



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PATIENT COMPLAINTS

In this practice we take complaints very seriously indeed and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. When patients complain, they are dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. This procedure is based on these objectives.

Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our complaint about a service to be handled. We learn from every mistake that we make and we respond to customers' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service which we provide is the Dr Wallace or Dr Gibson (the complaints managers)
2. If a patient complains on the telephone or at the reception desk, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him or her to the Dr Wallace or Dr Gibson immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, then the patient will be told when they will be able to talk to the Complaints Manager and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The member of staff will make a written record of your complaint and provide the patient with a copy as well as passing it on to the Complaints Manager. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail it will be passed on immediately to the Complaints Manager.
4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the dentist concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
5. We will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within THREE working days. We will offer to discuss the complaint at a time agreed with the patient, asking how the patient would like to be kept informed of developments, for example, by telephone, face to face meetings, letters or e-mail. We will inform the patient about how the complaint will be handled and the likely time that the investigation will take to be completed. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the process.
6. We will seek to investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and we will keep the patient regularly informed, as far as reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation. Investigations will normally be completed within *10 working days*.
7. When we have completed our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report. The report will include an explanation of how the complaint has been considered, the conclusions reached in respect of each specific part of the complaint, details of any necessary remedial action and whether the practice is satisfied with any action it has already taken or will be taking as a result of the complaint.
8. Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.

9. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be referred to:
Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478, Belfast BT1 6BR telephone: 0800 343424 or www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk for complaints about NHS treatment.

The Dental Complaints Service, The Lansdowne Building, 2 Lansdowne Road, Croydon, Greater London CR9 2ER, 08456 120 540 or www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk for complaints about private treatment.

The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ the dentists' registration body.

RQIA: 9th Floor Riverside Tower

5 Lanyon Place

BELFAST

BT1 3BT

NOTES:

The Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints

Our Practice operates a complaints procedure which is in compliance with the HSC complaints procedure and also in compliance with The Independent Healthcare Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

Patients are asked that in the event any complaint to speak or write to The dentist involved or in the event the patient does not wish to speak with or be contacted by this dentist the other partner will be the primary contact. A copy of the complaints process is held in the waiting room.

We will acknowledge complaints within two working days and will aim to have investigated the complaint within ten working days of the date when the matter was raised. If there are any delays in the process the complainant will be informed.

When a complaint is investigated we will aim to:

- find out exactly what happened and what went wrong
- make it possible for the complainant to discuss the problem with those concerned
- make sure the complainant receives an apology where appropriate
- identify learning from the complaint to ensure the problem does not happen again

The outcome of the investigation will be shared with the complainant either in person or in writing.