

Complaints Handling Policy (NHS)

Code of practice for patient complaints

In this practice we take complaints very seriously 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 a complaint we are making about a service to be handled. We learn from every mistake that we make and we respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

If any patient is not happy with the treatment or service they have received, it is usually best for them to tell the practice directly that they are unhappy, so there is a chance for the practice to put things right and resolve any problems before they escalate. If an informal approach doesn't solve the problem then the complaints procedure should be followed.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service we provide is Mrs Karen Medicott, the practice Complaints Manager.
2. If a patient requires support to make a complaint, they can get help from an NHS complaints advocate, or can get help from a local independent health complaints advocacy in the area. If the patient would rather not go directly to the practice, they can contact NHS England instead
3. If a patient complains by telephone or in person, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him or her to the Complaints Manager immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, we will advise the patient 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 the complaint and provide the patient with a copy as well as passing it on to the Complaints Manager. If we cannot arrange the discussion with the Complaints Manager 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.
4. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail it will be passed immediately to the Complaints Manager.
5. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges, it will normally be referred to the orthodontist concerned (unless the patient does not want this to happen).
6. 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.

7. 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 investigations will take to be complete. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint further, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the investigation.
8. We will seek to investigate the complaint within ten working days of receipt in order to fully understand the circumstances which led to the complaint. If we are unable to investigate the complaint within ten working days we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed.
9. 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. The report will be signed by Dr Sadaf Khan who is the responsible person.
10. 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. These records will be reviewed regularly to ensure we take every opportunity to improve our service.
11. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our investigation then a complaint may be referred to:
 - NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT. Telephone: 0300 311 2233 or Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
 - The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank London SW1P 4QP. Telephone: 0345 015 4033 or www.ombudsman.org.uk. Note: the PHSO can only be used if the patient is not happy with how the practice or NHS England dealt with the complaint
12. If the problem is so serious that the patient feels the dental professional could be a risk to the public they should contact:
 - The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ, Telephone: 0845 222 4141 (the dentists' registration body)
13. Patients can also seek assistance in making a complaint from:
 - Our Complaints Manager

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- Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS), 3rd Floor Kingfisher House, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP21 7AY. Telephone: 01296 468170 or www.seap.org.uk/icas
- Citizens Advice www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- British Dental Health Foundation. Telephone: 0845 063 1188

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