

COMPLAINTS POLICY

We have a complaints procedure in place to deal with any problems and we aim to learn from any mistakes that we make. We believe that all people who use our services and their carer's have the right to make comments and complaints if the standard of care falls below what they expect. We respect the dignity and privacy of patients who have a grievance and realise that they may find complaining very difficult. We will take all complaints and other comments very seriously and deal with them promptly. We will take reasonable steps to ensure that our patients are aware of the existence of a complaints procedure and make it readily accessible. We will ensure that patients are aware of the role of the PCT in relation to complaints about services under the contract and their right to assistance with any complaint from independent advocacy services. S R Williams Ltd nominates the practice administrator, Skye Goodson, to deal with complaints.

We recognise that a complaint can be made by the patient, on behalf of a patient or former patient, a parent for a child, or where a patient is deceased – a relative, or any guardian.

The period for making a complaint is 12 months from the incident. All complaints will be recorded in writing, irrespective of whether they were made verbally or in writing, and will be acknowledged within 3 working days and properly investigated. We will send a written summary of this investigation within 10 working days and invite the complainant to come and discuss the results of the investigation if they so wish. Records of the incident will be entered on The Complaint Form, The Interview Report form and the Complaints Action Sheet as appropriate. A questionnaire will be sent to the complainant following resolution of the complaint. We will take the information provided on this questionnaire very seriously and endeavour to learn from this information.

We recognise that complaints can arise from a shortfall in patient's expectations about all aspect of the dental practice not just about clinical care and we take all complaints equally seriously and will endeavour to rectify any such shortfall.

A record of all complaints will be kept for 2 years in a file in the Practice Managers office and not in the patient's clinical records.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

The aims of a grievance procedure should be:

1. To allow the patient to express their concerns when they feel the practice has not reached the standard of care they expect.
2. To give the practice a chance to offer an explanation and, if appropriate, an apology.
3. To protect staff from verbal and physical abuse.
4. To use information gained from these procedures to develop working practices, where appropriate.
5. To make sure any complaint is brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible and that the patient/complainant are informed of the result in language they can understand.

Remember that people are entitled to comment or complain but patients may find it difficult to do so for fear of upsetting someone or causing a problem. Likewise, the practice may find it difficult to respond positively to criticism but it may even enhance the practice image by showing concern and by reacting positively to their comments.

A problem or grumble dealt with quickly and effectively within the practice may prevent it turning into a major problem which has to be dealt with by the local health authority. Dealing with people who are making complaints can be very difficult particularly if they are angry or distressed. Remember to stay calm and don't try to argue. Listen to what is being said sympathetically- often that may be all that is necessary.

When a patient complains there are three golden rules:

1. Make the person feel relaxed by helping them express their grievance in a constructive way.
2. Keep calm. If the person is upset, angry or nervous offer them a quiet private place to go and talk.
3. Give them the Patient Advice leaflet and explain that their complaint will be acknowledged and investigated promptly.

Ideally deal with the complaint verbally on the day, within 24 hrs.

Acknowledge any complaint within 3 working days.

Provide an explanation within 10 working days.

Aim to reach a satisfactory conclusion within 28 working days.

Record all complaints, interviews and outcomes in writing and send copies to the patient. Send the patient a questionnaire at the end of the process and use this to reflect on how well we dealt with the complaint and see if we can improve the process in the future.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the dentists or any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system adheres to national criteria.

HOW TO COMPLAIN

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible - ideally, within a matter of days or at most a few weeks – because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily. If it is not possible to do this, please let us have details of your complaint within 12 months of the incident; or within 12 months of discovering that you have a problem. Complaints should be addressed to The Practice Administrator or to either of the dentists. Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with The Practice Administrator in order to discuss your concerns. They will explain the complaints procedure to you and will ensure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

WHAT WE WILL DO

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aim to have looked into your complaint within 10 working days of the date when you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with those involved. In investigating your complaint, we will aim to find out what happened and what went wrong, make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned (if you would like this), make sure you receive an apology (where this is appropriate) and to identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of physical or mental illness) or because they are a child.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

COMPLAINING TO THE HEALTH AUTHORITY

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. But this does not affect your right to approach the local health authority. If you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation. You should contact the complaints team via;

NHS England

PO Box 16738

Redditch

B97 9PT

By email to: england.contactus@nhs.net

If you are making a complaint please state: '**For the attention of the complaints team**' in the subject line.

By telephone: 0300 311 22 33

Our opening hours are: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesdays when we open at the later time of 9.30am. Closed on bank holidays.

If you're not happy with the way your complaint was handled – either by the dental practice or NHS England – you may wish to contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

The PHSO makes the final decision on complaints that haven't been resolved by NHS England. You can call on 0345 015 4033 or use the PHSO's secure online form to raise your complaint (this only applies to NHS services in England)

