



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 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 Susie Rea (Practice Manager).
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 Susie Rea immediately. If Susie is not available at the time, then the patient will be told that she will contact them as soon as she is available. If the patient wishes to speak to someone immediately then we will check to see if Patrick Rea (Practice Principal) is available to speak to them. The member of staff will take brief details of the complaint and pass them on.
3. If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately.
4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the dentist, 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 seek to investigate the complaint within ten working days of receipt to give an explanation of the circumstances which led to the complaint. If the patient does not wish to meet us, then we will attempt to talk to them on the telephone. 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.
6. We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
7. Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received.
8. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be made to:
 - The Dental Complaints Service (08456 120 540) for complaints about private treatment
 - The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ (the dentists' registration body)
 - For complaints about NHS treatment:
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust Complaints Department, 6th Floor McKinney House,
Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast BT9 7JB
Patient and Client Council (PCC) email info.pcc@hscni.net or Freephone 0800 917 0222
 - Northern Ireland Ombudsman, The Ombudsman, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN.
9. We conduct regular patient questionnaires to maintain our level of service and receive feedback from our patients. A summary of the latest findings can be requested from reception.
10. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority:
9th Floor Riverside Tower
5 Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3BT
028 9051 7500
The most recent inspection report is available from www.rqia.org.uk