

Patient Complaints Policy

At Gentle Touch Dental Studio, we want to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. We take complaints very seriously indeed. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with the matter courteously and promptly so that it is resolved as quickly as possible. Our procedure is based on these objectives.

Gentle Touch Dental Studio has an effective complaints system in place to ensure that identifying, receiving, recording, handling and response to any comments, observations or complaints occurs within a strict timetable which is clearly documented. The complaints system is clearly displayed and all patients and visitors are confident that they will be listened and responded to without fear of discrimination.

Any complainant can be assured that they will be treated in a manner respecting their human rights and diversity; in a sensitive manner and that the complaint can be made by a variety of methods either verbally, by sign language or in writing.

Where they lack confidence or require help they will be supported by helpful staff members. Their complaint will be fully documented and fairly dealt with and following investigation, lessons learned can lead to changes being made to avoid future complaints.

Patient Complaints Procedures

If a patient complains on the telephone or at the reception desk, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him/her to **Robert Craig** immediately. If **Robert Craig** is not available at the time, then the patient will be told when they will be able to talk to the dentist and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The member of staff will take brief details of the complaint and pass them on. 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.

- If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately to **Robert Craig**
- Complaints about clinical care or associated charges will be referred to the clinician concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
- A written response to a complaint with accompanying copy of our code of practice will be sent 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.
- We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
- Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received.

If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be made to:

- The Dental Complaints Service for complaints about private treatment
Phone: 08456 120 540 Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk
- The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ (the dentists' registration body) Phone: 0845 222 4141 (UK local rate) Email: standards@gdc-uk.org
- The Health and Social Care Board, Complaints Office, 12-22 Linenhall Street HSC Board Headquarters, Belfast BT2 8BS for complaints about Health Service treatment Phone: 028 9032 1313 Email: complaints.hscb@hscni.net
- The Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478, Belfast, BT1 6BR. Phone: Freephone 0800 343 424 Switchboard 028 9023 3821 Email: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

Complaints Notice Template

Ensure you display a notice to patients about how to raise concerns. This should be kept in your reception area and added to relevant practice literature. Give (or send) any patient who raises a concern, the Gentle Touch Dental Studio - Code of Practice for Patients Who Wish to Raise Concerns (see below). Ensure that the gaps are completed so that it is personalised to your practice.

Complaints should be analysed graphically to identify trends. For more information about complaints, see section nine.

Use the following template when drafting your complaints notice.

~ Code of Practice for Patients Who Wish to Raise Concerns

In this practice we place great emphasis on meeting and whenever possible, exceeding our patient's expectations. We try to ensure that all patients are pleased with their experience of our service and we take any concerns a patient may have very seriously.

If you have a concern regarding any aspect of your care, please let us know. We will do all that we can to resolve your concern to your satisfaction both promptly and professionally.

Our aim is to respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

The person responsible for dealing with any concerns about the service we provide in this practice is Robert Craig

If a patient raises an issue they are unhappy about on the telephone or at the reception desk, after listening to a description of the problem, we will immediately contact Robert Craig. Should the designated person or other responsible person not be available at the time, the patient will be informed when they will be available and arrangements will be made for the two to meet or speak. The member of staff will take brief details of the concern and pass them to Robert Craig.

If a patient writes to express their concern, the letter will be passed on to the relevant person immediately.

We will acknowledge any concerns raised in writing within two days. If a concern has been raised in writing, the written acknowledgement will also include a copy of this Code of Practice, again, normally within two working days. We will investigate the concern and report back within ten working days of it being received. If we are unable to complete our investigations within ten working days for any reason, we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and the likely period within which the investigation will be completed.

We will confirm the outcome of the investigation and any decisions made in writing.

Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any concerns or complaints received.

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