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**Complaints handling policy**

**For both Private and NHS Patient**

**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 Valerie Maguire
2. You can complain in the way that best suits you. This can be face to face, on the telephone, in a letter or by email. You should try to provide details of

* How or what you are complaining about
* Where and when the event that caused your complaint happened: and
* If possible, what you would like to be done to address your complaint.

1. 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.
2. If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately to Valerie Maguire.
3. 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.
4. If you do not wish to speak to anyone in the Practice you can contact the General Dental Council or HSC.
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.
6. 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.
7. We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
8. 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.

* 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.
* The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority 9th Floor Riverside tower, 5 Lanyon Place BelfastBT1 3BT ( oversight role in the management of complaints)

**Dromore Dental Recording Form for Complaints**

Patient name:…………………………………………

Address………………………………….

..…………………………………………..

Contact number/s:…………………………… ….…………………………………………

Complaint received by……………………………on………..…. by letter/telephone/in person

Person handling complaint:………………………………………………………………………...

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Details of complaint |
|  | Action taken |
|  | Follow-up |
|  | Outcome |

# ***MODEL LETTERS FOR DEALING WITH PATIENT COMPLAINTS***

**Simple acknowledgement of complaint**

Date

Dear [*patient’s name*]

Thank you for bringing to our attention the problem you have experienced/your letter of [*date*].

I was sorry to learn that you were not happy with our service. I am looking into the points you have made as a matter of urgency and shall be in touch with you with a full response as soon as I am able.

Yours sincerely

Patient Complaints Officer

**Acknowledgement of complaint and confirmation of meeting**

Date

Dear [*patient’s name*]

Thank you for your letter of [*date*]. We take complaints very seriously and shall do our best to resolve the matter.

I enclose a copy of our Code of Practice for handling complaints and I hope that you will agree to this procedure.

As I said in our conversation [*today* OR *on date*], I will investigate your concerns thoroughly and anticipate that my investigation will be complete by [*anticipated* *date*].

A meeting has been arranged on [*date*] at [*time*] for us to discuss the matter further. Present at that meeting will be the following members of the practice [*names of those to be present*].

I hope that we can resolve the matter to your satisfaction. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the procedure or any other aspect of this investigation.

Yours sincerely,

Patient Complaints Officer

**Acknowledgement of complaint – patient does not want to meet**

Date

Dear [*patient’s name*]

Thank you for your letter of [*date*]. We take complaints very seriously and shall do our best to resolve the matter.

I enclose a copy of our Code of Practice for handling complaints and I hope that you will agree to this procedure. I understand that you do not wish to meet to discuss the problem.

Following our conversation [*today* OR *on date*], I will investigate the matter thoroughly and [*telephone you* OR *write to you*] within [*number*] working days with our response. Meanwhile, please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the procedure or any other matter connected with this investigation.

Yours sincerely

Patient Complaints Officer

**Response to patient following meeting/investigation: Complaint is well founded**

Date

Dear [*patient’s name*]

I am writing to record the results of my investigation/our meeting on the [*date*] with regard to your complaint about [*a short summary of complaint*].

As we explained to you, we take complaints very seriously and will do our best to resolve the matter. You accepted our explanation and we agreed that, as a gesture of goodwill and without admitting liability, we would [*a summary of the action agreed*]. You can rest assured that we will make every effort to see that the problem does not occur again to other patients by [*details of how the problem is to be prevented*].

I hope that the matter is now resolved and you will continue to be a valued patient of our practice. If you have any queries, or I can help in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Patient Complaints Officer

**Response to patient following meeting/investigation: Complaint not justified**

Date

Dear [*patient’s name*]

I am writing to record the results of [*my investigation / our meeting*] on the [*date*] when we discussed the complaint about [*short description of complaint*].\*

**OR** I am writing to record the results of my investigation of your complaint about [*add short description of complaint*]\*.

At the meeting we listened very carefully to your concerns, which we do appreciate and understand. In response to your complaint we would say that [*summary of your decision*].

**OR**  I have investigated your complaint very carefully and I do understand and appreciate your concerns. In response we would say that [*summary of your decision*].\*

In our view [*name*] acted quite properly in [*add explanation of what occurred*].

I hope that you will accept our explanation and that you will continue as a valued patient of our practice. If you wish to pursue the matter formally you should contact [*details of appropriate organisation(s)*].

Yours sincerely

Patient Complaints Officer