

Complaints Policy

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response”

In our 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 patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

Procedure for handling complaints

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service that we provide is Bronagh McGuckin, the Complaints Manager.
2. If a patient complains by telephone or in person, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer them to the Complaints Manager immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, then the patient will be told 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 your complaint and provide the patient with a copy as well as passing it on to the Complaints Manager. 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 such as the Practice Manager.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail it will be passed on immediately to the Complaints Manager.
4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the dentist concerned, 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 Policy as soon as possible, normally within 3 working days. 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 investigation will take to be completed. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the process.

6. We will seek to investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and we will keep the patient regularly informed, as far as is reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation. Investigations will normally be completed within 10 working days. If we are unable to investigate the complaint within 10 working days, we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed.
7. 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.
8. 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
9. If the patient is not satisfied with the result of our procedure, then the following agencies can be utilised at local level in seeking resolution:
 - Complaints Office, BSO, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ complaints.bso@hscni.net 02895363555 (For complaints about NHS treatment)
 - Patient and Client Council 08009170222 www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net info@pcc@hscni.net (For complaints about NHS treatment)
 - The Dental Complaints Service 02082530800 Stephenson House, 2 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon, CR0 6BA. (For complaints about Private treatment)
10. If patients are not satisfied with the complaint investigation at local level then they can contact:
 - Northern Ireland Ombudsman, Freepost NIPSO, Belfast, BT1 6BR 0800343424 nipso@nipso.org.uk www.nipso.org.uk (For complaints about NHS treatment)

This practice is also registered with The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority:

- RQIA The regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, 9th Floor Riverside Tower, 5 Lanyon Place, Belfast, BT1 3BT www.rqia.org.uk info@rqia.org.uk 02895361990 to speak to the duty inspector (Switchboard is manned 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday)

Whilst RQIA does not investigate individual complaints, through their regulatory activities, they have an important role in ensuring all regulated services: have an effective complaints procedure; take complaints seriously; and investigate complaints thoroughly, in line with DHSSP complaints guidelines.