

Robin Smith Dental Practice

Complaints procedure – information for patients

We want you to be pleased with the service you receive and take all complaints (and other feedback) seriously. 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 which adheres to national guidelines.

We will try to answer your questions sympathetically and deal with any concerns promptly and courteously. Our aim is to resolve the matter as quickly as possible following the agreed procedure and wherever possible to your satisfaction. We know that a complaint may indicate a failing on our part, which we can learn from and make improvements to our service and we want you to have a positive experience if you make a complaint and to know you will not be dealt with differently in future because you have complained.

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily, quickly and informally at the time they arise and with the person concerned. We will follow the formal procedure set out below in all cases unless the issue is raised verbally and resolved quickly (within 24 hours; or one full working day if the practice is shut for a day or half day during the 24 hour period).

How to Complain

If your problem has not been resolved quickly and you wish to make a complaint, please 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 most easily. If that is not possible, please let us have details of your complaint:

- within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem; or
- within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

Please note that we are bound by rules of confidentiality and data protection. We need to be sure who is making the complaint and if you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we need to know that you have authority to do so. We will need a note signed by the person concerned, unless they are incapable of providing this eg because of physical or mental illness or they are a child under 16 years.

The Practice Complaints Manager Robin Smith is responsible for dealing with all complaints about our service but you can make an initial complaint to any member of staff.

Please help us to help you by being as clear as possible about your complaint. If we understand what you are complaining about, including your view of events, any concerns you have and how those might be resolved to your satisfaction we will be better placed to help you.

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You can complain in writing, in person or by telephone. If in writing, it will be passed on as soon as possible (and within that working day) to the Complaints Manager.

If you complain in person or by telephone, the member of staff receiving the complaint will make a record of your concerns and try to check this is accurate with you. This will be passed to the Complaints Manager as soon as possible (and within that working day). We will ask whether you would like to see or speak to them at once if they are available and if they are not we will offer you an appointment or ask if you would like them to call you by telephone and if so say when they are likely to be able to call.

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 3 working days, sending you a copy of this procedure, and offering you a discussion at a mutually convenient time if you have not yet discussed the matter with the Complaints Manager. If you complained in person or by telephone and it was not resolved within 24 hours, we will also send you a copy of the record we made of your complaint.

We will aim to look into your complaint within 10 working days of the date we learned of it but if we need longer we will explain why and keep you informed of our progress every 10 working days. Please tell us of your preferred method of communication for this – letter, telephone or email.

In investigating your complaint, we shall aim to:

- find out what happened and what went wrong
- enable you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this;
- ensure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem does not happen again.

On completion of our investigation, we will send you a full written response by first class post marked Private and Confidential which will include

- How we considered each concern that was raised and our conclusions
- An apology where this is appropriate
- The action that has been or will be taken to stop the problem re-occurring.

We will keep proper and comprehensive records of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will make use of our practice complaints procedure as we believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice.

However, this does not affect your right to complain to the Dental Complaints Service (for complaints about private treatment) and the Ombudsman (about NHS treatment) if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

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If you want further advice you should contact -

(for complaints about private treatment) -

- Dental Complaints Service Stephenson House 2 Cherry Orchard Rd
Croydon CR0 6BA
E-mail: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk
Tel. 020 8253 0800

If you are complaining about NHS treatment and are not satisfied with the result of our practice complaints procedure, then you can contact -

- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank
London SW1P 4QP,
- telephone: 0345 015 4033 or www.ombudsman.org.uk

You may also like to contact the General Dental Council for more advice -

- General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1M 8DQ
E-mail: Complaints@gdc-uk.org
Tel. 020 7887 3800

For those patients who have a complaint regarding treatment they have received under the NHS, you can also contact -

- NHS England - North (Cheshire and Merseyside)
Regatta Place
Summers Road
Brunswick Business Park
Liverpool
L3 4BL

For patients with a Denplan payment plan, you can also contact the Clinical Mediation and Risk Management team for advice at -

- Simplyhealth Professionals
Email: clinicalmediationservice@denplan.co.uk
Tel. 0800 169 7220