

Patient complaints Policy

We want all our patients to be pleased with the service they receive, so we take all complaints very seriously. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with it promptly and courteously. Our aim is to resolve the matter as quickly as possible following the agreed procedure and, wherever possible, to provide a satisfactory outcome to the patient.

A complaint may indicate a failing on our part, which we can learn from and use to improve our service. We will adopt a 'no blame' approach when investigating a complaint and especially where individuals are identified, with the aim of reaching a satisfactory conclusion. We will, at all times, be polite and respectful to our patients.

Practice procedure

1. The Practice Complaints Manager Michelle Molloy is responsible for dealing with all complaints about our service. If the complaint is in regards to this member of staff, then it will be dealt with by our Business Manager Gary Saulters in order to preserve the integrity of our complaints process.
2. If a patient makes a complaint in person or by telephone, the member of staff receiving the complaint makes an initial record of their concerns and checks this for accuracy with the patient before then passing it to the Complaints Manager. If the Complaints Manager is available, the patient is asked whether they would like to see him/her immediately. Otherwise the patient is advised when the Complaints Manager will make contact to arrange a meeting in person or by telephone.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail, the complaint will be passed immediately to the Complaints Manager.
4. Complaints about clinical care or the amount charged for treatment will be referred to the dentist concerned, unless the patient requests otherwise.
5. All complaints are acknowledged in writing within three working days.
6. We will investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and, as far as reasonably practicable, will keep the patient informed of our progress. Investigations will normally be completed within 10 working days.
7. On completion of our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which 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 will be kept of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.
9. If this is a complaint regarding NHS dental treatment and you are not happy with the practice response to your complaint, you can contact the HSCB Complaints Officer at:
 - Health and Social Care Board, Complaints Office, 12-22 Linenhall Street, HSC Board Headquarters, Belfast, BT2 8BS

Telephone: 028 9536 3893

Email: complaints.hscb@hscni.net

Website: Health and Social Care Board

- If you remain unhappy you can refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman:

Progressive House, 33-37 Wellington Pl, Belfast BT1 6HN

Telephone: 0800 343424

NIPSO will look at your complaint and decide whether they should investigate it.

Complaints about private dental treatment, if not satisfied with the in-house process, should be referred to;

- Dental Complaints Service

Stephenson House, 2 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon, CRO 6BA

Telephone: 02082530800

This procedure should be followed if you are complaining on behalf of someone else.

The rules of medical confidentiality will be adhered to if the complaint is received on behalf of someone else. A note signed by the person concerned will be required, unless they are incapable (e.g. because of illness) of providing this to allow the complaint to be investigated.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services.

RQIA does not investigate complaints. However, 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 DHSSPS complaints guidelines.

9th Floor Riverside Tower, 5 Lanyon Place, BELFAST, BT1 3BT

info@rqia.org.uk

028 9536 1111 (9am - 5pm Mon to Fri)