



We are committed to providing high quality care for all and will ensure that our patients and their representatives can seek advice, provide feedback or make a complaint about any aspect of our service. This policy describes how we receive, manage, respond to and learn from complaints made about our service. All members of the team are expected to understand and follow this policy when dealing with a patient complaint.

Our approach to complaints

A complaint can be made by a patient of the practice or a person acting on their behalf if the patient is a child, has physical or mental incapacity, has consented to the person acting on their behalf, or has delegated authority to act on their behalf. A complaint can also be made by an individual who is, or is likely to be, affected by our actions, inactions, decisions or omissions.

A complaint provides us with the opportunity to identify where our practice systems have fallen short and what we can do to improve our service. In dealing with a complaint.

Acknowledgement

The Complaints Manager (Dr R Paul) will acknowledge the complaint in writing within: *three* working days and enclose a copy of our code of practice for handling complaints. If a delay in acknowledging the complaint is anticipated, the reason for the delay will be explained to the individual.

Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to

- Understand what the complaint is about
- Establish what the individual would consider to be a satisfactory resolution
- Seek the views of other team members and seek suggestions on how to resolve the matter
- Identify other useful sources of information – for example, published research, suppliers

We aim for the investigation to be completed and for the individual to receive the report – *promptly within 10 working days or, if the issue is complex, within 6 months* Where we anticipate a delay, we will explain this to the individual and provide an update on progress at least every 10 working days.

Response

Before providing a written response, we will invite the individual to a meeting to discuss the findings of our investigation.

Our written response to the individual will

- Address all the issues raised and demonstrate that each has been fully and fairly investigated
- Include an apology where something has gone wrong
- Explain our conclusions and any action that we have taken as a result or explain why no further action is needed
- Include details of how to contact the NHS Ombudsman or the Dental Complaints Service if the individual remains dissatisfied

Records

The Complaints Manager keeps full records of all complaints, investigations and responses. These records are kept securely and not with the individual's clinical records (if they are a patient of the practice). These records include:

- The date a complaint was received, by who and how (verbally or in writing)
- Details of the complaint and the results of the investigation
- Copies of any communications and records of telephone conversations and meetings
- The outcome of the complaint and any action that we took as a result
- Correspondence between the patient and the practice.

Learning from complaints

We will undertake ongoing monitoring of all complaints to identify trends and assess training requirements.