

## **Complaints Handling Policy**

In this practice we take complaints very seriously and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. 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.

The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service which we provide is Shahzad Tahir, the practice Complaints Manager.

If a patient complains in writing or by email it will be passed on to the Complaints Manager. If a patient complains by telephone or in person we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer them to the Complaints Manager. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time arrangements will be made for the Complaints Manager to contact them. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with the complaint. A member of staff will make a written record of your complaint and pass it to the Complaints Manager.

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.

We will acknowledge the complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this policy as soon as possible, normally within three working days of the complaint being received. We will offer to discuss the complaint at a time agreed with the patient.

We will seek to investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently. Investigations will normally be completed within twenty working days of the Complaints Manager receiving the complaint and the patient should expect to receive a full response within this time. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean the complaint cannot be resolved within the usual timescale, the patient will be given regular updates (at least every 10 days) on progress.

When we have completed our investigation we will provide the patient with a written response. If appropriate, this will include an explanation of how the complaint has been considered, the conclusions reached in respect of each 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.

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.

For NHS and private treatment there are two stages to Complaints Resolution. For NHS treatment, stage 1 (also called Local Resolution) includes making the complaint either directly to the practice or to NHS England. Patients are encouraged to communicate with the practice first where possible. If patients are not happy with the result of our procedure or would prefer an alternative contact they can contact NHS England on 01722 214127. If a complaint cannot be resolved at stage 1 of the resolution process patients can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (Tel: 0345 015 4033) for NHS complaints or the Dental Complaints Service (Tel: 08456 120 540) for complaints about private treatment.

If patients need assistance with making a complaint they could seek assistance from:

**Advocacy Focus Lancashire**

Phone: 0300 323 0965

Fax: 01254 898898

Text: 07886 744 634

Email: [admin@advocacyfocus.org.uk](mailto:admin@advocacyfocus.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice**

Phone: 03444 111 444

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)