

## Ferndale House Code of Practice - Complaint Handling

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. Our code of practice encourages patients to let us know when our service has not met their expectations and explains how we will investigate their complaint and keep them informed.

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.

### In dealing with a complaint, we will:

- Be respectful of our patients right to complain
- Be open and transparent to ensure those involved understand the process and what to expect
- Acknowledge a complaint promptly
- Undertake evidence-based investigations
- Provide sympathetic responses within appropriate timeframes
- Identify the causes of complaints and act to prevent recurrence
- Learn lessons and implement change
- If the individual is a patient of the practice, ensure that their ongoing care is not adversely affected by the complaint.

### Raising a complaint:

**Verbal complaints:** a complaint can be made to any member of the dental team. We will listen to your complaint or concerns and be polite and considerate. We aim to resolve the matter as soon as it received, making a note of the complaint. If we are unable to resolve immediately it will be passed to our Complaints Manager to contact you and discuss in detail your complaint. Notes will be passed to the complaints manager and to the patient along with a copy of the practice policy which outlines our code of practice for handling complaints.

**Written complaints:** you can raise a complaint or concern in writing or via email. Written complaints can be handed to reception or posted to 90 Saltergate, Chesterfield, S40 1LG. Complaints via email should be sent to [enquiries@ferndaledental.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ferndaledental.co.uk)

The practice Complaints Manager, Gareth Phillips (practice manager), is responsible for dealing with all complaints received by the practice, unless immediate resolution is possible.

### Acknowledgement of a complaint:

The Complaints Manager 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.

### **The acknowledgement will include**

- Confirmation that the matter will be investigated and that the individual will receive a report of the findings
- An offer to meet with the individual to discuss the complaint and gather information
- A description of how the complaint will be handled and who will be involved
- Anticipated timescales for the investigation and preparation of the report
- How the individual would like to be kept informed of progress
- Local organisations that can provide help.

### **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 (for example, 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

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).

### **Learning from complaints**

We adopt a no-blame approach to complaints that we receive but recognise that all feedback provides an opportunity for us to develop and improve our service. As soon as possible after a complaint has been dealt with, we will ensure that those involved are given individual feedback.