



DENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

### Practice Complaints Procedure

In this practice we take complaints very seriously and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. When patients complain, they are dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. This procedure is based on these objectives.

Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our complaint to 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.

If you have a complaint about the service you have received from the Dentists or any of the members of staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a complaints procedure as part of a system for dealing with complaints regarding NHS and private treatment at the practice. Our complaints system adheres to national criteria.

#### How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to 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 more easily. If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

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

If you wish to complain by telephone or in person, we will listen to your complaint and offer to refer you to the Complaints Manager (Samantha Mott) immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, then you will be told when you will be able to talk to the Complaints Manager and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The member of staff will make a written record of your complaint and provide you with a copy as well as passing it on to the Complaints Manager. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if you do not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.

If you wish to complain in writing or by email, it will be passed on immediately 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.

It would be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.



### What we shall do

We shall acknowledge your complaint in writing and enclose a copy of the complaints code of practice, normally within 3 working days and offer a meeting to discuss your complaint at a time convenient to yourself and the practice. We will establish how you would like to be kept informed of developments, for example, by telephone, face to face meetings, letters or email. We will inform you of how the complaint will be handled and the likely time that the investigation will take to be completed. If you do not wish to discuss the complaint, we will still inform you of the expected timescale for completing the process. In investigating your complaint, we shall aim to:

- Find out what happened and what went wrong
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this
- Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.
- We aim to complete all investigations within a 6 month time frame.
- When the investigation is complete you will be provided with a full written report of the complaint, investigation and any measures taken to improve our service.

### Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be required, unless they are incapable (because of physical or mental illness) of providing this.

We hope that if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. This does not affect your right to complain to an independent party if you feel that you cannot raise the complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

For complaints regarding NHS treatment, patients should contact:

#### ***Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)***

Redbridge Primary Care Trust  
Becketts House  
2-14 Ilford Hill  
Ilford  
Essex  
IG1 2QX  
Tel: 020 8478 5151 or 0800 0926 995  
Email: [pals@redbridge.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@redbridge.nhs.uk)

Or

#### ***The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsmen***

Millbank Tower,  
Millbank,  
London,  
SW1P 4QP.  
Tel: 0345 015 4033  
On-line: [www.ombudsmen.org.uk](http://www.ombudsmen.org.uk)



For complaints regarding private treatment, patients should contact:

The Dental Complaints Service  
The Lansdowne Building  
2 Lansdowne Road  
Croydon  
Greater London  
CR9 2ER  
Tel: 08456 120 540  
On-line: [www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk)

The General Dental Council (GDC)  
37 Wimpole Street  
London  
W1M 8DQ  
Tel: 0845 222 4141

Reviewed and updated: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010  
Next review due: December 2011

