

## **Complaints handling policy**

At ODL Dental Clinic we take complaints very seriously because we want all our patients to be delighted with our service. If a patient makes a complaint, it is important to us that this is dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our own complaint about a service to be handled, to learn from any mistakes we make and to respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way. This policy sets out the procedures we will follow to ensure that we achieve these objectives.

**Encouraging feedback and complaints** - We encourage our patients to give feedback and, where they are unhappy, to make a complaint if we haven't met their expectations. We want to stress that this is important to us because it helps us to improve the service we provide.

*Patients will not be discriminated against for making a complaint and it will not have a negative effect on their treatment.*

**Overall responsibility** - The person with overall responsibility for dealing with complaints is the Complaints Manager, Juliana Morais. However, any patient wishing to make a complaint should not hesitate to raise the matter with any member of the practice team, as they prefer.

**Verbal complaints (telephone or face-to-face)** If a patient makes a verbal complaint, the member of staff they are speaking to will listen to the patient and, if they are able, immediately attempt to remedy the problem. If this is not possible, or if the patient is asking for something that the staff member is not authorised to provide (for example, a refund of treatment fees), the staff member should contact the Practice Manager immediately so that she can deal with the matter. If the Practice Manager is not available, the patient will be told when she will be and/or that arrangements will be made for her to contact them (and when this will happen). The member of staff will take brief details of the complaint and pass them on to the Practice Manager. If the patient is unhappy with this, or is not able or prepared to wait, then arrangements will be made for the dentist or other appropriate person to deal with the matter in the Practice Manager's absence.

**Written complaints (letter or email)** Written complaints, whether in a letter or an email, will be passed immediately to the Complaints Manager for her to deal with.

Complaints relating to clinical care or associated charges will usually be referred to the dentist.

We will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 3 practice working days. We will provide a full response (with redress or details of action to be taken, where appropriate) within 10 practice working days. If this is not possible for any reason, we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and the likely period within which the investigation will be completed.

The full response may initially be given at a meeting or by telephone if the patient prefers and confirmed in writing.

**Data protection** In the event that a patient makes a complaint or commences/threatens to commence legal process(es) against the practice, we may need to provide information about the patient and the treatment they have received to our dental defence organisation, insurers and legal advisers in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

**Records** We will keep proper and comprehensive records of any complaints we receive, responses we give and any action taken.

**Where a patient is not satisfied with the outcome** Where a patient is not satisfied with the response to a complaint, they may refer the matter to:

The Dental Complaints Service, The Lansdowne Building, 2 Lansdowne Road, Croydon, Greater London, CR9 2ER,

telephone 08456 120540

The Care Quality Commission, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TG, telephone 03000 616161  
- the general health regulator, with responsibility for maintaining standards in healthcare services

The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ, telephone 0845 222 4141 - the dentists'  
regulatory body, which deals with complaints about professional misconduct