



## **Complaints handling policy**

### **Code of practice for patient complaints**

At Trafalgar Dental practice we take complaints very seriously and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. When a patient complains, the complaint is dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as swiftly 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 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.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service that we provide is the practice Manager.
2. If a patient complains by telephone or in person to a member of our team, the staff member will listen and assist where possible and then refer the complaint to the Practice Manager immediately. If the Practice Manager is not available at the time, then the patient will be advised when they will be able to talk to the Practice Manager and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The member of staff will make a written record of the complaint and pass this on to the Practice Manager. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with the complaint.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail it will be passed on immediately to the Practice Manager.
4. 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.
5. We will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing within three working days and enclose a copy of this code of practice. We will invite the patient in to the practice to meet with the Practice Manager. We will offer to discuss the complaint at a time agreed with the patient, asking how the patient would like to be kept informed of developments, for example, by telephone, face to face meetings, letters or e-mail. We will inform the patient about how the complaint will be handled and the likely time that the investigation will take to be completed. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the process.
6. We will seek to investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and we will keep the patient regularly informed, as far as is reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation.
7. 'When the investigation has been completed, a final response will be sent to the patient. The response will include an explanation of how the complaint has been considered, the conclusions reached in respect of each specific 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’.

8. 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.
9. If you need help or assistance with your complaint, you may wish to contact the NHS Complaints Advocacy service. This organisation provides free independent advice and support. The organisation for your local area is:

**Healthwatch Portsmouth (Portsmouth only)**

3 St Georges Business Centre, St Georges Square, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3EY  
Tel: 02393 977079  
Website: [www.healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchportsmouth.co.uk)

**Healthwatch Southampton (City)**

The Voluntary Action Centre, Kingsland Square, Southampton, Hampshire, SO14 1NW  
Tel: 02380 216018  
Website: [www.healthwatchsouthampton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsouthampton.co.uk)

**Dorset advocacy Service (whole of Dorset)**

Unit 13-15, Jubilee Court, Paceycombe Way, Poundbury, DT1 3AE  
Tel: 0300 343 7000  
Email: [nhscomplaints@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:nhscomplaints@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk)  
Website: [www.healthwatchsouthampton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsouthampton.co.uk)

10. If the complainant is not satisfied with the final result of our procedure, then a complaint may be referred to:

**Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**

Millbank Tower, Millbank London SW1P 4QP  
Tel: 0345 015 4033