

## Wedgwood House Dental Practice

# Complaints handling policy

## Code of practice for patient complaints



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.

An NHS patient can either complain direct to the dental practice or to NHS England but cannot do both. If a patient has already made a complaint to the practice and has been provided with a response to their complaint, the next stage is to either request a further response from the practice answering their further concerns or attend a meeting with the practice to try and achieve local resolution. See bullets 9, 10, 11 and 14 below.

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: Dr J M Geaney, the practice Proprietor. Address – Wedgwood House Dental Practice, 100 Bury Street, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1HF. Alternatively, write to [jill.geaney@nhs.net](mailto:jill.geaney@nhs.net)
2. If a patient complains by telephone or in person, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him or her to the Proprietor immediately. If the Proprietor is not available at the time, then the patient will be told when they will be able to talk to them and arrangements will be made for this to happen.
3. If an oral complaint then the member of staff will make a written record of your complaint and provide the patient with a copy as well as passing it on to the Proprietor. 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 it.

Note that Oral complaints and comments/suggestions that do not require investigation are not to be included in the KO41(b) annual return to NHS England, see Annex A.

4. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail it will be passed on immediately to the Proprietor. If another person complains on behalf of a person, then the validity of the complaint may be checked before passing on to the Proprietor – the complaint will be recorded immediately.
5. 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.
6. We will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within three (3) working days.
7. 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.

8. 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. Investigations will normally be completed within six (6) months in England.
9. When we have completed our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report. The report 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.
10. If following the FIRST STAGE response to the complaint, from dental practice to patient, then as specified by NHS England the patient must then request a further response from the practice answering their further concerns or attend a meeting with the practice to try and achieve a local resolution.
11. If following a SECOND STAGE response or meeting local resolution has still not been achieved, the patient can then approach the Ombudsman to request that they investigate the complaint.
12. 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.
13. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be referred to:
  - NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT, or [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk) for complaints about NHS treatment.
  - The Dental Complaints Service (funded by the GDC), 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ, 020 8253 0800, or <https://dcs.gdc-uk.org/> for complaints about private treatment.
  - The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ the dentists' registration body.
  - The UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for data processing complaints.
14. If a NHS patient does not want to make their complaint direct to the practice, they should be directed to NHS England contact centre as follows:
  - By post - NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT.
  - By email - [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)
  - By telephone - 0300 311 2233
  - Or if unsure, speak to the NHS Patient advice and liaison services (PALS) team who'll try to help you resolve issues informally before you need to make a complain. Tel. 020 8423 8999

## History

Issue 5, 16/11/2020. Updated date of latest NHS KO41b Guidance notes. Note that collection of 2019/20 data cancelled due to COVID-19 (October 2020 NHS BSA news letter). Added email address for written complaints. Step 4 clarified if another makes a complaint.

Issue4, 14/1/2019: Minor update.

Updated contact details for the Dental Complaints Service, and NHS KO41(b) guidance.

Added NHS PALS service.

Added person's *Right* to lodge a data complaint with a supervisory authority (Article 77).

Issue 3: Updated following NHS England ([umit.kanat@nhs.net](mailto:umit.kanat@nhs.net) and [lynn.morgan2@nhs.net](mailto:lynn.morgan2@nhs.net)) information on 'Patients making NHS complaints' email dated 21/4/2015.

Issue 2: The updated document replaces the following:

- CQC\_SECTION5\_COMPLAINTS-01 01 NHS COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY
- CQC\_SECTION5\_COMPLAINTS-02 01 PRIVATE COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY (1)

## Annual NHS complaints report (England)

Following the demise of the Primary Care Trusts (PCT) NHS England Area Teams now have the responsibility for obtaining the data from Practices and to supply an aggregated return to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (NHS digital).

The WHDP comes under the “East Anglia Area Team; Primary Care Support” based in Cambridge. The dental practice is required to submit an annual return form. Full details of this form, and instruction on how it is to be completed are described in the following reference:

KO41(b) – General Practice (including Dentist) Written Complaints  
A guide to completing the Dental section of the NHS written complaints collection  
May 2019 (*latest as of 16/11/2020*).

For further information:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/general-practice-including-dental-complaints-collection-ko41b>

Note that for the purposes of the KO41(b) return, a written complaint is one that is made in writing to any member of staff, or is originally made orally and subsequently recorded in writing. Once it is so recorded, it should be treated as though it was made in writing from the outset. Oral complaints and comments/suggestions that do not require investigation should not be included. Complaints forwarded to the Ombudsman are to be excluded because a complaint could span several reporting years and could corrupt data returns.