

# Wedgwood House Dental Practice



## Complaints handling procedure

### Code of practice for patient complaints

If you're not happy with the treatment or service you have had, it's usually best to tell us directly that you're unhappy and give us a chance to put things right. We may be able to sort out the problem there and then.

If you need to make a more formal complaint to the practice, ask for a copy of this procedure that explains what you need to do.

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 Integrated Care Board (ICB) that funds the NHS work 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.

Our aim is to react to complaints in a positive and constructive manner. We make every effort to learn from our mistakes and we try to respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

Should the practice deem the comments or actions of the person making a complaint to be abusive, violent, harassing or bullying, then the practice reserves the right to cancel future scheduled appointments during the complaint investigation and in extreme cases cancel the patient's registration at the practice. For more information, see the WHDP Violence, Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Complaint files and investigations are not routinely stored as part of clinical records. This is to avoid future prejudice. It may also be necessary due to clinician confidentiality.

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.
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. Unless the complaint is anonymous, we will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing and send this procedure (or refer to the publicly available copy on the WHDP website) as soon as possible, normally within three (3) to ten (10) working days 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 of the complaint being received, or such longer period as may be agreed before the expiry of that period by the complainant and dental practice.
9. When we have completed our investigation, we will provide the patient with a written report/response. This 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 the patient, 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 after 6 months, the patient can then approach the Ombudsman to request that they investigate the complaint.
12. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be referred to:
  - NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX (01473 770 000), or [pals@snee.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@snee.nhs.uk) (0800 389 6819).
  - [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk) for complaints about NHS treatment.
  - For non-NHS complaints. The Dental Complaints Service (funded by the GDC), 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ, 020 8253 0800, or <https://dcs.gdc-uk.org/>
  - 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.
13. 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:
  - NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board.
  - 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
14. 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. As necessary, the dental practice (proprietor or their staff) have the right to share and discuss the details of the complaint with their legal defence unions.

15. Complaints not made by patients themselves may not be answered due to personal data confidentiality reasons. The dental practice will however seek to learn from any issues brought up by this type of complaint.
16. This practice is determined to learn from every complaint and improve the service we give to our customers whilst protecting people (customers and staff) from discrimination, harassment or disadvantage. Individual complaints and complaint trend analysis will be discussed at staff meetings and where necessary direct future staff training, practice policy and procedure improvement or change.
17. The practice reserves the right to answer Google reviews and Suffolk Health Watch reviews. Anything complaints related will be recorded in the practice Complaints Log.

## History

Issue 7, 3/7/2025 following QA review by JM Geaney. Checked consistency with CQC Dental MythBusters 34. Added reference to the WHDP Violence, Harassment and Bullying Policy. Added (bullet 16) statement how we seek to improve from complaints. Added (bullet 17) how Google and Suffolk Health watch reviews logged.

Issue 6, 12/4/2024. Draft 8/4/2024 QA reviewed and authorised by JM Geaney (reviewed by LDS also). Updated in line with latest CQC MythBusters 16 (CQC Reg 16) and mention of ICB. Turned from a Policy to a Procedure – because it always was a procedure.

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.

Issue 4, 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)

## Publishing Complaints

### CQC

In accordance with CQC Regulation 16, the dental practice must provide the CQC with a summary of complaints when requested.

### Annual NHS complaints report (England)

NHS related complaints are submitted annually to the NHS Business Services Authority.

KO41(b) – General Practice (including Dentist) Written Complaints  
A guide to completing the Dental section of the NHS written complaints collection  
11/6/2024 (*latest as of 3/7/2025*).

For further information:

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

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.