

POLICY FOR HANDLING PATIENT COMPLAINTS

We want our service to meet your expectations. If you have a concern or complaint about any aspect of our service, we want to know what mistakes we made and identify how we can improve to ensure that we meet your expectations in future. Our aim is to learn from any feedback we receive and improve the service we provide to our patients.

We will deal with complaints courteously and promptly and aim to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint or simply let us know how we could have done better, please contact Mrs. Nia Evans, our Complaints' and Practice Manager:

- By telephone on 029 20626551
- By email at reception@rhiwbinadental.com
- By letter to Mrs. Nia Evans, Rhiwbina Dental, The Pines, Heol Y Forlan, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 1AX
- In person.

The Complaints' Manager usually works at the practice Monday-Friday and will endeavor to be available during these times. You may find it more convenient to make an appointment with the Complaints' Manager to ensure that she can dedicate sufficient time to meet with you. If Mrs. Nia Evans is unavailable, Sarah Wakeling-Smith or Chantelle Duffield (Assistant Practice Managers) are available.

If you contact the practice to make a complaint and the Complaints' Manager is not available, we will arrange a convenient time for them to contact you. We will ask you for brief details of your complaint so that the Complaints' Manager can gather any useful information before contacting you. You will be given a copy of the notes made for the Complaints' Manager.

If the matter requires a more immediate response, we will arrange for a senior member of the dental team to deal with it.

If your complaint is about your dental treatment or the fee charged, we will usually ask the dentist concerned to contact you, unless you do not want this.



We acknowledge all complaints in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within two working days.

Investigating a complaint

We will offer to discuss the complaint with you and will ask how you would like to be kept informed of developments – by telephone, letters or e-mail or by face-to-face meetings. We will let you know how we will deal with your complaint and the likely time that the investigation will take to complete. If you do not wish to discuss the complaint further, we will still let you know the expected timescale for completing the investigation.

We will investigate your complaint within four weeks and, as far as reasonably practicable, will let you know how our investigation is progressing.

When we have completed our investigation, we will provide you with a full written report, unless you have told us that you do not wish for further communication. The report will explain how we considered the complaint, the conclusions we reached for each part of your complaint, details of any remedial action we have taken and whether further action is needed.

Records

We keep proper and comprehensive records of any complaints that we receive and the action we have taken following investigation. We review these records regularly to ensure that we recognise our mistakes and take every opportunity to improve our service.

If you are not satisfied

If your complaint was about your dental treatment and you are not satisfied with the result of our investigation, you can take up the matter with a relevant external organisation.

Dental Complaints Service, 37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ

Tel: 020 8253 0800

Online: contactus.gdc-uk.org/dcs/Complaint/PrivatePatients

Health Inspectorate Wales, Rhydycar Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ

Tel: 0300 062 8163

Email: hiw@gov.wales



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For data

complaints:

The Information Commissioners Office online reporting tool: www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint

We are committed to providing high-quality care for all and will ensure that our patients and their representatives can seek advice, provide feedback or make a complaint about any aspect of our service. This policy describes how we receive, manage, respond to and learn from complaints made about our service. All members of the team are expected to understand and follow this policy when dealing with a patient complaint.

The key aspects of this policy are that:

- Our patients know how to complain and are confident that we will take their complaint seriously
- We will investigate all complaints and will keep the patient informed of the findings of our investigation
- We will learn from any complaints, concerns and feedback that we receive and use these lessons to improve our service.

Information for patients

We believe that if a patient wishes to make a complaint or register a concern about any aspect of our service, they should find it easy to do so. Our code of practice for handling complaints, encourages patients to let us know when our service has not met their expectations and explains how we will investigate their complaint and keep them informed.

Copies of our code are available at our Practice and on our website at www.rhiwbinadental.com.

Our approach to complaints

A complaint can be made by a patient of the practice or a person acting on their behalf if the patient is a child, has physical or mental incapacity, has consented to the person acting on their behalf, or has delegated authority to act on their behalf. A complaint can also be made by an individual who is, or is likely to be, affected by our actions, inactions, decisions or omissions.



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A complaint provides us with the opportunity to identify where our practice systems have failed and what we can do to improve our service. In dealing with a complaint, we will

- Be open and transparent to ensure that all those involved understand the process and what to expect
- Acknowledge a complaint promptly
- Undertake evidence-based investigations
- Provide sympathetic responses within appropriate timeframes
- Identify the causes of complaints and act to prevent recurrence
- Learn lessons and implement change
- if the individual is a patient of the practice, ensure that their ongoing care is not adversely affected by the complaint.

Practice complaints process

Handling a complaint efficiently and sympathetically from the outset may encourage early resolution and avoid the need for a formal complaint process, involving investigation and formal reports. which is stressful and time-consuming for all concerned.

When making a complaint, an individual usually wants an apology and to know what happened and why, what will be done to put it right, what action will be taken immediately and to prevent the cause for complaint happening again.

Receiving complaints

All members of the team must be able to receive a complaint or feedback (verbal or written) and deal with it appropriately. Staff should bear in mind, that the individual making the complaint may not refer to their concern as a complaint.

The practice Complaints Manger, Mrs Nia Evans, is responsible for dealing with all complaints received by the practice, unless immediate resolution is possible.

Verbal complaints: We will listen to what the individual is saying and be polite and considerate; avoid justifying the action that led to the complaint or being dismissive of the individual's concerns. Where possible and, depending on the nature of the complaint, we will aim to resolve the matter as soon as it is received, making a note of the complaint and how we resolved it and pass the information to the Complaints Manager, Mrs Nia Evans.

If we are unable to resolve the complaint immediately, we should encourage the individual to speak with the Complaints Manager. If the Complaints Manager is not available, we should take brief details of the complaint and arrange a convenient time for the Complaints Manager to contact the individual.

If the complaint requires an urgent response and the Complaints Manager is not available, we will pass the complaint to Sarah Wakeling-Smith or Chantelle Duffield (Deputy Practice and Complaints Managers).

Written complaints: If we receive a written complaint (by letter or email.), it should pass it immediately to the Complaints Manager.

Acknowledgement

The Complaints Manager will acknowledge the complaint in writing within two working days and enclose a copy of our code of practice for handling complaints. If a delay in acknowledging the complaint is anticipated, the reason for the delay will be explained to the individual.

The acknowledgement will include

- Confirmation that the matter will be investigated and that the individual will receive a report of the findings
- An offer to meet with the individual to discuss the complaint and gather information
- A description of how the complaint will be handled and who will be involved
- Anticipated timescales for the investigation and preparation of the report
- How the individual would like to be kept informed of progress
- Local organisations that can provide help.

Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to

- Understand what the complaint is about
- Establish what the individual would consider to be a satisfactory resolution
- Seek the views of other team members and seek suggestions on how to resolve the matter
- Identify other useful sources of information – for example, published research, suppliers

We aim for the investigation to be completed and for the individual to receive the report within four weeks. Where we anticipate a delay, we will explain this to the individual and provide an update on progress at least every 10 working days.

Response

Before providing a written response, we will invite the individual to a meeting to discuss the findings of our investigation.

Our written response to the individual will

- Address all the issues raised and demonstrate that each has been fully and fairly investigated
- Include an apology where something has gone wrong
- Explain our conclusions and any action that we have taken as a result or explain why no further action is needed
- Include details of how to contact the Ombudsman or the Dental Complaints Service if the individual remains dissatisfied

Records

The Complaints Manager keeps full records of all complaints, investigations and responses. These records are kept securely and not with the individual's clinical records (if they are a patient of the practice). These records include:

- The date a complaint was received, by who and how (verbally or in writing)
- Details of the complaint and the results of the investigation

- Copies of any communications and records of telephone conversations and meetings
- The outcome of the complaint and any action that we took as a result
- Correspondence between the patient and the practice.

Learning from complaints

We adopt a no-blame approach to complaints that we receive but recognise that all feedback provides an opportunity for us to develop and improve our service.

As soon as possible after a complaint has been dealt with, we will ensure that those involved are given individual feedback. Where our investigations identify a need to improve or review our practice systems, we will encourage general discussion at practice meetings and seek suggestions for improvement. Any agreed changes will be kept under review.

We will undertake ongoing monitoring of all complaints to identify trends and assess training requirements.

Data protection complaints

A data protection complaint is any complaint from an individual who believes their personal information has been handled in a way that breaches data protection law.

A data protection complaint is dealt with the same as any other complaint, and you will receive an acknowledgment of receipt within 30 days of receiving them.

You have a right to make a data protection complaint to the ICO.