

*helping you put
things right...*



How we work

When we receive your complaint, we will look at it carefully to decide how we can help.

We will make some initial enquiries with the dental practice involved, and we may need to see your dental records and other papers about your complaint.

Our principles

- Our service is free of charge.
- We respect your privacy.
- We are independent from the NHS and the Government.
- We will treat you fairly, whatever your background or circumstances.



What can we look at?

We can look into complaints about private dental services provided by dental practices in the UK. If you have a concern about your service or treatment - and the dental practice hasn't put things right where it could have - we may be able to help.

Usually, you should have already complained to the dental practice or dental professional involved before sending us your complaint, although we recognise this is not always possible.

Examples of the sorts of complaints we can look into include:

- receiving the wrong or poor treatment;
- mistakes in diagnosis or treatment;
- communication problems;
- when it has not been made clear how much you have to pay for treatment;
- significant mistakes over appointments;
- a delay that could have been avoided;
- faulty procedures, or failing to follow correct procedures;
- unfairness, bias or prejudice;
- giving advice which is misleading or inadequate;
- rudeness and not apologising for mistakes; and
- not putting things right when something has gone wrong.



What can't we look at?

Before you send us your complaint, you should know that there are some things we can't look at, for example, we can't look at complaints which are just about NHS treatment. We also can't look at staff matters - such as recruitment, pay and discipline.

In some cases, there may be another more appropriate organisation to deal with your complaint, for example, for some complaints, the only or best way for you to get the solution you want may be through going to court.

For complaints about the ability or behaviour of clinical staff, which raise questions as to whether or not a professional should continue to practise, we may decide to recommend that you contact the General Dental Council.

You should **call our helpline on 08456 120 540** to check that we can help and for advice on filling in your complaint form.



What can we do to put things right?

When we investigate complaints we look at the issue from both sides. We try to sort out the complaint in a way which is fair for everyone concerned.

If we do find something has gone wrong, we will ask the dental practice or person involved to:

- provide an explanation and acknowledgement of what went wrong;
- take action to put the matter right, including giving you an apology; and
- where appropriate, refund the charges you paid plus contribute towards treatment you need to put things right, up to the value of the cost of the original treatment.

We can also recommend that:

- the dental practice changes the way it works so that similar things don't happen again; and
- lessons are learnt from things that have gone wrong.

While we have no formal power to enforce our recommendations, we expect that they will almost always be followed.



How to make a complaint

Before you contact the Dental Complaints Service, you should have complained to the dental practice or practitioner involved, although we recognise this is not always possible. They should give you full details of their complaints procedure and try to sort out your complaint.

You should try to complain as soon as possible. For advice on the process and making your complaint, phone our helpline on 08456 120 540 or visit our website at www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk.



How we will deal with your complaint

We always look for the best way to solve each individual complaint and get a satisfactory result.

We will let you know we have received your complaint within two working days and explain how we will handle your complaint. We may also contact you to discuss the details of your complaint and what you would like us to do to make things right.

We may be able to achieve a satisfactory result for you using only the information you have provided, or by phoning the organisation or practitioner involved. If this is not possible, we may need to carry out an investigation and invite you and the practitioner to a complaints panel.



Complaints panels are made up of two members of the public and one dental practitioner. They will invite you and your own dental practitioner to a meeting to discuss the issues. They will then consider the situation and decide the outcome of the complaint, writing to you and your practitioner to let you know our final decision. Complaints panels are held as locally to you as possible.

Please let us know if you are not happy with our service at any stage in the process.

Dental Complaints Service

The Lansdowne Building, 2 Lansdowne Road, Croydon CR9 2ER

Phone: **08456 120 540** Fax: 020 8263 6100

E-mail: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk

Website: www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk

The Dental Complaints Service is an independent service funded by the General Dental Council. There is a separate service that deals with complaints from NHS dental patients.

