



Caring for you

It is the aim of the practice to give you the best possible care and service.

To support our patients, SpaDental Ledbury has an informal, confidential, in-house procedure to deal with any problems or concerns you might have.

If you require further details, please ask for our policy or discuss any concerns with a member of the staff.

Code of practice for patient complaints

We want all our patients to be pleased with the service they receive, so we take complaints seriously. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with it promptly and courteously. Our aim is to resolve the matter as quickly as possible and, wherever possible, to the satisfaction of the patient.

A complaint may indicate a failing on our part, which we can learn from and make improvements to our service. We will adopt a 'no blame' approach when investigating a complaint and especially where individuals are identified, with the aim of reaching a satisfactory conclusion. We will, at all times, be polite and respectful to our patients.

Practice Procedure

1. The Practice Manager, Ingrid Schoonraad, is responsible for dealing with all complaints about our service.
2. If a patient makes a complaint in person or by telephone, the member of staff receiving the complaint makes an initial record of their concerns and checks this for accuracy with the patient. The patient is given a copy of the record and the original is passed to the Practice Manager. If the Manager is unavailable, the patient is advised that the Manager will make contact to arrange a meeting in person or by telephone.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by e-mail, the complaint will immediately be passed to the Manager.
4. Complaints about clinical care or the amount charged for treatment will be referred to the dentist.
5. All complaints are acknowledged in writing as soon as possible but within 3 working days. A copy of this code of practice will be sent with the acknowledgement. If the patient has not yet discussed the matter with the Manager, they will be offered the opportunity to do so and also be asked how they would like to be kept informed of developments, by letter, e-mail, telephonically or face to face meetings. The patient will also be advised of the process we will follow in resolving the complaint and the anticipated timescale.
6. We will investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and will keep the patient informed of our progress. Investigations will normally be completed within six months (but will mostly be dealt with much quicker)

7. On completion of our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which will include, as appropriate to the complaint,
 - a. an explanation of how the complaint has been considered
 - b. the conclusions reached in respect of each specific part of the complaint
 - c. details of any necessary remedial action and
 - d. whether the practice is satisfied with any action it has taken or will be taking as a result of the complaint.
8. Proper and comprehensive records will be kept of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.
9. If a patient is not satisfied with the result, then the complaint may be referred to:
 - The Dental Complaints Service, The Lansdown Building, 2 Lansdown Road, Croyden, Greater London, CR9 2ER, Tel: 08456 120 540 or www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk
 - The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ, Tel 0845 222 4141, the dentists' registration body.

The Dental Complaints Service(DCS) provides a free and impartial service to help private dental patients and dental professionals to settle complaints about private dental care fairly and efficiently.

The DCS can deal with your complaint if you would like an apology, a refund or a contribution to the cost of further treatment. They cannot deal with claims for compensation, or with complaints about dental plans.

If your private treatment was through a dental plan, you should contact your plan provider as they will have a complaints process.

If you have safety concerns about a dentist or practice

If the problem is so serious that you think the dental professional could be a risk to other patients, you should contact the *General Dental Council (GDC)*, which regulates dental professionals in the UK. If the issue is serious enough, the GDC can stop individual dentists from practising. The GDC does not get involved in complaints that are being managed locally. It does not resolve complaints or award compensation.

If the problem is so serious that you think the care provided at the practice could be a risk to other patients, the *Care Quality Commission (CQC)* would like to know about it. CQC cannot investigate individual complaints, but its inspectors use information when they inspect services to make sure that they are meeting quality and safety standards.

Where to get help with your complaint

Citizens Advice also provides information and advice about making complaints.

If you have been unable to find an NHS dentist

NHS Choices lists local dentists that provide NHS services. If you've tried to find an NHS dentist but been unable to, contact *NHS England* or your local *Healthwatch*.