Holywell House Orthodontics Ltd - Complaints Policy

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.

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 patient's concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service which we provide is Anna Sammut, the practice Complaints Manager.

2. If a patient complains formally on the telephone or at the reception desk, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him or her to the Complaints Manager immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, then the patient will be told when they will be able to talk to her and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The receptionist will make a written record of the complaint (providing the patient with a copy) as well as passing it on to the Complaints Manager. 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.

3. If the patient complains in writing or by email it will be passed on immediately to the Complaints Manager

4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the clinician unless the patient does not want this to happen.

5. We will acknowledge the patient's formal complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within three working days. 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 email. 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.

6. We will seek to investigate the formal complaint quickly and efficiently and we will keep the patient regularly informed, as far as reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigation. Investigations will normally be completed within six months.

7. When we have completed the investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which 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/will be taking because of the complaint.

8. Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of the complaint.

9. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure, then a complaint may be referred to:

   Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
   Tel: 03450154033
   Secure email service available from Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman website

10. If a patient wishes to make a formal complaint and doesn't want to pursue the issue with us directly, they need to contact:

    Customer Contact Centre - NHS England
    PO Box 16738, Redditch B97 9PT
    Tel: 03003112233
    Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

11. You can also contact the Care Quality Commission (03000 616161), Local Government Ombudsman or the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication service. The dentists' registration body can also be contacted- General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ.

12. You can find more information about the NHS complaints process, what to expect from it, and other ways to give feedback, on the NHS Choices website.

Duty of Candour

Holywell House will be open and honest with patients when something goes wrong with their treatment or care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress. This means that we must:

- tell the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer, or family) when something has gone wrong
- apologise to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer, or family)
- offer an appropriate remedy or support to put matters right (if possible)
- explain fully to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer, or family) the short- and long-term effects of what has happened.

Holywell House will also be open and honest with their colleagues, employers, and relevant organisations, and take part in reviews and investigations when requested. We will also be open and honest with our regulators, raising concerns where appropriate. We will encourage each other to be open and honest and not stop someone from raising concerns.

If you had private dental treatment

1. The quickest and simplest way to resolve the problem is to contact the practice, who may be able to sort it out there and then. If an informal approach doesn't solve the problem, ask for a copy of the complaint's procedure. Any private dental practice must have one.

2. If you have already made a formal approach to the practice, and the problem has not been resolved, you can contact the Dental Complaints Service (DCS). The 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

1. 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.

2. 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

If you need further advice, you can contact local Healthwatch for information about how to make a complaint about NHS dental services.
Citizens Advice also provides information and advice about making complaints.

If you have been unable to find an NHS dentist or your usual NHS dentist is unable to see you

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.

Sign: L Booth
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