

# Greenhill Dental Practice

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

This Dental Practice aims to provide services to meet all our patients' needs but there may be occasions when we have not achieved this.

We take complaints very seriously indeed and try to ensure that all complaints are kept to a minimum. When a patient complains, they are dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.

Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our complaint about a service to be handled. We respond to patients' concerns in a caring, professional and confidential way.

The person responsible for dealing with complaints is our complaints officer - Mrs Pauline Bull. If your complaint is of a more serious nature, or if you would prefer then your complaint will be dealt with by your dentist.

### **Who can complain?**

Anyone who is receiving, or has received treatment or services by this dental practice.

### **What to do?**

If you think you need to raise any concerns or make a complaint about the services we provide, please speak to the Dentist or Receptionist initially who will do their best to address your concerns and resolve any problems you have.

You should make your complaint as soon as possible after the event. We can only usually investigate complaints that are either:

- Within 6 months of the event, or
- Within 6 months of your becoming aware of a cause of complaint (as long as it is not more than 12 months after the event itself)

Occasionally complaints will be investigated outside these time limits if there are good reasons why you could not complain earlier.

You can make your complaint either verbally or in writing.

### **Who can you expect?**

Your complaint will be investigated as quickly as possible. We may need to talk with other staff to find out what has happened and decide what action is required to resolve your complaint. Any information obtained about you will always remain confidential. You may be invited to meet with a member of staff from the practice to discuss your complaint.

If you have made a written complaint, we will acknowledge your complaint within **2 working days** and you will receive a full written reply within **10 working days** of

receiving your complaint. If there is a delay you will be informed how things are progressing.

We will let you know:

- What has happened
- Why it happened
- What will be done to put it right
- Whether anyone is to blame
- If so, what action will be taken
- What action will be taken within the practice to ensure it doesn't happen again.

This part of the process is called **local resolution**.

### **What if local resolution is unsuccessful?**

If you are still dissatisfied with the response given by the practice after this process you do have the right to request an independent review of your complaint. To do this write to this Dental Practice within 4 weeks of the last letter received from the surgery explaining the outcome of the investigation into your complaint.

- Private patients:

If we are unable to resolve your complaint at a local level then you will be advised to fill in a form for the 'Dental Complaints Service' which will be given to you by Mrs Pauline Bull and should be forwarded to the Dental Complaints Service, The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ.

- NHS patients:

Your request will be forwarded to the complaints convenor of the NHS Wessex Area Team. The convenor is a specially trained member of the trust board who will ask you to explain in writing, if you have not already done so, the unresolved issues.

The convenor with the help of an independent chairperson appointed by the Department of Health will consider your complaint and look at what further action by us could resolve the problem. If this seems unlikely, the convenor will decide whether there should be an independent review of your complaint by a special panel. A panel will only be set up if the convenor thinks it is likely to resolve your complaint. There is no automatic right to have your complaint reviewed.

You will be informed of the Convenors decision within 4 weeks of your request for an independent review. If it has been agreed to set up a panel, you will be told what matters will be investigated. The panel will re-examine the concerns referred to it, talking to everyone involved and obtaining specialist advice where necessary. A report will be prepared setting out the findings. A copy of the report will be sent to you.

### **What if you are still dissatisfied?**

If you are still dissatisfied after the Independent Review Panels report, you can ask the Health Service Commissioner (Ombudsman) to investigate your complaint. The Ombudsman is completely independent of both the service provider and the government. However the Ombudsman is not obliged to investigate every complaint

received and will not normally review a complaint until it has been through the Local Resolution and Independent Review Panel procedures.

### **Records**

We will keep full, accurate and confidential records of any complaint that we receive.

### **Finally**

We will do all we can to prevent problems occurring in the first instance. If things do go wrong we would like to hear from you, so that we can quickly put them right and learn from your experiences. We would also like to know what you think about our services generally and what suggestions you have for improvements.

We are also pleased to hear about and pass on your praise and comments about the staffs' efforts to help you.

### **Useful Names and Addresses:**

#### **Wessex Area Team**

Dental Complaints Officer,  
Wessex Area Team,  
Oakley Road,  
Southampton,  
Hampshire,  
SO16 4GX

(for complaints about NHS treatment)

#### **The General Dental Council**

The General Dental Council,  
37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ

(the dentists' registration body)

#### **The Health Service Commissioner (Ombudsman)**

11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Millbank Tower  
London  
SW1P 4QP  
Tel: 0171 276 2035

*Written by:* M Bradley

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## PATIENT COMPLAINTS RECORD

Patient name:.....

Address.....

.....

Contact number/s:.....

.....

Complaint received by.....on..... by letter/telephone/in person

Person handling complaint:.....

Date	Details of complaint
	Action taken
	Follow-up
	Outcome

Letters attached:

- 1.
- 2.