Heyford Smiles
DENTAL CLINIC

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Our Commitment

At Heyford Smiles we are committed to providing high-quality dental care to all our patients. We take feedback and complaints seriously and view them as an opportunity to learn, improve our services, and maintain trust and transparency with our patients.

We aim to handle all complaints courteously, efficiently, and promptly so that concerns can be resolved as quickly as possible.

The person responsible for handling all complaints in the practice is Sheetal Kharbanda.

How to Make a Complaint

We hope that most issues can be resolved quickly and informally, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned.

If your concern cannot be resolved this way, or you would prefer to make a formal complaint, you may do so verbally, in writing, or by email.

Complaints Made Verbally

If you make a complaint in person or by telephone:

- We will listen to your concerns and, where possible, attempt to resolve them immediately.
- If the Complaints Lead is not available, a team member will record your details and a brief description of your complaint.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days, and arrangements will be made for the Complaints Lead to contact you directly.

Complaints made in Writing or by Email

Written and emailed complaints will be passed immediately to the Complaints Lead, who will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days of receiving your correspondence.

Investigation and Response

- We will make every effort to resolve your complaint within 10 working days of acknowledgment.

- If the investigation is likely to take longer (for example, where clinical advice is required), we will inform you of the reason for the delay and agree on an updated timescale with you.
- If your complaint involves clinical care or treatment, the matter will usually be referred to the treating dentist, unless you specifically request otherwise.
- Once our investigation is complete, we will contact you via your preferred method (letter, email, or telephone) to share our findings and any actions taken.

Where necessary, we may seek advice from our indemnity provider, insurer, or legal adviser to ensure a fair and compliant response. In such cases, only relevant information will be shared, and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Confidentiality

All complaints are treated in the strictest confidence. Patient records will remain confidential, and only those involved in investigating or resolving your complaint will have access to the necessary information.

Learning from Complaints

We record all complaints centrally and regularly review them as part of our governance and quality improvement processes. This ensures we identify any trends, improve our services, and share learning across the team.

Time Limits for Making a Complaint

Complaints should normally be made **within 12 months** of the incident or the date the issue came to your attention.

However, we will always consider reasonable exceptions if there are valid reasons for the delay.

If You Are Not Satisfied

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure first. We believe this gives us the best chance to put things right and improve our services.

However, if you remain dissatisfied, you may contact one of the following independent bodies:

The CQC: The CQC don't get directly involved with complaints made to the practice. They do, however, encourage giving feedback to service providers.

To send feedback to the CQC please go to: https://www.cqc.org.uk/give-feedback-on-care

Telephone: 03000 616161 (Mon to Fri, 8.30am - 5.30pm Excluding Bank Holidays)

The Dental Complaints Service handles complaints made by private patients.

Telephone: 0208 253 0800 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Website: https://dcs.gdc-uk.org/

The GDC

Telephone: 0854 222 4141 or 0207 887 3800

Website: https://contactus.gdc-uk.org/Complaint/Process/13