

**Complaints Policy and Procedures
and
Code of Practice for patients who wish to raise concerns**

Complaints Policy

At Somerhill Smiles, we want to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. We take complaints very seriously indeed. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with the matter courteously and promptly so that it is resolved as quickly as possible. Our complaints policy and procedures are based on these objectives.

We display the General Dental Council's 6 core principles for ensuring that we get the most from patient feedback and complaints for the benefit of all this is displayed in reception.

At Somerhill Smiles, we have an effective complaints system in place to ensure that identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to any comments, observations, concerns or complaints occurs within a strict timetable that is clearly documented. Our Code of Practice for patients who wish to raise concerns is displayed in reception and all patients and visitors should feel confident that they will be listened to and responded to without fear of discrimination or recrimination. Our Complaints Policy and Procedures are displayed on tv screens in reception and copies can be requested at reception.

We aim to ensure that any complainant is treated sensitively and in a manner that respects their human rights and diversity.

We recognise that a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with our service, treatment or advice and that a complaint can be made by a variety of methods, including verbally, by sign language or in writing.

In situations where a patient may lack confidence to express their views, or require help to do so, they will be supported by helpful team members. All patients' complaints are fully documented and investigated and are dealt with fairly.

At Somerhill Smiles we view complaints as an opportunity to improve our service delivery and to learn lessons that will help us make changes with the intention of avoiding a repetition of any similar complaint.



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To help us learn lessons from complaints, we track and analyse all our complaints to identify trends that will help us improve our service.

Our complaints procedures are monitored and reviewed regularly and the named contact who is accountable for doing this is Marie Waller.

This policy was implemented on 06/01/2023.

This policy and relevant procedures will be reviewed annually and are due for review on 05/01/2024 or prior to this date in accordance with new guidance or legislative changes or as a result of learnings following a complaint.

Complaints Procedures

Verbal complaints

If a patient complains on the telephone, at the reception desk or anywhere else in the practice, we will listen sympathetically to their complaint and make notes about their issues or problems, provided that the patient consents to us doing this.

Having first listened to the patient's complaint, we will offer to refer the individual to Marie Waller immediately. If Marie Waller is not available at the time, the patient will be advised of when they will be able to speak to her and arrangements will be made for this to happen. If the patient has consented to their concerns or issues being written down, the team member will take brief details of the complaint and pass them on. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable time period or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for Kate Attwood to deal with it.

Our aim in handling verbal complaints is always to try to resolve the issue to the patient's satisfaction so that it does not escalate and become a written complaint.

Written complaints

- If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately to Marie Waller.
- Complaints about clinical care or associated charges will be referred to the clinician concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
- If a claim has begun, or if a complaint to one of the regulatory bodies has been made or intimated, advice and assistance should be sought from the relevant registrant's indemnity provider.
- A written response to a complaint with an accompanying copy of our code of practice and complaints policy will be sent as soon as possible, normally within three working days.
- We will investigate the complaint to enable us to give an explanation of the circumstances that led to the complaint within ten working days of receipt. If the patient does not wish to meet us, then we will attempt to talk to them on the telephone. If we are unable to investigate the complaint within ten working days, we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed.
- We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
- We make and keep proper and comprehensive records of any complaint received.

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

The Dental Complaints Service for complaints about private treatment.

Address: 37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ

Phone: 0208 253 0800

Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk

The General Dental Council

Address: 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ

Phone: 0207 167 6000

Email: standards@gdc-uk.org

The Care Quality Commission

Address: Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE14PA

Phone: 03000 616161

Email: enquires@cqc.org.uk

The Somerhill Smiles Family Dental Code of Practice for patients who wish to raise concerns

In Somerhill Smiles we place great emphasis on meeting and whenever possible, exceeding our patients' expectations. We try to ensure that all patients are pleased with their experience of our service and we take any concerns a patient may have very seriously.

If you have a concern regarding any aspect of your care, please let us know. We will do all that we can to resolve your concern to your satisfaction promptly and professionally.

Our aim is to respond to your concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

The person responsible for dealing with any concerns about the service we provide in this practice is Marie Waller.

If you raise an issue you are concerned or unhappy about on the telephone or at the reception desk, after listening to a description of the problem the person with whom you raise your concern will try to resolve the issue to your satisfaction immediately.

If the person with whom you raise your concern is unable to resolve the issue for any reason, we will contact Marie Waller immediately. Should Marie Waller be unavailable at the time, we will advise you when they will be available, and arrangements will be made for you to meet or speak with her.

If for any reason Marie Waller is going to be unable to meet you or speak with you at a time that is convenient to you, we will arrange for Kate Attwood to take responsibility for dealing with your concern or complaint.

The team member with whom you first raised your concern will take brief details from you and pass these to Marie Waller so that they can familiarise themselves with your concern prior to meeting you or speaking with you.

If you choose to write to us to express your concern rather than raising it verbally, your letter or email will be passed on to the relevant person immediately.

We will acknowledge any concerns you raise in writing within three working days and we will also include a copy of this Code of Practice with our response. We will investigate your concern and report back within ten working days of it being received. If we are unable to complete our investigations



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within ten working days for any reason, we will notify you, giving reasons for the delay and the likely period within which the investigation will be completed.

We will confirm the outcome of the investigation and any decisions made in writing.

We will keep proper and comprehensive records of any concerns or complaints received.

We will do all we can to resolve your issue, concern or complaint to your satisfaction. If, for any reason, you are not satisfied with the outcome or the procedure, we will advise you of other avenues open to you for raising concerns. These are:

The Dental Complaints Service for complaints about private treatment.

Address: 37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ

Phone: 0208 253 0800

Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk

The General Dental Council (GDC) (the clinicians' professional regulator).

Address: 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ

Phone: 0207 167 6000

Email: standards@gdc-uk.org

NHS England for complaints about NHS treatment.

Address: NHS England, PO Box 6738, Redditch, B97 9PT

Phone: 0300 311 2233

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net with: 'For the attention of the complaints team' in the subject line.

The Care Quality Commission (the regulator for all of health and social care).

Address: Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE14PA

Phone: 03000 616161

Email: enquires@cqc.org.uk

Document Change Record

For

Complaints Policy

The table below is used to register all changes to the policy:

Published Date	Document Version Number	Pages affected	Description of revision	Author
	6.1	1	To include reference to General Dental Council's 6 core principles	
	6.2	3, 5	Change two days' acknowledgement and response to three	
	6.3	4, 6	Updated address for Dental Complaints Service	