



IVY COTTAGE
DENTAL CARE

Policy Title:	Complaints Policy
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Responsibility:	All Practice Staff
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Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy details the procedure for dealing with comments, concerns, complaints and compliments received about any aspect of the care, treatment and service provided by Ivy Cottage Dental Care.

In the patient-centered environment of Ivy Cottage Dental Care, patients are encouraged to express comments, concerns, complaints and compliments about the treatment and services that they receive in the knowledge that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- They will receive a speedy and effective response.
- Things will be put right and appropriate remedy used.
- Their views will inform learning and improvements in service delivery.
- There is a system for taking action to address the full range of problems, which occur from minor difficulties to major failures in treatment and care.
- There will be no adverse effects on their care or that of their families.

Comments

A comment is defined as being an idea, suggestion or opinion on how Ivy Cottage Dental Care could improve its services.

If a patient wants to make a comment / suggestion on Ivy Cottage Dental Care's service this may be done either verbally, in writing or via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. If a patient wishes to make a comment about any element of the practice or service provided, there is a comments / suggestions box and forms which can be found in reception (**See Appendix 1 – Comments / Suggestion Form**). These comments / suggestions are collated together on a regular basis and if there are any issues to address, these will be discussed at the next available practice meeting and fed back to the patients wherever necessary through our website or our quarterly practice newsletter.

Patients may also make a comment/review via our NHS Choices website which can be found using the www.nhs.uk site and entering the practices postcode. The NHS Choices website along with the Friends and Family Test (FFT) introduced for 2015/16 is promoted by the practice via a postcard which is routinely given out to patients if they express an interest. The FFT is also promoted on the practices website via www.ivycottagedentalcare.co.uk where patients can answer the one question and a free text question on whether they would recommend our practice to their friends and family.

Complaints

We want all our patients to be pleased with the service that they receive, so we take complaints very seriously. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with it straight away and with courtesy. Our aim is to resolve the matter as quickly as possible following the agreed procedure below 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.

In order to operate effectively, our system is:

- Easily accessible for patients, service users or their carers.
- Inclusive, treating all service users with dignity and respect.
- Aiming to seek to resolve issues efficiently, effectively and as close to the source as possible.
- An open process (subject to issues of confidentiality), which is impartial, independent and objective. Promoting a culture of openness is considered a prerequisite to improving quality and patient care.
- Part of an integrated process for reporting and handling complaints, ensuring that lessons learned from complaints are disseminated throughout.

Complaints Procedure

1. The Practice's Lead Complaints Person – Kiarn Hanji is responsible for dealing with all complaints about our service. There is also a Deputy Complaints Person who will also be able to help in the Lead's absence – Mrs Wendy Langdale.
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 (**See Appendix 2 – Complaints Record Form**) and (**Appendix 2a – Complaints Log**). The patient is given a copy of the record and the original is passed to the Practice's Lead Complaints Person – Kiran Hanji. If the Lead Complaints Person is available, the patient is asked whether they would like to see them immediately. Otherwise the patient is advised when the Lead Complaints Person will make contact to arrange a meeting in person or by telephone. These forms may also be issued to a patient wishing take away a complaints form, simply request them complete Page 1 'only' and return to the practice as soon as possible.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by email, the complaint will be passed immediately to the Practice's Lead Complaints Person – Kiran Hanji or the Deputy Complaints Person who will also be able to help in the Lead's absence – Mrs Wendy Langdale.
4. Complaints about clinical care or the amount charged for treatment will be referred to the dentist concerned, unless the patient requests otherwise.
5. All complaints are acknowledged in writing as soon as possible but within three working days (**See Appendix 3a – Acknowledgement of Complaint Letter Template**). A copy of the code of practice which is in line with this policy (**See Appendix 4 – Code of Practice for Complaints**) will be sent with the acknowledgement. If the patient has not yet discussed the matter with the Lead Complaints Person, 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, email, telephone 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, as far as reasonably practicable, will keep the patient informed of our progress. Investigations will normally be completed within six months.
7. On completion of our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report letter **(See Appendix 3b & 3c – Complaints Report Letter Templates)**, 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 or will be taking as a result of the complaint.
 - Proper and comprehensive records will be kept of any complaint received as well as any action taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.
8. Upon request, a summary of the practices complaints will be submitted to the NHS England Local Area Team **(See Appendix 5 – Annual Audit of Complaints)**.
9. If a patient is not satisfied with the result, the complaint may be referred to:

For complaints about private treatment, to:	For complaints about NHS treatment, to:
The Dental Complaints Service: Stephenson House 2 Cherry Orchard Road Croydon CR0 6BA Telephone: 020 8253 0800 Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk Website: www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk	NHS England P O Box 16738 Redditch B97 9PT Telephone: 0300 311 2233 Email: England.contactus@nhs.net Website: www.nhs.uk
The General Dental Council: 37 Wimpole Street London W1M 8DQ Telephone: 020 7167 6000	
Other contact numbers:	
The Care Quality Commission: National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne Ne1 4PA Telephone: 03000 616161 Email: enquiries@cqc.org Website: www.cqc.org.uk	The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: Millbank Tower Millbank London SW1P 4QP Customer Helpline: 0345 015 4033

Compliments

A compliment is defined as being feedback which informs Ivy Cottage Dental Care that it has provided a service well.

If an individual wants to offer a compliment about Ivy Cottage Dental Care or service this may be done either verbally or in writing.

Where a patient pays a compliment about the service they have received or regarding the practice in general, a record of this can be made on the compliments record log, i.e. via a

telephone call, passing comment, thank you cards & gifts for the team (**See Appendix 6 – Compliments Record Log**), and where a patient raises with a member of staff a wish to have recorded their thanks, praise or a complement then the member of staff should record this within the compliments record log and invite the patient to sign the contents as a true and accurate record of what they want recorded.

When a compliment is received, it will be recorded by a member of staff on the compliments record log to ensure it is tracked and responded to (if appropriate) within the specified timescales – in-line with the complaints procedure timescales. (**See Appendix 6 – Compliments Record Log**).

Monitoring

On a yearly basis the Comments, Complaints & Compliments Lead / Deputy will collate all the comments, complaints and compliments together as part of the yearly audit process, this will then be discussed at the next available practice meeting to ensure that improvements are made where necessary.

References

[NHS England's Complaints Process](#)