

WOLLASTON DENTAL PRACTICE

Private Patient Complaints Policy & Procedure

Private Dental Care | Patient-Centred | Transparent | Continuously Improving

1. Introduction and Purpose

Wollaston Dental Practice is a private dental practice dedicated to providing outstanding patient care. We take all concerns and complaints seriously and are committed to resolving them quickly, fairly, and respectfully.

This policy applies exclusively to patients receiving private dental treatment at Wollaston Dental Practice. It sets out how you can raise a concern or complaint, what you can expect from us, and the options available to you if you remain dissatisfied.

2. Our Commitment to You

We are committed to ensuring that:

- Every complaint is taken seriously, acknowledged promptly, and handled with sensitivity
- You are kept informed at every stage of the process
- Your complaint is investigated thoroughly, honestly, and without bias
- We take appropriate steps to resolve the issue and prevent recurrence
- You will never be treated less favourably as a result of raising a concern
- Your rights as a private patient are fully respected throughout

3. How to Make a Complaint

3.1 Who Can Complain

A complaint may be made by:

- Any current or former private patient of Wollaston Dental Practice
- A person authorised to act on a patient's behalf (e.g. a parent, guardian, carer, or legal representative)
- A person acting on behalf of a deceased patient

3.2 How to Reach Us

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- In person: Ask to speak with the Practice Manager at reception
- By telephone: Call us and ask to speak with the Practice Manager
- In writing: Address a letter to the Practice Manager at our practice address
- By email: Write to our dedicated complaints email address

Any member of our team will be happy to help you if you are unsure how to proceed. You are welcome to bring a friend, family member, or independent advocate to support you at any stage.

3.3 Timeframe for Raising a Complaint

Complaints should be raised within 12 months of the treatment or incident in question, or within 12 months of becoming aware that you had cause to complain. We may use our discretion to accept complaints outside this period where there is good reason for the delay.

4. Our Complaints Process

Step 1 — Acknowledgement (within 3 working days)

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 3 working days of receiving it. Our acknowledgement will confirm the name of the person handling your complaint, how we plan to investigate it, and the expected timeframe for our response.

Step 2 — Investigation

Your complaint will be investigated impartially. This may involve reviewing your clinical records, speaking with the treating clinician and relevant staff, and considering any other relevant documentation or evidence. Where appropriate, we may seek a second clinical opinion.

Step 3 — Full Written Response (within 10 working days)

We aim to provide a full written response within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. If the matter is complex, we will write to you to explain the delay and give a revised timeframe. Our response will include:

- How your complaint was investigated
- Our findings and conclusions
- An apology where appropriate
- Any action taken or planned to prevent recurrence
- Information about escalation options if you remain dissatisfied

Step 4 — Resolution Meeting (if appropriate)

If you would prefer to discuss your complaint in person, we are happy to arrange a meeting with the Practice Manager and, where relevant, the treating clinician. We find that many issues can be resolved most effectively through open and honest dialogue.

5. If You Remain Dissatisfied

If you are not satisfied with our response to your complaint, the following external bodies are available to private dental patients. You should generally approach them within 12 months of our final written response.

5.1 Dental Complaints Service

The Dental Complaints Service (DCS) is a free service funded by the General Dental Council (GDC) that helps private patients and dental professionals resolve complaints about private dental treatment.

- Website: dentalcomplaints.org.uk
- Telephone: 020 8253 0800
- Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

5.2 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

As a private dental practice, we are committed to engaging with Alternative Dispute Resolution where appropriate. If your complaint cannot be resolved through our internal process or via the Dental Complaints Service, independent ADR schemes may be available. We will provide relevant details upon request

6. Financial Disputes

If your complaint relates to a financial matter — such as a refund, remedial treatment, or the cost of corrective care — we will address this as part of our complaints process. Where appropriate, we may offer:

- A refund of fees paid for the treatment in question
- Remedial treatment at no additional charge
- Contribution towards the cost of corrective treatment elsewhere

Any financial offer made will be without admission of liability unless otherwise stated in writing.

7. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled in strict confidence and in accordance with our Privacy Policy and the UK GDPR. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in investigating or resolving your complaint. Records of complaints are stored securely and retained in line with our document retention policy.

8. Learning from Complaints

We view complaints as an essential part of our commitment to continuous improvement. All complaints are reviewed by the Practice Manager and discussed at regular governance and clinical meetings. Where complaints highlight trends or recurring issues, we take prompt action to improve our policies, procedures, training, or equipment. An anonymised summary of complaints is reviewed annually.

9. Responsibilities

The Practice Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, coordinating investigations, maintaining a complaints log, and reporting on outcomes. All staff are responsible for treating patients courteously, directing complaints appropriately, and cooperating fully with any investigation.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to regulatory guidance, changes in legislation, or significant complaints. All staff will be notified of any material updates.