



## **Patient Complaints Policy**

At Loughridge Dental Care, 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 procedure is based on these objectives.

Loughridge Dental Care has an effective complaints system in place to ensure that identifying, receiving, recording, handling and response to any comments, observations or complaints occurs within a strict timetable which is clearly documented. The complaints system is clearly displayed and all patients and visitors are confident that they will be listened and responded to without fear of discrimination.

Any complainant can be assured that they will be treated in a manner respecting their human rights and diversity; in a sensitive manner and that the complaint can be made by a variety of methods either verbally, by sign language or in writing.

Where they lack confidence or require help they will be supported by helpful staff members. Their complaint will be fully documented and fairly dealt with and following investigation, lessons learned can lead to changes being made to avoid future complaints.

These clear complaint procedures are monitored and reviewed and the named contact who is accountable for doing this is Chris Loughridge and the next policy review date is: 24th July 2026



## Patient Complaints Procedures

If a patient complains on the telephone or at the reception desk, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him/her to Chris Loughridge immediately. If **Chris Loughridge** is not available at the time, then the patient will be told when they will be able to talk to the dentist and arrangements will be made for this to happen. The member of staff will take brief details of the complaint and pass them on. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.

- If the patient complains in writing, the letter will be passed on immediately to Christopher Loughridge
- Complaints about clinical care or associated charges will be referred to the clinician concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
- A written response to a complaint, with accompanying copy of our code of practice, will be sent as soon as possible, normally within three working days. We will seek to investigate the complaint within ten working days of receipt to give an explanation of the circumstances which led to the complaint. 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.
- Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received.

### **Code of Practice for Patients Who Wish to Raise Concerns**

In this practice we place great emphasis on meeting and whenever possible, exceeding our patient's 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 both promptly and professionally.

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

(a) The person responsible for dealing with any concerns about the service we provide in this practice, is the Practice Service Coordinator, who is: Chris Loughridge

(b) If a patient raises an issue they are unhappy about on the telephone or at the reception desk, after listening to a description of the problem, we will immediately contact the Practice Service Coordinator. Should the designated person or other responsible person not be available at the time, the patient will be informed when they will be available and arrangements will be made for the two to meet or speak. The member of staff will take brief details of the concern and pass them to the Practice Service Coordinator.

(c) If a patient writes to express their concern, the letter will be passed on to the relevant person immediately.

(d) We will acknowledge any concerns raised in writing within two days. If a concern has been raised in writing, the written acknowledgement will also include a copy of this Code of Practice, again, normally within two working days. We will investigate the concern and report back within ten working days of it being received. If we are unable to complete our investigations within ten working days for any reason, we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and the likely period within which the investigation will be completed.

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

(f) Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any concerns or complaints received.

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

You can be supported throughout the complaints process by the **Patient and Client Council (PCC)**.

Patient Client Council, 2nd Floor, Centre House, 79 Chichester St, Belfast BT1 4JE

Telephone: 0800 917 0222

Email: [Complaints.pcc@hscni.net](mailto:Complaints.pcc@hscni.net)

## Pathway for health service patients

- Health and Social Care Board, Complaints Office, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS, Tel: 02895 363893 Email: [complaints.hscb@hscni.net](mailto:complaints.hscb@hscni.net)  
Website: [hscboard.hscni.net/contacts/complaints-team/](http://hscboard.hscni.net/contacts/complaints-team/)

- Northern Ireland Ombudsman, NIPSO, Progressive House, 33 – 37 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN, Tel: 02890 233821 Email: [nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso.org.uk)  
Website: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk) (Include information here that normally you would have exhausted the service internal procedure prior to seeking input from the NIPSO)

- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)

*The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services. RQIA does not investigate complaints however, through their regulatory activities, they have an important role in ensuring all regulated services have an effective complaints procedure, take complaints seriously and investigate complaints thoroughly, in line with DoH complaints guidelines.*

- The Dental Complaints Service, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ, Tel: 0845 222 4141 / 020 8253 0800

Email: [contactus.gdc-uk.org](mailto:contactus.gdc-uk.org)

## Pathway for private patients

- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) 7th Floor, Victoria House, 15 – 24 Gloucester Street, Belfast, BT1 4LS

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- The Dental Complaints Service, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ, Tel: 0845 222 4141 / 020 8253 0800

Email: [contactus.gdc-uk.org](mailto:contactus.gdc-uk.org)

- The Dental Complaints Service for complaints about private treatment  
Phone: 08456 120 540 Email: [info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk](mailto:info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk)
- The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ (the dentists' registration body) Phone: 0845 222 4141 (UK local rate) Email: [standards@gdc-uk.org](mailto:standards@gdc-uk.org)
- The Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478, Belfast, BT1 6BR.  
Phone: Freephone 0800 343 424 Switchboard 028 9023 3821 Email: [ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016  
**NIPSO – Progressive house, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6HN**  
**028 902 3821 - [nipso@nipso.org.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.org.uk) – [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)**