



Complaints

Policy

Gowerton Dental Practice is committed to providing a high quality, patient-focused service. Complaints and comments from patients are taken very seriously, as we want every patient to feel satisfied with the services we provide. The practice has a procedure for dealing with complaints, to ensure that every complaint is handled fairly and transparently. We will use information received to learn and improve. When handling complaints, the practice is committed to being fair to staff while seeking to resolve complaints promptly.

Procedure

1. Complaints will be accepted from:
 - a. a patient
 - b. a person acting on behalf of a patient with a patient's consent
 - c. a person acting on behalf of a patient where consent is not required

2. Complaints may be made:
 - a. verbally in person
 - b. verbally over the phone
 - c. by e-mail
 - d. by letter

3. Complaints should be made within 12 months of the event that gave rise to the complaint, or within 12 months of the complainant becoming aware of it. Where a person could not reasonably have complained within the timescale, the practice may still consider the complaint.

4. When a person raises a concern or complaint in the first instance, members of the team should:
 - a. respond positively to the person.
 - b. resolve the problem there and then if possible.
 - c. explain that the practice has a procedure for handling complaints.
 - d. ask the person if they wish to make a complaint using the practice procedure.

5. If the person does want to use the complaints procedure the team member should:
 - a. explain the procedure.
 - b. take note of the details of the complaint.
 - c. check the person is happy to make the complaint verbally or whether they wish to put it in writing.
 - d. pass the details of the complaint to the complaints manager.

6. Ellie Parker is the nominated responsible person and Susan Richards is the complaints manager for the practice. All complaints should be directed to Sue in the first instance.

7. The complaints manager will acknowledge a complaint within three working days of receipt and at the same time will offer to discuss with the patient the handling of the complaint and the probable timescale for the investigation and response.

8. When a person complains on behalf of a patient, before proceeding to investigate the complaint, the complaints manager will:
 - a. verify the person's identity
 - b. verify that the person has the patient's written consent.

9. The complaints manager and/or responsible person will investigate the complaint. He or she may:

- a. speak with the staff involved.
- b. review any systems or processes involved.
- c. advise the clinician and/or provider on the appropriate response to the complaint.
- d. advise the clinician and/or provider on any changes required to working practices or systems.
- e. discuss the response with involved staff before contacting the complainant.

10. Following the agreement of the appropriate response, the complaints manager or responsible person will contact the complainant to respond. Where the responsible person deems it appropriate, another member of the team will respond to the complainant directly.

11. If the complainant is not happy with the response, the complaints manager will advise them how to take their complaint to the next stage.

12. The practice will keep record of all complaints, responses and actions taken as a result of complaints.

13. Letters to the complainant will always be marked as 'Private and confidential' or 'Personal' and will always be sent by 1st class mail.