

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



1. Policy brief & purpose

Dentaid aims to provide high quality charitable services which meet your needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we do not get it right, please let us know.

In order to ensure our services, remain at a high and improving standard, Dentaid has an effective complaints system in place to ensure that identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding 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 to 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.

1.1 Scope

The policy applies to all Dentaid Staff, Volunteers, Patients, Trustees and Visitors.

1.2 Related Policies

Confidentiality Policy

Data Protection Policy

Information Governance Policy

Policy/Procedure Title: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number: 1 of 7
Owner: UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date: 24/08/2023
Approved by: Management Team	Review Date: 24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



2. Procedure

These clear complaint procedures are monitored and reviewed and the named contact who is accountable for doing this is the UK Clinics Manager.

If a patient complains on the telephone or in person, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him/her to UK Clinics Manager immediately.

If the UK Clinics Manager is unavailable, we will take brief details about the complaint and will arrange for a meeting, or phone call when it is suitable for you. We will keep comprehensive and confidential records of your complaint, which will be stored securely and only be accessible by those who need to know about your complaint. If the complaint investigation takes longer than anticipated, the UK Clinics Manager will contact you at least every ten working days to keep you informed of the reason for any delays, the progress of the investigation and the proposed date it will be completed.

1. If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately to UK Clinics Manager.
2. Complaints about clinical care will be referred to the clinician concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
3. A written acknowledgment of a complaint with accompanying copy of our complaints policy will be sent as soon as possible, **normally within three working days.**
4. We will seek to investigate the complaint within 1 month of receipt of the complaint 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 or an email depending on the patient's preference. If we are unable to investigate the complaint within a reasonable time we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed.

Policy/Procedure Title: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number: 2 of 7
Owner: UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date: 24/08/2023
Approved by: Management Team	Review Date: 24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



5. We will confirm the outcome about the complaint in writing immediately after completing our investigation.
6. We will complete proper and comprehensive records of any complaint received in a complaint's tracker along with the outcome and any measures taken to prevent recurrence.
7. If you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to the Chief Executive. (If your complaint is about the Chief Executive, please write to the Chair of Trustees.)

We value how you feel and will treat a complaint in confidence. A complaint will not prejudice any other dealings with Dentaid or planned volunteer trips. The complainant will not be subject to victimization and harassment.

GDC Standards for the Dental Team

www.gdc-uk.org

2.1 Make sure that there is an effective complaints procedure readily available for patients to use and follow that procedure at all times.

2.1.1 It is part of your responsibility as a dental professional to deal with complaints properly and professionally. You must: ensure that there is an effective written complaints procedure where you work; follow the complaints procedure at all times; respond to complaints within the time limits set out in the procedure; and provide a constructive response to the complaint.

2.1.2 You should make sure that everyone (dental professionals, other staff and patients) knows about the complaints procedure and understands how it works. If you are an employer, or you manage a team, you must ensure that all staff are trained in handling complaints.

2.1.3 If you work for a practice that provides NHS (or equivalent health service) treatment, or if you work in a hospital, you should follow the procedure set down by that organisation.

Policy/Procedure Title: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number: 3 of 7
Owner: UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date: 24/08/2023
Approved by: Management Team	Review Date: 24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



2.1.4 If you work in private practice, including private practice owned by a dental body corporate, you should make sure that it has a procedure which sets similar standards and time limits to the NHS (or equivalent health service) procedure.

2.1.5 You should make sure that your complaints procedure:

is displayed where patients can see it – patients should not have to ask for a copy; is clearly written in plain language and is available in other formats if needed; is easy for patients to understand and follow; provides information on other independent organisations that patients can contact to raise concerns; allows you to deal with complaints promptly and efficiently; allows you to investigate complaints in a full and fair way; explains the possible outcomes; allows information that can be used to improve services to pass back to your practice management or equivalent; and respects patients’ confidentiality.

2.1.6 Complaints can be an opportunity to improve your service. You should analyse any complaints that you receive to help you improve the service you offer, and share lessons learnt from complaints with all team members.

2.1.7 You should keep a written record of all complaints together with your responses. This record should be separate from your patient records so that patients are not discouraged from making a complaint. You should use your record of complaints to monitor your performance in handling complaints and identify any areas that need to be improved.

2.2 Respect a patient’s right to complain.

2.2.1 You should not react defensively to complaints. You should listen carefully to patients who complain and involve them fully in the complaints process. You should find out what outcome patients want from their complaint.

2.3 Give patients who complain a prompt and constructive response.

2.3.1 You should give the patient a copy of the complaints procedure when you acknowledge their complaint so that they understand the stages involved and the timescales.

2.3.2 You should deal with complaints in a calm and constructive way and in line with the complaints procedure.

Policy/Procedure Title: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number: 4 of 7
Owner: UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date: 24/08/2023
Approved by: Management Team	Review Date: 24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



2.3.3 You should aim to resolve complaints as efficiently, effectively and politely as possible.

2.3.4 You must respond to complaints within the time limits set out in your complaints procedure.

2.3.5 If you need more time to investigate a complaint, you should tell the patient when you will respond.

2.3.6 If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that the complaint cannot be resolved within the usual timescale, you should give the patient regular updates (at least every 10 days) on progress.

2.3.7 You should try to deal with all the points raised in the complaint and, where possible, offer a solution for each one.

2.3.8 You should offer an apology and a practical solution where appropriate.

2.3.9 If a complaint is justified, you should offer a fair solution. This may include offering to put things right at your own expense if you have made a mistake.

2.3.10 You should respond to the patient in writing, setting out your findings and any practical solutions you are prepared to offer. Make sure that the letter is clear, deals with the patient's concerns and is easy for them to understand.

2.3.11 If the patient is not satisfied despite your best efforts to resolve their complaint, you should tell them about other avenues that are open to them, such as the relevant Ombudsman for health service complaints or the Dental Complaints Service for complaints about private dental treatment.

3. Complaints should be addressed to

Dentaid
116 Commercial Road
Totton
Southampton
SO40 3AD

Complaining to Dental Complaints Service

Policy/Procedure Title:	Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number:	5 of 7
Owner:	UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date:	24/08/2023
Approved by:	Management Team	Review Date:	24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



We hope that, if you have a problem, you will make use of our complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. However, this does not affect your right to complain to an independent body, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us or you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

For further advice, you should contact:

Dental Complaints Service

**37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Telephone: 020 8253 0800**

(Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)

Or

General Dental Council

37 Wimpole Street

London

W1G 8DQ

Email: www.gdc-uk.org

Parliamentary And Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower, London SW1P 4QP

Policy/Procedure Title:	Complaints Policy and Procedure v2	Page Number:	5 of 7
Owner:	UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date:	24/08/2023
Approved by:	Management Team	Review Date:	24/08/2024

Dentaid: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2



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ombudsman.org.uk

Policy/Procedure Title: Complaints Policy and Procedure V2	Page Number: 7 of 7
Owner: UK Project & Compliance Officer	Approval Date: 24/08/2023
Approved by: Management Team	Review Date: 24/08/2024