Practice Policy for Handling Patient Complaints

In this practice, we take complaints very seriously indeed and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. When patients complain, they are dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. This procedure is based on these objectives:

Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our complaint about a service to be handled. We learn from every mistake that we make and we respond to customers' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service which we provide is M. Newland.
2. If a patient complains on the telephone or at the reception desk, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer him or her to M. Newland immediately. If M. Newland 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.
3. If the patient complains in writing the letter will be passed on immediately to M. Newland.
4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the dentist concerned unless the patient does not want this to happen.
5. We will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within two working days. We will offer to discuss the complaint at a time agreed with the patient asking how the patient would like to be kept informed of developments, e.g. by telephone. We will inform the patient about how the complaint will be handled and the likely time that the investigation will take to be completed. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the process.
6. We will seek to investigate the complaint within ten working days and we will keep the patient regularly informed, as far as is reasonably practicable, as to the progress of the investigations. If we are unable to investigate the complaint within ten working days we will notify the patient, giving reasons for the delay. Investigations will normally be completed in 4 weeks.

7. When we have completed our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report. The report 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 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.
8. Proper and comprehensive records are kept of any complaint received as well as any actions taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.
9. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be referred to:

   Cwm Taf Health Board
   Ynysmeurig House
   Navigation Park
   Abercynon
   Rhondda Cynon Taff
   CF45 4SN
   Telephone 01443 744800

   Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
   1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
   Pencoed
   CF35 5LJ
   Telephone 0300 790 0203
   or www.ombudsmanwales.org.uk for complaints about NHS treatment

   The Dental Complaints Service
   Stephenson House
   2 Cherry Orchard Road Croydon
   Greater London
   CR0 6BA
   Telephone 020 8253 0800
   or www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk for complaints about private treatment

The General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1M 8DQ
the dentists' regulatory body for complaints against dental misconduct
Telephone 0207 167 6000

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
Welsh Government
Rhydycar Business Park
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ
Telephone 0300 062 8163
For complaints about private treatment.