

APOLLONIA DENTAL CARE

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

A procedure is just a set of general instructions to the practice on how staff should communicate with a patient who complains. A sound procedure will deal with complaints in the following way:

- one person in the practice is given responsibility for handling complaints
- a complaint should be responded to by the way of a telephone call and acknowledged in writing (normally within two or three working days)
- the complainant should be told how the complaint will be dealt with and the anticipated timetable
- the substance of the complaint must be investigated thoroughly
- the matter may need to be resolved by way of a meeting or telephone call with the complainant. Any meeting should be in private and the outcome of such a meeting/call should be confirmed in writing. The response should not be bland or patronising
- during the conversation the views of both dentist/staff member and complainant need to be heard
- if the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, they should be advised of the bodies to which a formal complaint can be made, such as the PCO, the Healthcare Commission or the Dental Complaints Service for private patients
- records should be kept of all complaints, investigations and responses
- under normal circumstances the whole procedure should be completed within ten working days. If there is a delay, for example where you are consulting a defence body or obtaining other information, the patient should be advised of this and of the anticipated revised times
- communications to complainants should be sent by first class post and marked "private and confidential" or "personal".