



# Making a complaint about private dental care



Funded by the General Dental Council

**General  
Dental  
Council**

protecting patients,  
regulating the dental team

[www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk)

‘Everybody  
was very helpful.  
They explained  
everything clearly.  
It was very fair.’

**Cecilia Andrews, patient**


## Who we are

We are a team of trained advisors who aim to help private dental patients and dental professionals settle complaints about private dental care. We provide a free, impartial service and are funded by the General Dental Council, the organisation that regulates dental professionals in the UK.

We aim to settle complaints about private dental care fairly, efficiently and quickly. We work with patients and dental professionals to reach a solution that both sides are happy with, whether that's remedial treatment (treatment to put right previous dental work), a refund, or referral to another professional. We cannot award or recommend compensation.

## Our principles

- Our service is free.
- We are independent of the NHS and the Government.
- We will treat you fairly, whatever your background or circumstances.
- We do not take sides.



**We aim to settle complaints about private dental care fairly, efficiently and quickly.**

# ‘We try to be imaginative and flexible in helping to resolve a complaint.’

**Emran Miah, complaints officer**

## **What we can look at**

We can look into complaints about private dental services provided by dental professionals in the UK. If you have a complaint about the service or treatment you have received, but have been unable to sort it out with the professional, we may be able to help.

Examples of the sorts of complaint we can look into include:

- receiving the wrong treatment or poor treatment;
- poor communication between you and the dental professional;
- the professional not making clear how much you have to pay for treatment;
- a delay that could have been avoided;
- faulty procedures, or the dental professional failing to follow correct procedures;
- the professional being unfair or biased;
- being given misleading or inadequate advice;
- the dental professional being rude or not apologising for mistakes; and
- the dental professional not putting things right when something has gone wrong.


## What we can't look into

There are some complaints that we can't deal with. For example, we can't look into complaints which are just about NHS treatment, or complaints that you made before February 2006. Also, we can't look into staff matters such as recruitment, pay and discipline.

In some cases, there may be a more appropriate organisation to deal with your complaint. If you want compensation, taking the matter to court may be your only option, or your best option.

If you have a complaint about NHS dental care you should contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Team (PALS) at your local primary care trust or your local health board.

If you have a complaint about the ability or behaviour of a dental professional that raises questions as to whether or not they should continue to practise, we recommend that you contact the General Dental Council.



Visit our website  
to find out more  
about organisations  
that can help where  
we can't.

# ‘Working with the Dental Complaints Service meant that issues were resolved quickly and fairly for all.’

**Robert De Villiers, dentist**

## How to make a complaint

You should complain to the dental professional involved before contacting us.

They should give you full details of their complaints procedure and try to sort out your complaint. You should try to raise any concerns as soon as possible.

For advice on how to complain to us, and the process involved in this, phone our **helpline** on **08456 120 540** or visit our website at **[www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk)**.

## How we deal with your complaint

We always look for the best way to solve each individual complaint in order to achieve a result that you are happy with.

We will contact you within two working days of receiving your complaint to discuss the details, ask what you would like us to do to make things right and explain how we will handle things.

We may be able to solve the problem using only the information you have provided, or by phoning the professional involved. If this is not possible, we may need to invite you and the dental professional to a complaints panel meeting. Complaints panels are held at venues as near to you both as possible.

## What we can do to put things right

We look at the matter from both sides. We try to sort out the complaint in a way which is fair to everyone involved.

As a patient, you may want our help to ask the dental professional involved to:

- acknowledge that something has gone wrong, and explain what went wrong and why;
- take action to put the matter right, including giving you an apology; and
- where appropriate, refund the charges you paid for their service and contribute towards treatment you need to put things right (up to the cost of the original treatment).

We can also recommend that the dental professional changes the way they work so that similar things don't happen again.

We have no formal power to enforce our recommendations, but we expect that they will almost always be followed.



For advice on  
how to complain  
to us phone our  
helpline on  
08456 120 540

## Helping you put things right

If you have a complaint about the private dental care you've received in the UK, get in touch.

Phone: 08456 120 540.

Calls to this number cost the same as a local call.

Email: [info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk](mailto:info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk)

Website: [www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk)

Dental Complaints Service

The Lansdowne Building

2 Lansdowne Road

Croydon CR9 2ER

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities in all our work.

We want to make sure that everyone can access our products and services.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in a different format (for example, in large print or audio), please contact us.

