



### **Our Commitments**

Our clinic is committed to continuously improve our services through ongoing learning and changes made to meet our patient's needs. We ensure that every complaint received is acknowledged and investigated fully to ensure appropriate response to address any failures identified by the complaint or investigation.

We aim to ensure that all members of our team, including management, are trained in handling patient complaints from the start of their employment, so everyone is familiar with this policy and know how to respond when complaint is received.

We have established effective process in place for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints as set out below which is in line with Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints | Care Quality Commission

### **Complaints Policy**

Information and guidance about how to complain is provided in our Complaints Policy which is available and accessible to patients on our website and in the clinic. Complaints Policy identifies who is our Complaints Manager and includes information with relevant contacts of authorities where patient can seek further investigation and support if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint and how we handled this.

When patient complaint is escalated further to other authoritative bodies, we will ensure a full cooperation with any independent review or process.

### **Complaints Manager**

Our dedicated Complaints Manager Shanelle Bartenbach involved in the assessment and investigation of complaints is competent for the appointed role and understands our complaints process thoroughly. Relevant training in preventing and managing complaints effectively has been provided.

### **Patient Feedback, Concerns and Suggestions**

Our dedicated team ask patients about their experience at our clinic and encourage open and honest feedback routinely. If patient wants to complain, whether in writing or verbally, we ensure they know how to do this and have access to all the information they require. People's care and treatment will not be affected if they make a complaint, or if somebody else complains on their behalf.

If complaint is verbal, the team will log it and pass it on to management for an investigation. Manager maintains 'Patient Feedback Register' up to date which shows what our patients say, what we did in response and how we improved our services in line with the feedback received.

All complaints, whether written or verbal, are acknowledged promptly and passed on to management who then logs it all on 'Complaints Register' and initiates prompt investigation.

We understand that sometimes patients do not want to identify themselves but are keen to suggest improvements or share their feedback. With this in mind, we have set up 'Suggestion Box' in our waiting area which allows patients to leave open and honest feedback and remain anonymous.

### **Learning when things go wrong**

All feedback and complaints received is welcomed as it shows where improvements are needed. Feedback, concerns and complaints are logged, analysed and shared with the team to promote learning and make ongoing improvements to services.

Patient feedback and complaints is a regular discussion point at our monthly team meetings. This ensures effective communications within the team and promotes no-blame culture which allows us to become more efficient and improve the quality of care.

### **Investigation, Analysis and Reporting**

All complaints are investigated and analysed to understand what has gone wrong, what might have caused the complaint and how such complaint can be prevented in the future.

Patients who complained and those about whom complaints are made, will be kept informed of the status of the investigation and complaint as well as any changes made as a result.

'Complaints Register' is maintained and kept up to date by management. It shows the nature and category of complaint, complaint summary, action taken, changes made to prevent this in the future and what learning has taken place as a result. Where changes are not possible to make, reasons are recorded. It also allows us to audit complaints we receive over time and identify patterns, trends and areas of risk we need to address.

Our professional and dedicated team are aware of and act in accordance with Regulation 20: Duty of Candour in respect of complaints about care and treatment that have resulted in a notifiable safety incident. Management is aware of 'Notifiable Incidents' which require reporting to regulatory bodies as outlined in our 'Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy'.

We understand our professional commitments and responsibilities to escalate certain complaints or concerns further to relevant professional regulators or local authority safeguarding teams as necessary.

### **Consent and confidentiality**

Consent and Confidentiality will never be compromised during the complaints process unless there are professional or statutory obligations that make this necessary, such as safeguarding. All patient complaints information and folder is kept secure, locked and only accessible to management.

### **Complaints Policy – Patient Copy**

It is our aim to always have satisfied patients, to meet your expectations of care and service and to resolve any complaint as efficiently, effectively, and politely as possible. We take complaints very seriously; we investigate them promptly and fairly and take great care to protect your confidentiality.

We will never discriminate against patients who have made a complaint and we will be happy to listen to you and answer any questions you may have for us about your care and treatment. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of your care or our service, let us know so we can address your concerns promptly and find a solution as soon as possible. You can call us and speak to our Complaints Manager Shanelle Bartenbach or write to us instead. Your written complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days and we will aim to provide a full response in writing, as soon as investigation is complete. We may need to speak to our clinicians if this involves them too.

If the Complaints Manager is unavailable, we will take details about the complaint and will pass it on to principal dentist as soon as they become available. We will keep comprehensive and confidential records of your complaint, which will be stored securely and accessible only to those who need to know about it.

You can send your complaint to 15 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1DB or call us on 0118 9573 668 or email on [info@friardental.com](mailto:info@friardental.com) marked F.A.O Shanelle Bartenbach.

If the complaint investigation takes longer than anticipated our Complaints Manager will contact you at least every 10 working days to keep you informed of the reason for the delay, the progress of the investigation and the proposed date it will be completed.

When the investigation has been completed, you will be informed of the outcome in writing. If you would like, we will invite you to a meeting to discuss the results and any practical solutions that we can offer to you.

We analyse patient complaints and as a team we learn from them so we make the changes to improve our services. That is why we always welcome your feedback, comments, suggestions, even complaints.

If you are dissatisfied with our response to a complaint, you can take it further and contact other organisations who will listen to you. Please see the contacts below.

**General Dental Council (GDC)** by calling 020 8253 0800 or visiting <https://dcs.gdc-uk.org/>

**Care Quality Commission (CQC)** by calling 03000 616161 or visiting <http://www.cqc.org.uk/>

**The Parliamentary Health Ombudsman (England)** for NHS complaint by calling 0345 015 4033 or visiting <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>