

Complaints and Feedback Procedure

Patient information – private and NHS dental care

Active from: 1 September 2026

At Dentistry at The Crown, our aim is to provide high-quality care and a good experience for every patient. We welcome feedback and take concerns and complaints seriously. We will deal with them fairly, courteously, confidentially and as promptly as possible, and we use what we learn to improve our service.

This procedure covers dental and practice complaints

This procedure applies to complaints about your dental care, our service, staff, appointments, administration, facilities or other aspects of the practice, whether your treatment is private or provided under NHS arrangements. Complaints specifically about patient finance are handled under our separate Patient Finance Complaints Procedure.

1. Who to contact

Our Feedback and Complaints Officer is **Leanne McKerchar**. She is responsible for coordinating complaints and seeing them through to an appropriate conclusion.

Email	leanne@dentistryatthecrown.co.uk
Telephone	01887 820441
Post / in person	Dentistry at The Crown, 10 Bank Street, Aberfeldy, PH15 2BB

If your complaint is about Leanne McKerchar, please make this clear when contacting us. The complaint will be handled by Dr Iona Cairns or Dr Chris Cairns, Practice Owners. You can use the same postal or telephone details above, or email info@dentistryatthecrown.co.uk and mark your message for the attention of a Practice Owner.

2. How to make a complaint

You can complain in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. You do not have to use a particular form.

It is helpful if you can tell us:

- your name and contact details;
- what happened, including relevant dates and the people involved where known;
- what you are unhappy about;
- what you would like us to do to help resolve the matter; and
- how you would prefer us to communicate with you.

If you need help to make a complaint, or need information in a different format, please tell us and we will make reasonable efforts to assist you.

3. Complaining on behalf of someone else

You may complain on behalf of another patient where you are entitled or authorised to do so. Depending on the circumstances, we may need evidence of the patient's consent or of your authority before we can disclose confidential information or discuss their care in detail.

This may include a parent or guardian acting for a child, a welfare attorney or guardian, an advocate, or an appropriate representative of a patient who has died.

4. When to complain

Please raise a concern as soon as reasonably possible. Early discussion often makes it easier for us to understand what happened and resolve the problem.

For NHS complaints, the normal time limit is within six months of the event you want to complain about, or within six months of becoming aware that you have a reason to complain, provided this is no later than 12 months after the event. Exceptions may be considered where there is good reason.

For private dental complaints, we encourage you to contact us promptly. If you later wish to ask the Dental Complaints Service for help, its current time limit is generally 12 months from the treatment, or 12 months from when you became aware there was an issue.

5. What we will do

We use a two-stage complaints process. We will always consider whether the matter can be resolved at Stage 1 first. A complex or serious complaint may go directly to Stage 2, and you can also ask for a formal investigation.

Stage 1 – Early resolution

- We will try to resolve straightforward complaints quickly and close to where the issue arose.
- Where appropriate, this may include an explanation, apology and immediate action to put something right.
- If enquiries are needed before we can respond, we aim to give you our Stage 1 response within five working days.
- In exceptional circumstances, a further five working days may be needed. If so, we will explain why, keep you informed and seek your agreement to the extension.
- If you are not satisfied with the Stage 1 response, you can ask us to move the complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Investigation

- Stage 2 is used for complex or serious complaints, complaints not resolved at Stage 1, or where a formal investigation is requested.
- We will acknowledge a Stage 2 complaint in writing within three working days.
- We will clarify the issues to be investigated and, where appropriate, the outcome you are seeking.
- We aim to provide a full written response within 20 working days.
- If the investigation will take longer, we will explain the reason, keep you updated and discuss a revised timescale.
- Our response will address the issues raised, explain our findings and any action taken, and offer an apology where appropriate.

6. Confidentiality and records

We will handle complaints confidentially and only share information where this is necessary and lawful for the investigation or resolution of the complaint. We will keep an appropriate record of the complaint, our investigation, the outcome and any learning or changes made as a result.

If a complaint involves care provided by another organisation or professional, we may need to liaise with them. Where appropriate, we will explain this to you and seek any consent that is required.

7. If another process is more appropriate

Some concerns may need to be handled under a different process, for example where legal proceedings have commenced, where a matter is primarily a request for a second opinion, or where another statutory or professional process applies. If this is the case, we will explain why and, where possible, direct you to the appropriate route.

8. If your complaint is about private dental treatment

We ask that you give us the opportunity to resolve the matter through our practice procedure first. If you remain dissatisfied about private dental care, the Dental Complaints Service (DCS) may be able to help. The DCS provides a free and impartial complaints resolution service for private dental care and operates independently, although it is funded by the General Dental Council.

Dental Complaints Service	020 8253 0800 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm)
Website	https://dcs.gdc-uk.org/

The DCS has its own eligibility criteria and time limits. Its website contains the current details and online contact form.

9. If your complaint is about NHS dental treatment

Our internal procedure applies to NHS treatment as well as private care. Independent help and NHS escalation routes are also available.

NHS Tayside Complaints and Feedback Team

Telephone	0800 027 5507
Email	TAY.feedback@nhs.scot
Address	Complaints and Feedback Team, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, DD1 9SY

Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS)

PASS provides free, independent and confidential advice and support about NHS healthcare complaints in Scotland.

Advice line	0800 917 2127 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm)
Website	https://pass-scotland.org.uk/

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

If you remain dissatisfied after the NHS complaints process has concluded, the SPSO is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland, including the NHS. The SPSO will normally expect the local complaints process to have been completed first.

Freephone	0800 377 7330
Website	https://www.spsso.org.uk/
Post	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

10. Serious concerns about a dental professional

The General Dental Council (GDC) regulates dental professionals in the UK. It is not a general complaints resolution service, but it may consider serious concerns about a registered dental professional where patient safety or public confidence may be at risk. Information is available at <https://www.gdc-uk.org/>.

11. If you change your mind

You can withdraw your complaint at any time. Please let us know as soon as possible. We may still need to consider any separate patient-safety, regulatory or learning issues raised by the complaint.

12. Learning from complaints

We review complaints and feedback to identify themes, learning and opportunities to improve. Where a complaint identifies a problem, we will consider what changes are needed to reduce the risk of the same issue happening again.