

Patient & Staff Feedback policy

Patients often want to give feedback about a dental professional or some aspect of the treatment they have received. Positive or negative, patient feedback can be useful for dental professionals and supporting colleagues to consider and reflect if and how their own practice could improve or otherwise evolve. As employers or managers you have a role in creating an environment that values patient feedback as part of professional development.

Practice staff also play a vital role in ensuring they can openly feedback to employers regarding their wellbeing at their workplace and any concerns they may have. Our practice ensures a culture where staff feel supported, respected, and valued and we do this by welcoming feedback from our team.

Positive Feedback

It is important for the whole team to know the things that are being done well, so that they can be maintained or bettered. It is a good boost of confidence to know that patients are happy with the service provided and that the team members are carrying out their duties to a high level. Such feedback should always be shared right across the team.

Negative Feedback

Input is essential if the dental team is to find ways of improving the patient's journey. Indeed, a great deal of negative feedback on the same issues means something really needs to be done about the points that have been raised. This type of feedback will highlight areas, which are not being carried out to the satisfaction of the patients. Ways of improving the situation should be considered as a matter of urgency; disenchanted patients can do much damage to the success of your practice. If patients are happy, not only will they come back, but they will also recommend their friends and families. They will talk positively about the practice in general, which creates a good reputation. Word of mouth is the best way of building a patient list.

Using Feedback from Patients & Staff

Formal feedback should cover the whole of the patient's contact with the practice, from their first attempt to arrange an appointment. Feedback should cover, not just what happened, but how the patient was made to feel at every stage. All feedback should be discussed by the whole team at future staff meetings, so that all of them can contribute to any changes and improvements that

need to be made. This may include discussions, further training or even taking the staff on a course. Auditing the activity, which gave rise to an earlier complaint, provides a useful check on the progress of any improvements.

Staff feedback may be approached in several different ways depending on the details of the feedback given, part of creating the healthy culture is to ensure our staff feel listened to and that their opinions are valued and acted upon where necessary.

A proactive and welcoming approach to patient & staff concerns will signal that the practice wants to ensure it resolves these as fully and as quickly as it can. There may also be opportunities for learning and development. Such an approach should also help to prevent escalation.

We may discuss the following at a team meeting:

- How feedback, from patients and colleagues, is gathered and considered.
- How to collect and share both positive and negative feedback.
- How easy it is for patients or colleagues to give feedback.
- Whether the local procedure for raising concerns is clear, straightforward and easy to access, and meets the requirements of the GDC's [Standards for the Dental Team](#).
- If, or how, feedback is being used to improve professional development or overall services.

In some serious cases, a patient's feedback might identify issues that call into question a dental professional's fitness to practise. Any serious concerns related to a dental professional's performance, health or professional conduct may need to be referred to the GDC.

Ways to Gather Feedback from Patients and Staff

Patients

There are several ways practices can collect and request feedback from patients including-

- Automated e-mail requests sent directly from the software system on completion of a course of treatment.
- Having a comments box/book in the waiting area to allow feedback to be given freely.
- Links to online reviews
- Paper feedback questionnaires
- Patient participation groups (inviting patients to the practice once per year to gather feedback)

Staff

- Having a comment/suggestions box in the staff area
- Having an open conversation during organised team meetings
- Keeping an open-door policy

Auditing Patient Feedback

To evidence learning and quality improvement from patient feedback, it would be recommended to perform an annual audit to enable full reflection and create an action plan of any changes required.

Document Control

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0.1	Final	23.03.23	PG	Creation of new feedback policy to include both patient and staff feedback. New Policy, not replacing any old versions.

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