

Practice fees and payments policy

The prompt collection of fees is crucial to maintaining cash flow and keeping the practice operational. All members of the dental team are responsible for ensuring that patients are fully informed about the fees that they are likely to pay and when those payments will be due.

This policy describes the practice procedure for advising patients of the fees payable for their dental care and for collecting payments.

Information on fees

We are committed to ensuring that patients are given sufficient information about the costs associated with their care to allow them to make informed decisions. Where changes to treatment are agreed with a patient, we ensure that any cost implications are explained. Information about fees is displayed on walls in the reception/ waiting area, A copy of the information is available on request from the receptionist.

Information on patient charges and an indicative price list are available for all patients. **The *practice information leaflet*** describes how patients can pay for their care.

Estimates and bills

Before any treatment is undertaken, the treatment options and associated costs are explained in full to the patient in a way that the patient understands. The patient is allowed time to consider the information provided and to ask questions.

A written treatment plan and estimate of the costs are provided for all Band 2 / Band 3 NHS treatments and for private treatments. Details of any fees incurred and payments made are recorded in the patient's clinical records and checked at each visit. Payments that remain outstanding are also recorded. Where appropriate, patients are given an itemised bill.

Payments

The practice offers patients a range of payment options, including payment by **cash and credit/debit card**. Credit/debit card payments are processed by Worldpay Merchant Services.

Our policy for **Private dental treatments** is that these are due to be paid at the time of receiving the treatment and on occasions a deposit is required. Patients are reminded about our payment policy when they make an appointment.

Our policy for **NHS dental treatments** is that the full course of treatment is due to be paid at the outset. Patients exempt from charges must clearly express this to their treating dentist and will be expected to produce suitable document evidence. If the treatment cost is less than expected at the outset any payment due back to you will be provided by either return on your credit/debit card, or by cheque, the method to be decided by Karen Webb, Business Manager.

Whenever a payment is taken, the patient will always be given a full itemised and dated receipt. Payments are evidenced by our standard receipt from the software in use by the practice.

Treatment costs can change and patients will be kept updated/informed by their dentist and supporting team.

NHS patients will be charged in accordance with the NHS dental charges regulations. Exempt patients will be required to sign NHS forms and provide evidence that they are exempt.

Outstanding payments

A regular check of the treatments provided against the payments received is undertaken by Karen Webb, Business Manager and reminders sent to patients who have missed payments.

If no payment is received within 7 days a reminder will be sent inviting the patient to contact the practice regarding payment options and timescale.

If, following the second reminder, no payment is received, a final reminder letter will be sent and the patient advised that further failure to make a payment may result in the practice instructing a debt collection agency or taking legal proceedings. Details of the agency will be provided to ensure that the patient knows who may contact them at a later date.

If, following the final reminder, no payment is received, Uday Patel, Practice Owner and Karen Webb Business Manager will consider how to progress the matter. Action may include the engagement of a reputable debt collection agency or formal legal action. In extreme circumstances and at the sole discretion of **the practice owner and business manager**, the debt may be written off.

The patient will be informed that, for the purposes of collecting the debt, their details may be passed to a third party.

Date: 20th May 2019

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