

## Patient Acceptance Policy - Terms and Conditions

This is an outline guide of our terms and conditions under which we strive to ensure a good working relationship with our patients. Patients are seen at our Practice according to the terms and conditions we have set. We reserve the right to vary the terms and conditions from time to time.

We also refer you to the Patient Information folder kept in the waiting areas of the Practice, which contains details on useful information for patients. Information for patients is also available on our website. If you require clarification on any matter, then please ask to speak to the receptionist in the first instance or the *Patient Manager* at our Practice for further information.

### 1. Appointment

#### 1.1 Booking your appointment

We will try to offer you a suitable appointment, and with your usual dentist for continuing care. You may refer to the practice information leaflet or website for details on the working pattern of your dentist. In case of a dental emergency, we will do our best for you to be seen by your usual dentist, however they may not be available on that day in which case an alternative dentist may see you.

When we start your course of treatment, we will provide you with a treatment plan, indicate costs, and will want you to finish that course as soon as is possible to maintain oral health. Therefore, we would expect you to be able to return as advised and required.

Owing to a high demand for our services at specific times, we cannot always offer the most convenient time for appointments. Patients are expected to free up time in order to attend their dental appointments. Appointments are offered for booking if mutually convenient for the dentist and the patient.

Sometime, for a variety of reasons, there may be a waiting period before you will be seen. If we cannot offer you an appointment because of limited capacity, you will be advised on available options for you at that time.

#### 1.2 Checking in

We need you to arrive at or just before your appointment time. You will be required to confirm your personal details such as your address, telephone numbers including your mobile and personal email address with the receptionist. The receptionist team will need to be made aware of your mobile and email contact preferences. It is usual for dental practices to use digital

technologies to communicate with their patients. You may wish to take advantage of receiving courtesy messages about the time and date of your dental appointments. You will be required to declare your contact preferences when checking in.

### 1.3 Your appointment with the dentist

The dentist will try to see you as soon as is reasonably possible. The nature of dentistry means that we may run behind schedule; however we will keep you informed if there is an excessive wait. That way you can make the choice of waiting for your treatment or rescheduling the appointment if that suits you better. If you arrive late, then you are unlikely to be seen by your dentist, as this can have a severe impact on the rest of the day for subsequent appointments. Patients who regularly arrive late for their appointment will not be offered dental care at our Practice.

## 2. Failing to attend, cancelling or changing your booked appointment

### 2.1 Failing to attend

It will be your responsibility to make a diary or calendar note of all the booked appointments you make. The Practice will not take the responsibility to remind you of your booking. We have a high demand for services and therefore will not see patients if they fail to keep two appointments or cancel at short notice ie less than 24hours on 2 occasions. However, we may see them on a private basis. This will apply to all patients.

### 2.2 Cancelling or changing your booked appointment

The Practice requires you to give a minimum of 24 hours notice if you wish to cancel or change appointments. If you provide us with as much notice as possible, we can then avoid wastage of clinical time.

NHS Appointments: Patients are not charged for not attending their appointment. However, a record of booking and attendance is referred to, and NHS patients who have a poor attendance history will not be seen as an NHS patient at our practice. Some examples of poor history of attendance are

- two short notice cancellations
- one short notice cancellation and one failure to attend appointment
- two failure to attend appointments
- two late arrivals for dental appointments

Private Appointments: Patients for private treatment only, who book and either fail to attend or cancel with less than 24 hours notice, are charged at the hourly rate as published on our website.

### **3. Dental emergency care or Your urgent care and treatment needs**

#### **3.1 Dental Emergencies**

The practice operates a triage for assessing how quickly you will need to see the dentist. Examples of true dental emergencies are a swollen face due to an abscess, uncontrolled bleeding and trauma to the teeth and tissues. These patients will be encouraged to attend often immediately without delay.

Dental Pain can be of varying severity and will not be classed as a true dental emergency, unless it is a symptom that accompanies a true dental emergency as outlined above.

If you need to see the dentist in an emergency and during surgery hours, please telephone the Practice as soon as you become aware of the problem and we will make every effort to see you as soon as possible during surgery hours. We will try and book this appointment with your usual dentist; however, the dentist may not be available on that day or is fully booked and therefore an alternative dentist will see you.

For emergency treatment outside normal Practice hours, please telephone the Practice to receive the details of the emergency dental services. This may mean that you have to travel to another nearby town to see a colleague, and it is best if you are accompanied by a relative or a friend. It will be up to you to make any necessary arrangements such as travel and agreement of the cost of emergency treatment to be provided by the emergency dentist. Any treatment received in an emergency elsewhere will be separate from our Practice.

#### **3.2 Your urgent care and treatment needs**

Your urgent treatment need would be a treatment that can wait for a period without risk to your general health. Examples of your urgent treatment need could be recementing a crown, lost fillings, sensitivity etc. An appointment will be offered depending on available times on that day, and capacity.

Available appointments may not be on the same day of your notification if it is agreed that you can wait to be seen. If you request, a dentist will be happy to offer any advice you need over the telephone before you are seen.

## 4 Payments Policy

### 4.1 Costs

A guide to the current cost of dental treatment is displayed in the patient information booklet available in the waiting areas of the Practice. Your dentist will discuss the likely treatment cost. This estimate can vary if your treatment plan needs to be changed at that point in time. Patients who are eligible for exemption from charges are kindly requested to provide suitable evidence. More information about NHS dental treatment costs and eligibility for exemption can be found on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### 4.2 Method of payment

We accept cash or debit cards and credit cards.

You are required to pay the whole cost at the very beginning of your new course of treatment, that is the first appointment for that course of treatment. However, some private treatments can be paid as and when the treatment is done.

### 4.3 Unpaid treatments

NHS Dental Services: We kindly request full payment relating to the NHS course of treatment, at the beginning. We do not offer credit and it is our policy that agreed NHS treatment plan is to be settled in full at the outset of a given NHS course of treatment. The dentist will not proceed booking for NHS treatments if the NHS fee due at the beginning of the course of treatment is outstanding. We recommend that patients communicate when they will be in a position to settle fees, so that they may continue with the course of treatment as agreed. Patients keeping their dentist informed about whether they wish to continue will help the dentist make appropriate patient care arrangements.

All fee paying patients: Patients who are in arrears with payments and who do not offer to pay within two weeks of receiving treatment, may not be seen again at the Practice. Patients have a choice of finding an alternative dental practice.

### 4.4 Overpayment

If you have overpaid for your course of treatment, we will make every effort to settle the overpayment as soon as is possible. Refunds will be issued by cheques or credit /debit card refunds following internal authorization. You may be entitled to refund if you initially decided to proceed with a course of treatment, but then changed your mind not to proceed. In such cases, as each

course of treatment is different, we check your details and will refund any overpayments.

## 5 . Recall and Maintenance

### 5.1 Recall for continuing care arrangements

At the end of an examination if you do not need treatment or at the end of a course of treatment, your dentist will discuss with you when you will need to see him/her again in order to help you maintain and better your dental health. (for example, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months etc before you need to return for a new course of treatment). We highly recommend you keep to the interval that the dentist advises. It will be up to you to book your recall appointment for maintaining your oral health.

*Our terms and conditions for recalling NHS patients:* If you are an NHS patient, we will continue to see you providing you return as an NHS patient and attend an appointment within 15 months of completing your last course of NHS treatment. The booked recall appointment must be kept. A maximum of 3 changes/rescheduling of appointments will be acceptable provided we have at least 24hours notice.

Failure to attend appointments or cancelling at short notice (less than 24hours) may mean you will not be seen as an NHS patient at the practice. The next section provides additional details on this policy.

### 5.2 Your oral hygiene routine and preventive advice

The outcome of any treatment will depend very much on your maintenance by following the recommended oral hygiene routine and preventive advice, including any dietary precautions. Our expectation would be that you follow these, and if you are unclear on any routine, you obtain clarification from your dentist. If you do not follow the dentist's advice, your oral health may deteriorate.

### 5.3 Post operative instructions

Your dentist will expect you to follow instructions to try and avoid possible problems or complications that can occur after treatments.

## **6. Information about you**

### **6.1 Personal details**

Should any of your personal details change, we require you to inform us as soon as is possible. The current details we require from you include your address with postcode, telephone numbers including mobile numbers and email addresses (for children we require contact details for the parent or guardian). All details will be kept confidential. The privacy notice is available on our website, or you may ask our receptionist for a copy.

### **6.2 Medical Details**

The dentists follow good practice guidelines. One of our protocol for safe dental care is that we require patients to tell their dentist about their medical history including any changes. It may help to bring a current repeat prescription form with you. We will ask you about the exact names of medications you are currently taking if any. The dentist will expect you to complete a confidential medical history form, and answer a lifestyle questionnaire to determine risks to health and can offer advice.

## **7. Information for Patients**

### **7.1 Practice information leaflet**

This leaflet provides useful details about our Practice. Copies of the latest leaflet are available from the receptionist, and is published on our website

### **7.2 Patient information booklet**

The Information regarding our Practice policies and protocols that apply to our patients is kept in a Patient information booklet in the waiting areas of our Practice.

Should you require detailed information on any subject matter, you should direct your communication to *The Patient Manager* of the Practice.

## **8. Your Feedback and Complaints**

### **8.1 Contact with Patient Manager**

In this practice we take patient concerns and complaints very seriously indeed. We try to ensure that all patients are pleased with their experience of this service. When patients complain, they are dealt with courteously and promptly

Sandy DentalCare, 10 Market Square, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 1HU

so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. Patients with concerns or complaints are encouraged to either asking to speak to the Patient Manager, or in the absence of the Patient Manager, you may speak to the Business Manager. It may be that you want to submit a written complaint, in which case please write to our Patient Manager at the Practice address. Full details on how to complain are published on our website.

## **9. We do not tolerate abuse to any team member**

9.1 Please note we reserve the right to refuse dental treatment. We do not tolerate verbal or physical abuse at any level. Patients who are violent or abusive to practice personnel, to other patients or anyone else on the practice premises will be refused treatment and reported to the appropriate authorities including the police.