



If something isn't right, *please tell us*

Our complaints procedure — how to raise a concern, what we will do about it, and how quickly.

We would rather know. This sets out who to tell, what happens in the first 24 hours, and exactly what will be in the response you get within ten working days.



Tell us what happened

If you are reading this, something has probably gone wrong. Here is exactly what to do, and exactly what we will do about it.

You can raise a concern with any member of our team, at any time, in whatever way suits you. You do not need to put it in writing first, use a form, or work out who the right person is. Every route below reaches the same person and gets the same response.

AT YOUR PRACTICE

The manager at your practice

Their name, direct email and direct telephone number are

displayed in reception

at every Truly practice, and we will give them to you on request.

Named, so you know exactly who has your complaint. If they are on leave, their deputy takes it over automatically after two days — your complaint does not wait for someone to come back.

AWAY FROM THE PRACTICE

complaints@trulydental.ie

Read every working day by more than one person, none of whom work at your practice.

You can also use

info@trulydental.ie

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Use this if your concern is about the practice itself, or about someone who works there.

GROUP LEVEL

Mags Simpson

VP of Operations

mags@trulydental.ie

+353 83 079 4866

Our most senior operations lead. She carries out the group review at stage five, and she is the person to contact if you feel a practice is not dealing with you properly.

IN PERSON OR BY POST

Tell anyone here

Reception, your nurse, your dentist, anyone.

Or write to: Complaints, Truly, 36/37 Dame Street, Dublin 2, D02 EF64.

Telephone

(01) 525 2670

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It is their job to pass it on the same day — see below.

What happens in the first 24 hours

This is the part most people never see, so it is worth setting out.

- Whoever you speak to **writes down what you told them, in your words**, on a complaint record form. They do not edit it, summarise it, or form a view on whether you are right. That is not their job and they know it.

- It goes to the manager at your practice **before the end of that working day** — not the end of the week.
- It is logged that day and given a reference number, which we will quote in everything we send you.
- They read it the same day and decide how serious it is. That decision determines who investigates it. If it involves clinical harm, an allegation about an individual, your personal information, or anyone senior at Truly, it leaves the practice immediately and is handled at group level.

What we will do, and when

1

Within two working days you will hear from a named person

By letter or email, whichever you prefer. It gives you their name, role, direct telephone number and direct email. It sets out **as a numbered list what we understand each of your concerns to be**, so you can correct us before we investigate the wrong thing. It asks what outcome you are hoping for — often not what we would have assumed. It tells you the date you will have our full response. And it encloses a copy of this procedure. If you would rather talk than exchange letters, say so and we will ring you.

2

Then we investigate — which means more than a word with your dentist

We look at your complete clinical record including the notes from every visit; your radiographs and clinical photographs at full diagnostic resolution; your treatment plan, estimates and consent forms; every email, letter, text message and note of a call; your appointment and payment history; a **written account from each member of staff involved**, taken separately; whether we actually followed our own procedures, including this one; and whether the same thing has happened before, at your practice or any other Truly practice.

Where your concern is about clinical judgement, we obtain a written opinion from a dentist who had no involvement in your care — and where you dispute our internal view, from a dentist outside Truly entirely. **We pay for that.** We will not ask you to fund a second opinion in order to be taken seriously.

3

Within ten working days you get a full written response

Containing ten specific things — set out on the next page.

4

If we cannot meet that date, you hear from us before day ten — not after it

With the specific reason. Not "due to ongoing investigations", but something like "I am waiting for an independent opinion from a periodontist, which I expect by the 14th." And a firm date. After that we write to you at least every ten days until it is resolved, **whether or not there is news.**

What our response will contain

Ten things, every time. If any of them is missing, tell us and we will send a proper one.

What you will find in it

- 1 Each of your concerns, restated in your own terms, numbered.
- 2 What we did to investigate — **who we spoke to and what we looked at**, specifically.
- 3 A finding on **every single point** — upheld, partly upheld or not upheld — **with our reasons**. Not a general conclusion covering everything at once.
- 4 An apology where one is owed. Plainly, and near the top — not buried in the last paragraph.
- 5 What we are offering to put it right, and how to accept it.
- 6 What we have **changed** as a result. Something specific, not "staff have been reminded".
- 7 How to ask for a review if our answer does not satisfy you, and the name of the person to write to.
- 8 The other organisations you can go to, with their full contact details.
- 9 Confirmation that nothing in the letter affects your right to complain to a regulator, take legal advice, or ask for your records.
- 10 The name and direct contact details of the person who wrote it.

Putting it right

Where a complaint is justified we offer a fair remedy. Depending on what happened, that can be:

- an explanation and an apology, where that is genuinely what you wanted;
- **redoing the treatment at our expense**;
- **funding treatment somewhere else**, if you would rather not come back to us — and we will transfer your records promptly and without charge;
- a full or partial refund of what you paid;
- reimbursing reasonable costs you incurred, such as travel to a rearranged appointment;
- a payment where the failing caused real inconvenience or distress that nothing else addresses.

Why we apologise readily

An apology is not an admission of legal liability — the law in every country we work in says so expressly. So nobody at Truly has to weigh being decent against being careful, and no member of our team will ever be criticised for having said sorry to you.

If our answer doesn't satisfy you

Two further stages, both inside a defined timescale, and the second one is not us.

5

A group review — within twenty working days

Ask within three months of our response, by writing to **Mags Simpson, VP of Operations, at mags@trulydental.ie**. She had no part in the first decision and does not work at your practice. They look at two things: whether we got the answer right, and **whether we handled you properly** — the timescales, the tone, and whether we actually answered everything you raised. They can uphold, vary or replace the original outcome.

6

An independent review — within thirty working days

Carried out by someone we appoint from **outside Truly entirely**: not an employee, a director, a shareholder or a supplier, and not one within the last three years. They have unrestricted access to your file and to our staff, who are required to cooperate. **Their report comes to you exactly as they wrote it** — we may add a response but we cannot edit theirs. Their recommendations bind us unless our Board formally records in writing why not, and you get a copy of those reasons.

And if your complaint is about someone senior

A complaint about a director, a shareholder or the founder does not start at the practice and does not go to any employee. It goes **straight to the independent reviewer** from the moment we receive it, and they — not us — correspond with you about it. That route exists so you never have to wonder whether the person investigating reports to the person you are complaining about.

Things you might be wondering

Will this affect my treatment?

Your fees will not change because you raised something with us. We will not ask you to withdraw a complaint, sign anything or stay quiet as a condition of anything. If you are in pain, have an infection, or treatment is already under way, we will still see you.

Treatment that can wait is different. Our dentists practise independently, and they will not start that work while a complaint or other dispute is open. That is on the next page.

If anyone at Truly ever suggests that raising a concern is a reason to withhold care you need, please email complaints@trulydental.ie — that will be treated as a serious matter and dealt with by someone independent of the practice concerned.

Will my dentist know it was me?

Usually yes, because we cannot investigate properly otherwise — and they are entitled to answer for themselves before we make any finding about them. But we keep complaint records **separately from your dental records**, so nothing about raising a concern sits in your clinical notes, and only the people who genuinely need to see it will.

Can I complain without giving my name?

Yes. We will investigate as far as we can and we will still record it. We will not be able to write back to you, which is the only real drawback.

What if I'm not sure it's serious enough?

Tell us anyway. A great deal of what we have improved came from something small that somebody nearly did not mention. If it turns out to be a misunderstanding we will explain it, and no one will think less of you for asking.

What if it happened a while ago?

We ask for complaints within twelve months of what happened, or of your realising there was a problem. If it has been longer, still tell us. We accept late complaints where there is good reason, where you could not have complained sooner, or where the matter is serious — and only our VP of Operations can decline one, in writing, with reasons.

Who treats you

The dentists who see you at Truly are self-employed. They are not our employees.

Each holds their own professional registration, keeps their own indemnity, and makes their own clinical decisions. We provide the practice, the team around them, and this complaints procedure. We do not tell a dentist which treatment they must carry out.

What they decide

A dentist decides whether they will take on a piece of work, whether they will start it, and whether they will continue with it. That includes treatment that is not needed to relieve pain, treat infection, or finish something already under way. They may decline to start that work, or to proceed with it, and they are not required to give you a reason.

They will only carry out treatment they can justify and that they are trained and competent to complete. If the work falls outside what they do, they should say so and we will help you see someone who can.

If a course of treatment has started

If a dentist has accepted you for a course of treatment, they should finish it, or arrange for it to be finished. If they cannot, we will refer you to another dentist and transfer your records promptly and without charge. We will not leave you mid-treatment with nowhere to go.

If a complaint is open

Raising a concern does not end your relationship with us, and it is not a reason to withhold care you need.

What we will not do, while a complaint or other dispute remains open, is start new treatment that can wait. Consent, the records, and the complaint itself may all bear on what is being proposed, and a dentist may decide they will not take that work on until the matter has been concluded. Appointments already booked for that kind of work will be postponed — not cancelled as a punishment — and we will not ask you to withdraw the complaint as a condition of being seen.

Care you need is not postponed

Pain, infection, trauma, and treatment already under way are not delayed because you have complained. If you need urgent care and your usual dentist cannot see you, we will still look after you or tell you clearly where to go. Raising a concern is not a reason to withhold that care. We do not refuse anyone on the grounds the law protects.

Can someone help me, or complain for me?

Yes. We will take your complaint down in your own words if that is easier, provide this in large print or another format, or arrange an interpreter including sign language at our cost. Bring a family member, a friend or an advocate — and someone can complain on your behalf with your agreement.

What do you do with what I tell you?

Every complaint is reviewed for what it teaches us. Themes go to our Clinical Governance Committee every quarter and to our Board every year, and an action is not closed until someone has confirmed it was actually done. A complaint is often the only way we find out about something we would otherwise never have known.

What do you ask of me?

Only that you treat our team with the same respect we owe you. Being frustrated, persistent, upset or forceful is completely understandable and we will absorb it — that is the job. Threats, abuse or discriminatory language towards an individual are different, and if that happens we will tell you clearly what is not acceptable and why before taking any other step. Even then we would continue to deal with your complaint, and we would never leave you without care.

Other organisations you can contact

You can go to any of these at any time. None of them requires you to finish our procedure first, and neither do we.

If you were treated in the Republic of Ireland

Dental Complaints Resolution Service

dentalcomplaints.ie
mary@dentalcomplaints.ie
087 354 5842

Free, independent, confidential mediation, provided by the Irish Dental Association. They will ask you to raise it with us first. They cannot deal with medical card or PRSI treatment.

Dental Council of Ireland

57 Merrion Square, Dublin, D02 EH90
info@dentalcouncil.ie
+353 1 676 2069
dentalcouncil.ie

For concerns about a dentist's professional conduct. It cannot order a refund, require work to be redone, or deal with fees.

Data Protection Commission

6 Pembroke Row, Dublin 2, D02 X963
forms.dataprotection.ie/contact
(01) 765 0100

If your concern is about how we have used your personal information or your photographs. Complaints are made through the online form, not by telephone.

Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

ask@ccpc.ie
+353 1 402 5555
ccpc.ie

For information about your rights as a consumer.

Treated under the medical card scheme? You can also contact your local HSE Principal Dental Surgeon through your local health centre, or the HSE at yoursay@hse.ie or freephone 1800 424 555. **Treated under the PRSI Treatment Benefit Scheme?** Questions about the benefit itself go to the Treatment Benefit Section, Department of Social Protection, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, F92 T449 — 0818 300 600 or treatmentenquiries@welfare.ie.

If you were treated at one of our practices in the United Kingdom

Dental Complaints Service

37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ
info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk
020 8253 0800
dcs.gdc-uk.org

Free and impartial, for private dental care, funded by the General Dental Council.

Note their time limit: twelve months from the treatment, or from when you became aware of the problem.

General Dental Council

37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ
gdc-uk.org

For concerns about a dental professional's conduct or ability.

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire
SK9 5AF
0303 123 1113
ico.org.uk

If your concern is about how we have used your personal information.

The regulator for your nation

England

— Care Quality Commission, 03000 616161

Wales

— Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, 0300 062 8163

Scotland

— Healthcare Improvement Scotland,
his.ihceregulation@nhs.scot

N. Ireland

— RQIA, 028 9536 1990

These bodies regulate how a practice is run. Except in Scotland they do not usually investigate individual complaints, but they do want to know.



Thank you for telling us.

Truly — Complaints Procedure · Version 4.0 · 13 March 2026

complaints@trulydental.ie · info@trulydental.ie · (01) 525 2670 · trulydental.ie

Truly, 36/37 Dame Street, Dublin 2, D02 EF64

Displayed at every Truly practice. Ask any member of our team for a printed copy — you should never have to ask twice.