



Patient Payment Policy

The practice is committed to providing a high standard of treatment and service to our patients whilst ensuring that treatment fees are collected on time. Team members are expected to make every effort to avoid a difficult situation arising with a patient over payment of fees. The use of court action or debt collectors as a means of obtaining settlement of outstanding accounts will only be considered when all reasonable steps to obtain payment have first been taken in writing.

Patients will be made aware of the fees, payment methods and conditions when their appointments are made. It will be explained to all patients that they will be expected to pay fees as the treatment progresses with the full balance due before the final appointment.

In case of an outstanding fee after the end of treatment the following procedure will be followed:

- The patient will be mailed a bill by first class post □
- If the bill is not paid within 4 weeks a second bill will be sent
- If the account is still outstanding 2 weeks after the second bill, a reminder will be sent by mail asking for payment by return
- If payment is not received after a further 2 weeks, the patient will be contacted by telephone or letter to enquire if there is any reason for non- payment. If there is a complaint about treatment this will need resolution and the bill may have to be waived. It is also possible that the patient's financial situation has changed, there would be no point in pursuing a patient who cannot pay. If there is no problem or complaint the patient should be requested to pay by return
- If the account is still outstanding after another 2 weeks, the practice will send a letter advising of legal action if the account is not paid by return
- If the account is still outstanding after another suggest 2 weeks' small claims court action will be instigated or a debt collector will be asked to collect the fees

Records of all correspondence and contacts with the patients must be kept in order to be able to prove that all reasonable steps were taken should the matter be referred to the GDC.

Special attention should be paid to patient confidentiality in relation to fees and fee recovery. The matter must not be raised with third parties, including relatives, unless the patient is a minor and the parent is responsible for the payment of fees. This is particularly relevant in relation to telephone calls.