

Private Dental Plans Code of Practice

General

In offering patients the option of receiving their dental care under alternative payment methods, including, but not limited to, a dental plan, the practice undertakes to provide patients with adequate information about the choices available, work with clear and fair contracts, ensure they understand the payment procedures for each option and, where appropriate, any on-going costs or exclusions, and have in place a system for dealing with complaints and feedback.

The practice should at all times demonstrate a high degree of honesty and diligence in accordance with good professional practice and observe the General Dental Council's Standards and associated guidance by:

- Putting patient's interests first
- Communicating effectively with patients
- Obtaining valid consent
- Maintaining and protecting patients' information
- Having a clear and effective complaints procedure
- Working with colleagues in patients' best interests
- Maintaining, developing and working within professional knowledge and skills
- Raising concerns if patients are at risk
- Ensuring personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence

Adequate information

- All information about payment methods is presented to the patient in a way that they can understand.
- Patients are given sufficient information about Denplan and the alternative options available, such as treatment on a fee-per-item basis, deferred payment methods and others as applicable to allow them to make an informed choice.
- Information about Denplan is provided in a timely way – for example, at the patient's first appointment with the practice or at a routine dental examination. Where information about Denplan is on display in the practice, it includes the name and contact details of individual(s) who can provide more information or answer any questions the patient might have.
- The terms and conditions relating to Denplan are provided and explained to the patient. The patient has a clear understanding of what is included and excluded.
- No member of the dental team makes a promise or representation or gives warranties or guarantees that are not in line with the terms of Denplan

- The patient is given adequate time (away from the surgery, if required) to consider their options and to ask questions. The practice respects that time required will vary from patient to patient.
- The patient's express consent is obtained before progressing with membership of Denplan.
- Where the option of a fee-per-item arrangement is offered, an indicative price list is available.

Clear and fair contracts

- The individual needs of the patient are assessed and, in consultation with the patient, a treatment plan is developed and the terms on which care is provided are agreed. Continuation of treatment in progress is not conditional upon registration under Denplan
- Patients are not required to sign up to Denplan as a pre-condition of receiving treatment or a course of treatment.
- Patients are not subject to undue influence to consider membership of Denplan through, for example, disproportionate financial incentives or the continuation of treatment.
- Where a practice restricts its funding method to Denplan new patients are made aware of this before the start of any care or treatment.
- Patients are advised of any changes to the terms of their plan and are given the opportunity to ask questions and to reconsider their membership of Denplan
- Patients who agree to membership of Denplan have a without liability cooling-off period of at least 14 days (or a statutory or regulatory minimum, if longer), which is set out in writing. During this time, the patient has the right to change their mind and withdraw from membership of the plan without incurring any financial or other penalties.
- Patients have clear information about their right (and the dentist's right) to cancel their membership of Denplan and there are reasonable notice periods which are sufficient to allow completion of any outstanding treatment.

Protecting payments

- In explaining payment alternatives to patients, members of the dental team will put the interests of the patient before personal opinion or the financial interests of the dental practice.
- Where the dentist does not offer the option of treatment on a fee-per-item basis in addition to Denplan the patient is given advice on how to find an alternative dentist within a reasonable travel time who offers dentistry under other funding methods.

Complaints

- The practice has a written procedure for dealing with complaints and feedback, which is advertised and available to patients and should ensure that there is a clear route for patients to take up administrative issues or complaints with the provider of Denplan
- The complaints procedure complies with professional requirements and the requirements of Denplan
- All complaints and feedback are recorded and monitored.