One in four dental patients want to complain but don’t

A quarter of dental patients want to complain about their dental care but don’t, according to a survey by the Dental Complaints Service.

The survey by the Dental Complaints Service (DCS) found that a third had actually complained about some aspect of their dental care.

However, half of those who did complain to their dental practice felt their complaint wasn’t resolved satisfactorily.

The most common cause of complaints (15 per cent) was ineffective treatment, followed by the cost of treatment (12 per cent).

But when it came to complaints that patients wanted to make but didn’t, the most common reason was the cost of treatment (35 per cent), followed by ineffective treatment (14 per cent), inconvenient appointments (15 per cent) and unnecessary treatment (13 per cent).

Thirteen per cent of patients didn’t complain because they thought it wouldn’t be ‘worth it’, while 17 per cent didn’t because they lacked confidence and 15 per cent because they feared ‘negative comeback’.

Nine per cent of those who failed to complain didn’t know where to take their complaint.

‘If you have a complaint about private dental care but don’t know where to go, call us. We’ll try to help resolve your complaint quickly and fairly,’ said Hazel Adams, head of the Dental Complaints Service.

The DCS can also advise on where to go with complaints about NHS dentistry.

The DCS is free to use and has helped to resolve more than 5,000 complaints about private dental care since its launch three years ago.

In the last three years, the DCS has received more than 20,000 calls to its local rate 08456 120540 complaints hotline. Two thirds of complaints logged are resolved within a fortnight.

The DCS was set up by, but is independent of, the General Dental Council, which regulates dental professionals in the UK. Complaints that raise issues about patient safety and whether a practitioner should be allowed to continue practising continue to be dealt with by the GDC.

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To contact the Dental Complaints Service, call 08456 120540 (local rate), visit www.dental-complaints.org.uk, or email info@dental-complaints.org.uk.