



## **BEMONT ORTHODONTIC CENTRE**

**5a Belmont, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 1TE**

### **Practice Fees and Payments Policy**

At Belmont Orthodontic Centre, the prompt collection of fees is crucial to maintaining cash flow and keeping the practice operational. All members of the dental team are responsible for ensuring that patients are fully informed about the fees that they are likely to pay and when those payments will be due.

This policy describes the practice procedure for advising patients of the fees payable for their dental care and for collecting payments.

#### **Information on fees**

Belmont Orthodontic Centre are committed to ensuring that patients are given sufficient information about the costs associated with their care to allow them to make informed decisions. Where changes to treatment are agreed with a patient, we ensure that any cost implications are explained.

An indicative price list of sundries available/replacement appliances is displayed in the practice, this information is displayed in the Waiting Room.

All private patients and patients who are returning to the practice are given information on patient charges.

#### **Estimates and bills**

Before any private treatment is undertaken, the treatment options and associated costs are explained in full to the patient in a way that the patient understands. The patient is allowed time to consider the information provided and to ask questions.

A written treatment plan and estimate of the costs are provided for all private orthodontic patients. Details of any fees incurred and payments made are recorded in the patient's clinical records and checked at each visit. Payments that remain outstanding are also recorded. Where appropriate, patients are given an itemised bill.

## **Payments**

The practice offers patients a range of payment options, including payment by cash, cheque, credit/debit card or BACS transfer. Credit/debit card payments are processed by First Data Merchant Solutions.

Notices explaining this are displayed in the Waiting Room and patients are informed of the charge before any payment by credit/debit card is taken.

Our normal policy for private patients is to request patients to pay a deposit on the commencement of treatment and then make further regular payments which are spread out over the treatment duration.

For NHS Patients, the cost of replacement appliances are payable at the time of ordering to ensure prompt payment is in turn made to the laboratory.

Whenever a payment is taken, the patient must be given a card receipt if payment is made by credit/debit card. For cash payments, a written receipt is given on request. A full itemised statement can be issued upon request for all NHS or private patients during and after treatment.

If a private patient offers to pay part of the full cost, the part-payment should be accepted but the patient must be advised that the amount paid is not accepted as full-and-final settlement. The patient should be given a statement showing the original invoice amount and date, the date and amount of the part-payment, and the amount still outstanding.

NHS patients will be charged in accordance with the NHS dental charges regulations. Exempt patients must sign NHS forms and provide evidence that they are exempt.

## **Outstanding payments**

A regular check of the treatments provided against the payments received is undertaken by the admin team and reminders sent to patients who have missed payments.

If no payment is received within 6 – 8 weeks, a reminder will be sent inviting the patient to contact the practice regarding payment options.

If, following the second reminder, no payment is received, a final reminder letter will be sent and the patient advised that further failure to make a payment may result in the practice instructing a debt collection agency or taking legal proceedings. Details of the agency will be provided to ensure that the patient knows who may contact them at a later date.

If, following the final reminder, no payment is received, **Dr Philip Barton** will consider how to progress the matter. Action may include the engagement of a reputable debt collection agency or formal legal action. In extreme circumstances and at the sole discretion of **Dr Philip Barton** the debt may be written off.

The patient will be informed that, for the purposes of collecting the debt, their details may be passed to a third party.

***Date:*** ***June 2018***

***Review date:*** ***June 2019***