



## Payment policy - December 2019

This is the payment policy for Bridge Dental Practice in Towcester and covers:

1. How you can pay
2. Our terms for payment
3. Our refund policy
4. Our none attendance and short notice cancellation policy
5. Our none attendance and cancellation charges

If you have any question about any of the below, please do get in touch with Nicole using [nicole@bridgedentaltowcester.co.uk](mailto:nicole@bridgedentaltowcester.co.uk) . As Mentioned already this clarification of our position will not impact on the majority of those using the Practice.

### **1. How can I pay?**

We accept payments from all major credit cards (including American Express) and cash and cheque although please be minded that at some point we will phase out paying by cheque as an option.

### **2. Paying for treatment – Our terms of business**

In general, we operate a pay as you go system for the dentistry we provide.

This means that each patient will be presented with a bill at the end of each treatment session and it is expected that the required amount will be paid at that time. We do not offer credit or payment on account.

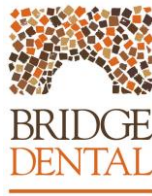
There are some exceptions:

1. New patients
2. Those with poor attendance
3. Referrals
4. Specialist dental care
5. Where a payment plan has been agreed

Details of each of these are found below.

#### **a. New patients**

All new Private patients (this includes NHS patients having private treatment) and Specialists referrals will be asked to pay for their first appointment at the time they book in. We will be able to make a provisional booking for them however, if they have not paid 3 working days in advance of the appointment date and time then we will release the space for other patients to book into.



**b. Patients with poor attendance**

Those patients who repeatedly cancel with late notice or who FTA regularly will be asked to pay for all their treatment and routine dental care in advance of the appointment. They will be not be able to pay as they go. If they have not paid 3 working days in advance of the appointment date and time, then we will release the space for other patients to book into.

**c. External referrals**

Patients that have been referred to us by an external practice will need to pay their initial consultation fee 3 working days in advance of their appointments. If they fail to do this then we will look to fill that time with another patient's treatment plan. This includes CBCT scans and OPG x-rays.

**d. Specialist dental care**

We will be asking all patients (internal and external) who come to see one of our specialists to pay in advance for their treatment. Appointments can be booked before payment is made however payment must be completed 3 working days prior to the appointment start time otherwise we may give the slot to someone else.

**e. Where a payment plan has been agreed**

There may be an occasion where the practice agrees a payment plan for a larger and longer piece of treatment. When this does happen, the patient will be expected to make the relevant payment before each of their treatment appoints. Failure to do so will result in that time being reallocated to another patients and treatment will stop until the account is brought up to date.

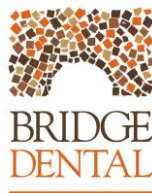
**f. Bad Debts**

In the unlikely event that a bill remains unpaid for treatment we have done we will look to recover the costs through a debt collection agency or the small claims court.

**3. Our Refund policy**

In order to limit the risk of fraudulent activity Bridge Dental Practice will process any refunds using the same medium in which they were paid to the Practice (using the same card to the same person). Where this is not possible the Practice will issue a personal cheque for the relevant amount.

Refunds will take up to 2 working weeks to process. This is so we can carry out some due diligence at our end to reduce the risk of fraudulent activity. If we can complete the refund in a quicker time frame, then we will.



#### 4. Late cancellations and no shows

In order to make sure we use our time effectively we operate a system to track those who miss their dental appointment with us or who cancel regular at short notice.

In broad terms we understand that sometimes Dental appointments are forgotten and that other more important things do crop up; however, we also need to balance the needs of other patients who might have wanted the now unused time to come and see us.

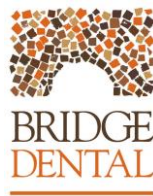
As a result, we operate a three-strike system as follows:

##### FOR NHS PATIENTS

<b>First occasion</b>	<p>A reminder via email/text message/phone call (one of these not all three) that you have missed your appointment and that you should call the practice to rebook.</p> <p>If this is your first appointment, then we may not let you book in again with us.</p>
<b>Second occasion</b>	<p>On the second occasion we will send a reminder email or letter (one of these not both) that you have missed your appointment and that you should call the practice to rebook.</p> <p>At this stage we will remind you of our policy re late cancellations and no shows.</p> <p>Please be aware that if we are required to write to you again about non-attendance or late cancellation then there is every chance, we will also be asking you to find an alternative dentist in the area to visit.</p>
<b>Third occasion</b>	<p>In the unusual event that there have been three occasions when you have failed to attend a pre-booked appointment or cancelled at short notice, we may remove you from our NHS patient list.</p> <p>We can still see you, but it will be as a Private patient on the pay as you go tariffs. You will be asked to pay in advance for these appointments.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can visit the NHS choices website (<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>) to see which dentists in the local area are taking on new NHS patients.</p>

##### FOR PRIVATE PATIENTS

<b>First occasion</b>	<p>A reminder via email/text message/phone call (one of these not all three) that you have missed your appointment and that you should call the practice to rebook.</p>
<b>Second occasion</b>	<p>On the second occasion we will call you to find out what happened and rebook your appointment.</p> <p>Please note that should you miss another appointment with us we may require you to pay a missed appointment charge or to pay at the time of booking for any future appointments.</p>



	<p>The value of the missed appointment charge will vary depending on the duration of the appointment you have missed and the number of times that you have missed appointment with us.</p> <p>The maximum it will be for is the full amount of the treatment that was due to be carried out at the appointment and the minimum will be a value equivalent to £1 x the length of the appointment (20-minute appointment = £20 charge).</p> <p>This fee will be <b><u>IN ADDITION</u></b> to the original treatment cost.</p>
<p><b>Third occasion</b></p>	<p>In the unusual event that there have been three occasions when you have missed an appointment in this way, we need to make a couple of changes in the way we make your bookings.</p> <p>We will now require you to pay in advance for your appointments. Payments should be made at the time you book in.</p> <p>Refunds will be available if you do not attend minus any non-attendance charges and will be provided as per our practice refund policy and can take up to two weeks to process.</p>

Things to note:

1. Most of our communication will be via email. Whilst the Practice makes every effort to make sure we keep up to date communication information on each patient, it is the patient's responsibility to make sure that any changes or errors are communicated to the Practice and that any communication from the practice and not lost in a "junk" folder.
2. Short notice cancellation is any time before the appointment was due to begin extending out to 2 working days in advance – three for the Specialist Dental Care (A working day is Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays)
3. You can appeal against a decision we make. Once we have listened to any feedback and carried out our own investigation, we will make decision if we are to change the outcome. The Practice Managers decision is final.
4. The Practice, in exceptional circumstances, may choose to reduce the number of "strikes" available to a Patient. The reasons for this reduction will be articulated to the patient at the time.



## 5. Cancellation and FTA charges

Cancellation changes will apply as follows:

	NHS	Membership Plan	Private Dental appointment	Private Hygienist appointment	Specialist appointment
More than *3 working days in advance	No charge	No Charge	No charge	No charge	No charge
*3 working days in advance	No Charge	No Charge	No Charge	No Charge	A charge will be made equivalent to £1 per each minute that an appointment was booked for.
*2 working days in advance	This will be classed as a late notice cancellation.	No Charge	A charge will be made equivalent to £1 per each minute that an appointment was booked for.	A charge will be made equivalent to £1 per each minute that an appointment was booked for.	Full treatment charge
*1 day before	This will be classed as a late notice cancellation.	A charge will be made equivalent to £1 per each minute that an appointment was booked for.			
On the day	This will be classed as a late notice cancellation.		Full treatment charge	Full treatment charge	
Fail to attend without notice	This will be classed as an FTA.				

You can appeal against a decision we make based on the above. Once we have listened to any feedback and carried out our own investigation, we will make decision if we are to change the outcome. The Practice Managers decision is final.

\*A working day is Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays and weekends