

The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Policy Regarding the Provision of Repairs to Teeth Damaged During Treatment within the Trust

Effective: September 2009

Review: September 2012

1. Introduction

A number of routine procedures within the Trust have the potential to cause permanent damage to teeth or the permanent restorations attached to them. The Trust recognises that, whilst not necessarily negligent, it does owe a duty of care to the patient and that, if possible, it should seek to repair any damage caused by its actions.

2. Application of policy

- 2.1 In order to reduce the potential for inappropriate claims against the Trust only damage discovered within 7 days of the operative procedure is within the remit of this document. Other dental needs should be referred to the patient's general dental practitioner for treatment.
- 2.2 To arrange for any damage to be repaired the consultant responsible for the patient's care at the time of the incident should refer them to a consultant in Restorative Dentistry in the Dental Hospital. For paediatric patients (i.e. aged under 16 years) the referral should be made to a consultant in Paediatric Dentistry, also at the Dental Hospital. The consultant anaesthetist should make the referral if the damage arises during the anaesthetic procedure. The decision to refer must be recorded in the patient's case notes with a copy of the letter filed for reference.
- 2.3 The receiving consultant will then arrange for a prompt assessment of the problem and the subsequent treatment. All decisions and action taken must be recorded in the case notes.
- 2.4 The provision of this treatment will normally be expedited by the Dental Hospital but an indication of the likely timescale will be advised to the patient when they attend for assessment. Depending upon the situation it may be possible to undertake a temporary repair until a permanent repair is possible.
- 2.5 In instances where it is more practical for the patient to attend their own practitioner the Trust should only be responsible for the NHS costs associated with correcting the damage. Such situations might include, for example, patient

preference, travelling distances and the timescale for the completion of treatment.

3. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly. Any comments, queries or suggested amendments should be addressed the Dental Directorate Manager.

Policy author: Dental Directorate Manager