

# CHRIS HODGKINS

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
London  
[REDACTED]

1<sup>st</sup> October 2004

Dear [REDACTED]

I attended a dental appointment this morning at 10a.m. Whilst in the waiting room I had no choice but to listen to your receptionist make a string of private calls the subject of which was a friend of her son's whom she is taking on holiday. The calls involved a luckless quest to ascertain his surname for the travel agents. I can tell you that "the lad has spiky hair and is not dumpy". I was rescued from this excruciating exercise in the banal organisation of a social calendar by finally overhearing my call to the surgery.

On my return downstairs I paid my bill and went to book an appointment with Dr [REDACTED] in December. One receptionist could not be bothered to look up and the other receptionist, surprise, surprise, was on a personal phone call. I tried to book an appointment and was informed that they do not book 3 months in advance and told I would have to book an appointment in November.

When I asked why, I was informed that booking so far in advance inconveniences them: 'if a dentist takes a day off they will have to un-book the appointments.' Of course it was of no concern to either of them that I would have to spend time booking an appointment in November, making an entry in the diary etc.

If I had not been attending your practise for some 25 years I could have sworn I had stumbled on the filming of a new series of Fawlty Towers: Episode One - Reception.

I am sure you can understand my frustration at not being able to book an appointment two months hence and then having to hear endless private and personal phone calls that have nothing to do with running a dental surgery or for that matter focussing on the needs of the patient who - believe it or not - pays their wages.

I fervently hope that my next visit to your surgery does not entail me having to endure the inanities of your receptionists' private lives and I receive a service where I can make a booking without hearing about how they could be inconvenienced by my outrageous request for an appointment 3 months in advance.

Yours sincerely