

Sussex Medical Chambers- Making a complaint about a service

You have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of care, treatment or service you may receive from Sussex Medical Chambers (SMC).

The information in this document will guide you through the complaints arrangements. We encourage feedback because it's used to improve services. If you wish to share your views and experiences, positive or negative, simply speak to a member of staff.

We also collect your views using our feedback forms (or online links) made available at the time of delivering services.

If you're unhappy with a SMC service, it's often worthwhile discussing your concerns early on with the person providing/ representing the service, as they may be able to sort the issue out quickly. Most problems can be dealt with at this stage, but in some cases you may feel more comfortable speaking to someone not directly involved in your care.

Considering making a complaint but need help?

Many issues can be resolved quickly by speaking directly to the staff at the place where you received care or accessed a service. However, if you're making or thinking of making a complaint, you can do this independently or someone from the independent advocacy can help you. They will also be able to attend meetings with you and review any information you're given during the complaints process. The NHS offer an independent advocacy service and they can be involved at any stage of the process. If you decide you need some support, it's never too late to ask for help. Your local council will be able to tell you who the advocacy provider is in your area. Find details for [your local council](#) on the GOV.UK website.

Your [local Healthwatch](#) can also provide information about making a complaint.

Who do I make my complaint to?

Knowing who to complain to can seem confusing, especially if more than one organisation is involved.

For example, Sussex Medical Chambers provides services in the community where we hire rooms in GP Practices. So if your complaint is about the facilities, e.g. the waiting room, the parking spaces, accessibility, signage etc it may need to be directed to the Practice itself. If your complaint is, for example, about the amount of time you had to wait then it would be directed to the provider of the service, i.e. Sussex Medical Chambers.

If you are unsure, Sussex Medical Chambers will always be able to receive your complaint and ensure that it is responded to by the correct organisation(s) as quickly as possible.

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Complaining about services provided by SMC

You can either complain to SMC directly (verbally or in writing) or to the commissioner of the services, which is the body that pays for the services you use. You can't apply to both. See the information below on how to find the commissioner.

Alternatively, you can also make a complaint to our regulator – [The Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC). Our CQC registration number is 1-101726936.

In the event of a complaint about more than one organisation – perhaps a complaint that includes issues about your GP, local hospital and SMC– you'll only need to make one complaint.

The organisation that receives your complaint must then co-operate with the others to ensure you receive a co-ordinated response.

The simplest way to make a complaint is to speak directly with us by calling 01903 503447 or writing to us by email adminsmc@nhs.net or to the Managing Director, Sussex Medical Chambers, 10 Clive Avenue, Worthing, BN12 4SG.

How do I find the commissioner?

Every CCG will have its own complaints procedure, which is often displayed on its website. You can find contact details for CCGs on this site: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/Clinical-Commissioning-Group/LocationSearch/1>

Alternatively you can call SMC and we will inform you of the contact details for the associated CCG. Our number is 01903 503 447.

Making a complaint

Complaints should normally be made within 12 months of an incident or of the matter coming to your attention. This time limit can be extended provided you have good reasons for not making the complaint sooner and it's possible to complete a fair investigation.

This will be a decision taken by the complaints manager in discussion with you. If you're told your complaint can't be looked at, you may want to contact the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>) or the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) (<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>).

You can make a complaint verbally, in writing, or by email. If you make your complaint verbally, a record of your complaint will be made and you'll be provided with a written copy.

If you're complaining on behalf of someone else, include their written consent with your letter (if you're making your complaint in writing) as this will speed up the process.

But consent isn't required if you're making a complaint in the name of:

- a deceased person

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- someone who lacks the capacity to make their own decisions
- a non-Gillick competent child – visit the NSPCC for more details

If you'd like support, you can always contact your local NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Complain for Change website also offers tips about making a complaint, including tailored advice for people with learning disabilities and resources for south Asian and Muslim women.

What to expect

You should expect an acknowledgement and the offer of a discussion about the handling of your complaint within three working days of receiving your complaint.

If you accept, the discussion will cover the period within which a response to your complaint is likely to be sent – there's no set timeframe and this will depend on the nature of your complaint. If, in the end, the response is delayed for any reason, you should be kept informed.

If you made a complaint but don't receive a response or decision for more than six months, you should be told the reason for the delay. At this point you may also wish to contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>) or the LGO (<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>).

Once your complaint has been investigated, you'll receive a written response. The response should set out the findings and, where appropriate, provide apologies and information about what's being done as a result of your complaint.

It should also include information about how the complaint has been handled and details of your right to take your complaint to the relevant ombudsman.

Other ways to feed back

SMC will routinely ask for your feedback, as in the following examples.

The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is available for service users at multiple points.

The FFT is an anonymous and quick way for you to provide feedback about the service provided to you.

SMC also welcomes compliments and suggestions on service improvements or requests for additional services which we can then assess within the scope of future developments.