



Healthwatch Southwark

Making a complaint: what online information do Southwark GP surgeries give to their patients?

March 2016



Healthwatch Southwark: Who we are & what we do

Healthwatch Southwark is the local independent champion for health and social care services in Southwark. We want all people in Southwark to be able to access the best health and social care services possible.

We inform people about how to get involved in their local health and social care services. We encourage people to tell us what they like and what needs improving, and we work in various ways to ensure that different voices are equally heard.

Healthwatch Southwark uses people's feedback to inform those who design, deliver and commission local public health and social care services.

We sit on several boards and committees, so we can effectively use our influence to provide constructive insight and recommendations about how to improve services and make them more accessible to those who need them.

For more information, visit our website: www.healthwatchsouthwark.co.uk

Why check information about complaints?

The aim of this check by Healthwatch Southwark was to find out whether or not GPs across the borough provide clear and consistent information about making a complaint.

We wanted to highlight the surgeries that make it easy for their patients to know how, where and when to complain. We also wanted to identify the surgeries where there is room for improvement.

Being able to make a complaint about your experience at your GP, which is dealt with appropriately and professionally, is an important right for all patients.

Effective complaints systems help the people who use them feel confident in the system, make GP practices aware of specific issues within their practice and encourage improvement across different areas of the service.

In October 2014, Healthwatch England released a report "Suffering in Silence". The report highlighted the concerns and problems that people face when making a complaint, not just about GPs but across other health and social care services.

Following on from this report, other local Healthwatch have visited GP practices, in order to gather feedback about complaints from members of the public in their respective localities (Healthwatch Islington Oct 2014, Healthwatch Camden Jan 2014).

Additionally, Healthwatch Southwark has carried out engagement work with different community groups, around the issue of [access to GPs](#). During our meetings with different groups, making complaints was flagged an issue by various individuals.



Lack of trust in the system, and absence of support provided to those in making a complaint, were both mentioned.

With this in mind, Healthwatch Southwark wanted to gain an overview of what GP surgeries do to provide information to their patients to make a complaint.

What did we do?

We carried out an online audit of each GP practice in Southwark to see what information they provide on their website about making a complaint.

We decided to look at the information available on their websites because:

- A lot of people prefer to go online to find out information about their GP (opening hours, services available, appointments etc).
- Some people may prefer the confidentiality of finding out this information online.
- Some people will only think about making a complaint once they've gone home and thought about it - online information is convenient.
- It is sometimes difficult to get through to the GP receptionist on the telephone - quicker or easier to get online information about making a complaint.

Summary of findings from our review

We searched for the websites of all 44 surgeries in Southwark. The extent of information that GP surgery websites

offered about making a complaint was varied.

In short, our findings were:

- **32/44** surgeries' websites mention their complaints procedure (N.B 1 surgery was 'currently reviewing its complaint procedure').
- **29** surgeries advised patients to contact the practice manager or complaints manager with their complaint.
- **2** surgeries had websites but provided no information on how to make a complaint about their service.
- **5** surgeries have no website and therefore no online information about how to make a complaint about their service.
- **8** surgeries do not mention a complaints procedure, but provide a form for people to leave suggestions and comments.
- **8** surgeries provide information and details on how to get support in making a complaint.
 - Of these, **3** mentioned VoiceAbility, **2** mentioned Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAD) and **3** mentioned PohWER.

See 'full breakdown of the data' section of this report for a breakdown of each GP's response.

What does this mean?

- Around 2/3 of GP practices in Southwark provide some online information about how to make a complaint about their service.



- There was consistency amongst most of these practices in that they recommended patients to contact the practice or complaints managers.
- Many practices provide concise summaries of how to make a complaint, as well as links to download their complete complaints policy on the website
- A few surgeries provide estimates of how long it will take for them to respond to complaints.

However...

- There was inconsistency in the information that GP surgery websites provide: some simply say “contact the practice manager” whilst others provide a lot more information and guidance on making a complaint.
- Some surgeries tell patients to pick up a copy of the complaints policy from the reception rather than provide a downloadable version on their website.
- Some surgeries do not offer any guidance on making a complaint except to provide feedback and comments in a generic online form.

Recommendations

This report will be shared with:

- NHS England and NHS Southwark CCG who jointly commission primary care services.
- All 44 Southwark GP practices.
- Patient Participation Groups.

Recommendation 1: All surgeries with websites should provide information on complaints. It would be good practice to include the following information:

- How to make a complaint
- What the surgery will do
- Who will be dealing with the complaint
- When they can expect to hear from the surgery
- If they are not happy, what they can do next

Recommendation 2: Complaints policies and procedures should be downloadable from the website where possible or written out on a website page.

Recommendation 3: Websites should give information about how and where to get support in making a complaint - VoiceAbility etc.

Recommendation 4: In addition to website information about complaints, GP surgeries should have visible information in the waiting area. This is especially important if the GP surgery does not have a website.



Full breakdown of the data...

Name of GP	Website link and date we checked it	Details
Acorn Surgery	https://acorn-gaumont.secure-gpsite.nhs.uk/index.php?seo=comments-and-complaints&navid=27553 Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints section on website. Contact practice manager. Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.
Albion Street Group Practice	http://www.albionstreetgrouppractice.co.uk/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints section on website. Contact practice manager. Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
Avicenna Health Centre	Date last checked 17/03/2016	No website.
Aylesbury Medical Centre (Aylesbury Partnership) (Thurlow St, Commercial Way & Dun Cow Practices)	http://www.aylesburypartnership.nhs.uk/practice-policies.aspx?t=3 Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints section on the website. Contact the practice manager. Go to reception to get a complaints procedures and guidance form or download online. Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (ICAD).
Bermondsey Spa Medical Practice	http://www.drsabhatti.co.uk/charter.asp#3 Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints section on website. Contact practice manager in writing. Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
Blackfriars Medical Practice	http://www.blackfriarsmedicalpractice.nhs.uk/information/rights-and-responsibilities/ Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints section on website. Contact practice manager in writing.

Borough Medical Centre (Dr Sharma)	http://www.drsharma-boroughmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/information/ Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager.
Borough Medical Centre (Dr Misra)	http://www.drmisra-boroughmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/information/ Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager.
Camberwell Green Practice	http://www.camberwellgreensurgery.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure. • Mentions where to get support in making complaint (ICAD).
Concordia Melbourne Grove Medical Practice	http://www.mgmp.co.uk/ Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints not mentioned on website.
Concordia Parkside Medical Centre	http://www.parksidemedical.co.uk/contact-us Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form is provided for feedback and comments. • Complaints not mentioned.
DMC Chadwick Road	http://www.chadwickroad.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.
Dulwich Medical Centre	http://www.dmccrystalpalaceroad.co.uk/info.aspx?p=7 Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.

<p>East Street Surgery</p>	<p>http://301eaststreetsurgery.co.uk/pages/Suggestion--Complaints Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager in writing.
<p>Elm Lodge Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.elmlodgesurgery.co.uk/info.aspx?p=7 Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (VoiceAbility).
<p>Falmouth Road Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.falmouthroadgp.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager in writing. • Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
<p>Forest Hill Road Group Practice</p>	<p>http://fhrgp.co.uk/other-information/page/suggestions-complaints.html Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<p>But...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • FHRGP is currently reviewing its complaints procedure so no information is available.
<p>Gaumont Surgery</p>	<p>https://acorn-gaumont.secure-gpsite.nhs.uk/index.php?seo=comments-and-complaints&navid=27553 Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.
<p>Grange Road Practice</p>	<p>http://www.grangeroadpractice.co.uk/#!the-practice/c5mn Date last checked 21/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints not mentioned on website. • Advises patients to contact practice manager with comments.

Hambleton Clinic	http://www.southwarkgp.co.uk/practice/practice-policies/comments-and-complaints Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact Complaints Manager. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (PohWER).
Hurley at Lister	http://hurleyatlister.com/complaints-procedure/ Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager.
Lister Primary Care Centre (Dr Arumugaraasah)	Date last checked 16/03/2016	No website.
Lister Primary Care Centre (Dr Hossein)	Date last checked 16/03/2016	No website.
Maddock Way Surgery	Date last checked 17/03/2016	No website.
Manor Place Surgery	http://manorplacesurgery.co.uk/feedback_form_t56899.html?a=0 Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form is provided for feedback and comments. • Complaints not mentioned.
New Mill Street Surgery	http://www.newmillstreet.com/Policies.php Date last checked 17/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on the website. • Get information on making a complaint from reception.
Nunhead Surgery	http://nunheadsurgery.co.uk/other-information/page/comments-complaints.html Date last checked 16/03/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (VoiceAbility).

<p>Old Kent Road Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.oldkentroadsurgery.nhs.uk/practice-policies.aspx Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Speak to a staff member and fill in a complaints form which will be passed onto practice manager.
<p>Park Medical Centre</p>	<p>http://www.parkmedicalcentresouthwark.co.uk/practice_p3716.html?a=0 Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager in writing. • Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
<p>Penrose Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.penrosesurgery.nhs.uk/feedback.php Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager.
<p>Princess Street Group Practice</p>	<p>http://www.princessstreetgrouppractice.co.uk/practice_p2540.html?a=0 Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.
<p>Queens Road Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.southwarkgp.co.uk/practice/practice-policies/comments-and-complaints/ Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact Complaints Manager. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (PohWER).
<p>Silverlock Medical Centre</p>	<p>http://www.southwarkgp.co.uk/practice/practice-policies/comments-and-complaints/ Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact Complaints Manager. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (PohWER).
<p>Sir John Kirk Close Surgery</p>	<p>http://manorplacesurgery.co.uk/feedback_form_t56899.html?a=0 Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form is provided for feedback and comments. • Complaints not mentioned.

<p>St Giles Surgery (both)</p>	<p>http://www.stgilessurgery.co.uk/blue/comments.htm and http://www.stgilessurgery.co.uk/red/complaints.htm Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager in writing. • Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
<p>St James Church Surgery</p>	<p>Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<p>No website.</p>
<p>Sternhall Lane Surgery</p>	<p>http://sternhalllanesurgery.co.uk/complaints-procedure/ Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure. <p>But...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The link to the complaints procedure is broken.
<p>Surrey Docks Health Centre (Drs Holden, Marrinan et al)</p>	<p>http://www.surreydockshc.co.uk/ Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints not mentioned. • Family & Friends test only form of feedback.
<p>The Bermondsey and Lansdowne Medical Mission</p>	<p>http://blm2.co.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-suggestions/ Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager in writing. • Get more details from reception about making a complaint.
<p>The Gardens</p>	<p>http://thegardenssurgery.co.uk/general-information/page/complaints.html Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure. • Mentions where to get support in making a complaint (VoiceAbility).

<p>The Lordship Lane Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.thelordshiplanesurgery.net/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Contact practice manager. • Provides a link to detailed complaints procedure.
<p>306 Medical Centre</p>	<p>http://www.306medicalcentre.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=20 Date last checked 16/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website • Contact practice manager or get more information from reception • Provides an online link to download the complaints procedure.
<p>The Trafalgar Surgery</p>	<p>http://www.thetrafalgarsurgery.co.uk/pages/Concerns--Complaints Date last checked 17/03/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Speak to a staff member and fill in a complaints form which will be passed onto practice manager.
<p>Villa Street Medical Centre</p>	<p>http://www.villastreetmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/other-gp-surgery-information.shtml#SEC150 Date last checked 09/05/2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints section on website. • Speak to member of staff or Practice Manager. • Write or complete complaints form (downloadable or available in reception) • Link to NHS Choices to complain to NHS England.