



GUIDE FOR CHIROPRACTIC PRACTITIONERS

How We Can Help

All chiropractors and chiropractic clinics should have an effective internal complaints procedure to address concerns raised by patients. Many complaints can be resolved locally; however, where a complaint remains unresolved, the Chiropractic Complaints Mediation Service (CCMS) provides an independent and impartial service to help patients and practitioners work towards a satisfactory outcome.

We recognise that complaints can be challenging for everyone involved. Our aim is to help facilitate a fair, proportionate and timely approach to complaint resolution. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and everyone involved in the process will be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

The service is a pilot funded by the General Chiropractic Council, who are the statutory regulator of the chiropractic profession. The pilot launched on 1 September 2026 for an initial seven-month period. It is therefore free at the point of use, but funded through GCC registration fees.

The pilot is being delivered by Nockolds Resolution, who run ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) Approved Body services in other sectors including the eyecare/optics and veterinary care in the UK.

What We Do

The CCMS Mediation Process

CCMS is an independent, confidential, telephone-based mediation service that helps patients and chiropractic professionals resolve complaints through constructive communication and collaborative problem-solving.

Mediation seeks to resolve disputes without taking sides, making judgments, conducting investigations or providing legal advice. We do not determine who is right or wrong. Instead, we facilitate discussions to help both parties better understand each other's concerns and explore mutually acceptable resolutions. An impartial resolution manager will be assigned to help you and the patient to resolve their complaint in a mutually acceptable way.

Your CCMS resolution manager will:

- Listen to the patient's concerns.
- Understand your perspective on the circumstances of the complaint
- Gather relevant information from both parties.
- Encourage effective communication through shuttle mediation (talking to each party separately).
- Use mediation techniques to help clarify misunderstandings, address concerns and explore key elements that require resolution.
- Support collaborative problem-solving.
- Assist both parties in working towards a mutually acceptable resolution.

The CCMS process is:



Independent

As the pilot is operated by a third party ADR expert, the service is independent from the chiropractic sector and stakeholders. CCMS does not 'work' for either party and has no vested interest in the outcome.



Impartial

The process and standards underpinning the pilot ensure it is fair, neutral and without professional or regulatory bias. The resolution managers listen to both sides fairly and do not favour one party over the other.



Resolution Focused

The process supports and facilitates finding a resolution which both parties can agree to, and which allows both parties to bring the matter to a close, feel heard and also give an opportunity to gain insight as part of reflective practice and continual improvement.

Mediation is a well-established dispute resolution technique, and is based on the following core principles:

- Confidential – the discussions take place with the resolution manager and remain within the mediation process. This creates a safe space for both parties to share their perspectives and explore how concerns can be understood, addressed and resolved.
- Without prejudice – the matters discussed within the process cannot be referred to in any subsequent civil legal proceedings involving the complaint. This is an accepted approach in both formal legal and ADR processes which allows the parties to make offers, proposals or share information in the spirit of resolving the complaint or dispute.

These elements and expectations are clearly set out in an Agreement to Mediate which both parties sign, and in the Mediation Resolution Agreement which confirms the agreed outcome.

To support the effective resolution of concerns and complaints, you are expected to engage promptly, openly and constructively with the mediation process. This reflects the General Chiropractic Council's expectation that registrants cooperate fully with complaints procedures relating to their professional conduct, performance or the care of a patient.

Where appropriate, you should inform patients that the pilot service is available as an independent means of resolving concerns and should encourage participation where it may assist in achieving an early and mutually satisfactory outcome.

In line with the principles of Duty of Candour, you should communicate openly with patients when things go wrong, including offering an apology where appropriate, providing a clear explanation of what has happened, and discussing any remedial action or support available.

Our aim is to help patients and practitioners resolve complaints efficiently and fairly, and can be highly effective where a complaint can be resolved with:

- An explanation
- An apology or acknowledgement
- Remedial action or communication
- A refund discussion where appropriate
- Clarification of treatment plans
- Agreement regarding future care or conduct
- Signposting, and
- Other proposals which both parties are willing to agree and bring matters to a close.

We cannot award compensation, determine negligence, or adjudicate on complaints.

In addition to providing a full mediation service, we can also:

- Provide guidance on complaint handling.
- Offer information about mediation and how the complaints process works.
- Support patients who may need assistance raising a complaint.

The mediation process is informal, and neither party requires legal representation.

Who Can Complain to Us?

A patient may refer a complaint to CCMS if they:

- Are receiving or have received chiropractic care from a registrant of the General Chiropractic Council.
- Have been refused chiropractic services.
- Have concerns regarding treatment, communication, service delivery or associated aspects of care provided by a practitioner or clinic which fall within our remit.

What Complaints Can We Help With?

CCMS may assist with complaints relating to:

- Patient experience and customer service.
- Communication difficulties.
- Administrative issues.
- Treatment-related concerns suitable for mediation.
- Fees and billing disputes.
- Delays, misunderstandings or service issues.
- Dissatisfaction with how a complaint has been handled.
- Appointment management.
- Aspects of care where the primary issue may be capable of resolution through explanation, apology, practical remedial action or facilitated dialogue.

Customer service concerns can be highly emotive and difficult to resolve when recollections differ. As an impartial mediation service, we help both parties explore why the complaint remains unresolved and identify possible ways forward.

We do not investigate complaints, make findings of fact, or determine liability.

When Can a Complaint Be Referred to the CCMS?

Patients should raise their concerns directly with the clinic first and allow the clinic an opportunity to respond through its own complaints procedure. If the patient has not raised their complaint with you previously, then please let us know and we can support them to return to you for you to respond to and resolve their complaint.

Patients and practitioners may contact CCMS at any stage to obtain impartial information about the mediation process.

We generally recommend a party contacts the CCMS for complaint resolution where:

- The clinic has been unable to resolve the complaint.
- The patient remains dissatisfied following the clinic's final response.

- Communication between the parties has broken down.

Complaints should ideally be raised as soon as possible and normally within twelve months of the events concerned.

What Complaints Can't We Help With?

CCMS can only assist with complaints that fall within our mediation remit. CCMS will not be able to assist with:

- Concerns involving a clear public protection risk, serious or repeated allegations, dishonesty, abuse, serious clinical concern, safeguarding concern, immediate risk to patients or the public, or matters likely to require formal Fitness to Practise investigation.
- Complaints where mediation could compromise an ongoing investigation, delay urgent regulatory action, or create confusion about the GCC's statutory responsibilities.
- Allegations involving illegal practice, misuse of protected title, failure to cooperate with the regulator, serious misconduct or information suggesting wider risk to patients or the public.
- Possible Clinical Negligence- if a patient believes they have suffered significant harm as a result of negligent treatment and are entitled to compensation, they should seek independent legal advice from a solicitor specialising in clinical negligence.
- Complaints Outside Our Jurisdiction- where appropriate, we will direct patients to another organisation better placed to assist them.
- Historic complaints where the circumstances of the complaint or the final response from the chiropractor was more than 12 months ago. The CCMS has a discretion to assist in these matters and a decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Important Information for Practitioners

If the complaint involves clinical concerns, patient safety issues, or could potentially include allegations regarding professional conduct, we strongly recommend that you contact your professional indemnity insurer or representative body before responding in detail. If additional time is required to obtain advice, please let us know.

How Can a Complaint Be Referred?

You can contact CCMS by:

Telephone:

Email: enquiries@chirocomplaints.co.uk

Online form [\[link\]](#)

Written: CCMS, 6 Market Square, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 3UZ

Practitioners are welcome to contact CCMS to discuss the mediation process and complaint handling. However, practitioners should ensure that any disclosure of personal data complies with their legal and professional obligations.

If you consider that complaint resolution with the CCMS would be helpful for a complainant and you have completed your own complaint policy, then you may:

- Share a link to the information guide for patients ([LINK](#))
- Share a link to the online information and contact form ([LINK TO WEBPAGE](#))
- Obtain the patient's consent to share their contact details with the CCMS and reach out to us. We can then make contact with the patient.

What Happens Next?

When a complaint is received:

- We review the information provided.
- We determine whether the complaint is suitable for mediation.
- If the complaint is suitable for mediation, then we start the CCMS process:
- We obtain relevant information from both parties.
- A resolution manager is assigned and will contact you.
- You can decide who will participate in the CCMS calls – we ask that they are familiar with the complaint so they can discuss matters in full and have authority to make any decisions on behalf of the practice. The individual chiropractor involved will usually participate, however we can discuss this with you when the resolution manager makes initial contact
- We discuss the issues separately with the patient and practitioner.
- We facilitate communication and explore potential resolutions.
- If a resolution is agreed, and considered appropriate, we will confirm in a 'Mediation Agreement' which is signed by you and the patient.

Either party may withdraw from mediation at any stage.

If a Resolution Is Reached

Where a complaint is successfully resolved through mediation, both parties may be asked to confirm their agreement to the proposed resolution and to confirm this settles the complaint and brings the matter to a close. Any legally binding effect will depend on the terms of the agreement reached.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

CCMS is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion throughout all aspects of our work.

Frequently Asked Questions

Whose side are you on?

Neither. CCMS is an independent mediation service.

We do not advocate for patients or practitioners. Our role is to facilitate communication, improve understanding and help both parties explore possible resolutions.

Do I need to be represented during the mediation?

No, the process is informal and there is no adjudication. We recommend that chiropractors liaise with their professional indemnity insurers where the circumstances of a complaint may involve allegations or an outcome which could fall within their insurance cover, and notifications should be made in the usual way. The discussions within the CCMS process are without prejudice and confidential so cannot be referred to in any subsequent civil legal claim (i.e. for clinical or professional negligence).

Should serious allegations come to our attention during the CCMS process which could amount to an impairment to your fitness to practise, then we are obliged to share these with the GCC.

Do you investigate complaints?

No. We do not investigate, adjudicate, determine liability or make findings against either party.

Can you award compensation?

No. Compensation claims fall outside our role as a mediation service.

How long will the process take?

We aim to have completed the CCMS process within XX days of the Agreement to Mediate being signed. Usually, the resolution manager will schedule the calls with each party for around 30-45 minutes. They will then look to work with you both over the next 24-48 hours following the calls to reach a resolution.

Will there be a joint meeting?

Not usually. Our mediation process is primarily telephone-based, with mediators speaking separately to each party to understand their concerns and facilitate productive discussions.

What happens if mediation is unsuccessful?

If no agreement can be reached, both parties remain free to pursue other available options, which may include regulatory, legal or court processes where appropriate.

Who will be mediating my complaint?

A CCMS resolution manager will be assigned to your complaint and will work with you and the chiropractor/practice. They will be one of the trained and impartial resolution managers who work in accordance with the requirements of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Approved Body framework and have experience in complaint resolution or chiropractic practice.

What happens if the pilot ends before my complaint mediation is concluded?

CCMS will complete the resolution process for any referrals received during the pilot and where the mediation process has commenced.