

# FAQ Setting up a satellite chambers



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## **Why are Pallant Medical interested in working with you setting up a new chambers?**

We're keen to expand our network across the UK. Working in a locum team like Pallant Medical Chambers is a fantastic way to work as a GP, and a key lesson we've learnt over our 6 years is that it requires an enormous amount of work and effort to set up a chambers. As well as the obvious benefit of hoping to pay ourselves back for our investment (which we hope to do in 2011!), we firmly believe that within the next few years – mainly due to revalidation – chambers like ours will be the accepted way of working as a locum and we believe our model offers the most comprehensive solution to the dilemma of independent peripatetic locum GPs working within a managed environment.

### **What's in it for you?**

You can benefit from working as part of a growing network of chambers, whilst benefiting from our experience and expertise, using the systems we have developed without having to invest the significant amount of time, energy and money that is needed to set up a successful chambers.

### **Will Pallant Medical Chambers help me set up an independent chambers in my area?**

Although possible, this is only going to be realistic if you're an organisation like a PCT due to the substantial set up cost involved. In order to implement an independent chambers comparable to Pallant Medical Chambers, it may be feasible to offer a management consultancy service plus the provision of systems. In addition, a local service would have to fund an ongoing manager that would prove costly for the first 20 members. We suggest that the costs would be prohibitive for a small group.

### **How do we get going?**

Once there is a small core group (say of around 3 individuals) who want to commit to working as a Pallant Medical Chambers, Richard Fieldhouse or one of our other clinical directors and Ali Lewis (one of our Chambers Managers) will find a day to come to your area and go through all that's needed to set the group up. Prior to this we'll collate some basic information about the core members and put together some 'marketing packs' to introduce your current practices to the Pallant way of doing things. We'll get you to place your existing bookings etc onto our bespoke chambers management system and – for no fee - we'll take over all your billing/banking of your existing bookings etc.

### **How many members do you need to start a chambers?**

Ideally 3 or more, but we would consider just one (we've started a couple of chambers with members who've moved to a new area from an existing chambers). Starting as a small group, you'll be able to start chambers meetings and educational meetings, whereas a single member could take a while to help recruit more members.

### **How soon can we get going?**

That depends on you – if you've already got a core group of potential members, ideally some doctors who are already locuming locally, we can start within a week or so of getting all your details onto the system. We'll work with you prior to the induction meeting to make sure we've got a good database of practices to begin working with.

### **Some of our members already have work booked?**

That's not a problem. As soon as you've been taught how to use the calendar system, they can transfer all their current bookings on to the calendar system and, for no charge, we'll do their billing and invoicing for them. We actively encourage this as it allows us to build up relationship very quickly with practices near you.

**As the Clinical Directors and Chambers Managers live on the South Coast, how would we feel part of the team as a 'satellite' chambers?**

Initially we would work closely with you helping you set up the chambers, visiting as necessary. However we fully recognise the need for local expertise. Once we have a good number of members in a geographical area we plan to recruit a local Chambers Manager. In addition, once we have a group of around 6 chambers in a region we will work with you to aim to identify a local Chamber's Lead who could become a Clinical Director for that area.

**Who sets the Chambers rates?**

Pallant Medical Chambers uses a very well tested and implemented session schedule, but we leave it to our individual chambers to decide the rates for each particular type of session – although we're here to help you decide!

**Who selects the members to our new Chambers?**

This becomes the responsibility of the new chambers, under the direction of the Chamber's Lead. Potential members apply via the Pallant Medical website, and we advise you whether we believe there is enough work coming into the chambers to sustain a new member. The chambers lead will arrange a time to interview new applicants. Once you've decided that you want them to proceed with the application, we'll organise their references etc for you and we'll take it from there.

**What's a 'Chamber's Lead'?**

This is a member of your local chambers who acts as your chambers clinical governance lead. Their role includes interviewing new applicants, chairing monthly meetings and managing significant events. They receive a reduction in their chamber's fees which equates for an honorarium for this work. If you're interested in being, or even sharing, the Chamber's Lead then let us know.

**Am I still self-employed?**

Yes – you'll still be able to contribute to the NHS Superannuation Scheme and you are liable for your own tax and NI. The Chambers Managers facilitate all your bookings and bill the practices on your behalf; the practice writes the payment out in your name and either pays the full amount direct to you your bank account or we'll forward the payment to you.

**What happens regarding members medical indemnity?**

Pallant Medical Chambers is on the MPS's Practice Scheme so, if you're with the MPS, you'll pay less as you will be charged the previous year's rates (i.e. increases in rates are delayed for year).

**Could you be accused of operating as a 'cartel' by fixing prices?**

Firstly each chambers decides its own rates as we have learned that it is much better for individual chambers to choose rates that are appropriate for the area that they work in. However, as the members within each separate chambers operate as a single trading entity, we are free to set rates *within* each chambers.

**What does it cost?**

Pallant charges each member a management fee. This fee will eventually more than pay for itself; the sheer efficiency of the chambers will ultimately lead to an increase in the number of sessions you'll be booked for, and you will no longer have to spend time on administration and could choose to work a further locum session instead. The fee is fully tax deductible. We can discuss details of our fee structures with you.

If you have any other questions then please don't hesitate to ask!