

**WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST**

**COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT  
2014/15**

**INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND / FOREWORD**

**INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the Health & Social Care Complaints Procedure, this is our fifth annual report which sets out a detailed analysis of the nature and number of complaints and concerns received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust during 2014/15. During the year we have continued to encourage more meaningful engagement and involvement with our patients and service users, ensuring that lessons are continually learned to safeguard quality and prevent failures in care and treatment.

In order to encourage a simpler and more flexible approach to complaints handling and a greater emphasis on local resolution, the current system has only two stages. The first is a complaint to the healthcare provider or commissioner, followed if necessary by the complaint being considered by the Health Service Ombudsman.

The Trust is obliged to offer every opportunity to exhaust local resolution and therefore encourages complainants to contact the Trust again should they remain dissatisfied. During the year a total of 62 complainants asked for a further review of their complaint by the Trust. In addition, 10 complainants referred their complaint to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman for consideration.

The Trust's Head of Clinical Quality and Safety, Governance Manager and Complaints staff facilitated a number of meetings throughout the year between complainants and professional staff in order to attempt resolution of formal complaints and this approach achieved a number of satisfactory outcomes.

**FOREWORD**

The Complaints Annual Report reviews the complaints received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015

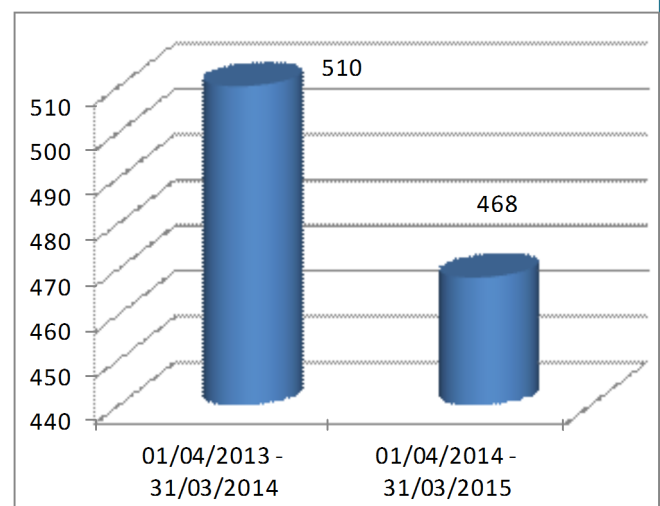
**Mrs Elaine Way  
Chief Executive  
9 September 2015**

**Annual comparison of complaints**

There has been a 8% decrease in the number of formal complaints received in the past year. During 2014/15 a total of 468 formal complaints (includes 11 Children Order Complaints) were received by the Trust. This compares with 510 complaints during the previous financial year of 2013/14.

It is pleasing to note that this decrease in complaints has been noted considering the large geographical area the Trust covers and the volume of contacts Trust staff have with patients and clients.

The continued awareness training provided to staff on the Health & Social Care Complaints Procedure highlights the emphasis around enhanced local resolution and encourages staff to resolve complaints at a local level.



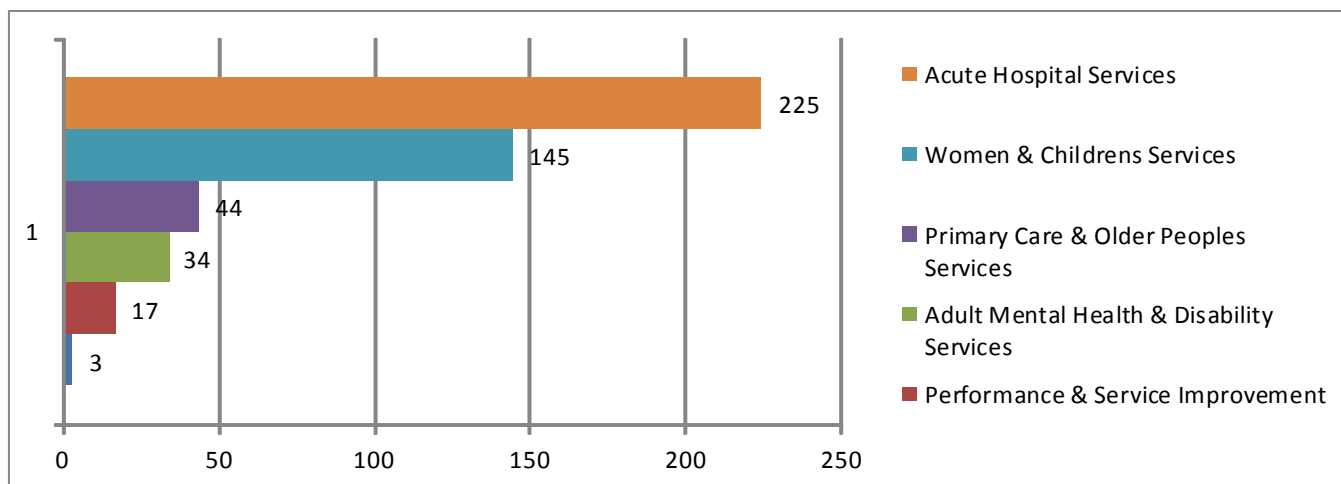
## What our service users complained about

A total of 633 subjects were identified from the 468 complaints received during the 2014/15 year.

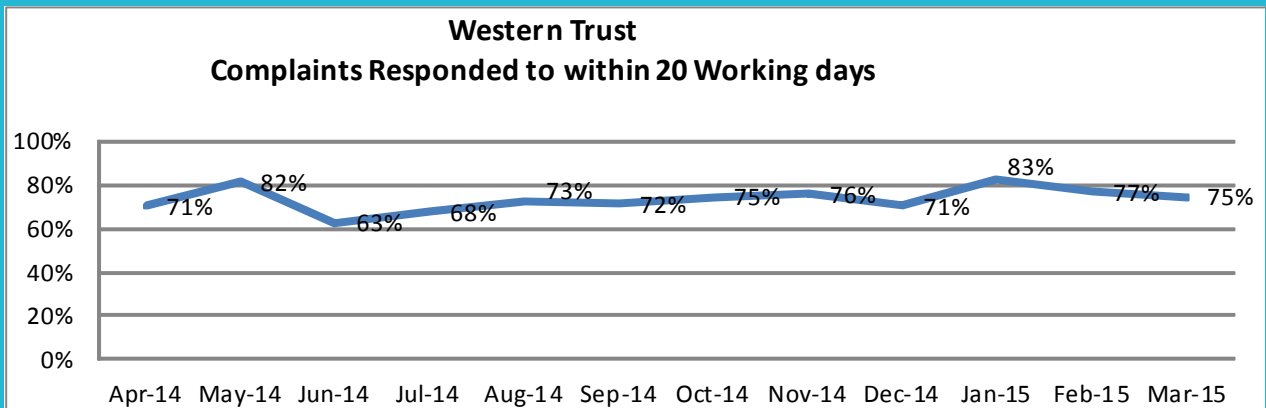
Treatment & Care, Quality	182
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	88
Communication/Information to Patients	60
Clinical Diagnosis	47
Policy/Commercial Decisions	43
Treatment & Care, Quantity	42
Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)	30
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments	19
Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)	16
Other	14
Professional Assessment of Need	12
Children Order Complaints	11
Waiting Times, Accident & Emergency	10
Records/Records Keeping	8
Hotel/Support/Security Services	8
Infection Control	7
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements	7
Confidentiality	6
Patients' Privacy/Dignity	6
Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies	4
Environmental	4
Other Contracted Services	3
Aids/Adaptations/Appliances	2
Transport, Late or Non-Arrival/Journey Time	1
Consent to Treatment	1
Waiting Times, Community Services	1
Patient's Status/Discrimination	1
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>633</b>

## Which Directorates received complaints?

The following is a breakdown of the Complaints received by Directorate for the 2014 - 2015 year.



## RESPONSE TIMES – April 2014–March 2015



### Monitoring

### Reporting

### Learning

#### Monitoring / Reporting / Learning

The Complaints Department has and will continue to take action to increase the number of complaints responded to within 20 working days. These include regular reports to management, posting information on response times on the Trust's Sharepoint system and increased follow-up with Investigating Officers. Summaries of outstanding complaints are also provided on a regular basis to Assistant Directors. Complaints staff also encourage staff to meet with Complainants when it is felt that this will promote a more positive and timely outcome.

A complaints handling flowchart has been developed to ensure that actions are taken to address any delays in receiving responses from the Investigating Officers.

In accordance with the flowchart the Complaints Manager referred five complaints during the 2014/15 year that were open for 3+ months to the Trust's Chief Executive. Following this, action was taken to ensure that a response to the complaint was issued.

The Trust is committed to using complaints/concerns as an opportunity to learn and improve services and care. In order to record and monitor complaints activity, the Complaints Department is required to maintain a database of complaints and provide regular reports to the Complaints Forum, Directorates and other relevant Committees. These reports highlight themes and trends across the Trust to ensure learning takes place.

The Complaints Department also provides information on lessons learned as a standing item for the Share to Learn Quality and Safety Newsletter.

The Trust continues to provide a monthly monitoring return to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) regarding lessons learned from all complaints closed within each month.

The Complaints Forum, Chaired by Mrs Sally O'Kane, Non-Executive Director, continues to meet throughout the year on a quarterly basis. The Forum has service user representation from each of the Directorates and was commended by the Patient and Client Council for this approach. The Forum is provided with a Performance Report at each of the quarterly meetings which provides comparative data on the number of complaints received and also helps to identify trends.

## COMPLIMENTS

Services across the Trust receive many compliments on a frequent basis, usually in the form of written thank-you letters/cards or verbal feedback. A number of compliments are received by the Chief Executive which are forwarded on to relevant services by the Patient's Advocate. A total of 2243 patients and clients formally acknowledged and complimented the treatment and care that they have received by Trust staff during 2014/15. Staff are greatly encouraged by the positive comments.

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### CHILDREN ORDER COMPLAINTS

The Trust received a total of 11 Children Order complaints for the 2014/15 period. Each of these complaints was processed through the Children's Order Procedure.

### Other/Additional Information

The Western Health and Social Care Trust takes all complaints seriously and welcomes the opportunity to learn from complaints. The Trust's Chief Executive reviews weekly summaries of complaints received and she is also signatory to all written responses.

This report highlights the significant work being done within the Complaints Department to ensure that the HSC Complaints Procedure is being managed effectively and to improve the responsiveness to patients concerns and complaints in line with the regulations.

Complaints staff also regularly liaise with staff across the Trust to help resolve informal complaints and respond to enquiries from MLAs, local Councillors and other public representatives. A total of 277 General Enquiries were handled by the Complaints Department in 2014/15. The Complaints Department continues to work with Service Directorates to ensure a quick resolution of issues which may be resolved without the need for an investigation of a formal complaint. Complaints Department staff wish to thank all areas for their assistance throughout the 2014/15 period.