

Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2017 - 2018

Foreword

As the Director responsible for complaints and compliments, I am pleased to present the Complaints & Compliments Annual Report for the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust for the year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

We welcome complaints and the opportunities they provide us with to learn lessons and improve our services. Whilst we aim to give the best service to all our patients and clients, we wish to know when things do not go well so that we can take the appropriate remedial action to prevent it happening again.

The Trust has a Lessons Learnt Sub Committee, which is part of the Governance and Risk Management infrastructure. The role of this committee is to ensure that lessons learnt have been put into practice on an organisation wide basis.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Trust staff for their continued dedication to the resolution of complaints and for their sensitive handling of issues that are important to complainants. The Trust appreciates the many compliments received that acknowledge the excellent services provided by our staff.



Myra Weir

Director of Human Resources & Corporate Affairs

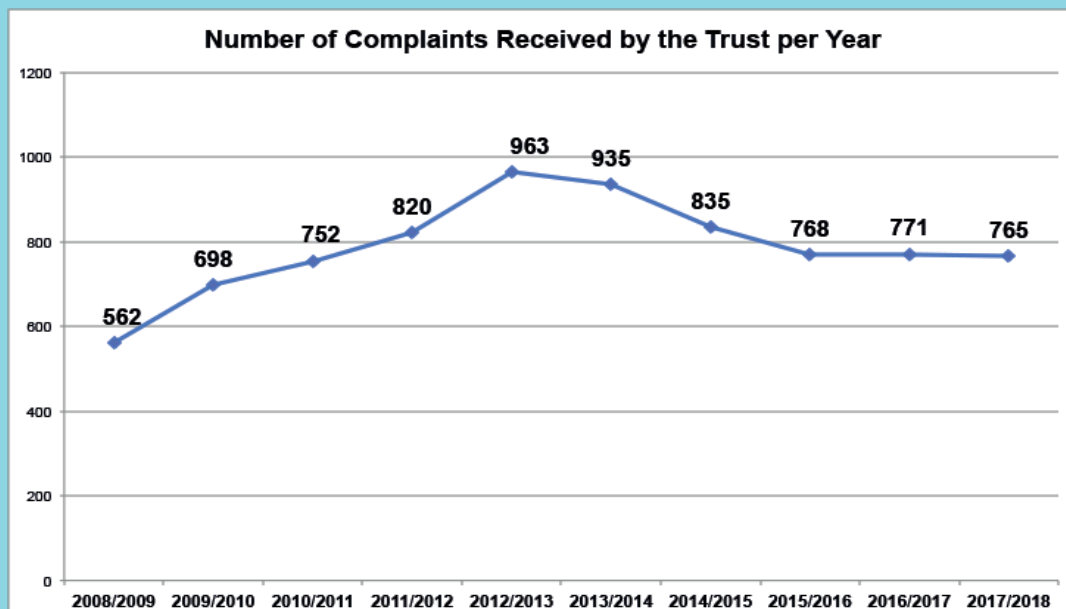
Facts & Figures

In the year 2017/2018:

- **765** complaints were received
- **99%** of complaints were acknowledged within 2 working days
- **50%** of complaints were responded to within 20 working days
- The top **3** issues of complaint were Quality of Treatment & Care; Staff Attitude / Behaviour; Communication / Information
- **3680** compliments were received.

Complaints this year

During the past year (2017/2018), the Trust received **765** complaints, which is similar to the previous year (771), as shown in the graph below.



Complaints

The number of complaints continues to be low considering the large geographical area the Trust covers and the number of contacts Trust staff have with patients and clients. The Trust:

- Provides over 250 different health and social care services
- Serves a population of approximately 440,000
- Has almost 10,000 staff
- Provides services in peoples own homes and from the Ulster, Lagan Valley, Downe, Newtownards and Bangor Hospitals
- Saw about 150,000 people at our Emergency Departments during the year, treated about 31,000 people in hospital as daycases and admitted about 36,600 people to our 3 main hospitals
- Spends in excess of 50% of its resources on community based and personal social services, supporting people in their homes.

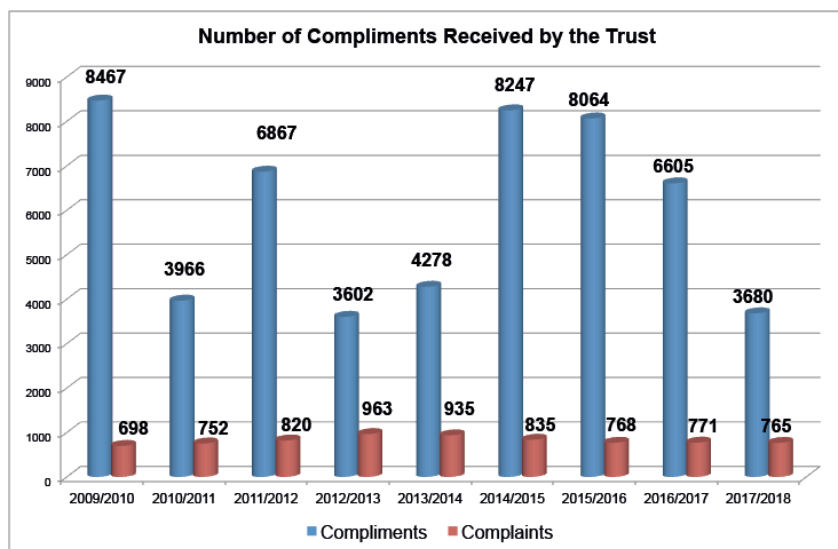
Compliments

Whilst the Trust recognises that sometimes things go wrong, each year the Trust receives thousands of letters of appreciation and expressions of thanks to acknowledge the excellent services provided.

We are proud of our staff and ensure that positive feedback is shared and celebrated. Our staff certainly appreciate feedback from their patients and clients, and knowing when things go well.

In 2017/2018 the Trust received **3680** compliments. During the year, we have worked with the Department of Health to pilot a new method of collecting compliments. This can account for some under reporting as we roll out the system to all staff.

The graph below shows the number of compliments received per year in comparison to the number of complaints.



"I am writing to thank all the nurses, doctors and other staff who cared so beautifully for my mother in her last few days. She was treated with kindness and dignity."

"The kindness & care received from these two district nurses went far and beyond their duties. They treated him with such dignity and compassion not to mention their kindness to me in these extremely painful circumstances. They were considerate, thoughtful and always very appropriate."

"I want to express my thanks to the Care Manager for all he had done for my friend and her family. He always went out of his way to help in every way. It is nice to have good care and support at a time like that."

"From the moment I arrived at the hospital to the moment I left, I was treated with the utmost courtesy and professionalism."

"I would like to compliment my therapist. I have recently completed a block of therapy, which I have found extremely helpful. She conducted herself in a warm, friendly and professional manner. I would definitely recommend this service to other patients."

"The cleaning staff are excellent and one member in particular. He was efficient, thorough and friendly. There were no shortcuts taken and everything got his full attention, it was apparent he takes a real pride in his job. His methodical and rigorous dedication was a real pleasure to watch."

What people complained about

The chart below shows the number of complaints by subject for the past year (2017/2018) in comparison to the previous year.

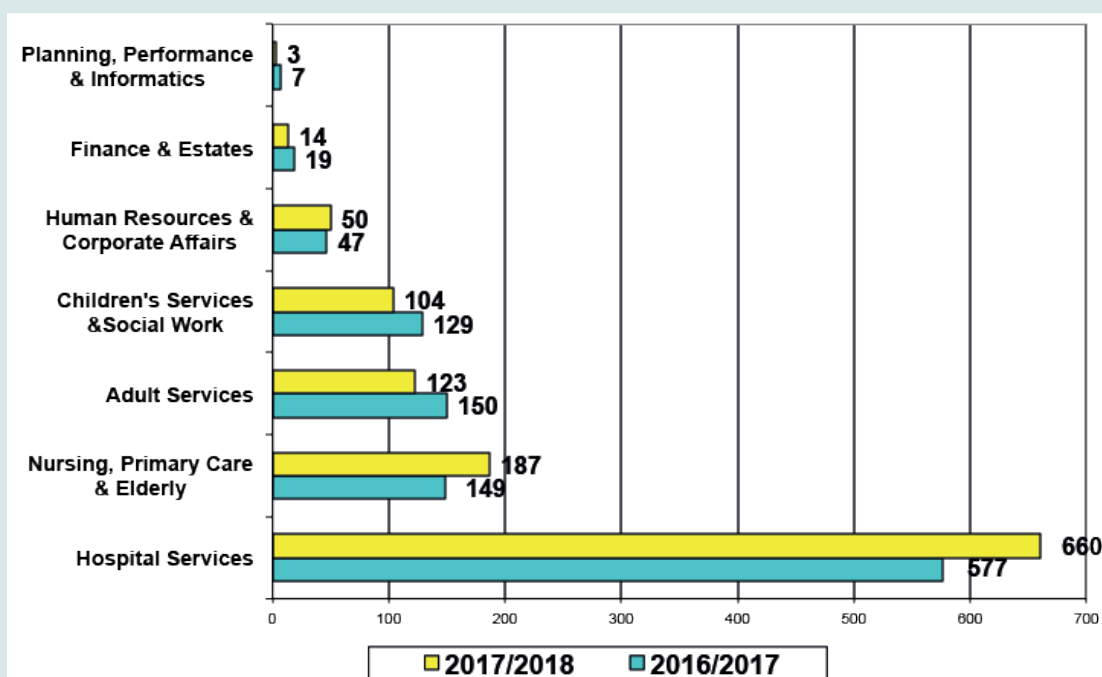
The figures are per issue of complaint, as a complaint can have more than one issue. For 2017/2018 we had complaints made by **765** complainants and these raised **1141** issues, compared with 2016/2017 figures of **771** complainants and **1078** issues.

The top three subjects of complaint in the past year were: Quality of Treatment & Care, Staff Attitude / Behaviour and Communication / Information.

These are the same top subjects as last year, and this is similar across other Health & Social Care Trusts.

Subjects (per issue)	2016/2017		2017/2018	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Quality of Treatment & Care	236	22%	298	26%
Staff Attitude / Behaviour	218	20%	229	20%
Communication / Information	158	14%	191	17%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancellation Outpatients Appointments	88	8%	55	5%
Clinical Diagnosis	25	2%	38	3%
Records / Record Keeping	32	3%	31	3%
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments	11	1%	24	2%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancel Planned Admission to Hospital	28	2%	23	2%
Policy / Commercial Decisions	23	2%	22	2%
Access to Premises	21	2%	20	2%
Environmental	14	1%	20	2%
Confidentiality	10	1%	18	2%
Discharge / Transfer Arrangements	15	1%	18	2%
Quantity of Treatment & Care	21	2%	18	2%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancellation Community Based Appointments	27	2%	15	1%
Property / Expenses / Finances	21	2%	11	1%
Waiting Times, A&E Departments	10	1%	10	1%
Other	128	12%	100	9%
Totals:	1078		1141	

This graph below shows the breakdown by directorates of formal complaints for 2017/2018 in comparison to the previous year (per issue).

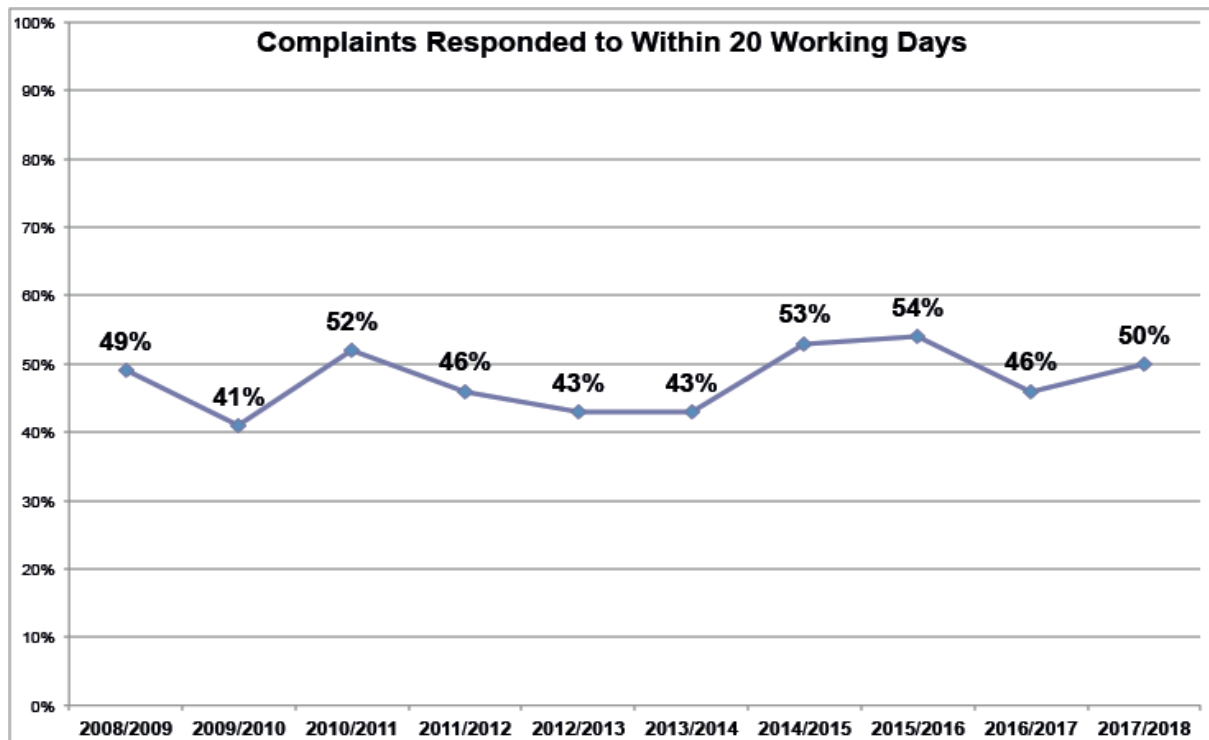


Response Times to Complaints

99% of complaints were acknowledged within the target of 2 working days which is the same as last year.

50% of complaints were responded to within the target of 20 working days, which is an improvement of 4% from the previous year (46%), as shown in the graph below.

The Trust continues to monitor timescales to ensure complainants are provided with timely responses. However our emphasis is on the quality of the responses and ensuring resolution for the complainants, relevant to the issues raised.



If people are dissatisfied

Sometimes people are not always happy with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint.

We encourage people to let us know if they are unhappy, and we consider other options to attempt to resolve their concerns. We routinely offer to meet complainants, as this allows the opportunity for more detailed discussions, face-to-face.

In the last year **13%** of complainants contacted us to tell us they were not entirely satisfied.

Ombudsman

For those people who remained dissatisfied, they had the option to approach the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (Ombudsman) directly.

In **2017/2018**, there were **17** complainants who approached the Ombudsman for investigation of their complaint.

Of these, 2 were not accepted for investigation by the Ombudsman, 2 have been completed and 13 others are ongoing.

6 other complaints, received by the Ombudsman prior to 1 April 2017, were closed during the past year, while 6 others remain ongoing.

Prison Healthcare

The South Eastern Trust is responsible for Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland. All complaints relating to healthcare in prisons or the secure college at Hydebank are dealt with through the Trust's complaints process.

In 2017/2018 there have been 297 informal complaints, dealt with locally by healthcare staff.

There were **42** formal complaints made. The majority were resolved at that point, however, less than 3 approached the Ombudsman to investigate their complaint and are still ongoing.

A large number of complaints to Prison Healthcare related to medication issues. Patients wanted to understand how and why healthcare staff made decisions regarding medication prescribed in prison. We have undertaken service user engagement initiatives. As a result, service users and healthcare staff co-produced two posters, one about medication and the other prescribing guidelines. Complaints regarding medication have been reduced.

Complaints Procedure - Children Order

Complaints by, or on behalf of, children about services provided to them under Part IV of the Children (NI) Order 1995, are dealt with under a separate procedure – the Children Order Representations & Complaints Procedure.

Over the year, there were **31** complaints dealt with at the informal 'problem-solving' stage. The majority were resolved at this point. Less than 3 progressed to stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints Training

The Trust commissioned bespoke training on Effective Written Responses to Complaints and one day took place in March 2018 with further dates planned in 2018/2019.

The course focused on discussing and developing effective complaints letter writing skills through a combination of expert tutor input, group discussion and practical, supported exercises. The aim of the course was for managers to leave the day with the techniques and the confidence to respond effectively and efficiently to complaints through letters.

Monitoring

During this year, the Trust's Lessons Learnt Sub Committee, which reports to the Corporate Control Committee, chaired by the Chief Executive, met on a quarterly basis.

The primary role of the sub committee is to ensure that the Trust has in place the necessary controls to manage its risk in relation to complaints, incidents and litigation claims. Its role is also to ensure that the lessons learnt have been put into practice on an organisation wide basis.

Lessons Learnt / Improvements from Complaints

We welcome complaints so that we can learn lessons and improve our services. An action plan is completed, where appropriate, for complaints. We use this information to feed back to patients and staff on the changes and improvements made.

Complaints are discussed with the staff concerned and often the issues are brought to staff meetings for discussion as to how services can be improved.

A number of improvements have been put in place over the year 2017/2018 following complaints.

You said, We did

You Said:

A number of people smoking at the hospital with total disregard to the Smoke Free signage

We Did:

Informed Smoke Free Wardens of the areas of concern
Recruited additional Smoke Free Wardens
Reviewed signage
Purchased an interactive Public Address system
Reminded all staff to challenge smokers

You Said:

The accessibility of Pay and Display pay stations for those with mobility difficulties / disabilities was unreasonable.

We Did:

We have ordered 2 further Pay and Display pay stations. We plan to make additional disabled spaces closer to the pay stations and to have the roadway realigned to accommodate a drive through drop off / pick up.

You Said:

Newly referred patients could be potentially lost to follow up when the practitioner goes on an unexpected period of absence.

We Did:

The Team Leader now updates the information system at the point of allocation to the practitioner, thereby ensuring oversight of progress with each case.

You Said:

There was an issue with turnover of health visitors leading to confusion for parents.

We Did:

We have increased the number of health visitors to provide better service cover across the Trust and will continue to monitor and review the continuity of care to individual families.

You Said:

Poor carer experience

We Did:

The complainant co-produced the new Mental Health Regional Carer Experience Form with the Trust, HSC Board, Public Health Authority and Cause regional representatives as part of the development of regional mental health documentation and outcome measures.
Monthly and annual reports will now be issued to monitor carer experience on an ongoing basis

You Said:

A referral letter was delayed as sent through the post system.

We Did:

We have finalised and shared department generic email addresses with other Trusts to streamline this process and ensure referrals are emailed to the relevant departments which will significantly speed receipt of referrals.

Plans for the incoming year (2018/2019)

In the incoming year, we plan to issue our revised complaints policy and procedure, and undertake a staff survey to audit staff's knowledge and compliance.

We also have an ongoing survey asking people who have complained to tell us about their experiences of using the complaints process. The results will be analysed to see where improvements can be made.

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