

Compliments & Complaints Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Foreword

As the Director responsible for the positive and negative feedback received into the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, I am very pleased to present the Compliments & Complaints Annual Report for 2019/2020.

I am delighted to report that the Trust received 4,517 compliments throughout the year and I appreciate the time that people have taken to acknowledge the services provided by our staff and teams.

As a Trust, we welcome the complaints received as this information is used to learn lessons and improve our services. We are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all of our patients and clients, and when

things do not go well, we wish to know so that the appropriate remedial action can be taken 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 all our staff for their continued dedication to the resolution of complaints and for their sensitive handling of issues that are important to complainants.



Myra Weir

Director of Human Resources & Corporate Affairs

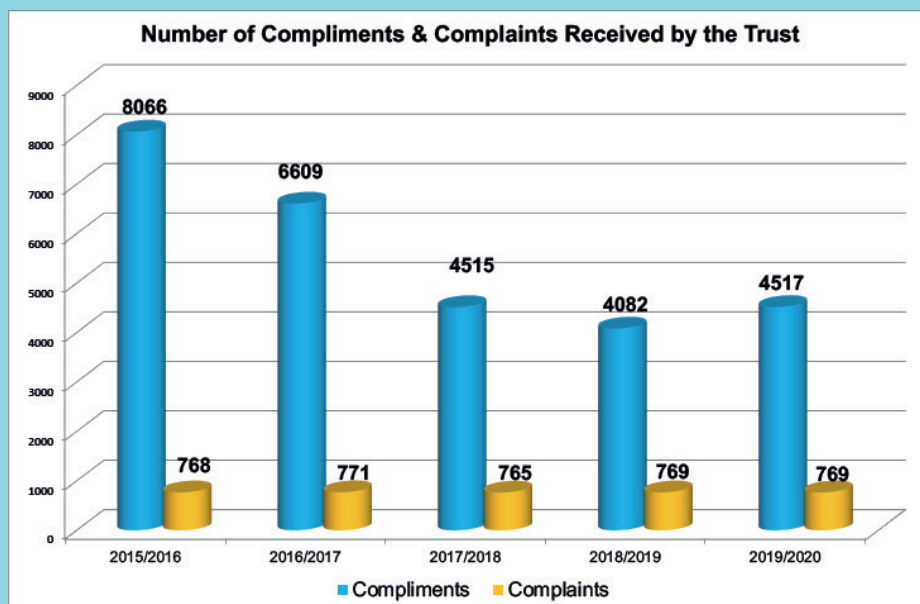
Facts & Figures

In the year 2019/2020:

- **4,517** compliments were received
- **769** complaints were received
- **99%** of complaints were acknowledged within 2 working days
- **43%** 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.

How did we do this year?

During the past year (2019/2020), the Trust received **4,517** compliments and **769** complaints, which is similar to the previous year (4,082 compliments / 769 complaints), as shown in the graph below.



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 2019/2020 the Trust received **4,517** compliments (includes formal verbal) (see below for some examples).

The graph on page 1 shows the number of compliments received per year in comparison to the number of complaints.

"Everything was first class. The doctor, the nurses, the student nurses and the care assistant were professional, pleasant and efficient. The area was clean and tidy also free of obstacles. It was busy but overall showed a well-run Casualty."

"I would like to highlight the outstanding care given by Health Visitor during my recent postnatal period. I found her to be compassionate, supportive, knowledgeable and caring. It is clear that she has a real gift for her role and I and my family are incredibly grateful for all she has done for us over the past year."

"I attended the Day Procedure Unit and I can honestly say that the staff made my experience a very positive one. Their friendliness and extreme professionalism was second to none!"

Thank you."

"My CPN. I have now been seeing her for a while and she is just amazing. She is so talented in her line of work and has really helped me. She is so committed to her job and helping others and I'm so glad we have crossed paths and have connected. She definitely needs to be recognised for her hard work as she goes above and beyond."

"Can I just say that the service and care that Sister and the District Nursing Team gave my relative during his illness and the support given after his death towards his wife had been first class. I could not praise these staff enough."

"The way he has been treated and the professionalism was outstanding and to make things harder, he's got Down's syndrome. We couldn't ask for anything more. A massive thank you to all, from the reception staff to the doctors."

"The social worker has restored my faith in social services. She has been professional and is really good at her job and she needs to know how good she is at what she does."

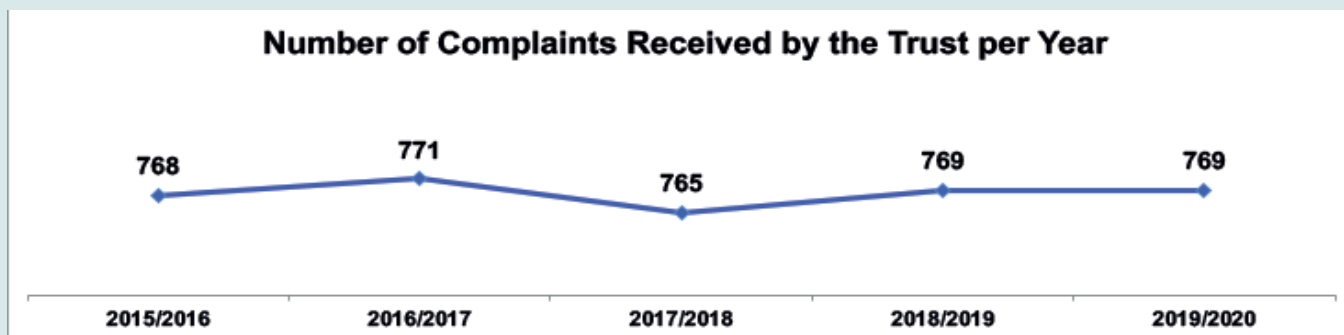
"Just want to give a massive thanks to a young girl who works in the restaurant at the hospital. She was so patient and helpful to my elderly parents who are hard of hearing and partially blind."

Complaints

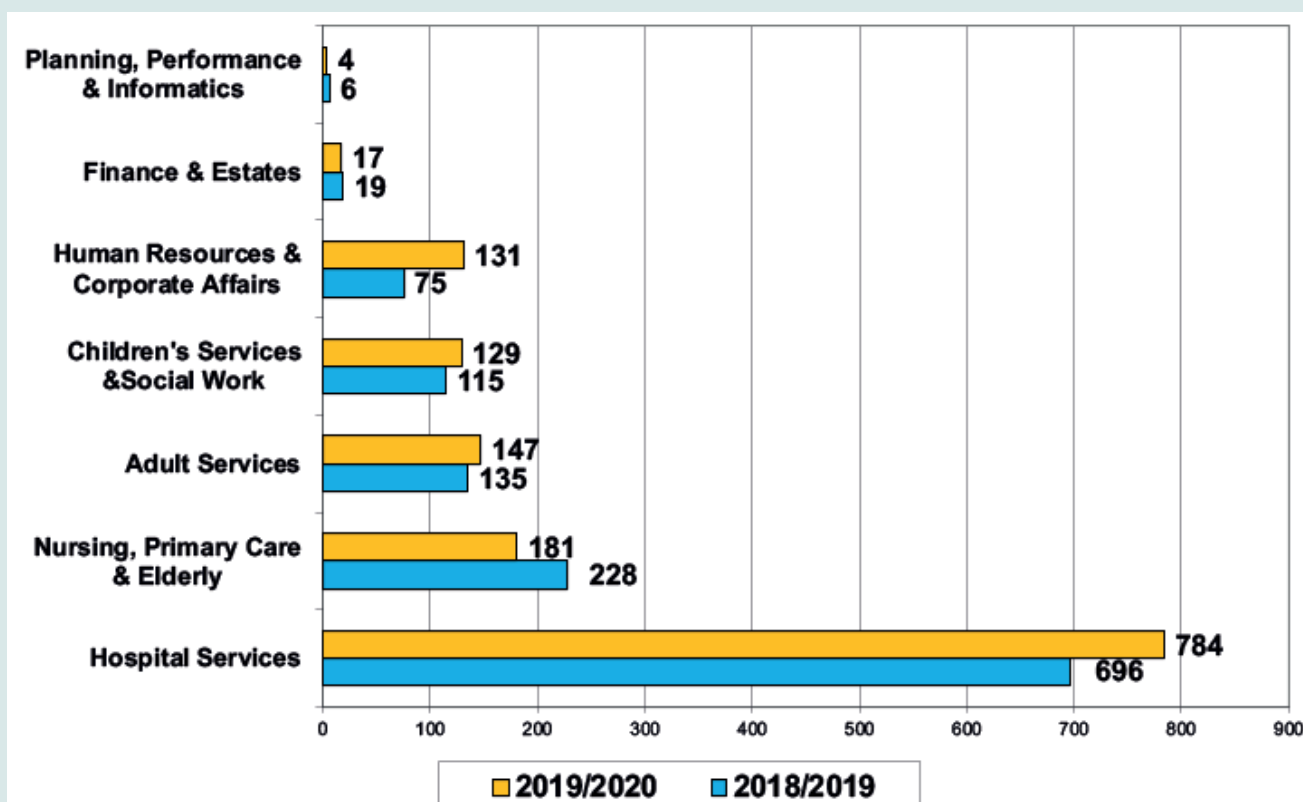
The number of complaints continues to be low considering the large geographical area the Trust covers and the number of contacts Trust staff have with patients and clients. The Trust:

- 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.

The number of complaints received has remained similar over the past 5 years - see the graph below.



This graph below shows the breakdown by directorates of formal complaints for 2019/2020 in comparison to the previous year (per issue - a complaint can have more than one issue).



What people complained about

The chart below shows the number of complaints by subject for the past year (2019/2020) in comparison to the previous year.

The figures are per issue of complaint, as a complaint can have more than one issue. For 2019/2020 we had complaints made by **769** complainants and these raised **1,393** issues, compared with 2018/2019 figures of **769** complainants and **1,274** issues.

The top three subjects of complaint in the past year were: Quality of Treatment & Care, Communication / Information and Staff Attitude / Behaviour. These are the same top subjects as last year, and this is similar across other Health & Social Care Trusts.

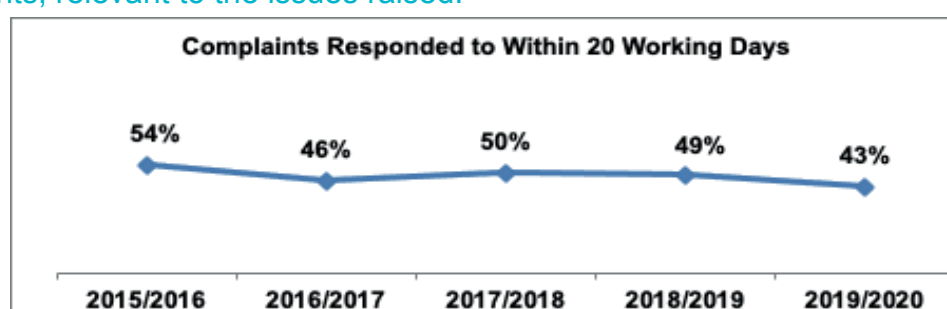
Subjects (per issue)	2018/2019		2019/2020	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Quality of Treatment & Care	300	24%	346	25%
Communication / Information	246	19%	266	19%
Staff Attitude / Behaviour	196	15%	223	16%
Access to Premises	42	3%	106	8%
Clinical Diagnosis	58	5%	72	5%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancel Outpatients Appointments	63	5%	54	4%
Privacy / Dignity	18	1%	34	3%
Environmental	25	2%	33	2%
Records / Record Keeping	27	2%	29	2%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancel Community Appointments	22	2%	18	1%
Waiting List, Delay / Cancel Planned Admission to Hospital	21	2%	18	1%
Aids / Adaptions / Appliances	7	1%	17	1%
Waiting Times, A&E Departments	18	1%	17	1%
Quantity of Treatment & Care	15	1%	16	1%
Discharge / Transfer Arrangements	19	1%	15	1%
Confidentiality	10	1%	13	1%
Policy / Commercial Decisions	22	2%	13	1%
Delay / Cancel Procedure while Inpatient	8	1%	11	1%
Property / Expenses / Finances	12	1%	11	1%
Other	145	11%	81	6%
Totals:	1274	100%	1393	100%

Response Times to Complaints

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

43% of complaints were responded to within the target of 20 working days, which is a decrease of 6% from the previous year (49%), as shown in the graph below. This is due to a number of reasons such as resource issues and the complexity of cases.

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 **11%** 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 **2019/2020** there were **21** complainants who approached the Ombudsman for investigation of their complaint, which is a slight reduction from last year (25).

Of these, 4 were not accepted for investigation by the Ombudsman, 2 were settled without investigation and 15 others are ongoing.

23 other complaints, received by the Ombudsman prior to 1 April 2019, were closed during the past year, while 12 others remain ongoing.

Of the 23 closed during 2019/2020:

- 9 were not accepted for investigation by the Ombudsman
- In 1 case the Ombudsman did not uphold any of the complaint
- In 4 cases a settlement was reached without investigation
- 9 had some areas of failings identified and recommendations made by the Ombudsman for remedy / improvement to services.

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 **27** complaints dealt with at the informal ‘problem-solving’ stage. They were all resolved at this point, and none progressed to Stage 1 of the procedure.

Complaints Training

The Trust commissioned bespoke training on Effective Written Responses to Complaints and two days took place in March 2020.

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

The training was very well received by the participants. On a scale of 1 to 5, the participants scored their knowledge and skills had increased from 2.43 out of 5 before course to 3.30 after course (1= novice and 5 = expert).

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 main 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 2019/2020 following complaints.

You said, We did

You Said:

A number of service users raised concerns about the new car parking arrangements at one of our hospitals.

We Did:

As a result, one parking area was re-designed, the internal road was re-aligned to prevent queueing onto the main road, we increased the number of Disabled parking spaces, and we increased directional signage.

You Said:

Some patients raised issues about staff attitude and care provided.

We Did:

The manager used the examples to develop a learning event for nursing staff to include staff attitude, care and compassion.

You Said:

Patient was not given medication that they were on at home.

We Did:

New ward pharmacist now in place and will update team on pharmacology use of drugs, including risks of withdrawal.

You Said:

Kerb on pedestrian crossing is not suitable for wheelchairs.

We Did:

We undertook work to improve access and footpaths for those with mobility issues.

You Said:

Clinic name is visible through window of envelope on appointment letters.

We Did:

Format of template appointment letters have been amended to ensure only address details visible in windowed envelopes.

Plans for the incoming year (2020/2021)

In the incoming year, we plan to undertake a staff survey to audit staff's knowledge and compliance with the Trust's Complaints Procedures.

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 shared with staff for any learning and used as part of our training programme.

Complaints/Patient Liaison Department
Lough House, Ards Hospital, Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AS
T: (028) 9056 1427 E: complaints@setrust.hscni.net