



Northern Health
and Social Care Trust



innovation
Quality
improvement



ramp

REFORM AND MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

Complaints Annual Report

1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

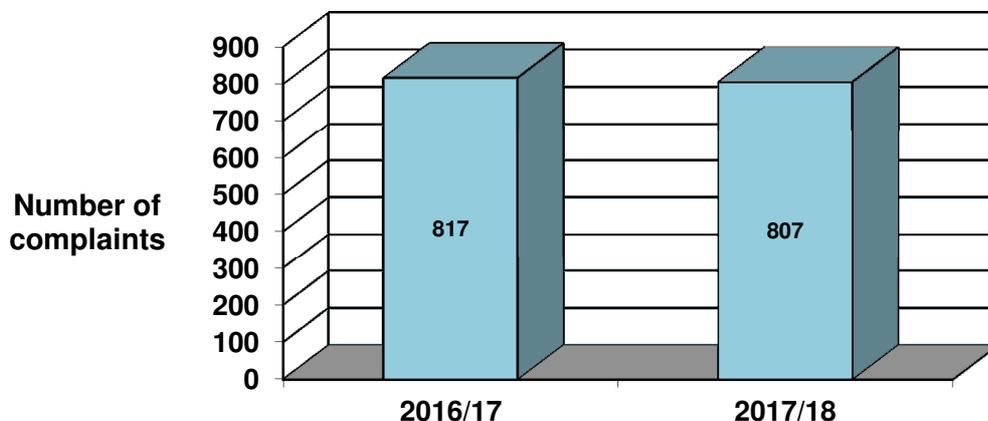
Introduction

This report gives an overview of complaints and feedback received from service users, patients, their carers and family members by Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

The NHSCT provides health and social care services to a population of approximately 470,000, which is the largest resident population in Northern Ireland. The Trust provided treatment and care for a significant number of people during this year including;

- 75,309 inpatients
- 261,965 acute outpatients
- 178,957 mental health outpatients
- 143,874 emergency department attendances
- 28,226 day case patients
- 3,848 births
- 671 children looked after by Trust
- 467 children on child protection register
- 4,370 domiciliary care packages for older people provided in the community

The report provides details of the number and nature of complaints received by the Trust. The overall number of complaints received decreased by 1% from 817 to 807 this year. However we are committed to listening to and learning from all of our patients and service users, so that we can continually improve the quality of our services; particularly when the care provided may not have been of the standard that we ourselves would expect. Compliments and suggestions/comments made by patients and service users are acknowledged and shared with the relevant staff/teams.



We aim to respond to complaints within 20 working days, where possible, and strive to ensure that there is a full, fair and objective investigation of the issues and concerns raised and that an effective response/outcome is provided. The Trust must offer every opportunity to exhaust local resolution and therefore encourages complainants to contact the Trust again should they remain dissatisfied. We will continue to do our utmost to resolve complaints.

Method of complaints received during 2017/18



Email
40%



Letter
29%

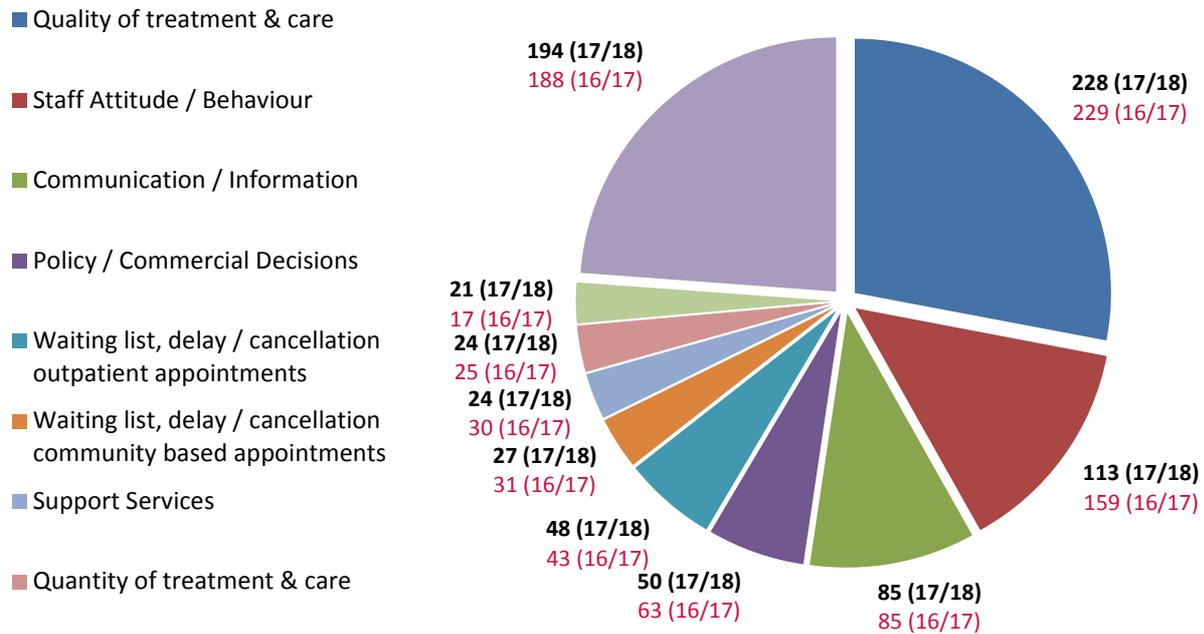


Trust
feedback
form
30%



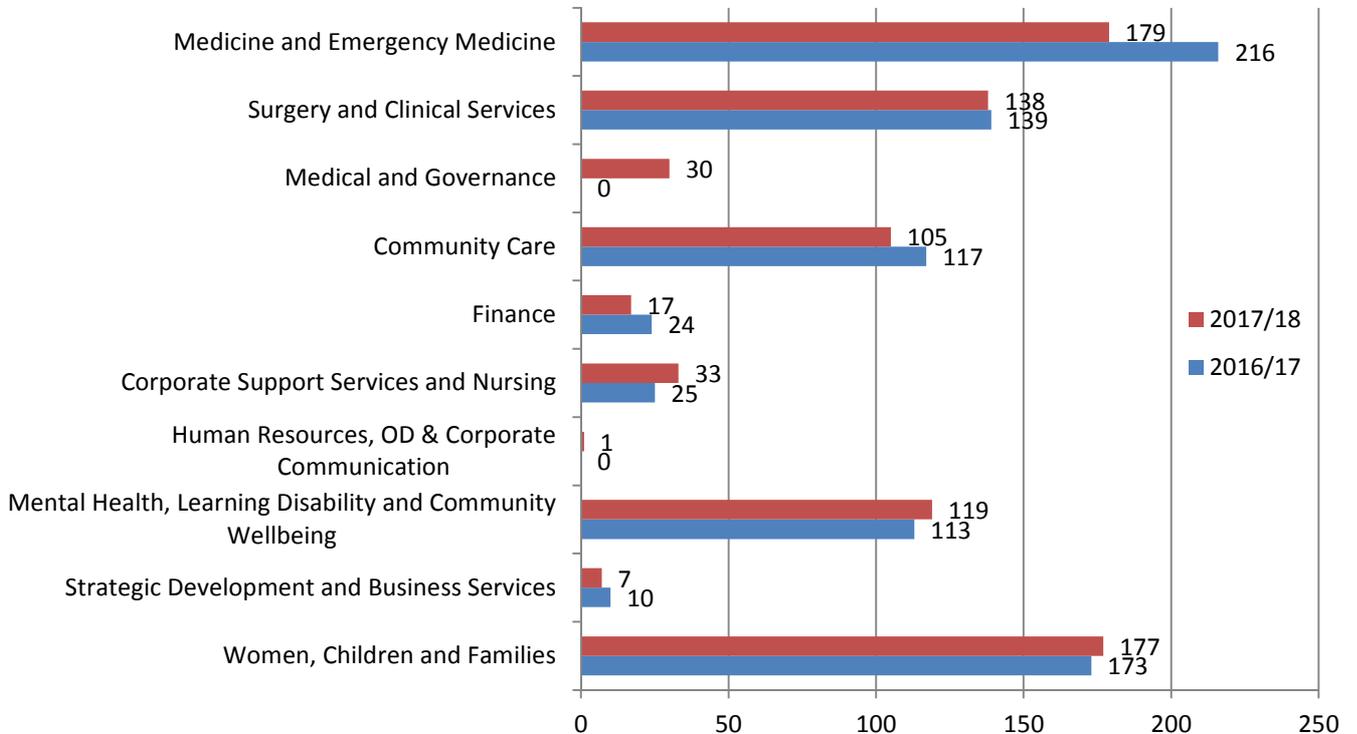
Phone
1%

A breakdown of the issues our service users complained about



Complaints Received by Division

The services provided by the NHCST are organised into 8 Divisions. The graph below shows the distribution of complaints across these Divisions over the past year.



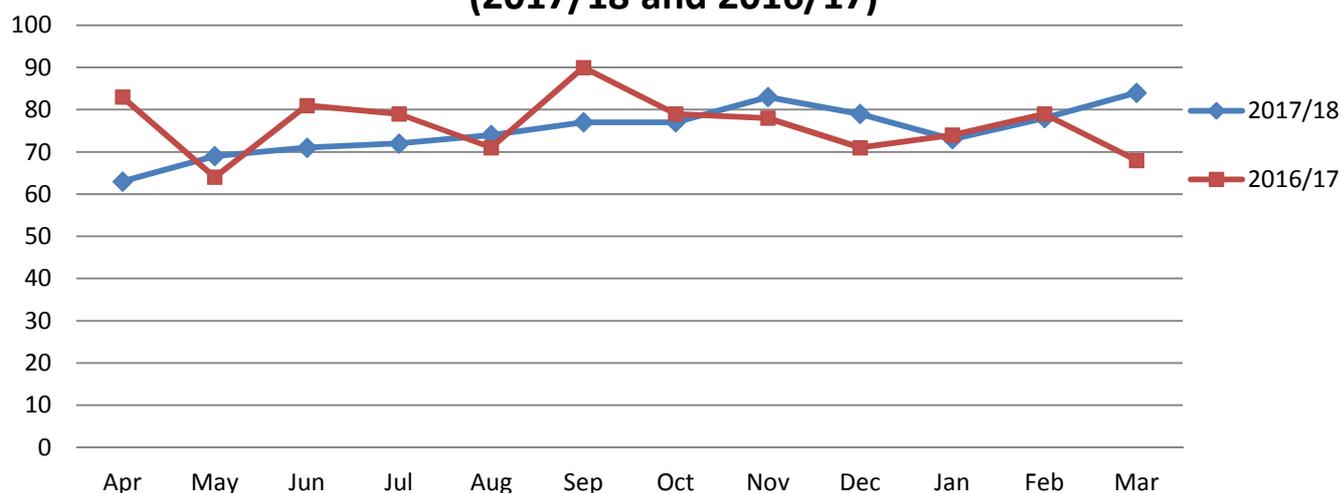
Response Times

The HSC Complaints Procedure outlines that complaints should be acknowledged within 2 working days and that complaints should be responded to within 20 working days, if at all possible.

Various factors can impact on the time taken to investigate a complaint, such as information may be awaited from other agencies or due to the complexity of the complaint investigation.

During 2017/18, 74% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days, which is a slight reduction on the previous years' response time of 78%.

Complaints performance i.e. % of responses for Trust (overall) issued within 20 working days (2017/18 and 2016/17)



	Number of complaints	Percentage
Acknowledged ≤ 2 days	807	100%
Response ≤ 20 days	598	74%

Monitoring, Reporting, Learning

The Trust values all feedback received from patients and service users, including complaints. When there is an identified need to improve our services we take all the necessary actions to ensure these improvements happen.

In order to record and monitor complaints activity, the complaints department is required to maintain a database of complaints and provide regular reports to senior management, directorates and various Committees within the Assurance Framework including the Experience, Engagement & Equality (Triple E) Group. These reports highlight themes and trends across the Trust to ensure learning takes place. The Trust continues to provide monthly monitoring returns to the Health and Social care Board (HSCB) regarding lessons learned from all complaints closed each month.

An action/learning proforma is completed, where appropriate, for complaints. We use this information to provide feedback to patients, service users and staff on the changes and improvements made. Complaints are discussed with relevant staff and issues brought to staff meetings where service improvements are agreed. A number of improvements have been introduced during 2017/18 following complaints. Below are some examples of learning across divisions:

A) Summary of Event

A 7 year old attended the Emergency Department - ill, lethargic, unresponsive and with a high fever and temperature of 39.8. He was examined by 3 doctors who all diagnosed chicken pox and recommended discharge. His father refused to go so the child was admitted and received immediate appropriate care in the Children's Ward.

Learning Points

- The Doctors involved accept that with hindsight the child could and probably should have been commenced on IV fluids and antibiotics at an earlier stage of his admission. They have both reflected at length on the episode itself and will both produce written reflection for their Portfolios of training.
- The Trust is in the process of integrating the Sepsis 6 Screening and Action Tool into the standard of care for all children and this implementation will be closely monitored and audited.

B) Summary of Event

Cancer patient became unwell at home and was advised to attend B1. He had a raised temperature at this time. Following examination and x-ray he was given antibiotics to take at home. At home he felt unwell again and attended Causeway where he was isolated and intravenous antibiotics were administered. He was in hospital over seven weeks admitted on 3 occasions with neutropenic sepsis. He feels that AAH did not follow correct protocol on first attendance. It would appear the Consultant used an unrecognised clinical scoring system titled Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC). This scoring system placed the patient in the low risk band. This scoring system is not part of the NHSCT Neutropenic Sepsis Guidelines for the management of oncology/haematology patient (> 18th birthday). A follow up plan should have been put in place and clearly communicated to the patient for warning signs of sepsis following discharge.

Learning Points

- The Neutropenic Sepsis Policy - to be reissued to all relevant nursing staff and medical teams to review, reflect and implement the NHSCT Neutropenic Sepsis Guidelines for the management of oncology/haematology patient (> 18th birthday)
- A review was already underway to transfer the chemotherapy helpline calls to the haematology ward (ward C7) from the admissions ward. This transfer has taken place from the week commencing 19 February 2018. In future all chemotherapy helpline calls will be received in ward C7 and patients who require assessment following the nurse triage will attend the treatment room in the ward to be reviewed by the nursing and medical teams.
- Complaint was discussed at the MEM monthly Governance meeting

Compliments received

Services across the Trust receive many compliments on a frequent basis, in the form of written thank you letters, emails, cards and verbal feedback. During 2017/18, over 1416 compliments were received, relating to a wide range of different service areas.

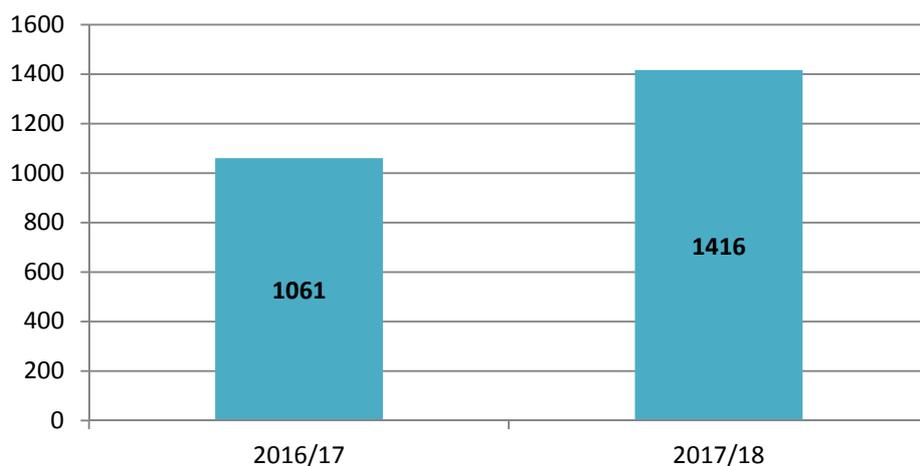
Divisions/services also monitor the compliments they receive locally. Compliments are always appreciated as they allow patients and service users' positive experiences to be shared with our staff, as well as identifying good working practices that can be shared with other service areas. Below are some examples of compliments received during 2017/18.

I would just like to comment on the exceptionally lovely staff we met in Laurel House during my mum's 3rd chemo treatment for breast cancer. The staff nurse was so nice, gentle and thoughtful towards mum and took time to chat and reassure her, making sure she was ok throughout. We are truly grateful for such a human touch during a horrible time and would like to extend our thanks to the team in Laurel House.

Mum received a home visit from a Community Mental Health Dementia Navigator. We were very pleased with the service and he made the difficult assessment process easy to understand for mum and the family. He gave us lots of useful information about other services and numbers to contact. We appreciated the time and help. Thank you.

As a long term patient of the Hospital Diversion Team Nursing Team, for 3 weekly intravenous infusion, I continue to receive the best of care. I see the attention and compassion of this small team, making every patient feel valued as an individual. Their professionalism is of the highest standard and they work as a united team.

Number of compliments received



Children Order Complaints



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 three complaints dealt with under this procedure and these were all resolved at the informal “problem solving” stage. The timescale for responding to Children Order complaints is 28 days. All of these were responded to within 20 days.

Additional Information

There were 225 formal enquiries and 195 informal enquiries received during 2017/18 with most being received from MLAs, MPs or local Councillors. A number of these were received from service users, carers or other third parties.

During 2017/18, 105 face to face complaints training sessions were provided to Trust staff working in a number of different services and departments across the Trust. In addition, a total of 857 staff completed the eLearning complaints training module and 763 support staff received informal training via the staff complaints training guide. Complaints training was also included in a number of other courses delivered during the year including corporate induction, managers’ induction and NVQ training.

If complainants are dissatisfied:

Sometimes people are not always happy with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint. We would encourage people to let us know if they are unhappy, and we will consider other options to attempt to resolve their concerns. We routinely offer to meet complainants, as this allows the opportunity for more detailed discussions, on a face to face basis.

Ombudsman

The Advice, Support Service and Initial Screening Team (ASSIST) is the public’s first point of contact with the Office. Where the ASSIST team decide that they cannot resolve the complaint and there is evidence that the matter requires further detailed investigation, the case is forwarded to the Ombudsman’s Investigations Team. In 2017/18 there were thirteen requests for information from the NIPSO Office. Two cases were not upheld and eight are still on-going. In addition, a further case was returned to the Trust for action, one case was closed as the complainant choose to pursue legal recourse and the last complaint accepted a goodwill offer of £100.

our vision

To deliver excellent integrated services
in partnership with our community

our values

COMPASSION

OPENNESS

RESPECT

EXCELLENCE

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCTrust

If you would like to give feedback on any of our
services please contact:

Email: user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net

Telephone: 028 9442 4655