

Complaints Annual Report

1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

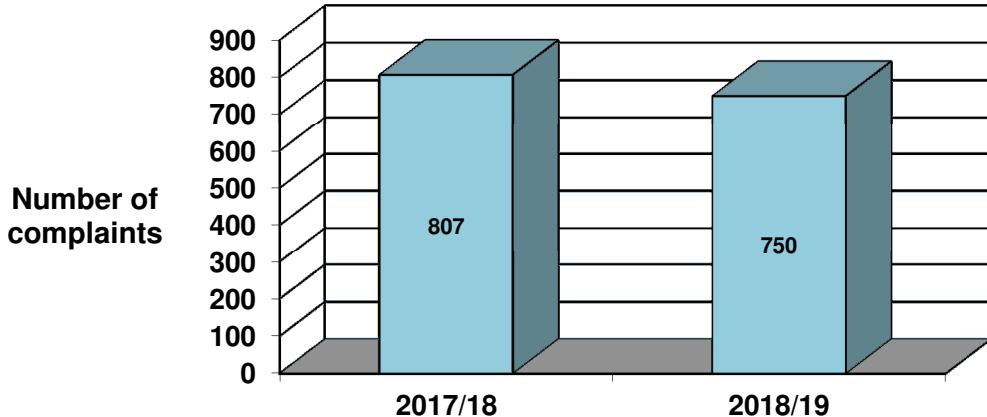
Introduction

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 2018 to 31 March 2019.

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;

- 76,100 inpatients
- 269,127 acute outpatients
- 168,536 mental health outpatients
- 150,558 emergency department attendances
- 28,609 day case patients
- 3,809 births
- 663 children looked after by Trust
- 468 children on child protection register
- 4,422 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 7% from 807 to 750 this year. 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 2018/19



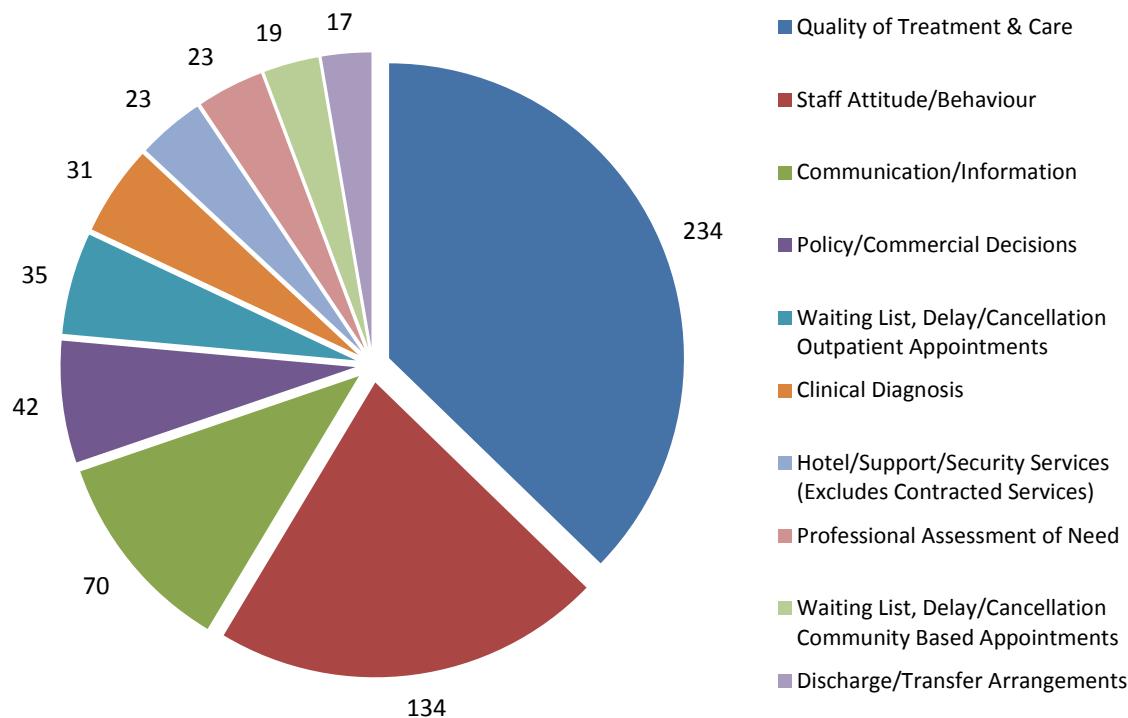
Email
47%

Letter
27%

Trust
feedback
form
23%

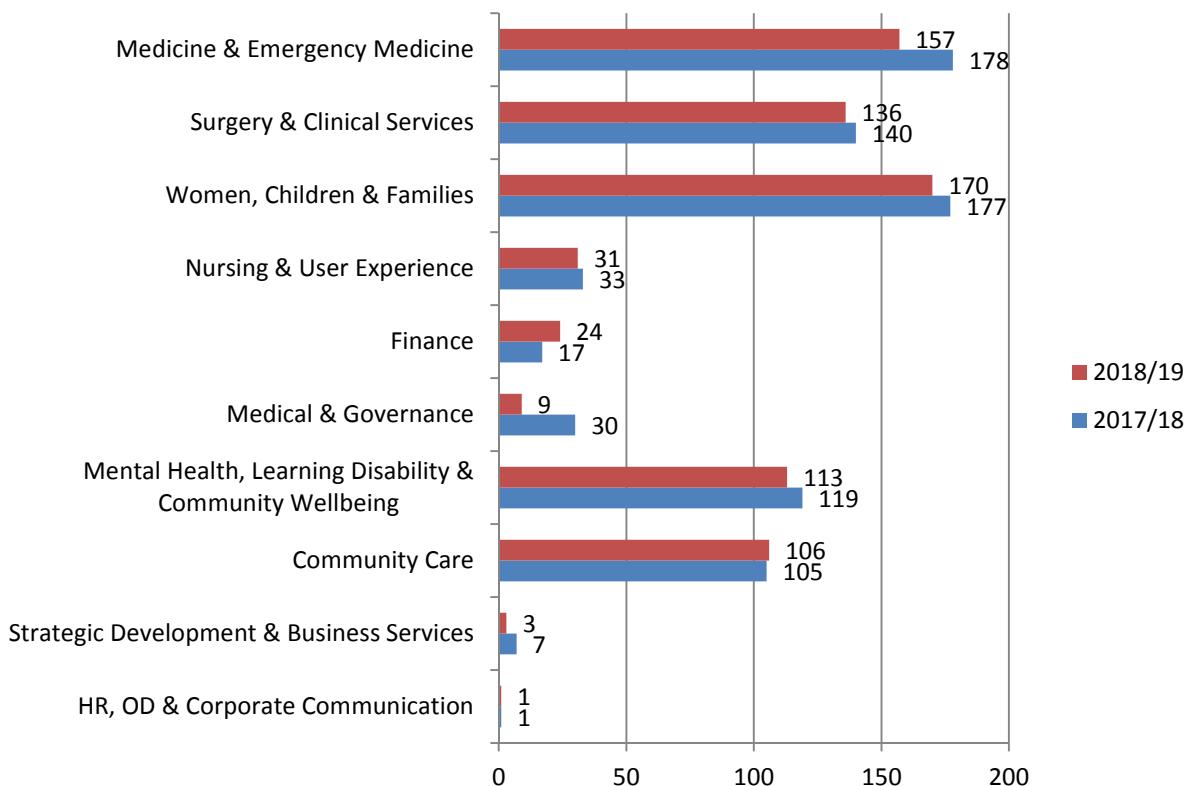
Phone/
Person
3%

A breakdown of the issues our service users complained about



Complaints Received by Division

The services provided by the NHSCT are organised into 10 Divisions. The graph below shows the distribution of complaints across these Divisions over the past year.



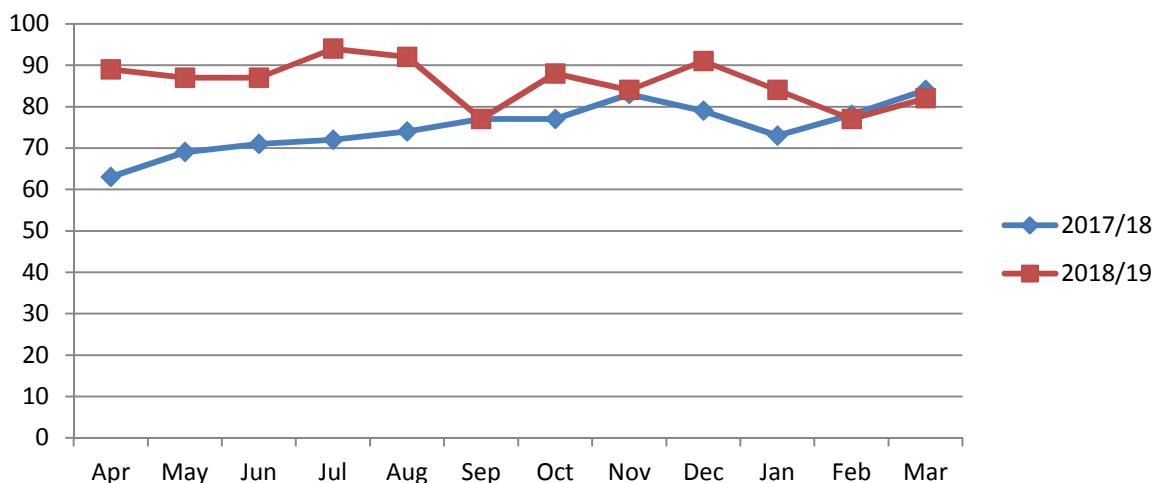
Response Times

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 2018/19, 86% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days, which is a 12% improvement on the previous years' response time of 74%.

Complaints performance i.e. % of responses for Trust (overall) issued within 20 working days (2018/19 and 2017/18)



	Number of complaints	Percentage
Acknowledged ≤ 2 days	750	100%
Response ≤ 20 days	645	86%

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 pro forma 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 2018/19 following complaints. Below are some examples of learning across divisions:

A) Summary of Event

A Service User was given the incorrect medication following routine surgery. Remedial action was taken immediately.

Learning Points

- There has been a review of drugs and their storage facilities. Drugs are now stored in categories of clinical need rather than alphabetical order.
- All staff must follow the medicines management policy when checking drugs.
- It was agreed that theatre stock for drugs needs to be reviewed periodically and this process has now been actioned.

B) Summary of Event

Parents are unhappy with the actions of a Community Midwife. The Midwife completed a UNOCINI regarding a possible 'bruise' on the baby and the parents were distressed about this.

Learning Points

- While the Midwife expressed her apology for the distress caused she was indeed following the correct process at the time, despite all healthcare professionals acknowledging that this process was too rigid.
- The Trust has recognised that staff needed more guidance on professional discretion and have developed a Trust protocol.
- The Trust is currently piloting the use of new Baby Body Maps that have recently been developed which it is hoped will improve how staff record any marks that appear on a baby.
- The parents were invited to join the Maternity Services Liaison Committee and contact details were provided for same.

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 2018/19, over 2634 compliments were received, relating to a wide range of different service areas.

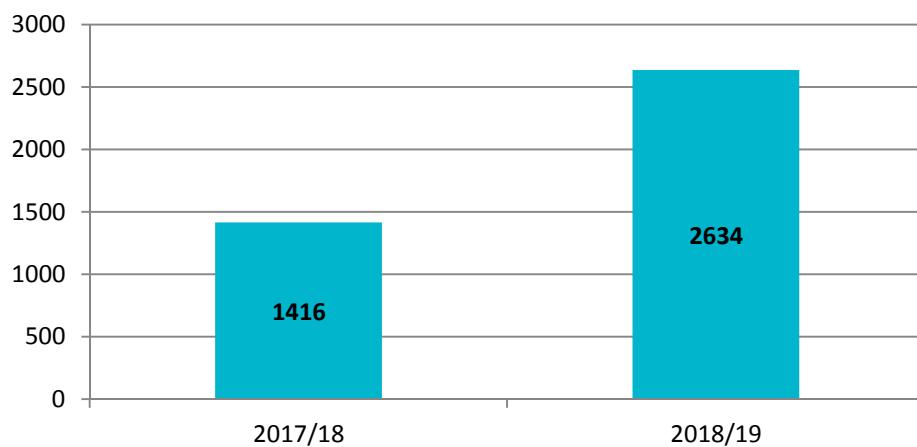
Divisions/services also monitor the compliments they receive locally. Compliments are always appreciated as they allow patients and service users' positive experiences to be shared with our staff, as well as identifying good working practices that can be shared with other service areas. Below are some examples of compliments received during 2018/19.

Rehab Unit – The staff were excellent and extremely friendly and attentive to my needs. Communication between staff was excellent and I was kept fully informed at every stage.

My CPN has helped my recovery and the stability of my mental illness dramatically! All the staff in the Community Mental Health Team are exceptional, helpful and accommodating.

I have been overwhelmed by the attention and compassion I have received by members of the Occupational Therapy Team. They have supplied all the equipment I required and it has been absolutely wonderful. The staff are a joy to have calling at the house.

Number of compliments received



Children Order Complaints



Representations & Complaints Procedure.

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

Over the year, there were two complaints dealt with under this procedure and these were resolved at the informal “problem solving” stage. The timescale for responding to Children Order complaints is 28 days. These were both responded to within 20 days.

Additional Information

There were 177 formal enquiries and 266 informal enquiries received during 2018/19 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 2018/19, 83 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 967 staff completed the eLearning Complaints Training. 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. The Trust encourages people to let us know if they are unhappy, and we will consider other options to attempt to resolve their concerns. The Trust routinely offers to meet complainants, as this allows the opportunity for more detailed discussions, on a face to face basis.

Ombudsman

Sometimes people are not always happy with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint. For those who remain dissatisfied, they may approach the NIPSO Office directly. 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, the case is forwarded to the Ombudsman’s Investigations Team. In 2018/19 there were 17 requests for information from the NIPSO Office. Three cases were closed and not upheld, 14 are on-going. Three older complaints investigations were completed with consolatory payments recommended.

(The figures in this report are subject to change due to the reporting process)

Our Vision

To deliver excellent integrated services in partnership with our community

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

Email: user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net

Telephone: 028 9442 4655

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCTrust

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

