



Complaints and Compliments Received by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland (2020/21)

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Reader Information

Purpose	This publication monitors and reports the number of HSC Trust complaint issues received, by the programme of care, category, subject and specialty of the complaint issue, as well as demographic information and the time taken to provide a substantive response to complaints received. It also includes information on compliments received by HSC Trusts regarding the services they provide.
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KEY POINTS

Latest Year (2020/21)

- A total of 3,292 complaints, relating to 5,005 complaint issues, were received by HSC Trusts in 2020/21 (Tables 1 & 9); equating to 63 complaints per week or approximately 9 complaints per day.
- Over half (2,695, 53.8%) of complaint issues received during 2020/21 related to the 'Acute' POC (Table 2, Figure 3).
- During 2020/21, the highest number (1,631, 32.6%) of complaint issues related to a patient's 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (Table 5).
- The highest percentage of complaint issues received in 2020/21 related to the 'General Medicine' specialty (635, 12.7%) (Table 7).
- Of the 3,292 complaints received in 2020/21, the median age of the patient / client was 46.5 years (Figure 8).
- On average HSC Trusts took 31.4 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints received in 2020/21 (Table 9, Figure 13).
- During 2020/21, 14,683 compliments (via card, email, feedback form, care opinion, letter, social media or telephone) were received by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland.
- Of the 14,683 compliments received by HSC Trusts, 8,675 (59.1%) related to 'Quality of Treatment & Care', 3,913 (26.6%) to 'Staff Attitude & Behaviour', 1,149 (7.8%) to 'Information & Communication', 578 (3.9%) to 'Environment', and 368 (2.5%) to 'Other' subjects (Table 15, Figure 20).

Last Five Years (2016/17 to 2020/21)

- Since 2016/17, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts decreased from 6,189 to 5,005 in 2020/21 (Table 1, Figure 2).
- Over the last five years, five of the six HSC Trusts reported a decrease in the number of complaint issues received; with the largest decrease (47.1%) reported by the Western Trust (Table 1, Figure 2).
- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the largest increase in the number of complaint issues (65, 14.2%) was reported in the 'Family and Child Care' POC (459 to 524) (Table 3).
- Complaints issues relating to Family Practitioner Services decreased by almost a third (75, 30.1%) in 2020/21 compared to the 2016/17 year (Table 10, Figure 14).

SECTION 1: COMPLAINT ISSUES RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

What is the Difference between a Complaint and a Complaint Issue?

A *complaint* is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of HSC Trust and/or Family Practitioner Services or facilities.

A single communication regarding a complaint, however, may refer to more than one issue. In such cases each individual *complaint issue* is recorded separately for the Programme of Care, Subject and Specialty to which it relates.

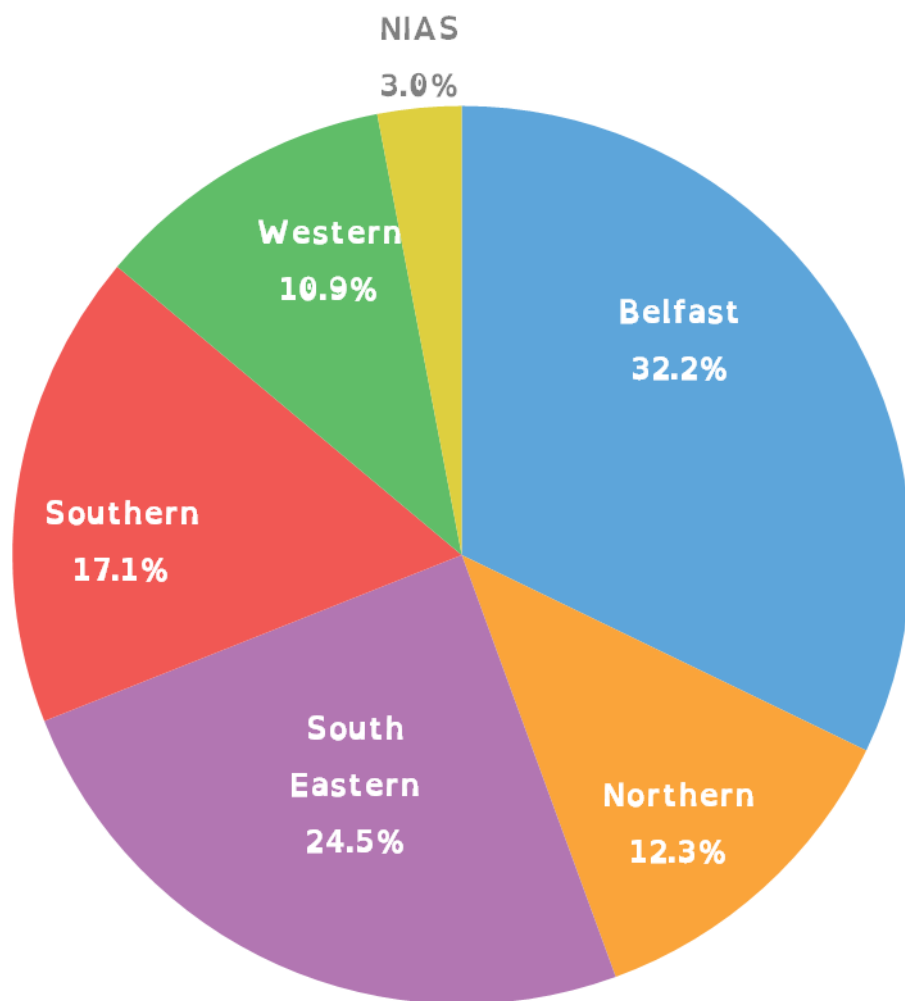
Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts

During 2020/21, HSC Trusts received 3,292 complaints relating to 5,005 complaint issues (Tables 1 & 9).

Of the 5,005 complaint issues, almost a third (1,610, 32.2%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,228 (24.5%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 857 (17.1%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 614 (12.3%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 545 (10.9%) by the Western HSC Trust and 151 (3.0%) by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) (Tables 1 & 2, Figure 1).

One third
of complaint issues
were received by the
Belfast HSC Trust

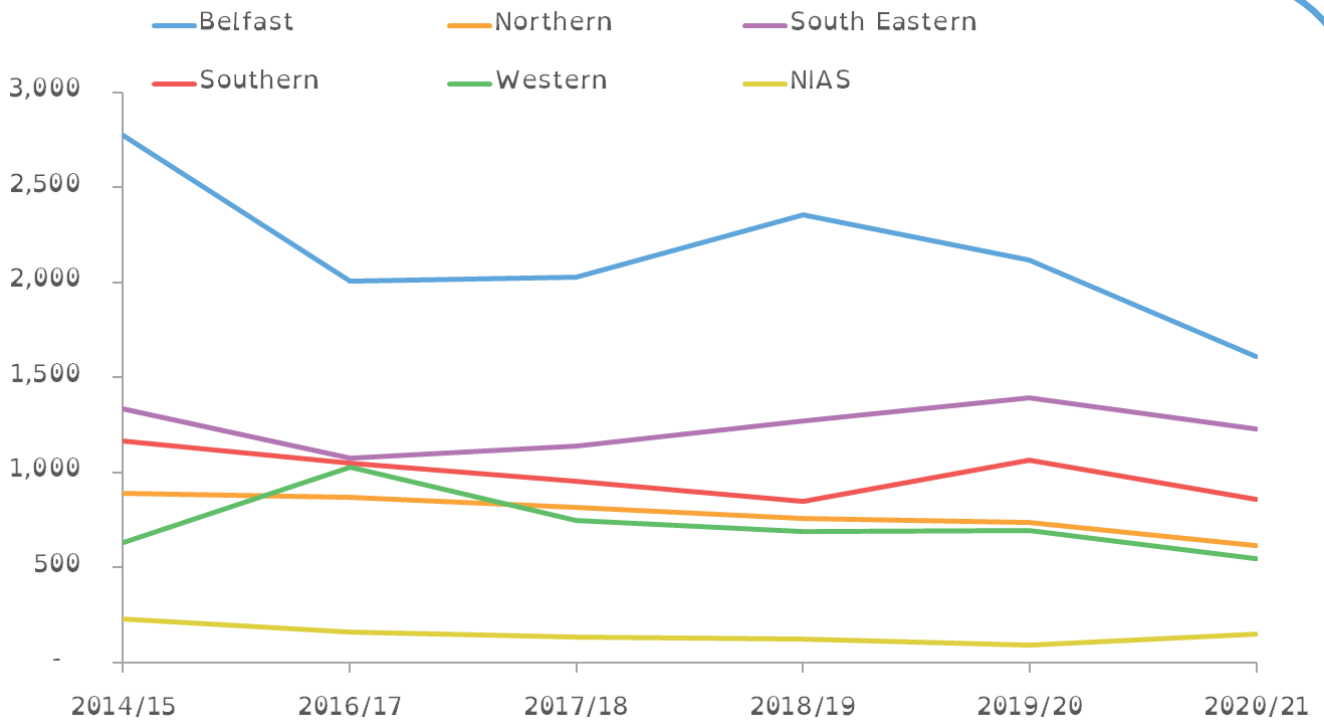
Figure 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2020/21)



During the last five years, the highest number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts was in 2016/17 (6,189) and the lowest was in 2020/21 (5,005) (Table 1, Figure 2).

Since 2016/17, the number of complaint issues received decreased in five of the six HSC Trusts, with the Western HSC Trust reporting the largest decrease (485, 47.1%) from 1,030 in 2016/17 to 545 in 2020/21 (Table 1, Figure 2).

Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2016/17 – 2020/21)



Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)¹

Each complaint issue received is recorded against the POC of the patient / client to whom the complaint relates. If a complaint is made by a user of HSC Trust facilities who is not a patient / client, the complaint issue will be recorded against the POC of that service.

Of the 5,005 complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in 2020/21, more than half (2,695, 53.8%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2)

Four POCs accounted for over 80% (4,026, 80.4%) of all complaint issues received during 2020/21; Acute POC (2,695, 53.8%), Family & Child Care POC (524, 10.5%), Elderly Care POC (413, 8.3%) and Maternal & Child Health POC (394, 7.9%) (Table 2 & Figure 3).

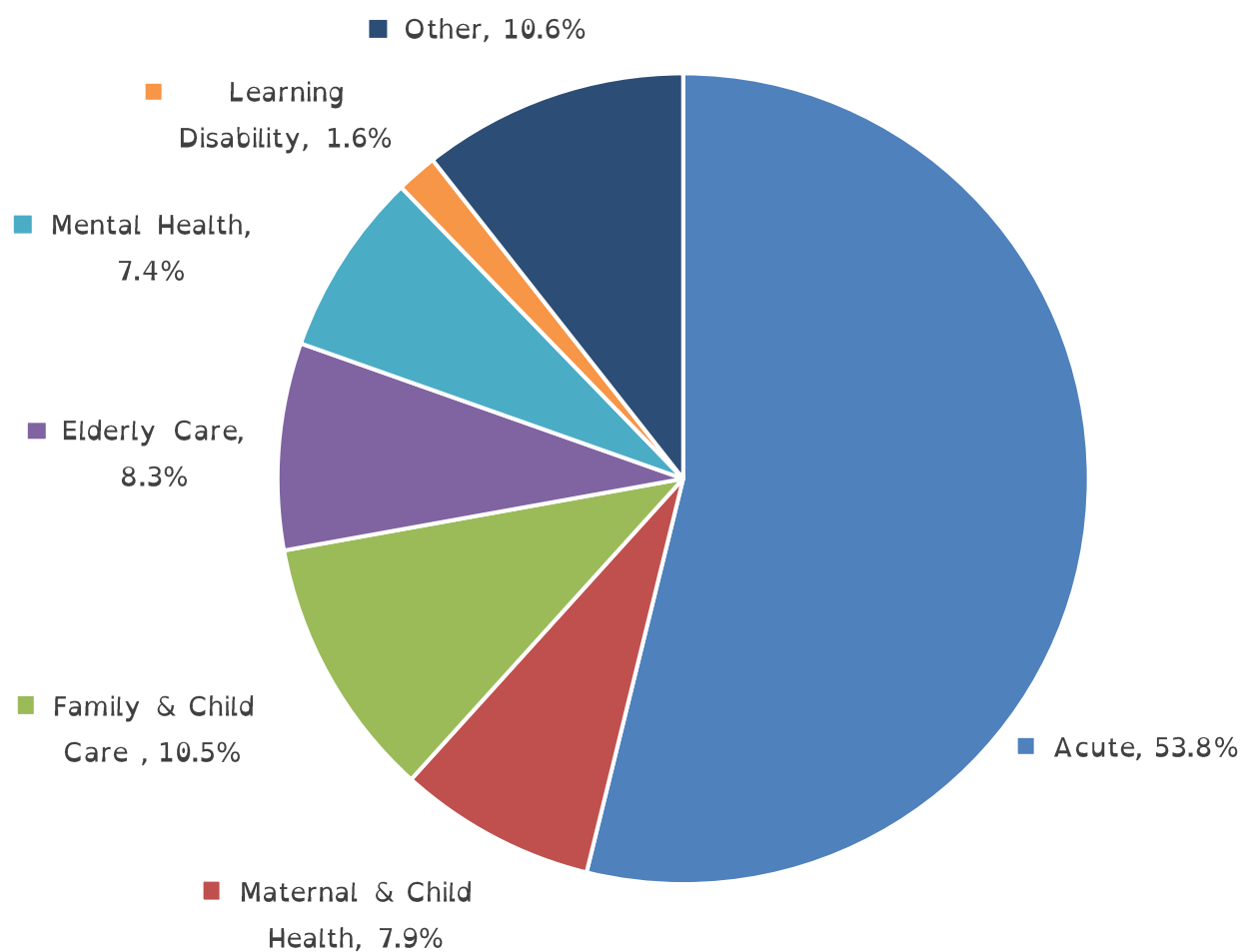
Since 2016/17, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts relating to the Family & Child Care POC increased by 14.2% (65), from 459 to 524 (Table 3).

54%

of complaint issues
received in 2020/21
related to the
Acute POC

¹ Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POCs)

Figure 3: Complaint Issues by POC (2020/21)²



² The 'Other' category includes all complaint issues not included within the seven named POCs above.

Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

There is variation across HSC Trusts in the distribution of complaint issues across POCs. During 2020/21:

- Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (997, 37.0%), Mental Health POC (132, 35.9%), and the Elderly Care POC (125, 30.3%). Of all complaints received across Northern Ireland, the Belfast HSC Trust Acute POC accounted for nearly a fifth (997, 19.9%).
- South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Learning Disability POC (32, 39.0%), Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (17, 60.7%), Primary Health & Adult Community POC (24, 47.1). The South Eastern HSC Trust, the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland, reported 62 complaint issues in relation to this POC (Table 2).
- Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Family & Child Care POC (220, 42.0%) (Table 2).
- The Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Health Promotion & Disease Prevention POC (11, 91.7%) (Table 2).

20% of all
complaint issues
received related
to the Belfast HSC
Trust Acute POC

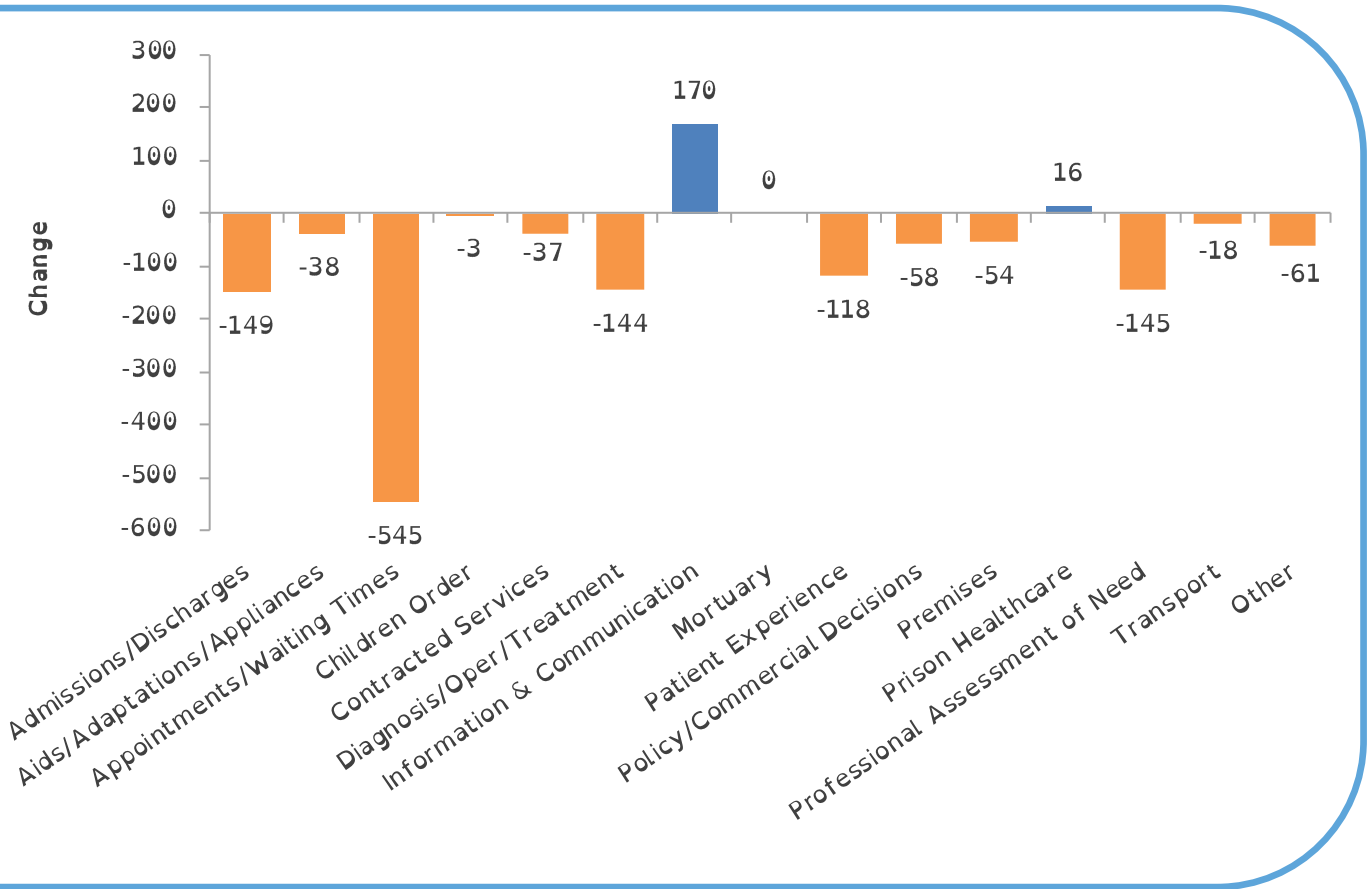
Complaint Issues Received by Category

The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject³ which best describes the nature of the patient's / client's concern. To enable the category of the complaint issue to be presented, the subject area of each complaint issue has been grouped into one of 15 main categories⁴.

During 2020/21, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues related to Diagnosis, Operation and Treatment (1,631, 32.6%), Information & Communication (1,177, 23.5%) and Patient Experience (962, 19.2%) (Table 5).

35% increase
in Prison Healthcare
related complaint
issues received

Figure 4: Change in the Number of Complaint Issues Received, by Category of Complaint (2016/17 - 2020/21)



³ A complete list of complaint issue subjects is detailed in Appendix 3, whilst an analysis of complaint issues by subject can be found in Table 4.

⁴ A list of complaint issue subjects grouped by general category is detailed in Appendix 4.

Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, two categories reported increases in the number of complaint issues received, the 'Information and Communication' category increased by 16.9% from 1,007 to 1,177 and 'Prison Healthcare' increased by 34.8% from 46 to 62 (Figure 4, Table 5).

The 'Appointments/Waiting Times' and 'Admissions/Discharges' categories had the largest decrease in the number of complaint issues received; 545 (60.8%) and 149 (34.7%), respectively (Figure 4, Table 5).

Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust

During 2020/21:

In the Belfast HSC Trust, almost three tenths (461, 28.6%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category. The next largest categories were 'Information & Communication' (411, 25.5%) and 'Patient Experience' (264, 16.4%) (Figure 5, Table 6).

In the Northern HSC Trust, the largest category of complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (263, 42.8%). The second largest category was 'Patient Experience' (118, 19.2%) (Figure 5, Table 6).

The 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category accounted for the largest number (406, 33.1%) of complaint issues received in the South Eastern HSC Trust followed by 'Information & Communication' (350, 28.5%) and Patient Experience (237, 19.3%) (Figure 5, Table 6).

61% decrease
in complaint issues
related to Appointments
Waiting Times

In the Southern HSC Trust, the largest number (237, 27.7%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category. The next largest categories were 'Information & Communication' (232, 27.1%) and 'Patient Experience' (183, 21.4%) (Figure 5, Table 6).

The majority (228, 41.8%) of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment'. The next largest category was 'Patient Experience' (114, 20.9%) (Figure 5, Table 6).

Complaint issues received by NIAS mainly related to 'Transport' (56, 37.1%) followed by 'Patient Experience' (46, 30.5%) and 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (36, 23.8%) (Table 6).

Figure 5 overleaf presents a summary of the four largest categories, accounting for 82.3% (4,121) of complaint issues received during 2020/21 for each HSC Trust. In Figure 5 complaint issues not in the four largest categories are referred to as 'Other'.

Figure 5: Main Category of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2020/21)⁵



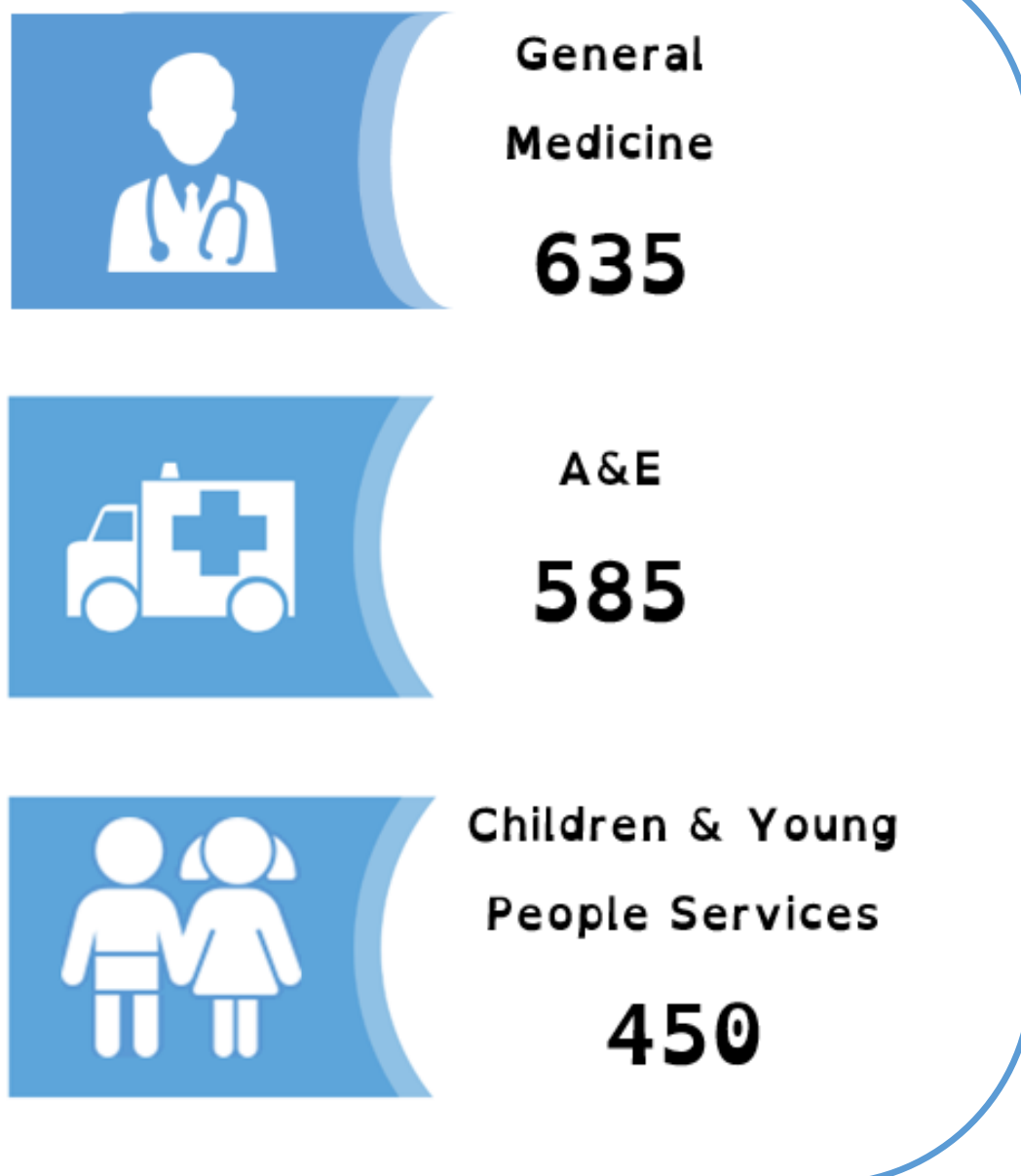
⁵ Information for Northern Ireland includes complaint issues received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

Complaint Issues Received by Specialty

During 2020/21, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues received related to the 'General Medicine' (635, 12.7%), 'Accident & Emergency' (585, 11.7%) and 'Children & Young People's Services' (450, 9.0%) (Table 7).

These three specialties accounted for a third (1,670, 33.4%) of all complaint issues received during this time (Table 7).

Figure 6: Top 3 Complaint Issues Received by Specialty



SECTION 2: COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

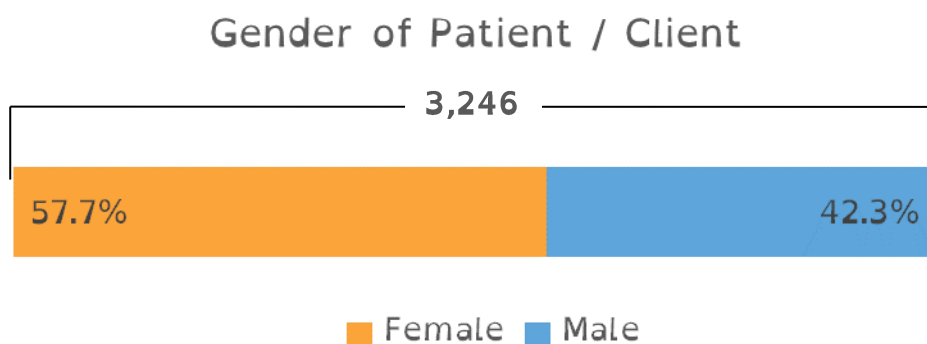
During 2020/21, HSC Trusts received 3,292 complaints, relating to 5,005 complaint issues. Section 2 presents a summary of information relating to these 3,292 complaints. Further information on the difference between a complaint and a complaint issue is detailed on page 6.

Age and Gender of Patient / Client

During 2020/21, a patient/client's gender was recorded in 3,246 (98.6%) of complaints received by HSC Trusts (Figure 7).

Of those complaints where the gender of the patient / client was recorded, 1,873 (57.7%) were females and 1,373 (42.3%) were males (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Gender of Patient / Client (2020/21)



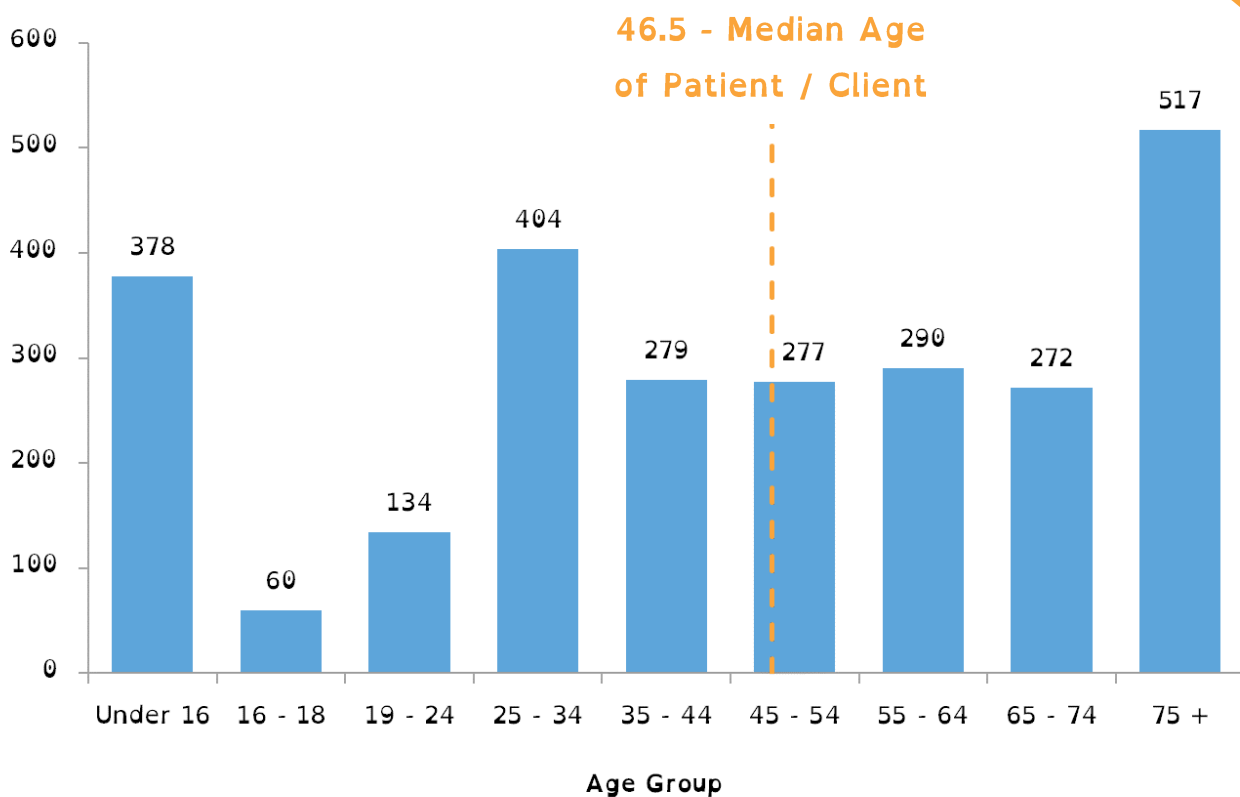
During 2020/21, both the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded in 2,611 (79.3%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.

For those complaints where the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded, 517 (19.8%) related to patients / clients aged 75 & over and 378 (14.5%) to those aged under 16 (Figure 8, Table 8).

Of the complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2020/21, the median age of the patient / client was 46.5 years (Figure 8).

47 years
the median age
of patient / client
complaints
received in 2020/21

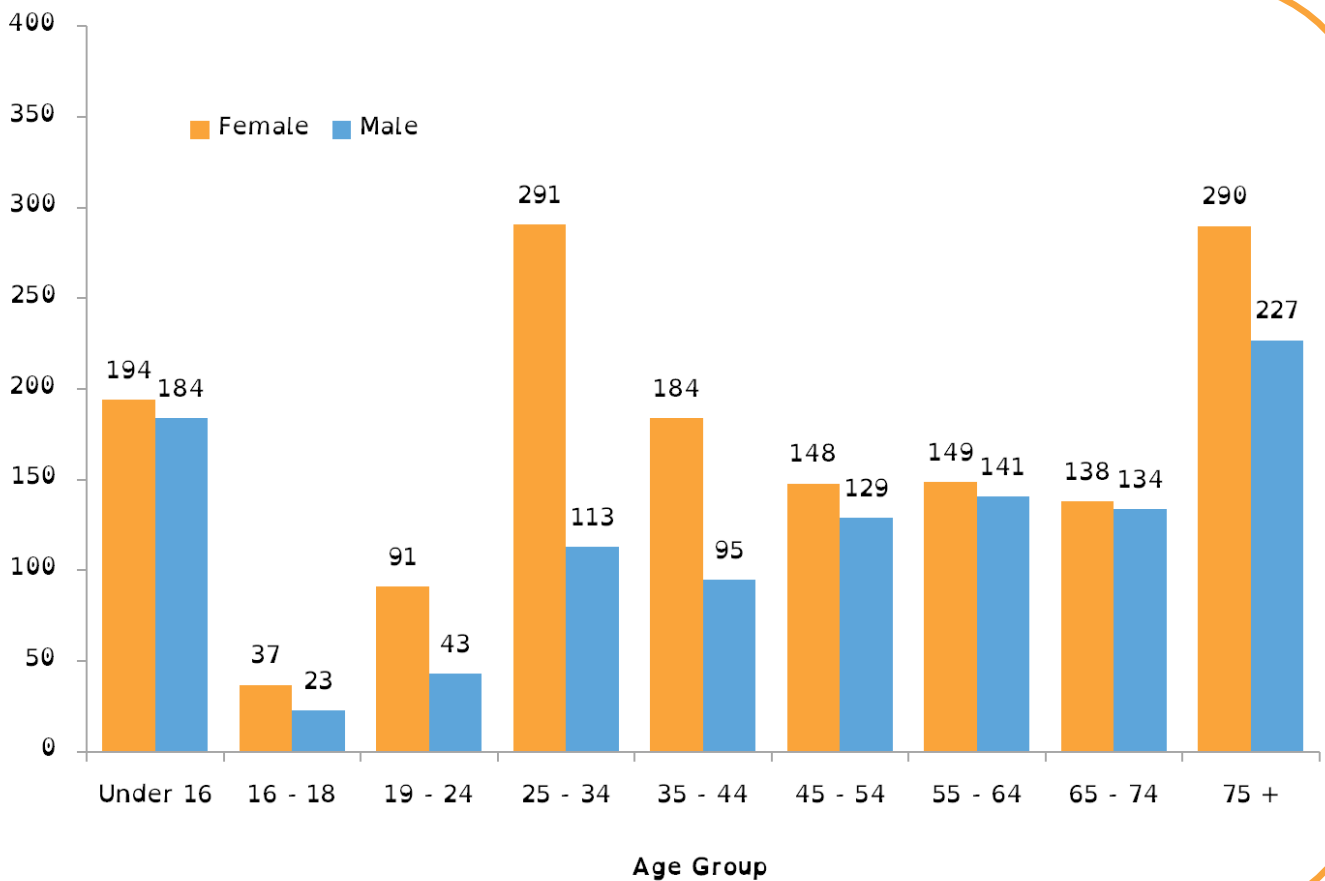
Figure 8: Complaints Received by Age Group of Patient / Client (2020/21)



Of the 2,611 complaints where the age and gender of the patient/client was recorded, 1,522 (58.3%) were females and 1,089 (41.7%) were males (Table 8, Figure 9).

There were over twice as many complaints received relating to females than males in the 25-34 age group, with females outnumbering males in each age group (Table 8, Figure 9).

Figure 9: Complaints Received by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2020/21)



Relationship of Complainant to Patient / Client

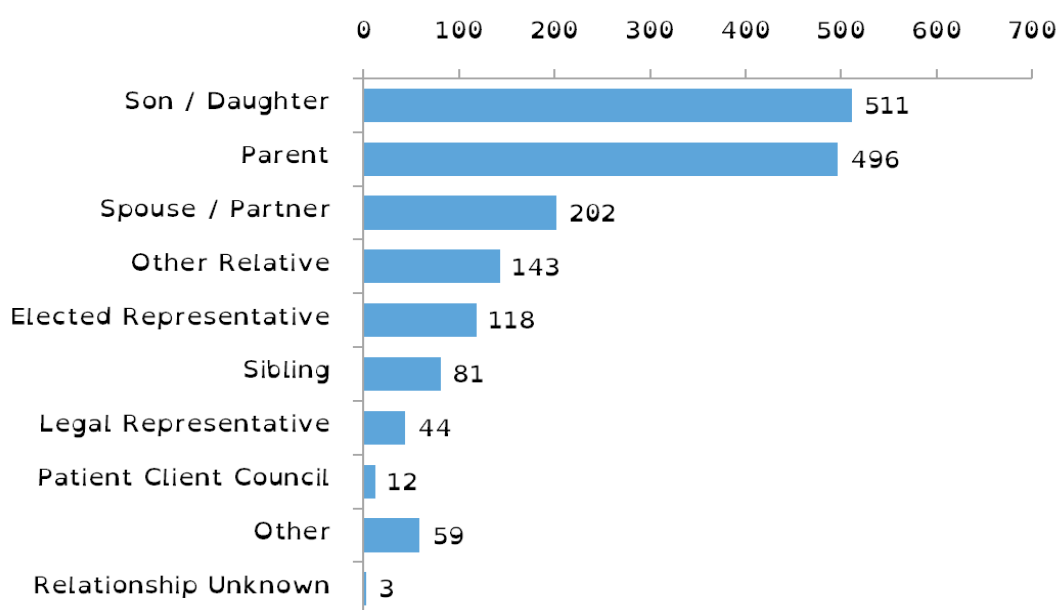
Less than half (1,623, 49.3%) of all complaints received in 2020/21 were identified as being from the patient / client, with 1,669 (50.7%) complaints from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client.

Of the 1,669 complaints received from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client, three tenths (511, 30.6%) were from the son / daughter of the patient / client, 496 (29.7%) from the parent, 202 (12.1%) from a spouse / partner and 143 (8.6%) from another relative (Figure 10) (Tables 16a and 16b).

51%

of complaints were received from those acting on behalf of patients / clients in 2020/21

Figure 10: Complaints Received by Relationship of Complainant (2020/21)⁶



⁶Includes only those complaints made by persons acting on behalf of the patient / client i.e. the complainant was not the patient / client

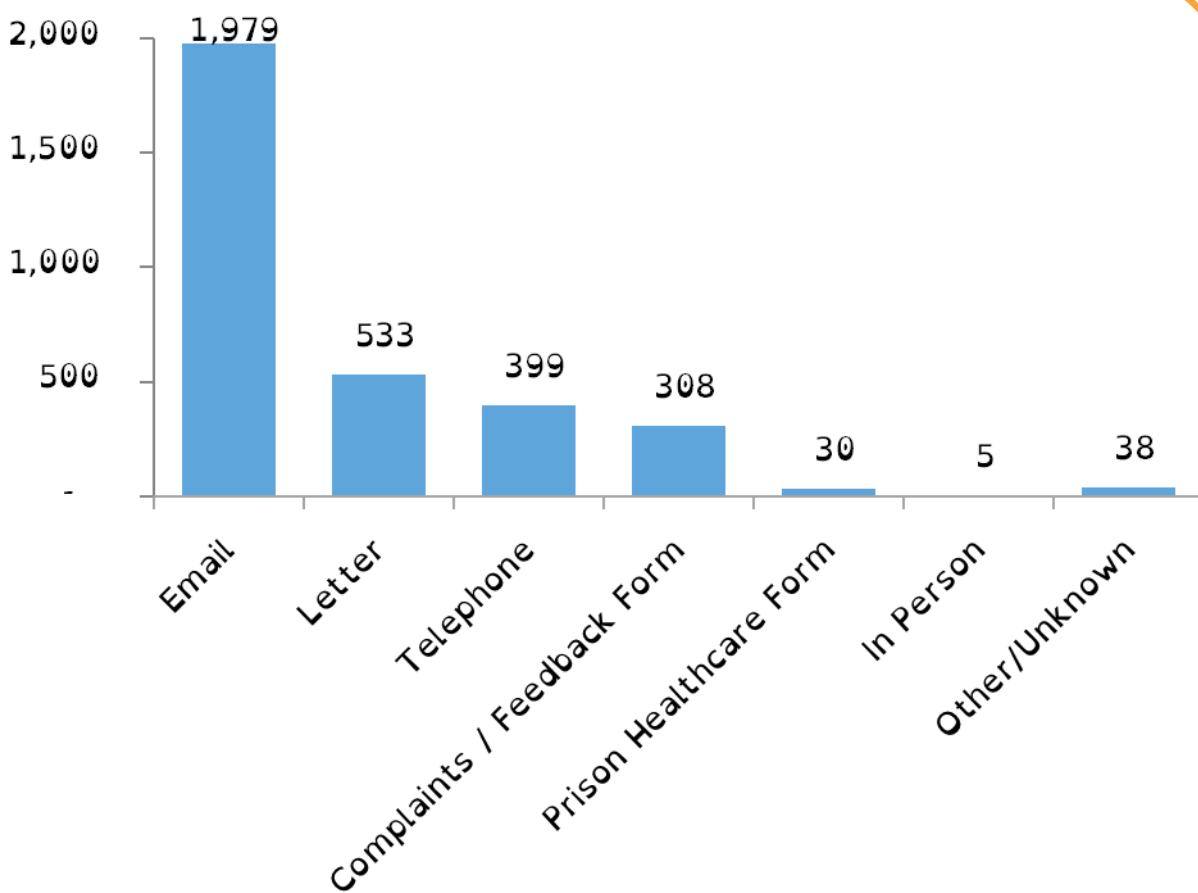
Method of Complaint

Of the 3,292 complaints received during 2020/21, more than three fifths (1,979, 60.1%) were sent by email, 533 (16.2%) by letter and 399 (12.1%) by telephone. These three methods accounted for over four fifths (88.4%, 2,911) of all complaints received during the year (Figure 11).

60%

of complaints received were sent by email in 2020/21

Figure 11: Complaints Received by Method of Complaint (2020/21)



SECTION 3: TIME TAKEN TO PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

A substantive response is defined as a communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant following an investigation. It should be noted that a single substantive response will be provided to a complaint which may include a number of complaint issues.

The HSC Complaints Policy requires HSC Trusts to provide a substantive response to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of a complaint. Where this is not possible, a holding response explaining the reason for the delay is sent to the complainant. **All holding responses are issued in 20 working days or less.**

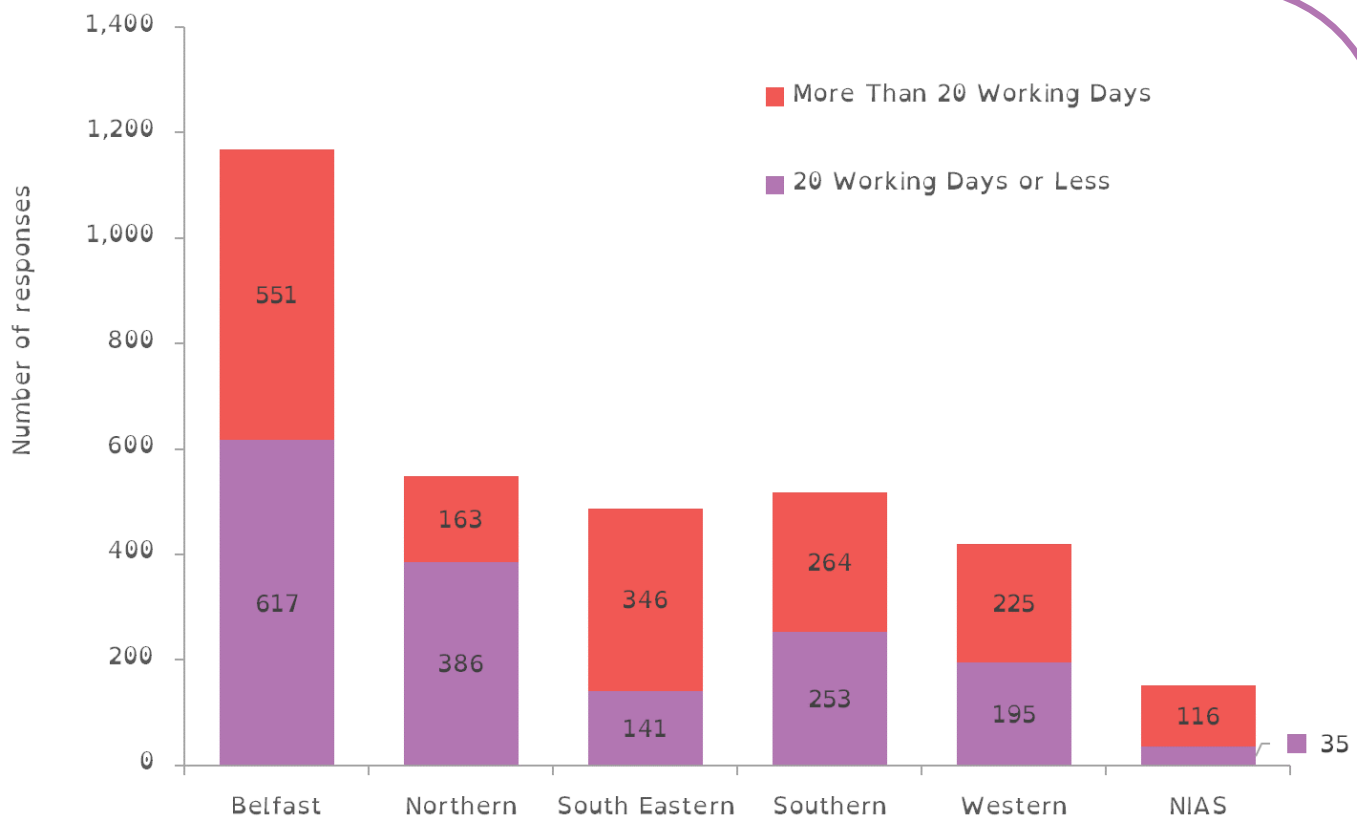
During 2020/21, just under half (1,627, 49.4%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 9, Figure 12).

The Northern HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (386, 70.3%) during 2020/21, whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (35, 23.2%) (Table 9, Figure 12).

49%

of complaints
received a substantive
response within 20
working days

Figure 12: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2020/21)

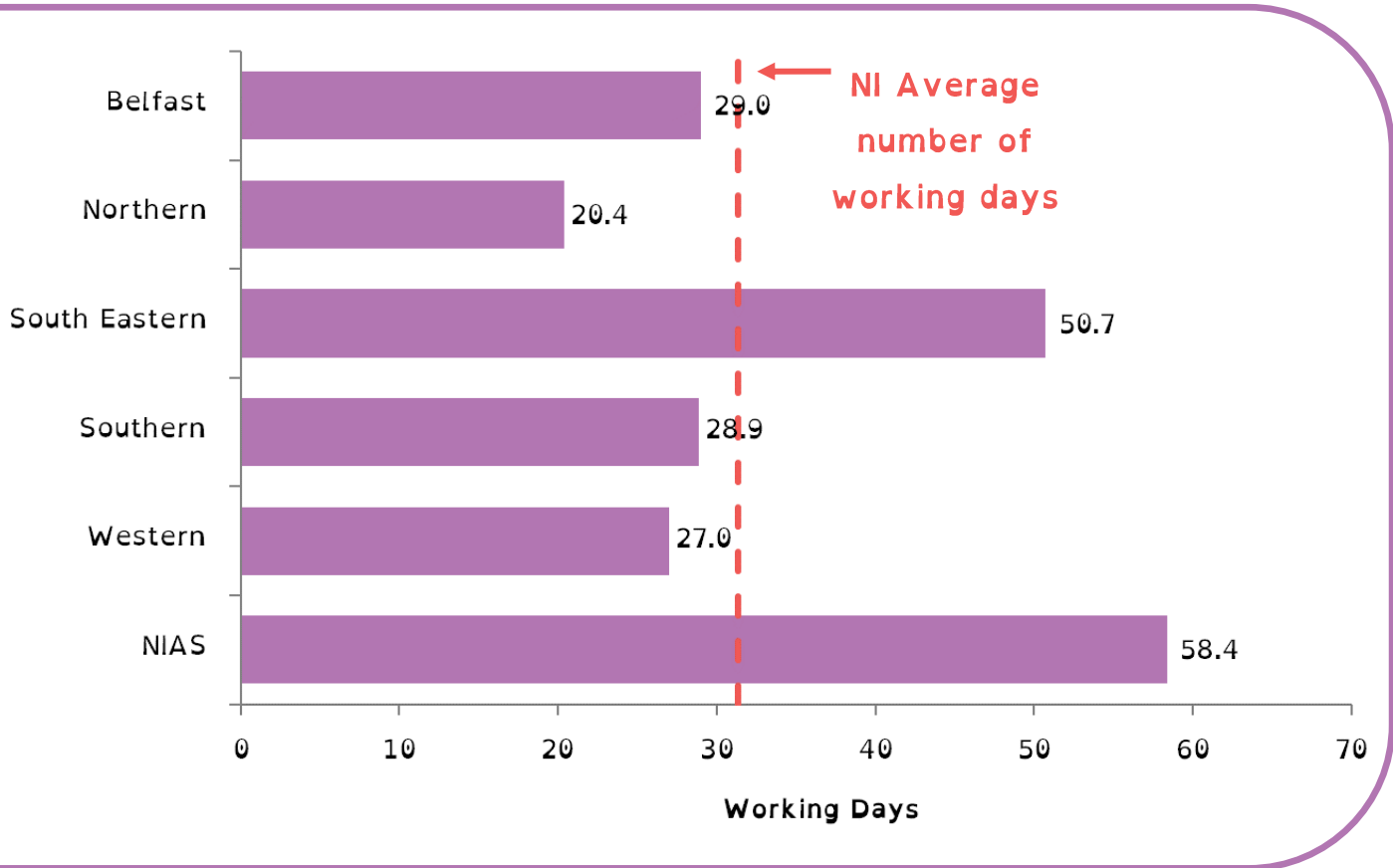


Average Number of Working Days to Substantive Response

On average HSC Trusts took 31.4 working days to provide a substantive response to a complaint received in 2020/21 (Table 9, Figure 13)

On average substantive responses were provided within **31** working days

Figure 13: Average Number of Working Days to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2020/21)⁷



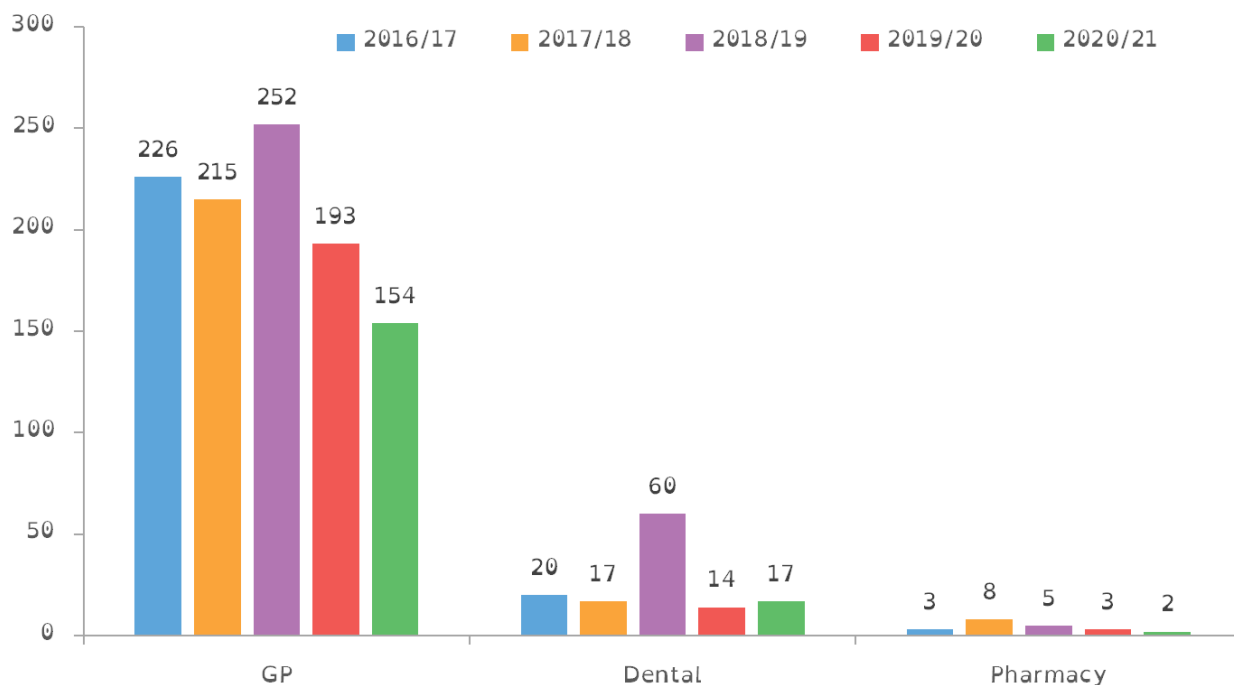
⁷ Where it is not possible to provide a substantive response within 20 working days, a holding response explaining the reason for the delay is sent to the complainant. All holding responses are issued in 20 working days or less.

SECTION 4: FAMILY PRACTITIONER SERVICE (FPS) COMPLAINTS

Information in this section refers to complaints received by the HSCB⁸ regarding FPS practices in Northern Ireland.

There are over 1,500 FPS practices across Northern Ireland encompassing general practitioners, dental practitioners, pharmacists and optometrists. Under HSC Complaints Procedure all FPS practices are required to forward to the HSC Board anonymised copies of each letter of complaint received along with the subsequent response, within 3 working days of this being issued.

Figure 14: FPS Complaints Handled by Practice Type (2016/17 – 2020/21)⁹



⁸ Refer to Appendix 5 for further details.

⁹ There have been no ophthalmic complaints handled over the last 5 years.

Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the number of complaints made against FPS practices in Northern Ireland decreased by 30.5%, from 249 to 173 (Table 10, Figure 14), with the number of complaints made in 2020/21 being 17.6% (37) less than the previous year (2019/20).

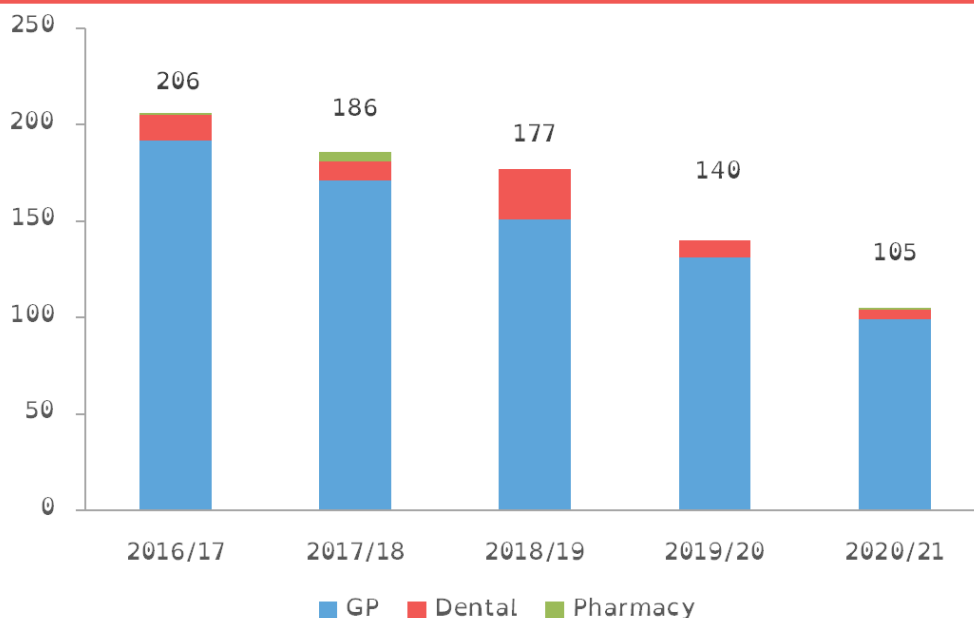
17%

**decrease in
FPS complaints
in the last year**

Local resolution

The first stage of the HSC Complaints Procedure is known as 'local resolution'. The purpose of local resolution is to provide an opportunity for the complainant and the organisation to attempt a prompt and fair resolution of the complaint. In the case of FPS practices, local resolution involves a practitioner seeking to resolve the complaint through discussion and negotiation.

Figure 15: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Year and Practice Type (2016/17 - 2020/21)¹⁰



¹⁰ There have been no ophthalmic complaints handled over the last 5 years.

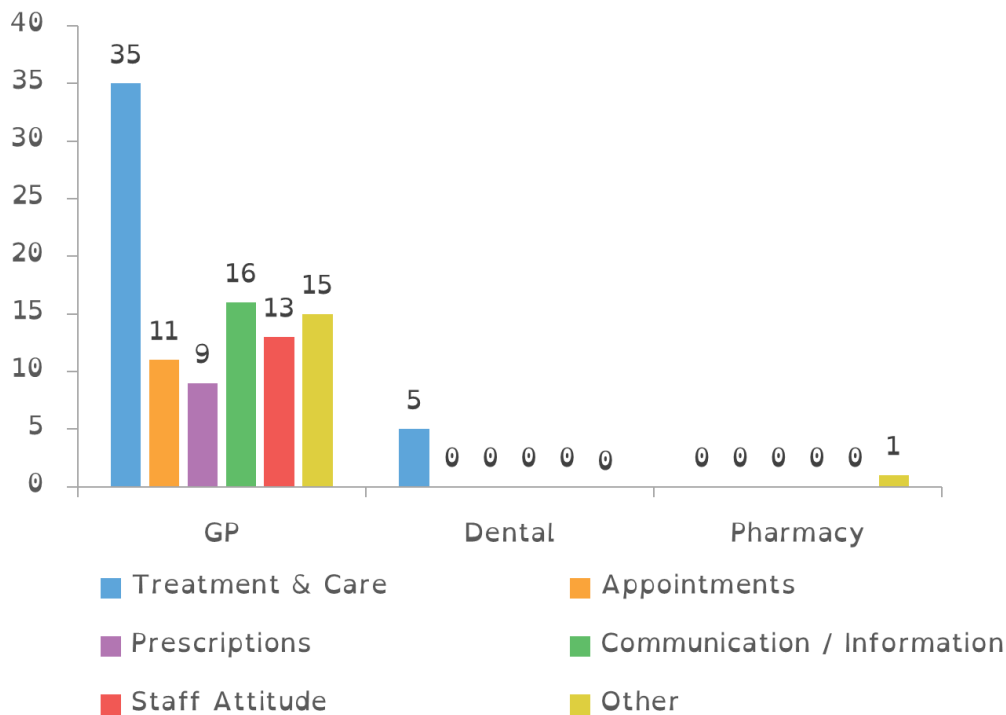
Of the 173 complaints received by the HSCB regarding FPS practices in 2020/21, 105 (60.7%) were handled under Local Resolution and the HSCB acting as an Honest Broker in 68 (39.3%) (Tables 11 & 14, Figures 15 & 17).

In 2020/21, 94.3% of complaints handled under local resolution related to GPs (Table 11, Figure 15).

During 2020/21, 'Treatment & Care' accounted for 38.1% (40) of all complaints handled under local resolution, 21 less than in the previous year (Table 12, Figure 16).

94%
of complaints handled under Local Resolution related to GPs in 2020/21

Figure 16: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Subject and Practice Type (2020/21)¹¹



¹¹ There were no ophthalmic or pharmacy complaints handled under local resolution in 2019/20.

Honest Broker

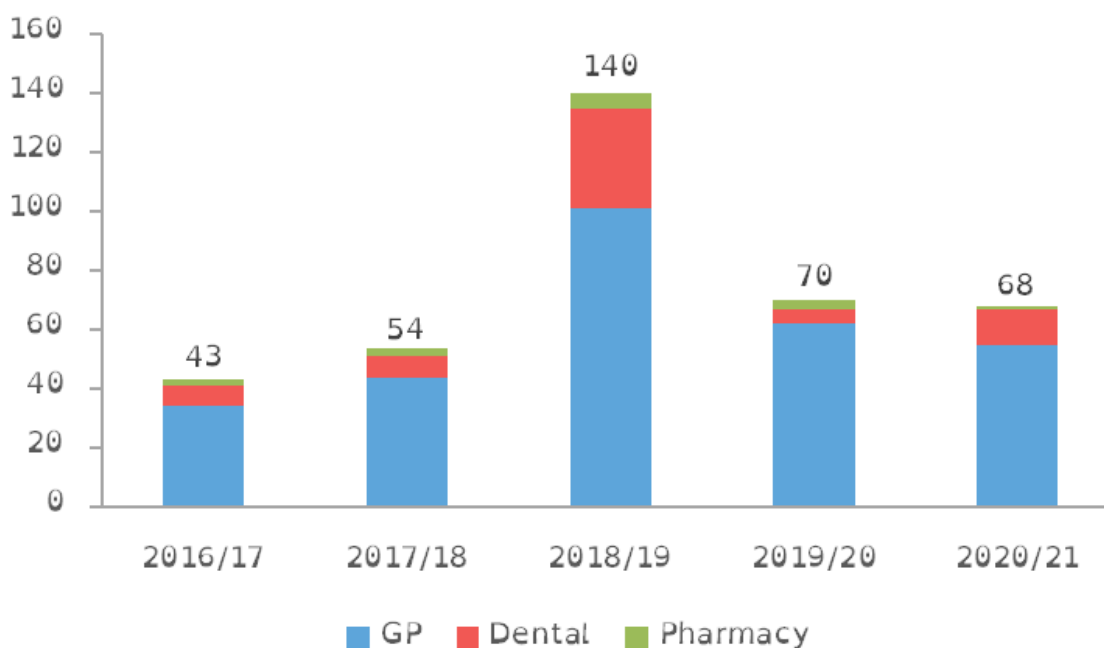
Where a complainant does not wish to approach the FPS practice directly, HSC Board Complaints staff, with the agreement of both the practice and complainant, may act as an intermediary or 'honest broker' with the aim of assisting in the local resolution of the complaint.

The number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker remained similar, with 70 in 2019/20 and 68 in 2020/21 (Table 13, Figure 17).

81%

of complaints, where the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker, related to GPs in 2020/21

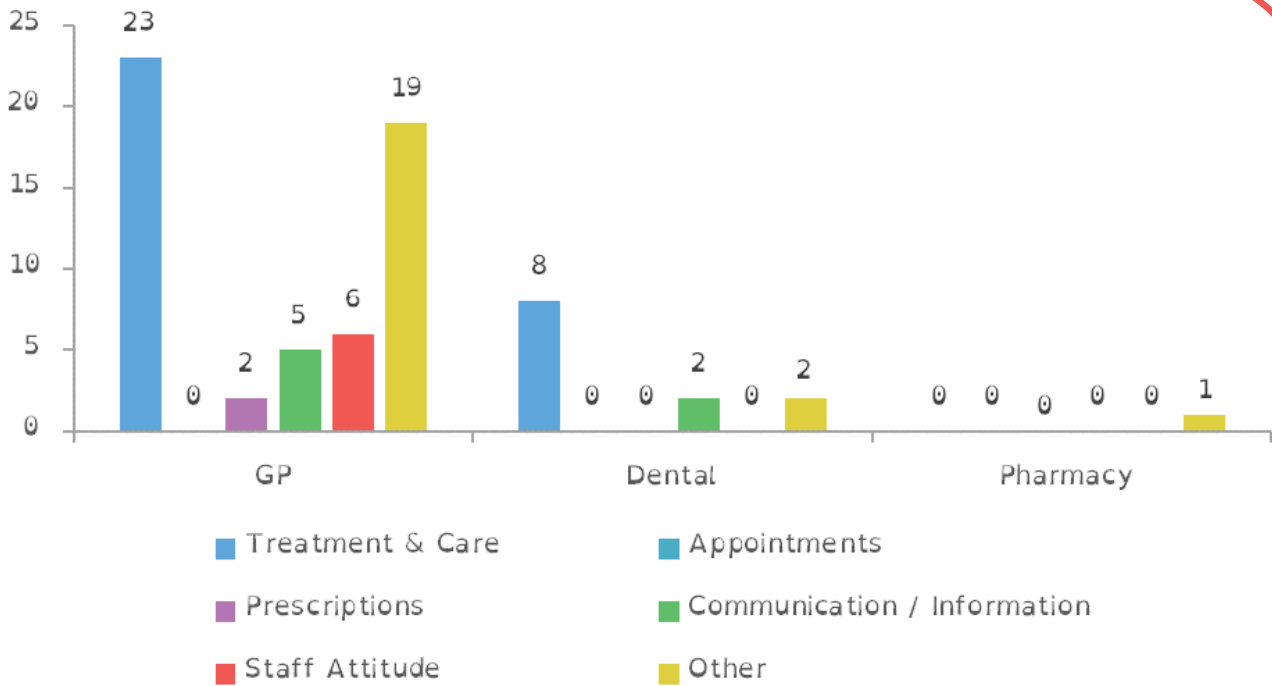
Figure 17: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Year and Practice Type (2015/16 – 2020/21)¹²



¹² There were no ophthalmic complaints handled over the last 5 years.

'Treatment & Care' accounted for more than two fifths (31, 45.6%), of all complaints in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker during 2020/21 (Table 14, Figure 18).

Figure 18: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject and Practice Type (2020/21)¹²



SECTION 5: COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

A statistical information return to collate information on compliments received by HSC Trusts was introduced in December 2017¹³, with data first being published in the 2018/19 report.

For the purposes of this statistical collection, a compliment may be understood as ‘an expression of praise, commendation or admiration’. In addition, only compliments received by: Card, Email, Feedback Form, Letter, Social Media (Facebook & Twitter only) or Telephone should be included.

Compliments Received by HSC Trusts

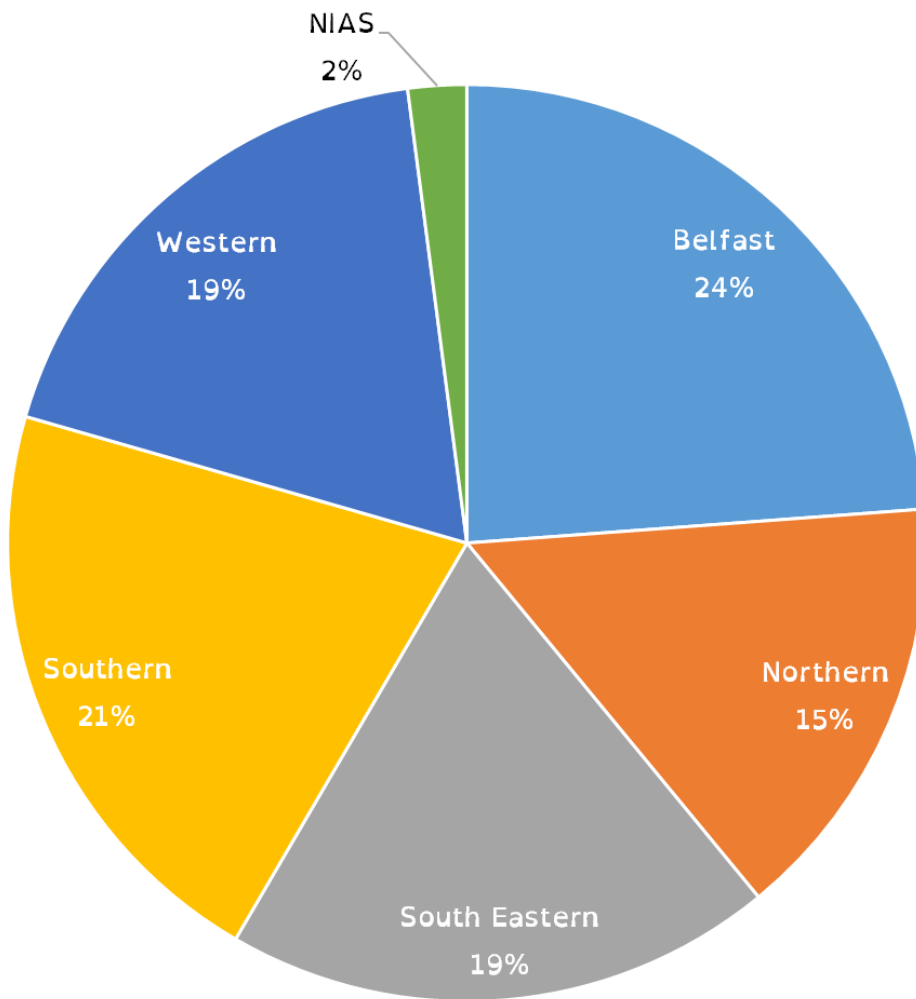
During 2020/21, HSC Trusts received 14,683 compliments.

Almost a quarter (3,497, 23.8%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 3,091 (21.1%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 2,842 (19.4%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 2,714 (18.5%) by the Western HSC Trust, 2,236 (15.2%) by the Northern HSC Trust and 303 (2.1%) by NIAS (Table 15, Figure 19).

14,700
compliments
received by HSC
Trusts in 2020/21

¹³ Additional information on the compliments information collection is detailed in Appendix 1 & 6.

Figure 19: Compliments Received by HSC Trusts (2020/21) ¹²

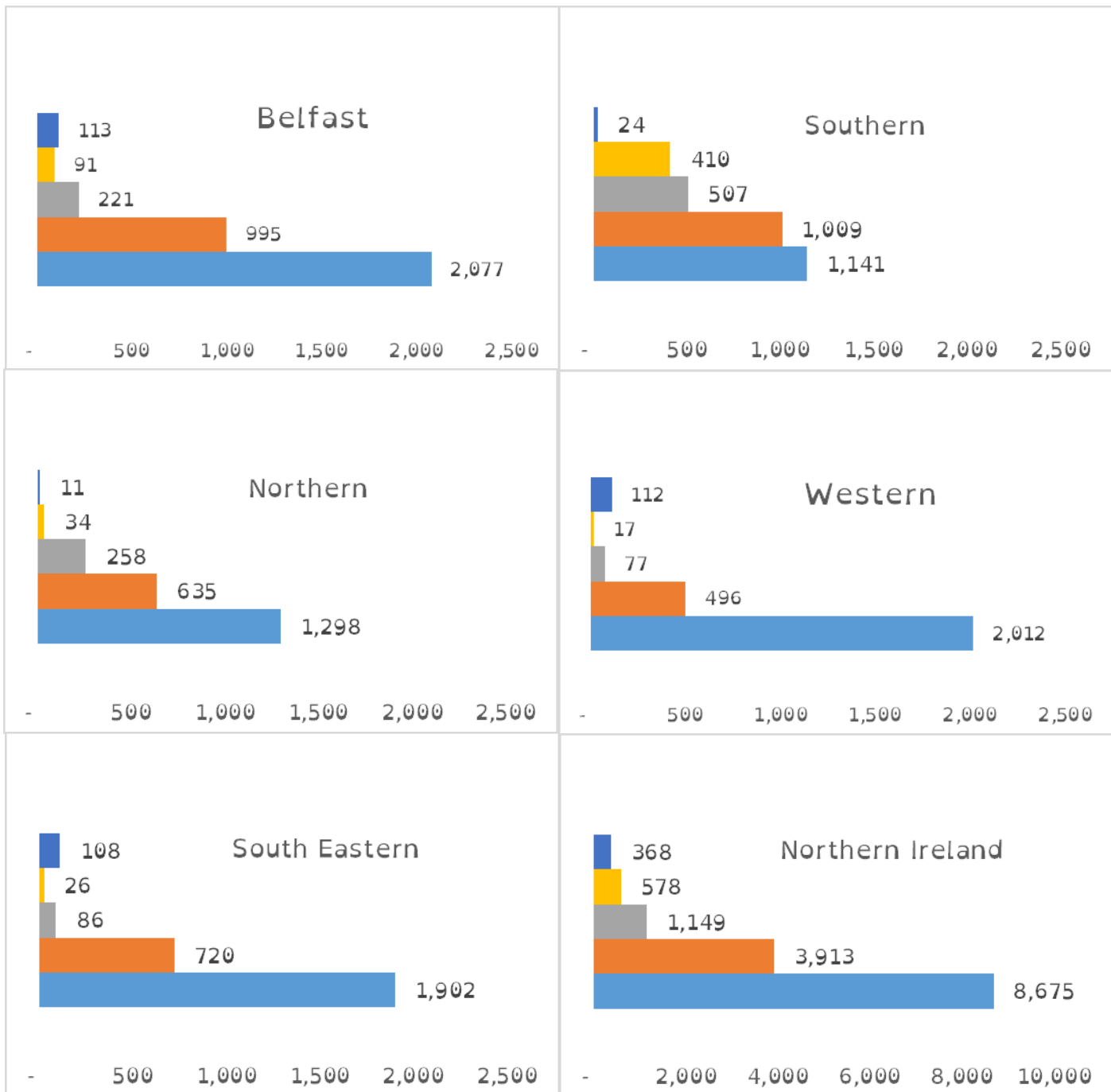


Subject of Compliment Received

Of the 14,683 compliments received by HSC Trusts, 8,675 (59.1%) related to 'Quality of Treatment & Care', 3,913 (26.6%) to 'Staff Attitude & Behaviour', 1,149 (7.8%) to 'Information & Communication', 578 (3.9%) to 'Environment', and 368 (2.5%) to 'Other' subjects (Table 15, Figure 20).

60% of
compliments related
to Quality of
Treatment & Care

Figure 20: Compliments received by HSC Trusts, by Subject and HSC Trust (2020/21)¹⁴

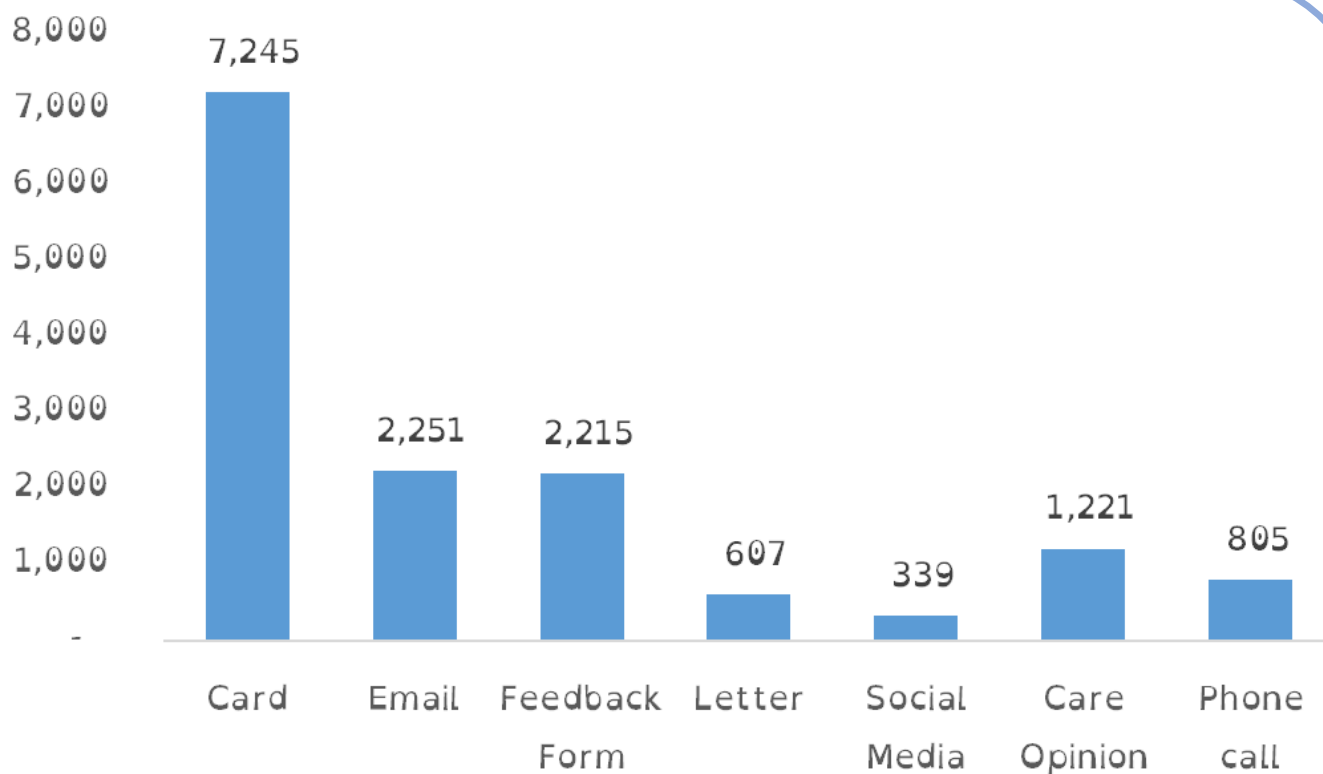


¹⁴ Information for Northern Ireland includes compliments received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

Method of Compliment

Almost half (7,245, 49.3%) of compliments received during 2020/21 were made by card, 2,251 (15.3%) by email, 2,215 (15.1%) by feedback form, 1,221 (8.3%) by Care Opinion, 607 (4.1%) by letter, 339 (2.3%) by social media¹⁵ and 805 (5.5%) by phone call (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Compliments received by HSC Trusts by Method (2020/21)¹⁴



¹⁵ Only Facebook posts / Tweets linked to the official organisational Facebook / Twitter accounts are included as social media compliments.

SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2014/15 - 2020/21)

HSC Trust	2014/15	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Belfast	2,772	2,007	2,026	2,356	2,118	1,610
Northern	890	869	814	760	739	614
South Eastern	1,332	1,076	1,140	1,269	1,392	1,228
Southern	1,166	1,046	955	850	1,067	857
Western	629	1,030	746	690	696	545
NIAS	226	161	133	124	93	151
Northern Ireland	7,015	6,189	5,814	6,049	6,105	5,005

Table 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2020/21)¹⁶

Programme of Care	BHSCT	NHSCT	SEHSCT	SHSCT	WHSCT	NIAS	Total
Acute	997	292	656	484	266	-	2,695
Maternal & Child Health	195	43	120	-	36	-	394
Family & Child Care	-	-	-	-	7	-	524
Elderly Care	80	74	130	220	13	-	413
Mental Health	125	64	89	86	49	-	368
Learning Disability	132	108	66	30	32	-	82
Sens Impairment & Physical Disability	15	15	32	11	9	-	28
Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	4	3	17	1	3	-	12
Primary Health & Adult Community	-	-	1	-	11	-	51
Prison Healthcare	-	3	24	24	-	-	62
None (No POC assigned)	-	-	62	-	-	-	376
Total	62	12	31	1	119	151	5,005

¹⁶ The South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland.

Table 3: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2016/17 - 2020/21)

Programme of Care	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Acute	3,703	3,371	3,626	3,576	2,695
Maternal & Child Health	354	361	281	367	394
Family & Child Care	459	466	429	458	524
Elderly Care	378	370	322	426	413
Mental Health	431	390	412	474	368
Learning Disability	134	119	93	113	82
Sens Impairment & Physical Disability	61	73	58	40	28
Health Promotion & Disease	5	2	4	24	12
Primary Health & Adult Community	167	190	287	113	51
Prison Healthcare	46	51	39	40	62
None (No POC assigned)	451	421	498	474	376
Total	6,189	5,814	6,049	6,105	5,005

Table 4: Subject of Complaint Issues by HSC Trust (2020/21)

Subject	BHSCT	NHSCT	SEHSCT	SHSCT	WHSCT	NIAS	Total
Access to Premises	9	4	13	4	2	1	33
Aids/Adaptations/Appliances	16	5	3	6	4	-	34
Children Order Complaints	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
Clinical Diagnosis	59	36	69	34	35	1	234
Communication/Information	370	74	294	217	78	1	1,034
Complaints Handling	1	-	6	-	1	-	8
Confidentiality	20	7	16	8	13	-	64
Consent to Treatment/Care	2	-	2	2	1	-	7
Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Services	-	5	5	-	-	-	10
Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing	-	16	3	-	-	-	19
Other Contracted Services	1	2	-	-	-	-	3
Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients	1	1	2	10	2	-	16
Delayed Admission from A&E	1	-	3	4	5	-	13
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements	48	15	26	18	16	-	123
Discrimination	3	2	6	5	1	-	17
Environmental	18	6	7	10	1	-	42
Hotel/Support/Security Services (Excludes Contracted Services)	6	9	6	10	3	-	34
Infection Control	22	5	10	10	1	3	51
Mortuary & Post-Mortem	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Policy/Commercial Decisions	16	19	16	11	7	-	69
Privacy/Dignity	3	3	25	3	6	-	40
Professional Assessment of Need	13	17	11	82	7	-	130
Property/Expenses/Finances	50	11	12	14	12	1	100
Records/Record Keeping	20	7	42	7	3	-	79
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	208	102	199	161	95	45	810
Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time	1	-	1	1	1	56	60
Quality of Treatment & Care	292	217	359	157	164	35	1,224
Quantity of Treatment & Care	107	9	17	34	26	-	193
Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments	10	7	22	3	12	-	54
Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments	164	22	18	12	3	-	219
Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital	107	5	9	9	14	-	144
Waiting Times, A&E Departments	7	2	8	2	2	-	21
Waiting Times, Community Services	10	1	4	6	2	-	23
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments	14	5	9	8	2	-	38
Other	11	-	4	9	21	8	53
Total Number of Complaint Issues	1,610	614	1,228	857	545	151	5,005

Table 5: Category of Complaint Issue (2016/17 - 2020/21)

Category of Complaint Issue	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Admissions/Discharges	429	6.9%	374	6.4%	348	5.8%	372	6.1%	280	5.6%
Aids/Adaptations/Appliances	72	1.2%	62	1.1%	51	0.8%	62	1.0%	34	0.7%
Appointments/Waiting Times	896	14.5%	737	12.7%	711	11.8%	688	11.3%	351	7.0%
Children Order	8	0.1%	5	0.1%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	5	0.1%
Contracted Services	69	1.1%	64	1.1%	63	1.0%	60	1.0%	32	0.6%
Diagnosis/Oper/Treatment	1,775	28.7%	1,733	29.8%	1,920	31.7%	1,855	30.4%	1,631	32.6%
Information & Communication	1,007	16.3%	1,035	17.8%	1,075	17.8%	1,176	19.3%	1,177	23.5%
Mortuary	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Patient Experience	1,080	17.5%	1,030	17.7%	1,068	17.7%	1,077	17.6%	962	19.2%
Policy/Commercial Decisions	125	2.0%	111	1.9%	99	1.6%	83	1.4%	67	1.3%
Premises	214	3.5%	238	4.1%	317	5.2%	302	4.9%	160	3.2%
Prison Healthcare	46	0.7%	51	0.9%	39	0.6%	40	0.7%	62	1.2%
Professional Assessment of	275	4.4%	237	4.1%	191	3.2%	196	3.2%	130	2.6%
Transport	78	1.3%	61	1.0%	59	1.0%	117	1.9%	60	1.2%
Other	114	1.8%	76	1.3%	104	1.7%	75	1.2%	53	1.1%
Total	6,189	100.0%	5,814	100.0%	6,049	100.0%	6,105	100.0%	5,005	100.0%

Table 6: Category of Complaint Issue by HSC Trust (2020/21)¹⁷

Category of Complaint Issue	BHSCT	NHSCT	SEHSCT	SHSCT	WHSCT	NIAS	Northern Ireland
Admissions/Discharges	156	20	38	31	35	0	280
Aids/Adaptations/Appliances	16	5	3	6	4	0	34
Appointments/Waiting Times	205	37	57	31	21	0	351
Children Order	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Contracted Services	1	23	8	0	0	0	32
Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment	461	263	406	237	228	36	1,631
Information & Communication	411	88	350	232	95	1	1,177
Mortuary	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Patient Experience	264	118	237	183	114	46	962
Policy/Commercial Decisions	16	19	14	11	7	0	67
Premises	55	24	36	34	7	4	160
Prison Healthcare			62				62
Professional Assessment of Need	13	17	11	82	7	0	130
Transport	1	0	1	1	1	56	60
Other	11	0	4	9	21	8	53
Total	1610	614	1228	857	545	151	5,005

¹⁷ The South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland.

Table 7: Specialty of Complaint Issues by HSC Trust (2020/21)

Specialty	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	NIAS	Total
Accident & Emergency	125	85	100	94	94	87	585
Allied Health Professions	41	12	38	26	12	0	129
Anaesthetics & Pain Management	13	1	9	0	9	0	32
Burns Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery	1	0	42	0	3	0	46
Cardiology	19	13	14	8	9	0	63
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	23	4	0	23	1	0	51
Children & Young Peoples Services	63	71	138	124	54	0	450
Community Nursing/Midwives	0	9	9	2	6	0	26
Community Paediatrics	19	2	1	22	0	0	44
Dentistry	18	1	1	1	1	0	22
Dermatology	10	2	6	3	1	0	22
Domicillary Services	6	11	1	11	25	0	54
ENT	46	1	5	6	4	0	62
General Medicine	98	60	263	169	45	0	635
General Surgery	41	40	61	27	58	0	227
Geriatric Medicine	81	10	23	0	9	0	123
Gynaecology	64	14	30	13	11	0	132
Learning Disability	4	15	22	9	1	0	51
Mental Health Acute	103	33	30	12	4	0	182
Mental Health Community	1	48	41	19	12	0	121
Neurology	48	0	6	4	3	0	61
Obstetrics	86	26	122	71	19	0	324
Old Age Psychiatry	0	25	9	0	2	0	36
Oncology	32	4	11	0	0	0	47
Ophthalmology	36	0	2	0	11	0	49
Other	230	91	169	132	78	41	741
Paediatrics	102	8	19	17	8	0	154
Physical Disability/ Sensory Support	14	0	11	2	4	0	31
Radiology	37	12	12	11	7	0	79
Rehabilitation	0	4	0	10	11	0	25
Residential Care	13	9	5	8	3	0	38
Trauma & Orthopaedics	198	3	24	19	29	0	273
Urology	38	0	4	14	11	0	67
NIAS - Emergency Ambulance Control	0	0	0	0	0	23	23
Total	1,610	614	1,228	857	545	151	5,005

Table 8: Complaints by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2020/21)¹⁸

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
Under 16	194	184	378
16 - 18	37	23	60
19 - 24	91	43	134
25 - 34	291	113	404
35 - 44	184	95	279
45 - 54	148	129	277
55 - 64	149	141	290
65 - 74	138	134	272
75 +	290	227	517
Total	1,522	1,089	2,611

Table 9: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2020/21)

HSC Trust	20 Working Days or Less		More Than 20 Working Days		Total No.	Mean No. of Working Days
	No.	%	No.	%		
Belfast	617	53%	551	47%	1,168	29.0
Northern	386	70%	163	30%	549	20.4
South Eastern	141	29%	346	71%	487	50.7
Southern	253	49%	264	51%	517	28.9
Western	195	46%	225	54%	420	27.0
NIAS	35	23%	116	77%	151	58.4
Northern Ireland	1,627	49%	1,665	51%	3,292	31.4

¹⁸ Includes only those complaints where both age and gender of the patient / client was recorded.

Table 10: FPS Complaints Handled (2015/16 - 2020/21)

FPS Complaints	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
GP	226	215	252	193	154
Dental	20	17	60	14	17
Pharmacy	3	8	5	3	2
Ophthalmic	0	0	0	0	0
Total	249	240	317	210	173

Table 11: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2015/16 - 2020/21)¹⁹

Local Resolution	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
GP	194	192	171	151	131	99
Dental	15	13	10	26	9	5
Pharmacy	1	1	5	0	0	1
Ophthalmic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	210	206	186	177	140	105

Table 12: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Subject (2020/21)

Local Resolution	GP	Dental	Pharmacy	Total
Treatment & Care	35	5	0	40
Appointments	11	0	0	11
Prescriptions	9	0	0	9
Communication / Information	16	0	0	16
Staff Attitude	13	0	0	13
Other	15	0	1	16
Total	99	5	1	105

¹⁹ There were no ophthalmic complaints handled under local resolution in 2020/21.

**Table 13: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker
(2016/17 - 2020/21) ²⁰**

Honest Broker	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
GP	34	44	101	62	55
Dental	7	7	34	5	12
Pharmacy	2	3	5	3	1
Ophthalmic	0	0	0	0	0
Total	43	54	140	70	68

**Table 14: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject
(2020/21)**

Honest Broker	GP	Dental	Pharmacy	Total
Treatment & Care	23	8	0	31
Appointments	0	0	0	0
Prescriptions	2	0	0	2
Communication / Informa	5	2	0	7
Staff Attitude	6	0	0	6
Other	19	2	1	22
Total	55	12	1	68

²⁰ There were no ophthalmic complaints handled in 2020/21.

Table 15: Subject of Compliments by HSC Trust (2020/21)

Subject of Compliment	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Nias	Total
Quality of Treatment and Care	2,077	1,298	1,902	1,141	2,012	245	8,675
Staff Attitude & Behaviour	995	635	720	1,009	496	58	3,913
Information & Communication	221	258	86	507	77	-	1,149
Environment	91	34	26	410	17	-	578
Other	113	11	108	24	112	-	368
Total Compliments	3,497	2,236	2,842	3,091	2,714	303	14,683

Table 16a: Source of Complaint

Is Complainant the Patient/Client	No.
Yes	1,623
No	1,669
Total	3,292

Table 16b: Source of those complaints not from the Patient/Client

Relationship of Complainant	No.
Son / Daughter	511
Parent	496
Spouse / Partner	202
Other Relative	143
Elected Representative	118
Sibling	81
Legal Representative	44
Patient Client Council	12
Other	59
Relationship Unknown	3
Total	1,669

APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL NOTES

This statistical release presents information on complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. It details the number of HSC Trust complaint issues received, by the programme of care, category, subject, specialty of the complaint and the time taken to provide a substantive response.

Information is also included on the number of complaints received by the HSC Board regarding Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland.

Data Collection

The information presented in this statistical release derives from the Departmental CH8 Revised statistical return provided by the six HSC Trusts, (including the NIAS) in Northern Ireland. The CH8 return was originally introduced in 1998 and updated in 2007 to take account of the structural changes within the HSC system following the Review of Public Administration (RPA). In 2014, the CH8 return was redesigned to allow the collection of patient level data on all complaints received by HSC Trusts. The patient level collection was titled CH8 Revised to distinguish it from the original CH8 aggregate return. This return is submitted on a quarterly basis by HSC Trusts, in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

Information presented on FPS complaints forwarded to the HSC Board derives from CHB statistical return. The CHB is collected on a quarterly basis by the HSC Board, in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

Data presented on compliments is collected from the six HSC Trusts on a quarterly basis using the compliments information return (CP1). The compliments information return was developed in consultation with HSC Trusts to ensure regional consistency, and enable comparisons across HSC Trusts.

Data providers are supplied with technical guidance documents outlining the methodologies that should be used in the collection, reporting and validation of each of these data returns. These documents can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/trust-complaints-form-ch8>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/trust-compliments-form-cp1>

Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and as a consequence some totals may not sum to 100.

Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin has been provided by HSC Trusts / Board and has been validated and quality assured by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.

For the CH8 Revised information collection, HSC Trusts are given a set period of time to submit the information. At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent both within and across returns. Trend analyses are used to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. Queries arising from validation checks are presented to HSC Trusts for clarification and if required returns may be amended and/or re-submitted. This report incorporates all returns and amendments received up to 8th September 2020.

The compliments information collection was introduced in December 2017 and took some time to embed, with data first being published in the 2018/19 report. In 2018/19, information had to be estimated for two of the six Trusts as they were only able to provide a partial return for the year because their monitoring systems had not been fully implemented. For

2020/21, full year's data was available for all Trusts. However for 2019/20, it should be noted that Belfast HSC Trust's telephone system to capture compliments was only effective from 1 October 2019, Western HSC Trust did not have a system in place to record compliments received by phone call and NIAS did not monitor compliments via social media.

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust compliments, HSC Trust and FPS complaints received during the year, to help assess performance, for corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to assembly questions and ad-hoc queries from the public.

Contextual Information for Using Complaint and Compliment Statistics

Readers should be aware that contextual information about Northern Ireland and the health services provided is available to read while using statistics from this publication.

This includes information on the current and future population, structures within the Health and Social Care system, the vision for future health services as well as targets and indicators. This information is available at the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/contextual-information-using-hospital-statistics>

Contact Information

As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on the publication to:

Hospital Information Branch Email: statistics@health-ni.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS

Programme of care

Programmes of care are divisions of health care, into which activity and finance data are assigned, so as to provide a common management framework. They are used to plan and monitor the health service, by allowing performance to be measured, targets set and services managed on a comparative basis. There are nine programmes of care as follows:

POC1 Acute

POC6 Learning Disability

POC2 Maternity and Child Health

POC7 Sensory Impairment and Physical Disability

POC3 Family and Child Care

POC8 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

POC4 Elderly Care

POC9 Primary Health and Adult Community

POC5 Mental Health

Complaint Issues

For the purposes of the CH8 return, a complaint may be understood as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response’. This return includes information on all formal complaints only, informal complaints or communications criticising a service or the quality of care but not adjudged to require a response, are not included on this form.

A single communication regarding a complaint may refer to more than one issue. In such cases each individual complaint issue is recorded separately for Programme of Care (POC) and Subject.

Only complaints received from/on behalf of patients/clients or other ‘existing or former users of a Trust’s services and facilities’ are included. Complaints from staff are not included.

Where separate communications in respect of a single patient / client refer to one episode, they are treated as a single complaint issue for the purposes of this publication. In other words, if two relatives complain about the same subject/episode in respect of the same patient, this will be treated as one complaint issue only. However, if two relatives complain about separate subjects/episodes but in the care of the same patient, these will be treated as separate complaint issues.

Where separate unconnected communications refer to the same episode/issue, they will be treated as separate complaint issues. In other words, if separate individuals complain about a matter they have all experienced, this would be treated as separate complaint issues, e.g. if ten clients complain individually about conditions in a day centre, these will be treated as ten separate complaint issues.

The logic of the complaints procedure is that it should afford a speedy resolution of cases of individual dissatisfaction of service. This differs from the case of petitions where the concern is primarily the collective representation of views, e.g. if a single complaint is received from a group of users, it will be treated as a single complaint issue.

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the Trust's response to his/her complaint and enters into further communications about the same matter/s, this is not a new complaint, rather it will be the same complaint reopened. Such a complaint would only be recorded once in the CH8 Revised, i.e. in the quarter it was initially received. However, if this complainant were to then complain about a separate/different matter, this would be a new complaint.

APPENDIX 3: SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT ISSUES

1. Access to Premises

This heading includes all issues concerning ease of movement inside and outside the buildings, e.g. signage, car parking, etc. Problems of wheelchair access / disabled parking etc. should also be included under this heading, if not covered under '*Discrimination*' (17).

2. Aids / Adaptations / Appliances

This heading refers to the suitability / availability of any aids / adaptations, once they have been recommended. Complaint issues about waiting for assessment should be included under '*Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments*' (32).

3. Children Order Complaints

This heading refers to all formal complaint issues received under the Children Order Representations and Complaint Issues Procedure, irrespective of their subject or content.

4. Clinical Diagnosis

This heading covers clinical diagnosis only and is to be distinguished from '*Professional Assessment of Need*' (24).

5. Communication / Information

This heading includes all issues of communication and information provided to patients / clients / families / carers regarding any aspect of their contact with staff. However, this should be distinguished from complaint issues about the attitude of staff when communicating with patients / clients, which would be logged under '*Staff Attitude / Behaviour*' (27).

6. Complaint Handling

This refers to handling of a complaint issue at any point up to and including the conclusion of local resolution stage, e.g. a complainant complains that he/she did not receive a response within the timescale. However, a complaint issue would not be included under this heading if it obviously falls under another heading, e.g. if the complaint issue is about attitude of staff handling the complaint issue, it would be logged under 'Staff Attitude / Behaviour' (27).

7. Confidentiality

This heading includes any issues of confidentiality regarding patients / clients, e.g. (i) complaint by a patient regarding a breach of confidentiality or (ii) complaint by the parents of a young adolescent who are denied information by staff on the grounds of that adolescent's right to confidentiality.

8. Consent to Treatment / care

This refers to complaint issues made regarding consent to treatment/care.

9. Contracted Regulated Children's Services

10. Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Agency

11. Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing

These three headings refer to complaints about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements. Establishments may be children's homes, nursing or residential homes, while Agencies may be a domiciliary care agency, fostering agency or nursing agency. For a full list of Regulated Establishments and Agencies please refer to 'Quality & Improvement Regulation NI Order 2003, Article 8'.

In the first instance, the service provider is expected to deal with complaints, however, where the complainant, Trust or RQIA wishes, the matter may be investigated by the Trust under the HSC Complaint Procedure.

Examples: (i) the Trust (as the commissioner) is asked by either RQIA or a relative, to investigate a complaint about the care or treatment provided to a resident in a Residential Home; (ii) a patient / client asks the Trust (as the commissioner) to investigate a complaint about the attitude of a member of staff of a Voluntary Agency with whom the Trust has contracted a home care service (e.g. personal care).

12. Contracted Independent Hospital Services

This heading refers to complaints about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements with independent hospitals.

13. Contracted Services – Other

This heading refers to complaint issues about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements that are not captured in 'Contracted Regulated Children's Services/Domiciliary Agency/Residential Nursing' (9, 10 & 11). In the first instance, the service provider is expected to deal with complaint issues, however, where the complainant or Trust wishes, the matter may be investigated by the Trust under the HSC Complaint Procedure.

Example: Attitude of a member of staff of facilities services operating under contract on Trust premises, (e.g. car clamping company or catering).

14. Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients

This heading includes all aspects of delay or cancellation of operation or procedure once the patient is in hospital, e.g. Radiology investigation cancelled, or theatre cancelled due to lack of ICU beds, theatre overrun, no anaesthetist, etc. This should be distinguished from the cancellation or delay of admission for the procedure captured under 'Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital' (34).

15. Delayed Admission from A&E

This refers to patients waiting in Accident & Emergency, following decision to 'admit', before being allocated a bed in a ward. This should be distinguished from 'Waiting Times, A&E Departments' (35) and 'Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital' (34).

16. Discharge / Transfer Arrangements

This heading refers to the adequacy of arrangements and includes early discharges or delayed discharges. It does not include failure to communicate discharge arrangements, which would be included under 'Communication / Information' (5).

17. Discrimination

This heading refers to complaint issues regarding disadvantageous treatment. It includes discrimination under the 9 Equality categories (i.e. age, gender, marital status, political opinions, religious belief, racial group, sexual orientation, persons with or without a disability, persons with or without dependents) and under the Human Rights Act (e.g. Article 1, Right to Life; Article 3, Right to Freedom from Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment; Article 8, Right to Respect for Private or Family Life). Complaint issues about patient choice should also be included under this heading.

18. Environmental

Complaint issues referring to the general condition or repair of the premises should be included under this heading. It also covers wider environmental issues, e.g. smoking.

19. Hotel / Support / Security Services

This heading includes any complaint issue referring to ancillary or support services, e.g. portering, facilities, catering. It also refers to security issues, e.g. stolen vehicles parked on Trust property.

20. Infection Control

This heading refers to compliance with infection control standards, e.g. hand hygiene; aseptic procedures; inappropriate use of personal protective equipment; incorrect disposal of waste or soiled linen; equipment / furniture not decontaminated. It covers issues around all infections but especially resistant micro-organism infections, e.g. MRSA, VRE. However, complaint issues about lack of information or not being informed would not be included in this heading, but would be logged under '*Communication / Information*' (5).

21. Mortuary & Post-Mortem

This category refers to complaint issues in relation to the mortuary and/or post-mortem.

22. Policy / Commercial Decisions

This category refers to complaint issues related to policy and/or commercial decisions.

23. Privacy / Dignity

This heading includes complaint issues specifically relating to the privacy or personal dignity of patients/clients.

24. Professional Assessment of Need

This heading refers to the assessment of need in either clinical or non-clinical contexts, however, should be distinguished from '*Clinical Diagnosis*' (4).

25. Property / Expenses / Finance

This heading refers to issues of the personal property, expenses or finance of patients/clients, e.g. due money for fostering; issues around direct payments; concerns about Trust charging / invoicing for clients in Nursing/Residential Home (either Private or Trust Home); broken hearing aid; lost spectacles / dentures.

Property damaged by staff arising in the course of care / treatment would fall into this category; however, property stolen from a patient's locker (as not being entrusted to or in the custodianship of

staff and not known to be attributable to staff) would come under the heading of 'Hotel/Support/Security Services' (19). Complaint issues about stolen vehicles (visitor or patient) and property lost or stolen from visitors should similarly be logged as a 'Hotel/Support/Security Services' (19).

26. Records / Record Keeping

This refers to cases where records (such as medical notes, case files, X-rays) are unavailable, e.g. records have been mislaid or misfiled. Complaint issues about access rights to deceased patients' health records (governed by Access to Health Records (1993) NI Order) should be included under this heading. Complaint issues about any aspect of content of records or right of access should only be included under this heading, if they are not more appropriately dealt with under other procedures, such as Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information Act appeals processes.

27. Staff Attitude / Behaviour

This category refers to complaint issues related to staff attitude and/or staff behaviour.

28. Transport, Late or Non-arrival / Journey Time

This heading refers to complaint issues about the late arrival or non-arrival of transport or about the length of journey.

29. Transport, Suitability of Vehicle / Equipment

This heading refers to the appropriateness of the vehicle assigned and will include issues such as comfort, ease of access for the client group served. Complaint issues about the appropriateness of equipment would also be logged under this heading.

30. Quality of Treatment & Care

This refers to the quality or standard of treatment and care provided. It also covers complaint issues relating to patient / client safety. However, it is to be distinguished from 'Quantity' of Treatment & Care, (31) which refers to the quantity or amount of treatment and care.

31. Quantity of Treatment & Care

This refers to the amount of treatment and care provided or available, e.g. someone receiving good quality home help but feel they are receiving inadequate number of hours.

32. Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments

This heading refers to the time spent waiting for either assessment or for the delivery of services following assessment, e.g. waiting list for an OT assessment, waiting list for a care package. 'Unmet need' should also be logged under this heading. This heading should be distinguished from '*Waiting Times, Community Services*' (36).

33. Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments

This heading refers to delay or cancellation in securing an outpatient appointment, i.e. outpatient waiting lists. It is to be distinguished from '*Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments*' (32) and '*Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments*' (37).

34. Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital

This refers to delay or cancellation of a planned admission to hospital, e.g. waiting list for surgery. Delayed admissions from A&E should not be included in this category but under '*Delayed Admission from A&E*' (15).

35. Waiting Times, A&E Departments

Complaint issues regarding waiting time for initial assessment or waiting time to be treated should all be logged under this heading. Complaint issues about delayed admission from A&E are not included here but should be listed under '*Delayed Admission from A&E*' (15).

36. Waiting Times, Community Services

This heading refers to waiting time during delivery of community services. It would include such issues as erratic timing, failure of professional staff to turn up at the specified time for

an appointment. It should be distinguished from 'Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments' (32).

37. Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments

This heading refers to the time waiting at an outpatient appointment, other than at A&E. It should be distinguished from 'Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments (33)'.

38. Other

This is a residual heading for any complaint issues, which do not fall into any categories listed above.

APPENDIX 4: SUBJECT GROUPED BY GENERAL CATEGORY

Admissions/Discharges

Delayed Admission from A&E

Discharge/Transfer Arrangements

Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital

Aids/Adaptations/Appliance

Aids/Adaptations/Appliances

Appointments/Waiting Times

Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments

Waiting Lists, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments

Waiting Times, A&E Departments

Waiting Times, Community Services

Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments

Children Order

Children Order Complaint Issues

Contracted Services

Contracted Regulated Children's Services

Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Agency

Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing

Contracted Independent Hospital Services

Other Contracted Services

Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment

Clinical Diagnosis

Consent to Treatment/Care

Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients

Treatment & Care, Quality

Treatment & Care, Quantity

Information & Communication

Communication/Information to Patients

Complaints Handling

Confidentiality

Records/Records Keeping

Mortuary

Mortuary & Post-Mortem

Patient Experience

Discrimination

Privacy/Dignity

Property/Expenses/Finance

Staff Attitude/Behaviour

Policy/Commercial Decisions

Policy/Commercial Decisions

Premises

Access to Premises

Environmental

Hotel/Support/Security Services

Infection Control

Prison Health Care

Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues

Professional Assessment of Need

Professional Assessment of Need

Transport

Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time

Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment

Other

Other

APPENDIX 5: HSC BOARD COMPLAINTS

The information presented within this release relating to FPS complaints derives from the HSC Board CHB statistical return. The CHB is collected on a quarterly basis by the HSC Board, in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

Complaints in Health and Social Care: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning sets out how HSC organisations should deal with complaints raised by people who use or are waiting to use their services.

Under HSC Complaints Procedure all FPS practices are required to forward to the HSC Board anonymised copies of each letter of complaint received along with the subsequent response, within 3 working days of this being issued.

The first stage of the HSC Complaints Procedure is known as 'local resolution'. The purpose of local resolution is to provide an opportunity for the complainant and the organisation to attempt a prompt and fair resolution of the complaint. In the case of FPS practices, local resolution involves a practitioner seeking to resolve the complaint through discussion and negotiation.

Where a complainant does not wish to approach the FPS practice directly, HSC Board Complaints staff, with the agreement of both the practice and complainant, may act as an intermediary or 'honest broker' with the aim of assisting in the local resolution of the complaint.

The HSC Board has a responsibility to record and monitor the outcome of all complaints lodged with them. It will provide support and advice to FPS in relation to the resolution of complaints and it will also appoint independent experts, lay persons or conciliation services, where appropriate.

APPENDIX 6: COMPLIMENTS GUIDANCE / DEFINITIONS

Introduction

1. The purpose of the CP1 return is to record the number of compliments received by Trusts during the quarter, the subject areas to which they referred and how the compliment was received.
2. The form should be returned quarterly by Trusts in respect of services for which they have responsibility. Deadline for receipt by Hospital Information Branch is no later than the last working day of the month after the end of the quarter to which the information refers.

Compliments

1. For the purposes of this return a compliment may be understood as 'an expression of praise, commendation or admiration'.
2. Only compliments received from/on behalf of patients/clients or other 'existing or former users of a Trust's services and facilities' should be included. Compliments from staff should not be included on this form.
3. A single communication may include more than one compliment. In such cases each distinct compliment should be recorded separately on the return.
4. Only compliments pertaining to the services of the Trust returning the form to Hospital Information Branch (DoH) should be recorded on the CP1 return. Compliments received by a Trust, which properly refer to the services of another Trust, should be recorded on the return of the relevant Trust to which the compliment/s pertains.
5. Where separate communications (whether from a single party or from several parties in respect of a single patient) refer to one subject only, they should be treated as one

compliment for the purposes of this form. In other words, if two relatives submit a compliment about the same subject/episode in respect of the same patient, this should be treated as one compliment only. However, if two relatives submit compliments about separate subjects/episodes in the care of the same patient, these should be treated as separate compliments.

Subjects

1. This part deals with the subject of the compliment. The subject of the compliment is to be assigned on the basis of the subject that best describes the nature of the patient / client's praise.

Definitions of Subjects:

i. Quality of Treatment & Care

This refers to the quality or standard of treatment and care provided. It also covers compliments relating to patient/client safety.

ii. Staff Attitude & Behaviour

This category refers to compliments related to staff attitude and/or staff behaviour.

iii. Information & Communication

This heading includes all issues of communication and information provided to patients / clients / families / carers regarding any aspect of their contact with staff. However, this should be distinguished from compliments about the attitude of staff when communicating with patients / clients, which should be logged under 'Staff Attitude & Behaviour'.

iv. Environment

Compliments referring to the general condition or repair of the premises should be included under this heading.

v. Other

This is a residual heading for any compliments which do not fall into any of the categories listed above. Where the subject is recorded as 'Other' a brief description of the compliment should be provided in part 2 of the return.

Method of Compliment

The CP1 return should include (A) written compliments received by (i) Card, (ii) Email, (iii) Feedback Form, (iv) Letter or (v) Social Media (Facebook & Twitter only), or (B) compliments received by telephone, whereby the primary purpose of the phone call is to express a compliment. Only Facebook posts / Tweets linked to the official organisational Facebook/Twitter accounts should be included.

APPENDIX 7: ABOUT HOSPITAL INFORMATION BRANCH

Hospital Information Branch is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Health & Social Care (HSC) Trusts and the HSC Board. Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic patient level administrative systems and pre-defined EXCEL survey return templates.

The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the HSC Committee, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within the DoH, other Health organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations as well as the general public. The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the HSC system, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, development of service frameworks as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a significantly high volume of Parliamentary / Assembly questions and ad-hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through a number of key statistical publications, including: Inpatient Activity, Outpatient Activity, Emergency Care, Mental Health & Learning Disability and Waiting Time Statistics (Inpatient, Outpatient, Diagnostics, Cancer and Emergency Care).

A detailed list of these publications is available from:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

The 'Complaints and Compliments Received by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland (2020/21)' publication was originally due to be published on 8th July but was delayed due to pressures associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

APPENDIX 8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information on HSC Trust Complaint Issues and Compliments in Northern Ireland is available from:

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

Department of Health

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Email: statistics@health-ni.gov.uk