

Complaints Annual Report
1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

Introduction

The 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 2020 to 31 March 2021.

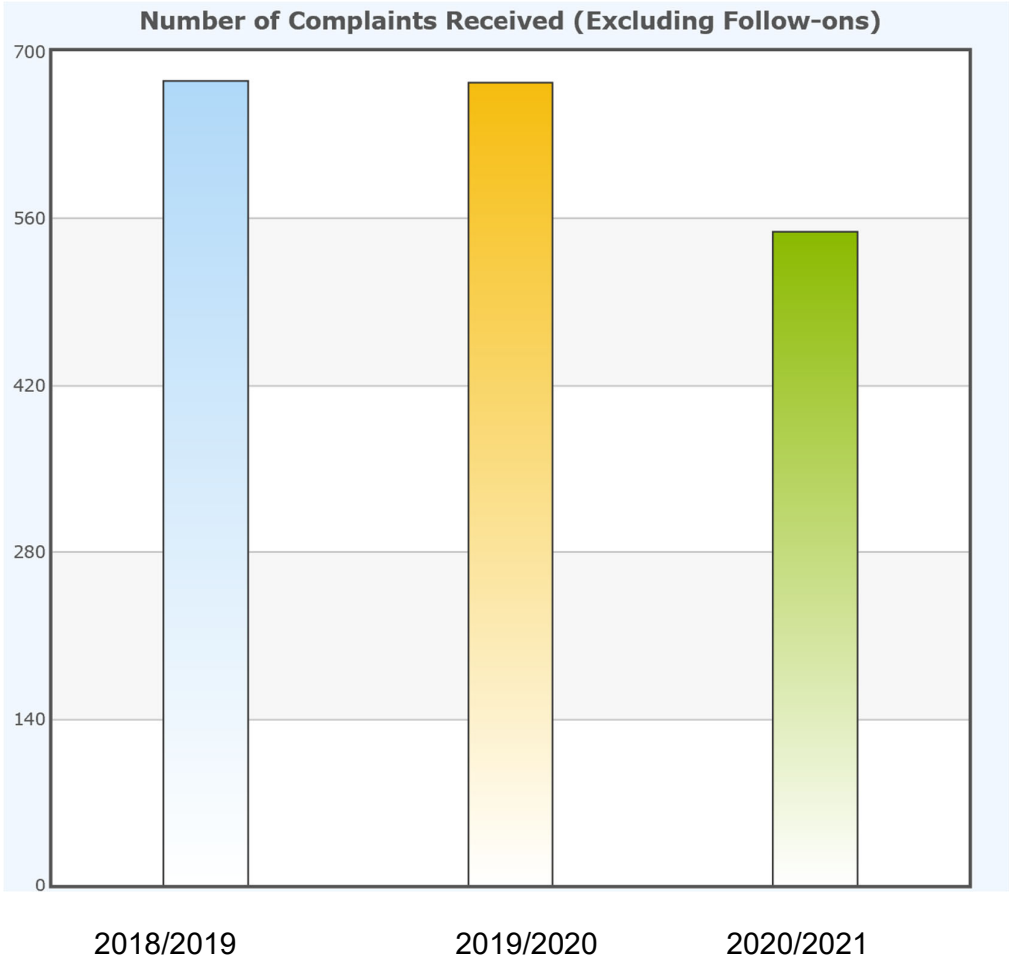
The NHSCT provides health and social care services to a population of approximately 470,000, which is the largest resident population in Northern Ireland. The Trust provided treatment and care for a significant number of people during this year including;

- 87,488 inpatients (excluding Mental Health patients)
- 189,654 acute outpatients
- Mental health outpatients (Figures for Mental Health services are not available due to changeover to a new information system).
- 119,997 emergency department attendances
- 11,334 day case patients
- 3,785 births
- 737 children looked after by Trust
- 492 children on child protection register
- 4,964 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 from 753 to 673 this year (this includes follow on complaints where complainants return to the Trust to request further information). 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 review 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 2020/21



**Email
61%**



**Letter
20%**

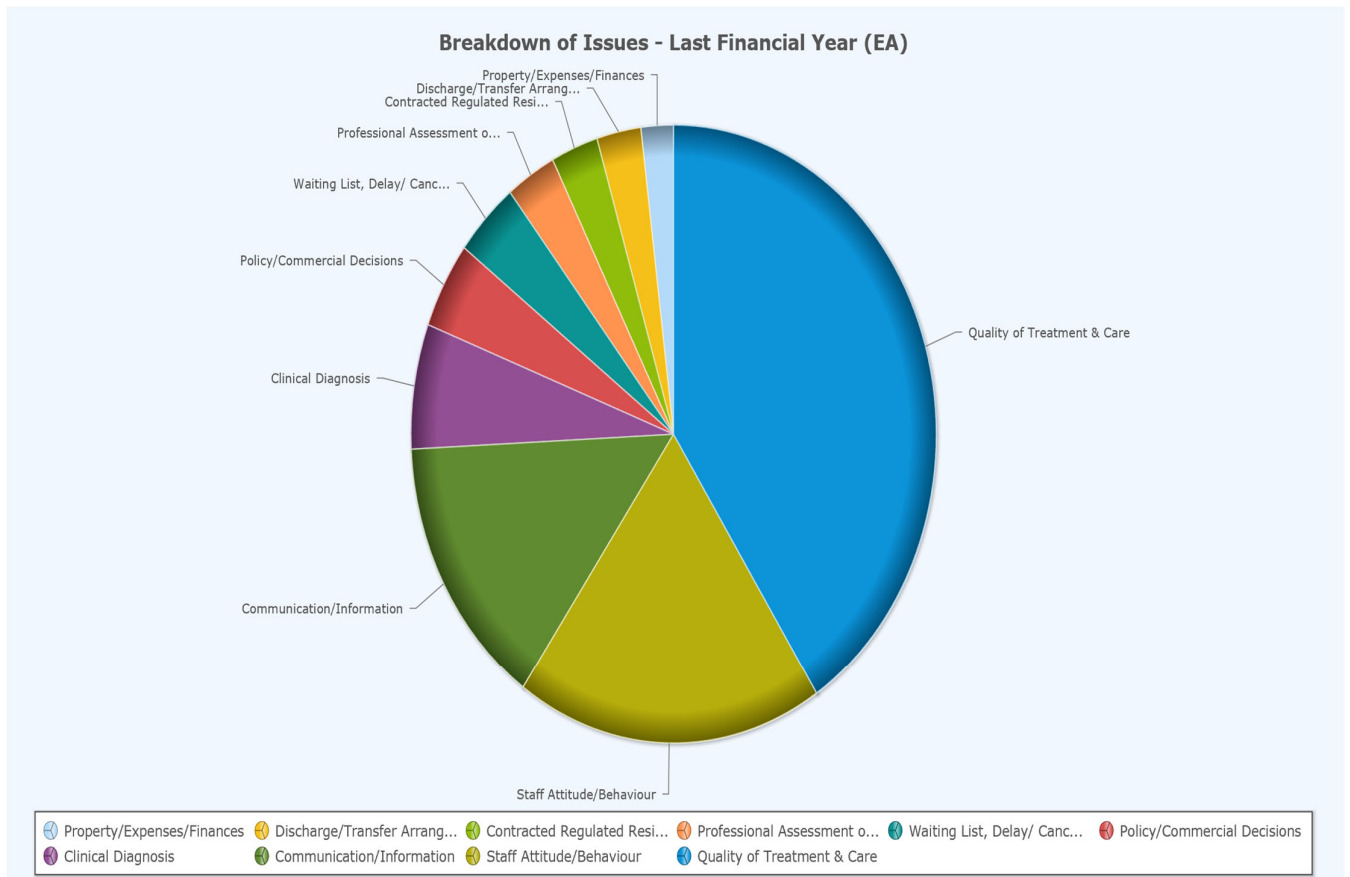


**Trust
feedback
form
16%**



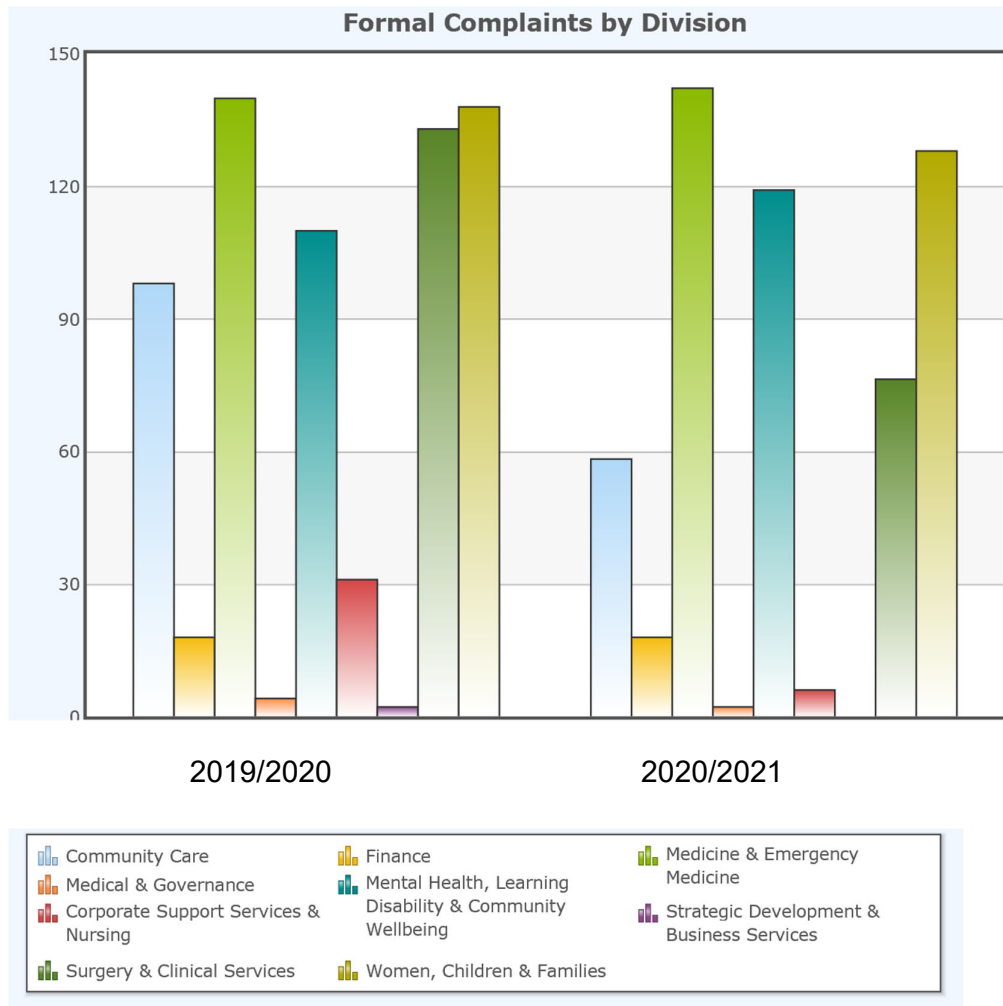
**Phone/
Person
3%**

A breakdown of the issues our service users complained about in the Last Financial Year



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 2 years.

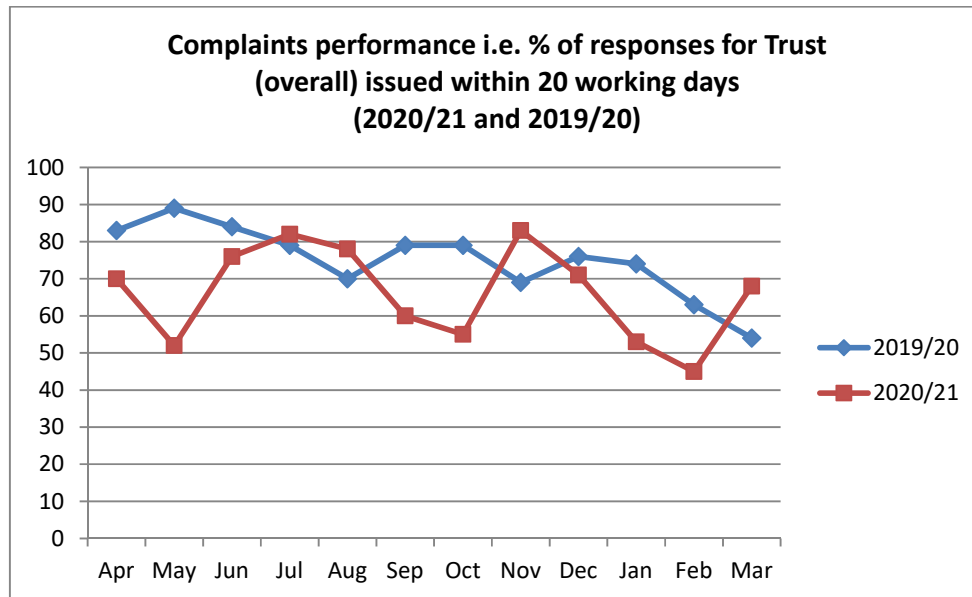


Response Times

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.

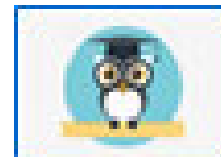
Various factors can impact on the time taken to review a complaint, such as information may be awaited from other agencies or due to the complexity of the complaint review.

During 2020/2021, 67% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days, which is a 9% decrease on the previous years' response time of 76%. **(The target response time is 72% within 20 working days).**



	Number of complaints	Percentage
Acknowledged ≤ 2 days	636	100%
Response ≤ 20 days	426	67%

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



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 Equality, Engagement, Experience & Employment (Quadruple 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 2020/2021 following complaints. Below are some examples of learning:

A) Summary of Event

Family of Service User, who resides in a Private Contracted Nursing Home, feel that staff are not adhering to the guidelines regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and the use of Personal Protective Equipment.

Learning Points

- The Locality Manager spoke with the family to outline the actions taken by the Trust following this incident.
- The Trust has convened several meetings with the key stakeholders to address the issues arising from the complaint, including the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), the Trust Contracts Department, the Trust Adult Safeguarding Team and the Trust Responsive Education and Collaborative Health Team (Reach) who are currently providing the link worker role to the care home.
- The Infection Prevention Control(IPC) team had made a number of recommendations to the Nursing Home and the Nursing Home have evidenced that they have actioned the recommendations. There will be a further on site follow up by the Trust to seek assurances that the measures and recommendations are being fully implemented.
- RQIA has recently completed an unannounced inspection and the outcome will be published in due course.
- The Home is undertaking the following actions: 1) Internal audit of IPC measures within the Nursing Home 2) Assurance that all staff are competent in respect of donning and doffing PPE 3) Online IPC training has been undertaken by all staff 4) Coronavirus and Covid19 infection control training is being rolled out to all staff 5) Trust IPC action plan is being implemented.

B) Summary of Event

Service User who is blind contacted the Radiology Department to make an appointment. The appointment was to be confirmed by letter but the Service User stated she needed either an email or text. The member of staff questioned her ability to read an email as she could not read a letter. Unhappy with this patronizing attitude.

Learning Points

- The Trust is committed to ensuring that all information is provided in an accessible format. Apologies were given that the request for communication by email or text was not accommodated. This complaint has been raised as learning for radiology administrative staff.
- Staff are required to adhere to the Trust's mandatory equality training 'Making a Difference' which covers this aspect.
- The Equality Unit have also co-produced guidance for staff which has been disseminated widely and is available on the Trust's "StaffNet" page.
- There is also an online disability equality training programme (to replace face to face training) – being co-produced with our Disability Consultation Panel which will be available by the end of September.

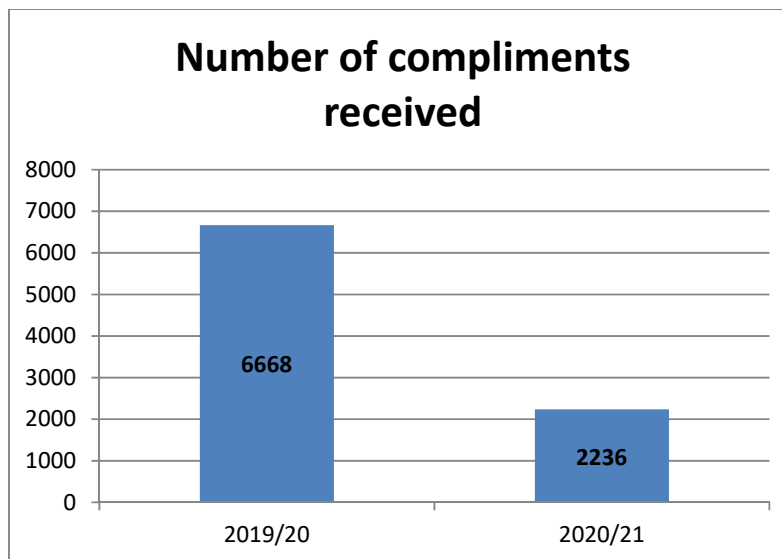
Compliments received

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 2020/2021, over 2236 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 2020/2021.

The Occupational Therapist who arranged for a new chair and adjusted it on arrival was very approachable and had a nice way with her.

As a daughter of a patient, I wanted to say how my family appreciate the effort made by staff in my father's ward when it was his birthday, during Covid-19 visiting restrictions

I want to record my appreciation for the excellent service being delivered in the Covid Vaccination Centre. The staff were reassuring and efficient.



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 no complaints dealt with under this procedure. The timescale for responding to Children Order complaints is 28 days.

Additional Information

There were 273 formal enquiries and 579 informal enquiries received during 2020/2021 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 2020/2021, over 2359 staff received face to face, E Learning Complaints Training Level 1 and Complaint Reviewer Training Level 2. 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 2020/2021, there were 13 requests for information from the NIPSO Office:

- 4 cases were closed and not upheld,
- 9 are on-going.

Of 6 older complaints investigations:

- 1 was not upheld,
- 3 were issued a letter of apology and
- 2 remain open.

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

