

Complaints & Compliments Annual Report

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Introduction

This Annual report gives an overview of compliments, complaints and feedback received by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) from Service Users, Patients, their carers and families for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

We are committed to listening and learning from all our Patients and Service Users; particularly when the care provided may not have been to the standard that we ourselves would expect. The overall number of complaints received increased from 840 to 854 this year.

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

Compliments, suggestions/comments made by Service Users and Patients are acknowledged and shared with the relevant staff/teams.

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust provides a range of health and social care services to a population of approximately 479,000 people across a geographical area of 1,733 square miles (2,773 square km) making it the largest geographical Trust in Northern Ireland.

- 79,191 inpatients, inclusive of elective inpatients (compared to 83,275 in 2022/23)
- 596,279 acute outpatients across all specialties (compared to 523,842 in 2022/23)
- 158,070 attendance at Emergency Department and Minor Injury Units (increase from 150,557)
- 40,565 day case patients across all specialties (increase from 36,039)
- 3,442 births (decrease from 3,650)
- 815 children looked after by Trust (increase from 774)
- 502 children on child protection register (increase from 464)
- 4,166 domiciliary care packages for older people provided in the community (decrease from 4,982)



Facts & Figures

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

5827

Compliments

(3404)*

854

Complaints

(840)*

107

Reopened

59%

Compliance

(51%)*

3

Complaints
escalated to SAI

(10)*

100%

Of complaints
acknowledged within 2
working days

3

Independent
Sector
Complaints

2

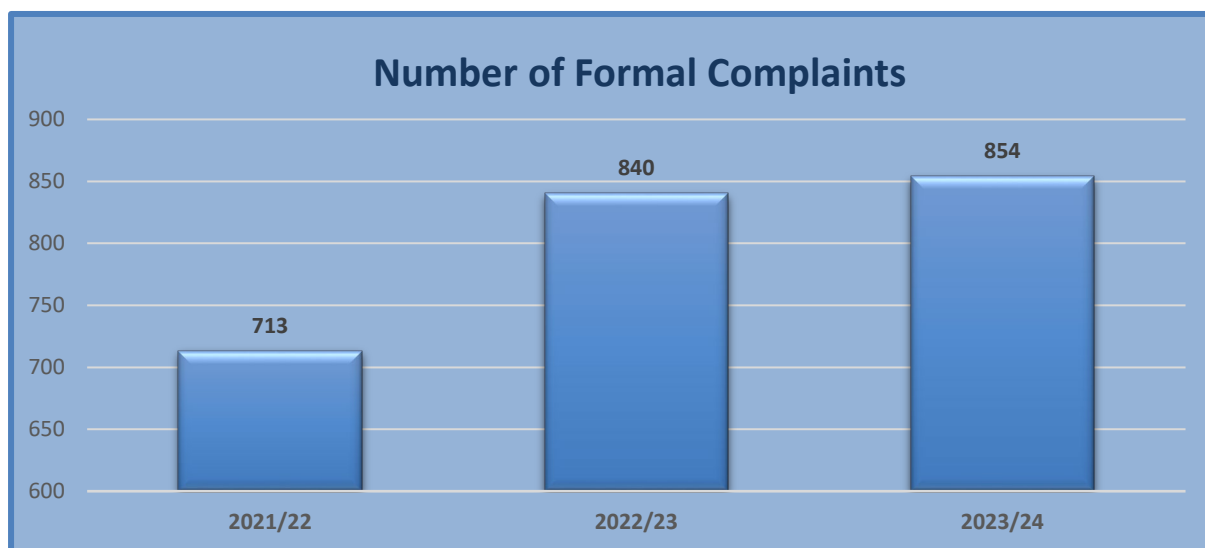
Children Order
Cases

13

Ombudsman
Cases ongoing

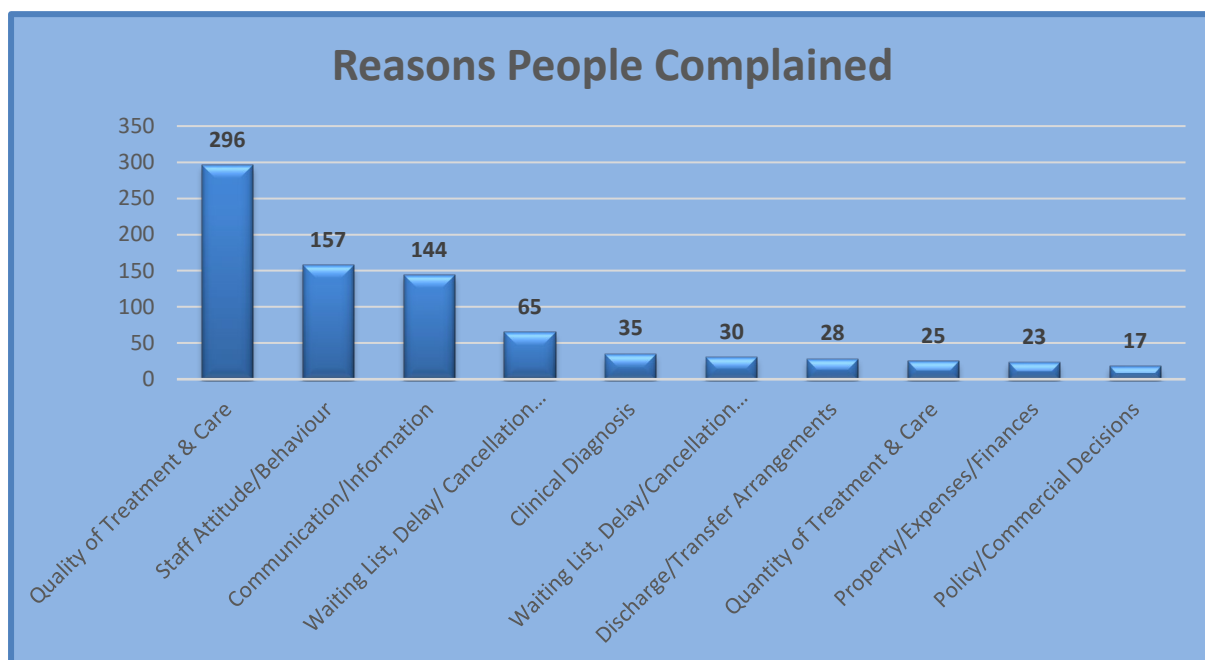
*Data in () denotes previous financial year activity

Number of Complaints by Financial Year



What People complained about

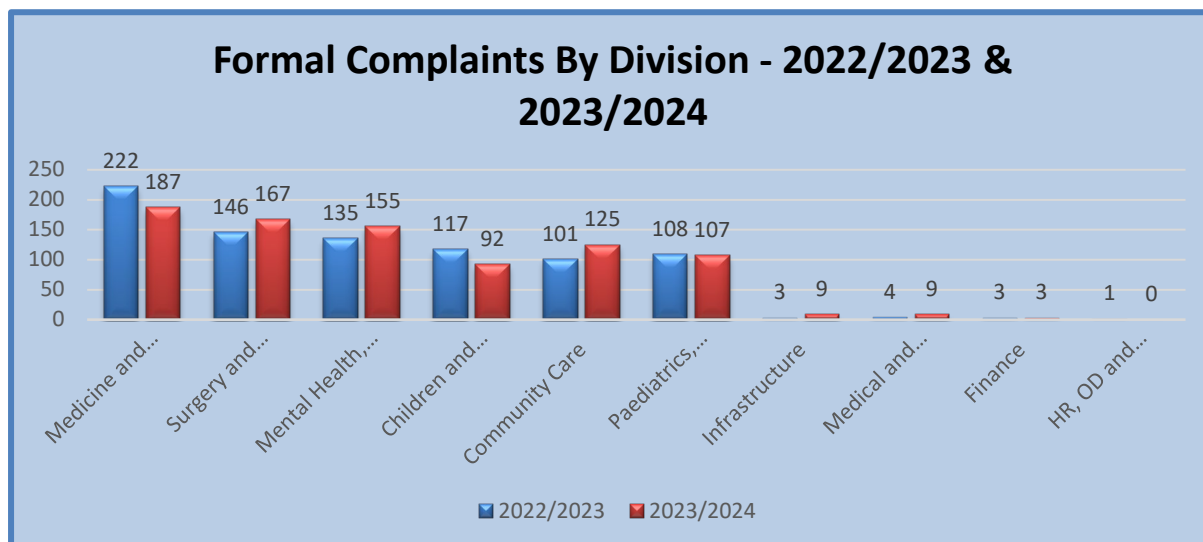
The chart below shows the number of complaints by subject in 2023/2024. The top 3 reasons why people complained were Quality of Treatment & Care, Staff Attitude/Behaviour & Communication/Information.



78% of complaints were received by email, 7% by letter, 14.5% via the Trust Feedback Form and less than 1% via telephone.

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.

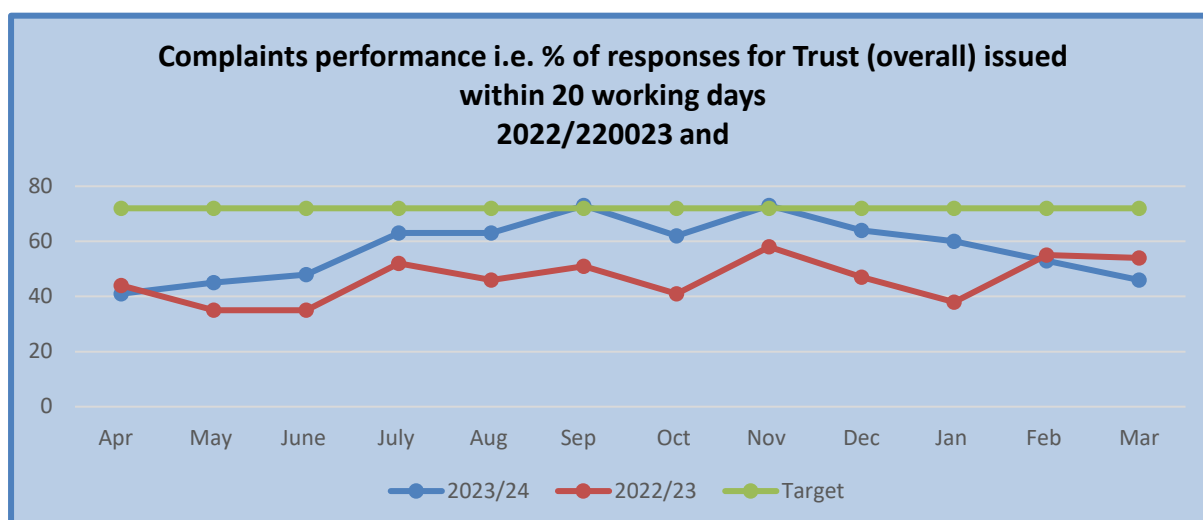


Response Times

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.

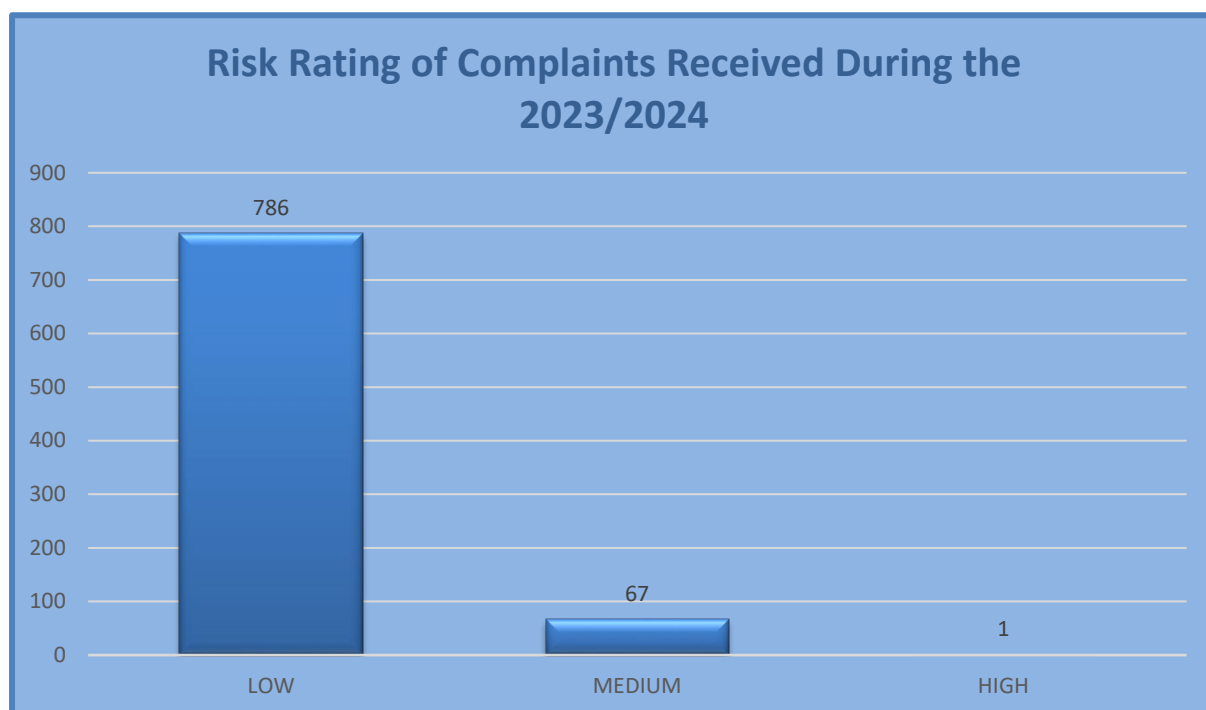
During 2023/2024, 59% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days, during 2022/2023, 51% were responded to within 20 working days. (The Trust target response time is 72% within 20 working days). **100% of complaint were acknowledged within 2 working days.**



Average Length of Time Complaints Open

Of the 854 complaints received the average length of time the complaints were open was 23 days

Risk Rating of Complaints Received



Independent Sector Providers

There were 3 Formal Complaints raised with the Trust during the year that related to Independent Sector providers/establishments.

Learning from Complaints

Lessons Learnt/Improvement from Complaints

The Trust values all feedback received from Service Users/patients including complaints so that we can learn lessons and improve our services.

An action/learning pro forma is completed where appropriate for complaints. We use this information to provide feedback to Service Users/patients 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.

You told us: Mother of Service User with Autism wants more stringent procedures in place to ensure "human error" does not happen again. Her son has mistakenly been vaccinated twice.

We did: Lead Public Health Nurse made contact with mother to discuss how the error occurred and explained that two consent forms were obtained for her son's vaccination. Staff Nurse has discussed with Team Co-ordinator and recognised that process was not followed. Process for duplicate consents will be reviewed and strengthened.

You told us:

Sister of Service User with a Learning Disability feels her sister was neglected in the Trust respite unit because her oxygen tank was empty when she collected the Service User from respite.

We did:

All staff were not trained in the management of Oxygen when the visits took place. All staff are now trained in this area. The oxygen checklist that the Respiratory Nurse recommended was not in place at the time of the visit. This is now in place. There is now clear communication at handovers and a clear care plan/checklist regarding specific healthcare needs. Apologies have been offered and staff have reviewed the handover process to ensure this does not happen again.

You told us: Complainant has concerns regarding the application process in relation to Direct Payments. She feels that the Trust held the process up and should backdate the payments.

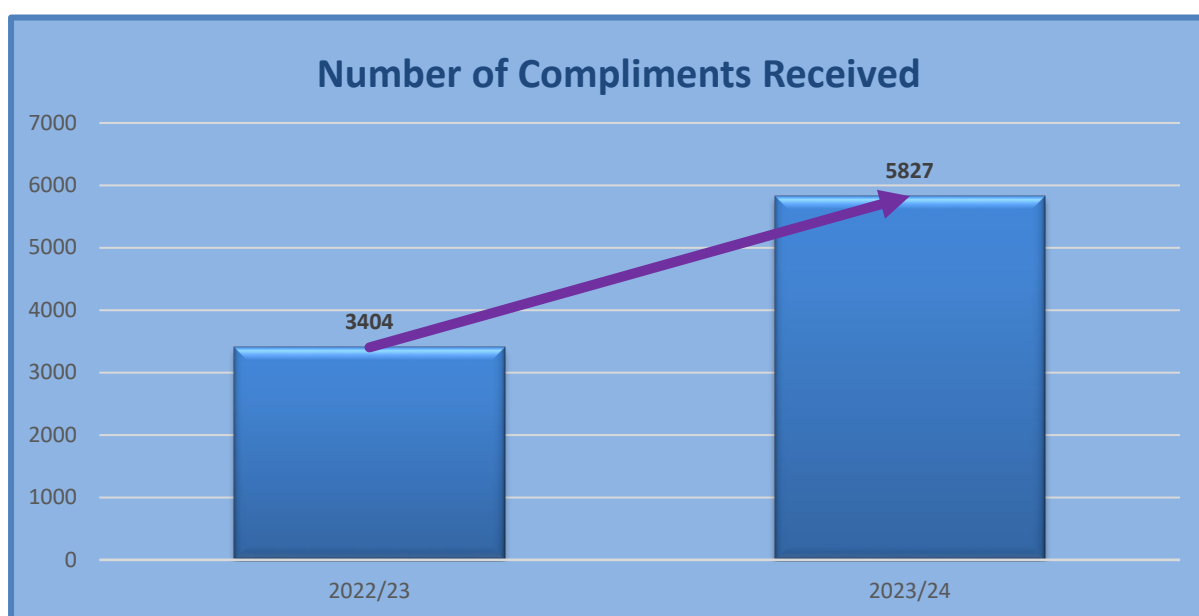
We did: Payment has been approved from the date the Access NI certificate was approved. Apologies were given for this delay and for the inconvenience caused. The Locality Manager has been in contact with the family regarding the Direct Payment and implementation of the care package for the complainant's mother.

You told us: Mother of infant is unhappy with the attitude of a nurse in the Minor Injuries Unit when she presented with her son who had an injury to his forehead.

We did: Apologies were given regarding the manner in which the Service User's mother was spoken to. Children under five with a head injury do not meet the criteria to be assessed and treated in Mid Ulster Minor Injuries Unit by the Specialist Nurse Practitioner. This is due to no senior medical cover availability and to safeguard the child. The staff member in question has been spoken to at length, and a reflective discussion of this contact has taken

Compliments received

Services across the Trust receive many compliments in the form of Thank You letters, emails, cards and verbal feedback. During 2023/2024 over **5827** compliments were received across service areas this is a **71%** increase in compliments. Compliments are always appreciated as they allow Service Users/Patients' positive experience to be shared with our staff, they also identify areas of good working practice that can be shared with other service areas. Below are some examples of compliments received during 2023/2024.



Our father receives direct payments which have proved extremely helpful in maintaining his independence at home. As a family we appreciate and thank your team and the Trust for the funding to allow us to keep our father at home.

I was admitted to the Rehab unit in the Mid Ulster Hospital. I was made so welcome by all staff – the care I received was outstanding. Thank you to everyone, too many to mention but in particular the physio who gave me the confidence to get up and move!

We had an appointment at Orthoptics, Antrim Hospital this morning. The lady who did the eye test was amazing and superb at her job. Really suited to working with patients!

The team in Larne Adult Centre are exceptional. Their care to our daughter is excellent. There are so many activities to keep her stimulated and she is so thankful to the Centre for all they do.

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.

During the year, there were 2 complaints dealt with under this procedure. The timescale for responding to Children Order complaints is 28 days.

Additional Information

There were 56 formal enquiries and 452 other enquiries received during 2023/2024 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 the year, 853 staff were trained, 654 completed - E Learning Complaints Training Level 1 and 199 Complaint Reviewer Training Level 2. Complaints Training was also included in a number of other courses delivered during the year including Corporate Induction and Managers' Induction.

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 2023/2024, there were 23 requests for information from the NIPSO Office:

- 7 cases were not accepted for investigation,
- 3 cases went to alternative resolution
- 13 are on-going.

Our Vision

**We provide compassionate care
with our community, in 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

