

WESTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND / FOREWORD

FOREWORD

The Complaints Annual Report reviews the complaints received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

Mrs Elaine Way
Chief Executive
3 June 2014

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Health & Social Care Complaints Procedure, this is our fourth annual report which sets out a detailed analysis of the nature and number of complaints and concerns received by the Western Health and Social Care Trust during 2013/14. During the year we have continued to encourage more meaningful engagement and involvement with our patients and service users, ensuring that lessons are continually learned to safeguard quality and prevent failures in care and treatment.

In order to encourage a simpler and more flexible approach to complaints handling and a greater emphasis on local resolution, the current system has only two stages. The first is a complaint to the healthcare provider or commissioner, followed if necessary by the complaint being considered by the Health Service Ombudsman.

The Trust is obliged to offer every opportunity to exhaust local resolution and therefore encourages complainants to contact the Trust again should they remain dissatisfied. During the year a total of 53 complainants asked for a further review of their complaint by the Trust. In addition, 8 complainants referred their complaint to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman for consideration.

The Trust's Head of Clinical Quality and Safety, Governance Manager and Complaints staff facilitated a number of meetings throughout the year between complainants and professional staff in order to attempt resolution of formal complaints and this approach achieved a number of satisfactory outcomes.

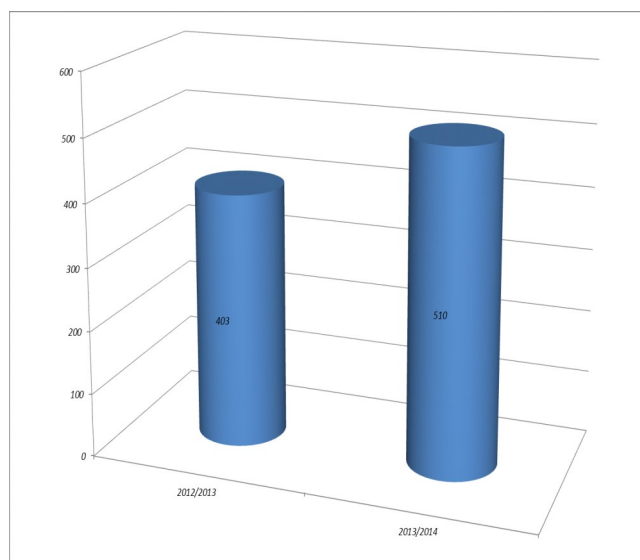
The Trust continued to provide a monthly monitoring report to the Health & Social Care Board regarding lessons learned from all complaints closed within each month.

Annual comparison of complaints

There has been a 22% increase in the number of formal complaints received in the past year. During 2013/14 a total of 510 formal complaints (includes 15 Children Order Complaints) were received by the Trust. This compares with 403 complaints during the previous financial year of 2012/13.

It should however be noted that the number of complaints continues to be low, considering the large geographical area the Trust covers and the volume of contacts Trust staff have with patients and clients.

The continued awareness training provided to staff on the new Health & Social Care Complaints Procedure highlights the emphasis around enhanced local resolution and encourages staff to resolve complaints at a local level.



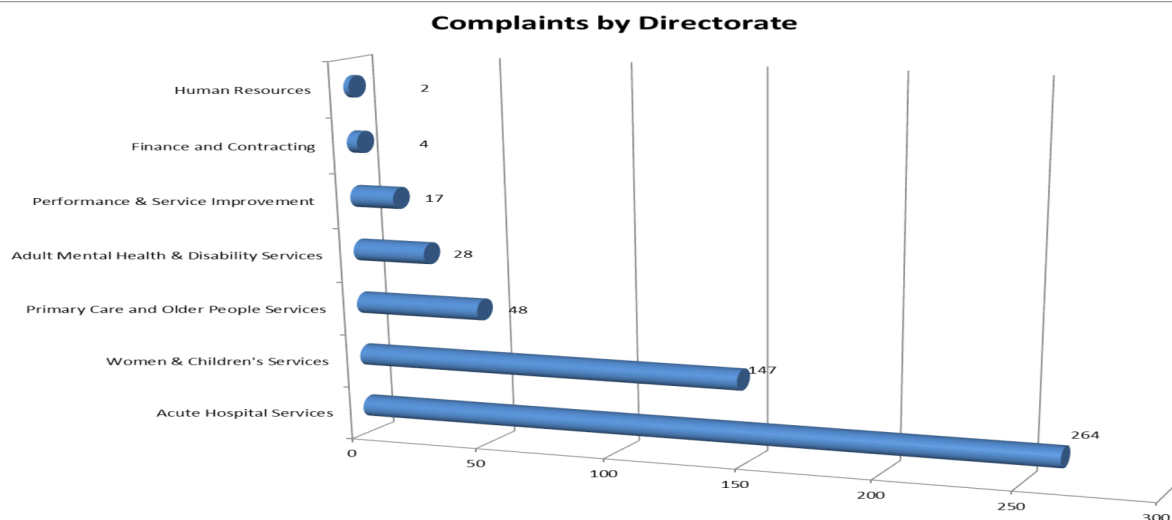
What our service users complained about

A total of 787 subjects were identified from the 510 complaints received during the 2013/14 year.

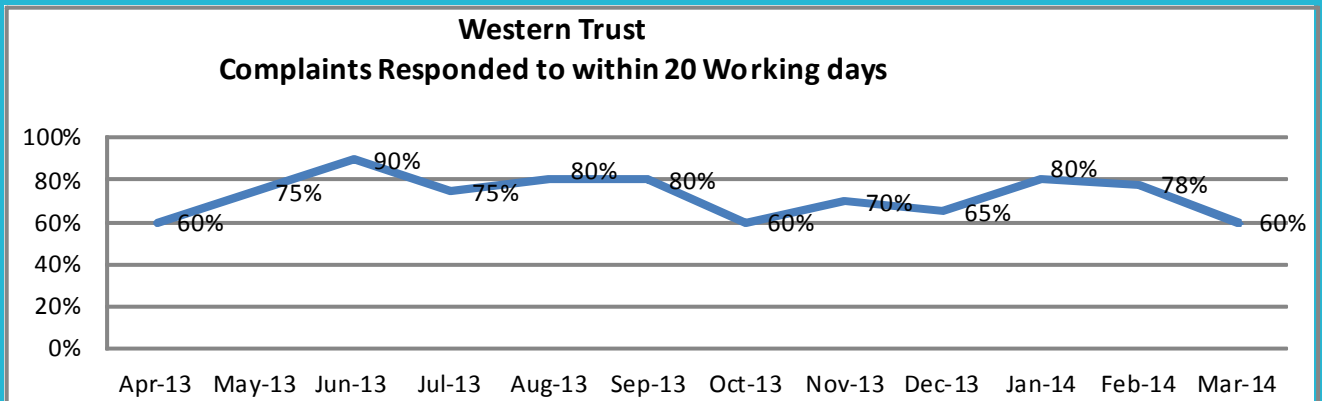
SUBJECT	COUNT	%
Treatment & Care, Quality	219	28%
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	161	20%
Communication/Information to Patients	96	12%
Policy/Commercial Decisions	61	8%
Clinical Diagnosis	43	5%
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments	33	4%
Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)	31	4%
Other	24	3%
Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)	17	2%
Treatment & Care, Quantity	17	2%
Children Order Complaints	14	2%
Professional Assessment of Need	9	1%
Patients' Privacy/Dignity	8	1%
Confidentiality	7	1%
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements	6	1%
Waiting Times, Accident & Emergency	6	1%
Patient's Property/Expenses/Finance	6	1%
Other Contracted Services	5	1%
Aids/Adaptations/Appliances	4	1%
Environmental	4	1%
Records/Records Keeping	4	1%
Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies	3	0%
Infection Control	3	0%
Hotel/Support/Security Services	2	0%
Transport, Late or Non-Arrival/Journey Time	1	0%
Access to Premises	1	0%
Waiting Times, Community Services	1	0%
Theatre/Operation Procedure, Delay/Cancellation	1	0%
TOTALS	787	100%

Which Directorates received complaints?

The following is a breakdown of the Complaints received by Directorate for the 2013 - 2014 year.



RESPONSE TIMES – April 2013–March 2014



Monitoring

Reporting

Learning

Monitoring / Reporting / Learning

The Complaints Department has and will continue to take action to increase the number of complaints responded to within 20 working days. These include regular reports to management, posting information on response times on the Trust's Sharepoint system and increased follow-up with Investigating Officers. Summaries of outstanding complaints are also provided on a regular basis to Assistant Directors. Complaints staff also encourage staff to meet with Complainants when it is felt that this will promote a more positive and timely outcome.

A complaints handling flowchart has been developed to ensure that actions are taken to address any delays in receiving responses from the Investigating Officers.

In accordance with the flowchart the Complaints Manager referred four complaints during the 2013/14 year that were open for 3+ months to the Trust's Chief Executive. Following this action was taken to ensure that a response to the complaint was issued.

The Trust is committed to using complaints/concerns as an opportunity to learn and improve services and care. In order to record and monitor complaints activity, the Complaints Department is required to maintain a database of complaints and provide regular reports to the Complaints Forum, Directorates and other relevant Committees. These reports highlight themes and trends across the Trust to ensure learning takes place.

The Complaints Department also provides information on lessons learned as a standing item for the Share to Learn Quality and Safety Newsletter.

The Trust continues to provide a monthly monitoring return to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) regarding lessons learned from all complaints closed within each month.

The Complaints Forum, Chaired by Mrs Sally O'Kane, Non-Executive Director, continues to meet throughout the year on a quarterly basis. The Forum has service user representation from each of the Directorates and was commended by the Patient and Client Council for this approach. The Forum is provided with a Performance Report at each of the quarterly meetings which provides comparative data on the number of complaints received and also helps to identify trends.

COMPLIMENTS

Services across the Trust receive many compliments on a frequent basis, usually in the form of written thank-you letters/cards or verbal feedback. A number of compliments are received by the Chief Executive which are forwarded on to relevant services by the Patient's Advocate. A total of 2596 patients and clients formally acknowledged and complimented the treatment and care that they have received by Trust staff during 2013/14. Staff are greatly encouraged by the positive comments.

CHILDREN ORDER COMPLAINTS

The Trust received a total of 15 Children Order complaints for the 2013/14 period. Each of these complaints was processed through the Children's Order Procedure.

Other/Additional Information

The Western Health and Social Care Trust takes all complaints seriously and welcomes the opportunity to learn from complaints. The Trust's Chief Executive reviews weekly summaries of complaints received and she is also signatory to all written responses.

This report highlights the significant work being done within the Complaints Department to ensure that the HSC Complaints Procedure is being managed effectively and to improve the responsiveness to patients concerns and complaints in line with the regulations.

Complaints staff also regularly liaise with staff across the Trust to help resolve informal complaints and respond to enquiries from MLAs, local Councillors and other public representatives. A total of 309 General Enquiries were handled by the Complaints Department in 2013/14. The Complaints Department continues to work with Service Directorates to ensure a quick resolution of issues which may be resolved without formal complaint investigation and thank all areas for their assistance throughout the 2013/14 period.