

**COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS
ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2013—MARCH 2014**

“A health service that does not listen to complaints is unlikely to reflect its patients’ needs”
The Francis Report

The Belfast Trust welcomes and actively encourages Complaints and Compliments about our services. We recognise the importance of working with our patients, clients, their families, carers and others to deliver, develop and improve the services we provide. To do this we need to listen, and take their views seriously.

The Complaints Department is an integral part of the Trust’s Corporate Governance Service. Good complaints management is fully dependent on joint working with the Service Directorates. Staff within the Department will work closely with colleagues in the Service Directorates to ensure that, where possible, complaints are satisfactorily resolved at an early stage to the satisfaction of the Complainant. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and ask that all staff continue to work in a positive and proactive manner in the management of complaints.

It has been a busy and productive year for the Complaints Department. This Report will provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Department with an analysis of the type of Complaints and Enquiries received and our responses to them.

During the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014 the Complaints Department managed **1924** Formal Complaints.

645 Enquiries were received and successfully resolved at Service Directorate level.

302 Complaints were recorded as being resolved at local level by the Service Directorates.

194 Complaints first received during 2013-14 which were revisited (reopened).

Approximately **5403** recorded Compliments were also received during the 2013-14 year.

The Complaints Team can be contacted at:

Complaints Department

Musgrave Park Hospital

6th Floor McKinney House

Stockman’s Lane

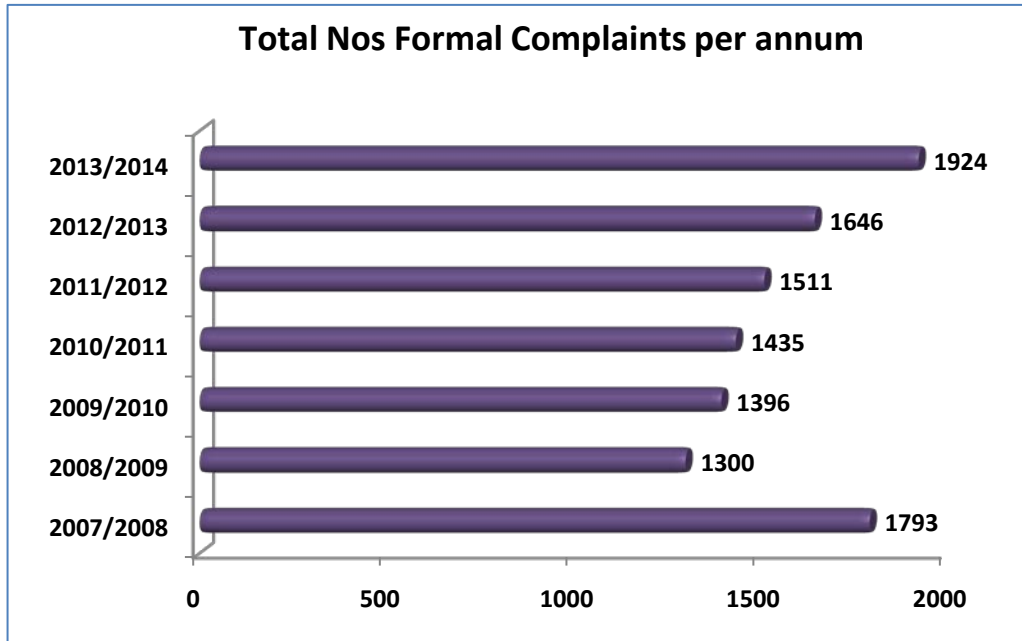
Belfast BT9 7JB

Tel: (028) 9504 8000

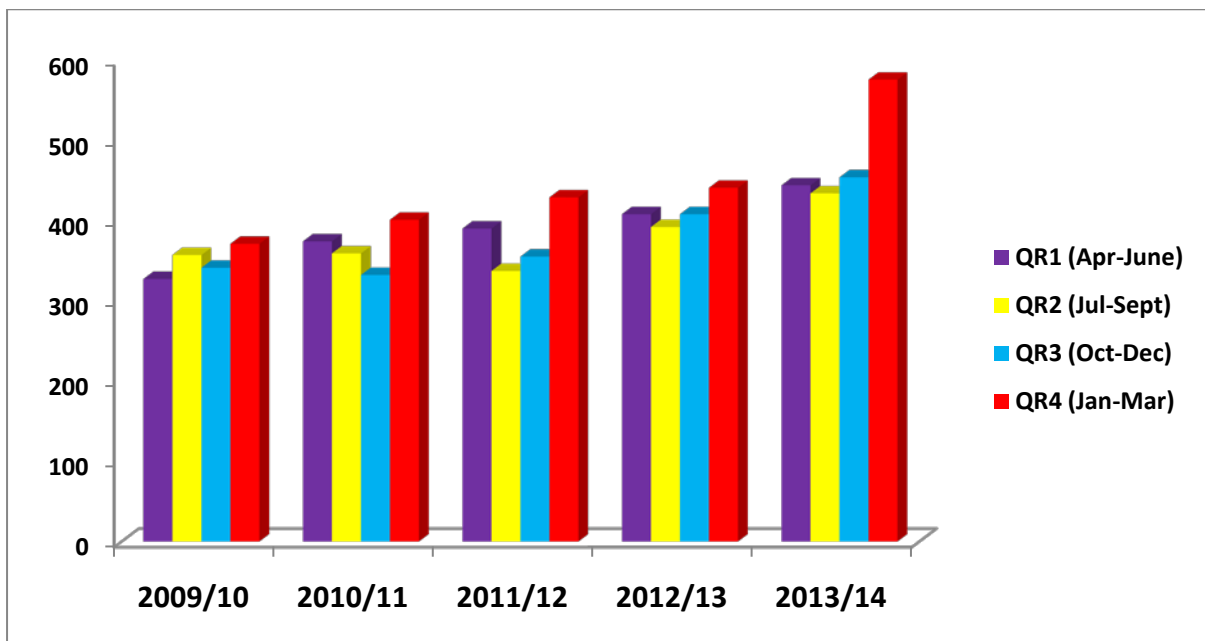
Email: complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Annual Comparison of Complaints

At the year ending 31 March 2014 a total of 1924 Formal Complaints were managed. This is an increase of 278 on last year's figure of 1646.



Quarterly Comparison of Complaints 2013-14



The data continues to highlight a trend of an annual increase in the numbers of complaints managed by the Trust, with the highest volume of complaints being received within Quarter (QR) 4.

Total Number of Complaints by Service Directorate 2013-14

*Since 2012/13, there have been changes to the Service Directorate structure. This has led to the formation of Unscheduled & Acute Care and Surgery & Specialist Services Service Directorates. The increase in the volume of Surgery & Specialist Services complaints reflects the inclusion of Surgery within this Directorate. *

Unscheduled & Acute Care and Specialist Hospitals & Women's Health jointly generated 58% of all complaints received (29% each) followed by Surgery & Specialist Services 20%. This distribution reflects the range and complexity of specialties provided by these Service Directorates.

Service Directorate	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10	5 YR TOTALS
Adult Social & Primary Care Services	193	170				363
Social & Primary Care Services	*SEE ABOVE*	*SEE ABOVE*	178	165	192	535
Children's Community Services	60	49				109
Finance	45	23	4	4	5	81
Human Resources	0	0	1	0	0	1
Medical	1	0	0	1	1	3
Nursing and User Experience	58	36	41	41	44	220
Performance & Delivery	*SEE ABOVE*	*SEE ABOVE*	30	15	30	75
Performance, Planning & Informatics	58	36				94
Planning and Development	*SEE ABOVE*	*SEE ABOVE*	37	42	75	154
Specialist Hospitals & Child Health	566	493	203	178	171	1610
Surgery & Specialist Services	380	140	168	128	131	947
Unscheduled & Acute Care	563	699	849	861	747	3719
Totals:	1924	1646	1511	1435	1396	7912

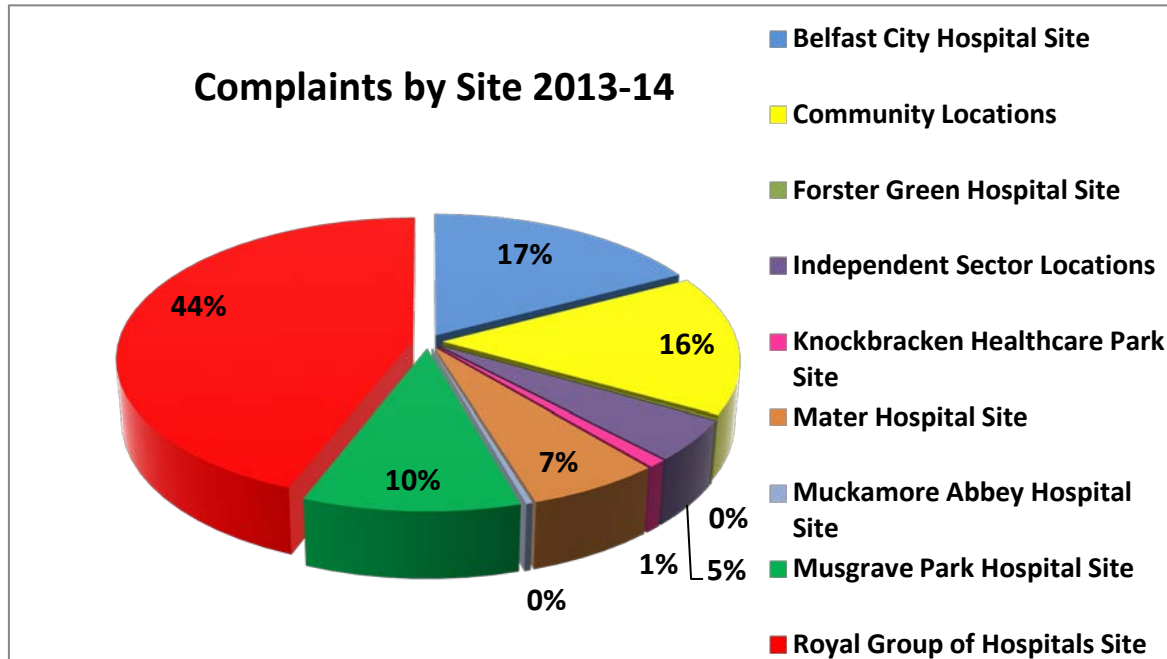
What our Service Users complained about 2013-14

Formal Complaints - Top 5 Subjects	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Communication/Information	455	337	364
Treatment & Care, Quality	404	399	280
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	357	323	321
Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)	318	267	291
Admissions into Hospital Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)	199	145	131

Overall, a total of 2499 subjects were recorded as being raised by our service users. There is a rising trend on the top five subjects. The "Communication/ Information" was the top complaint subject matter for this year, closely followed by the "Treatment & Care, Quality" subject, which was the top complaint subject last year.

Annual Comparison Complaints by Site

The Royal Hospital site continues to generate the largest percentage of Complaints **848 (44%)** which is a reflection on the geographical make up of the Trust and location of our high volume of acute services. Breakdown across all sites is as follows:



Grading of Complaints 2013-14

All complaints are graded by the Complaints Managers using the Trust Risk Matrix. The grading determines the response action at the outset of complaints' handling; this may include immediate notification to the appropriate Director, the Medical Director and the Director of Nursing.

A review of complaints' grading for the 2013-14 indicates that 2% of complaints are graded as 'High' - this figure has not changed from 2012-13 reporting period.

In 2013-14, there has been a shift of 8% from 'Medium' grade complaints to 'Low' grade complaints which means that 'Low grade' complaints now account for 58% of all complaints received.

It is important that appropriate consent is received. However, where a Patient Safety issue is identified via a complaint, the Complaints Manager will liaise with the Service Directorate to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out and any learning is identified. If consent has not been received after three requests, the response is recorded on file and the complaint closed. If the Complaints Department considers that a complaint may be identified as a Serious Adverse Incident (SAI), they will liaise with the Corporate Governance Department and the Service Directorate to agree appropriate management and the Complainant will be kept informed.

Response Times

Category	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Acknowledgement Times < 2 days	79%	93%	95%	95%	96%
Response Times < 20 days	49%	55%	63%	51%	50%
Response Times 30 days	63%	70%	79%	68%	64%

There was a 1% decrease in our 20 day response time to complaints from last year. This may be attributed to the changes within the Directorates, the complexity of complaints received, and the increase in the total number of complaints year on year and increasing demands on limited resources. The Complaints Department, along with the Service Directorates, are committed to working together to provide comprehensive and full responses to all our complaints in a timely manner. We continue to review how we might improve our performance without compromising quality of response in the face of increasing challenges.

Comparison of General Enquiries

645 General Enquiries were handled by the Complaints Department in 2013-14; this numbers remains almost unaltered since 2012-13 with 640 General Enquiries.

The 2013-14 year saw a 3% increase in General Enquiries made by telephone (42%). Complaints received by email have also increased, with 29% received by this mode compared to 23% in the preceding year. Service User contact by letter has consequently reduced from 35% to 26% in the 2013-14 year.

The subjects raised broadly reflect the same top five subjects of formal complaints, with 'Communication/Information' the highest, similar to formal complaints.

General Enquiries - Top 5 Subjects	2013/14
Communication/Information	190
Treatment & Care, Quality	72
Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)	71
Treatment & Care, Quantity	49
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	43

The Complaints Department continues to work with the Service Directorates to ensure a speedy resolution of issues at a local level without going through a formal complaint investigation. The Trust aims to effectively resolve complaints locally, working closely with the service user. Staff use the "Local Resolution" forms which are available on the Hub to record local resolution of complaints. The Complaints Department thanks staff for their continued support and assistance in resolving matters locally.

Children’s Order Complaints

13 Complaints (covering 16 subject reasons) were received and investigated under the Problem Solving Stage of the Children (NI) Order 1995 Representation and Complaints Procedure (CORCP). These complaints relate to issues pertaining to:

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|----------|---|
| 4 | Decision Making Process | 1 | Services to support children within the family home |
| 2 | Denial of Service | 2 | Decision about a placement of a child |
| 4 | Accommodation of a child | | |

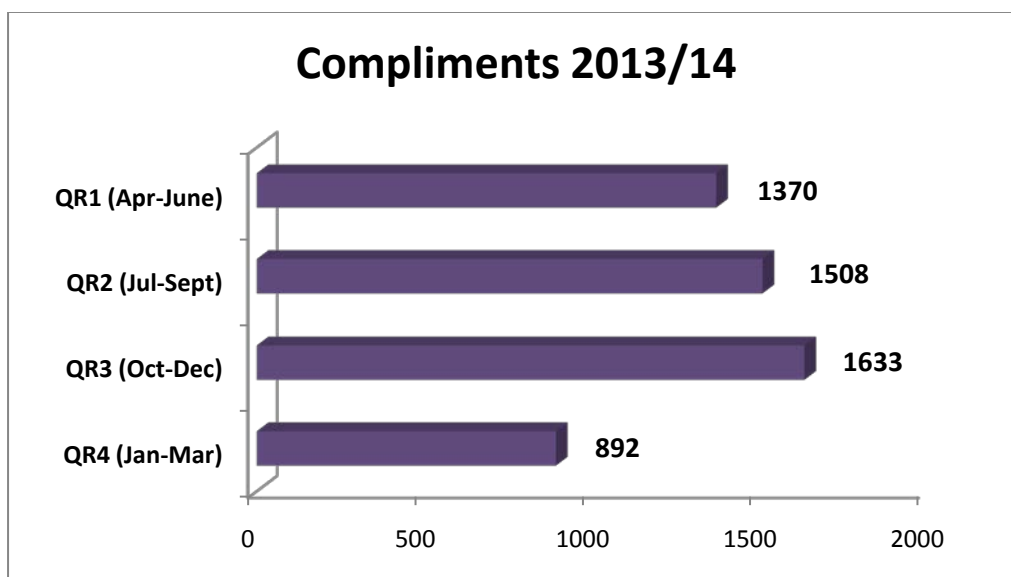
All of these Complaints were successfully resolved under the Problem Solving stage, with the service to be monitored in 2 cases.

Compliments Received

The Complaints Department recorded 5403 compliments received; this is a decrease of 1738 from the 2012-13 year. Staff are reminded to report any compliments received to the Complaints Department for our records. In response to comments received from service users, we are currently reviewing how to assist service users report compliments.

Service users have commended the professionalism and compassion of staff across the Trust; in particular, the Emergency Department staff received compliments for their dedication, commitment, skill and quality of care.

The Complaints Department have also received compliments in the professional way that they handled the issues in the complaint raised.



Monitoring and Reporting

- The DHSSPSNI receives Quarterly Monitoring CH8 Subject and Programme of Care Reports.
- The HSC Board receives redacted Monthly Reports of all Formal Complaints.
- The Trust Board receives Internal Performance Reports on a quarterly basis; these include the Complaints' Department acknowledgement and response timeframes.
- The Governance Managers for the Service Directorates receive regular Complaint Reports. These are discussed at their particular Service Directorate Governance Meetings and any lessons identified can be shared for learning.
- The Complaints Review Group meets 3 or 4 times a year. This Group is chaired by a Non-Executive Director and membership includes representation from the Service Directorates, the Complaints Department and the Risk and Governance Department. The Group reviews and monitors how complaints are managed and considers any lessons learned to provide assurances to Trust Board via the Learning from Experience Assurance Committee.

Learning, Service Improvements and Actions

Throughout 2013-2014, as a result of complaints received and investigated, learning, service improvements and actions are identified. Ombudsman Reports and some 'High' or 'Medium' graded complaints may also require the Service Directorates to develop and implement an Action Plan.

The outcome of all complaints investigations are recorded under the following headings as follows;

01.04.13-31.03.14 - CLOSED CASES	TOTAL
Training need identified	41
Review/Change of service	36
Review/Change of system	23
Monitoring of service	15
Resource Issue (staff)	12
Referred to Other Agency	10
Litigation commenced by complainant	8
Further assessment	5
Equipment approved/required	4
Ex-Gratia Payment	4
Resource Issue (non-staff)	4
Procedural Change Required	3
SAI commenced	3

Ombudsman's Report 2013-14

There were 22 requests for information received from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints. ('The Ombudsman'). This is a 38% increase in comparison to the year 2012-13 when 6 requests were received.

Breakdown of 2013-14 Ombudsman cases:	2013-14	2012-13
Requests for information / Consideration stage	22	16
Proceed to Investigation	9	
Not Upheld	4	2
Upheld	4	4
Transferred to Litigation	1	1

Please note that some of the above 2013-2014 cases were not opened in this financial year; some of the cases are ongoing from the previous financial year.

Of those cases that were upheld by the Ombudsman, 3 attracted consolatory payments with a number of recommendations. However, 1 of the cases which required a consolatory payment of £17500 was not paid as the Complainant subsequently proceeded down the legal route. In another case the Ombudsman suggested consolatory payment of £12500. However, the legal powers of the Ombudsman to award consolatory payments has been challenged and the Trust is awaiting the outcome of the Ombudsman's challenge to this High Court decision before it can proceed with payment. The total amount of consolatory payments this financial year 2013-14 was 1 payment of £250 compared to £5,100 in 2012-13 which is a significant decrease from the previous year 2012-2013.

Recommendations include;

- Review of medical record keeping
- Apology letter for poor communication
- Unacceptable delays and inadequate guidance provided to the family

Consolatory payments were made in relation to:

- Distress and upset caused to the family
- Delay in a meeting
- Lack of guidance/information/process
- Handling of complaint

Staff Training

There were 24 'Complaints Awareness' courses with 599 staff who have received Complaints training this year; this is a 26% increase from 2012-2013. 32 managers also attended 2 courses on 'Complaints Investigations, Response Writing and Ombudsman's Cases'

The Complaints Department is currently reviewing the provision of training to all staff including cascade and the development of computer based training.