

## 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

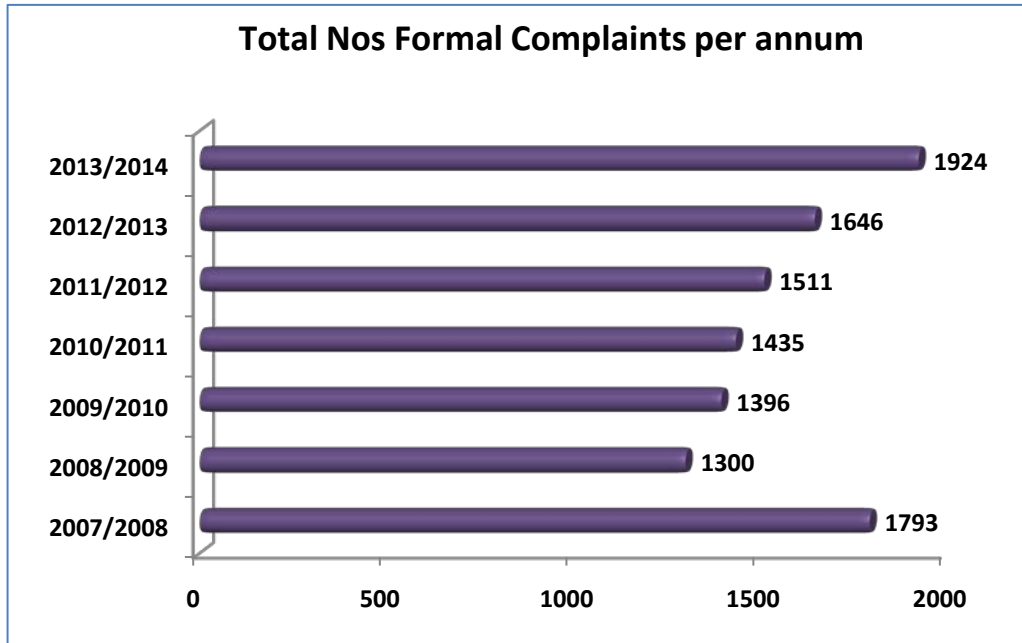
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Tel: (028) 9504 8000

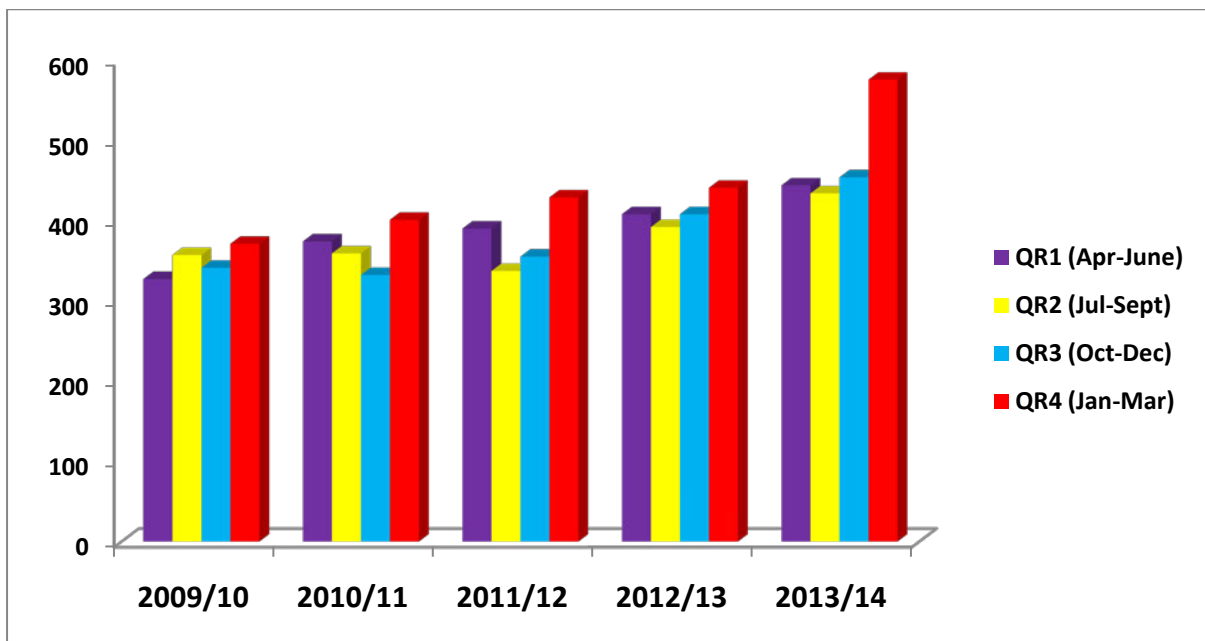
Email: [complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### 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        |
| <b>Totals:</b>                       | <b>1924</b> | <b>1646</b> | <b>1511</b> | <b>1435</b> | <b>1396</b> | <b>7912</b> |

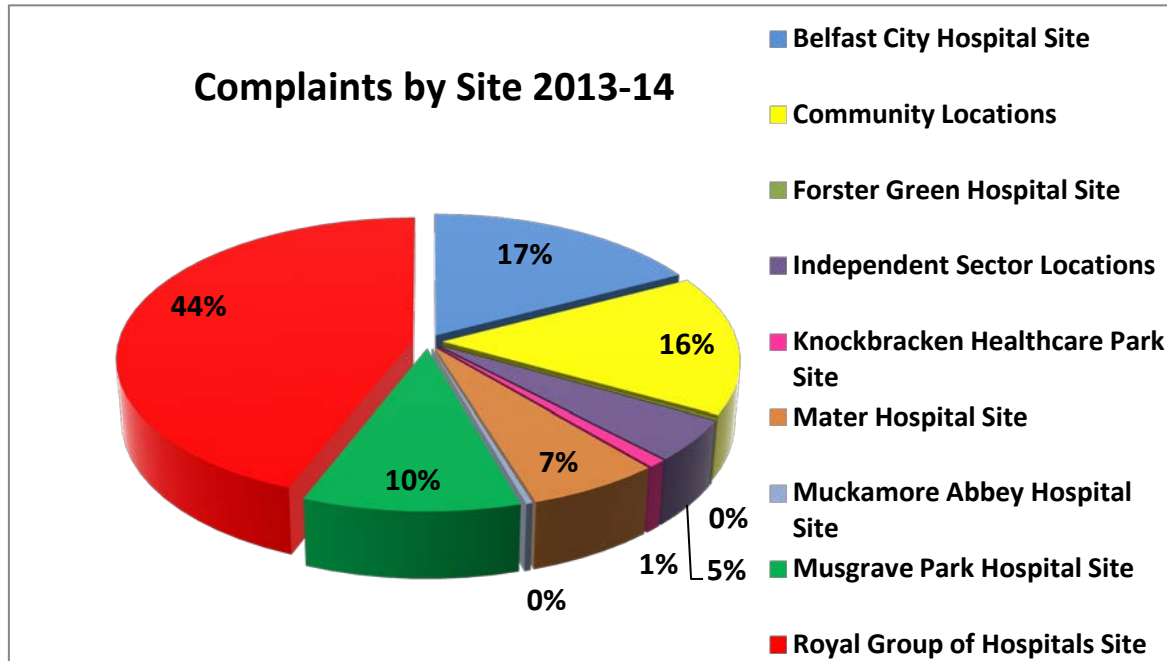
## What our Service Users complained about 2013-14

| 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%     | <b>96%</b> |
| Response Times < 20 days       | 49%     | 55%     | 63%     | 51%     | <b>50%</b> |
| Response Times 30 days         | 63%     | 70%     | 79%     | 68%     | <b>64%</b> |

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 |   |   |

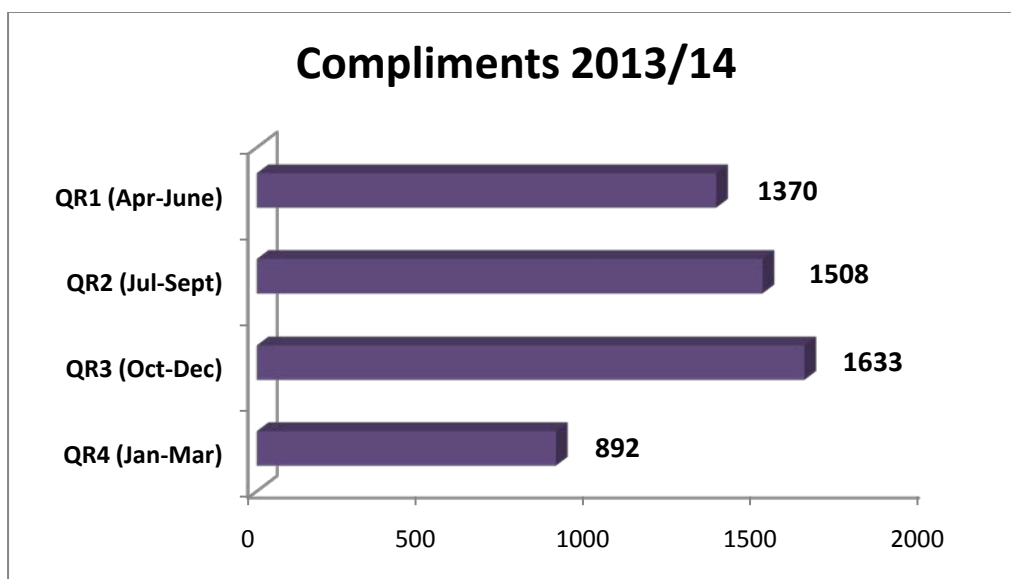
All of these Complaints were successfully resolved under the Problem Solving stage, with the service to be monitored in 2 cases.

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

| <b>Breakdown of 2013-14 Ombudsman cases:</b>   | 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.





# COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2011/12)

This statistical release summarises information collected on complaint issues received by the six Health & Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

## Issue No: 1

### Date of Publication:

26 March 2013

### Theme:

HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland

### Issued by

Hospital Information Branch  
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[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

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## Background

In this statistical report a complaint is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of a HSC Trust's services or facilities.

Readers are asked to note that 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.

## Key Points

- Across Northern Ireland, a total of 5,485 complaint issues were reported by the six HSC Trusts during 2011/12 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Over the last three years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 752 (15.9%), from 4,733 in 2009/10 to 5,485 in 2011/12 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- During 2011/12, over a third of all complaint issues (2,122, 38.7%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Of the 5,485 complaint issues received by the HSC Trusts during 2011/12, over three fifths (3,393, 61.9%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2, Figure 2).
- During 2011/12, almost three in ten (1,572, 28.7%) complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Tables 3 & 4).
- Over nine in ten (95.0%, 3,721) complaint issues received by HSC Trusts had been provided with a substantive response in 2011/12 (Table 11).
- During 2011/12, over three fifths (2,268, 61.0%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 12).

## Reader Information

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Purpose             | Monitor and report the number of HSC Trust complaint issues received during the year, by the programme of care, category, subject of the complaint issue and the time taken to provide a substantive response. |
| Authors             | Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart, Laura Smyth.  |
| Publication Date    | Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2013  |
| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012   |
| Publication Issue   | 1  |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with HSC Trusts prior to release.  |
| Target audience     | DHSSPS, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.                                       |
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| Price               | Free   |
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## About the Hospital Information Branch (HIB)

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 Head of the Branch is the Principal Statistician, Mrs. Laura Smyth. 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 DHSSPS, 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 and Cancer). A detailed list of these publications is available from:

**Website:** [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

## 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 of the complaint and the time taken to provide a substantive response for complaints received during 2011/12.

### Data Collection

The Information presented within this release derives from the Departmental CH8 statistical return provided by the six HSC Trusts, (including the NIAS) in Northern Ireland. The CH8 return was introduced in 1998 but was revised in 2007 to take account of the structural changes within the HSC system following the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The CH8 is returned quarterly by HSC Trusts in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/hib\\_guidance\\_manuals.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/hib_guidance_manuals.htm)

### Rounding

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

### Data Quality

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

For each information collection, HSC Trusts are given a set period of time to submit the information. Following submission, HIB perform a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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.

### Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust complaint issues received during the year, to help assess HSC Trust 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 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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/contextual\\_information\\_hospital\\_statistics.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/contextual_information_hospital_statistics.htm)

**Total Number of Complaint Issues (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

Table 1 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts over the last three years.

**Table 1: Total Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

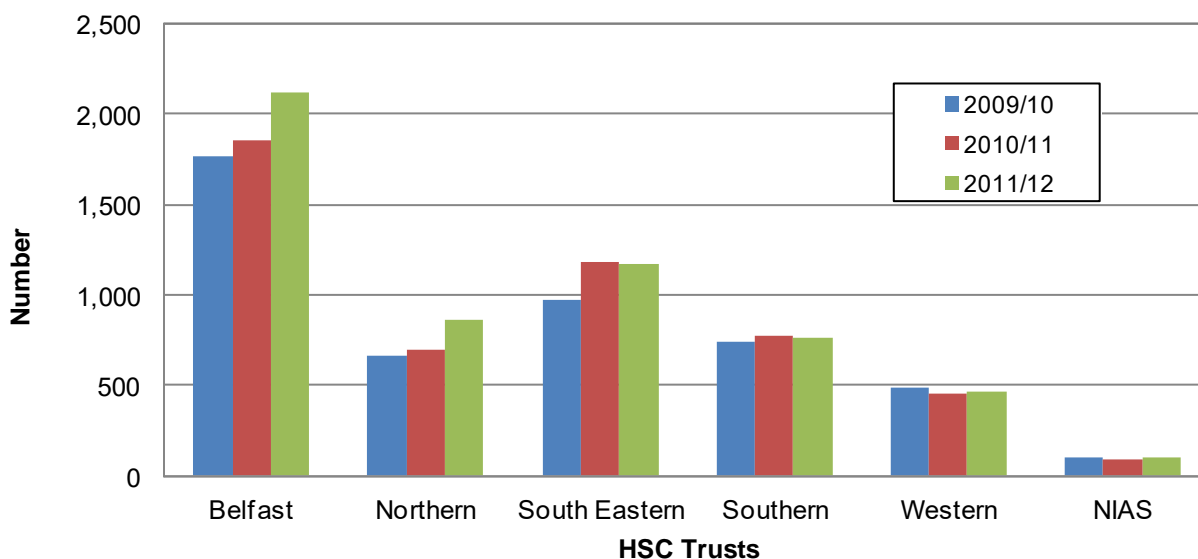
| HSC Trust               | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                         | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               |
|                         | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Belfast                 | 1,772        | 37.4%         | 1,855        | 36.7%         | 2,122        | 38.7%         |
| Northern                | 658          | 13.9%         | 697          | 13.8%         | 862          | 15.7%         |
| South Eastern           | 977          | 20.6%         | 1,182        | 23.4%         | 1,172        | 21.4%         |
| Southern                | 741          | 15.7%         | 777          | 15.4%         | 764          | 13.9%         |
| Western                 | 487          | 10.3%         | 450          | 8.9%          | 467          | 8.5%          |
| NIAS                    | 98           | 2.1%          | 92           | 1.8%          | 98           | 1.8%          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Over the last three years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 752 (15.9%), from 4,733 in 2009/10 to 5,485 in 2011/12 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received increased or remained the same in five of the six HSC Trusts, with the most notable increase reported by the Belfast HSC Trust (350, 19.8%), from 1,772 to 2,122 in 2011/12. During this time, the number of complaint issues decreased slightly in the Western HSC Trust, from 487 in 2009/10 to 467 in 2011/12 (Table 1, Figure 1).

During 2011/12, over a third of all complaint issues (2,122, 38.7%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,172 (21.4%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 862 (15.7%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 764 (13.9%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 467 (8.5%) by the Western HSC Trust and 98 (1.8%) by the NIAS (Table 1).

**Figure 1: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts during the Year (2009/10 – 2011/12)**



### Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

Table 2 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts over the last three years broken down by POC. Each complaint issue should be 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 but not a patient / client, it should be recorded against the POC of that service.

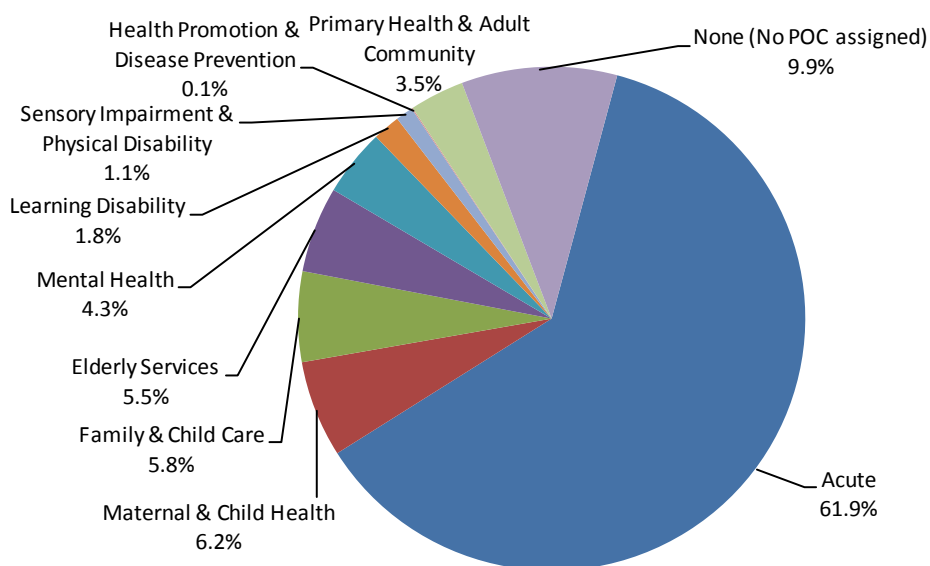
**Table 2: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/2012)**

| Programme of Care                        | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               |
|  | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute                                    | 2,682        | 56.7%         | 3,022        | 59.8%         | 3,393        | 61.9%         |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 275          | 5.8%          | 323          | 6.4%          | 340          | 6.2%          |
| Family & Child Care                      | 401          | 8.5%          | 317          | 6.3%          | 318          | 5.8%          |
| Elderly Services                         | 233          | 4.9%          | 307          | 6.1%          | 302          | 5.5%          |
| Mental Health                            | 253          | 5.3%          | 247          | 4.9%          | 236          | 4.3%          |
| Learning Disability                      | 103          | 2.2%          | 105          | 2.1%          | 96           | 1.8%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 82           | 1.7%          | 82           | 1.6%          | 61           | 1.1%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 3            | 0.1%          | 3            | 0.1%          | 4            | 0.1%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 284          | 6.0%          | 293          | 5.8%          | 191          | 3.5%          |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 417          | 8.8%          | 354          | 7.0%          | 544          | 9.9%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>  | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2011/12, 5,485 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, over three fifths (3,393, 61.9%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 2).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the HSC Trusts relating to the Acute POC increased by 5.2 percentage points, from 56.7% (2,682) to 61.9% (3,393) during 2011/12 (Table 2).

**Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2011/12)**



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

## Complaint Issues Received by Category<sup>2</sup>

Table 3 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during each year, by the category of the complaint issue. The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject which best describes the nature of the patient / clients 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 the 15 main categories below<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                 | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               |
|                                 | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges           | 230          | 4.9%          | 255          | 5.0%          | 307          | 5.6%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 70           | 1.5%          | 77           | 1.5%          | 69           | 1.3%          |
| Appointments                    | 617          | 13.0%         | 744          | 14.7%         | 692          | 12.6%         |
| Children's Order                | 66           | 1.4%          | 24           | 0.5%          | 12           | 0.2%          |
| Contracted Services             | 101          | 2.1%          | 34           | 0.7%          | 67           | 1.2%          |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 1,342        | 28.4%         | 1,575        | 31.2%         | 1,572        | 28.7%         |
| Information & Communication     | 626          | 13.2%         | 644          | 12.7%         | 852          | 15.5%         |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Other                           | 114          | 2.4%          | 110          | 2.2%          | 122          | 2.2%          |
| Patient Experience              | 928          | 19.6%         | 902          | 17.9%         | 1,009        | 18.4%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 159          | 3.4%          | 136          | 2.7%          | 121          | 2.2%          |
| Premises                        | 220          | 4.6%          | 214          | 4.2%          | 289          | 5.3%          |
| Prison Healthcare               | 50           | 1.1%          | 90           | 1.8%          | 174          | 3.2%          |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 147          | 3.1%          | 196          | 3.9%          | 145          | 2.6%          |
| Transport                       | 63           | 1.3%          | 51           | 1.0%          | 54           | 1.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2011/12, almost three in ten (1,572, 28.7%) complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment', 1,009 (18.4%) to 'Patient Experience', 852 (15.5%) to 'Information & Communication' and 692 (12.6%) to 'Appointments'. These four categories account for three quarters (4,125, 75.2%) of all complaint issues received during 2011/12 (Table 3).

Over the last three years, the number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' increased from 1,342 (28.4%) during 2009/10 to 1,572 (28.7%) during 2011/12 (Table 3).

The number of complaint issues relating to 'Prison Healthcare' increased by 2.1 percentage points, from 1.1% (50) during 2009/10 to 3.2% (174) during 2011/12 (Table 3).

<sup>2</sup> A list of the subjects of complaint issues is detailed in Appendix 3, and a list of the general category of complaint issue by subject area in Appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup> Details on the number of complaint issues received by subject of complaint issue is detailed in Appendix 1.



Table 4 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during 2011/12, by the category of the complaint issue and by HSC Trust. As per previous table, the subject area has been grouped into the main categories of complaint issues received.

**Table 4: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust (2011/12)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | HSC Trust    |            |               |            |            |           | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
|                                 | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS      |                  |
| Admissions/Discharges           | 181          | 22         | 43            | 30         | 31         | 0         | <b>307</b>       |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 23           | 1          | 20            | 23         | 2          | 0         | <b>69</b>        |
| Appointments                    | 402          | 77         | 96            | 88         | 29         | 0         | <b>692</b>       |
| Children Order                  | 0            | 6          | 0             | 0          | 6          | 0         | <b>12</b>        |
| Contracted Services             | 39           | 10         | 7             | 4          | 7          | 0         | <b>67</b>        |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 546          | 261        | 298           | 256        | 194        | 17        | <b>1,572</b>     |
| Information & Communication     | 412          | 100        | 189           | 92         | 59         | 0         | <b>852</b>       |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         | <b>0</b>         |
| Other                           | 16           | 48         | 38            | 5          | 11         | 4         | <b>122</b>       |
| Patient Experience              | 379          | 131        | 194           | 160        | 107        | 38        | <b>1,009</b>     |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 27           | 42         | 28            | 21         | 3          | 0         | <b>121</b>       |
| Premises                        | 69           | 95         | 72            | 42         | 11         | 0         | <b>289</b>       |
| Prison Healthcare               | 0            | 0          | 174           | 0          | 0          | 0         | <b>174</b>       |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 22           | 69         | 11            | 36         | 7          | 0         | <b>145</b>       |
| Transport                       | 6            | 0          | 2             | 7          | 0          | 39        | <b>54</b>        |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,122</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>1,172</b>  | <b>764</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>5,485</b>     |

During 2011/12, across HSC Trusts:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (546, 34.7%), 'Information & Communication' (412, 48.4%), 'Appointments' (402, 58.1%), 'Patient Experience' (379, 37.6%), 'Admissions/Discharges' (181, 59.0%) and 'Contracted Services' (39, 58.2%) (Table 4).
- The Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Premises' (95, 32.9%), 'Professional Assessment of Need' (69, 47.6%), 'Policy/Commercial Decisions' (42, 34.7%), and 'Other' (48, 39.3%) (Table 4).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported 174 complaint issues relating to 'Prison Healthcare'. It is important to note that the South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland, therefore, all other HSC Trusts reported nil complaint issues in this category (Table 4).
- The Belfast and Southern HSC Trusts reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Aids/Adaptations/Appliances' (23, 33.3%) (Table 4).
- The Northern and Western HSC Trusts reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Children Order' (6, 50.0%) (Table 4).
- The NIAS reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Transport' (39, 72.2%) (Table 4).

## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

Table 5 details the number of complaint issues received by each HSC Trust during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 5: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC during the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

| Programme of Care                        | HSC Trust    |            |               |            |            |           | 2011/12 Total |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
|  | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS      |               |
| Acute                                    | 1,594        | 441        | 626           | 465        | 267        | 0         | <b>3,393</b>  |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 208          | 24         | 50            | 3          | 55         | 0         | <b>340</b>    |
| Family & Child Care                      | 43           | 81         | 67            | 85         | 42         | 0         | <b>318</b>    |
| Elderly Services                         | 68           | 102        | 50            | 33         | 49         | 0         | <b>302</b>    |
| Mental Health                            | 44           | 67         | 54            | 53         | 18         | 0         | <b>236</b>    |
| Learning Disability                      | 11           | 20         | 20            | 27         | 18         | 0         | <b>96</b>     |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 15           | 16         | 16            | 11         | 3          | 0         | <b>61</b>     |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 2            | 0          | 0             | 2          | 0          | 0         | <b>4</b>      |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 19           | 29         | 58            | 85         | 0          | 0         | <b>191</b>    |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 118          | 82         | 231           | 0          | 15         | 98        | <b>544</b>    |
| <b>Total number of complaints</b>        | <b>2,122</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>1,172</b>  | <b>764</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>5,485</b>  |

During 2011/12:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,594, 47.0%) and the Maternal & Child Health POC (208, 61.2%) (Table 5).
- The Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Elderly Services POC (102, 33.8%) and Mental Health POC (67, 28.4%) (Table 5).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues with no POC assigned (231, 42.5%) (Table 5).
- The Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Family & Child Care POC (85, 26.7%), Learning Disability POC (27, 28.1%) and Primary Health & Adult Community POC (85, 44.5%) (Table 5).

## Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust

Table 6 details the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust during the last three years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 6: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 1,094        | 61.7%         | 1,353        | 72.9%         | 1,594        | 75.1%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 180          | 10.2%         | 178          | 9.6%          | 208          | 9.8%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 81           | 4.6%          | 34           | 1.8%          | 43           | 2.0%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 62           | 3.5%          | 76           | 4.1%          | 68           | 3.2%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 80           | 4.5%          | 57           | 3.1%          | 44           | 2.1%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 25           | 1.4%          | 9            | 0.5%          | 11           | 0.5%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 10           | 0.6%          | 20           | 1.1%          | 15           | 0.7%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 3            | 0.2%          | 3            | 0.2%          | 2            | 0.1%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 64           | 3.6%          | 41           | 2.2%          | 19           | 0.9%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 173          | 9.8%          | 84           | 4.5%          | 118          | 5.6%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>1,772</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,855</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,122</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

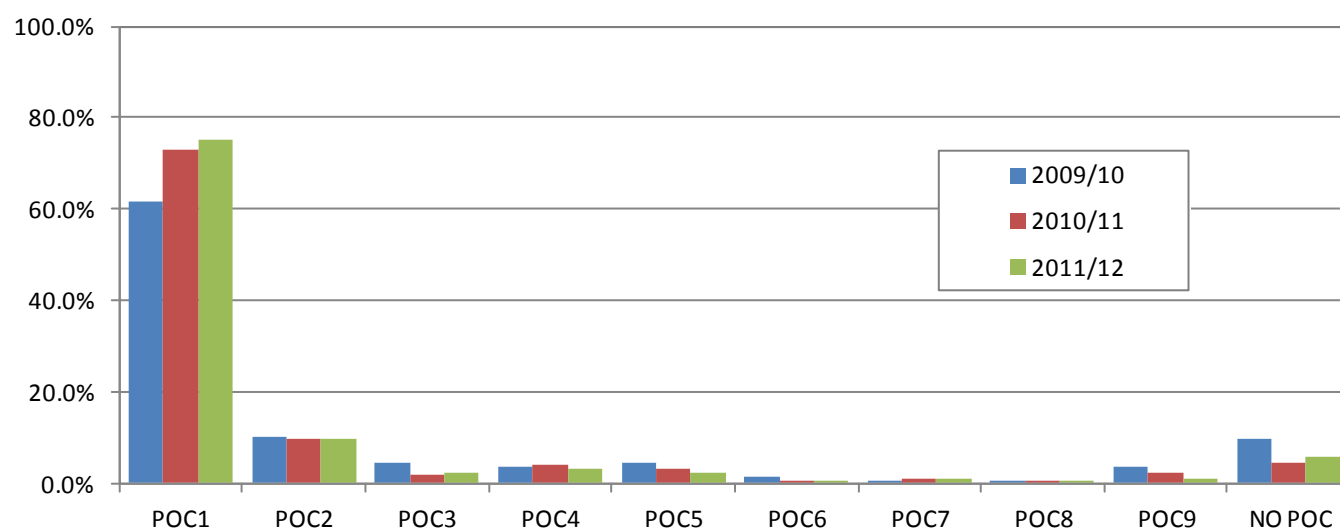
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust increased by 350 (19.8%), from 1,772 to 2,118 during 2011/12 (Table 6, Figure 3).

During 2011/12, 2,122 complaint issues were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, of which, almost three quarters (1,594, 75.1%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 6).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 13.4 percentage points, from 61.7% (1,094) to 75.1% (1,594) during 2011/12 (Table 6 and Figure 3).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC decreased by 2.7 percentage points, from 3.6% (64) to 0.9% (19) during 2011/12 (Table 6, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust

Table 7 details the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust during the last three years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 7: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 373        | 56.7%         | 398        | 57.1%         | 441        | 51.2%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 10         | 1.5%          | 22         | 3.2%          | 24         | 2.8%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 60         | 9.1%          | 64         | 9.2%          | 81         | 9.4%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 43         | 6.5%          | 69         | 9.9%          | 102        | 11.8%         |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 54         | 8.2%          | 56         | 8.0%          | 67         | 7.8%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 12         | 1.8%          | 21         | 3.0%          | 20         | 2.3%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 19         | 2.9%          | 10         | 1.4%          | 16         | 1.9%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 69         | 10.5%         | 41         | 5.9%          | 29         | 3.4%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 18         | 2.7%          | 16         | 2.3%          | 82         | 9.5%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>658</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>697</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

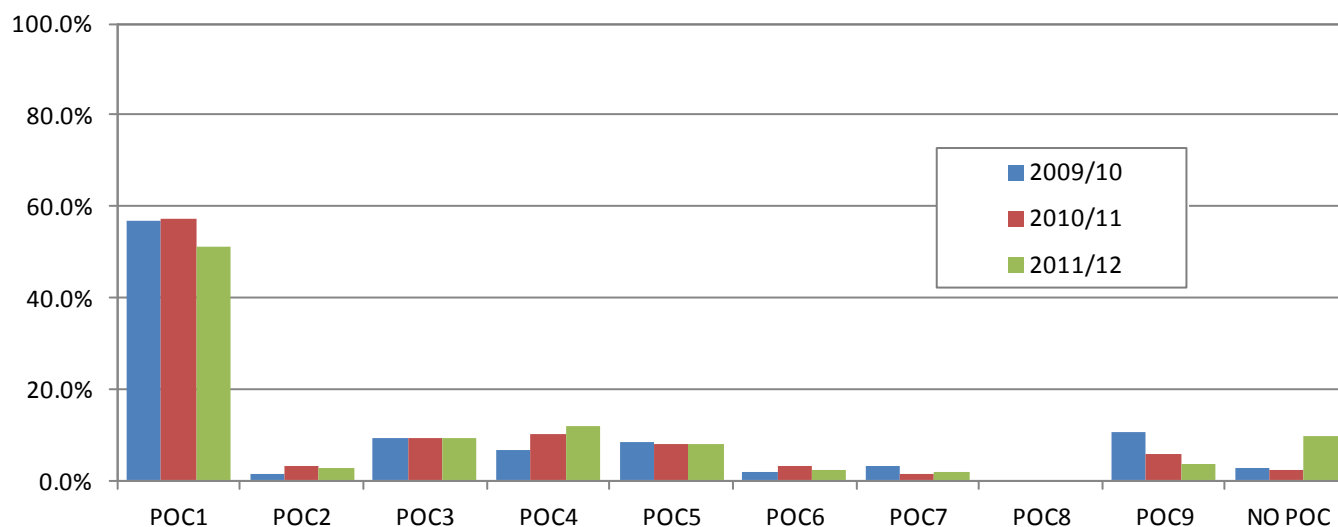
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust increased by 204 (31.0%), from 658 to 862 during 2011/12 (Table 7, Figure 4).

During 2011/12, 862 complaint issues were received by the Northern HSC Trust, of which, over half (441, 51.2%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 7).

During the last three years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC Trust decreased by 5.5 percentage points, from 56.7% (373) in 2009/10 to 51.2% (441) in 2011/12 (Table 7).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Elderly Services POC increased by 5.3 percentage points, from 6.5% (43) to 11.8% (102) in 2011/12 (Table 7).

**Figure 4: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust

Table 8 details the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust during the last three years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 8: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               |
|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 576        | 59.0%         | 635          | 53.7%         | 626          | 53.4%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 32         | 3.3%          | 92           | 7.8%          | 50           | 4.3%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 56         | 5.7%          | 73           | 6.2%          | 67           | 5.7%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 53         | 5.4%          | 64           | 5.4%          | 50           | 4.3%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 53         | 5.4%          | 69           | 5.8%          | 54           | 4.6%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 24         | 2.5%          | 27           | 2.3%          | 20           | 1.7%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 11         | 1.1%          | 13           | 1.1%          | 16           | 1.4%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 56         | 5.7%          | 59           | 5.0%          | 58           | 4.9%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 116        | 11.9%         | 150          | 12.7%         | 231          | 19.7%         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>977</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,182</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,172</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

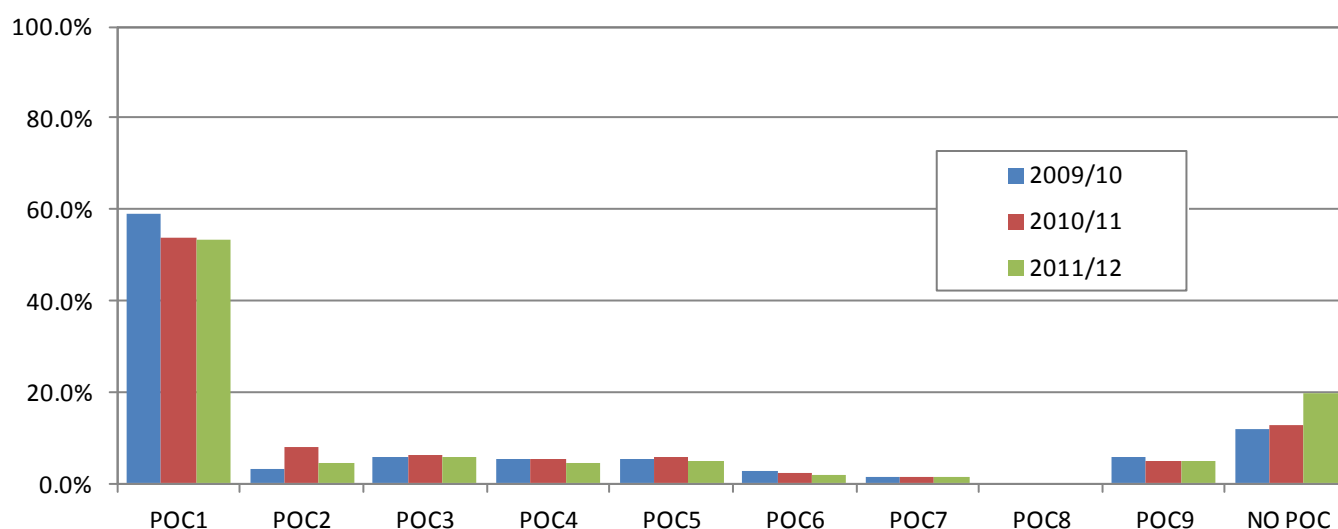
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust increased by 195 (20.0%), from 977 to 1,172 in 2011/12 (Table 8, Figure 5).

During 2011/12, 1,172 complaint issues were received by the South Eastern HSC Trust, of which, over half (626, 53.4%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 8).

During the last three years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC decreased by 5.6 percentage points, from 59.0% in 2009/10 to 53.4% in 2011/12 (Table 8).

Between 2009/10 and 2011/12, the proportion of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust with no POC assigned increased by 7.8 percentage points, from 11.9% (116) to 19.7% (231) (Table 8).

**Figure 5: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust

Table 9 details the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust during the last three years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 9: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 425        | 57.4%         | 388        | 49.9%         | 465        | 60.9%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 9          | 1.2%          | 2          | 0.3%          | 3          | 0.4%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 132        | 17.8%         | 91         | 11.7%         | 85         | 11.1%         |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 27         | 3.6%          | 44         | 5.7%          | 33         | 4.3%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 36         | 4.9%          | 46         | 5.9%          | 53         | 6.9%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 16         | 2.2%          | 31         | 4.0%          | 27         | 3.5%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 13         | 1.8%          | 26         | 3.3%          | 11         | 1.4%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 2          | 0.3%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 83         | 11.2%         | 149        | 19.2%         | 85         | 11.1%         |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>741</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>777</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

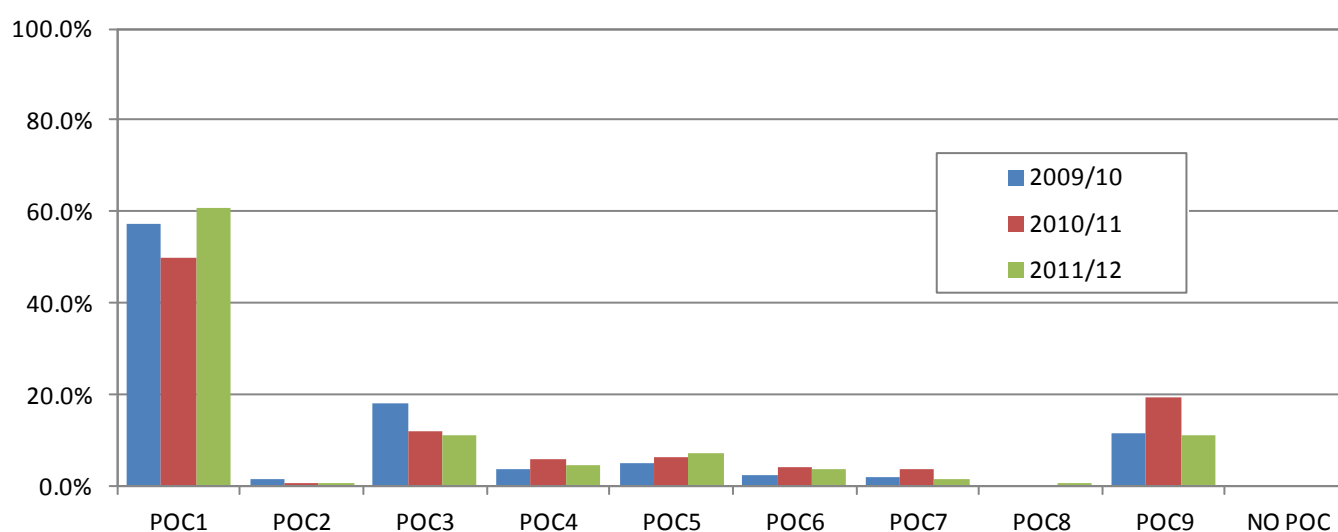
Between 2009/10 and 2011/12, the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust increased by 23 (3.1%), from 741 to 764 (Table 9, Figure 6).

During 2011/12, 764 complaint issues were received by the Southern HSC Trust, of which, over three fifths (465, 60.9%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 9).

During the last three years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 3.5 percentage points, from 57.4% (425) to 60.9% (465) (Table 9).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Family & Child Care POC decreased by 6.7 percentage points, from 17.8% (132) to 11.1% (85) in 2011/12 (Table 9).

**Figure 6: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust

Table 10 details the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust during the last three years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 10: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 214        | 43.9%         | 248        | 55.1%         | 267        | 57.2%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 44         | 9.0%          | 29         | 6.4%          | 55         | 11.8%         |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 72         | 14.8%         | 55         | 12.2%         | 42         | 9.0%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 48         | 9.9%          | 54         | 12.0%         | 49         | 10.5%         |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 30         | 6.2%          | 19         | 4.2%          | 18         | 3.9%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 26         | 5.3%          | 17         | 3.8%          | 18         | 3.9%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 29         | 6.0%          | 13         | 2.9%          | 3          | 0.6%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 12         | 2.5%          | 3          | 0.7%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 12         | 2.5%          | 12         | 2.7%          | 15         | 3.2%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>487</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>450</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

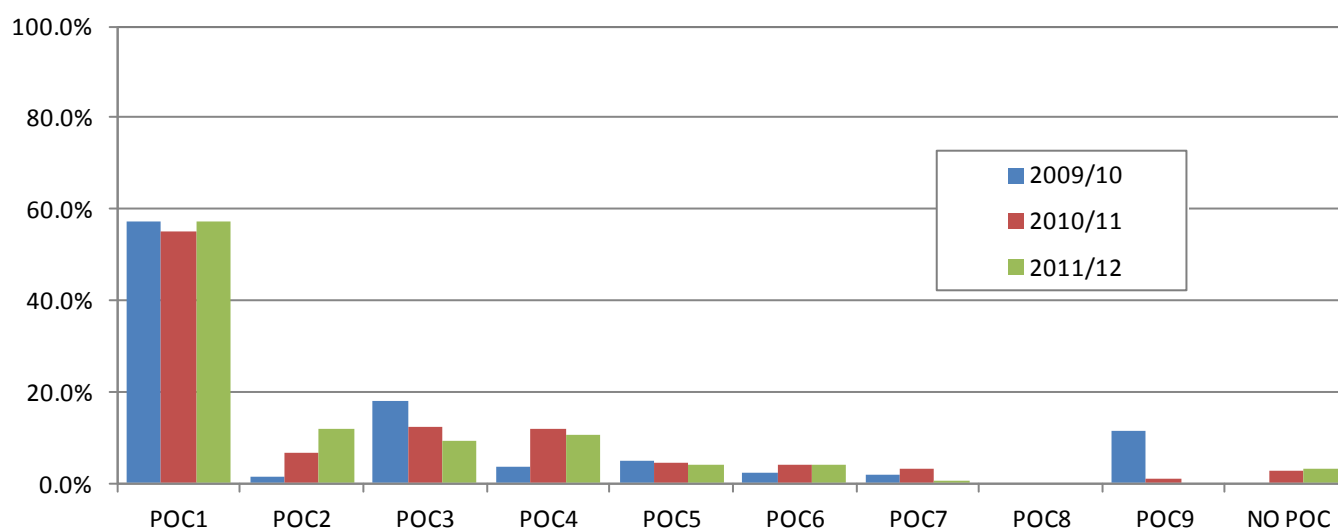
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust decreased by 20 (4.1%), from 487 to 467 in 2011/12 (Table 10, Figure 7).

During 2011/12, 467 complaint issues were received by the Western HSC Trust, of which, almost three fifths (267, 57.2%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 10).

During the last three years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 13.3 percentage points, from 43.9% (214) to 57.2% (267) in 2011/12 (Table 10).

Between 2009/10 and 2011/12, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust relating to the Family & Child Care POC decreased by 5.8 percentage points, from 14.8% (72) to 9.0% (42) in 2011/12 (Table 10).

**Figure 7: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2011/12)**





## Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, 98 complaint issues were received by the NIAS. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by Programme of Care as complaint issues received by NIAS are not assigned to a POC.

During the last three years, the number of complaint issues received by the NIAS remained broadly similar, ranging from 92 in 2010/11 to 98 in both 2009/10 and 2011/12.

### Number of Substantive Responses Provided<sup>4</sup>

Table 11 below details information on the number of substantive responses provided to complaints received by HSC Trusts during the financial year. A substantive response is defined as communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant following investigation. It should also be noted that only one substantive response will be provided to a number of complaint issues made by a complainant, i.e. 3,917 complaints were received in 2011/12 which related to 5,485 complaint issues.

The information detailed below refers to the position of complaints received by HSC Trusts during the year at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, i.e. information for 2009/10 refers to the position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

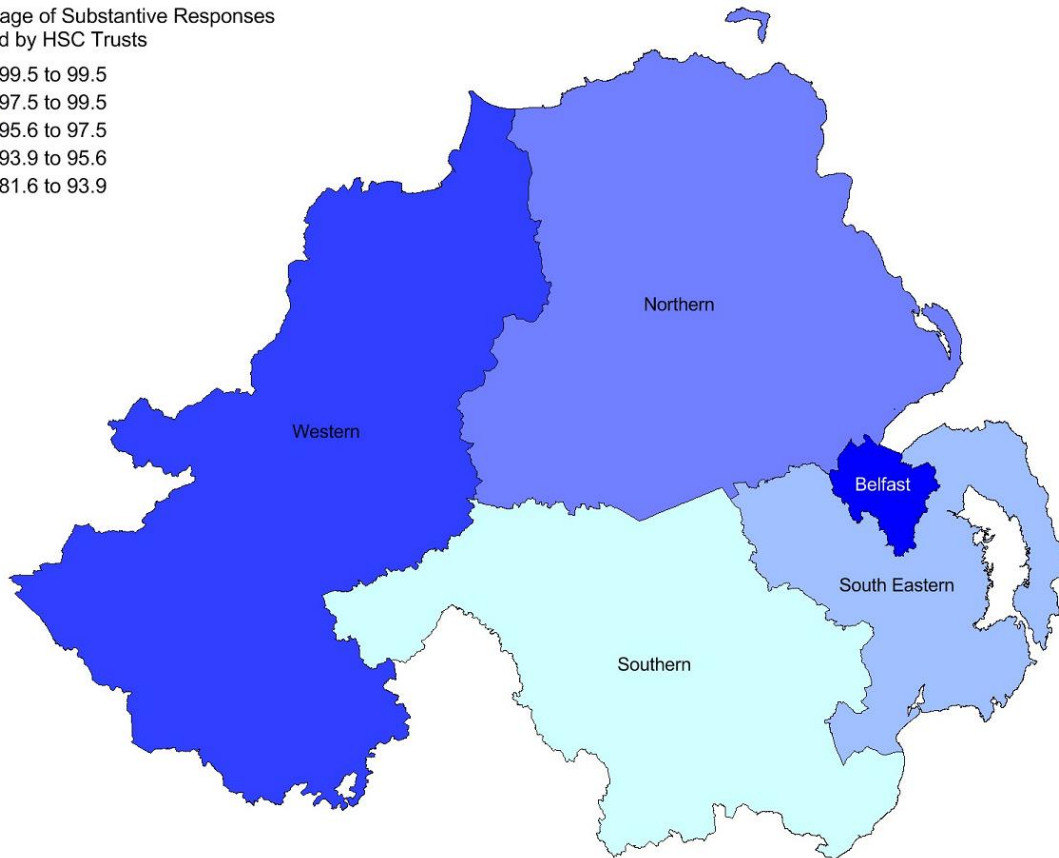
**Table 11: Number of Substantive Responses to Complaints, by HSC Trust (2009/10 - 2011/12)**

| HSC Trust               | Substantive Response Has Been Given |              |              |              |              |              | Substantive Response Not Yet Given |             |           |             |            |             |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                         | 2009/10                             |              | 2010/11      |              | 2011/12      |              | 2009/10                            |             | 2010/11   |             | 2011/12    |             |
|                         | No.                                 | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            | No.                                | %           | No.       | %           | No.        | %           |
| Belfast                 | 1,243                               | 87.7%        | 1,624        | 96.7%        | 1,497        | 99.5%        | 174                                | 12.3%       | 56        | 3.3%        | 7          | 0.5%        |
| Northern                | 631                                 | 96.0%        | 538          | 97.5%        | 607          | 95.6%        | 26                                 | 4.0%        | 14        | 2.5%        | 28         | 4.4%        |
| South Eastern           | 666                                 | 95.4%        | 749          | 99.6%        | 769          | 93.9%        | 32                                 | 4.6%        | 3         | 0.4%        | 50         | 6.1%        |
| Southern                | 558                                 | 87.2%        | 677          | 98.8%        | 438          | 81.6%        | 82                                 | 12.8%       | 8         | 1.2%        | 99         | 18.4%       |
| Western                 | 427                                 | 87.3%        | 351          | 99.4%        | 316          | 97.5%        | 62                                 | 12.7%       | 2         | 0.6%        | 8          | 2.5%        |
| NIAS                    | 88                                  | 89.8%        | 74           | 87.1%        | 94           | 95.9%        | 10                                 | 10.2%       | 11        | 12.9%       | 4          | 4.1%        |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>3,613</b>                        | <b>90.3%</b> | <b>4,013</b> | <b>97.7%</b> | <b>3,721</b> | <b>95.0%</b> | <b>386</b>                         | <b>9.7%</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>2.3%</b> | <b>196</b> | <b>5.0%</b> |

**Figure 8: Percentage of Substantive Responses Provided by HSC Trusts (Excluding NIAS) (2011/12)**

Percentage of Substantive Responses Provided by HSC Trusts

- 99.5 to 99.5
- 97.5 to 99.5
- 95.6 to 97.5
- 93.9 to 95.6
- 81.6 to 93.9



<sup>4</sup> Responses are sent to letters of complaint, a letter may contain more than one complaint issue, therefore total responses will always be less than or equal to the total number of complaint issues.

Between 2009/10 and 2011/12, the proportion of substantive responses provided increased in three of the six HSC Trusts, with the Belfast HSC Trust reporting the highest increase, from 87.7% (1,243) to 99.5% (1,497). However, during this time, the proportion of substantive responses provided decreased in the remaining three HSC Trusts, with the Southern HSC Trust reporting the highest decrease, from 87.2% (558) to 81.6% (438) (Table 11).

During 2011/12, over 9 in 10 (95.0%, 3,721) complaints received by HSC Trusts had been provided with a substantive response, 2.7 percentage points less than in 2010/11 (97.7%, 4,013) but 4.7 percentage points higher than 2009/10 (90.3%, 3,613) (Table 11).

During 2011/12, the Belfast HSC Trust received the highest number of complaints (1,504, 38.4%), of which 1,497 (99.5%) had been provided with a substantive response (Table 11, Figure 8).

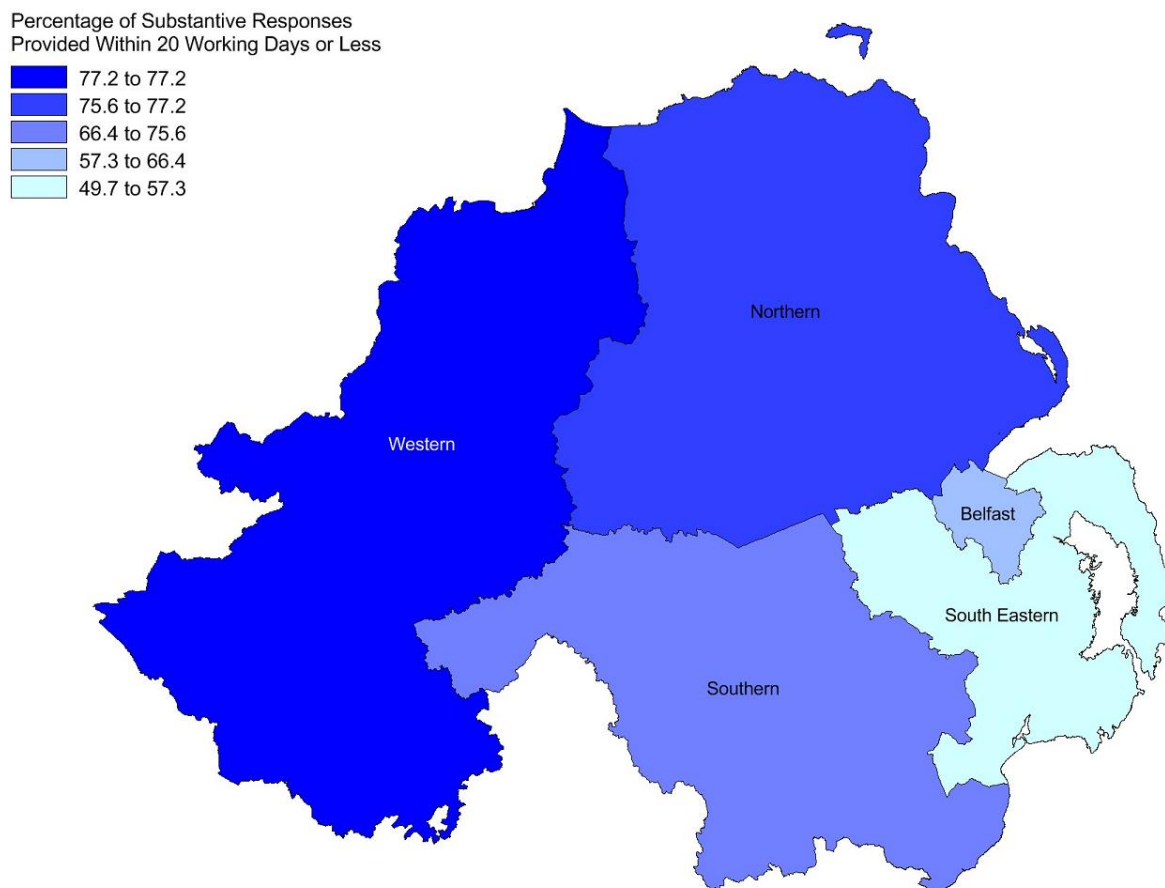
The date on which a substantive response is provided refers to the date on which the outcome of the complaint, following investigation, has been communicated to the complainant.

Table 12 details the length of time taken by HSC Trusts to provide a substantive response to complaints received during the financial year. Information is broken down by whether the response was provided within 20 working days.

**Table 12: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              |              |              |              |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              |              |              |              |              |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                         | 2009/10                 |              | 2010/11      |              | 2011/12      |              | 2009/10                   |              | 2010/11      |              | 2011/12      |              |
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            | No.                       | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            |
| Belfast                 | 688                     | 55.3%        | 864          | 53.2%        | 858          | 57.3%        | 555                       | 44.7%        | 760          | 46.8%        | 639          | 42.7%        |
| Northern                | 469                     | 74.3%        | 361          | 67.1%        | 459          | 75.6%        | 162                       | 25.7%        | 177          | 32.9%        | 148          | 24.4%        |
| South Eastern           | 283                     | 42.5%        | 394          | 52.6%        | 382          | 49.7%        | 383                       | 57.5%        | 355          | 47.4%        | 387          | 50.3%        |
| Southern                | 450                     | 80.6%        | 508          | 75.0%        | 291          | 66.4%        | 108                       | 19.4%        | 169          | 25.0%        | 147          | 33.6%        |
| Western                 | 214                     | 50.1%        | 142          | 40.5%        | 244          | 77.2%        | 213                       | 49.9%        | 209          | 59.5%        | 72           | 22.8%        |
| NIAS                    | 26                      | 29.5%        | 14           | 18.9%        | 34           | 36.2%        | 62                        | 70.5%        | 60           | 81.1%        | 60           | 63.8%        |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,130</b>            | <b>59.0%</b> | <b>2,283</b> | <b>56.9%</b> | <b>2,268</b> | <b>61.0%</b> | <b>1,483</b>              | <b>41.0%</b> | <b>1,730</b> | <b>43.1%</b> | <b>1,453</b> | <b>39.0%</b> |

**Figure 9: Percentage of Substantive Responses Provided in 20 Working Days or Less (Excluding NIAS) (2011/12)**



Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the number of substantive responses provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days increased by 153 (7.2%), from 2,130 to 2,283, but decreased by 15 (0.7%) between 2010/11 and 2011/12, from 2,283 to 2,268 (Table 12).

During 2011/12, over three fifths (2,268, 61.0%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint, 4.1 percentage points higher than in 2010/11 (56.9%, 2,283) and 2.0 percentage points higher than in 2009/10 (59.0%, 2,130) (Table 12).

During 2011/12, the Western HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (244, 77.2%), whilst the NIAS had provided the lowest (34, 36.2%) (Table 12, Figure 9).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of substantive responses provided by the Southern HSC Trust within 20 working days decreased by 14.2 percentage points, from 80.6% (450) to 66.4% (291) in 2011/12 (Table 12).

Table 13 details the number of complaints received during each of the last three financial years, and which at the end of each year had not been provided with a substantive response. The information is broken down by the length of time since the complaint was received by the HSC Trust as at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, i.e. information for 2009/10 refers to the position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

**Table 13: Number of Complaints that had Not Received a Substantive Response, by HSC Trust at 31<sup>st</sup> March (2009/10 – 2011/12)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              |          |             |           |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              |           |              |            |              |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
|                         | 2009/10                 |              | 2010/11  |             | 2011/12   |              | 2009/10                   |              | 2010/11   |              | 2011/12    |              |
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.      | %           | No.       | %            | No.                       | %            | No.       | %            | No.        | %            |
| Belfast                 | 99                      | 56.9%        | 0        | 0.0%        | 0         | 0.0%         | 75                        | 43.1%        | 56        | 100.0%       | 7          | 100.0%       |
| Northern                | 9                       | 34.6%        | 0        | 0.0%        | 0         | 0.0%         | 17                        | 65.4%        | 14        | 100.0%       | 28         | 100.0%       |
| South Eastern           | 0                       | 0.0%         | 0        | 0.0%        | 0         | 0.0%         | 32                        | 100.0%       | 3         | 100.0%       | 50         | 100.0%       |
| Southern                | 67                      | 81.7%        | 0        | 0.0%        | 75        | 75.8%        | 15                        | 18.3%        | 8         | 100.0%       | 24         | 24.2%        |
| Western                 | 0                       | 0.0%         | 0        | 0.0%        | 0         | 0.0%         | 62                        | 100.0%       | 2         | 100.0%       | 8          | 100.0%       |
| NIAS                    | 0                       | 0.0%         | 1        | 9.1%        | 0         | 0.0%         | 10                        | 100.0%       | 10        | 90.9%        | 4          | 100.0%       |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>175</b>              | <b>45.3%</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1.1%</b> | <b>75</b> | <b>38.3%</b> | <b>211</b>                | <b>54.7%</b> | <b>93</b> | <b>98.9%</b> | <b>121</b> | <b>61.7%</b> |

Between 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, the number of substantive responses that had not been provided by HSC Trusts decreased by 292 (75.6%), from 386 to 94, but more than doubled between 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, from 94 to 196 (Table 13).

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, 196 (5.0%) complaints received by HSC Trusts in 2011/12 had not received a substantive response, of which, 121 (61.7%) had waited for more than 20 working days (Table 13).

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, all complaints received by the Belfast, Northern, South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts and the NIAS which had not received a substantive response, had waited more than 20 working days, compared with almost a quarter (24.2%) of complaints in the Southern HSC Trust (Table 13).

**APPENDIX 1: Subject of Complaint Issues Received During Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, by HSC Trust**

| Subject  | HSC Trust    |            |               |            |            |           | Northern Ireland |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
|  | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS      |                  |
| Access to Premises                                       | 16           | 0          | 20            | 10         | 1          | 0         | 47               |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 132          | 5          | 22            | 6          | 5          | 0         | 170              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 23           | 1          | 20            | 23         | 2          | 0         | 69               |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 291          | 28         | 42            | 46         | 7          | 0         | 414              |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 105          | 39         | 32            | 18         | 28         | 0         | 222              |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 369          | 83         | 158           | 64         | 52         | 0         | 726              |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 1            | 0          | 0             | 1          | 0          | 0         | 2                |
| Confidentiality  | 21           | 7          | 13            | 9          | 2          | 0         | 52               |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 3            | 0          | 0             | 1          | 0          | 0         | 4                |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 37           | 6          | 6             | 2          | 0          | 0         | 51               |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 2            | 4          | 1             | 2          | 7          | 0         | 16               |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 2            | 4          | 4             | 1          | 0          | 0         | 11               |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 47           | 13         | 17            | 23         | 26         | 0         | 126              |
| Environmental  | 18           | 8          | 25            | 28         | 4          | 0         | 83               |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 24           | 78         | 11            | 2          | 1          | 0         | 116              |
| Infection Control  | 11           | 9          | 16            | 2          | 5          | 0         | 43               |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0                |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 18           | 6          | 9             | 7          | 9          | 0         | 49               |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 34           | 11         | 20            | 18         | 4          | 1         | 88               |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 5            | 1          | 5             | 3          | 1          | 0         | 15               |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 27           | 42         | 28            | 21         | 3          | 0         | 121              |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 22           | 69         | 11            | 36         | 7          | 0         | 145              |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 21           | 10         | 18            | 18         | 5          | 0         | 72               |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 322          | 113        | 160           | 132        | 93         | 37        | 857              |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 31           | 13         | 6             | 6          | 0          | 0         | 56               |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 5            | 0          | 2             | 6          | 0          | 39        | 52               |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 1            | 0          | 0             | 1          | 0          | 0         | 2                |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 281          | 185        | 240           | 212        | 158        | 17        | 1,093            |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 126          | 24         | 20            | 19         | 8          | 0         | 197              |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 12           | 20         | 10            | 2          | 0          | 0         | 44               |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 15           | 4          | 4             | 5          | 1          | 0         | 29               |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 47           | 17         | 31            | 21         | 10         | 0         | 126              |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 37           | 8          | 9             | 14         | 11         | 0         | 79               |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 0            | 6          | 0             | 0          | 6          | 0         | 12               |
| Other  | 16           | 48         | 38            | 5          | 11         | 4         | 122              |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0            | 0          | 174           | 0          | 0          | 0         | 174              |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>2,122</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>1,172</b>  | <b>764</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>5,485</b>     |

## 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 Services           | 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' should be 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 form. In other words, if two relatives complain about the same subject/episode in respect of the same patient, this should 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 should be treated as separate complaint issues.

Where separate unconnected communications refer to the same episode/issue, they may 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 should 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 should 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, 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 '*Patients' Status / Discrimination*' (20).

### 2. Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)

This refers to delay or cancellation coming into hospital for inpatient and day case admissions, 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*' (13).

### 3. 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, Community Services*' (32).

### 4. Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)

This heading refers to delay or cancellation in securing an appointment at an outpatient clinic, i.e. outpatient waiting lists. It is to be distinguished from '*Waiting Lists, Community Services*' (32) and '*Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments*' (35).

### 5. Children Order Complaint Issues

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

### 6. Clinical Diagnosis

This heading covers clinical diagnosis only and is to be distinguished from '*Professional Assessment of Need*' (22).

### 7. Communication / Information to Patients

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*' (24).

### 8. Complaint Issue 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*' (24).

### 9. 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.

### 10. Consent to Treatment

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

### 11. Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies

This heading refers to complaint issues about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements. Establishments may be children's homes, independent hospitals and 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 complaint issues, however, where the complainant, Trust or RQIA wishes, the matter may be investigated by the Trust under the HPSS Complaint Procedure.

Examples: (i) the Trust (as the commissioner) is asked by either RQIA or a relative, to investigate a complaint issue about the care or treatment provided to a resident in an Independent Nursing or Residential Home; (ii) a patient / client asks the Trust (as the commissioner) to investigate a complaint issue 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 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 Establishments and Agencies*' (10). 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 HPSS 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).

## **13. 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*' (34) and '*Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)*' (2).

## **14. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## **15. 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.

## **16. 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.

## **17. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## **18. Mortuary & Post-Mortem**

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

## **19. Patients' Privacy / Dignity**

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

## **20. Patients' 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' (15). 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' (15).

### **21. Patients' Status / 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.

### **22. Policy / Commercial Decisions**

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

### **23. 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' (5).

### **24. 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.

### **25. Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues**

This relates to the South Eastern HSC Trust only, which has responsibility for securing the provision of health and social care services for prisoners.

### **26. Staff Attitude / Behaviour**

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

### **27. Theatre / Operation / Procedure, Delay / Cancellation**

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 'Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation' (Inpatients) (2).

### **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. Treatment & Care, Quality**

This refers to the quality or standard of treatment and care provided. It also covers complaint issues relating to patient safety. However, it is to be distinguished from 'Treatment & Care, Quantity' (29) which refers to the quantity or amount of treatment and care.

**31. Treatment & Care, Quantity**

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, Community Services**

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*' (31).

**33. 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, Community Services*' (30).

**34. 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*' (12).

**35. 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 '*Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)*' (4).

**36. Other**

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

## **APPENDIX 4: General Category by Subject**

### **Premises**

Access to Premises  
Environmental  
Hotel/Support/Security Services  
Infection Control

### **Admissions/Discharges**

Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)  
Delayed Admission from A&E  
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements

### **Aids/Adaptations/Appliance**

Aids/Adaptations/Appliances

### **Appointments**

Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)  
Waiting Lists, Community Services  
Waiting Times, Community Services  
Waiting Times, A&E Departments  
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments

### **Children Order**

Children Order Complaint Issues

### **Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment**

Clinical Diagnosis  
Consent to Treatment  
Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation  
Treatment & Care, Quality  
Treatment & Care, Quantity

### **Information & Communication**

Communication/Information to Patients  
Complaints Handling  
Confidentiality  
Records/Records Keeping

### **Contracted Services**

Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies  
Other Contracted Services

### **Mortuary**

Mortuary & Post-Mortem

### **Patient Experience**

Patients Privacy/Dignity  
Patients Property/Expenses/Finance  
Patients Status/Discrimination  
Staff Attitude/Behaviour

### **Policy/Commercial Decisions**

Policy/Commercial Decisions

### **Prison Healthcare**

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

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

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**This Statistical bulletin and others published by Hospital Information Branch are available to download from the DHSSPS Internet site at:**

Internet address: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)



# COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS, HSC BOARD AND FAMILY PRACTITIONER SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2012/13)

This statistical release summarises information collected on complaint issues received by the six Health & Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It also includes information on complaints received by the HSC Board and the 1,500 Family Practitioner Services (FPS) in Northern Ireland.

## Issue No: 2

### Date of Publication:

27 June 2013

### Theme:

HSC Trust, HSC Board and FPS  
Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland

### Issued by

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## Background

In this statistical report a complaint is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of HSC Trust, HSC Board and/or Family Practitioner Services or facilities.

Readers are asked to note that 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.

## Key Points

- Across Northern Ireland, a total of 5,998 complaint issues were reported by the six HSC Trusts during 2012/13 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,265 (26.7%), from 4,733 in 2009/10 to 5,998 in 2012/13 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- During 2012/13, over a third of all complaint issues (2,113, 35.2%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Of the 5,998 complaint issues received by the HSC Trusts during 2012/13, almost three fifths (3,575, 59.6%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2, Figure 2).
- During 2012/13, three in ten (1,802, 30.0%) complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Tables 3 & 4).
- During 2012/13, over half (2,298, 52.0%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 11).
- During 2012/13, there were 363 complaints against family practitioner services, 247 (68.0%) of which were handled under local resolution and the remaining 116 (32.0%) involved the HSC Board acting as an honest broker (Tables 12 - 15).
- Over the last four years, the number of complaints received by the HSC Board decreased by 9 (45.0%), from 20 in 2009/10 to 11 in 2012/13 (Table 16).



## Reader Information

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Purpose             | Monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, HSC Board and Family Practitioner Service complaint issues received during the year, by the programme of care, category, subject of the complaint issue and the time taken to provide a substantive response. |
| Authors             | Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart, Laura Smyth.   |
| Publication Date    | Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2013   |
| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2012 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2013  |
| Publication Issue   | 2   |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with HSC Trusts prior to release.   |
| Target audience     | DHSSPS, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.  |
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| Internet address    | <a href="http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm">http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm</a>   |
| Price               | Free  |
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## About the Hospital Information Branch (HIB)

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 Head of the Branch is the Principal Statistician, Mrs. Laura Smyth. 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 DHSSPS, 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 and Cancer). A detailed list of these publications is available from:

**Website:** [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

## 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 of the complaint and the time taken to provide a substantive response for complaints received during 2012/13.

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

## Data Collection

The Information presented within this release derives from the Departmental CH8 statistical return provided by the six HSC Trusts, (including the NIAS) in Northern Ireland. The CH8 return was introduced in 1998 but was revised in 2007 to take account of the structural changes within the HSC system following the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The CH8 is submitted on a quarterly basis by HSC Trusts, in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/hib\\_guidance\\_manuals.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/hib_guidance_manuals.htm)

Information presented on HSC Board and 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.

## Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and as a consequence some percentages 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 information collection, HSC Trusts are given a set period of time to submit the information. Following submission, HIB perform a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, HSC Board and FPS complaint issues 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 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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/contextual\\_information\\_hospital\\_statistics.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/contextual_information_hospital_statistics.htm)

## Contact Information

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

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## Total Number of Complaint Issues (2009/10 – 2012/13)

Table 1 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts over the last four years.

**Table 1: Total Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

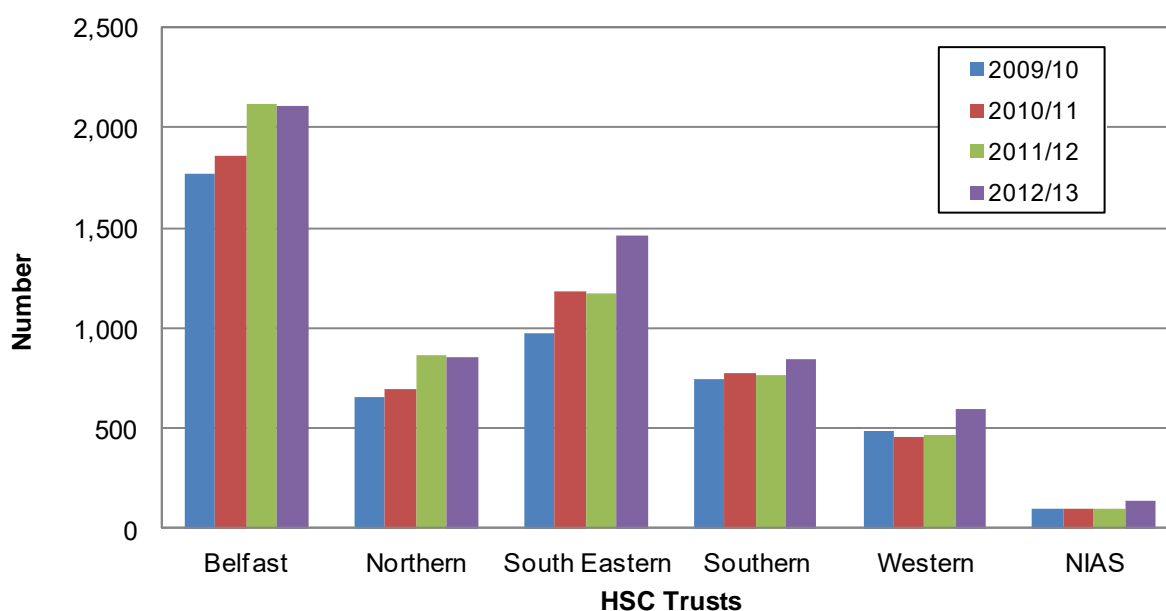
| HSC Trust               | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |              |               |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                         | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               |
|                         | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Belfast                 | 1,772        | 37.4%         | 1,855        | 36.7%         | 2,122        | 38.7%         | 2,113        | 35.2%         |
| Northern                | 658          | 13.9%         | 697          | 13.8%         | 862          | 15.7%         | 856          | 14.3%         |
| South Eastern           | 977          | 20.6%         | 1,182        | 23.4%         | 1,172        | 21.4%         | 1,459        | 24.3%         |
| Southern                | 741          | 15.7%         | 777          | 15.4%         | 764          | 13.9%         | 839          | 14.0%         |
| Western                 | 487          | 10.3%         | 450          | 8.9%          | 467          | 8.5%          | 591          | 9.9%          |
| NIAS                    | 98           | 2.1%          | 92           | 1.8%          | 98           | 1.8%          | 140          | 2.3%          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,265 (26.7%), from 4,733 in 2009/10 to 5,998 in 2012/13 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received increased in all six HSC Trusts, with the most notable increase reported by the South Eastern HSC Trust (482, 49.3%), from 977 to 1,459 in 2012/13 (Table 1, Figure 1).

During 2012/13, over a third of all complaint issues (2,113, 35.2%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,459 (24.3%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 856 (14.3%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 839 (14.0%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 591 (9.9%) by the Western HSC Trust and 140 (2.3%) by the NIAS (Table 1).

**Figure 1: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts during the Year (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



**Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>**

Table 2 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts over the last four years broken down by POC. Each complaint issue should be 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 but not a patient / client, it should be recorded against the POC of that service.

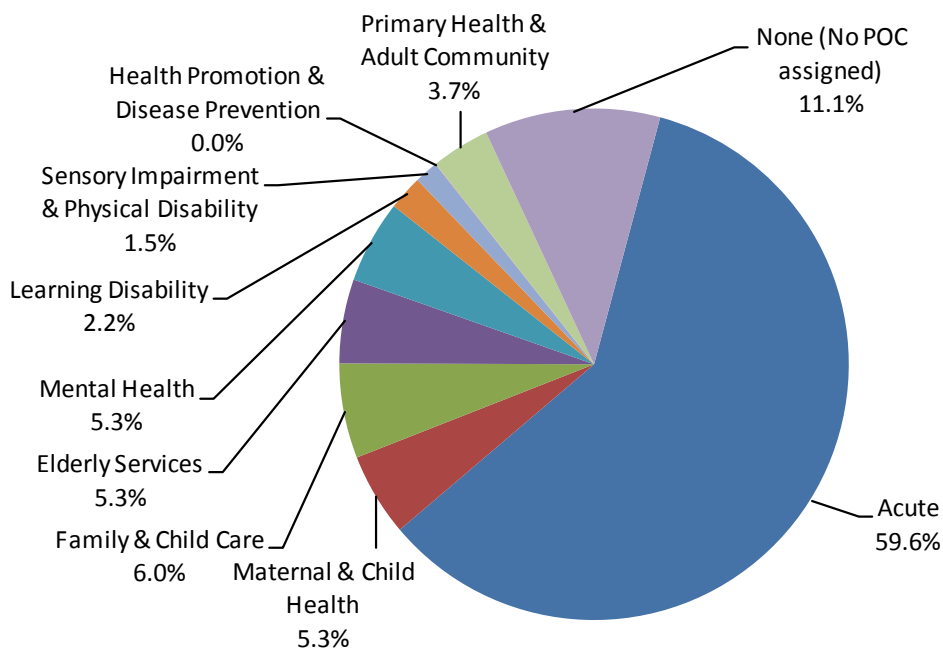
**Table 2: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Programme of Care                        | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |              |               |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               |
|  | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute                                    | 2,682        | 56.7%         | 3,022        | 59.8%         | 3,393        | 61.9%         | 3,575        | 59.6%         |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 275          | 5.8%          | 323          | 6.4%          | 340          | 6.2%          | 316          | 5.3%          |
| Family & Child Care                      | 401          | 8.5%          | 317          | 6.3%          | 318          | 5.8%          | 361          | 6.0%          |
| Elderly Services                         | 233          | 4.9%          | 307          | 6.1%          | 302          | 5.5%          | 320          | 5.3%          |
| Mental Health                            | 253          | 5.3%          | 247          | 4.9%          | 236          | 4.3%          | 315          | 5.3%          |
| Learning Disability                      | 103          | 2.2%          | 105          | 2.1%          | 96           | 1.8%          | 132          | 2.2%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 82           | 1.7%          | 82           | 1.6%          | 61           | 1.1%          | 89           | 1.5%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 3            | 0.1%          | 3            | 0.1%          | 4            | 0.1%          | 2            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 284          | 6.0%          | 293          | 5.8%          | 191          | 3.5%          | 222          | 3.7%          |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 417          | 8.8%          | 354          | 7.0%          | 544          | 9.9%          | 666          | 11.1%         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>  | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2012/13, 5,998 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, almost three fifths (3,575, 59.6%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 2).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the HSC Trusts relating to the Acute POC increased by 2.9 percentage points, from 56.7% (2,682) to 59.6% (3,575) during 2012/13 (Table 2).

**Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2012/13)**



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

## Complaint Issues Received by Category<sup>2</sup>

Table 3 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during each year, by the category of the complaint issue. The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject 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 the 15 main categories below<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | Year         |               |              |               |              |               |              |               |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                 | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               |
|                                 | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges           | 230          | 4.9%          | 255          | 5.0%          | 307          | 5.6%          | 356          | 5.9%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 70           | 1.5%          | 77           | 1.5%          | 69           | 1.3%          | 85           | 1.4%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 617          | 13.0%         | 744          | 14.7%         | 692          | 12.6%         | 699          | 11.7%         |
| Children's Order                | 66           | 1.4%          | 24           | 0.5%          | 12           | 0.2%          | 13           | 0.2%          |
| Contracted Services             | 101          | 2.1%          | 34           | 0.7%          | 67           | 1.2%          | 78           | 1.3%          |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 1,342        | 28.4%         | 1,575        | 31.2%         | 1,572        | 28.7%         | 1,802        | 30.0%         |
| Information & Communication     | 626          | 13.2%         | 644          | 12.7%         | 852          | 15.5%         | 920          | 15.3%         |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 2            | 0.0%          |
| Other                           | 114          | 2.4%          | 110          | 2.2%          | 122          | 2.2%          | 127          | 2.1%          |
| Patient Experience              | 928          | 19.6%         | 902          | 17.9%         | 1,009        | 18.4%         | 1,076        | 17.9%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 159          | 3.4%          | 136          | 2.7%          | 121          | 2.2%          | 124          | 2.1%          |
| Premises                        | 220          | 4.6%          | 214          | 4.2%          | 289          | 5.3%          | 214          | 3.6%          |
| Prison Healthcare               | 50           | 1.1%          | 90           | 1.8%          | 174          | 3.2%          | 267          | 4.5%          |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 147          | 3.1%          | 196          | 3.9%          | 145          | 2.6%          | 153          | 2.6%          |
| Transport                       | 63           | 1.3%          | 51           | 1.0%          | 54           | 1.0%          | 82           | 1.4%          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>4,733</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2012/13, three in ten (1,802, 30.0%) complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment', 1,076 (17.9%) to 'Patient Experience', 920 (15.3%) to 'Information & Communication' and 699 (11.7%) to 'Appointments/Waiting Times'. These four categories account for three quarters (4,497, 75.0%) of all complaint issues received during 2012/13 (Table 3).

Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' increased by 460 (34.3%), from 1,342 during 2009/10 to 1,802 during 2012/13 (Table 3).

During 2012/13, 267 (4.5%) complaint issues related to 'Prison Healthcare', more than five times the number received in 2009/10 (50, 1.1%) (Table 3).

<sup>2</sup> A list of the subjects of complaint issues is detailed in Appendix 3, and a list of the general category of complaint issue by subject area in Appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup> Details on the number of complaint issues received by subject of complaint issue are detailed in Appendix 1.

Table 4 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during 2012/13, by the category of the complaint issue and by HSC Trust. As per previous table, the subject area has been grouped into the main categories of complaint issues received.

**Table 4: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust (2012/13)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | HSC Trust    |            |               |            |            |            | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|
|                                 | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS       |                  |
| Admissions/Discharges           | 189          | 38         | 46            | 49         | 34         | 0          | 356              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 39           | 7          | 19            | 19         | 1          | 0          | 85               |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 411          | 77         | 92            | 80         | 39         | 0          | 699              |
| Children Order                  | 1            | 4          | 0             | 0          | 8          | 0          | 13               |
| Contracted Services             | 35           | 12         | 21            | 6          | 4          | 0          | 78               |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 568          | 289        | 393           | 276        | 262        | 14         | 1,802            |
| Information & Communication     | 375          | 115        | 240           | 95         | 94         | 1          | 920              |
| Mortuary                        | 1            | 0          | 1             | 0          | 0          | 0          | 2                |
| Other                           | 30           | 26         | 32            | 12         | 19         | 8          | 127              |
| Patient Experience              | 380          | 141        | 229           | 184        | 98         | 44         | 1,076            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 12           | 62         | 30            | 16         | 4          | 0          | 124              |
| Premises                        | 55           | 30         | 79            | 35         | 15         | 0          | 214              |
| Prison Healthcare               |              |            | 267           |            |            |            | 267              |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 15           | 54         | 9             | 64         | 11         | 0          | 153              |
| Transport                       | 2            | 1          | 1             | 3          | 2          | 73         | 82               |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,113</b> | <b>856</b> | <b>1,459</b>  | <b>839</b> | <b>591</b> | <b>140</b> | <b>5,998</b>     |

During 2012/13, across HSC Trusts:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (568, 31.5%), 'Appointments/Waiting Times' (411, 58.8%), 'Patient Experience' (380, 35.3%), 'Information & Communication' (375, 40.8%), 'Admissions/Discharges' (189, 53.1%), 'Aids/Adaptations/Appliances' (39, 45.9%) and 'Contracted Services' (35, 44.9%) (Table 4).
- The Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Policy/Commercial Decisions' (62, 50.0%) (Table 4).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Premises' (79, 36.9%) and 'Other' (32, 25.2%). The South Eastern HSC Trust also reported 267 complaint issues relating to 'Prison Healthcare'. It is important to note that the South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland; therefore, all other HSC Trusts reported nil complaint issues in this category (Table 4).
- The Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trusts each reported one (1) complaint issue relating to 'Mortuary' (Table 4).
- The Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Professional Assessment of Need' (64, 41.8%) (Table 4).
- The Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Children Order' (8, 61.5%) (Table 4).
- The NIAS reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Transport' (73, 89.0%) (Table 4).



## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust<sup>4</sup>

Table 5 details the number of complaint issues received by each HSC Trust during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 5: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC during the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013**

| Programme of Care                        | HSC Trust    |            |               |            |            |            | 2012/13 Total |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
|  | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS       |               |
| Acute                                    | 1,566        | 469        | 711           | 486        | 343        | 0          | <b>3,575</b>  |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 196          | 21         | 33            | 6          | 60         | 0          | <b>316</b>    |
| Family & Child Care                      | 49           | 105        | 85            | 77         | 45         | 0          | <b>361</b>    |
| Elderly Services                         | 101          | 87         | 50            | 22         | 60         | 0          | <b>320</b>    |
| Mental Health                            | 58           | 68         | 75            | 87         | 27         | 0          | <b>315</b>    |
| Learning Disability                      | 22           | 25         | 21            | 42         | 22         | 0          | <b>132</b>    |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 17           | 22         | 20            | 25         | 5          | 0          | <b>89</b>     |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 1            | 0          | 0             | 0          | 1          | 0          | <b>2</b>      |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 2            | 25         | 101           | 94         | 0          | 0          | <b>222</b>    |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 101          | 34         | 363           | 0          | 28         | 140        | <b>666</b>    |
| <b>Total number of complaints</b>        | <b>2,113</b> | <b>856</b> | <b>1,459</b>  | <b>839</b> | <b>591</b> | <b>140</b> | <b>5,998</b>  |

During 2012/13:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,566, 43.8%), the Maternal & Child Health POC (196, 62.0%) and the Elderly Services POC (101, 31.6%) (Table 5).
- The Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Family & Child Services POC (105, 29.1%) (Table 5).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues with no POC assigned (363, 54.5%) and relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC (101, 45.5%) (Table 5).
- The Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Mental Health POC (87, 27.6%), the Learning Disability POC (42, 31.8%) and the Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (25, 28.1) (Table 5).

<sup>4</sup> Whilst we cannot confirm at this stage due to the nature of the information collection, the high number of complaints received in the South Eastern HSC Trust with no POC assigned may be due to complaints received regarding Prison Healthcare.

## Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust

Table 6 details the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust during the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 6: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10      |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 1,094        | 61.7%         | 1,353        | 72.9%         | 1,594        | 75.1%         | 1,566        | 74.1%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 180          | 10.2%         | 178          | 9.6%          | 208          | 9.8%          | 196          | 9.3%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 81           | 4.6%          | 34           | 1.8%          | 43           | 2.0%          | 49           | 2.3%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 62           | 3.5%          | 76           | 4.1%          | 68           | 3.2%          | 101          | 4.8%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 80           | 4.5%          | 57           | 3.1%          | 44           | 2.1%          | 58           | 2.7%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 25           | 1.4%          | 9            | 0.5%          | 11           | 0.5%          | 22           | 1.0%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 10           | 0.6%          | 20           | 1.1%          | 15           | 0.7%          | 17           | 0.8%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 3            | 0.2%          | 3            | 0.2%          | 2            | 0.1%          | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 64           | 3.6%          | 41           | 2.2%          | 19           | 0.9%          | 2            | 0.1%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 173          | 9.8%          | 84           | 4.5%          | 118          | 5.6%          | 101          | 4.8%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>1,772</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,855</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,122</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,113</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

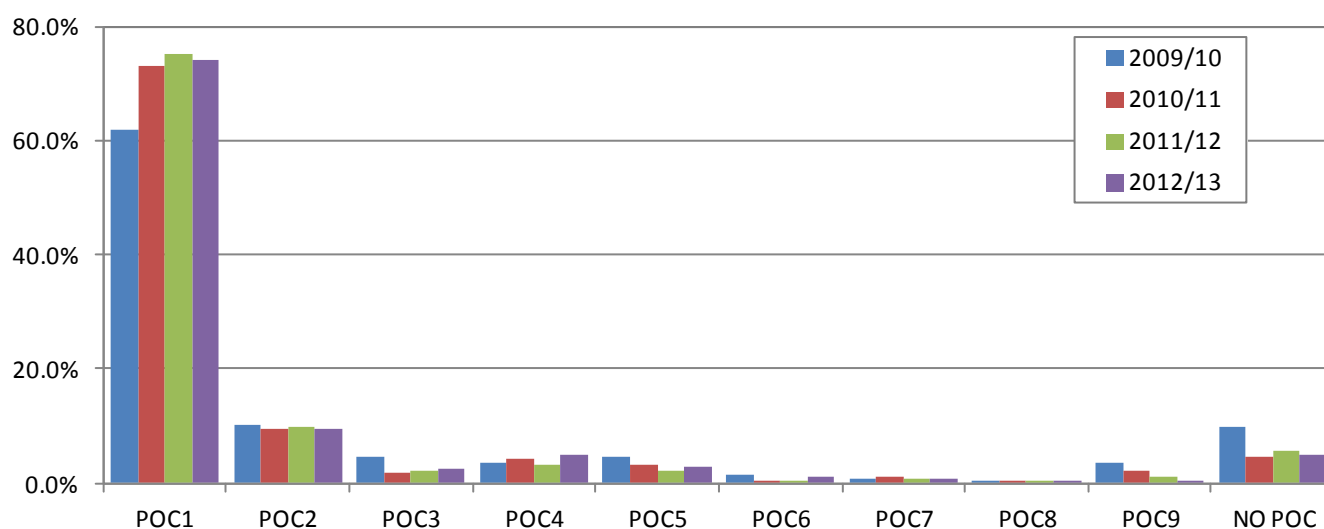
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust increased by 341 (19.2%), from 1,772 to 2,113 during 2012/13 (Table 6, Figure 3).

During 2012/13, 2,113 complaint issues were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, of which, almost three quarters (1,566, 74.1%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 6).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 12.4 percentage points, from 61.7% (1,094) to 74.1% (1,566) during 2012/13 (Table 6 and Figure 3).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC decreased by 3.5 percentage points, from 3.6% (64) to 0.1% (2) during 2012/13 (Table 6, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



### Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust

Table 7 details the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust during the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 7: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 373        | 56.7%         | 398        | 57.1%         | 441        | 51.2%         | 469        | 54.8%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 10         | 1.5%          | 22         | 3.2%          | 24         | 2.8%          | 21         | 2.5%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 60         | 9.1%          | 64         | 9.2%          | 81         | 9.4%          | 105        | 12.3%         |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 43         | 6.5%          | 69         | 9.9%          | 102        | 11.8%         | 87         | 10.2%         |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 54         | 8.2%          | 56         | 8.0%          | 67         | 7.8%          | 68         | 7.9%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 12         | 1.8%          | 21         | 3.0%          | 20         | 2.3%          | 25         | 2.9%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 19         | 2.9%          | 10         | 1.4%          | 16         | 1.9%          | 22         | 2.6%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 69         | 10.5%         | 41         | 5.9%          | 29         | 3.4%          | 25         | 2.9%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 18         | 2.7%          | 16         | 2.3%          | 82         | 9.5%          | 34         | 4.0%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>658</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>697</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>856</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

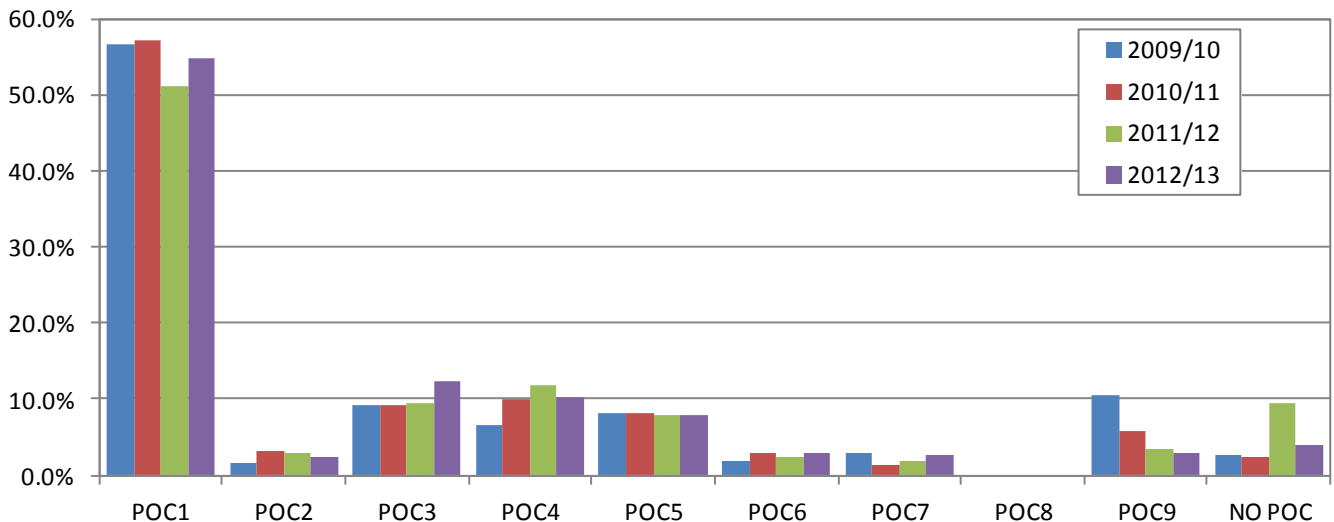
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust increased by 198 (30.1%), from 658 to 856 during 2012/13 (Table 7, Figure 4).

During 2012/13, 856 complaint issues were received by the Northern HSC Trust, of which, over half (469, 54.8%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 7).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Elderly Services POC increased by 3.7 percentage points, from 6.5% (43) in 2009/10 to 10.2% (87) in 2012/13 (Table 7).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC decreased by 7.6 percentage points, from 10.5% (69) to 2.9% (25) in 2012/13 (Table 7).

**Figure 4: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



### Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust

Table 8 details the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust during the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 8: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

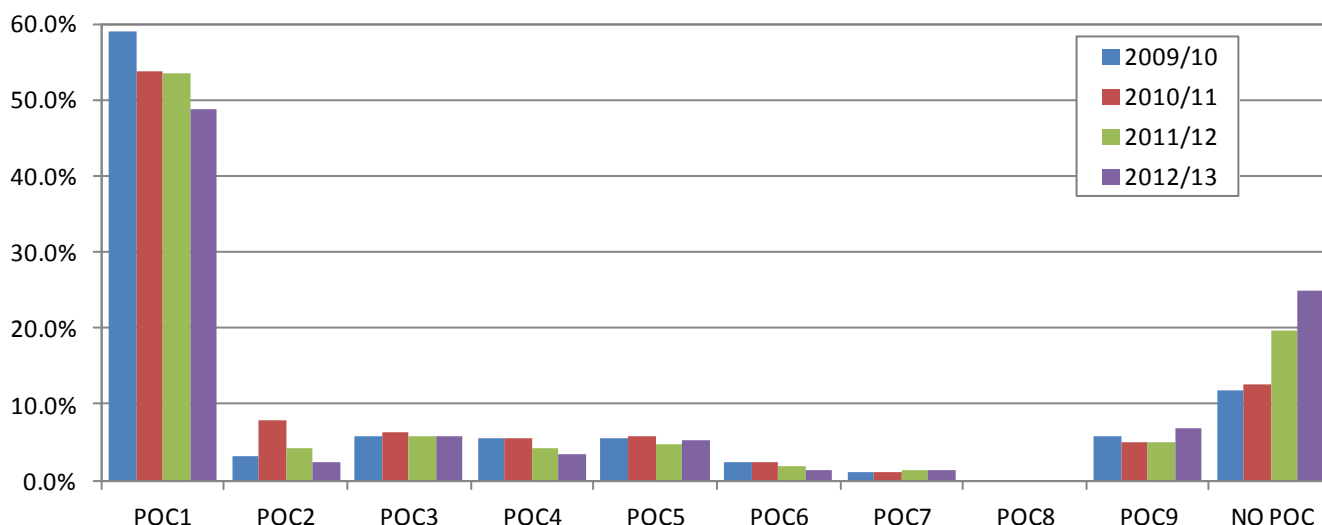
| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               |
|---|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 576        | 59.0%         | 635          | 53.7%         | 626          | 53.4%         | 711          | 48.7%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 32         | 3.3%          | 92           | 7.8%          | 50           | 4.3%          | 33           | 2.3%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 56         | 5.7%          | 73           | 6.2%          | 67           | 5.7%          | 85           | 5.8%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 53         | 5.4%          | 64           | 5.4%          | 50           | 4.3%          | 50           | 3.4%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 53         | 5.4%          | 69           | 5.8%          | 54           | 4.6%          | 75           | 5.1%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 24         | 2.5%          | 27           | 2.3%          | 20           | 1.7%          | 21           | 1.4%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 11         | 1.1%          | 13           | 1.1%          | 16           | 1.4%          | 20           | 1.4%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 56         | 5.7%          | 59           | 5.0%          | 58           | 4.9%          | 101          | 6.9%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 116        | 11.9%         | 150          | 12.7%         | 231          | 19.7%         | 363          | 24.9%         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>977</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,182</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,172</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,459</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust increased by 482 (49.3%), from 977 to 1,459 in 2012/13 (Table 8, Figure 5).

During 2012/13, 1,459 complaint issues were received by the South Eastern HSC Trust, of which, almost half (711, 48.7%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 8).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC decreased by 10.3 percentage points (from 59.0% (576) in 2009/10 to 48.7% (711) in 2012/13), whilst the proportion of complaint issues with no POC assigned increased by 13.0 percentage points (from 11.9% (116) in 2009/10 to 24.9% (363) in 2012/13) (Table 8).

**Figure 5: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust

Table 9 details the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust during the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 9: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 425        | 57.4%         | 388        | 49.9%         | 465        | 60.9%         | 486        | 57.9%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 9          | 1.2%          | 2          | 0.3%          | 3          | 0.4%          | 6          | 0.7%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 132        | 17.8%         | 91         | 11.7%         | 85         | 11.1%         | 77         | 9.2%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 27         | 3.6%          | 44         | 5.7%          | 33         | 4.3%          | 22         | 2.6%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 36         | 4.9%          | 46         | 5.9%          | 53         | 6.9%          | 87         | 10.4%         |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 16         | 2.2%          | 31         | 4.0%          | 27         | 3.5%          | 42         | 5.0%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 13         | 1.8%          | 26         | 3.3%          | 11         | 1.4%          | 25         | 3.0%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 2          | 0.3%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 83         | 11.2%         | 149        | 19.2%         | 85         | 11.1%         | 94         | 11.2%         |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>741</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>777</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>839</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

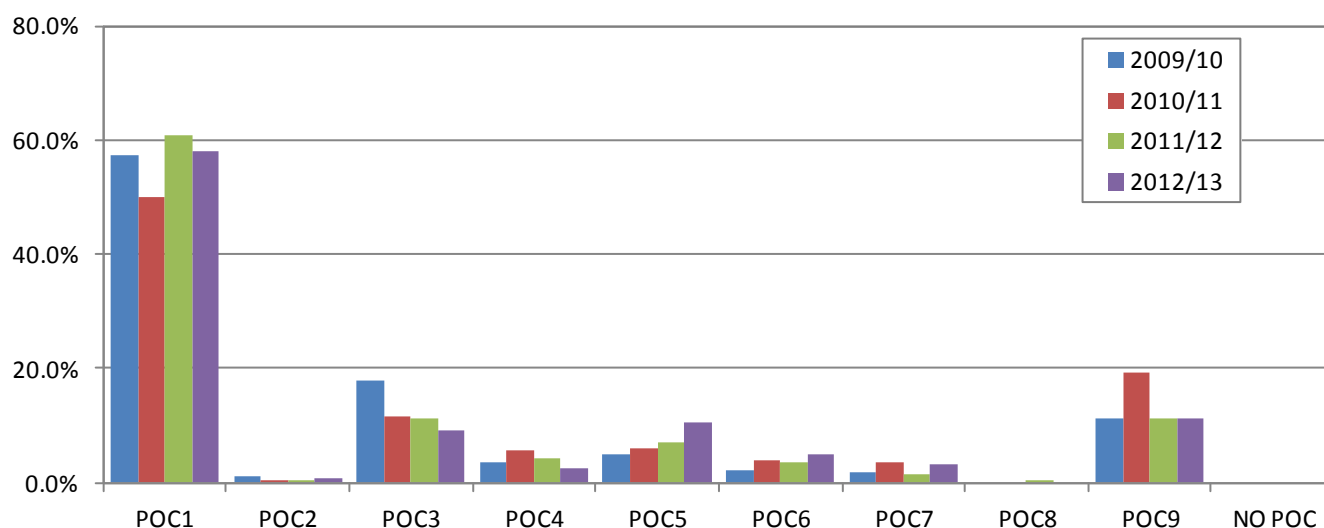
Between 2009/10 and 2012/13, the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust increased by 98 (13.2%), from 741 to 839 (Table 9, Figure 6).

During 2012/13, 839 complaint issues were received by the Southern HSC Trust, of which, almost three fifths (486, 57.9%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 9).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Family & Child Care POC decreased by 8.6 percentage points, from 17.8% (132) in 2009/10 to 9.2% (77) in 2012/13 (Table 9).

Since 2009/10, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Mental Health POC increased by 5.5 percentage points, from 4.9% (36) to 10.4% (87) in 2012/13 (Table 9).

**Figure 6: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust

Table 10 details the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust during the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 10: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust, by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2009/10    |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 214        | 43.9%         | 248        | 55.1%         | 267        | 57.2%         | 343        | 58.0%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 44         | 9.0%          | 29         | 6.4%          | 55         | 11.8%         | 60         | 10.2%         |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 72         | 14.8%         | 55         | 12.2%         | 42         | 9.0%          | 45         | 7.6%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 48         | 9.9%          | 54         | 12.0%         | 49         | 10.5%         | 60         | 10.2%         |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 30         | 6.2%          | 19         | 4.2%          | 18         | 3.9%          | 27         | 4.6%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 26         | 5.3%          | 17         | 3.8%          | 18         | 3.9%          | 22         | 3.7%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 29         | 6.0%          | 13         | 2.9%          | 3          | 0.6%          | 5          | 0.8%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 1          | 0.2%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 12         | 2.5%          | 3          | 0.7%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| NO POC Assigned                                 | 12         | 2.5%          | 12         | 2.7%          | 15         | 3.2%          | 28         | 4.7%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>487</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>450</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>591</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

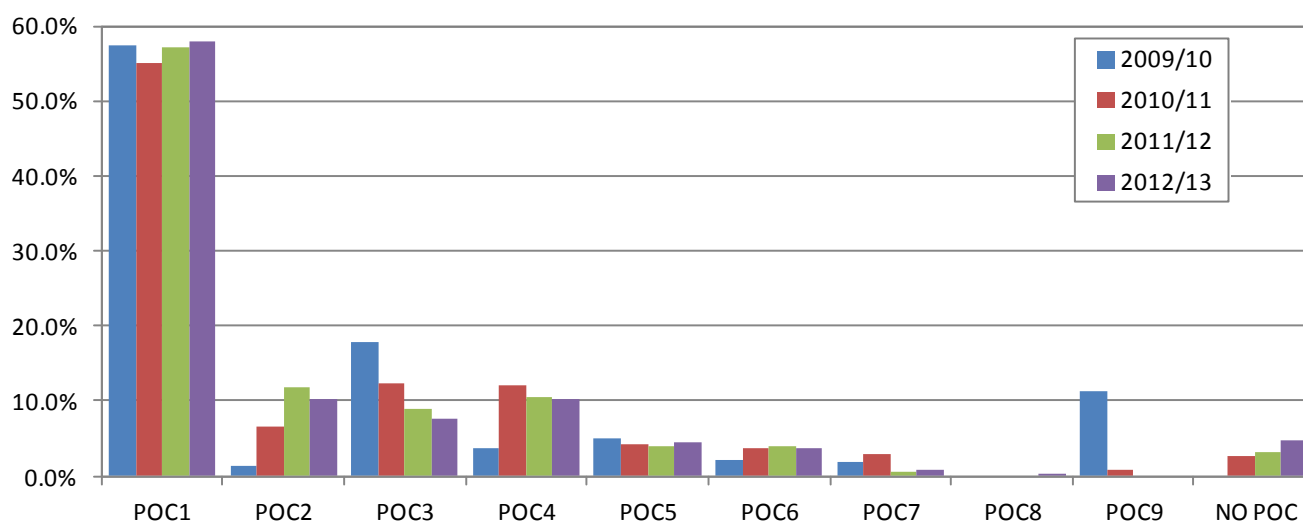
Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust increased by 104 (21.4%), from 487 to 591 in 2012/13 (Table 10, Figure 7).

During 2012/13, 591 complaint issues were received by the Western HSC Trust, of which, almost three fifths (343, 58.0%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 10).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 14.1 percentage points, from 43.9% (214) in 2009/10 to 58.0% (343) in 2012/13 (Table 10).

Between 2009/10 and 2012/13, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust relating to the Family & Child Care POC decreased by 7.2 percentage points, from 14.8% (72) to 7.6% (45) in 2012/13 (Table 10).

**Figure 7: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust by POC (2009/10 – 2012/13)**



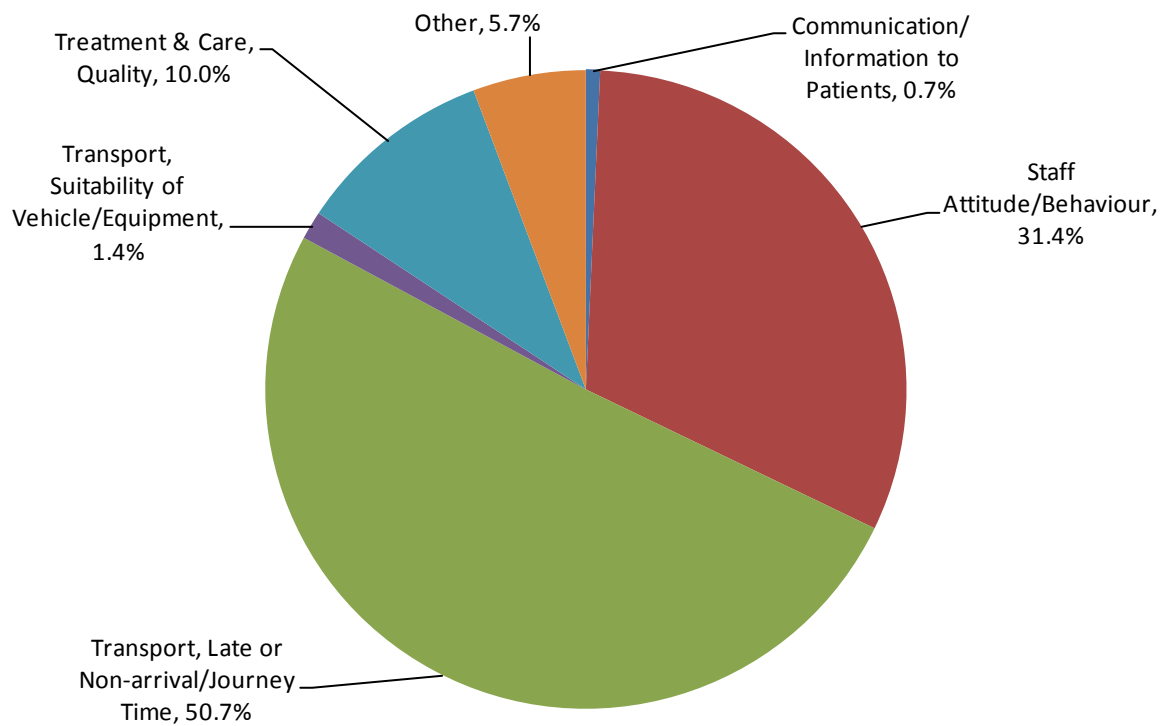
## Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS

During 2012/13, 140 complaint issues were received by the NIAS. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by Programme of Care as complaint issues received by NIAS are not assigned to a POC.

Since 2009/10, the number of complaint issues received by the NIAS increased by 42 (42.9%), from 98 to 140 in 2012/13.

Of the 140 complaint issues received by the NIAS in 2012/13, just over half (71, 50.7%), related to 'Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time', 44 (31.4%) to 'Staff Attitude/Behaviour', 14 (10.0%) to 'Treatment & Care, Quality', 8 (5.7%) to 'Other' and 2 (1.4%) to 'Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment' and 1 (0.7%) to 'Communication/Information to Patients' (Figure 8 and Table 1f, Appendix 1).

**Figure 8: Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS, by Subject (2012/13)**





## Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received<sup>5</sup>

Table 11 below details the length of time taken by HSC Trusts to provide a substantive response to complaints received during the financial year. A substantive response is defined as communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant following investigation. It should be noted that only one substantive response will be provided to a number of complaint issues made by a complainant, i.e. 4,418 complaints were received in 2012/13 which related to 5,998 complaint issues.

For all complaints received, a holding response will be issued to the complainant if the Trust is waiting for additional information to investigate the complaint and the length of time taken to provide a substantive response to the complaint will exceed 20 working days. All holding responses are issued in 20 working days or less.

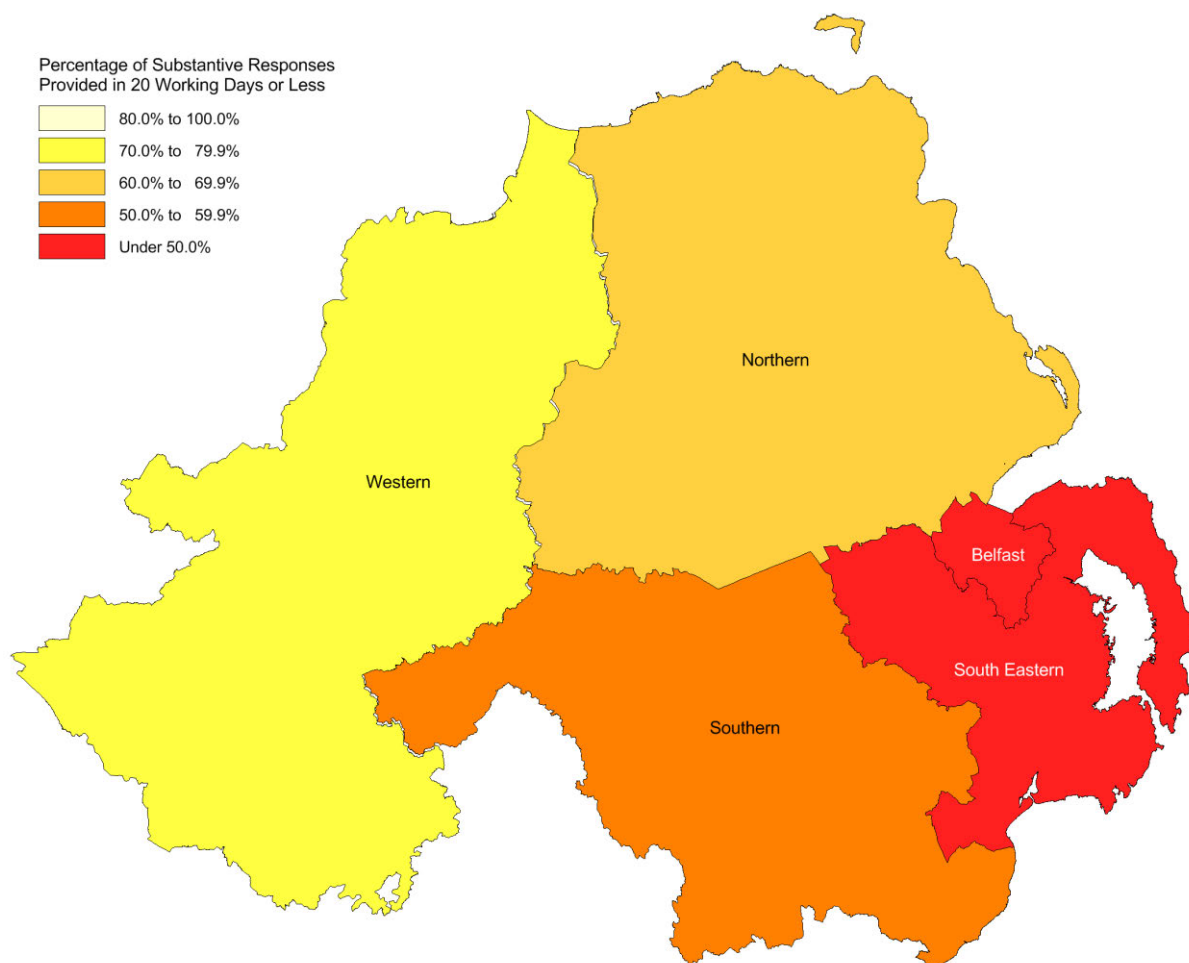
The information detailed below refers to the position of complaints received by HSC Trusts during the year at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, i.e. information for 2009/10 refers to the position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

**Table 11: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2010/11 - 2012/13)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              |              |              |              |              | 20 Working Days or More |              |              |              |              |              |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                         | 2010/11                 |              | 2011/12      |              | 2012/13      |              | 2010/11                 |              | 2011/12      |              | 2012/13      |              |
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            | No.                     | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            |
| Belfast                 | 864                     | 51.4%        | 858          | 57.0%        | 732          | 44.9%        | 816                     | 48.6%        | 646          | 43.0%        | 900          | 55.1%        |
| Northern                | 361                     | 65.4%        | 459          | 72.3%        | 419          | 65.7%        | 191                     | 34.6%        | 176          | 27.7%        | 219          | 34.3%        |
| South Eastern           | 394                     | 52.4%        | 382          | 46.6%        | 415          | 43.1%        | 358                     | 47.6%        | 437          | 53.4%        | 547          | 56.9%        |
| Southern                | 508                     | 74.2%        | 291          | 54.2%        | 379          | 58.9%        | 177                     | 25.8%        | 246          | 45.8%        | 264          | 41.1%        |
| Western                 | 142                     | 40.2%        | 244          | 75.3%        | 310          | 76.9%        | 211                     | 59.8%        | 80           | 24.7%        | 93           | 23.1%        |
| NIAS                    | 14                      | 16.5%        | 34           | 34.7%        | 43           | 30.7%        | 71                      | 83.5%        | 64           | 65.3%        | 97           | 69.3%        |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,283</b>            | <b>55.6%</b> | <b>2,268</b> | <b>57.9%</b> | <b>2,298</b> | <b>52.0%</b> | <b>1,824</b>            | <b>44.4%</b> | <b>1,649</b> | <b>42.1%</b> | <b>2,120</b> | <b>48.0%</b> |

<sup>5</sup> Responses are sent to letters of complaint, a letter may contain more than one complaint issue, therefore total responses will always be less than or equal to the total number of complaint issues.

**Figure 9: Percentage of Substantive Responses Provided in 20 Working Days or Less, by HSC Trusts (Excluding NIAS) (2012/13)**



During 2012/13, just over half (2,298, 52.0%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint, 5.9 percentage points lower than in 2011/12 (2,268, 57.9%) and 3.6 percentage points lower than 2010/11 (Table 11).

During 2012/13, the Western HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (310, 76.9%), whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (43, 30.7%) (Table 11 & Figure 9).

Since 2010/11, the proportion of substantive responses provided by the Belfast HSC Trust within 20 days decreased by 6.5 percentage points, from 51.4% (864) to 44.9% (732) in 2012/13 (Table 11).

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, the number of substantive responses provided by HSC Trusts that took over 20 working days decreased by 175 (9.6%), from 1,824 to 1,649, but increased by 471 (28.6%) between 2011/12 and 2012/13, from 1,649 to 2,120 (Table 11).

## Complaints Regarding Family Practitioner Services (FPS)<sup>6</sup>

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.

Since 2009/10, the number of complaints made against FPS services in Northern Ireland increased by 112 (44.6%), from 251 to 363 in 2012/13 (Tables 12 & 14).

### 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.

**Table 12: Number of FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Practice     | FPS Local Resolution Complaints |               |            |               |            |               |            |               |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|              | 2009/10                         |               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               |
|              | No.                             | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| GP           | 191                             | 89.7%         | 199        | 92.1%         | 189        | 89.2%         | 228        | 92.3%         |
| Dental       | 18                              | 8.5%          | 13         | 6.0%          | 19         | 9.0%          | 14         | 5.7%          |
| Pharmacy     | 1                               | 0.5%          | 3          | 1.4%          | 3          | 1.4%          | 5          | 2.0%          |
| Ophthalmic   | 3                               | 1.4%          | 1          | 0.5%          | 1          | 0.5%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>213</b>                      | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>216</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>247</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Since 2009/10, the number of complaints handled under local resolution increased by 34 (16.0%), from 213 to 247 in 2012/13 (Table 12).

During each of the last four years, around 9 in 10 complaints handled under local resolution, related to GPs, ranging from 89.2% (189) in 2011/12 to 92.3% (228) in 2012/13 (Table 12).

**Table 13: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Subject of Complaint (2012/13)**

| Subject                   | FPS Local Resolution Complaints |           |          |            | Total      |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|
|                           | GP                              | Dental    | Pharmacy | Ophthalmic |            |
| Treatment & Care          | 69                              | 7         | 0        | 0          | <b>76</b>  |
| Staff Attitude            | 51                              | 4         | 1        | 0          | <b>56</b>  |
| Communication/Information | 76                              | 1         | 1        | 0          | <b>78</b>  |
| Confidentiality           | 5                               | 0         | 1        | 0          | <b>6</b>   |
| Clinical Diagnosis        | 5                               | 0         | 0        | 0          | <b>5</b>   |
| Other                     | 22                              | 2         | 2        | 0          | <b>26</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>228</b>                      | <b>14</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>0</b>   | <b>247</b> |

During 2012/13, almost a third (78, 31.6%) of complaints handled under local resolution related to 'Communication/Information', 76 (30.8%) to 'Treatment & Care', 56 (22.7%) to 'Staff Attitude', 26 (10.5%) to 'Other', 6 (2.4%) to 'Confidentiality' and 5 (2.0%) to 'Clinical Diagnosis' (Table 13).

<sup>6</sup> Information for 2009/10 to 2011/12 has been sourced from previously published data contained within 'Annual Complaints Report of the Health and Social Care Board'

## 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.

**Table 14: Number of FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Practice     | FPS Honest Broker Complaints |               |           |               |           |               |            |               |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|              | 2009/10                      |               | 2010/11   |               | 2011/12   |               | 2012/13    |               |
|              | No.                          | %             | No.       | %             | No.       | %             | No.        | %             |
| GP           | 23                           | 60.5%         | 47        | 54.7%         | 50        | 71.4%         | 87         | 75.0%         |
| Dental       | 15                           | 39.5%         | 36        | 41.9%         | 18        | 25.7%         | 20         | 17.2%         |
| Pharmacy     | 0                            | 0.0%          | 0         | 0.0%          | 1         | 1.4%          | 8          | 6.9%          |
| Ophthalmic   | 0                            | 0.0%          | 3         | 3.5%          | 1         | 1.4%          | 1          | 0.9%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>38</b>                    | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During the last four years, the number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker more than trebled (78), from 38 in 2009/10 to 116 in 2012/13 (Table 14).

In 2012/13, three quarters (87, 75.0%) of complaints, in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker, related to GPs (Table 14).

**Table 15: FPS Complaints Where the Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject of Complaint (2012/13)**

| Subject                   | FPS Honest Broker Complaints |           |          |            | Total      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|
|                           | GP                           | Dental    | Pharmacy | Ophthalmic |            |
| Treatment & Care          | 42                           | 12        | 0        | 1          | <b>55</b>  |
| Staff Attitude            | 21                           | 2         | 0        | 0          | <b>23</b>  |
| Communication/Information | 11                           | 3         | 1        | 0          | <b>15</b>  |
| Confidentiality           | 1                            | 0         | 0        | 0          | <b>1</b>   |
| Clinical Diagnosis        | 1                            | 0         | 0        | 0          | <b>1</b>   |
| Other                     | 11                           | 3         | 7        | 0          | <b>21</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>87</b>                    | <b>20</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>116</b> |

During 2012/13, almost half (55, 47.4%) of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker related to 'Treatment & Care', 23 (19.8%) to 'Staff Attitude', 21 (18.1%) to 'Other', 15 (12.9%) to 'Communication/Information' and 2 (1.7%) to 'Confidentiality' and 'Clinical Diagnosis' (Table 15).

## Complaints Regarding the HSC Board

As well as monitoring the handling of complaints involving FPS the HSC Board also has responsibility for investigating and responding to those complaints that are made directly against their own organisation.

Table 16 below details the number of complaints received by the HSC Board during each of the last four years.

**Table 16: HSC Board Complaints, by Year (2009/10 - 2012/13)**

| Year    | HSC Board Complaints |
|---------|----------------------|
| 2009/10 | 20                   |
| 2010/11 | 9                    |
| 2011/12 | 14                   |
| 2012/13 | 11                   |

Over the last four years, the number of complaints received by the HSC Board decreased by 9 (45.0%), from 20 in 2009/10 to 11 in 2012/13 (Table 16).

During 2012/13, the HSC Board received 11 complaints: 7 (63.6%) relating to 'Board Purchasing', 2 (18.2%) 'Policy/Commercial Decision' and 2 (18.2%) 'Communication/Information'.

## APPENDIX 1:

Table 1a: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2012/13)

| Subject  | 2009/10      | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 42           | 34           | 16           | 14           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 98           | 87           | 132          | 145          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 36           | 30           | 23           | 39           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 251          | 318          | 291          | 267          |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 18           | 0            | 0            | 1            |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 53           | 72           | 105          | 60           |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 201          | 223          | 369          | 337          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 7            | 0            | 1            | 0            |
| Confidentiality  | 13           | 12           | 21           | 20           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 2            | 2            | 3            | 1            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 2            | 10           | 37           | 31           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 31           | 17           | 2            | 4            |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 3            | 3            | 2            | 1            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 32           | 35           | 47           | 43           |
| Environmental  | 15           | 20           | 18           | 21           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 26           | 30           | 24           | 14           |
| Infection Control  | 14           | 14           | 11           | 6            |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0            | 1            | 0            | 1            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 13           | 15           | 18           | 14           |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 34           | 26           | 34           | 40           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 11           | 3            | 5            | 3            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 15           | 16           | 27           | 12           |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 20           | 20           | 22           | 15           |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 24           | 12           | 21           | 18           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 297          | 289          | 322          | 323          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 6            | 41           | 31           | 16           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 5            | 5            | 5            | 1            |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 1            | 1            | 1            | 1            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 304          | 282          | 281          | 399          |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 102          | 110          | 126          | 92           |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 5            | 5            | 12           | 12           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 2            | 5            | 15           | 1            |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 29           | 47           | 47           | 47           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 27           | 39           | 37           | 84           |
| Other  | 33           | 31           | 16           | 30           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>1,772</b> | <b>1,855</b> | <b>2,122</b> | <b>2,113</b> |

**Table 1b: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10    | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 2          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 11         | 18         | 5          | 6          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 3          | 0          | 1          | 7          |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 15         | 30         | 28         | 35         |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 4          | 1          | 6          | 4          |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 38         | 41         | 39         | 39         |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 62         | 41         | 83         | 91         |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Confidentiality  | 10         | 11         | 7          | 9          |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 7          | 0          | 6          | 5          |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 8          | 2          | 4          | 7          |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 2          | 1          | 4          | 9          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 11         | 11         | 13         | 23         |
| Environmental  | 2          | 5          | 8          | 1          |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 11         | 16         | 78         | 25         |
| Infection Control  | 9          | 6          | 9          | 3          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 10         | 5          | 6          | 6          |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 6          | 4          | 11         | 6          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 2          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 19         | 39         | 42         | 62         |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 66         | 66         | 69         | 54         |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 2          | 6          | 10         | 15         |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 102        | 101        | 113        | 127        |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 6          | 5          | 13         | 7          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 0          | 2          | 0          | 1          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 140        | 155        | 185        | 237        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 27         | 31         | 24         | 6          |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 37         | 39         | 20         | 8          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 2          | 1          | 4          | 0          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 28         | 33         | 17         | 27         |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 2          | 8          | 8          | 7          |
| Other  | 14         | 18         | 48         | 26         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>658</b> | <b>697</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>856</b> |



**Table 1c: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10    | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      |
|--|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 11         | 21           | 20           | 30           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 12         | 12           | 22           | 16           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 11         | 18           | 20           | 19           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 62         | 58           | 42           | 50           |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 0          | 1            | 0            | 0            |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 31         | 49           | 32           | 50           |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 143        | 155          | 158          | 201          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0          | 2            | 0            | 1            |
| Confidentiality  | 14         | 18           | 13           | 13           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0          | 0            | 0            | 3            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 16         | 3            | 6            | 12           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 27         | 0            | 1            | 9            |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 2          | 6            | 4            | 9            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 11         | 19           | 17           | 21           |
| Environmental  | 16         | 18           | 25           | 29           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 10         | 5            | 11           | 10           |
| Infection Control  | 10         | 14           | 16           | 10           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0            | 0            | 1            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 5          | 9            | 9            | 13           |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 16         | 23           | 20           | 16           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 4          | 7            | 5            | 9            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 23         | 23           | 28           | 30           |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 50         | 90           | 174          | 267          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 9          | 13           | 11           | 9            |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 9          | 21           | 18           | 25           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 152        | 182          | 160          | 191          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 10         | 21           | 6            | 11           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 2          | 1            | 2            | 1            |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 0          | 3            | 0            | 0            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 206        | 299          | 240          | 301          |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 16         | 15           | 20           | 28           |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 9          | 5            | 10           | 8            |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 9          | 4            | 4            | 6            |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 21         | 16           | 31           | 18           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 15         | 13           | 9            | 10           |
| Other  | 45         | 38           | 38           | 32           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>977</b> | <b>1,182</b> | <b>1,172</b> | <b>1,459</b> |

**Table 1d: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10    | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 9          | 8          | 10         | 10         |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 6          | 9          | 6          | 21         |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 11         | 24         | 23         | 19         |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 36         | 61         | 46         | 41         |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 34         | 14         | 0          | 0          |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 11         | 10         | 18         | 25         |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 55         | 58         | 64         | 70         |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0          | 3          | 1          | 1          |
| Confidentiality  | 9          | 6          | 9          | 11         |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0          | 0          | 2          | 5          |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 8          | 1          | 2          | 1          |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 20         | 21         | 23         | 27         |
| Environmental  | 10         | 6          | 28         | 19         |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 11         | 3          | 2          | 6          |
| Infection Control  | 2          | 0          | 2          | 0          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 10         | 3          | 7          | 7          |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 12         | 19         | 18         | 15         |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 2          | 6          | 3          | 6          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 36         | 47         | 21         | 16         |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 39         | 85         | 36         | 64         |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 22         | 14         | 18         | 13         |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 154        | 105        | 132        | 156        |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 12         | 6          | 6          | 4          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 0          | 0          | 6          | 1          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 2          | 1          | 1          | 2          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 171        | 159        | 212        | 229        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 23         | 62         | 19         | 18         |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 3          | 4          | 2          | 2          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 7          | 10         | 5          | 9          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 2          | 13         | 21         | 18         |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 17         | 11         | 14         | 10         |
| Other  | 7          | 8          | 5          | 12         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>741</b> | <b>777</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>839</b> |

**Table 1e: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10    | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 10         | 5          | 1          | 5          |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 11         | 6          | 5          | 18         |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 9          | 5          | 2          | 1          |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 25         | 11         | 7          | 10         |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 10         | 8          | 6          | 8          |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 10         | 25         | 28         | 23         |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 37         | 51         | 52         | 87         |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 4          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Confidentiality  | 9          | 9          | 2          | 3          |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 3          | 2          | 0          | 1          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 2          | 1          | 7          | 3          |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 3          | 5          | 0          | 1          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 8          | 22         | 26         | 15         |
| Environmental  | 3          | 5          | 4          | 4          |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 2          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Infection Control  | 5          | 3          | 5          | 5          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 4          | 7          | 9          | 16         |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 8          | 2          | 4          | 9          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 66         | 11         | 3          | 4          |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 13         | 12         | 7          | 11         |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 5          | 2          | 5          | 3          |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 58         | 68         | 93         | 72         |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 1          | 7          | 0          | 0          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 0          | 1          | 0          | 1          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 1          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 130        | 138        | 158        | 223        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 24         | 24         | 8          | 15         |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 1          | 0          | 1          | 2          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 2          | 6          | 10         | 10         |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 10         | 5          | 11         | 17         |
| Other  | 12         | 6          | 11         | 19         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>487</b> | <b>450</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>591</b> |

**Table 1f: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS (2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10   | 2010/11   | 2011/12   | 2012/13    |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Confidentiality  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Environmental  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Infection Control  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 1         | 1         | 1         | 0          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 27        | 27        | 37        | 44         |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 45        | 32        | 39        | 71         |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 6         | 4         | 0         | 2          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 16        | 19        | 17        | 14         |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Other  | 3         | 9         | 4         | 8          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>98</b> | <b>92</b> | <b>98</b> | <b>140</b> |

**Table 1g: Subject of Complaint Issues Received in Northern Ireland  
(2009/10 – 2012/13)**

| Subject  | 2009/10      | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 74           | 68           | 47           | 60           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 138          | 132          | 170          | 206          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 70           | 77           | 69           | 85           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 389          | 478          | 414          | 403          |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 66           | 24           | 12           | 13           |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 143          | 197          | 222          | 197          |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 498          | 528          | 726          | 787          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 11           | 5            | 2            | 3            |
| Confidentiality  | 55           | 56           | 52           | 56           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 5            | 4            | 4            | 5            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 25           | 13           | 51           | 54           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 76           | 21           | 16           | 24           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 10           | 15           | 11           | 21           |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 82           | 108          | 126          | 129          |
| Environmental  | 46           | 54           | 83           | 74           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 60           | 55           | 116          | 56           |
| Infection Control  | 40           | 37           | 43           | 24           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0            | 1            | 0            | 2            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 42           | 39           | 49           | 56           |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 77           | 75           | 88           | 86           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 19           | 16           | 15           | 21           |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 159          | 136          | 121          | 124          |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 50           | 90           | 174          | 267          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 147          | 196          | 145          | 153          |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 62           | 55           | 72           | 74           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 790          | 772          | 857          | 913          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 35           | 80           | 56           | 38           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 53           | 40           | 52           | 75           |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 10           | 11           | 2            | 7            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 967          | 1,052        | 1,093        | 1,403        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 192          | 242          | 197          | 159          |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 54           | 55           | 44           | 30           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 21           | 20           | 29           | 18           |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 82           | 115          | 126          | 120          |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 71           | 76           | 79           | 128          |
| Other  | 114          | 110          | 122          | 127          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>4,733</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>5,998</b> |

## 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 Services           | 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' should be 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 form. In other words, if two relatives complain about the same subject/episode in respect of the same patient, this should 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 should be treated as separate complaint issues.

Where separate unconnected communications refer to the same episode/issue, they may 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 should 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 should 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, 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 '*Patients' Status / Discrimination*' (20).

### 2. Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)

This refers to delay or cancellation coming into hospital for inpatient and day case admissions, 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*' (13).

### 3. 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, Community Services*' (32).

### 4. Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)

This heading refers to delay or cancellation in securing an appointment at an outpatient clinic, i.e. outpatient waiting lists. It is to be distinguished from '*Waiting Lists, Community Services*' (32) and '*Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments*' (35).

### 5. Children Order Complaint Issues

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

### 6. Clinical Diagnosis

This heading covers clinical diagnosis only and is to be distinguished from '*Professional Assessment of Need*' (22).

### 7. Communication / Information to Patients

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*' (24).

### 8. Complaint Issue 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*' (24).

### 9. 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.

### 10. Consent to Treatment

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

### 11. Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies

This heading refers to complaint issues about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements. Establishments may be children's homes, independent hospitals and 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 complaint issues, however, where the complainant, Trust or RQIA wishes, the matter may be investigated by the Trust under the HPSS Complaint Procedure.

Examples: (i) the Trust (as the commissioner) is asked by either RQIA or a relative, to investigate a complaint issue about the care or treatment provided to a resident in an Independent Nursing or Residential Home; (ii) a patient / client asks the Trust (as the commissioner) to investigate a complaint issue 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 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 Establishments and Agencies*' (10). 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 HPSS 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).

## **13. 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*' (34) and '*Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)*' (2).

## **14. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## **15. 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.

## **16. 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.

## **17. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## **18. Mortuary & Post-Mortem**

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

## **19. Patients' Privacy / Dignity**

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

## **20. Patients' 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' (15). 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' (15).

### **21. Patients' Status / 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.

### **22. Policy / Commercial Decisions**

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

### **23. 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' (5).

### **24. 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.

### **25. Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues**

This relates to the South Eastern HSC Trust only, which has responsibility for securing the provision of health and social care services for prisoners.

### **26. Staff Attitude / Behaviour**

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

### **27. Theatre / Operation / Procedure, Delay / Cancellation**

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 'Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation' (Inpatients) (2).

### **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. Treatment & Care, Quality**

This refers to the quality or standard of treatment and care provided. It also covers complaint issues relating to patient safety. However, it is to be distinguished from 'Treatment & Care, Quantity' (29) which refers to the quantity or amount of treatment and care.

**31. Treatment & Care, Quantity**

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, Community Services**

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*' (31).

**33. 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, Community Services*' (30).

**34. 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*' (12).

**35. 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 '*Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)*' (4).

**36. Other**

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

## APPENDIX 4: General Category by Subject

### Premises

Access to Premises  
Environmental  
Hotel/Support/Security Services  
Infection Control

### Admissions/Discharges

Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)  
Delayed Admission from A&E  
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements

### Aids/Adaptations/Appliance

Aids/Adaptations/Appliances

### Appointments

Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)  
Waiting Lists, Community Services  
Waiting Times, Community Services  
Waiting Times, A&E Departments  
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments

### Children Order

Children Order Complaint Issues

### Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment

Clinical Diagnosis  
Consent to Treatment  
Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation  
Treatment & Care, Quality  
Treatment & Care, Quantity

### Information & Communication

Communication/Information to Patients  
Complaints Handling  
Confidentiality  
Records/Records Keeping

### Contracted Services

Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies  
Other Contracted Services

### Mortuary

Mortuary & Post-Mortem

### Patient Experience

Patients Privacy/Dignity  
Patients Property/Expenses/Finance  
Patients Status/Discrimination  
Staff Attitude/Behaviour

### Policy/Commercial Decisions

Policy/Commercial Decisions

### Prison Healthcare

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.

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

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**This Statistical bulletin and others published by Hospital Information Branch are available to download from the DHSSPS Internet site at:**

Internet address: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Complaints Received by HSC Trusts, Board and Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland (2013/14)



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)



## Reader Information

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Purpose             | Monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, Board and Family Practitioner Service complaint issues received during the year, by the programme of care, category, subject of the complaint issue and the time taken to provide a substantive response. |
| Authors             | Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart.  |
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| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2013 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014  |
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| Statistician        | Michael O'Donnell<br>[REDACTED]   |
| Email               | [REDACTED]  |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with HSC Trusts prior to release.   |
| Target audience     | DHSSPS, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.  |
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| Internet address    | <a href="http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm">http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm</a>   |
| Price               | Free  |
| Copyright           | This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.   |

## Background

In this statistical report a complaint is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of HSC Trust, HSC Board and/or Family Practitioner Services or facilities.

Readers are asked to note that 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.

## Key Points

- During 2013/14, 4,968 complaints were received by HSC Trusts relating to 6,836 complaint issues (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,783 (35.3%), from 5,053 in 2010/11 to 6,836 in 2013/14 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- During 2013/14, over a third of all complaint issues (2,514, 36.8%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Of the 6,836 complaint issues received by HSC Trusts during 2013/14, three fifths (4,135, 60.5%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2, Figure 2).
- During 2013/14, almost three in ten (1,971, 28.8%) complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Tables 3 & 4).
- During 2013/14, over half (2,597, 52.3%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 11).
- During 2013/14, there were 327 complaints against family practitioner services, of which 255 (78.0%) were handled under local resolution and the remaining 72 (22.0%) handled by the HSC Board acting as an honest broker (Tables 12 - 15).
- During 2013/14, the HSC Board received 9 complaints, of which, 5 (55.6%) related to 'Board Purchasing' (Table 16).

## About the Hospital Information Branch (HIB)

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 DHSSPS, 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 and Cancer). A detailed list of these publications is available from:

**Website:** [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

## 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 of the complaint and the time taken to provide a substantive response for complaints received during 2013/14.

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

## Data Collection

The Information presented within this release derives from the Departmental CH8 statistical return provided by the six HSC Trusts, (including the NIAS) in Northern Ireland. The CH8 return was introduced in 1998 but was revised in 2007 to take account of the structural changes within the HSC system following the Review of Public Administration (RPA). The CH8 is submitted on a quarterly basis by HSC Trusts, in respect of the services for which they have responsibility.

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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/hib\\_guidance\\_manuals.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/hib_guidance_manuals.htm)

Information presented on HSC Board and 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.

## Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and as a consequence some percentages 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 information collection, HSC Trusts are given a set period of time to submit the information. Following submission, HIB perform a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, HSC Board and FPS complaint issues 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 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:

[http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats/contextual\\_information\\_hospital\\_statistics.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/contextual_information_hospital_statistics.htm)

## Contact Information

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

**Michael O'Donnell**

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Tel:** [REDACTED]

**Number of Complaint Issues (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

Table 1 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last four years.

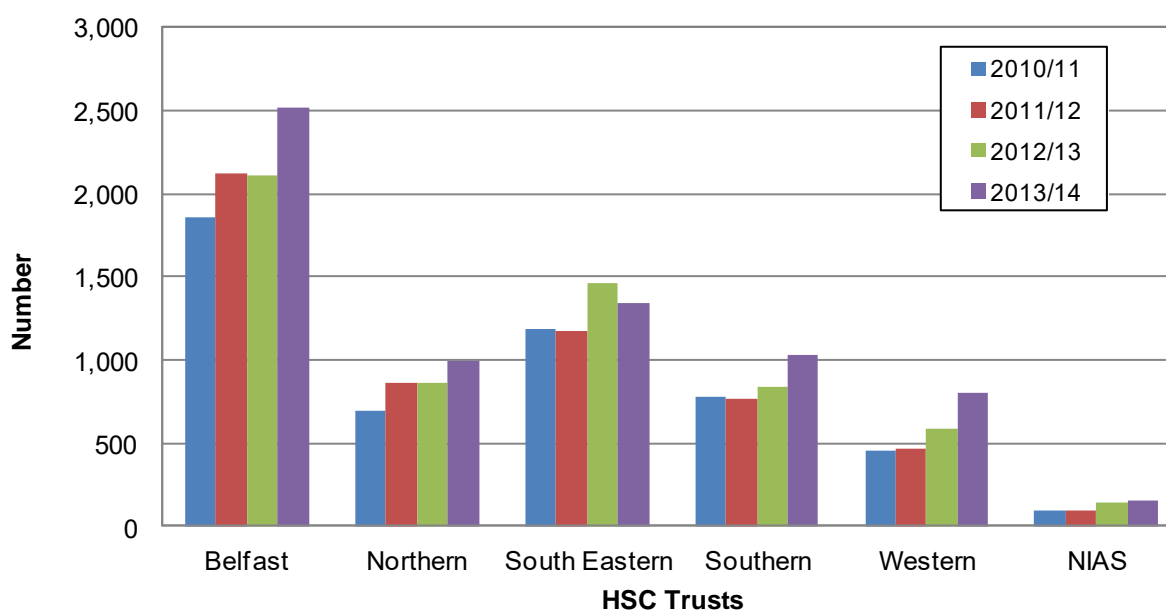
**Table 1: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| HSC Trust               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                         | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Belfast                 | 1,855        | 36.7%         | 2,122        | 38.7%         | 2,113        | 35.2%         | 2,514        | 36.8%         |
| Northern                | 697          | 13.8%         | 862          | 15.7%         | 856          | 14.3%         | 997          | 14.6%         |
| South Eastern           | 1,182        | 23.4%         | 1,172        | 21.4%         | 1,459        | 24.3%         | 1,343        | 19.6%         |
| Southern                | 777          | 15.4%         | 764          | 13.9%         | 839          | 14.0%         | 1,032        | 15.1%         |
| Western                 | 450          | 8.9%          | 467          | 8.5%          | 591          | 9.9%          | 800          | 11.7%         |
| NIAS                    | 92           | 1.8%          | 98           | 1.8%          | 140          | 2.3%          | 150          | 2.2%          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,783 (35.3%), from 5,053 in 2010/11 to 6,836 in 2013/14 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received increased in all six HSC Trusts, with the most notable increase reported by the Belfast HSC Trust (659, 35.5%), from 1,855 to 2,514 in 2013/14 (Table 1, Figure 1).

During 2013/14, over a third of all complaint issues (2,514, 36.8%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,343 (19.6%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 1,032 (15.1%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 997 (14.6%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 800 (11.7%) by the Western HSC Trust and 150 (2.2%) by the NIAS (Table 1).

**Figure 1: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts during the Year (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

## Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

Table 2 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last four years broken down by POC. Each complaint issue should be 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 but not a patient / client, it should be recorded against the POC of that service.

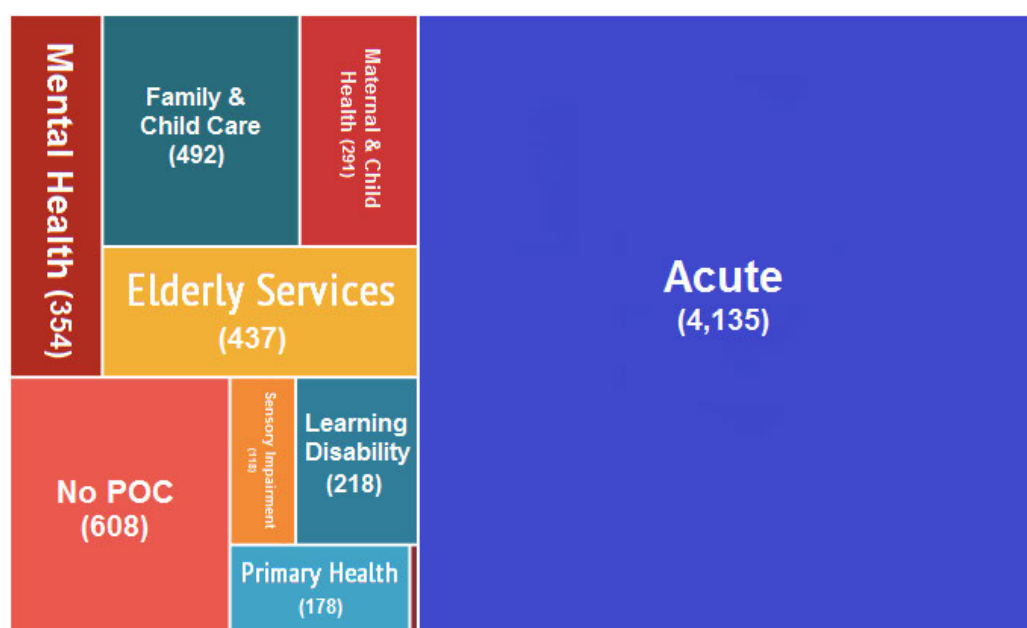
**Table 2: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Programme of Care                        | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute                                    | 3,022        | 59.8%         | 3,393        | 61.9%         | 3,575        | 59.6%         | 4,135        | 60.5%         |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 323          | 6.4%          | 340          | 6.2%          | 316          | 5.3%          | 291          | 4.3%          |
| Family & Child Care                      | 317          | 6.3%          | 318          | 5.8%          | 361          | 6.0%          | 492          | 7.2%          |
| Elderly Services                         | 307          | 6.1%          | 302          | 5.5%          | 320          | 5.3%          | 437          | 6.4%          |
| Mental Health                            | 247          | 4.9%          | 236          | 4.3%          | 315          | 5.3%          | 354          | 5.2%          |
| Learning Disability                      | 105          | 2.1%          | 96           | 1.8%          | 132          | 2.2%          | 218          | 3.2%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 82           | 1.6%          | 61           | 1.1%          | 89           | 1.5%          | 118          | 1.7%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 3            | 0.1%          | 4            | 0.1%          | 2            | 0.0%          | 5            | 0.1%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 293          | 5.8%          | 191          | 3.5%          | 222          | 3.7%          | 178          | 2.6%          |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 354          | 7.0%          | 544          | 9.9%          | 666          | 11.1%         | 608          | 8.9%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>  | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2013/14, 6,836 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, three fifths (4,135, 60.5%) were related to the Acute POC (Table 2).

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received by the HSC Trusts relating to the Acute POC increased by 1,113 (36.8%), from 3,022 to 4,135 in 2013/14 (Table 2).

**Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2013/14)**



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

## Complaint Issues Received by Category<sup>2</sup>

Table 3 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during each year, by the category of the complaint issue. The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject 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 the 15 main categories below<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 3: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                 | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges           | 255          | 5.0%          | 307          | 5.6%          | 356          | 5.9%          | 433          | 6.3%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 77           | 1.5%          | 69           | 1.3%          | 85           | 1.4%          | 76           | 1.1%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 744          | 14.7%         | 692          | 12.6%         | 699          | 11.7%         | 844          | 12.3%         |
| Children's Order                | 24           | 0.5%          | 12           | 0.2%          | 13           | 0.2%          | 43           | 0.6%          |
| Contracted Services             | 34           | 0.7%          | 67           | 1.2%          | 78           | 1.3%          | 118          | 1.7%          |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 1,575        | 31.2%         | 1,572        | 28.7%         | 1,802        | 30.0%         | 1,971        | 28.8%         |
| Information & Communication     | 644          | 12.7%         | 852          | 15.5%         | 920          | 15.3%         | 1,074        | 15.7%         |
| Mortuary                        | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 2            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Other                           | 110          | 2.2%          | 122          | 2.2%          | 127          | 2.1%          | 109          | 1.6%          |
| Patient Experience              | 902          | 17.9%         | 1009         | 18.4%         | 1,076        | 17.9%         | 1,267        | 18.5%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 136          | 2.7%          | 121          | 2.2%          | 124          | 2.1%          | 188          | 2.8%          |
| Premises                        | 214          | 4.2%          | 289          | 5.3%          | 214          | 3.6%          | 278          | 4.1%          |
| Prison Healthcare               | 90           | 1.8%          | 174          | 3.2%          | 267          | 4.5%          | 163          | 2.4%          |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 196          | 3.9%          | 145          | 2.6%          | 153          | 2.6%          | 188          | 2.8%          |
| Transport                       | 51           | 1.0%          | 54           | 1.0%          | 82           | 1.4%          | 84           | 1.2%          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

During 2013/14, almost three in ten (1,971, 28.8%) complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment', 1,267 (18.5%) to 'Patient Experience', 1,074 (15.7%) to 'Information & Communication' and 844 (12.3%) to 'Appointments/Waiting Times'. These four categories accounted for three quarters (5,156, 75.4%) of all complaint issues received during 2013/14 (Table 3).

Over the last four years, the number of complaint issues relating to 'Information & Communication' increased by 430 (66.8%), from 644 in 2010/11 to 1,074 in 2013/14 (Table 3).

Between 2011/12 and 2013/14, the number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' increased by 396 (25.1%), from 1,575 to 1,971 (Table 3).

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues relating to 'Patient Experience' increased by 365 (40.5%), from 902 to 1,267 in 2013/14 (Table 3).

<sup>2</sup> A list of the subjects of complaint issues is detailed in Appendix 3, and a list of the general category of complaint issue by subject area in Appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup> Details on the number of complaint issues received by subject of complaint issue are detailed in Appendix 1.

Table 4 below presents a summary of the number of complaint issues received during 2013/14, by the category of the complaint issue and by HSC Trust. As per previous table, the subject area has been grouped into the main categories of complaint issues received.

**Table 4: Number of Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust (2013/14)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern     | Western    | NIAS       | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Admissions/Discharges           | 262          | 44         | 43            | 45           | 37         | 2          | 433              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 35           | 1          | 16            | 19           | 5          | 0          | 76               |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 414          | 113        | 117           | 143          | 57         | 0          | 844              |
| Children Order                  | 13           | 11         | 3             | 1            | 15         | 0          | 43               |
| Contracted Services             | 45           | 44         | 18            | 3            | 8          | 0          | 118              |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 661          | 325        | 348           | 333          | 286        | 18         | 1,971            |
| Information & Communication     | 496          | 143        | 215           | 110          | 110        | 0          | 1,074            |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0                |
| Other                           | 27           | 12         | 36            | 8            | 24         | 2          | 109              |
| Patient Experience              | 434          | 173        | 234           | 191          | 177        | 58         | 1,267            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 4            | 42         | 32            | 49           | 61         | 0          | 188              |
| Premises                        | 106          | 39         | 88            | 35           | 10         | 0          | 278              |
| Prison Healthcare               |              |            | 163           |              |            |            | 163              |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 12           | 49         | 23            | 95           | 9          | 0          | 188              |
| Transport                       | 5            | 1          | 7             | 0            | 1          | 70         | 84               |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,514</b> | <b>997</b> | <b>1,343</b>  | <b>1,032</b> | <b>800</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>6,836</b>     |

During 2013/14:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (661, 33.5%), 'Information & Communication' (496, 46.2%), 'Patient Experience' (434, 34.3%), 'Appointments/Waiting Times' (414, 49.1%), 'Admissions/Discharges' (262, 60.5%), 'Premises' (106, 38.1%), 'Contracted Services' (45, 38.1%) and 'Aids/Adaptions/Appliances' (35, 46.1%) (Table 4).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Other' (36, 33.0%). The South Eastern HSC Trust also reported 163 complaint issues relating to 'Prison Healthcare'. It is important to note that the South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland; therefore, all other HSC Trusts reported nil complaint issues in this category (Table 4).
- The Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Professional Assessment of Need' (95, 50.5%) (Table 4).
- The Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Policy/Commercial Decisions' (61, 32.4%) and 'Children Order' (15, 34.9%) (Table 4).
- The NIAS reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to 'Transport' (70, 83.3%) (Table 4).



## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust<sup>4</sup>

Table 5 details the number of complaint issues received by each HSC Trust during 2013/14 by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 5: Number of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC during 2013/14**

| Programme of Care                        | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern     | Western    | NIAS       | Total        |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Acute                                    | 1,941        | 526        | 677           | 572          | 419        | 0          | <b>4,135</b> |
| Maternal & Child Health                  | 131          | 49         | 48            | 0            | 63         | 0          | <b>291</b>   |
| Family & Child Care                      | 82           | 137        | 90            | 124          | 59         | 0          | <b>492</b>   |
| Elderly Services                         | 106          | 128        | 67            | 80           | 56         | 0          | <b>437</b>   |
| Mental Health                            | 74           | 63         | 91            | 98           | 28         | 0          | <b>354</b>   |
| Learning Disability                      | 18           | 20         | 8             | 47           | 125        | 0          | <b>218</b>   |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability | 12           | 31         | 25            | 43           | 7          | 0          | <b>118</b>   |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention    | 0            | 0          | 0             | 1            | 4          | 0          | <b>5</b>     |
| Primary Health & Adult Community         | 6            | 20         | 84            | 66           | 2          | 0          | <b>178</b>   |
| None (No POC assigned)                   | 144          | 23         | 253           | 1            | 37         | 150        | <b>608</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>2,514</b> | <b>997</b> | <b>1,343</b>  | <b>1,032</b> | <b>800</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>6,836</b> |

During 2013/14:

- The Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,941, 46.9%) and the Maternal & Child Health POC (131, 45.0%)(Table 5).
- The Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Family & Child Services POC (137, 27.8%) and the Elderly Services POC (128, 29.3%) (Table 5).
- The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues with no POC assigned (253, 41.6%) and relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC (84, 47.2%) (Table 5).
- The Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Mental Health POC (98, 27.7%) and the Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (43, 36.4%) (Table 5).
- The Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Learning Disability POC (125, 57.3%) and the Health Promotion & Disease Prevention POC (4, 80.0%) (Table 5).

<sup>4</sup> The high number of complaints received in the South Eastern HSC Trust with no POC assigned is in part due to 163 complaints received regarding Prison Healthcare.

## Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust

Table 6 details the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust in each of the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 6: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 1,353        | 72.9%         | 1,594        | 75.1%         | 1,566        | 74.1%         | 1,941        | 77.2%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 178          | 9.6%          | 208          | 9.8%          | 196          | 9.3%          | 131          | 5.2%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 34           | 1.8%          | 43           | 2.0%          | 49           | 2.3%          | 82           | 3.3%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 76           | 4.1%          | 68           | 3.2%          | 101          | 4.8%          | 106          | 4.2%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 57           | 3.1%          | 44           | 2.1%          | 58           | 2.7%          | 74           | 2.9%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 9            | 0.5%          | 11           | 0.5%          | 22           | 1.0%          | 18           | 0.7%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 20           | 1.1%          | 15           | 0.7%          | 17           | 0.8%          | 12           | 0.5%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 3            | 0.2%          | 2            | 0.1%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 41           | 2.2%          | 19           | 0.9%          | 2            | 0.1%          | 6            | 0.2%          |
| No POC Assigned                                 | 84           | 4.5%          | 118          | 5.6%          | 101          | 4.8%          | 144          | 5.7%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>1,855</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,122</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,113</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>2,514</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

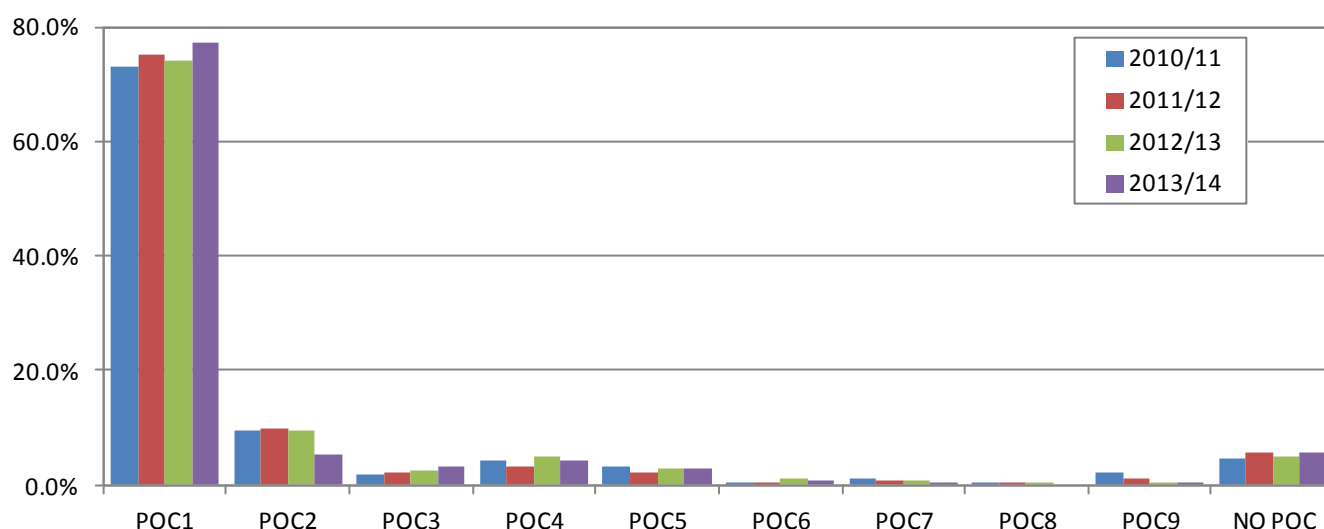
Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust increased by 659 (35.5%), from 1,855 to 2,514 during 2013/14 (Table 6, Figure 3).

During 2013/14, 2,514 complaint issues were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, of which, over three quarters (1,941, 77.2%) related to the Acute POC (Table 6).

Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, the number of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust which related to the Acute POC increased by 588 (43.5%), from 1,353 to 1,941 (Table 6 and Figure 3).

Since 2010/11, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Belfast HSC Trust relating to the Maternal & Child Health POC decreased by 4.4 percentage points, from 9.6% (178) to 5.2% (131) during 2013/14 (Table 6, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust

Table 7 details the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust in each of the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 7: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               | 2013/14    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 398        | 57.1%         | 441        | 51.2%         | 469        | 54.8%         | 526        | 52.8%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 22         | 3.2%          | 24         | 2.8%          | 21         | 2.5%          | 49         | 4.9%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 64         | 9.2%          | 81         | 9.4%          | 105        | 12.3%         | 137        | 13.7%         |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 69         | 9.9%          | 102        | 11.8%         | 87         | 10.2%         | 128        | 12.8%         |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 56         | 8.0%          | 67         | 7.8%          | 68         | 7.9%          | 63         | 6.3%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 21         | 3.0%          | 20         | 2.3%          | 25         | 2.9%          | 20         | 2.0%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 10         | 1.4%          | 16         | 1.9%          | 22         | 2.6%          | 31         | 3.1%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 41         | 5.9%          | 29         | 3.4%          | 25         | 2.9%          | 20         | 2.0%          |
| No POC Assigned                                 | 16         | 2.3%          | 82         | 9.5%          | 34         | 4.0%          | 23         | 2.3%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>697</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>856</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>997</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

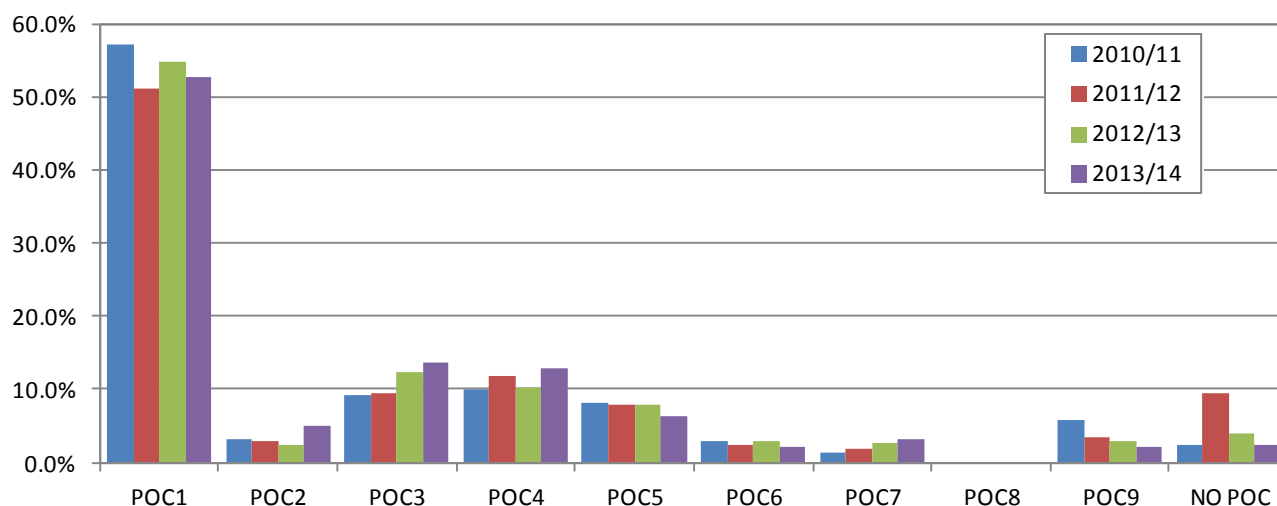
Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust increased by 300 (43.0%), from 697 to 997 during 2013/14 (Table 7, Figure 4).

Over half (52.8%, 526) of the 997 complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust in 2013/14 related to the Acute POC (Table 7).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Family & Child Care POC increased by 4.5 percentage points, from 9.2% (64) in 2010/11 to 13.7% (137) in 2013/14 (Table 7).

Since 2010/11, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Northern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC decreased by 4.3 percentage points, from 57.1% (398) to 52.8% (526) in 2013/14 (Table 7).

**Figure 4: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust

Table 8 details the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust in each of the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 8: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

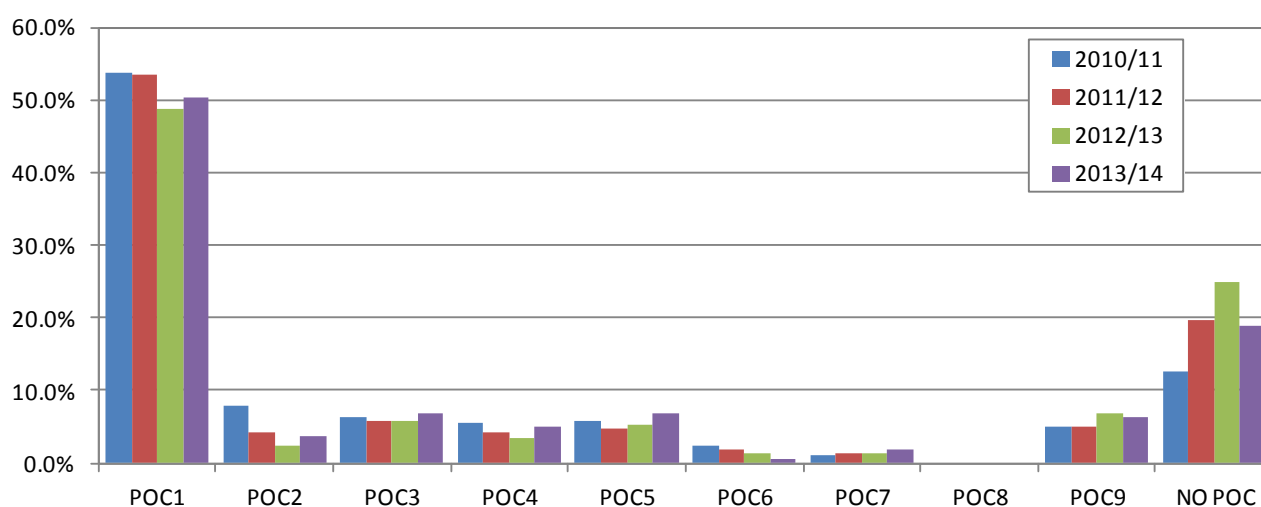
| Programme of Care                               | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 635          | 53.7%         | 626          | 53.4%         | 711          | 48.7%         | 677          | 50.4%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 92           | 7.8%          | 50           | 4.3%          | 33           | 2.3%          | 48           | 3.6%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 73           | 6.2%          | 67           | 5.7%          | 85           | 5.8%          | 90           | 6.7%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 64           | 5.4%          | 50           | 4.3%          | 50           | 3.4%          | 67           | 5.0%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 69           | 5.8%          | 54           | 4.6%          | 75           | 5.1%          | 91           | 6.8%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 27           | 2.3%          | 20           | 1.7%          | 21           | 1.4%          | 8            | 0.6%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 13           | 1.1%          | 16           | 1.4%          | 20           | 1.4%          | 25           | 1.9%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 59           | 5.0%          | 58           | 4.9%          | 101          | 6.9%          | 84           | 6.3%          |
| No POC Assigned                                 | 150          | 12.7%         | 231          | 19.7%         | 363          | 24.9%         | 253          | 18.8%         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>1,182</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,172</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,459</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,343</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust increased by 161 (13.6%), from 1,182 to 1,343 in 2013/14 (Table 8, Figure 5).

Over half (50.4%, 677) of the 1,343 complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust in 2013/14 related to the Acute POC (Table 8).

The proportion of complaint issues with no POC assigned increased by 6.1 percentage points, from 12.7% (150) in 2010/11 to 18.8% (253) in 2013/14. It is important to note that the South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of prison healthcare in Northern Ireland and these complaints (163) are included in 'No POC Assigned' category (Table 8).

**Figure 5: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust

Table 9 details the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust in each of the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 9: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Programme of Care                               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               | 2013/14      |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.          | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 388        | 49.9%         | 465        | 60.9%         | 486        | 57.9%         | 572          | 55.4%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 2          | 0.3%          | 3          | 0.4%          | 6          | 0.7%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 91         | 11.7%         | 85         | 11.1%         | 77         | 9.2%          | 124          | 12.0%         |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 44         | 5.7%          | 33         | 4.3%          | 22         | 2.6%          | 80           | 7.8%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 46         | 5.9%          | 53         | 6.9%          | 87         | 10.4%         | 98           | 9.5%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 31         | 4.0%          | 27         | 3.5%          | 42         | 5.0%          | 47           | 4.6%          |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 26         | 3.3%          | 11         | 1.4%          | 25         | 3.0%          | 43           | 4.2%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 2          | 0.3%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.1%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 149        | 19.2%         | 85         | 11.1%         | 94         | 11.2%         | 66           | 6.4%          |
| No POC Assigned                                 | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>777</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>839</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>1,032</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

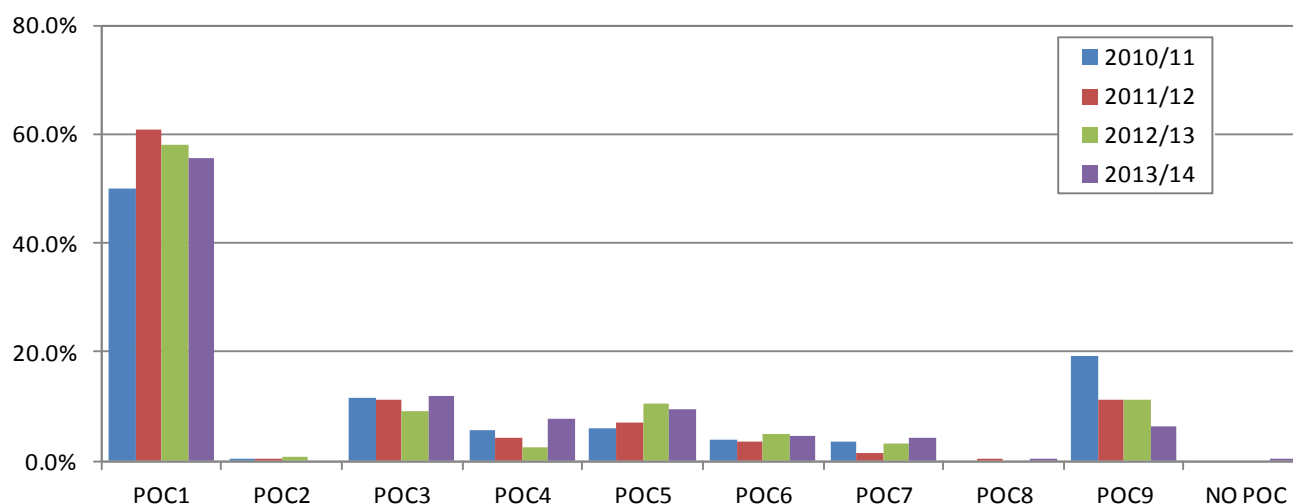
Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, the number of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust increased by 255 (32.8%), from 777 to 1,032 (Table 9, Figure 6).

Over half (55.4%, 572) of the 1,032 complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust in 2013/14 related to the Acute POC (Table 9).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Acute POC increased by 5.5 percentage points, from 49.9% (388) in 2010/11 to 55.4% (572) in 2013/14 (Table 9).

Since 2010/11, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Southern HSC Trust relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC decreased by 12.8 percentage points, from 19.2% (149) to 6.4% (66) in 2013/14 (Table 9).

**Figure 6: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**



## Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust

Table 10 details the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust in each of the last four years by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 10: Number of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust, by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

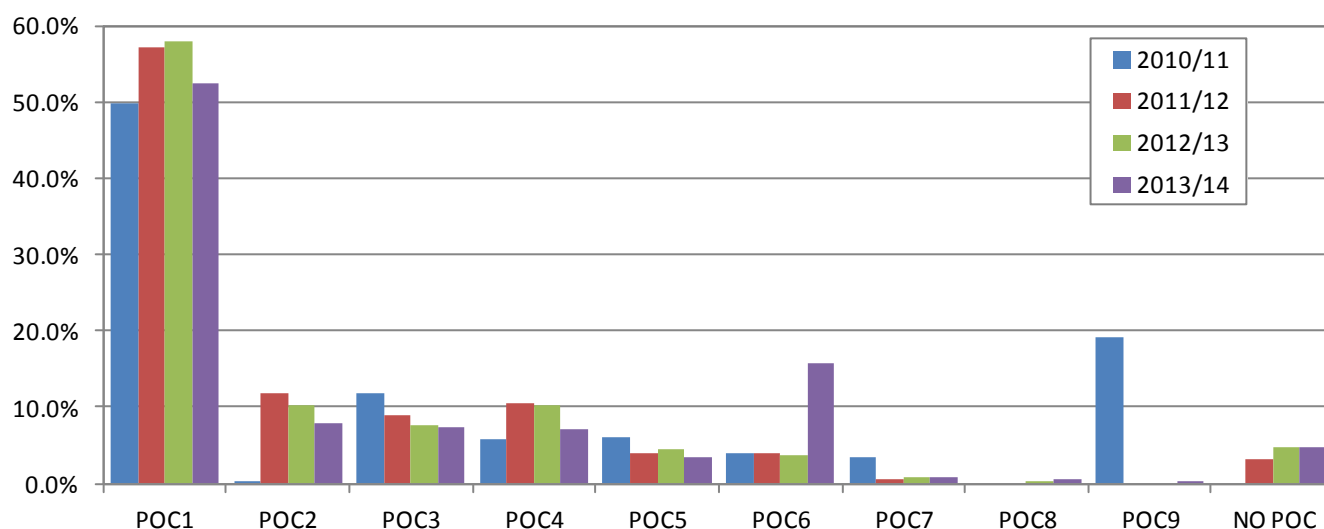
| Programme of Care                               | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               | 2013/14    |               |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|   | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| Acute (POC1)                                    | 248        | 55.1%         | 267        | 57.2%         | 343        | 58.0%         | 419        | 52.4%         |
| Maternal & Child Health (POC2)                  | 29         | 6.4%          | 55         | 11.8%         | 60         | 10.2%         | 63         | 7.9%          |
| Family & Child Care (POC3)                      | 55         | 12.2%         | 42         | 9.0%          | 45         | 7.6%          | 59         | 7.4%          |
| Elderly Services (POC4)                         | 54         | 12.0%         | 49         | 10.5%         | 60         | 10.2%         | 56         | 7.0%          |
| Mental Health (POC5)                            | 19         | 4.2%          | 18         | 3.9%          | 27         | 4.6%          | 28         | 3.5%          |
| Learning Disability (POC6)                      | 17         | 3.8%          | 18         | 3.9%          | 22         | 3.7%          | 125        | 15.6%         |
| Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability (POC7) | 13         | 2.9%          | 3          | 0.6%          | 5          | 0.8%          | 7          | 0.9%          |
| Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (POC8)    | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 1          | 0.2%          | 4          | 0.5%          |
| Primary Health & Adult Community (POC9)         | 3          | 0.7%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 2          | 0.3%          |
| No POC Assigned                                 | 12         | 2.7%          | 15         | 3.2%          | 28         | 4.7%          | 37         | 4.6%          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>         | <b>450</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>591</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>800</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, the number of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust almost doubled (350, 77.8%), from 450 to 800 (Table 10, Figure 7).

Over half (52.4%, 419) of the 800 complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust in 2013/14 related to the Acute POC (Table 10).

During the last four years, the proportion of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust relating to the Learning Disability POC increased by 11.8 percentage points, from 3.8% (17) in 2010/11 to 15.6% (125) in 2013/14 (Table 10).

**Figure 7: Percentage of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust by POC (2010/11 – 2013/14)**



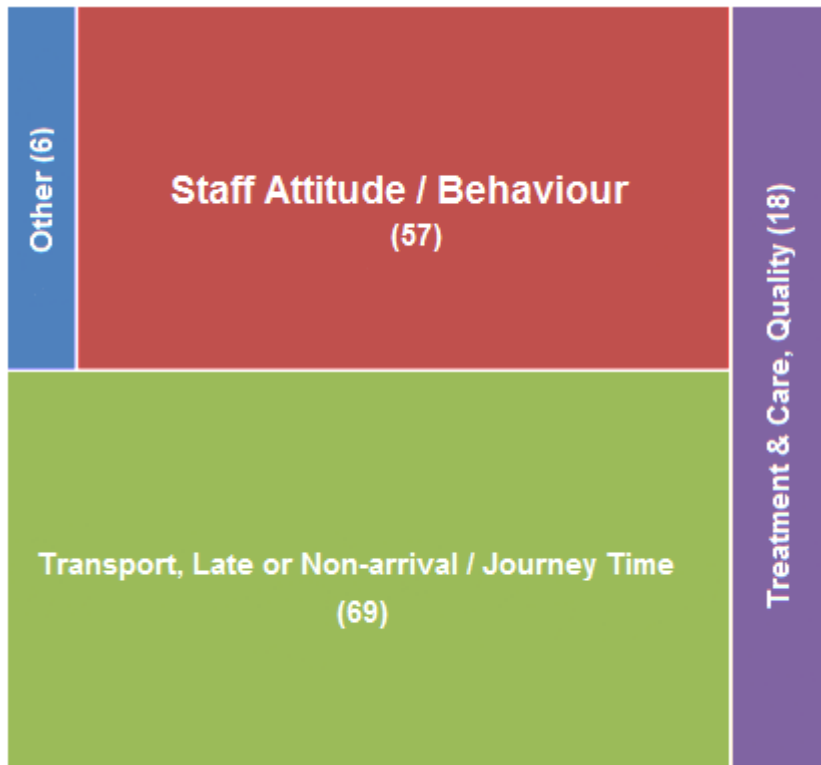
## Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS

During 2013/14, 150 complaint issues were received by the NIAS. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by Programme of Care as complaint issues received by NIAS are not assigned to a POC.

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received by the NIAS increased by 58 (63.0%), from 92 to 150 in 2013/14.

Of the 150 complaint issues received by the NIAS in 2013/14, almost half (69, 46.0%), related to 'Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time', 57 (38.0%) to 'Staff Attitude/Behaviour', 18 (12.0%) to 'Treatment & Care, Quality' and 6 (4.0%) to 'Other' (Figure 8 and Table 1f, Appendix 1).

**Figure 8: Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS, by Subject (2013/14)<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> 'Other' refers to complaint issues recorded as 'Other', 'Discharge/Transfer Arrangements', 'Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance' and 'Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment'.

## Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received<sup>6</sup>

Table 11 below details the length of time taken by HSC Trusts to provide a substantive response to complaints received during the financial year. A substantive response is defined as communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant following investigation. It should be noted that only one substantive response will be provided to a number of complaint issues made by a complainant, i.e. 4,968 complaints were received in 2013/14 relating to 6,836 complaint issues.

For all complaints received, a holding response will be issued to the complainant if the Trust is waiting for additional information to investigate the complaint and the length of time taken to provide a substantive response to the complaint will exceed 20 working days. All holding responses are issued in 20 working days or less.

The information detailed below refers to the position of complaints received by HSC Trusts during the year at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, i.e. information for 2011/12 refers to the position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

**Table 11: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2011/12 - 2013/14)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              |              |              |              |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              |              |              |              |              |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                         | 2011/12                 |              | 2012/13      |              | 2013/14      |              | 2011/12                   |              | 2012/13      |              | 2013/14      |              |
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            | No.                       | %            | No.          | %            | No.          | %            |
| Belfast                 | 858                     | 57.0%        | 732          | 44.9%        | 937          | 50.0%        | 646                       | 43.0%        | 900          | 55.1%        | 936          | 50.0%        |
| Northern                | 459                     | 72.3%        | 419          | 65.7%        | 431          | 59.5%        | 176                       | 27.7%        | 219          | 34.3%        | 293          | 40.5%        |
| South Eastern           | 382                     | 46.6%        | 415          | 43.1%        | 397          | 42.6%        | 437                       | 53.4%        | 547          | 56.9%        | 536          | 57.4%        |
| Southern                | 291                     | 54.2%        | 379          | 58.9%        | 393          | 50.4%        | 246                       | 45.8%        | 264          | 41.1%        | 387          | 49.6%        |
| Western                 | 244                     | 75.3%        | 310          | 76.9%        | 391          | 76.7%        | 80                        | 24.7%        | 93           | 23.1%        | 119          | 23.3%        |
| NIAS                    | 34                      | 34.7%        | 43           | 30.7%        | 48           | 32.4%        | 64                        | 65.3%        | 97           | 69.3%        | 100          | 67.6%        |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,268</b>            | <b>57.9%</b> | <b>2,298</b> | <b>52.0%</b> | <b>2,597</b> | <b>52.3%</b> | <b>1,649</b>              | <b>42.1%</b> | <b>2,120</b> | <b>48.0%</b> | <b>2,371</b> | <b>47.7%</b> |

During 2013/14, over half (2,597, 52.3%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint, 5.6 percentage points fewer than 2011/12 (2,268, 57.9%) (Table 11).

During 2013/14, the Western HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (391, 76.7%), whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (48, 32.4%) (Table 11 & Figure 9).

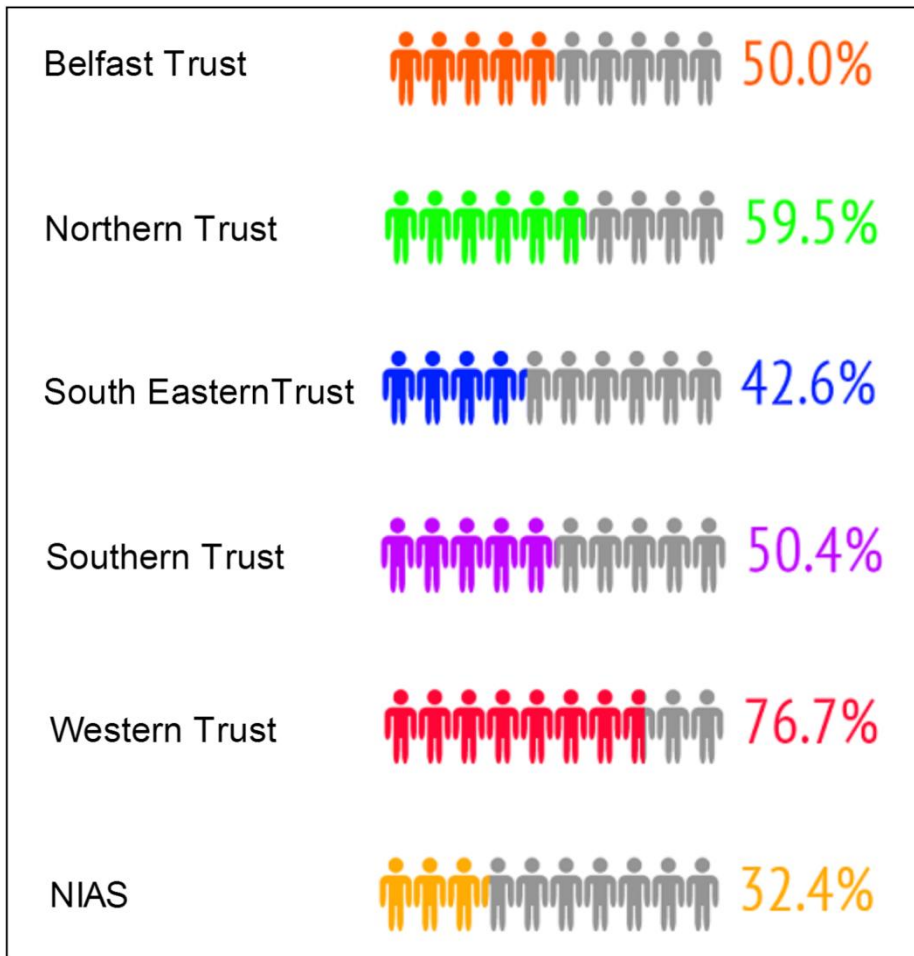
Since 2011/12, the proportion of substantive responses provided by the Northern HSC Trust within 20 days decreased by 12.8 percentage points, from 72.3% (459) to 59.5% (431) in 2013/14 (Table 11).

Since 2011/12, the number of substantive responses provided by HSC Trusts that took over 20 working days increased by 722 (43.8%), from 1,649 to 2,371 in 2013/14 (Table 11).

<sup>6</sup> Responses are sent to letters of complaint, a letter may contain more than one complaint issue, therefore total responses will always be less than or equal to the total number of complaint issues.



**Figure 9: Percentage of Complaints Receiving a Substantive Response Within 20 Working Days, by HSC Trust (2013/14)**



## Complaints Regarding Family Practitioner Services (FPS)<sup>7</sup>

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.

Since 2010/11, the number of complaints made against FPS services in Northern Ireland increased by 25 (8.3%), from 302 to 327 in 2013/14 (Tables 12 & 14).

### 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.

**Table 12: Number of FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Practice     | 2010/11    |               | 2011/12    |               | 2012/13    |               | 2013/14    |               |
|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
|              | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             | No.        | %             |
| GP           | 199        | 92.1%         | 189        | 89.2%         | 228        | 92.3%         | 241        | 94.5%         |
| Dental       | 13         | 6.0%          | 19         | 9.0%          | 14         | 5.7%          | 12         | 4.7%          |
| Pharmacy     | 3          | 1.4%          | 3          | 1.4%          | 5          | 2.0%          | 2          | 0.8%          |
| Ophthalmic   | 1          | 0.5%          | 1          | 0.5%          | 0          | 0.0%          | 0          | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>216</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>247</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>255</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Since 2010/11, the number of complaints handled under local resolution increased by 39 (18.1%), from 216 to 255 in 2013/14 (Table 12).

During each of the last four years, around 9 in 10 complaints handled under local resolution, related to GPs, ranging from 89.2% (189) in 2011/12 to 94.5% (241) in 2013/14 (Table 12).

**Table 13: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Subject of Complaint (2013/14)**

| Subject                   | GP         | Dental    | Pharmacy | Ophthalmic | Total      |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|
| Treatment & Care          | 119        | 8         | 0        | 0          | 127        |
| Staff Attitude            | 29         | 1         | 1        | 0          | 31         |
| Communication/Information | 59         | 3         | 0        | 0          | 62         |
| Confidentiality           | 3          | 0         | 0        | 0          | 3          |
| Clinical Diagnosis        | 6          | 0         | 0        | 0          | 6          |
| Other                     | 25         | 0         | 1        | 0          | 26         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>241</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>0</b>   | <b>255</b> |

During 2013/14, almost half (127, 49.8%) of complaints handled under local resolution related to 'Treatment & Care', 62 (24.3%) to 'Communication/Information', 31 (12.2%) to 'Staff Attitude', 26 (10.2%) to 'Other', 6 (2.4%) to 'Clinical Diagnosis' and 3 (1.2%) to 'Confidentiality' (Table 13).

<sup>7</sup> Information for 2011/12 has been sourced from previously published data contained within 'Annual Complaints Report of the Health and Social Care Board'

## 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.

**Table 14: Number of FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Practice     | 2010/11   |               | 2011/12   |               | 2012/13    |               | 2013/14   |               |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
|              | No.       | %             | No.       | %             | No.        | %             | No.       | %             |
| GP           | 47        | 54.7%         | 50        | 71.4%         | 87         | 75.0%         | 57        | 79.2%         |
| Dental       | 36        | 41.9%         | 18        | 25.7%         | 20         | 17.2%         | 13        | 18.1%         |
| Pharmacy     | 0         | 0.0%          | 1         | 1.4%          | 8          | 6.9%          | 2         | 2.8%          |
| Ophthalmic   | 3         | 3.5%          | 1         | 1.4%          | 1          | 0.9%          | 0         | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, the number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker increased by 30 (34.9%), from 86 to 116, but decreased by 44 (37.9%) since 2012/13, to 72 in 2013/14 (Table 14).

Almost four in five (57, 79.2%) complaints, in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker, related to GP complaints in 2013/14 (Table 14).

**Table 15: FPS Complaints Where the Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject of Complaint (2013/14)**

| Subject                   | GP        | Dental    | Pharmacy | Ophthalmic | Total     |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Treatment & Care          | 37        | 11        | 2        | 0          | 50        |
| Staff Attitude            | 10        | 1         | 0        | 0          | 11        |
| Communication/Information | 4         | 1         | 0        | 0          | 5         |
| Confidentiality           | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0          | 0         |
| Clinical Diagnosis        | 3         | 0         | 0        | 0          | 3         |
| Other                     | 3         | 0         | 0        | 0          | 3         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>57</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>0</b>   | <b>72</b> |

During 2013/14, over two thirds (50, 69.4%) of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker related to 'Treatment & Care', 11 (15.3%) to 'Staff Attitude', 5 (6.9%) to 'Communication / Information', 3 (4.2%) to both 'Clinical Diagnosis' and 'Other' (Table 15).

## Complaints Regarding the HSC Board

As well as monitoring the handling of complaints involving FPS the HSC Board also has responsibility for investigating and responding to those complaints that are made directly against their own organisation.

Table 16 below details the number of complaints received by the HSC Board in each of the last four years.

**Table 16: HSC Board Complaints, by Year (2010/11 - 2013/14)**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>HSC Board Complaints</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 2010/11     | 9                           |
| 2011/12     | 14                          |
| 2012/13     | 11                          |
| 2013/14     | 9                           |

In the last four years the highest number of complaints received by the HSC Board was in 2011/12 (14) (Table 16).

During 2013/14, the HSC Board received 9 complaints: 5 (55.6%) relating to 'Board Purchasing', 3 (33.3%) relating to 'Communication/Information' and 1 (11.1%) relating to 'Policy/Commercial Decisions'.

## APPENDIX 1:

**Table 1a: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Belfast HSC Trust (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 34           | 16           | 14           | 27           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 87           | 132          | 145          | 200          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 30           | 23           | 39           | 35           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 318          | 291          | 267          | 318          |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 0            | 0            | 1            | 13           |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 72           | 105          | 60           | 64           |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 223          | 369          | 337          | 455          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0            | 1            | 0            | 2            |
| Confidentiality  | 12           | 21           | 20           | 22           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 2            | 3            | 1            | 1            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 10           | 37           | 31           | 37           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 17           | 2            | 4            | 8            |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 3            | 2            | 1            | 2            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 35           | 47           | 43           | 60           |
| Environmental  | 20           | 18           | 21           | 32           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 30           | 24           | 14           | 40           |
| Infection Control  | 14           | 11           | 6            | 7            |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 1            | 0            | 1            | 0            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 15           | 18           | 14           | 16           |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 26           | 34           | 40           | 56           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 3            | 5            | 3            | 4            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 16           | 27           | 12           | 4            |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 20           | 22           | 15           | 12           |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 12           | 21           | 18           | 17           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 289          | 322          | 323          | 358          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 41           | 31           | 16           | 43           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 5            | 5            | 1            | 4            |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 1            | 1            | 1            | 1            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 282          | 281          | 399          | 403          |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 110          | 126          | 92           | 150          |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 5            | 12           | 12           | 18           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 5            | 15           | 1            | 3            |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 47           | 47           | 47           | 35           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 39           | 37           | 84           | 40           |
| Other  | 31           | 16           | 30           | 27           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>1,855</b> | <b>2,122</b> | <b>2,113</b> | <b>2,514</b> |

**Table 1b: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Northern HSC Trust (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 18         | 5          | 6          | 8          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 0          | 1          | 7          | 1          |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 30         | 28         | 35         | 42         |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 1          | 6          | 4          | 11         |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 41         | 39         | 39         | 36         |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 41         | 83         | 91         | 99         |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Confidentiality  | 11         | 7          | 9          | 14         |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0          | 6          | 5          | 32         |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 2          | 4          | 7          | 12         |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 1          | 4          | 9          | 1          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 11         | 13         | 23         | 35         |
| Environmental  | 5          | 8          | 1          | 12         |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 16         | 78         | 25         | 21         |
| Infection Control  | 6          | 9          | 3          | 5          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 5          | 6          | 6          | 10         |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 4          | 11         | 6          | 3          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 0          | 1          | 2          | 0          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 39         | 42         | 62         | 42         |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 66         | 69         | 54         | 49         |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 6          | 10         | 15         | 29         |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 101        | 113        | 127        | 160        |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 5          | 13         | 7          | 3          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 2          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 155        | 185        | 237        | 268        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 31         | 24         | 6          | 18         |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 39         | 20         | 8          | 41         |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 1          | 4          | 0          | 1          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 33         | 17         | 27         | 17         |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 8          | 8          | 7          | 12         |
| Other  | 18         | 48         | 26         | 12         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>697</b> | <b>862</b> | <b>856</b> | <b>997</b> |

**Table 1c: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the South Eastern HSC Trust  
(2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 21           | 20           | 30           | 38           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 12           | 22           | 16           | 20           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 18           | 20           | 19           | 16           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 58           | 42           | 50           | 59           |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 1            | 0            | 0            | 3            |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 49           | 32           | 50           | 48           |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 155          | 158          | 201          | 170          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 2            | 0            | 1            | 3            |
| Confidentiality  | 18           | 13           | 13           | 16           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0            | 0            | 3            | 1            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 3            | 6            | 12           | 16           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 0            | 1            | 9            | 2            |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 6            | 4            | 9            | 0            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 19           | 17           | 21           | 23           |
| Environmental  | 18           | 25           | 29           | 23           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 5            | 11           | 10           | 23           |
| Infection Control  | 14           | 16           | 10           | 4            |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0            | 0            | 1            | 0            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 9            | 9            | 13           | 4            |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 23           | 20           | 16           | 26           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 7            | 5            | 9            | 7            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 23           | 28           | 30           | 32           |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 90           | 174          | 267          | 163          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 13           | 11           | 9            | 23           |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 21           | 18           | 25           | 26           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 182          | 160          | 191          | 197          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 21           | 6            | 11           | 9            |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 1            | 2            | 1            | 6            |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 3            | 0            | 0            | 1            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 299          | 240          | 301          | 267          |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 15           | 20           | 28           | 23           |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 5            | 10           | 8            | 11           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 4            | 4            | 6            | 5            |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 16           | 31           | 18           | 22           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 13           | 9            | 10           | 20           |
| Other  | 38           | 38           | 32           | 36           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>1,182</b> | <b>1,172</b> | <b>1,459</b> | <b>1,343</b> |

**Table 1d: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Southern HSC Trust (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14      |
|--|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 8          | 10         | 10         | 12           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 9          | 6          | 21         | 14           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 24         | 23         | 19         | 19           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 61         | 46         | 41         | 50           |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 14         | 0          | 0          | 1            |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 10         | 18         | 25         | 15           |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 58         | 64         | 70         | 73           |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 3          | 1          | 1          | 2            |
| Confidentiality  | 6          | 9          | 11         | 13           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0          | 2          | 5          | 2            |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 1          | 2          | 1          | 1            |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 0          | 1          | 1          | 2            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 21         | 23         | 27         | 29           |
| Environmental  | 6          | 28         | 19         | 16           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 3          | 2          | 6          | 7            |
| Infection Control  | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0            |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 3          | 7          | 7          | 3            |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 19         | 18         | 15         | 19           |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 6          | 3          | 6          | 1            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 47         | 21         | 16         | 49           |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 85         | 36         | 64         | 95           |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 14         | 18         | 13         | 22           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 105        | 132        | 156        | 168          |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 6          | 6          | 4          | 16           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 0          | 6          | 1          | 0            |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 1          | 1          | 2          | 0            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 159        | 212        | 229        | 282          |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 62         | 19         | 18         | 20           |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 4          | 2          | 2          | 29           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 10         | 5          | 9          | 0            |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 13         | 21         | 18         | 30           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 11         | 14         | 10         | 34           |
| Other  | 8          | 5          | 12         | 8            |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>777</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>839</b> | <b>1,032</b> |



**Table 1e: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the Western HSC Trust (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14    |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 5          | 1          | 5          | 1          |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 6          | 5          | 18         | 31         |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 5          | 2          | 1          | 5          |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 11         | 7          | 10         | 17         |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 8          | 6          | 8          | 15         |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 25         | 28         | 23         | 43         |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 51         | 52         | 87         | 99         |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Confidentiality  | 9          | 2          | 3          | 7          |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 2          | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0          | 0          | 1          | 3          |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 1          | 7          | 3          | 5          |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 5          | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 22         | 26         | 15         | 6          |
| Environmental  | 5          | 4          | 4          | 4          |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 2          |
| Infection Control  | 3          | 5          | 5          | 3          |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 7          | 9          | 16         | 8          |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 2          | 4          | 9          | 6          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0          |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 11         | 3          | 4          | 61         |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 12         | 7          | 11         | 9          |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 2          | 5          | 3          | 4          |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 68         | 93         | 72         | 163        |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 7          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 1          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 138        | 158        | 223        | 225        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 24         | 8          | 15         | 17         |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 0          | 1          | 2          | 1          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 6          | 10         | 10         | 6          |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 5          | 11         | 17         | 33         |
| Other  | 6          | 11         | 19         | 24         |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>450</b> | <b>467</b> | <b>591</b> | <b>800</b> |

**Table 1f: Subject of Complaint Issues Received by the NIAS (2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| <b>Subject</b>   | <b>2010/11</b> | <b>2011/12</b> | <b>2012/13</b> | <b>2013/14</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 0              | 0              | 1              | 0              |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Confidentiality  | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 2              |
| Environmental  | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Infection Control  | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 1              | 1              | 0              | 1              |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 27             | 37             | 44             | 57             |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 32             | 39             | 71             | 69             |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 4              | 0              | 2              | 1              |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 19             | 17             | 14             | 18             |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Other  | 9              | 4              | 8              | 2              |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>92</b>      | <b>98</b>      | <b>140</b>     | <b>150</b>     |

**Table 1g: Subject of Complaint Issues Received in Northern Ireland  
(2010/11 – 2013/14)**

| Subject  | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises                                       | 68           | 47           | 60           | 79           |
| Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients) | 132          | 170          | 206          | 273          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                              | 77           | 69           | 85           | 76           |
| Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)            | 478          | 414          | 403          | 486          |
| Children Order Complaint Issues                          | 24           | 12           | 13           | 43           |
| Clinical Diagnosis                                       | 197          | 222          | 197          | 206          |
| Communication/Information to Patients                    | 528          | 726          | 787          | 896          |
| Complaints Handling                                      | 5            | 2            | 3            | 8            |
| Confidentiality  | 56           | 52           | 56           | 72           |
| Consent to Treatment                                     | 4            | 4            | 5            | 2            |
| Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies         | 13           | 51           | 54           | 90           |
| Other Contracted Services                                | 21           | 16           | 24           | 28           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                               | 15           | 11           | 21           | 5            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                          | 108          | 126          | 129          | 155          |
| Environmental  | 54           | 83           | 74           | 87           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services                          | 55           | 116          | 56           | 93           |
| Infection Control  | 37           | 43           | 24           | 19           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                   | 1            | 0            | 2            | 0            |
| Patients' Privacy/Dignity                                | 39           | 49           | 56           | 41           |
| Patients' Property/Expenses/Finance                      | 75           | 88           | 86           | 111          |
| Patients' Status/Discrimination                          | 16           | 15           | 21           | 12           |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                              | 136          | 121          | 124          | 188          |
| Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues               | 90           | 174          | 267          | 163          |
| Professional Assessment of Need                          | 196          | 145          | 153          | 188          |
| Records/Records Keeping                                  | 55           | 72           | 74           | 98           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                 | 772          | 857          | 913          | 1,103        |
| Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation          | 80           | 56           | 38           | 72           |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time              | 40           | 52           | 75           | 80           |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment              | 11           | 2            | 7            | 4            |
| Treatment & Care, Quality                                | 1,052        | 1,093        | 1,403        | 1,463        |
| Treatment & Care, Quantity                               | 242          | 197          | 159          | 228          |
| Waiting Lists, Community Services                        | 55           | 44           | 30           | 99           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                        | 20           | 29           | 18           | 10           |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                           | 115          | 126          | 120          | 110          |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                    | 76           | 79           | 128          | 139          |
| Other  | 110          | 122          | 127          | 109          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                  | <b>5,053</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> |

## 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 Services           | 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' should be 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 form. In other words, if two relatives complain about the same subject/episode in respect of the same patient, this should 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 should be treated as separate complaint issues.

Where separate unconnected communications refer to the same episode/issue, they may 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 should 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 should 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, 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 '*Patients' Status / Discrimination*' (20).

### 2. Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)

This refers to delay or cancellation coming into hospital for inpatient and day case admissions, 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*' (13).

### 3. 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, Community Services*' (32).

### 4. Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)

This heading refers to delay or cancellation in securing an appointment at an outpatient clinic, i.e. outpatient waiting lists. It is to be distinguished from '*Waiting Lists, Community Services*' (32) and '*Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments*' (35).

### 5. Children Order Complaint Issues

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

### 6. Clinical Diagnosis

This heading covers clinical diagnosis only and is to be distinguished from '*Professional Assessment of Need*' (22).

### 7. Communication / Information to Patients

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*' (24).

### 8. Complaint Issue 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*' (24).

### 9. 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.

### 10. Consent to Treatment

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

### 11. Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies

This heading refers to complaint issues about services that are provided by Trusts via contractual / commissioned arrangements. Establishments may be children's homes, independent hospitals and 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 complaint issues, however, where the complainant, Trust or RQIA wishes, the matter may be investigated by the Trust under the HPSS Complaint Procedure.

Examples: (i) the Trust (as the commissioner) is asked by either RQIA or a relative, to investigate a complaint issue about the care or treatment provided to a resident in an Independent Nursing or Residential Home; (ii) a patient / client asks the Trust (as the commissioner) to investigate a complaint issue 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 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 Establishments and Agencies*' (10). 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 HPSS 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).

## 13. 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*' (34) and '*Admission into Hospital, Delay / Cancellation (Inpatients)*' (2).

## 14. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## 15. 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.

## 16. 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.

## 17. 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 to Patients*' (6).

## 18. Mortuary & Post-Mortem

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

## 19. Patients' Privacy / Dignity

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

## 20. Patients' 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' (15). 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' (15).

### **21. Patients' Status / 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.

### **22. Policy / Commercial Decisions**

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

### **23. 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' (5).

### **24. 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.

### **25. Prison Healthcare Related Complaint Issues**

This relates to the South Eastern HSC Trust only, which has responsibility for securing the provision of health and social care services for prisoners.

### **26. Staff Attitude / Behaviour**

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

### **27. Theatre / Operation / Procedure, Delay / Cancellation**

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 'Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation' (Inpatients) (2).

### **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. Treatment & Care, Quality**

This refers to the quality or standard of treatment and care provided. It also covers complaint issues relating to patient safety. However, it is to be distinguished from 'Treatment & Care, Quantity' (29) which refers to the quantity or amount of treatment and care.



**31. Treatment & Care, Quantity**

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, Community Services**

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*' (31).

**33. 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, Community Services*' (30).

**34. 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*' (12).

**35. 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 '*Appointments, Delay / Cancellation (Outpatient)*' (4).

**36. Other**

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



## APPENDIX 4: General Category by Subject

### Premises

Access to Premises  
Environmental  
Hotel/Support/Security Services  
Infection Control

### Admissions/Discharges

Admission into Hospital, Delay/Cancellation (Inpatients)  
Delayed Admission from A&E  
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements

### Aids/Adaptations/Appliance

Aids/Adaptations/Appliances

### Appointments

Appointments, Delay/Cancellation (Outpatient)  
Waiting Lists, Community Services  
Waiting Times, Community Services  
Waiting Times, A&E Departments  
Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments

### Children Order

Children Order Complaint Issues

### Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment

Clinical Diagnosis  
Consent to Treatment  
Theatre/Operation/Procedure, Delay/Cancellation  
Treatment & Care, Quality  
Treatment & Care, Quantity

### Information & Communication

Communication/Information to Patients  
Complaints Handling  
Confidentiality  
Records/Records Keeping

### Contracted Services

Contracted Regulated Establishments and Agencies  
Other Contracted Services

### Mortuary

Mortuary & Post-Mortem

### Patient Experience

Patients Privacy/Dignity  
Patients Property/Expenses/Finance  
Patients Status/Discrimination  
Staff Attitude/Behaviour

### Policy/Commercial Decisions

Policy/Commercial Decisions

### Prison Healthcare

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.

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

**Michael O'Donnell**

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

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**This Statistical bulletin and others published by Hospital Information Branch are available to download from the DHSSPS Internet site at:**

Internet address: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats\\_research/hospital-stats.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats.htm)

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



MAHI

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MMcG-280

COMPLAINT

# Complaints Received by HSC Trusts, Board and Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland (2014/15)

## 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. |
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## KEY POINTS

### Latest Year (2014/15)

- During 2014/15, HSC Trusts received 5,154 complaints relating to 7,015 complaint issues (Tables 1 & 5, Figure 1).
- Three fifths (4,189, 59.7%), of complaint issues received during 2014/15 related to the Acute POC (Tables 2 & 3, Figure 3).
- During 2014/15, one in ten (743, 10.6%) complaint issues received by HSC trusts related to the 'Accident & Emergency' specialty (Appendix 4).
- Of the 5,154 complaints received in 2014/15, the median age of the patient/client was 49.4 years (Figure 7).
- On average HSC Trusts took 24.9 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints received in 2014/15 (Table 5, Figure 11).

### Last Five Years (2010/11 to 2014/15)

- Over the last five years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts has increased by 1,962 (38.8%), from 5,053 in 2010/11 to 7,015 in 2014/15 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the number of complaint issues received relating to the Acute POC has increased by 1,167 (38.6%), from 3,022 to 4,189 (Table 2).
- Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received has increased in all six HSC Trusts, with Belfast HSC Trust reporting the most notable increase (917, 49.4%), from 1,855 to 2,772 in 2014/15 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Almost three in ten (29.5%) complaint issues received during each of the last five years related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Appendix 2).

### Revision Note

This publication was revised on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2015 to take account of a coding error. This has resulted in small changes to Section 3 'Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received'.

## 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 and 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.

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:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/statistics/safetyquality/patient-safety/complaints-safety-and-quality.htm>

Information presented on HSC Board and 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.

### Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and as a consequence some percentages 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. Following submission, HIB carry out a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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 17<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, Board and FPS complaint issues 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 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:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/statistics/safetyquality/patient-safety/complaints-safety-and-quality.htm>

## Contact Information

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

**Michael O'Donnell**

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Tel:** [REDACTED]

# SECTION 1

## COMPLAINT ISSUES RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

### What's the Difference between a Complaint and a Complaint Issue?

In this statistical brief a **complaint** is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of HSC Trust, HSC Board 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 (POC), Subject and Specialty it relates to.

### Complaint Issues

Table 1 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last five years.

**Table 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2010/11 - 2014/15)**

| HSC Trust               | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Belfast                 | 1,855        | 2,122        | 2,113        | 2,514        | 2,772        |
| Northern                | 697          | 862          | 856          | 997          | 890          |
| South Eastern           | 1,182        | 1,172        | 1,459        | 1,343        | 1,332        |
| Southern                | 777          | 764          | 839          | 1,032        | 1,166        |
| Western                 | 450          | 467          | 591          | 800          | 629          |
| NIAS                    | 92           | 98           | 140          | 150          | 226          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>5,053</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> |

**Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received increased in all six HSC Trusts**

Over the last five years, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts has increased by 1,962 (38.8%), from 5,053 in 2010/11 to 7,015 in 2014/15 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Since 2010/11, the number of complaint issues received has increased in all six HSC Trusts, with the most notable increase reported by the Belfast HSC Trust (917, 49.4%), from 1,855 to 2,772 in 2014/15 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the number of complaint issues received by the NIAS has more than doubled (145.7%), from 92 to 226 (Table 1, Figure 1).

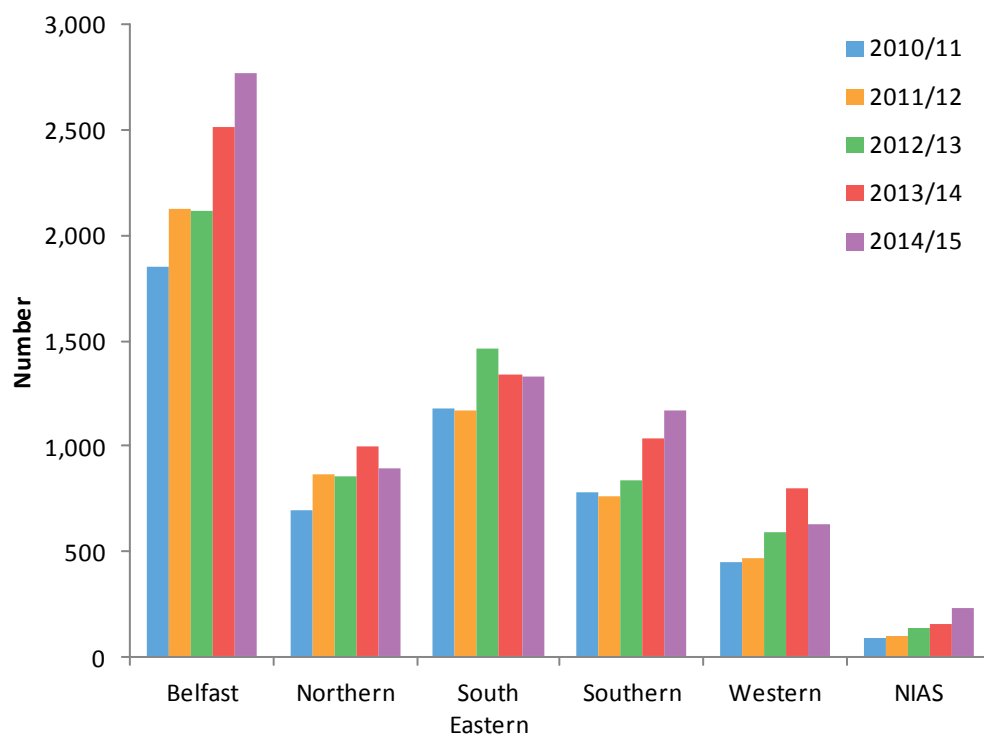
During 2014/15, almost two fifths of all complaint issues (2,772, 39.5%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,332 (19.0%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 1,166 (16.6%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 890 (12.7%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 629 (9.0%) by the Western HSC Trust and 226 (3.2%) by the NIAS (Table 1, Figure 1).

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**Belfast HSC Trust reported the most notable increase in complaint issues received over the last five years**

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**Figure 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2010/11 - 2014/15)**



## Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

Table 2 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last five years broken down by POC. 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.

**Table 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2010/11 - 2014/15)<sup>2</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 3,022        | 3,393        | 3,575        | 4,135        | 4,189        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 323          | 340          | 316          | 291          | 399          |
| Family & Child Care        | 317          | 318          | 361          | 492          | 495          |
| Elderly Services           | 307          | 302          | 320          | 437          | 457          |
| Mental Health              | 247          | 236          | 315          | 354          | 366          |
| Learning Disability        | 105          | 96           | 132          | 218          | 160          |
| Sens Imp & Phys Disability | 82           | 61           | 89           | 118          | 114          |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 3            | 4            | 2            | 5            | 0            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 293          | 191          | 222          | 178          | 214          |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 354          | 554          | 666          | 608          | 512          |
| Prison Healthcare          |              |              |              |              | 109          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>5,053</b> | <b>5,495</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> |

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts relating to the Acute POC increased by 1,167 (38.6%), from 3,022 to 4,189 (Table 2).

During 2014/15, 7,015 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, almost three fifths (4,189, 59.7%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2)

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**Three fifths of complaint issues received during 2014/15 related to the Acute POC**

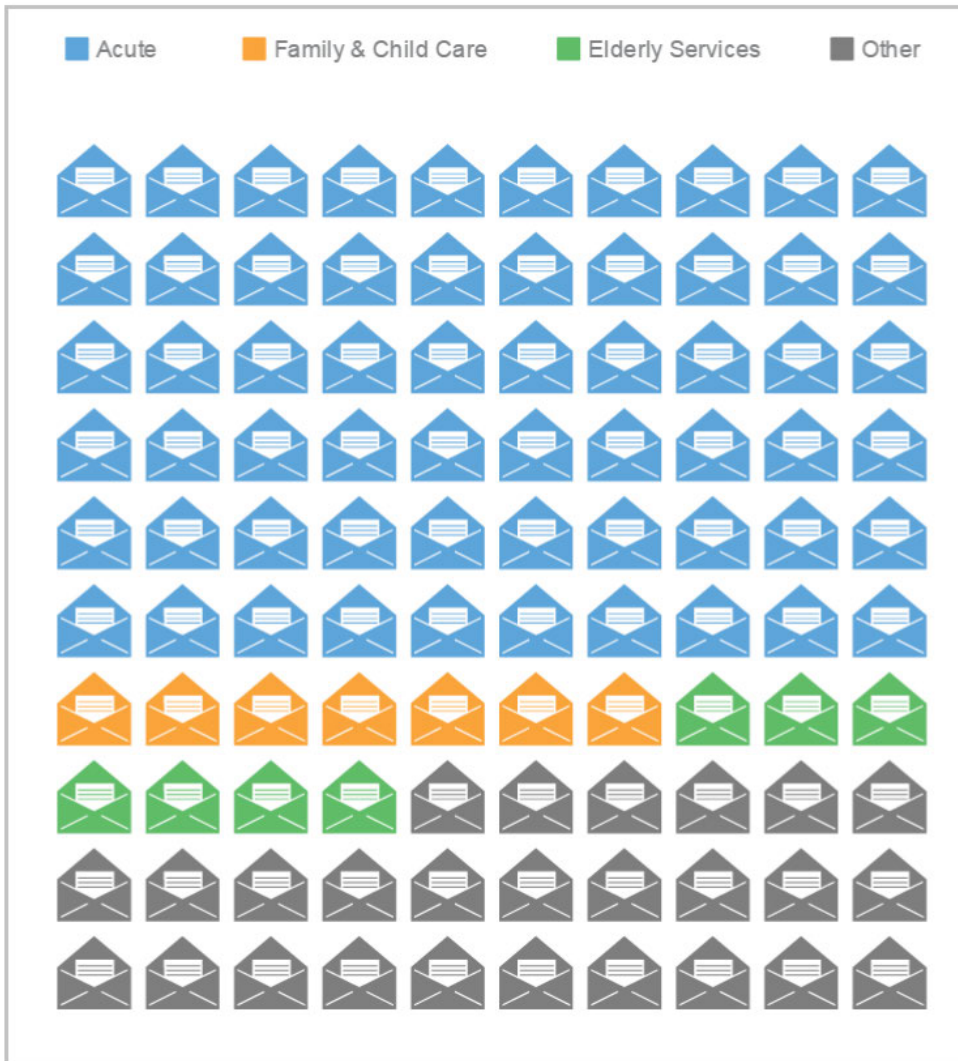
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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 6: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

<sup>2</sup> Prison Healthcare was previously included within 'None (No POC assigned)' but from 2014/15 this information is now recorded separately.

Three POC's accounted for almost three quarters (5,141, 73.3%) of all complaint issues received during 2014/15; the Acute POC (4,189, 59.7%), the Family & Child Care POC (495, 7.1%) and the Elderly Services POC (457, 6.5%) (Table 2, Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Three POCs Receiving the Largest Number of Complaint Issues (2014/15)<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> The 'Other' category includes all complaint issues not included within the three named POCs above.

## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

Table 3 presents information on the number of complaint issues received by each HSC Trust during 2014/15 by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 3: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2014/15)**

| Programme of Care          | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 2,205        | 441        | 746          | 471          | 326        | 0          | <b>4,189</b> |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 140          | 29         | 76           | 74           | 80         | 0          | <b>399</b>   |
| Family & Child Care        | 89           | 124        | 82           | 142          | 58         | 0          | <b>495</b>   |
| Elderly Services           | 81           | 120        | 62           | 152          | 42         | 0          | <b>457</b>   |
| Mental Health              | 77           | 86         | 76           | 100          | 27         | 0          | <b>366</b>   |
| Learning Disability        | 13           | 15         | 14           | 67           | 51         | 0          | <b>160</b>   |
| Sens Impair & Phys Dis     | 13           | 30         | 24           | 37           | 10         | 0          | <b>114</b>   |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | <b>0</b>     |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 11           | 12         | 71           | 117          | 3          | 0          | <b>214</b>   |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 143          | 33         | 72           | 6            | 32         | 226        | <b>512</b>   |
| Prison Healthcare          | 0            | 0          | 109          | 0            | 0          | 0          | <b>109</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>2,772</b> | <b>890</b> | <b>1,332</b> | <b>1,166</b> | <b>629</b> | <b>226</b> | <b>7,015</b> |

During 2014/15:

- Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (2,205, 52.6%) and the Maternal & Child Health POC (140, 35.1%) (Table 3, Figure 3).
- Belfast HSC Trust also reported the highest number of complaint issues with No POC assigned (143, 27.9%) (Table 3, Figure 3).
- South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland and reported 109 complaint issues relating to this POC (Table 3, Figure 3).

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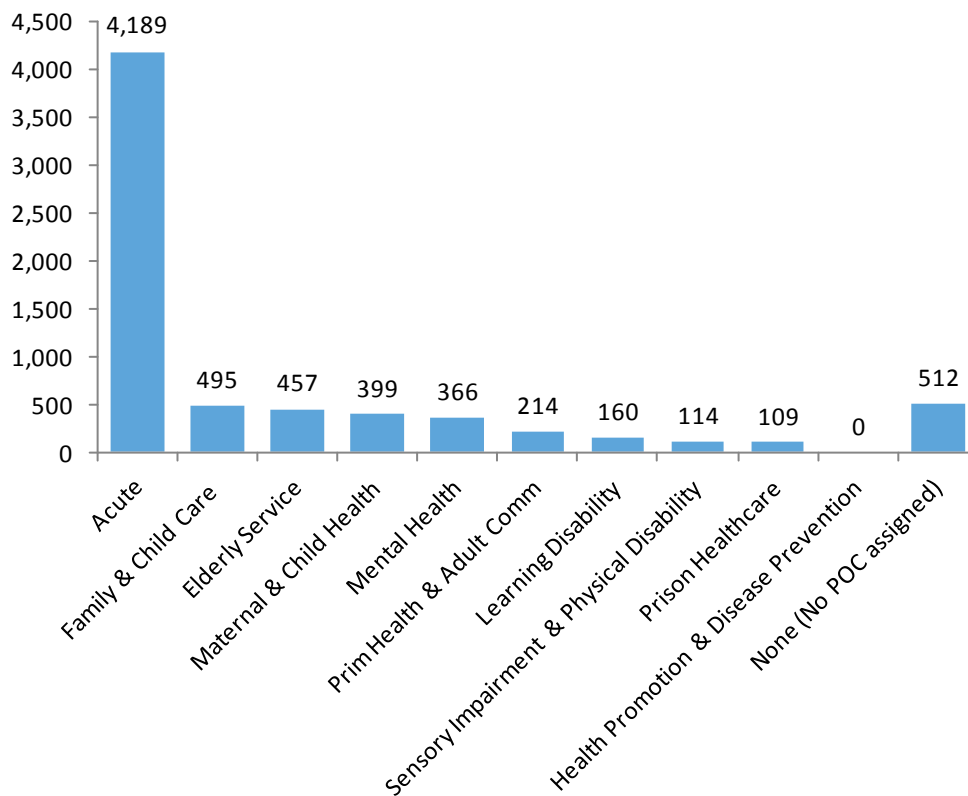
**A quarter of complaint issues received in the Southern HSC Trust related to the Family & Child Care or Elderly POC's**

---

**MAHI - STM - 118 - 2571**

- Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Elderly Services POC (152, 33.3%), Family & Child Care POC (142, 28.7%), Primary Health & Adult Community POC (117, 54.7%), Mental Health POC (100, 27.3%), Learning Disability POC (67, 41.9%) and the Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (37, 32.5%) (Table 3, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2014/15)**



## Complaint Issues Received by Category

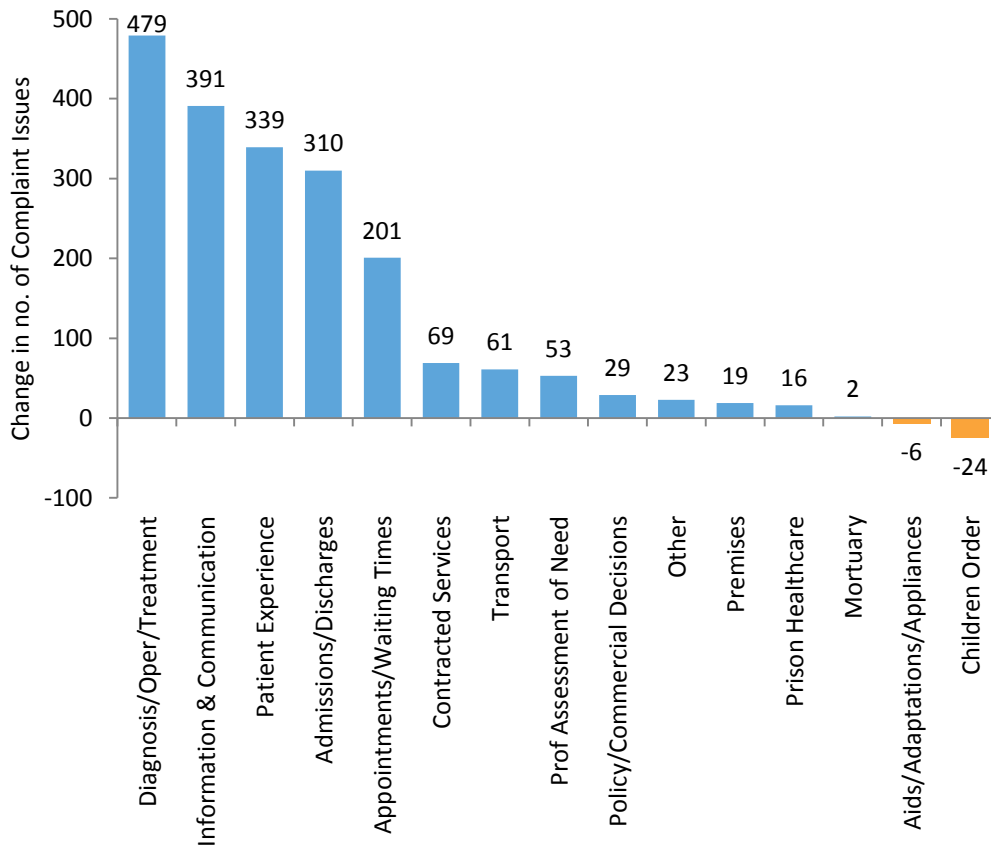
The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject<sup>4</sup> which best describes the nature of the patient’s / client’s concern. To enable the category of the complaint issue to be presented, the subject area of each complaint issue has been grouped into one of 15 main categories<sup>5</sup>.

During 2014/15, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues related to ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ (2,054, 29.3%), ‘Patient Experience’ (1,241, 17.7%), ‘Information & Communication’ (1,035, 14.8%) and ‘Appointments/Waiting Times’ (945, 13.5%) (Appendix 2).

Figure 4 below presents an analysis of the change in the number of complaint issues received between 2010/11 and 2014/15, for the 15 main categories of complaint.

**Complaint issues relating to Admissions / Discharges more than doubled since 2010/11**

**Figure 4: Change in the Number of Complaint Issues Received, by Category of Complaint (2010/11 - 2014/15)**



<sup>4</sup> A complete list of complaint issue subjects is detailed in Appendix 7, whilst an analysis of complaint issues by subject can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup> A list of complaint issue subjects grouped by general category is detailed in Appendix 8.



Since 2010/11, all but two categories reported an increase the number of complaint issues received (Figure 4, Appendix 2).

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category reported the highest increase in the number of complaint issues received, from 1,575 to 2,054 (Figure 4, Appendix 2).

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**Almost three in ten  
complaint issues  
received during each  
of the last five years  
related to  
Diagnosis/Operation  
/ Treatment**

---

## Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust

Figure 5 below presents a summary of the four largest categories of complaint issues received during 2014/15, by the category of the complaint for each HSC Trust. In the charts below complaint issues not in the four largest categories have been referred to as 'Other'.

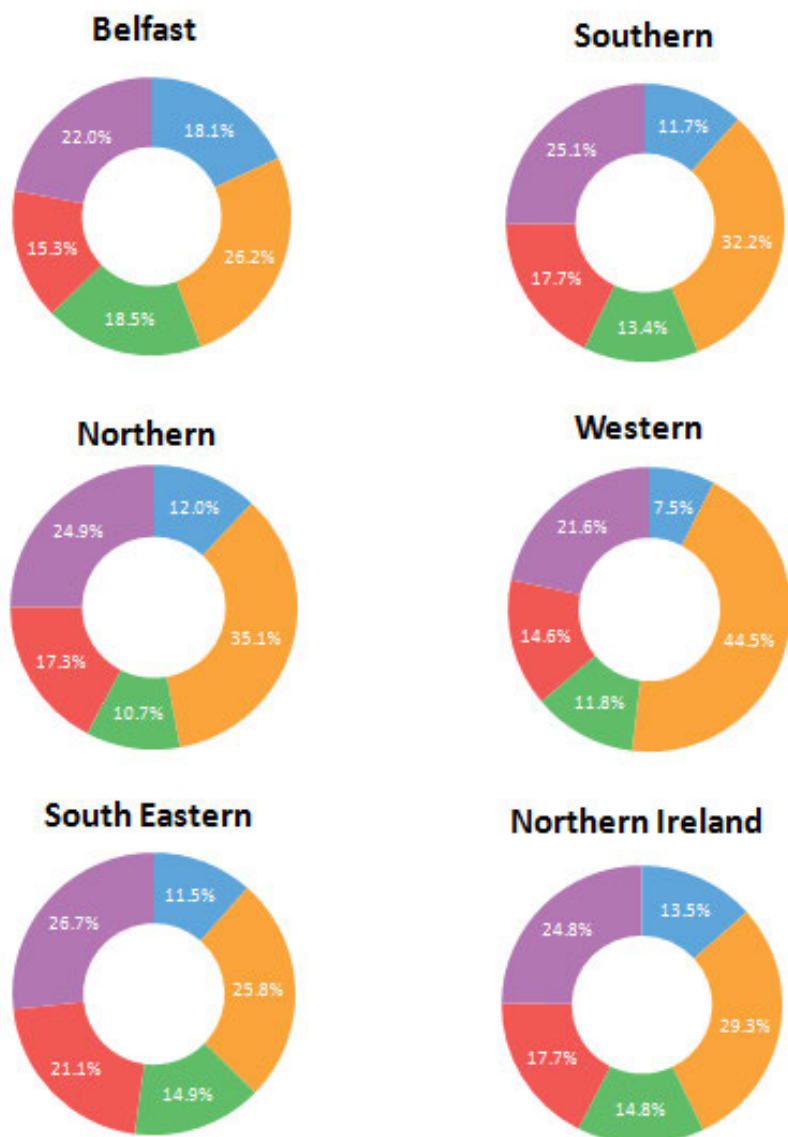
**Figure 5: Main Category of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2014/15)<sup>6</sup>**

- Appointments/Waiting Times
- Patient Experience
- Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment
- Other
- Information & Communication

---

**Over two fifths of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment**

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<sup>6</sup> Information for Northern Ireland includes complaint issues received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

During 2014/15:

- In the Belfast HSC Trust, almost a fifth (512, 18.5%) of complaint issues related to the 'Information & Communication' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- In the Northern HSC Trust, over a third (312, 35.1%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- Over a fifth (281, 21.1%) of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to 'Patient Experience' (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- In the Southern HSC Trust, almost a third (375, 32.2%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- Over two fifths (280, 44.5%) of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (Figure 5, Appendix 3)
- Across all HSC Trusts, these four largest categories accounted for three quarters (5,275, 75.2%) of all complaint issues received (Figure 5, Appendix 3).

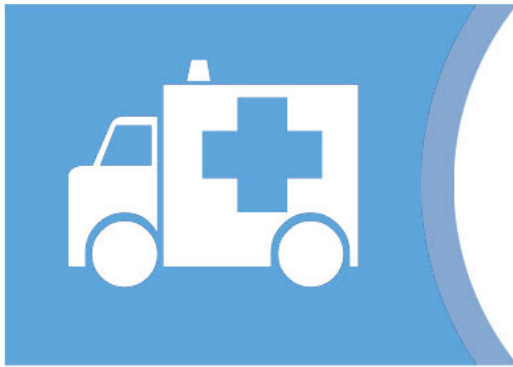
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**Over a fifth of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to Patient Experience**

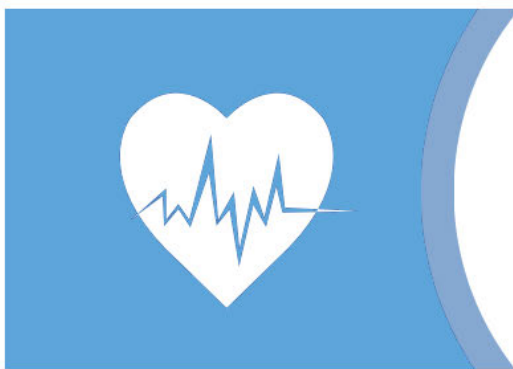
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## Complaint Issues Received by Specialty and HSC Trust

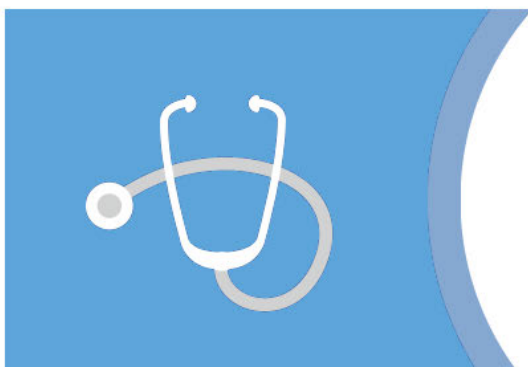
During 2014/15, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues received related to the 'Accident & Emergency' (743, 10.6%), 'Trauma & Orthopaedics' (602, 8.6%) and 'General Medicine' (480, 6.8%) specialties (Appendix 4).



**A & E**  
**743**



**Trauma & Ortho**  
**602**



**General Medicine**  
**480**

These three specialties accounted for over a quarter (1,825, 26.0%) of all complaint issues received during this time (Appendix 4).

# SECTION 2

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

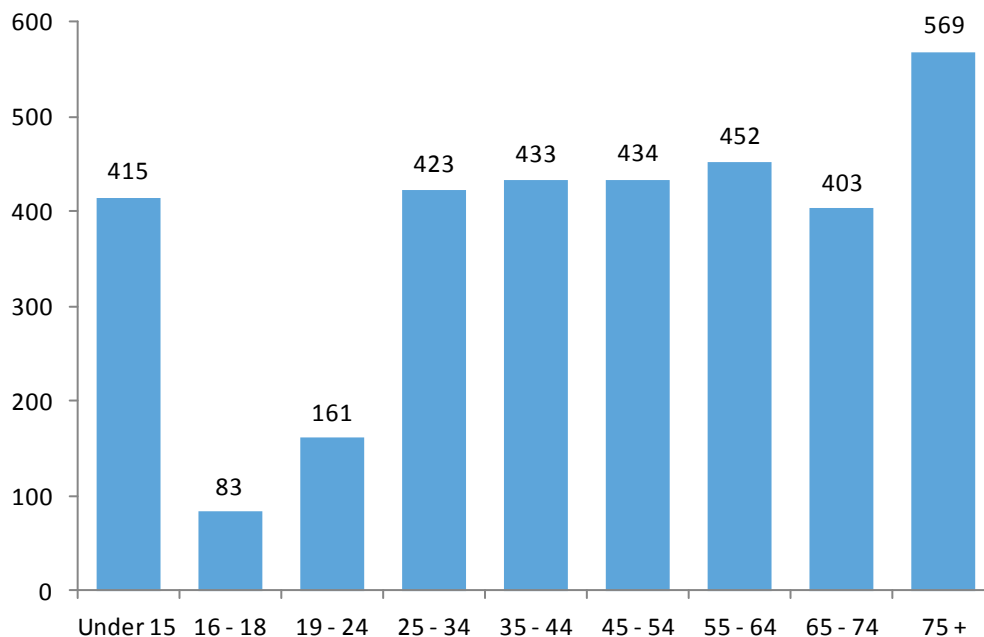
During 2014/15, HSC Trusts received 5,154 complaints relating to 7,015 complaint issues. Section 2 presents a summary of information relating to these 5,154 complaints. Further information on the difference between a complaint and a complaint issue is detailed on page 7.

### Age of Patient / Client

Figure 6 below presents a summary of the number of complaints received during 2014/15, by the age group of the patient/client at the time the complaint was received.

**Of complaints received in 2014/15, the median age of the patient / client was 49.4 years**

**Figure 6: Complaints Received, by Age Group of Patient / Client (2014/15)**

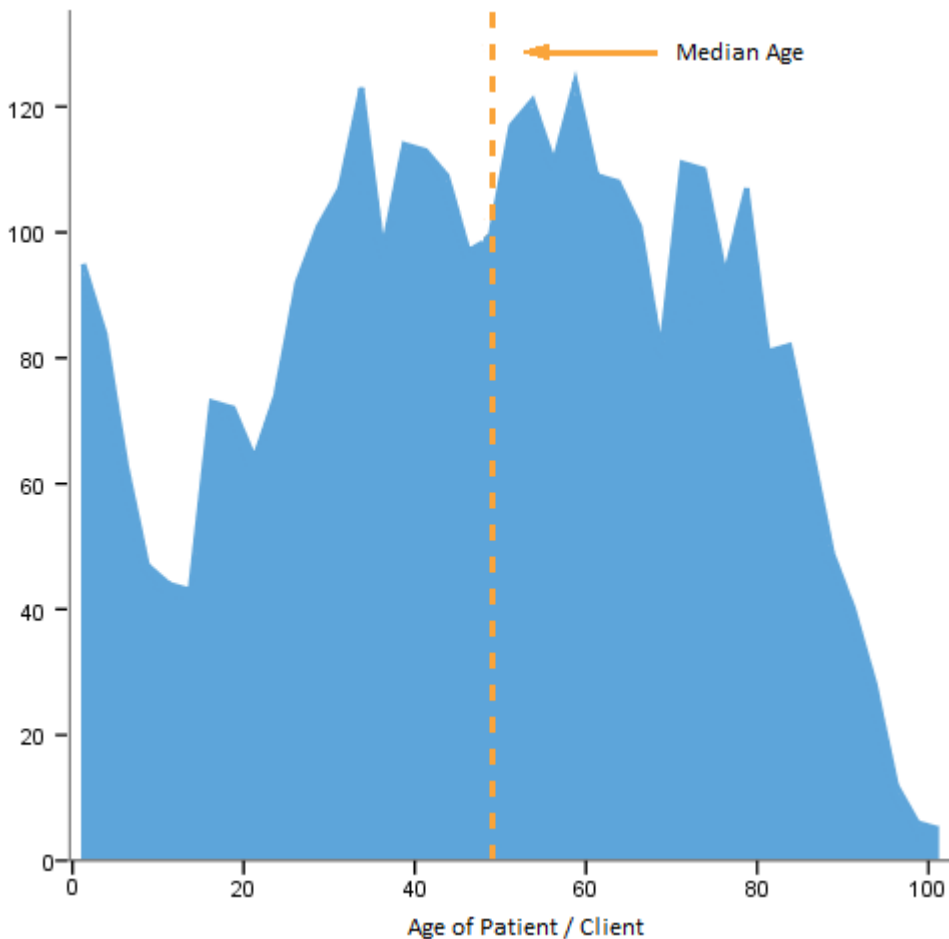


During 2014/15, the age of the patient/client was recorded for 3,373 (65.4%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.

For those complaints where the age of the patient/client was recorded, 569 (16.9%) related to patients/clients aged 75 & over, whilst 415 (12.3%) were for those aged 15 & under (Figure 6).

Figure 7 below presents information on the number of complaints received by the age of the patient / client at the time the complaint was received. The median age represents the middle value when all patient / client ages are arranged from the lowest to the highest value.

**Figure 7: Complaints Received, by Age of Patient / Client (2014/15)**



Of the complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2014/15, the median age of the patient/client was 49.4 years (Figure 7).

## Relationship of Complainant to Patient/Client

Over half (2,753, 53.4%) of all complaints received in 2014/15 were from the patient/client and a further 2,397 (46.5%) from persons acting on behalf of the patient/client. It was not possible to identify the relationship of the complainant in four cases.

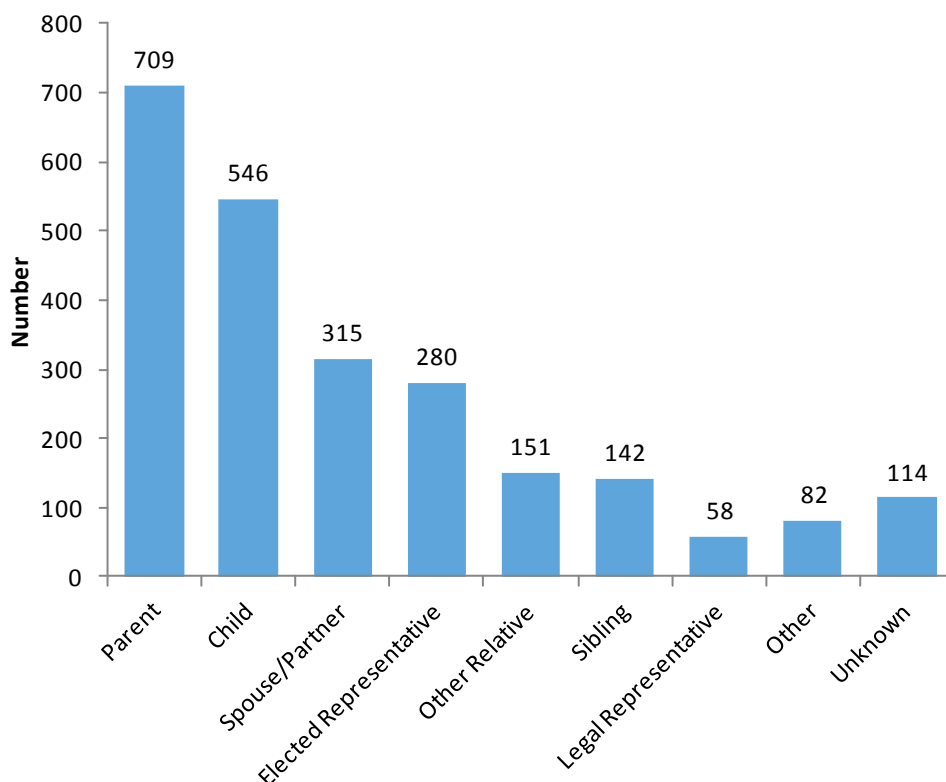
Figure 8 below details the relationship of the complainant to the patient/client for those complaints not made by the patient/client themselves.

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**Over half of complaints received in 2014/15, were from the patients/clients themselves**

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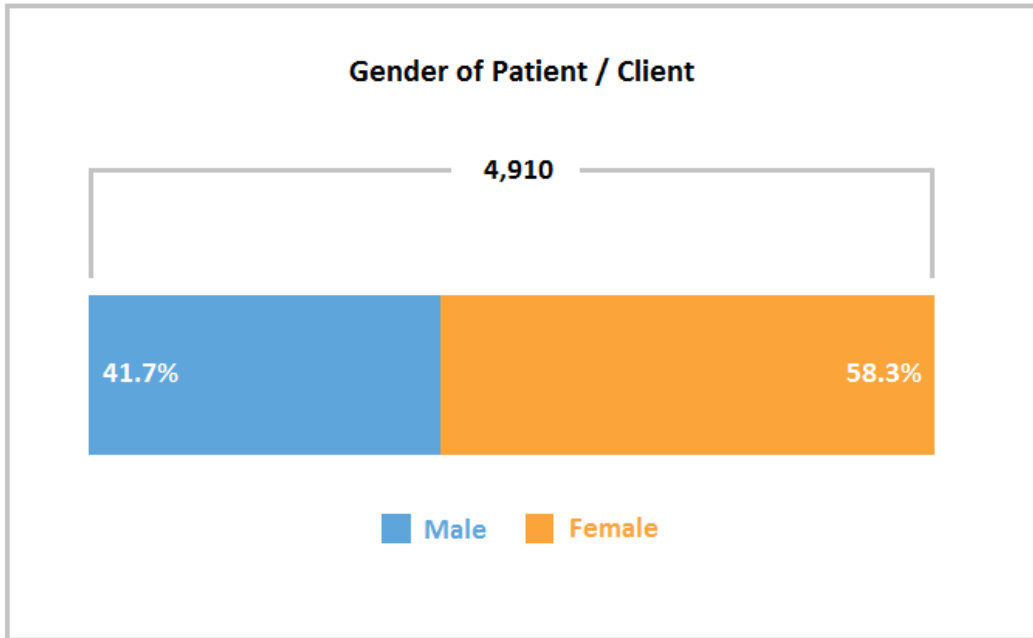
**Figure 8: Complaints Received, by Relationship of Complainant (2014/15)**



Of the 2,397 complaints received from persons acting on behalf of the patient/client, almost a third (709, 29.6%) were from the parents of the patient/client, 546 (22.8%) from the children of the patient/client, 315 (13.1%) from a spouse/partner and 280 (11.7%) from an elected representative (Figure 8).

## Sex of Patient / Client

During 2014/15, the sex of the patient/client was recorded for 4,910 (95.3%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.



Of those complaints where the sex of the patient/client was recorded, 2,864 (58.3%) were for female patients/clients and 2,046 (41.7%) for male patients/clients.

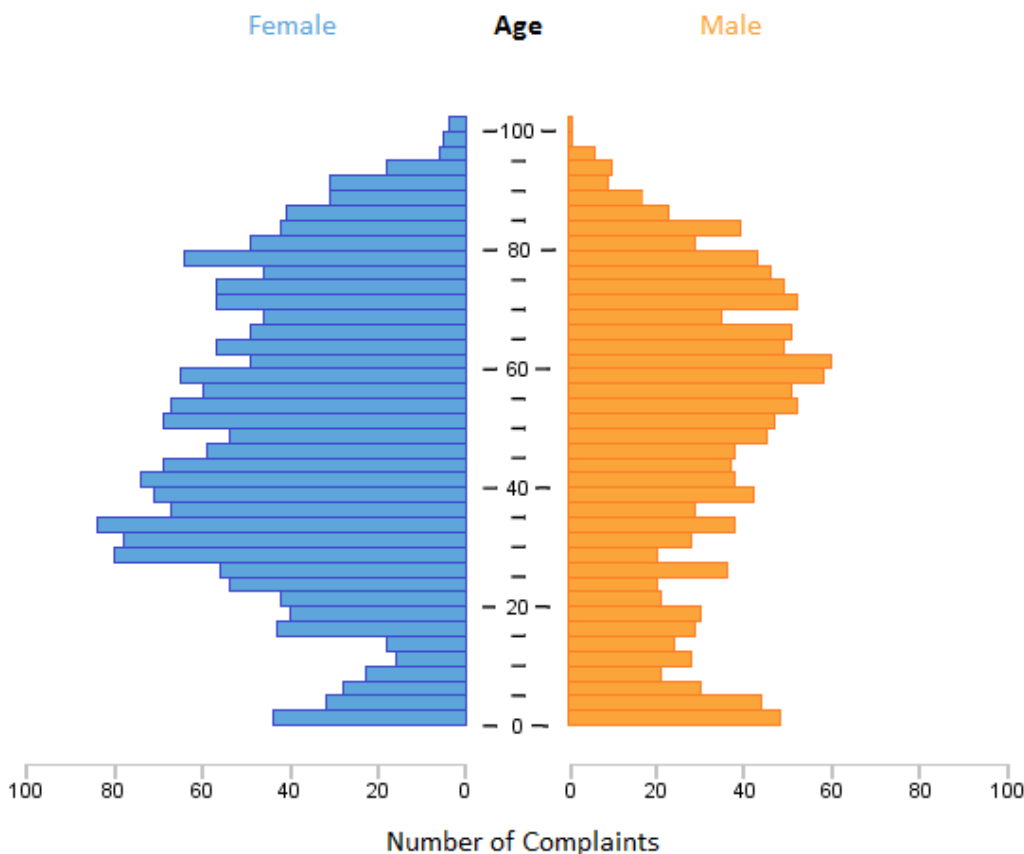


## Age and Sex of Patient / Client

The age and sex of the patient/client was recorded for 3,319 (64.4%) of the 5,154 complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2014/15. Of the 3,319 complaints where the age and sex of the patient/client was recorded, 1,945 (58.6%) were for female patient/clients and 1,374 (41.4%) were male patient/clients (Figure 9).

Figure 9 below details the number of complaints received in 2014/15 for each age band (2.5 years), for the 3,319 complaints which have the age and sex of the patient/client recorded.

**Figure 9: Complaints Received, by Age and Sex of Patient / Client (2014/15)**

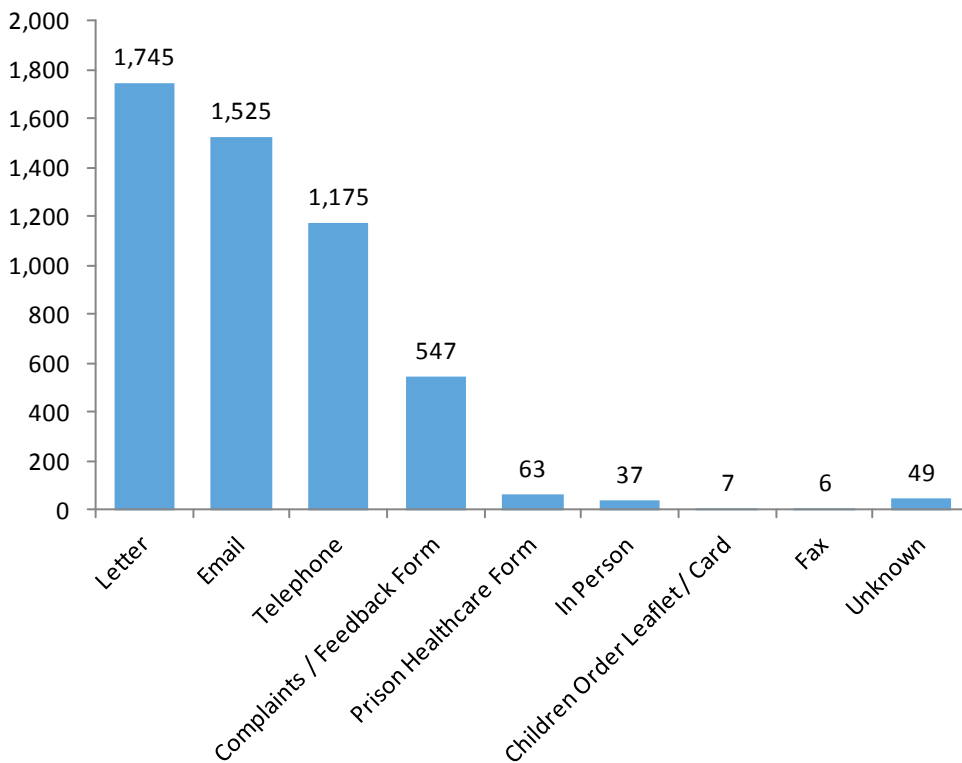


More complaints were received by HSC Trusts relating to female patient/clients than males in all age groups, except the '15 & Under' age group (Figure 9, Appendix 5).

## Method of Complaint

Figure 10 details the method by which complaints were received in 2014/15.

**Figure 10: Complaints Received, by Method of Complaint (2014/15)**




---

**A third of complaints were received by letter in 2014/15**

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During 2014/15, over a third (1,745, 33.9%) of complaints received were received by letter, 1,525 (29.6%) by email and 1,175 (22.8%) by telephone. These three methods accounted for over four fifths (86.2%, 4,445) of all complaints received during the year (Figure 10).

## SECTION 3

### TIME TAKEN TO PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Table 5 below details the length of time taken by HSC Trusts 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, i.e. 5,154 complaints were received during 2014/15 relating to 7,015 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.

**Over half of all complaints received a substantive response within 20 working days**

**Table 5: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2014/15)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              | Total No.    | Mean No. of Working Days |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.                       | %            |              |                          |
| Belfast                 | 1,122                   | 52.1%        | 1,032                     | 47.9%        | <b>2,154</b> | 27.3                     |
| Northern                | 490                     | 69.8%        | 212                       | 30.2%        | <b>702</b>   | 20.0                     |
| South Eastern           | 448                     | 53.7%        | 387                       | 46.3%        | <b>835</b>   | 26.2                     |
| Southern                | 339                     | 43.4%        | 442                       | 56.6%        | <b>781</b>   | 21.9                     |
| Western                 | 344                     | 75.4%        | 112                       | 24.6%        | <b>456</b>   | 21.0                     |
| NIAS                    | 35                      | 15.5%        | 191                       | 84.5%        | <b>226</b>   | 34.3                     |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,778</b>            | <b>53.9%</b> | <b>2,376</b>              | <b>46.1%</b> | <b>5,154</b> | <b>24.9</b>              |

Revision Note: Figures in the above table were updated on 12 August 2015

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During 2014/15, over half (2,778, 53.9%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 5).

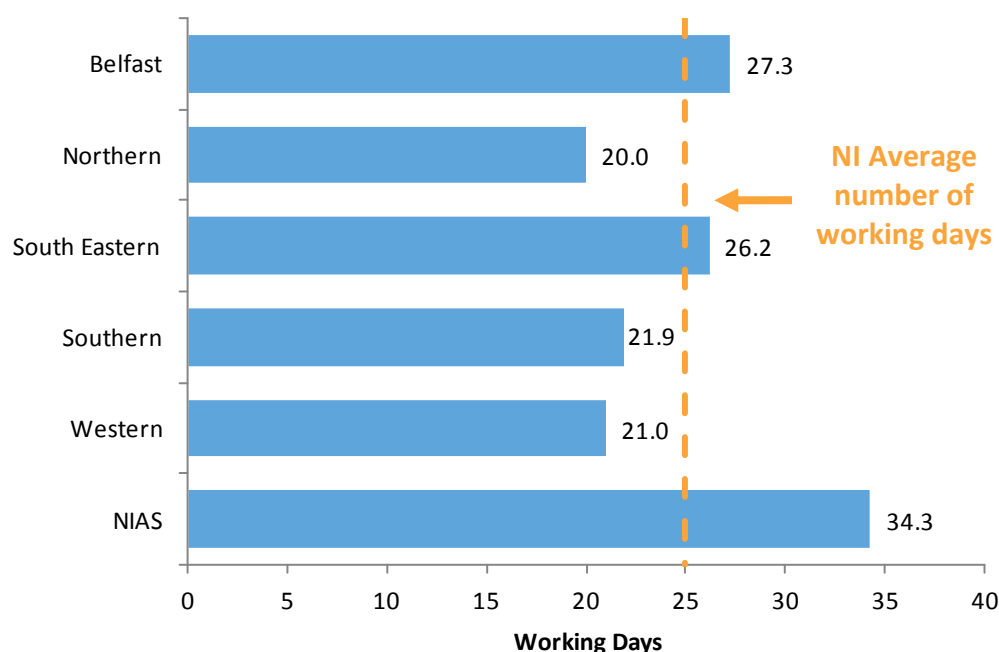
The Western HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (344, 75.4%) during 2014/15, whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (35, 15.5%) (Table 5).

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

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**Figure 11: Average Number of Working Days to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2014/15)<sup>7</sup>**



Revision Note: Figures in the above graph were updated on 12 August 2015

On average HSC Trusts took 24.9 working days to provide substantive responses to complaints received in 2014/15 (Table 7, Figure 11).

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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## SECTION 4

### FAMILY PRACTITIONER SERVICE (FPS)

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Information in this section refers to complaints received by the HSCB<sup>8</sup> 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.

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, the number of complaints made against FPS practices in Northern Ireland has increased by 24 (7.9%), from 302 to 326 (Tables 6 and 8).

Of the 326 complaints received by the HSCB regarding FPS practices in 2014/15, 230 were handled under Local Resolution and 96 where the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker (Tables 6 – 9).

#### 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.

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**Almost all  
complaints  
handled under  
local resolution in  
2014/15 related to  
GPs**

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix 9 for further details.

**Table 6: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2010/11 - 2014/15)**

| Subject      | 2010/11    | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP           | 199        | 189        | 228        | 241        | 224        |
| Dental       | 13         | 19         | 14         | 12         | 6          |
| Pharmacy     | 3          | 3          | 5          | 2          | 0          |
| Ophthalmic   | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>216</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>247</b> | <b>255</b> | <b>230</b> |

The number of complaints handled under local resolution increased by 39 (18.1%), from 216 in 2010/11 to 255 in 2013/14, but decreased by 25 (9.8%) to 230 in 2014/15 (Table 6).

**Table 7: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2014/15)**

| Subject              | GP         | Dental   | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total      |
|----------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Treatment & Care     | 83         | 5        | 0                     | 88         |
| Staff Attitude       | 56         | 0        | 0                     | 56         |
| Communication / Info | 59         | 0        | 0                     | 59         |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 3          | 0        | 0                     | 3          |
| Other                | 23         | 1        | 0                     | 24         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>224</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>0</b>              | <b>230</b> |

During 2014/15, 'Treatment & Care' accounted for almost two fifths (88, 38.3%) of all complaints handled under local resolution (Table 7).

## 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.

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**During 2014/15,  
almost 9 in 10  
complaints where  
the HSCB acted as  
an honest broker  
related to GPs**

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**Table 8: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2010/11 - 2014/15)**

| Subject      | 2010/11   | 2011/12   | 2012/13    | 2013/14   | 2014/15   |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| GP           | 47        | 50        | 87         | 57        | 83        |
| Dental       | 36        | 18        | 20         | 13        | 13        |
| Pharmacy     | 0         | 1         | 8          | 2         | 0         |
| Ophthalmic   | 3         | 1         | 1          | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>96</b> |

The number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker increased by 30 (34.9%), from 86 in 2010/11 to 116 in 2012/13, but decreased by 20 (17.2%) to 96 in 2014/15 (Table 8).

**Table 9: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2014/15)**

| Subject              | GP        | Dental    | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Treatment & Care     | 54        | 8         | 0                     | 62        |
| Staff Attitude       | 3         | 2         | 0                     | 5         |
| Communication / Info | 16        | 0         | 0                     | 16        |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 1         | 1         | 0                     | 2         |
| Other                | 9         | 2         | 0                     | 11        |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>83</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>0</b>              | <b>96</b> |

'Treatment & Care' accounted for almost two thirds half (62, 64.6%), of all complaints in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker during 2014/15 (Table 9).

**APPENDIX 1: SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT ISSUES BY TRUST (2014/15)**

| Subject  | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises   | 28           | 3          | 23           | 5            | 0          | 0          | 59           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                                | 27           | 1          | 17           | 26           | 0          | 0          | 71           |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 70           | 33         | 44           | 20           | 48         | 2          | 217          |
| Communication/Information                                  | 468          | 65         | 151          | 133          | 60         | 0          | 877          |
| Complaints Handling  | 0            | 0          | 5            | 2            | 0          | 0          | 7            |
| Confidentiality  | 27           | 13         | 16           | 5            | 6          | 0          | 67           |
| Consent to Treatment/Care                                  | 5            | 1          | 2            | 0            | 3          | 0          | 11           |
| Contracted Regulated Childrens Services                    | 0            | 1          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 1            |
| Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Services                  | 2            | 17         | 1            | 0            | 1          | 0          | 21           |
| Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing                   | 1            | 10         | 5            | 2            | 0          | 0          | 18           |
| Contracted Regulated Independent Services                  | 31           | 1          | 5            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 37           |
| Other Contracted Services                                  | 17           | 2          | 4            | 0            | 3          | 0          | 26           |
| Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients                          | 25           | 10         | 4            | 13           | 0          | 0          | 52           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                                 | 0            | 0          | 4            | 0            | 29         | 0          | 33           |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                            | 60           | 18         | 32           | 24           | 7          | 0          | 141          |
| Discrimination   | 3            | 1          | 9            | 5            | 1          | 0          | 19           |
| Environmental  | 38           | 8          | 25           | 13           | 4          | 0          | 88           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services (Ex Contracted Services)   | 15           | 22         | 16           | 5            | 8          | 0          | 66           |
| Infection Control  | 5            | 1          | 6            | 1            | 7          | 0          | 20           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                     | 3            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 3            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                                | 3            | 64         | 34           | 22           | 43         | 0          | 166          |
| Privacy/Dignity  | 10           | 6          | 20           | 8            | 4          | 0          | 48           |
| Professional Assessment of Need                            | 24           | 52         | 17           | 144          | 12         | 0          | 249          |
| Property/Expenses/Finances                                 | 47           | 4          | 20           | 14           | 0          | 1          | 86           |
| Records/Record Keeping                                     | 17           | 17         | 31           | 16           | 8          | 0          | 89           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                   | 363          | 143        | 256          | 179          | 87         | 84         | 1,112        |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time                | 3            | 0          | 1            | 2            | 1          | 101        | 108          |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment                | 0            | 1          | 0            | 1            | 0          | 2          | 4            |
| Quality of Treatment & Care                                | 461          | 256        | 337          | 242          | 188        | 16         | 1,500        |
| Quantity of Treatment & Care                               | 164          | 12         | 24           | 100          | 41         | 0          | 341          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Apps      | 6            | 39         | 13           | 2            | 0          | 0          | 60           |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments   | 376          | 36         | 80           | 49           | 16         | 0          | 557          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hosp | 337          | 6          | 22           | 28           | 0          | 0          | 393          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                             | 42           | 13         | 22           | 21           | 10         | 0          | 108          |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                          | 22           | 1          | 8            | 37           | 1          | 0          | 69           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                      | 56           | 18         | 37           | 27           | 20         | 0          | 158          |
| Other  | 16           | 15         | 41           | 20           | 21         | 20         | 133          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                    | <b>2,772</b> | <b>890</b> | <b>1,332</b> | <b>1,166</b> | <b>629</b> | <b>226</b> | <b>7,015</b> |



**APPENDIX 2: CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT ISSUE BY TRUST (2010/11 - 2014/15)**

| Category of Complaint Issue | 2010/11      |               | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               | 2014/15      |               |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges       | 255          | 5.0%          | 307          | 5.6%          | 356          | 5.9%          | 433          | 6.3%          | 565          | 8.1%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances | 77           | 1.5%          | 69           | 1.3%          | 85           | 1.4%          | 76           | 1.1%          | 71           | 1.0%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times  | 744          | 14.7%         | 692          | 12.6%         | 699          | 11.7%         | 844          | 12.3%         | 945          | 13.5%         |
| Children Order              | 24           | 0.5%          | 12           | 0.2%          | 13           | 0.2%          | 43           | 0.6%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Contracted Services         | 34           | 0.7%          | 67           | 1.2%          | 78           | 1.3%          | 118          | 1.7%          | 103          | 1.5%          |
| Diagnosis/Oper/Treatment    | 1,575        | 31.2%         | 1,572        | 28.7%         | 1,802        | 30.0%         | 1,971        | 28.8%         | 2,054        | 29.3%         |
| Information & Communication | 644          | 12.7%         | 852          | 15.5%         | 920          | 15.3%         | 1,074        | 15.7%         | 1,035        | 14.8%         |
| Mortuary                    | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 2            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 3            | 0.0%          |
| Patient Experience          | 902          | 17.9%         | 1,009        | 18.4%         | 1,076        | 17.9%         | 1,267        | 18.5%         | 1,241        | 17.7%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions | 136          | 2.7%          | 121          | 2.2%          | 124          | 2.1%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 165          | 2.4%          |
| Premises                    | 214          | 4.2%          | 289          | 5.3%          | 214          | 3.6%          | 278          | 4.1%          | 233          | 3.3%          |
| Prison Healthcare           | 90           | 1.8%          | 174          | 3.2%          | 267          | 4.5%          | 163          | 2.4%          | 106          | 1.5%          |
| Prof Assessment of Need     | 196          | 3.9%          | 145          | 2.6%          | 153          | 2.6%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 249          | 3.5%          |
| Transport                   | 51           | 1.0%          | 54           | 1.0%          | 82           | 1.4%          | 84           | 1.2%          | 112          | 1.6%          |
| Other                       | 110          | 2.2%          | 122          | 2.2%          | 127          | 2.1%          | 109          | 1.6%          | 133          | 1.9%          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>5,053</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

**APPENDIX 3: CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT ISSUE BY TRUST (2014/15)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Admissions/Discharges           | 397          | 24         | 56           | 52           | 36         | 0          | 565              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 27           | 1          | 17           | 26           | 0          | 0          | 71               |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 502          | 107        | 153          | 136          | 47         | 0          | 945              |
| Children Order                  | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0                |
| Contracted Services             | 51           | 31         | 15           | 2            | 4          | 0          | 103              |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 725          | 312        | 344          | 375          | 280        | 18         | 2,054            |
| Information & Communication     | 512          | 95         | 198          | 156          | 74         | 0          | 1,035            |
| Mortuary                        | 3            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 3                |
| Patient Experience              | 423          | 154        | 281          | 206          | 92         | 85         | 1,241            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 3            | 64         | 33           | 22           | 43         | 0          | 165              |
| Premises                        | 86           | 34         | 70           | 24           | 19         | 0          | 233              |
| Prison Healthcare               |              |            | 106          |              |            |            | 106              |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 24           | 52         | 17           | 144          | 12         | 0          | 249              |
| Transport                       | 3            | 1          | 1            | 3            | 1          | 103        | 112              |
| Other                           | 16           | 15         | 41           | 20           | 21         | 20         | 133              |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,772</b> | <b>890</b> | <b>1,332</b> | <b>1,166</b> | <b>629</b> | <b>226</b> | <b>7,015</b>     |

**APPENDIX 4: SPECIALTY OF COMPLAINT ISSUES BY TRUST (2014/15)**

| Specialty                               | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern     | Western    | NIAS       | Total        |
|---|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Accident & Emergency                    | 205          | 99         | 176           | 100          | 78         | 85         | 743          |
| Allied Health Professions               | 81           | 19         | 52            | 25           | 8          | 0          | 185          |
| Anaesthetics & Pain Management          | 37           | 6          | 15            | 4            | 6          | 0          | 68           |
| Burns Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery | 10           | 0          | 36            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 46           |
| Cardiac Surgery                         | 24           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 24           |
| Cardiology                              | 76           | 9          | 41            | 14           | 4          | 0          | 144          |
| Child & Adolescent Psychiatry           | 22           | 127        | 0             | 16           | 0          | 0          | 165          |
| Children & Young Peoples Services       | 59           | 1          | 108           | 44           | 65         | 0          | 277          |
| Community Paediatrics                   | 30           | 7          | 2             | 3            | 0          | 0          | 42           |
| Day Care Services                       | 0            | 135        | 0             | 8            | 5          | 0          | 148          |
| Dentistry                               | 27           | 1          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 28           |
| Dermatology                             | 26           | 3          | 20            | 8            | 2          | 0          | 59           |
| ENT                                     | 0            | 5          | 22            | 3            | 10         | 0          | 40           |
| General Medicine                        | 193          | 43         | 134           | 71           | 39         | 0          | 480          |
| General Surgery                         | 112          | 83         | 53            | 55           | 55         | 0          | 358          |
| Geriatric Medicine                      | 28           | 37         | 20            | 0            | 2          | 0          | 87           |
| Gynaecology                             | 131          | 24         | 48            | 36           | 31         | 0          | 270          |
| Joint Consultant Clinics                | 0            | 41         | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 41           |
| Learning Disability                     | 11           | 13         | 12            | 49           | 40         | 0          | 125          |
| Mental Health Acute                     | 57           | 89         | 43            | 37           | 4          | 0          | 230          |
| Mental Health Community                 | 3            | 0          | 28            | 49           | 20         | 0          | 100          |
| Neurology                               | 110          | 0          | 2             | 7            | 3          | 0          | 122          |
| NIAS - Patient Care Service             | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 28         | 28           |
| NIAS - Emergency Ambulance Control      | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 56         | 56           |
| NIAS - Non-Emergency Ambulance Control  | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 42         | 42           |
| Obstetrics                              | 89           | 46         | 69            | 74           | 28         | 0          | 306          |
| Oncology                                | 42           | 5          | 3             | 3            | 6          | 0          | 59           |
| Ophthalmology                           | 114          | 0          | 3             | 3            | 8          | 0          | 128          |
| Paediatrics                             | 101          | 0          | 26            | 16           | 16         | 0          | 159          |
| Physical Disability/ Sensory Support    | 8            | 16         | 13            | 25           | 4          | 0          | 66           |
| Radiology                               | 63           | 12         | 24            | 14           | 9          | 0          | 122          |
| Residential Care                        | 5            | 0          | 21            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 26           |
| Supported Living                        | 0            | 0          | 12            | 6            | 2          | 0          | 20           |
| Trauma & Orthopaedics                   | 516          | 6          | 22            | 24           | 34         | 0          | 602          |
| Urology                                 | 88           | 0          | 3             | 22           | 12         | 0          | 125          |
| Vascular                                | 29           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 29           |
| Other                                   | 461          | 63         | 323           | 424          | 138        | 14         | 1,423        |
| Unknown                                 | 14           | 0          | 1             | 26           | 0          | 1          | 42           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b> | <b>2,772</b> | <b>890</b> | <b>1,332</b>  | <b>1,166</b> | <b>629</b> | <b>226</b> | <b>7,015</b> |

## APPENDIX 5: COMPLAINTS BY AGE GROUP AND SEX OF PATIENT/CLIENT (2014/15)

| Age Group    | Female       | Male         | Total        |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Under 15     | 187          | 208          | 395          |
| 16 - 18      | 43           | 37           | 80           |
| 19 - 24      | 110          | 50           | 160          |
| 25 - 34      | 298          | 122          | 420          |
| 35 - 44      | 281          | 146          | 427          |
| 45 - 54      | 249          | 182          | 431          |
| 55 - 64      | 231          | 218          | 449          |
| 65 - 74      | 209          | 187          | 396          |
| 75 +         | 337          | 224          | 561          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,945</b> | <b>1,374</b> | <b>3,319</b> |

## APPENDIX 6: 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 Services           | 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 7: 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 Complaint

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 Issue 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**

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 8: 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 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

### **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

### **Contracted Services**

Contracted Regulated Children's Services

Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Agency

Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing

Contracted Independent Hospital Services

Other Contracted Services

### **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 9: 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 10: 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 Head of Branch is Principal Statistician, Ms. Ruth Fulton. 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 DHSSPS, 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:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/statistics.htm>

## APPENDIX 11: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

**Michael O'Donnell**

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SQ

☒ Tel: [REDACTED]

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INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



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# Complaints Received by HSC Trusts, Board and Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland (2015/16)



Department of  
**Health**  
An Roinn  
**Sláinte**

Published 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## 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. |
| Authors             | Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart  |
| Publication Date    | 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2016   |
| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016   |
| Issued by           | Hospital Information Branch<br>Information & Analysis Directorate<br>Department of Health<br>Stormont Estate<br>Belfast, BT4 3SQ   |
| Statistician        | Michael O'Donnell<br>   |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been provided by HSC Trusts / Board and has been validated and quality assured by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.   |
| Target Audience     | DoH, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.  |
| Further Copies      | <a href="mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk">statistics@health-ni.gov.uk</a>   |
| Website             | <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics</a>  |
| Price               | Free   |
| Copyright           | This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.  |

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## KEY POINTS

### Latest Year (2015/16)

- During 2015/16, HSC Trusts received 4,477 complaints relating to 6,181 complaint issues (Tables 1 & 5, Figure 1).
- Three fifths (3,666, 59.3%), of complaint issues received during 2015/16 related to the Acute POC (Tables 2 & 3, Figure 3).
- One in nine (683, 11.0%) complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in 2015/16 related to the 'Accident & Emergency' specialty (Appendix 4).
- Of the 4,477 complaints received in 2015/16, the median age of the patient / client was 51.0 years (Figure 7).
- On average HSC Trusts took 24.1 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints received in 2015/16 (Table 5, Figure 11).

### Last Five Years (2011/12 to 2015/16)

- Between 2011/12 and 2014/15, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,530 (27.9%), but decreased by 834 (11.9%) since 2014/15 to 6,181 in 2015/16 (Table 1, Figure 1).
- Between 2011/12 and 2015/16, the number of complaint issues received relating to the Acute POC increased by 273 (8.0%), from 3,393 to 3,666 (Table 2).
- Since 2011/12, the number of complaint issues received increased in three HSC Trusts, with Western HSC Trust reporting the most notable increase (425, 91.0%), from 467 to 892 in 2015/16. (Table 1, Figure 1).
- During 2015/16, three in ten (1,905, 30.8%) complaint issues received related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Appendix 2).

# SECTION 1

## COMPLAINT ISSUES RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

### What's the Difference between a Complaint and a Complaint Issue?

In this statistical brief a **complaint** is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction' received from or on behalf of patients, clients or other users of HSC Trust, HSC Board 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 (POC), Subject and Specialty it relates to.

### Complaint Issues

Table 1 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last five years.

**Table 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2011/12 - 2015/16)**

| HSC Trust               | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Belfast                 | 2,122        | 2,113        | 2,514        | 2,772        | 2,019        |
| Northern                | 862          | 856          | 997          | 890          | 786          |
| South Eastern           | 1,172        | 1,459        | 1,343        | 1,332        | 1,161        |
| Southern                | 764          | 839          | 1,032        | 1,166        | 1,163        |
| Western                 | 467          | 591          | 800          | 629          | 892          |
| NIAS                    | 98           | 140          | 150          | 226          | 160          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>5,485</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> |

---

**11.9% decrease in complaint issues received since 2014/15**

---

Between 2011/12 and 2014/15, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts increased by 1,530 (27.9%), but decreased by 834 (11.9%) since 2014/15, to 6,181 in 2015/16 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Since 2011/12, the number of complaint issues received increased in three of the six HSC Trusts, with the Western HSC Trust reporting the most notable increase (425, 91.0%), from 467 to 892 in 2015/16. The Belfast HSC Trust reported the most notable decrease during this period (103, 4.9%), from 2,122 to 2,019 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Between 2011/12 and 2015/16, the number of complaint issues received by the NIAS increased by 62 (63.3%), from 98 to 160 (Table 1, Figure 1).

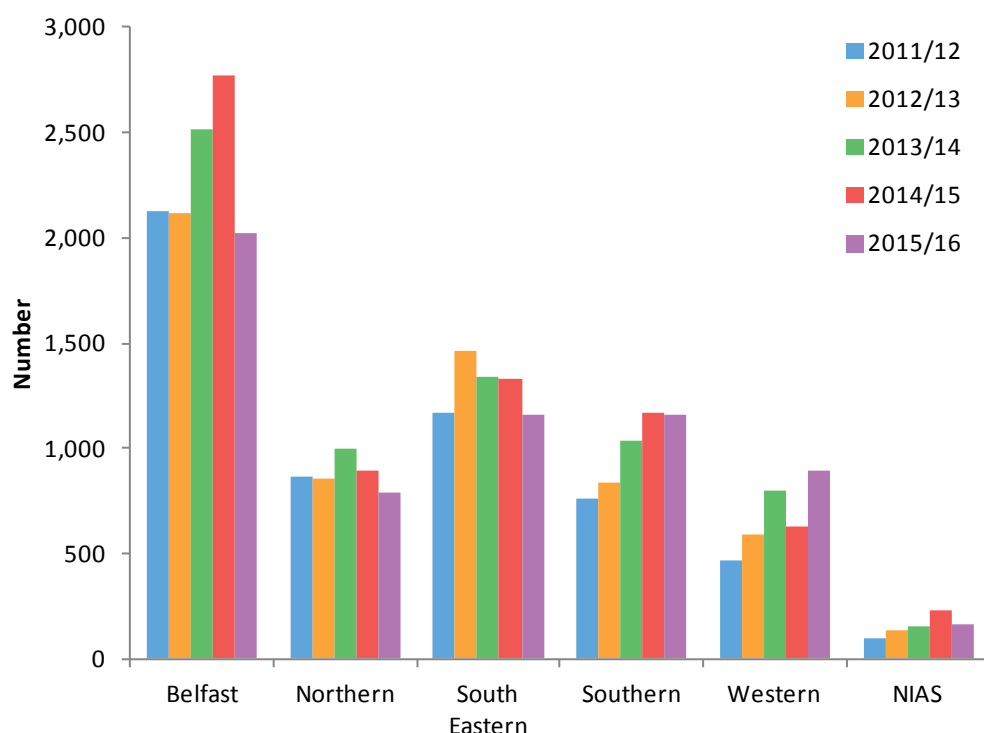
During 2015/16, almost a third of all complaint issues (2,019, 32.7%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,163 (18.8%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 1,161 (18.8%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 892 (14.4%) by the Western HSC Trust, 786 (12.7%) by the Northern HSC Trust and 160 (2.6%) by the NIAS (Table 1, Figure 1).

---

**Complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust almost doubled since 2011/12**

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**Figure 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2011/12 - 2015/16)**





## Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

Table 2 details the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in each of the last five years broken down by POC. 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.

**Table 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2011/12 - 2015/16)<sup>2</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 3,393        | 3,575        | 4,135        | 4,189        | 3,666        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 340          | 316          | 291          | 399          | 272          |
| Family & Child Care        | 318          | 361          | 492          | 495          | 496          |
| Elderly Services           | 302          | 320          | 437          | 457          | 439          |
| Mental Health              | 236          | 315          | 354          | 366          | 440          |
| Learning Disability        | 96           | 132          | 218          | 160          | 166          |
| Sens Imp & Phys Disability | 61           | 89           | 118          | 114          | 77           |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 4            | 2            | 5            | 0            | 1            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 191          | 222          | 178          | 214          | 194          |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 554          | 666          | 608          | 512          | 368          |
| Prison Healthcare          |              |              |              | 109          | 62           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>5,495</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> |

During 2015/16, 6,181 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, almost three fifths (3,666, 59.3%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2)

Between 2014/15 and 2015/16, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts relating to the Acute POC decreased by 523 (12.5%), from 4,189 to 3,666 (Table 2).

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**Three fifths of complaint issues received during 2014/15 related to the Acute POC**

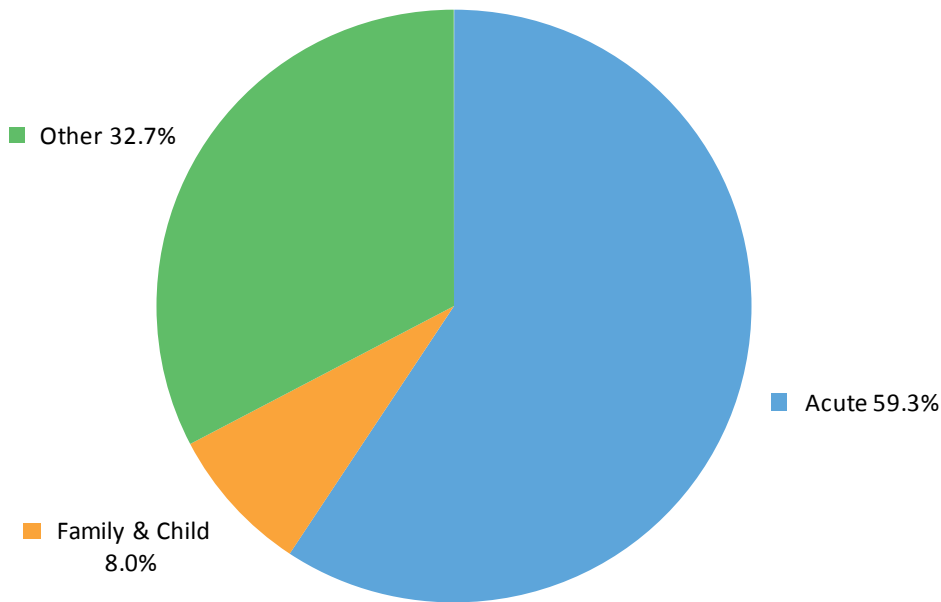
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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 6: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

<sup>2</sup> Prison Healthcare was previously included within 'None (No POC assigned)' but from 2014/15 this information is now recorded separately.

Two POC's accounted for over two thirds (4,162, 67.3%) of all complaint issues received during 2015/16; the Acute POC (3,666, 59.3%) and Family & Child Care POC (496, 8.0%) (Table 2, Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Two POCs Receiving the Largest Number of Complaint Issues (2015/16)<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> The 'Other' category includes all complaint issues not included within the two named POCs above.

## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

Table 3 presents information on the number of complaint issues received by each HSC Trust during 2015/16 by the POC of the complaint issue.

**Table 3: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2015/16)**

| Programme of Care          | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 1,626        | 388        | 643          | 488          | 521        | 0          | 3,666        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 25           | 31         | 57           | 49           | 110        | 0          | 272          |
| Family & Child Care        | 87           | 82         | 80           | 172          | 75         | 0          | 496          |
| Elderly Services           | 76           | 92         | 98           | 126          | 47         | 0          | 439          |
| Mental Health              | 55           | 98         | 56           | 173          | 58         | 0          | 440          |
| Learning Disability        | 13           | 30         | 17           | 77           | 29         | 0          | 166          |
| Sens Impair & Phys Dis     | 6            | 30         | 14           | 18           | 9          | 0          | 77           |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 1            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 1            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 0            | 16         | 98           | 59           | 21         | 0          | 194          |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 130          | 19         | 36           | 1            | 22         | 160        | 368          |
| Prison Healthcare          | 0            | 0          | 62           | 0            | 0          | 0          | 62           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>2,019</b> | <b>786</b> | <b>1,161</b> | <b>1,163</b> | <b>892</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>6,181</b> |

During 2015/16:

- Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,626, 44.4%) and Health Promotion & Disease Prevention POC (1, 100%) (Table 3, Figure 3).
- Northern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (30, 39.0%) (Table 3, Figure 3).
- South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC (98, 50.5%) and Prison Healthcare 62 (100%) of which it is the sole provider in Northern Ireland (Table 3, Figure 3).

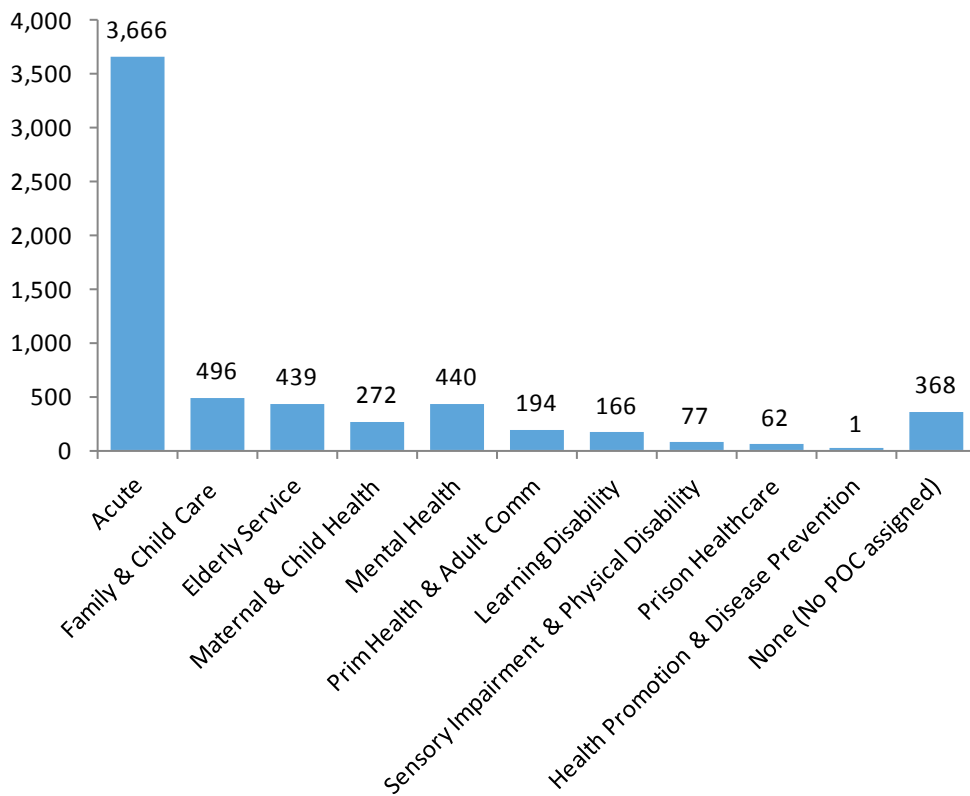
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**Three in ten  
complaint issues  
received in the  
Southern HSC  
Trust related to  
the Mental Health  
or Family & Child  
Care POC's**

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- Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Mental Health POC (173, 39.3%), Family & Child Care POC (172, 34.7%), Elderly Services POC (126, 28.7%) and the Learning Disability POC (77, 46.4%) (Table 3, Figure 3).
- Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Maternal & Child Health POC (110, 40.4%) (Table 3, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2015/16)**



## Complaint Issues Received by Category

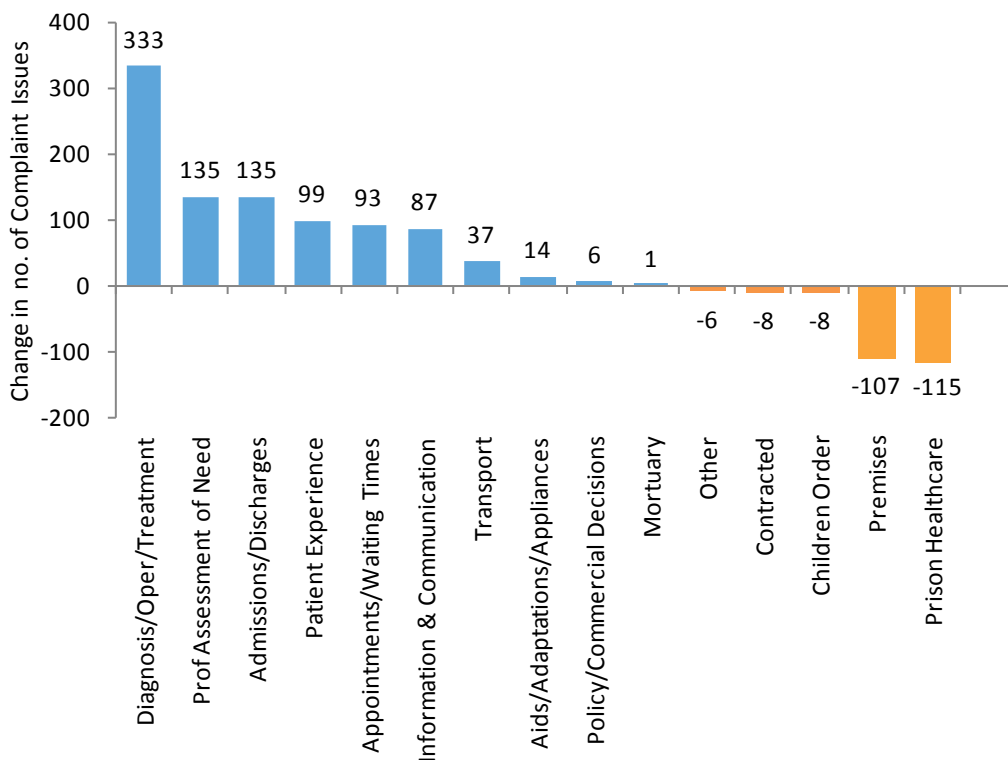
The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject<sup>4</sup> which best describes the nature of the patient’s / client’s concern. To enable the category of the complaint issue to be presented, the subject area of each complaint issue has been grouped into one of 15 main categories<sup>5</sup>.

During 2015/16, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues related to ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ (1,905, 30.8%), ‘Patient Experience’ (1,108, 17.9%), ‘Information & Communication’ (939, 15.2%) and ‘Appointments/Waiting Times’ (785, 12.7%) (Appendix 2).

Between 2011/12 and 2015/16, the ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ category reported the highest increase (333, 21.2%) in the number of complaint issues received, from 1,572 to 1,905 (Figure 4, Appendix 2).

Figure 4 below presents an analysis of the change in the number of complaint issues received between 2011/12 and 2015/16.

**Figure 4: Change in the Number of Complaint Issues Received, by Category of Complaint (2011/12 - 2015/16)**



**Complaint issues relating to Professional Assessment of Need almost doubled since 2011/12**

**Almost a third of complaint issues received during each of the last five years related to Diagnosis/Operation / Treatment**

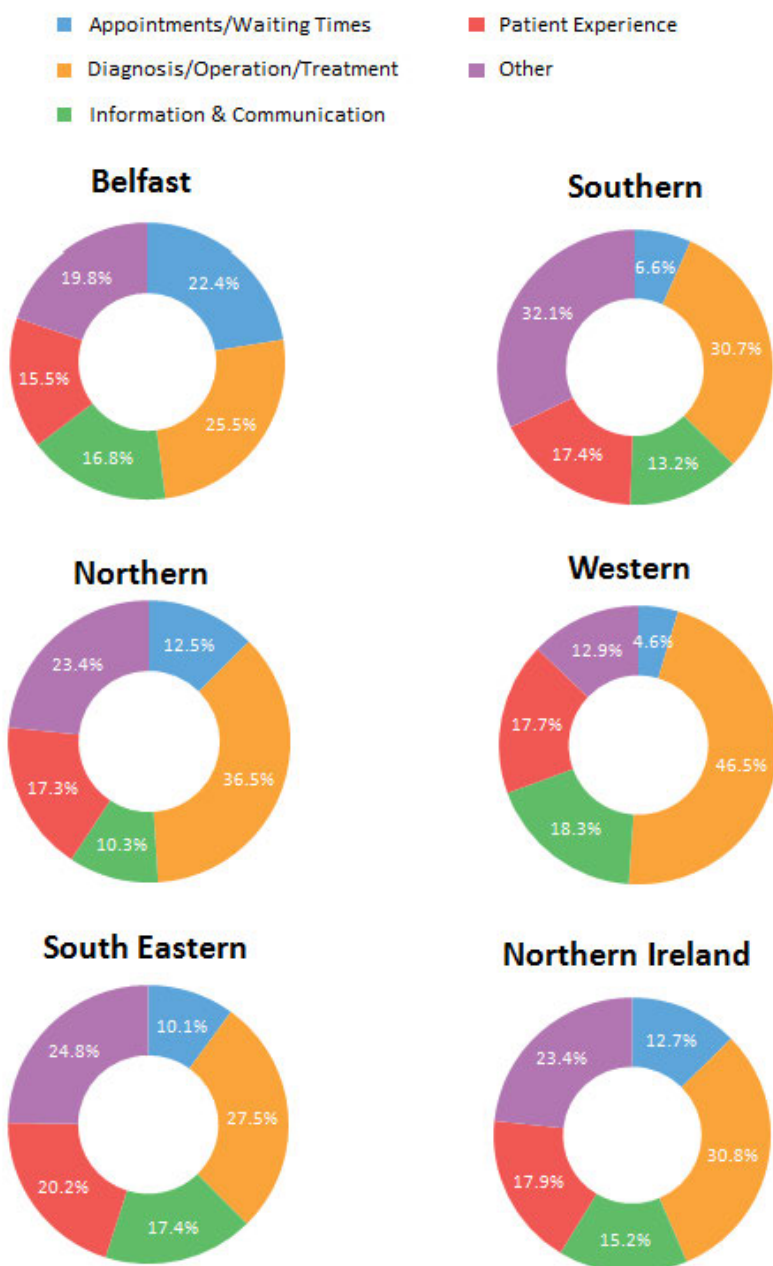
<sup>4</sup> A complete list of complaint issue subjects is detailed in Appendix 7, whilst an analysis of complaint issues by subject can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup> A list of complaint issue subjects grouped by general category is detailed in Appendix 8.

## Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust

Figure 5 below presents a summary of the four largest categories of complaint issues received during 2015/16 for each HSC Trust. In the charts below complaint issues not in the four largest categories have been referred to as 'Other'.

**Figure 5: Main Category of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2015/16)<sup>6</sup>**



**Almost half of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment**

<sup>6</sup> Information for Northern Ireland includes complaint issues received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

During 2015/16:

- Across all HSC Trusts, these four categories accounted for over three quarters (4,737, 76.6%) of all complaint issues received (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- In the Belfast HSC Trust, over a quarter (452, 22.4%) of complaint issues related to the 'Appointments/Waiting Times' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- In the Northern HSC Trust, over a third (287, 36.5%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- A fifth (235, 20.2%) of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to 'Patient Experience' (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- In the Southern HSC Trust, almost a third (357, 30.7%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category. It is also worth noting that 168 (14.4%) complaint issues related to the 'Professional Assessment of Need' category (Figure 5, Appendix 3).
- Almost half (415, 46.5%) of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (Figure 5, Appendix 3)

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**A fifth of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to Patient Experience**

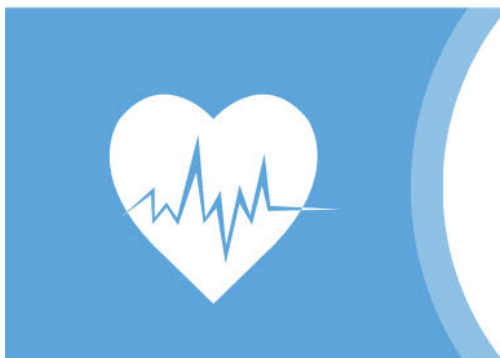
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## Complaint Issues Received by Specialty and HSC Trust

During 2015/16, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues received related to the 'Accident & Emergency' (683, 11.0%), 'Trauma & Orthopaedics' (519, 8.4%) and 'General Medicine' (422, 6.8%) specialties (Appendix 4).



**A & E**  
**683**



**Trauma & Ortho**  
**519**



**General Medicine**  
**422**

These three specialties accounted for over a quarter (1,624, 26.3%) of all complaint issues received during this time (Appendix 4).



# SECTION 2

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

During 2015/16, HSC Trusts received 4,477 complaints relating to 6,181 complaint issues. Section 2 presents a summary of information relating to these 4,477 complaints. Further information on the difference between a complaint and a complaint issue is detailed on page 7.

### Age of Patient / Client

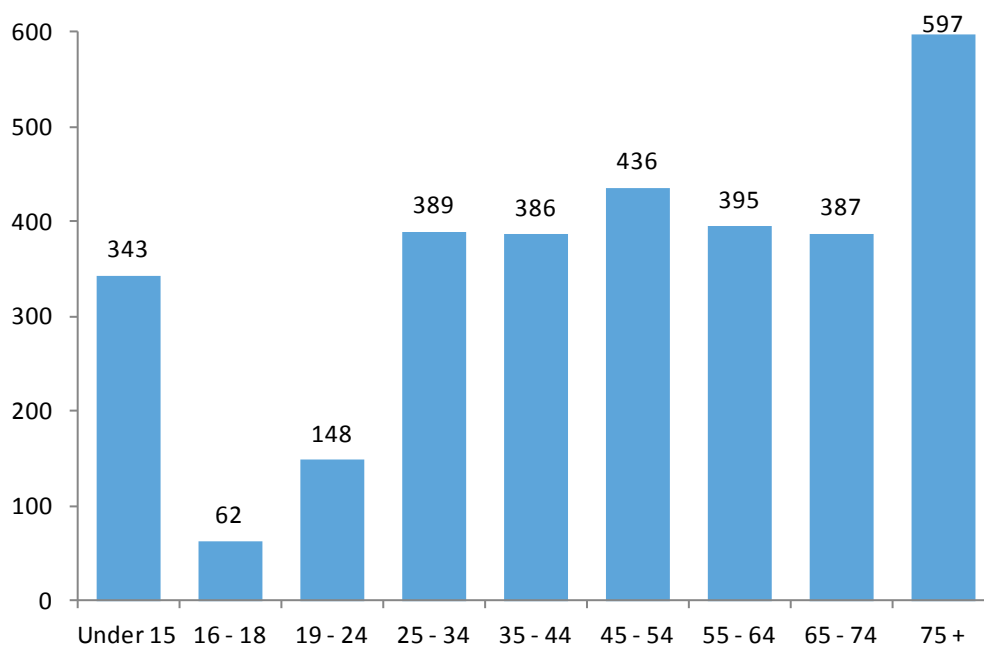
Figure 6 below presents a summary of the number of complaints received during 2015/16, by the age group of the patient / client at the time the complaint was received.

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**Of complaints received in 2015/16, the median age of the patient / client was 51 years old**

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**Figure 6: Complaints Received, by Age Group of Patient / Client (2015/16)**

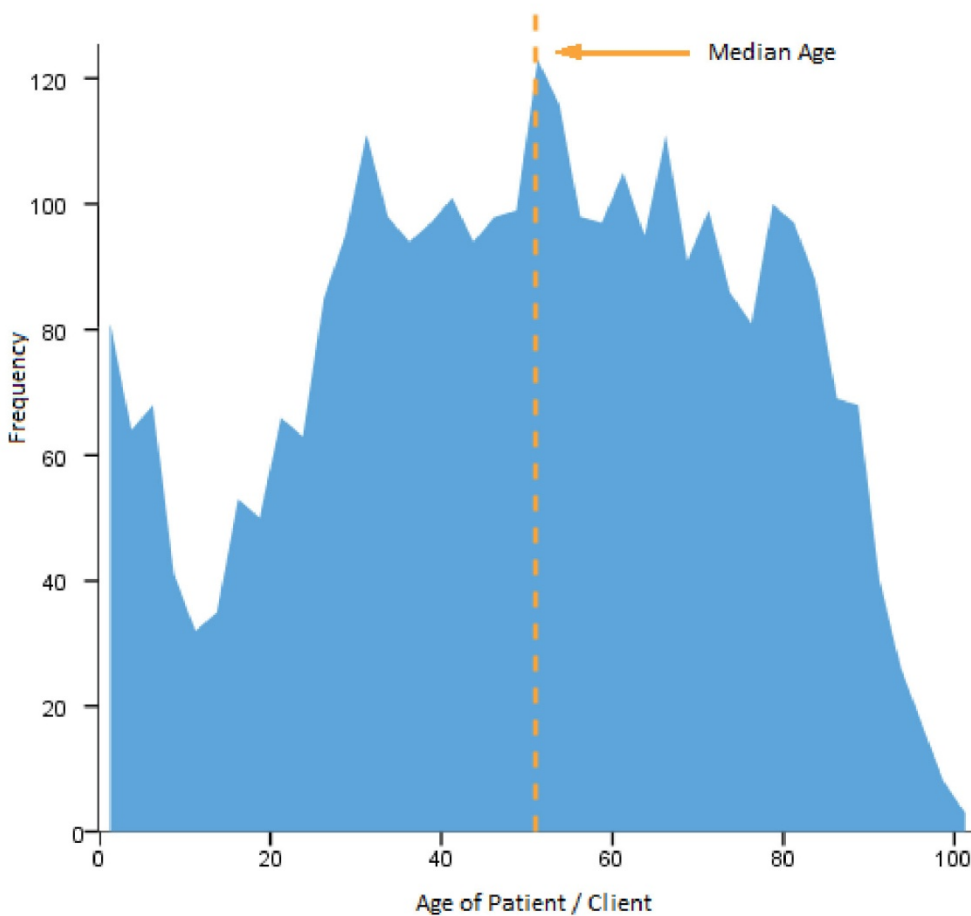


During 2015/16, the age of the patient / client was recorded for 3,143 (70.2%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.

For those complaints where the age of the patient / client was recorded, 597 (19.0%) related to patients / clients aged 75 & over, whilst 343 (10.9%) were for those aged 15 & under (Figure 6).

Figure 7 below presents information on the number of complaints received by the age of the patient / client at the time the complaint was received. The median age represents the middle value when all patient / client ages are arranged from the lowest to the highest value.

**Figure 7: Complaints Received, by Age of Patient / Client (2015/16)**



Of the complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2015/16, the median age of the patient / client was 51.0 years (Figure 7).

## Relationship of Complainant to Patient / client

Over half (2,409, 53.8%) of all complaints received in 2015/16 were from the patient / client, with a further 2,068 (46.2%) from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client.

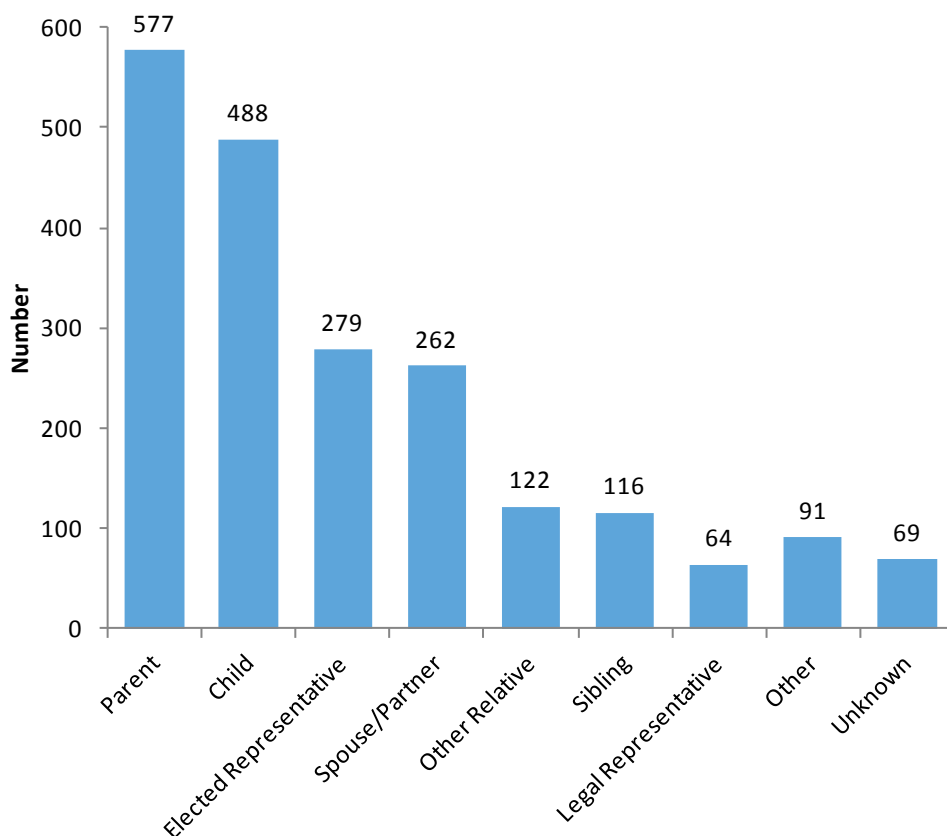
Figure 8 below details the relationship of the complainant to the patient / client for those complaints not made by the patient / client themselves.

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**Over half of complaints received in 2015/16, were from the patients / clients themselves**

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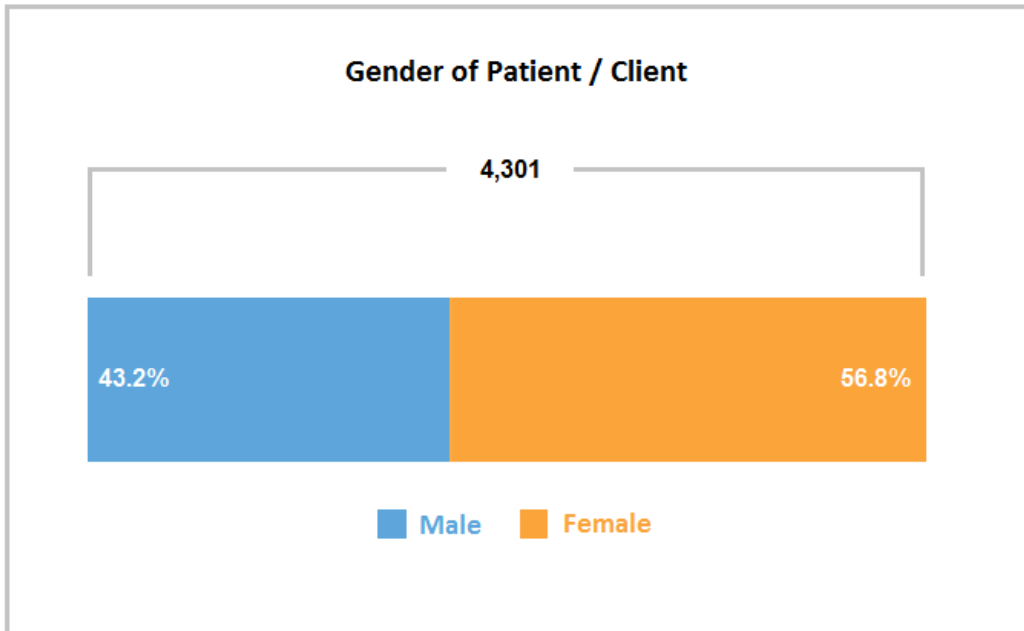
**Figure 8: Complaints Received, by Relationship of Complainant (2015/16)**



Of the 2,068 complaints received from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client, over a quarter (577, 27.9%) were from the parents of the patient / client, 488 (23.6%) from the children of the patient / client, 279 (13.5%) from an elected representative and 262 (12.7%) from a spouse / partner (Figure 8).

## Sex of Patient / Client

During 2015/16, the sex of the patient / client was recorded for 4,301 (96.1%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.



Of those complaints where the sex of the patient / client was recorded, 2,444 (56.8%) were for female patients / clients and 1,857 (43.2%) for male patients/clients.

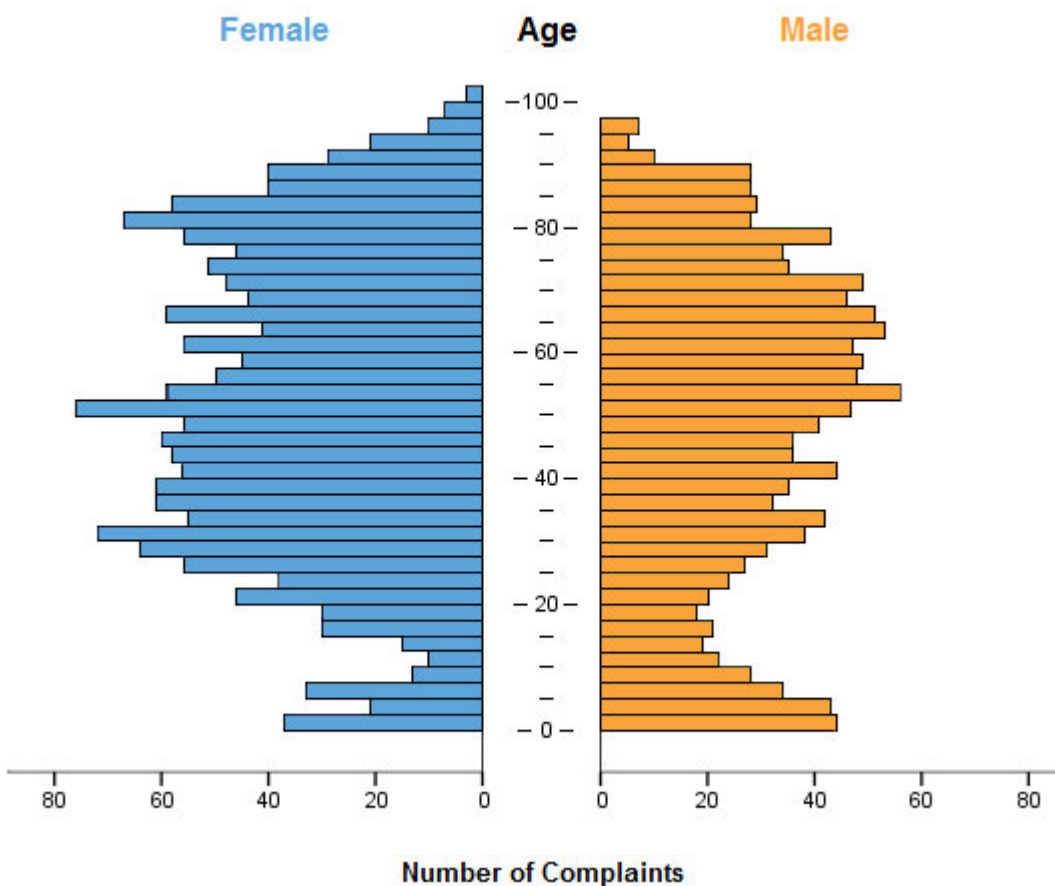
Since 2014/15, the proportion of complaints received regarding female patients / clients decreased by 1.5 percentage points, from 58.3% to 56.8% in 2015/16.

## Age and Sex of Patient / Client

The age and sex of the patient / client was recorded for 3,106 (69.4%) of the 4,477 complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2015/16. Of the 3,106 complaints where the age and sex of the patient / client was recorded, 1,778 (57.2%) were for female patient / clients and 1,328 (42.8%) were male patient / clients (Figure 9).

Figure 9 below details the number of complaints received in 2015/16 for each age band (2.5 years), for the 3,106 complaints which have the age and sex of the patient / client recorded.

**Figure 9: Complaints Received, by Age and Sex of Patient / Client (2015/16)**

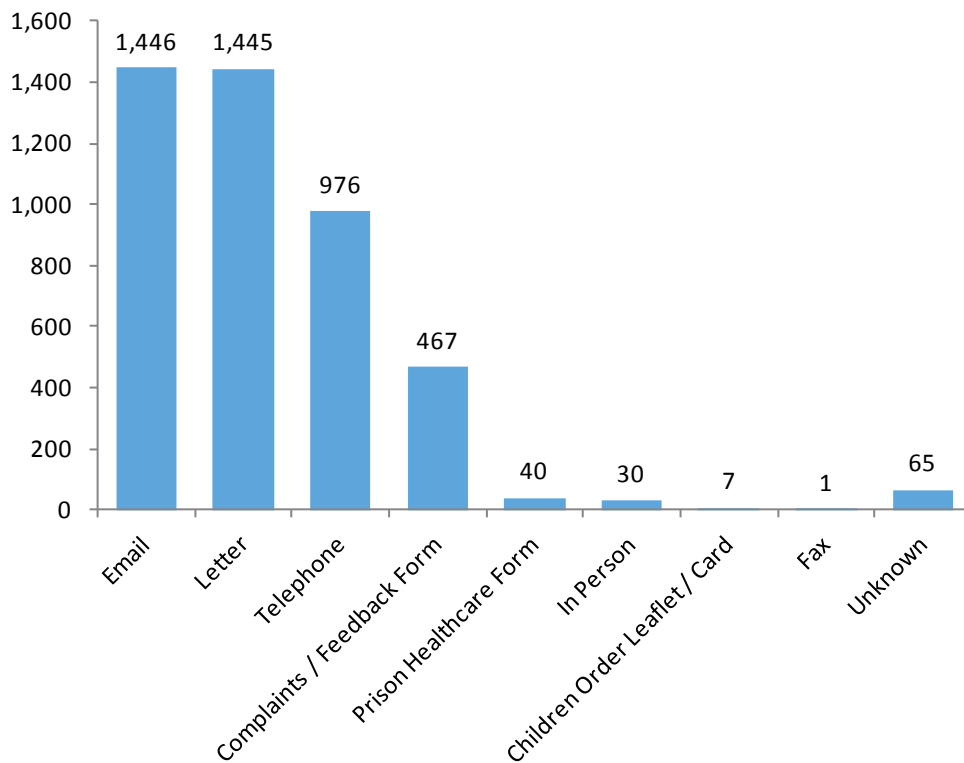


More complaints were received by HSC Trusts relating to female patient / clients than males in all age groups, except the '15 & Under' and '55 – 64' age groups (Figure 9, Appendix 5).

## Method of Complaint

Figure 10 details the method by which complaints were received in 2015/16.

**Figure 10: Complaints Received, by Method of Complaint (2015/16)**




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**Almost a third of complaints were received by email in 2015/16**

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During 2015/16, almost a third (1,446, 32.3%) of complaints received were received by email, 1,445 (32.3%) by letter and 976 (21.8%) by telephone. These three methods accounted for over four fifths (86.4%, 3,867) of all complaints received during the year (Figure 10).

## SECTION 3

### TIME TAKEN TO PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

Table 5 below details the length of time taken by HSC Trusts 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, i.e. 4,477 complaints were received during 2015/16 relating to 6,181 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.**

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**Almost three fifths of all complaints received a substantive response within 20 working days**

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**Table 5: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2015/16)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              | Total No.    | Mean No. of Working Days |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.                       | %            |              |                          |
| Belfast                 | 973                     | 56.8%        | 740                       | 43.2%        | <b>1,713</b> | 24.8                     |
| Northern                | 470                     | 70.1%        | 200                       | 29.9%        | <b>670</b>   | 20.5                     |
| South Eastern           | 412                     | 53.7%        | 355                       | 46.3%        | <b>767</b>   | 28.3                     |
| Southern                | 364                     | 50.8%        | 353                       | 49.2%        | <b>717</b>   | 18.6                     |
| Western                 | 325                     | 72.2%        | 125                       | 27.8%        | <b>450</b>   | 21.8                     |
| NIAS                    | 51                      | 31.9%        | 109                       | 68.1%        | <b>160</b>   | 39.3                     |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,595</b>            | <b>58.0%</b> | <b>1,882</b>              | <b>42.0%</b> | <b>4,477</b> | <b>24.1</b>              |

During 2015/16, almost three fifths (2,595, 58.0%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 5).

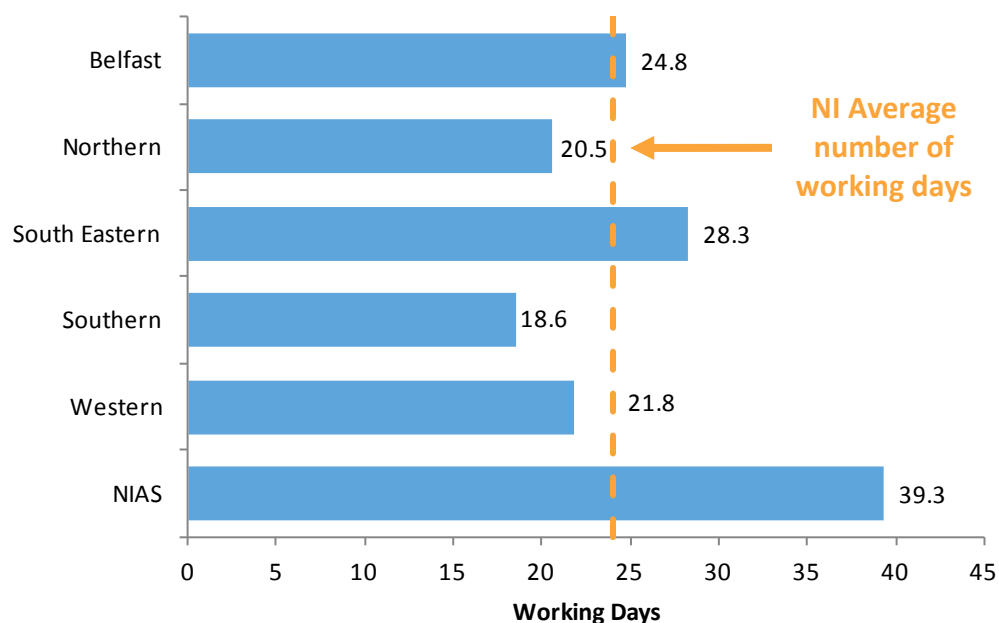
The Western HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (325, 72.2%) during 2015/16, whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (51, 31.9%) (Table 5).

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**On average substantive responses were provided within 24.1 working days**

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**Figure 11: Average Number of Working Days to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2015/16)<sup>7</sup>**



On average HSC Trusts took 24.1 working days to provide a substantive response to a complaint received in 2015/16 (Table 7, Figure 11).

<sup>7</sup> 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)

Information in this section refers to complaints received by the HSCB<sup>8</sup> 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.

The number of complaints made against FPS practices in Northern Ireland was similar in 2015/16 (289) to 2011/12 (282), despite increasing to 363 in 2012/13 (Table 6).

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**Almost three quarters of FPS complaints were handled under Local Resolution**

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**Table 6: FPS Complaints Handled (2011/12 - 2015/16)**

| Subject      | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP           | 239        | 315        | 298        | 307        | 260        |
| Dental       | 37         | 34         | 25         | 19         | 26         |
| Pharmacy     | 4          | 13         | 4          | 0          | 3          |
| Ophthalmic   | 2          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>282</b> | <b>363</b> | <b>327</b> | <b>326</b> | <b>289</b> |

Of the 289 complaints received by the HSCB regarding FPS practices in 2015/16, 210 were handled under Local Resolution and 79 where the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker (Tables 7 – 10).

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix 9 for further details.

## 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.

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**Over 9 in 10  
complaints  
handled under  
local resolution in  
2015/16 related to  
GPs**

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**Table 7: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2011/12 - 2015/16)**

| Subject      | 2011/12    | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP           | 189        | 228        | 241        | 224        | 194        |
| Dental       | 19         | 14         | 12         | 6          | 15         |
| Pharmacy     | 3          | 5          | 2          | 0          | 1          |
| Ophthalmic   | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>247</b> | <b>255</b> | <b>230</b> | <b>210</b> |

The number of complaints handled under local resolution was similar in 2015/16 (210) to 2011/12 (212), despite increasing to 255 in 2013/14 (Table 7).

**Table 8: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2015/16)**

| Subject              | GP         | Dental    | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total      |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Treatment & Care     | 60         | 7         | 0                     | 67         |
| Staff Attitude       | 35         | 0         | 0                     | 35         |
| Communication / Info | 43         | 5         | 0                     | 48         |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 0          | 0         | 0                     | 0          |
| Other                | 56         | 3         | 1                     | 60         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>194</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>1</b>              | <b>210</b> |

During 2015/16, 'Treatment & Care' accounted for almost a third (67, 31.9%) of all complaints handled under local resolution (Table 8).

## 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.

**Table 9: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2011/15 - 2015/16)**

| Subject      | 2011/12   | 2012/13    | 2013/14   | 2014/15   | 2015/16   |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| GP           | 50        | 87         | 57        | 83        | 66        |
| Dental       | 18        | 20         | 13        | 13        | 11        |
| Pharmacy     | 1         | 8          | 2         | 0         | 2         |
| Ophthalmic   | 1         | 1          | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>96</b> | <b>79</b> |

Between 2011/12 and 2015/16, the number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker increased slightly from 70 to 79, despite increasing to 116 in 2012/13 (Table 9).

**Table 10: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2015/16)**

| Subject              | GP        | Dental    | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Treatment & Care     | 38        | 9         | 0                     | 47        |
| Staff Attitude       | 6         | 0         | 1                     | 7         |
| Communication / Info | 12        | 0         | 1                     | 13        |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 1         | 0         | 0                     | 1         |
| Other                | 9         | 2         | 0                     | 11        |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>66</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>2</b>              | <b>79</b> |

'Treatment & Care' accounted for almost three fifths half (47, 59.5%), of all complaints in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker during 2015/16 (Table 10).

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**Over four fifths of complaints where the HSCB acted as an honest broker related to GPs**

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## 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 and 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.

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>

Information presented on HSC Board and 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.

### 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. Following submission, HIB carry out a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, Board and FPS complaint issues 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 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/trust-complaints-form-ch8>

## Contact Information

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

**Michael O'Donnell**

**Email:** [REDACTED]

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT ISSUES BY TRUST (2015/16)

| Subject  | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises   | 25           | 2          | 9            | 10           | 3          | 0          | 49           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                                | 24           | 6          | 15           | 38           | 0          | 0          | 83           |
| Children Order Complaints                                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 0            | 3          | 0          | 4            |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 56           | 29         | 42           | 29           | 62         | 1          | 219          |
| Communication/Information                                  | 309          | 58         | 159          | 123          | 139        | 0          | 788          |
| Complaints Handling  | 0            | 0          | 9            | 1            | 3          | 0          | 13           |
| Confidentiality  | 23           | 8          | 13           | 12           | 12         | 0          | 68           |
| Consent to Treatment/Care                                  | 0            | 0          | 0            | 7            | 2          | 0          | 9            |
| Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Services                  | 1            | 19         | 3            | 0            | 2          | 0          | 25           |
| Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing                   | 0            | 11         | 6            | 4            | 0          | 0          | 21           |
| Contracted Independent Hospital Services                   | 2            | 0          | 3            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 5            |
| Other Contracted Services                                  | 0            | 4          | 1            | 3            | 0          | 0          | 8            |
| Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients                          | 4            | 4          | 5            | 9            | 55         | 0          | 77           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                                 | 1            | 0          | 2            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 3            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                            | 23           | 22         | 21           | 55           | 22         | 0          | 143          |
| Discrimination   | 2            | 3          | 7            | 4            | 2          | 0          | 18           |
| Environmental  | 18           | 7          | 13           | 13           | 4          | 0          | 55           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services (Ex Contracted Services)   | 26           | 21         | 12           | 5            | 2          | 0          | 66           |
| Infection Control  | 1            | 5          | 5            | 1            | 0          | 0          | 12           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                     | 0            | 0          | 0            | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                                | 5            | 47         | 33           | 31           | 11         | 0          | 127          |
| Privacy/Dignity  | 3            | 6          | 4            | 8            | 21         | 0          | 42           |
| Professional Assessment of Need                            | 22           | 15         | 27           | 168          | 48         | 0          | 280          |
| Property/Expenses/Finances                                 | 26           | 5          | 14           | 24           | 1          | 0          | 70           |
| Records/Record Keeping                                     | 7            | 16         | 26           | 18           | 9          | 0          | 76           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                   | 282          | 122        | 224          | 166          | 134        | 64         | 992          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time                | 0            | 1          | 1            | 2            | 5          | 77         | 86           |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment                | 2            | 0          | 0            | 1            | 1          | 1          | 5            |
| Quality of Treatment & Care                                | 346          | 238        | 296          | 232          | 237        | 11         | 1,360        |
| Quantity of Treatment & Care                               | 109          | 15         | 13           | 80           | 59         | 0          | 276          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Apps      | 1            | 41         | 11           | 7            | 0          | 0          | 60           |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments   | 330          | 34         | 72           | 24           | 0          | 0          | 460          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hosp | 236          | 9          | 27           | 24           | 0          | 0          | 296          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                             | 9            | 12         | 10           | 10           | 13         | 0          | 54           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                          | 5            | 3          | 10           | 23           | 0          | 0          | 41           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                      | 107          | 8          | 17           | 13           | 28         | 0          | 173          |
| Other  | 14           | 15         | 50           | 17           | 14         | 6          | 116          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                    | <b>2,019</b> | <b>786</b> | <b>1,161</b> | <b>1,163</b> | <b>892</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>6,181</b> |

**APPENDIX 2: CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT ISSUE BY TRUST (2011/12 - 2015/16)**

| Category of Complaint Issue | 2011/12      |               | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               | 2014/15      |               | 2015/16      |               |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges       | 307          | 5.6%          | 356          | 5.9%          | 433          | 6.3%          | 565          | 8.1%          | 442          | 7.2%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances | 69           | 1.3%          | 85           | 1.4%          | 76           | 1.1%          | 71           | 1.0%          | 83           | 1.3%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times  | 692          | 12.6%         | 699          | 11.7%         | 844          | 12.3%         | 945          | 13.5%         | 785          | 12.7%         |
| Children Order              | 12           | 0.2%          | 13           | 0.2%          | 43           | 0.6%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 4            | 0.1%          |
| Contracted Services         | 67           | 1.2%          | 78           | 1.3%          | 118          | 1.7%          | 103          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          |
| Diagnosis/Oper/Treatment    | 1,572        | 28.7%         | 1,802        | 30.0%         | 1,971        | 28.8%         | 2,054        | 29.3%         | 1,905        | 30.8%         |
| Information & Communication | 852          | 15.5%         | 920          | 15.3%         | 1,074        | 15.7%         | 1,035        | 14.8%         | 939          | 15.2%         |
| Mortuary                    | 0            | 0.0%          | 2            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 3            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Patient Experience          | 1009         | 18.4%         | 1,076        | 17.9%         | 1,267        | 18.5%         | 1,241        | 17.7%         | 1,108        | 17.9%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions | 121          | 2.2%          | 124          | 2.1%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 165          | 2.4%          | 127          | 2.1%          |
| Premises                    | 289          | 5.3%          | 214          | 3.6%          | 278          | 4.1%          | 233          | 3.3%          | 182          | 2.9%          |
| Prison Healthcare           | 174          | 3.2%          | 267          | 4.5%          | 163          | 2.4%          | 106          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          |
| Prof Assessment of Need     | 145          | 2.6%          | 153          | 2.6%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 249          | 3.5%          | 280          | 4.5%          |
| Transport                   | 54           | 1.0%          | 82           | 1.4%          | 84           | 1.2%          | 112          | 1.6%          | 91           | 1.5%          |
| Other                       | 122          | 2.2%          | 127          | 2.1%          | 109          | 1.6%          | 133          | 1.9%          | 116          | 1.9%          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>5,485</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

**APPENDIX 3: CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT ISSUE BY TRUST (2015/16)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Admissions/Discharges           | 260          | 31         | 50           | 79           | 22         | 0          | 442              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 24           | 6          | 15           | 38           | 0          | 0          | 83               |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 452          | 98         | 117          | 77           | 41         | 0          | 785              |
| Children Order                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 0            | 3          | 0          | 4                |
| Contracted Services             | 3            | 34         | 13           | 7            | 2          | 0          | 59               |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 515          | 287        | 319          | 357          | 415        | 12         | 1,905            |
| Information & Communication     | 339          | 81         | 202          | 154          | 163        | 0          | 939              |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0          | 0            | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1                |
| Patient Experience              | 313          | 136        | 235          | 202          | 158        | 64         | 1,108            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 5            | 47         | 33           | 31           | 11         | 0          | 127              |
| Premises                        | 70           | 35         | 39           | 29           | 9          | 0          | 182              |
| Prison Healthcare               | 0            | 0          | 59           | 0            | 0          | 0          | 59               |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 22           | 15         | 27           | 168          | 48         | 0          | 280              |
| Transport                       | 2            | 1          | 1            | 3            | 6          | 78         | 91               |
| Other                           | 14           | 15         | 50           | 17           | 14         | 6          | 116              |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,019</b> | <b>786</b> | <b>1,161</b> | <b>1,163</b> | <b>892</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>6,181</b>     |



**APPENDIX 4: SPECIALTY OF COMPLAINT ISSUES BY TRUST (2015/16)**

| Specialty                               | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern     | Western    | NIAS       | Total        |
|---|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Accident & Emergency                    | 129          | 111        | 102           | 91           | 175        | 75         | 683          |
| Allied Health Professions               | 67           | 25         | 51            | 24           | 10         | 0          | 177          |
| Anaesthetics & Pain Management          | 18           | 5          | 23            | 4            | 7          | 0          | 57           |
| Burns Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery | 9            | 0          | 29            | 0            | 2          | 0          | 40           |
| Cardiology                              | 45           | 2          | 15            | 23           | 13         | 0          | 98           |
| Child & Adolescent Psychiatry           | 8            | 4          | 0             | 41           | 2          | 0          | 55           |
| Children & Young Peoples Services       | 73           | 81         | 101           | 47           | 72         | 0          | 374          |
| Community Nursing/Midwives              | 0            | 3          | 0             | 0            | 32         | 0          | 35           |
| Community Paediatrics                   | 21           | 8          | 6             | 2            | 16         | 0          | 53           |
| Day Care Services                       | 0            | 76         | 0             | 0            | 5          | 0          | 81           |
| Dentistry                               | 25           | 2          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 27           |
| Dermatology                             | 14           | 1          | 5             | 7            | 4          | 0          | 31           |
| Domicillary Services                    | 11           | 37         | 6             | 0            | 12         | 0          | 66           |
| ENT                                     | 0            | 7          | 18            | 0            | 17         | 0          | 42           |
| General Medicine                        | 101          | 40         | 113           | 99           | 69         | 0          | 422          |
| General Surgery                         | 105          | 70         | 41            | 70           | 84         | 0          | 370          |
| Genito-Urinary Medicine                 | 22           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 22           |
| Geriatric Medicine                      | 34           | 37         | 27            | 0            | 9          | 0          | 107          |
| Gynaecology                             | 77           | 10         | 32            | 25           | 40         | 0          | 184          |
| Joint Consultant Clinics                | 0            | 36         | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 36           |
| Learning Disability                     | 12           | 26         | 14            | 64           | 7          | 0          | 123          |
| Mental Health Acute                     | 49           | 24         | 41            | 61           | 11         | 0          | 186          |
| Mental Health Community                 | 0            | 42         | 20            | 62           | 39         | 0          | 163          |
| Neurology                               | 56           | 0          | 14            | 0            | 8          | 0          | 78           |
| NIAS - Emergency Ambulance Control      | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 41         | 41           |
| NIAS - Non-Emergency Ambulance Control  | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 25         | 25           |
| Obstetrics                              | 47           | 20         | 73            | 57           | 7          | 0          | 204          |
| Old Age Psychiatry                      | 0            | 15         | 13            | 0            | 0          | 0          | 28           |
| Oncology                                | 16           | 4          | 5             | 6            | 6          | 0          | 37           |
| Ophthalmology                           | 84           | 0          | 4             | 2            | 8          | 0          | 98           |
| Paediatrics                             | 94           | 7          | 19            | 10           | 32         | 0          | 162          |
| Physical Disability/ Sensory Support    | 4            | 19         | 16            | 13           | 12         | 0          | 64           |
| Radiology                               | 46           | 14         | 15            | 11           | 19         | 0          | 105          |
| Residential Care                        | 3            | 9          | 22            | 0            | 11         | 0          | 45           |
| Trauma & Orthopaedics                   | 381          | 0          | 31            | 30           | 77         | 0          | 519          |
| Urology                                 | 63           | 4          | 11            | 17           | 7          | 0          | 102          |
| Vascular                                | 23           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0          | 0          | 23           |
| Other                                   | 376          | 47         | 294           | 385          | 79         | 19         | 1,200        |
| Unknown                                 | 6            | 0          | 0             | 12           | 0          | 0          | 18           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b> | <b>2,019</b> | <b>786</b> | <b>1,161</b>  | <b>1,163</b> | <b>892</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>6,181</b> |

## APPENDIX 5: COMPLAINTS BY AGE GROUP AND SEX OF PATIENT / CLIENT (2015/16)

| Age Group    | Female       | Male         | Total        |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Under 15     | 142          | 198          | <b>340</b>   |
| 16 - 18      | 35           | 25           | <b>60</b>    |
| 19 - 24      | 96           | 50           | <b>146</b>   |
| 25 - 34      | 247          | 138          | <b>385</b>   |
| 35 - 44      | 236          | 147          | <b>383</b>   |
| 45 - 54      | 251          | 180          | <b>431</b>   |
| 55 - 64      | 192          | 197          | <b>389</b>   |
| 65 - 74      | 202          | 181          | <b>383</b>   |
| 75 +         | 377          | 212          | <b>589</b>   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,778</b> | <b>1,328</b> | <b>3,106</b> |

## APPENDIX 6: 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 Services           | 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 7: 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 Complaint

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 Issue 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**

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 8: 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 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

### 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

### Contracted Services

Contracted Regulated Children's Services  
Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Agency  
Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing  
Contracted Independent Hospital Services

Other Contracted Services

### **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 9: 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 10: 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>

**APPENDIX 11: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

**Michael O'Donnell**

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

Department of Health

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Fax: 028 905 23288

Email: [statistics@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk)



INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Complaints Received by HSC Trusts, Board and Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland (2016/17)



Department of  
**Health**  
An Roinn  
**Sláinte**

## 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. |
| Authors             | Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart, Siobhan Morgan  |
| Publication Date    | 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2017   |
| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017   |
| Issued by           | Hospital Information Branch<br>Information & Analysis Directorate<br>Department of Health<br>Stormont Estate<br>Belfast, BT4 3SQ   |
| Statistician        | Michael O'Donnell<br>   |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been provided by HSC Trusts / Board and has been validated and quality assured by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.   |
| Target Audience     | DoH, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.  |
| Further Copies      | <a href="mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk">statistics@health-ni.gov.uk</a>   |
| Website             | <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics</a>  |
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## KEY POINTS

### Latest Year (2016/17)

- During 2016/17, HSC Trusts received 4,603 complaints relating to 6,189 complaint issues (Tables 1 & 10, Figure 1).
- Three fifths (3,703, 59.8%), of complaint issues received during 2016/17 related to the Acute POC (Tables 2 & 3, Figure 3).
- During 2016/17, over a quarter (1,775, 28.7%) of complaint issues received related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Table 6).
- Over one tenth (684, 11.1%), of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in 2016/17 related to the 'Accident & Emergency' specialty (Table 8).
- Of the 4,603 complaints received in 2016/17, the median age of the patient / client was 50.0 years (Figure 8).
- On average HSC Trusts took 24.7 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints received in 2016/17 (Table 10, Figure 14).

### Last Five Years (2012/13 to 2016/17)

- During the last five years, the highest number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts was in 2014/15 (7,015) and the lowest in 2012/13 (5,998) (Table 1).
- Between 2012/13 and 2016/17, the number of complaint issues received relating to the Mental Health POC increased by 116 (36.8%), from 315 to 431 (Table 3).
- The number of complaint issues relating to Prison Healthcare more than halved (63, 57.8%) over the past three years, from 109 in 2014/15 to 46 in 2016/17 (Table 3).
- Since 2012/13, the number of complaint issues received increased in four of the six HSC Trusts, with Western HSC Trust reporting the most notable increase (439, 74.3%), from 591 to 1,030 in 2016/17. (Table 1, Figure 2).

# SECTION 1

## COMPLAINT ISSUES RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

### What's 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, HSC Board 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 it relates to.

### Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts

During the last five years, the highest number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts was in 2014/15 (7,015) and the lowest in 2012/13 (5,998) (Table 1, Figure 2).

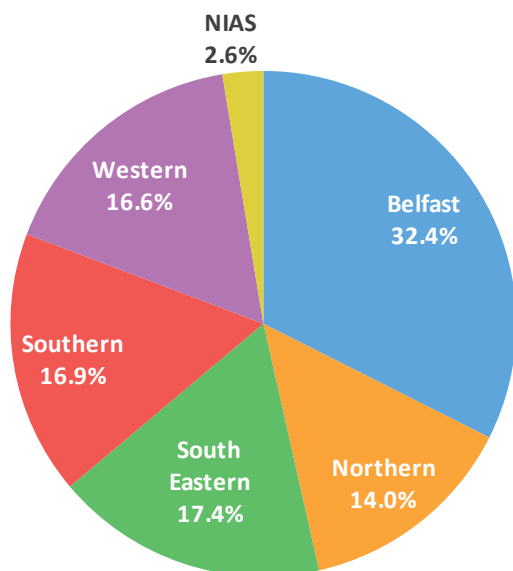
Almost a third (2,007, 32.4%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,076 (17.4%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 1,046 (16.9%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 1,030 (16.6%) by the Western HSC Trust, 869 (14.0%) by the Northern HSC Trust and 161 (2.6%) by the NIAS (Tables 1 & 2, Figure 1).

---

**3.2%**  
Increase in  
complaint issues  
received since  
2012/13

---

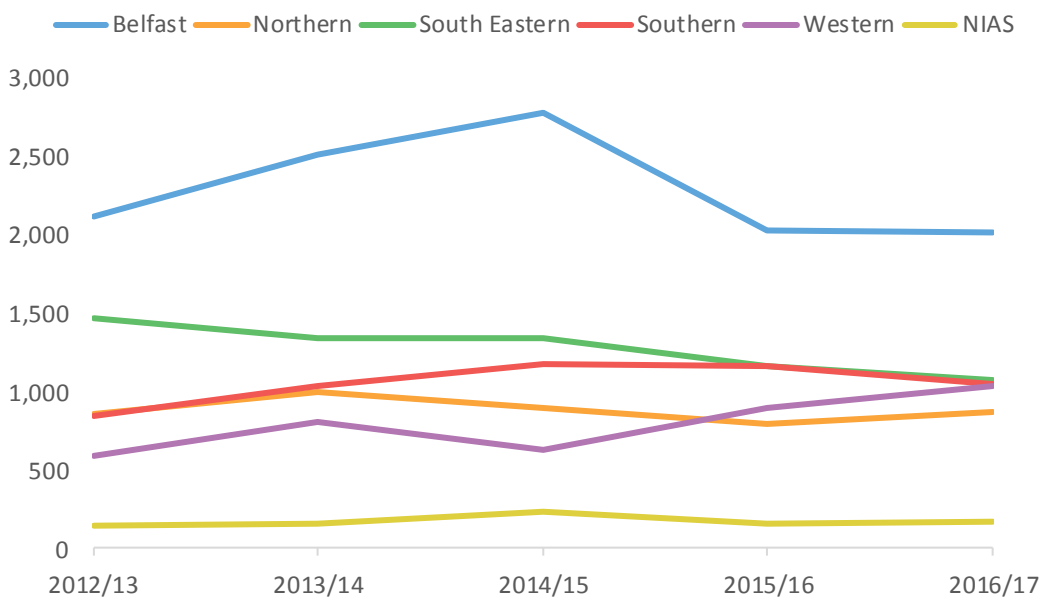
**Figure 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2016/17)**



**Complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust almost doubled since 2012/13**

Since 2012/13, the number of complaint issues received increased in four of the six HSC Trusts, with the Western HSC Trust reporting the most notable increase (439, 74.3%), from 591 to 1,030 in 2016/17. The South Eastern HSC Trust reported the most notable decrease during this period (383, 26.3%), from 1,459 to 1,076 (Table 1, Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2012/13 - 2016/17)**



## Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

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.

During 2016/17, 6,189 complaint issues were received by the HSC Trusts, of which, three fifths (3,703, 59.8%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2)

Five POC's accounted for over four fifths (5,325, 86.0%) of all complaint issues received during 2016/17; the Acute POC (3,703, 59.8%), Family & Child Care POC (459, 7.4%), Mental Health POC (431, 7.0%), Elderly Services POC (378, 6.1%) and Maternal & Child Health POC (354, 5.7%) (Table 2 & Fig 3).

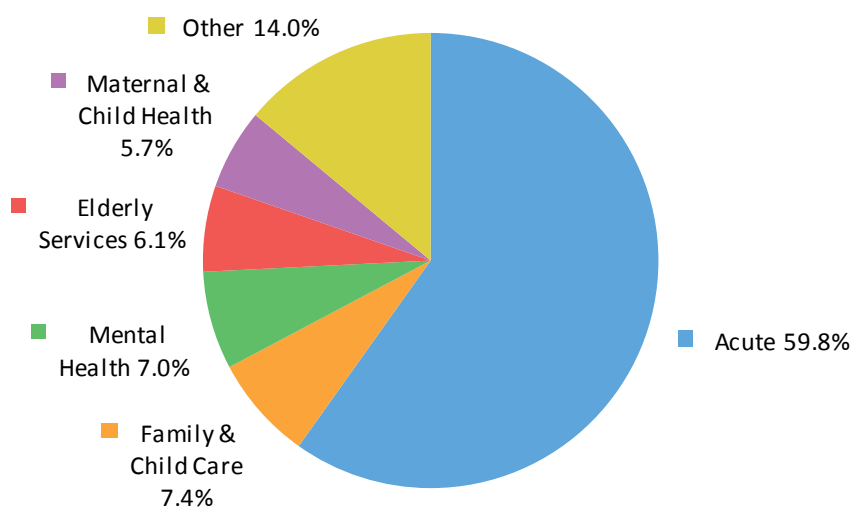
Since 2012/13, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts relating to the Mental Health POC increased by 116 (36.8%), from 315 to 431 (Table 3).

---

**60%** of  
complaint issues  
received during  
2016/17 related  
to the Acute POC

---

**Figure 3: POC's Receiving the Largest Number of Complaint Issues (2016/17)<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 1: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

<sup>2</sup> The 'Other' category includes all complaint issues not included within the five named POC's above.

## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

There is variation across HSC Trusts in the distribution of complaint issues across POC's. During 2016/17:

- Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,623, 43.8%) (Table 2).
- South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC (72, 43.1%) and Prison Healthcare 46 (100%) of which it is the sole provider in Northern Ireland (Table 2).
- Southern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Family & Child Care POC (145, 31.6%), Mental Health POC (133, 30.9%), Elderly Services POC (93, 24.6%), Learning Disability POC (46, 34.3%) and Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (22, 36.1%) (Table 2).
- Western HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Maternal & Child Health POC (126, 35.6%) (Table 2).

---

**27%**  
of complaint  
issues received in  
the Southern HSC  
Trust related to  
the Mental Health  
or Family & Child  
Care POC's

---



## Performance against the Complaint Issues Target

The 2016/17 Departmental target on complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland states that:

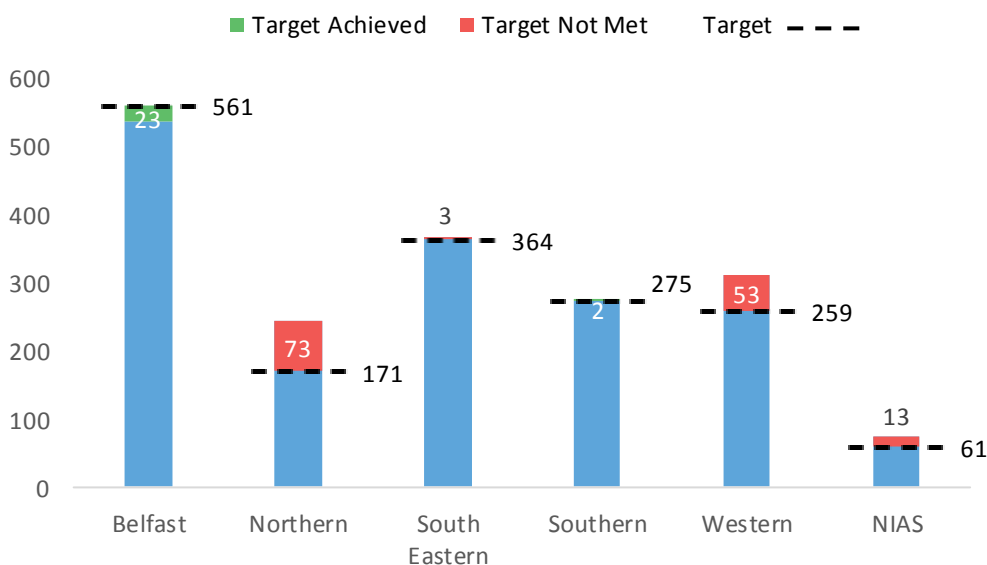
*'By March 2017, to have reduced the number of patient and service user complaints relating to attitude, behaviour and communication by 5% compared with 2015/16.'*

Both the Belfast and Southern HSC Trusts achieved the target on staff attitude / behaviour and communication / information.

Since 2015/16, complaint issues relating to staff attitude / behaviour and communication / information decreased by 53 (9.0%) in the Belfast HSC Trust, 23 fewer than the target, and decreased by 16 (5.5%) in the Southern HSC Trust, 2 fewer than the target (Table 4, Figure 4).

The number of complaint issues relating to staff attitude / behaviour and communication / information exceeded the target by 73 in Northern HSC Trust, 53 in the Western HSC Trust, 13 in the NIAS and 3 in the South Eastern Trust (Table 4, Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Complaint Issues Received Relating to Staff Attitude / Behaviour & Communication / Information (2016/17)**



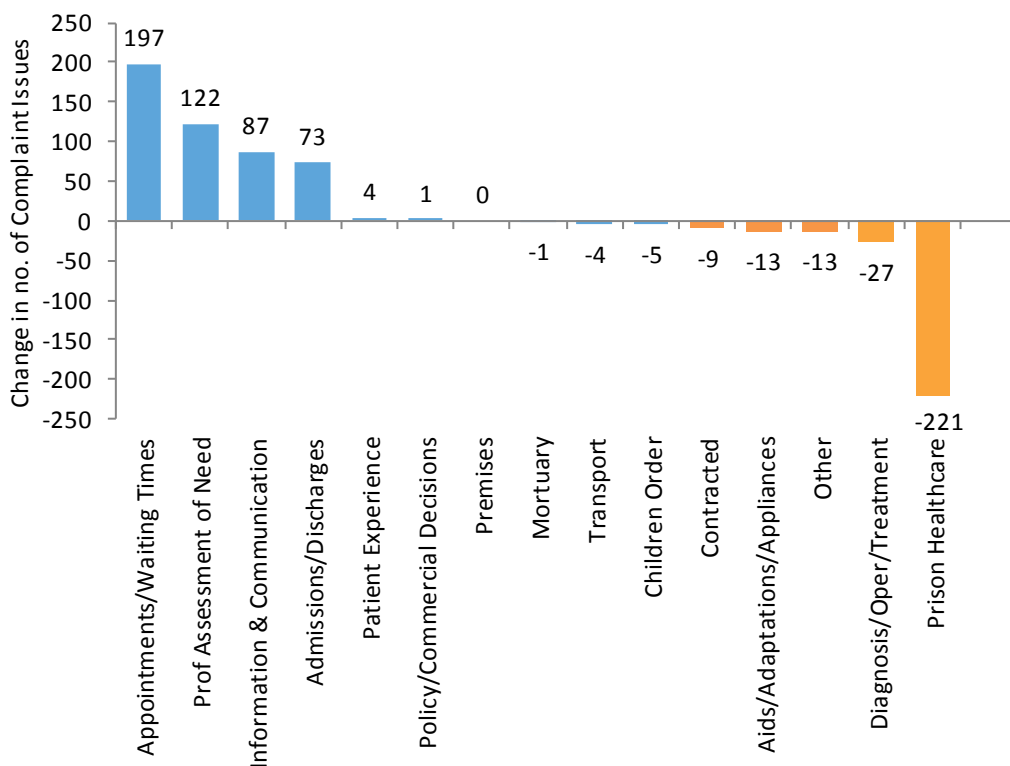
## Complaint Issues Received by Category

The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject<sup>3</sup> 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 categories<sup>4</sup>.

During 2016/17, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues related to ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ (1,775, 28.7%), ‘Patient Experience’ (1,080, 17.5%), ‘Information & Communication’ (1,007, 16.3%) and ‘Appointments/Waiting Times’ (896, 14.5%) (Table 6, Figure 6).

Between 2012/13 and 2016/17, the ‘Appointments/Waiting Times’ category reported the highest increase (197, 28.2%) in the number of complaint issues received, from 699 to 896 (Figure 5, Table 6).

**Figure 5: Change in the Number of Complaint Issues Received, by Category of Complaint (2012/13 - 2016/17)**



**Complaint issues relating to Professional Assessment of Need almost doubled since 2012/13**

**30%** of complaint issues received during each of the last five years related to **Diagnosis/Operation / Treatment**

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of complaint issue subjects is detailed in Appendix 2, whilst an analysis of complaint issues by subject can be found in Table 5.

<sup>4</sup> A list of complaint issue subjects grouped by general category is detailed in Appendix 3.

## Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust

During 2016/17:

- In the Belfast HSC Trust, over a quarter (516, 25.7%) of complaint issues related to the 'Appointments/Waiting Times' category (Figure 6, Table 7).
- In the Northern HSC Trust, almost a third (273, 31.4%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category (Figure 6, Table 7).
- Over a fifth (243, 22.6%) of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to 'Patient Experience' (Figure 6, Table 7).
- In the Southern HSC Trust, almost a quarter (256, 24.5%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category. It is also worth noting that 178 (17.0%) complaint issues related to the 'Professional Assessment of Need' category (Figure 6, Table 7).
- Over two fifths (452, 43.9%) of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (Figure 6, Table 7).

---

# 23%

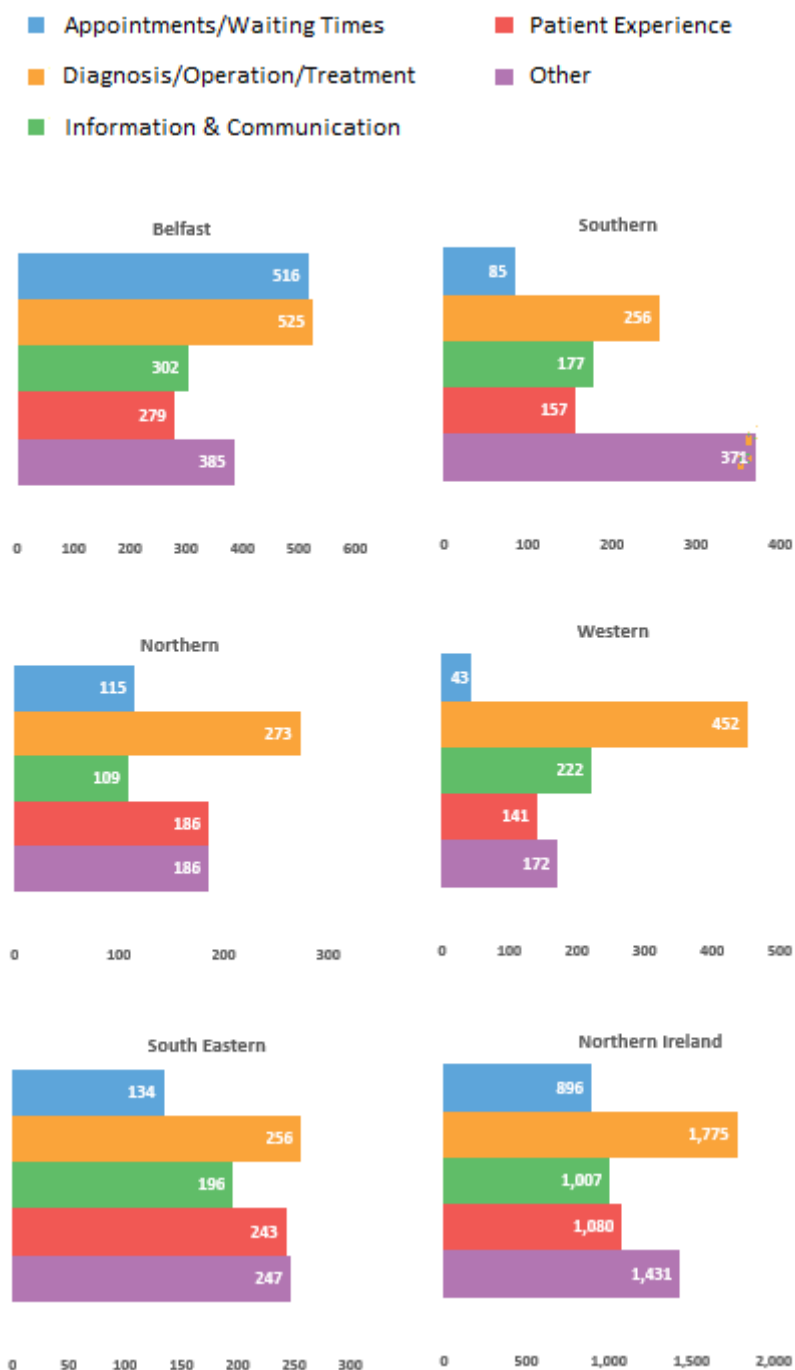
of complaint issues  
received by the  
South Eastern HSC  
Trust related to  
Patient Experience

---

Figure 6 below presents a summary of the four largest categories, accounting for over three quarters (4,758, 76.9%), of complaint issues received during 2016/17 for each HSC Trust. In the charts below complaint issues not in the four largest categories are referred to as 'Other'.

**Figure 6: Main Category of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2016/17)<sup>5</sup>**

**44%**  
of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment



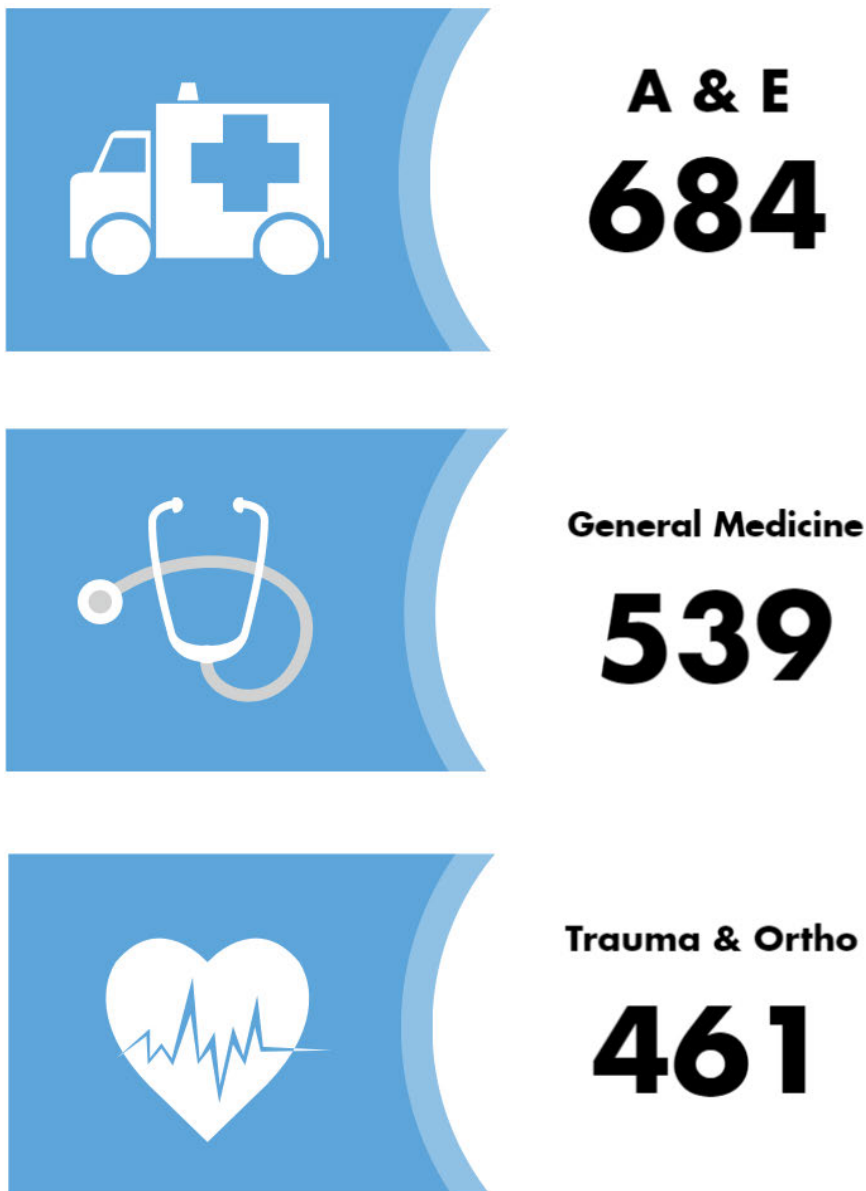
<sup>5</sup> Information for Northern Ireland includes complaint issues received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

## Complaint Issues Received by Specialty

During 2016/17, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues received related to the 'Accident & Emergency' (684, 11.1%), 'General Medicine' (539, 8.7%) and 'Trauma & Orthopaedics' (461, 7.4%) specialties (Table 8).

These three specialties accounted for over a quarter (1,684, 27.2%) of all complaint issues received during this time (Table 8).

**Figure 7: Top 3 Complaint Issues Received by Specialty**



## SECTION 2

### COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

During 2016/17, HSC Trusts received 4,603 complaints relating to 6,187 complaint issues. Section 2 presents a summary of information relating to these 4,603 complaints. Further information on the difference between a complaint and a complaint issue is detailed on page 5.

#### Age and Gender of Patient / Client

During 2016/17, the age of the patient / client was recorded in 3,114 (67.7%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.

For those complaints where the age of the patient / client was recorded, 510 (16.4%) related to patients / clients aged 75 & over, whilst 351 (11.3%) were for those aged 15 & under (Figure 8).

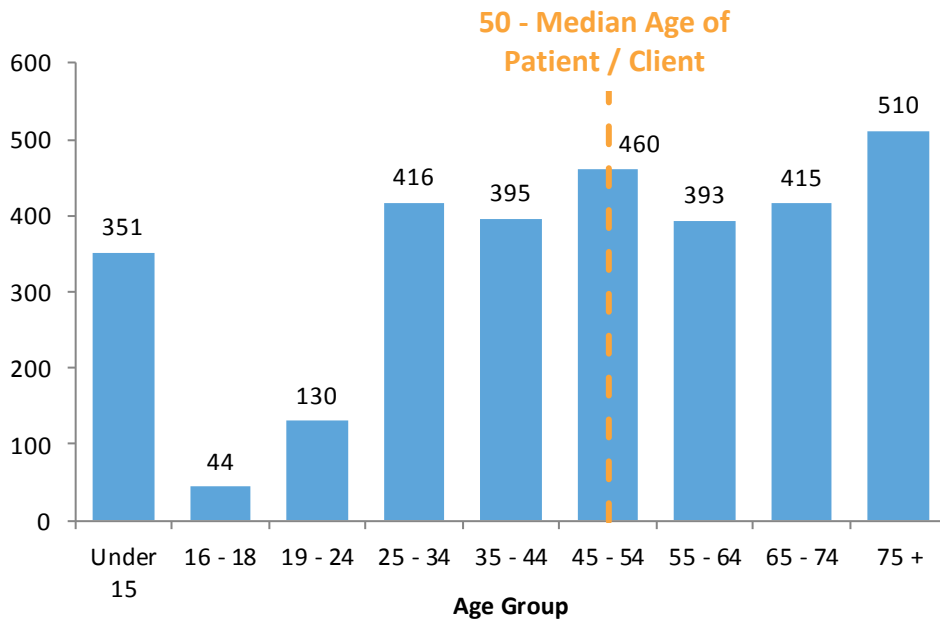
Of the complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2016/17, the median age of the patient / client was 50.0 years (Figure 8).

---

**50 years**  
the median age of  
patient / client  
complaints  
received in  
2016/17

---

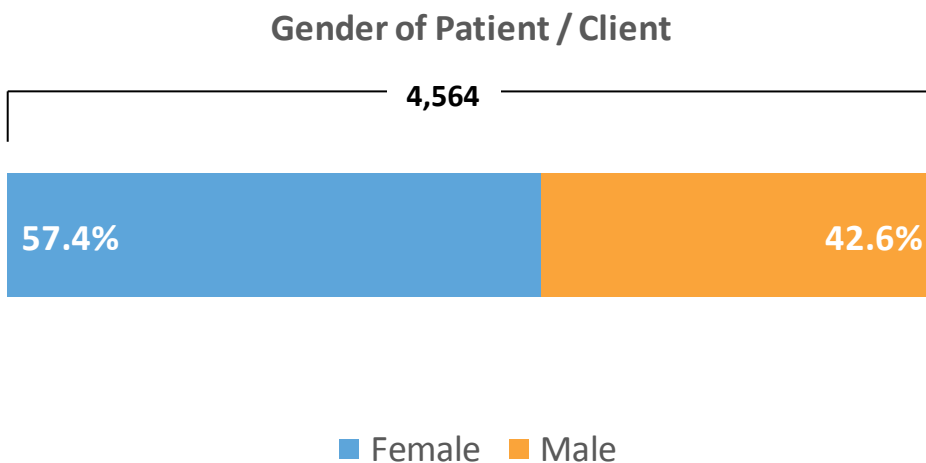
**Figure 8: Complaints Received by Age Group of Patient / Client (2016/17)**



During 2016/17, the gender of the patient / client was recorded in 4,564 (99.2%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts (Figure 9).

Of those complaints where the gender of the patient / client was recorded, 2,622 (57.4%) were for females and 1,942 (42.6%) for males (Figure 9).

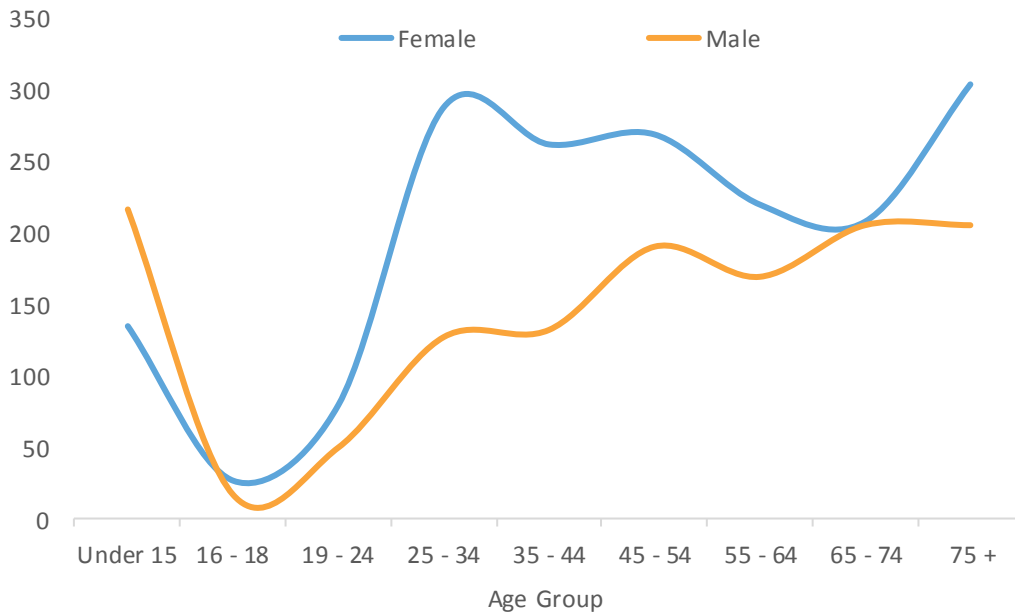
**Figure 9: Gender of Patient / Client (2016/17)**



The age and sex of the patient / client was recorded in 3,104 (67.4%) of the 4,603 complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2016/17. Of the 3,104 complaints where the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded, 1,793 (57.8%) were for females and 1,311 (42.2%) were males (Table 9, Figure 10).

More complaints were received relating to females than males in all age groups with the exception of those aged '15 & Under' (Table 9, Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Complaints Received by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2016/17)**





## Relationship of Complainant to Patient / Client

Over half (2,544, 55.3%) of all complaints received in 2016/17 were from the patient / client, with the remaining 2,059 (44.7%) from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client.

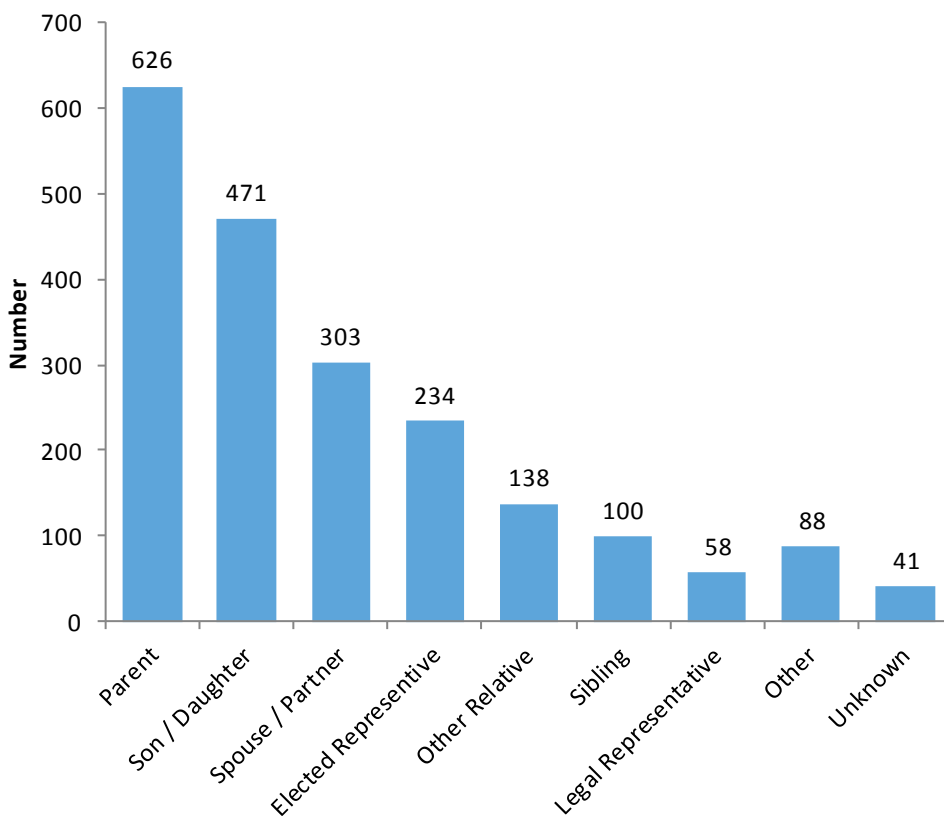
Of the 2,059 complaints received from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client, almost a third (626, 30.4%) were from the parents of the patient / client, 471 (22.9%) from the son / daughter, 303 (14.7%) from a spouse / partner and 234 (11.4%) from an elected representative (Figure 11).

---

**55%**  
of complaints  
received in  
**2016/17**, were  
from the patients /  
clients themselves

---

**Figure 11: Complaints Received by Relationship of Complainant (2016/17)**



## Method of Complaint

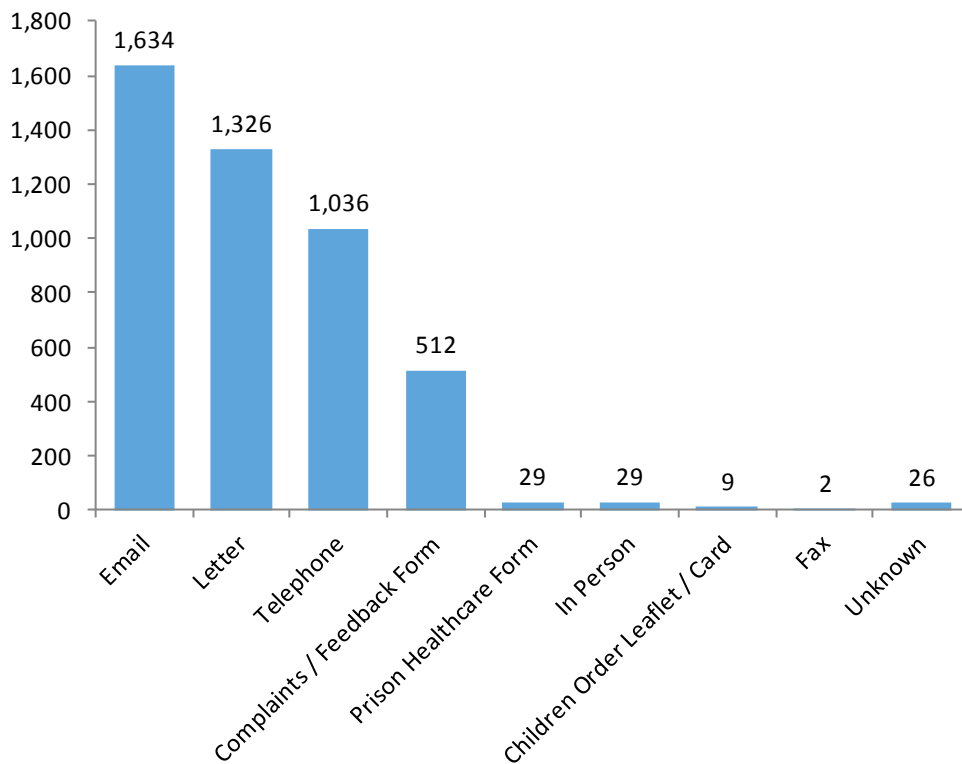
During 2016/17, over a third (1,634, 35.5%) of complaints received were sent by email, 1,326 (28.8%) by letter and 1,036 (22.5%) by telephone. These three methods accounted for over four fifths (86.8%, 3,996) of all complaints received during the year (Figure 12).

---

**35%**  
**of complaints**  
**received were sent**  
**by email in**  
**2016/17**

---

**Figure 12: Complaints Received by Method of Complaint (2016/17)**



## 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 2016/17, three fifths (2,765, 60.1%) of substantive responses were provided by HSC Trusts within 20 working days of having received the complaint (Table 10, Figure 13).

The Northern HSC Trust provided the highest proportion of substantive responses within 20 working days (586, 81.4%) during 2016/17, whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (51, 31.7%) (Table 10, Figure 13).

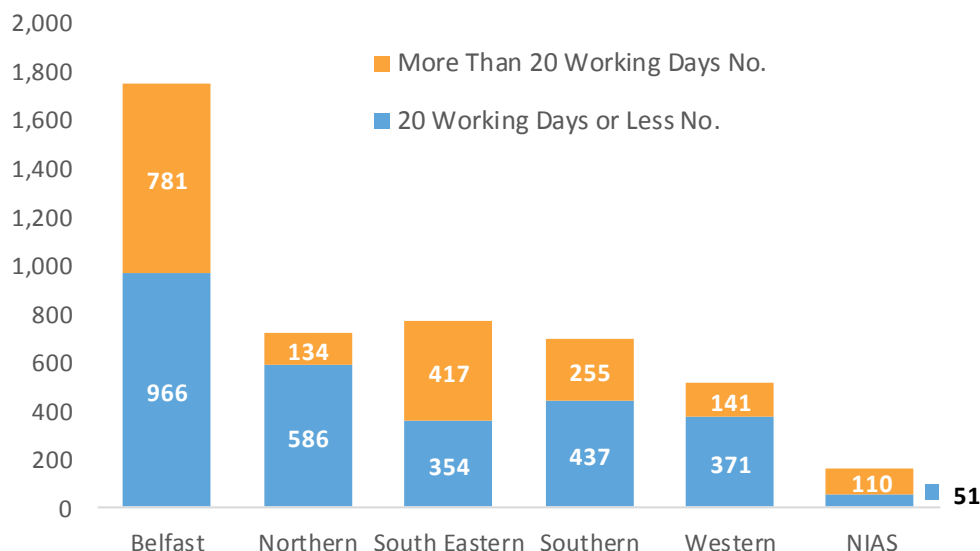
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**60%**  
**of complaints  
received a  
substantive  
response within 20  
working days**

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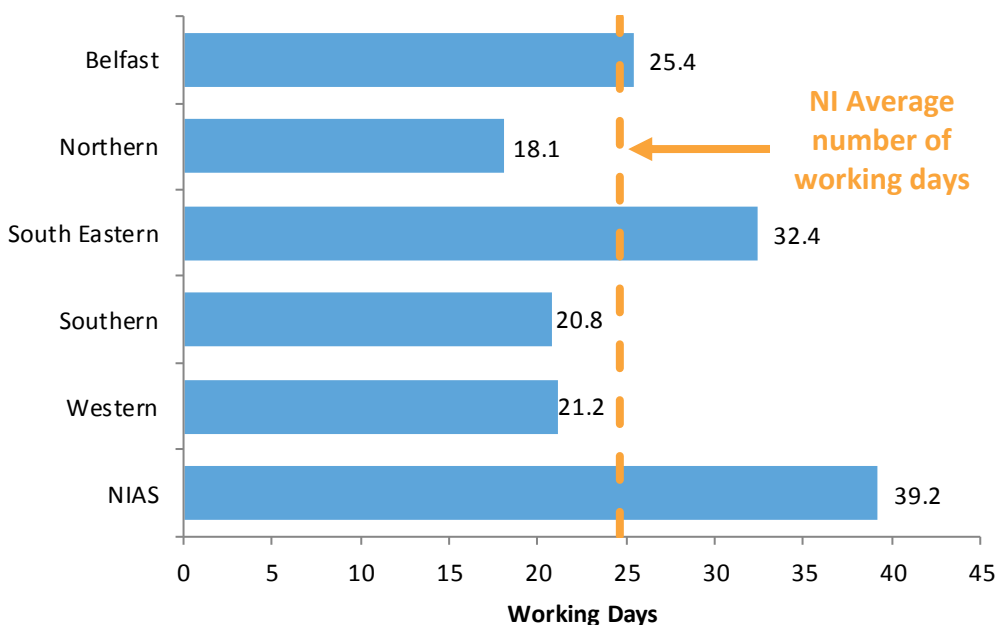
**Figure 13: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints**

**Received, by HSC Trusts (2016/17)**



On average HSC Trusts took 24.7 working days to provide a substantive response to a complaint received in 2016/17 (Table 10, Figure 14)

**Figure 14: Average Number of Working Days to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2016/17)<sup>6</sup>**



**On average substantive responses were provided within 25 working days**

<sup>6</sup> 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)

Information in this section refers to complaints received by the HSCB<sup>7</sup> 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.

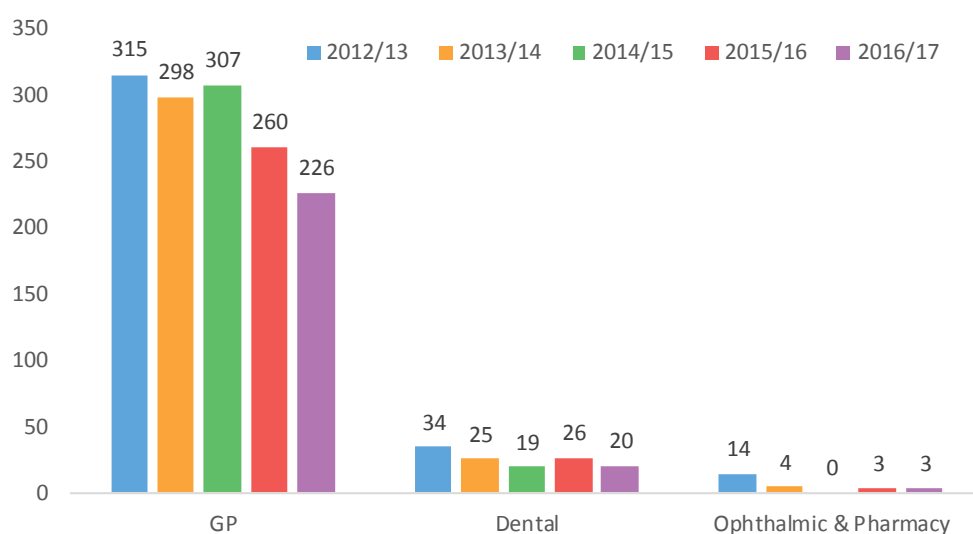
Since 2012/13, the number of complaints made against FPS practices in Northern Ireland has decreased year on year, from 363 to 249 in 2016/17, a reduction of 31.4% (114) (Table 11, Figure 15).

---

**83%**  
of FPS complaints  
were handled  
under Local  
Resolution

---

**Figure 15: FPS Complaints Handled (2012/13 - 2016/17)**



<sup>7</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 for further details.

## 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.

Of the 249 complaints received by the HSCB regarding FPS practices in 2016/17, 206 (82.7%) were handled under Local Resolution and 43 (17.3%) were the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker (Tables 12 – 15, Figures 16 & 18).

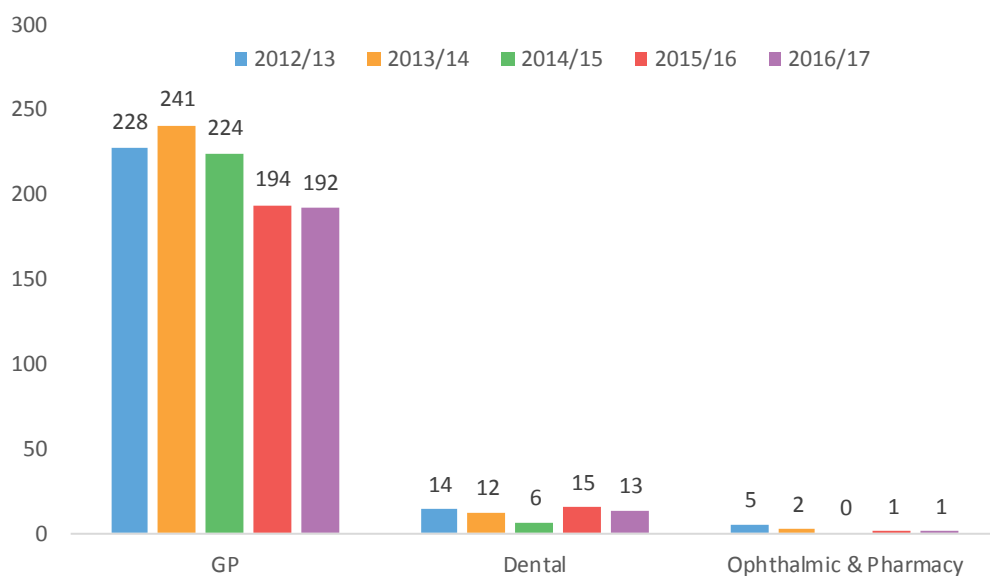
Despite a slight increase between 2012/13 and 2013/14, the number of complaints handled under local resolution has decreased year on year, from 255 in 2013/14 to 206 in 2016/17 (Table 12, Figure 16).

---

**93%**  
**of complaints  
 handled under  
 local resolution in  
 2016/17 related to  
 GPs**

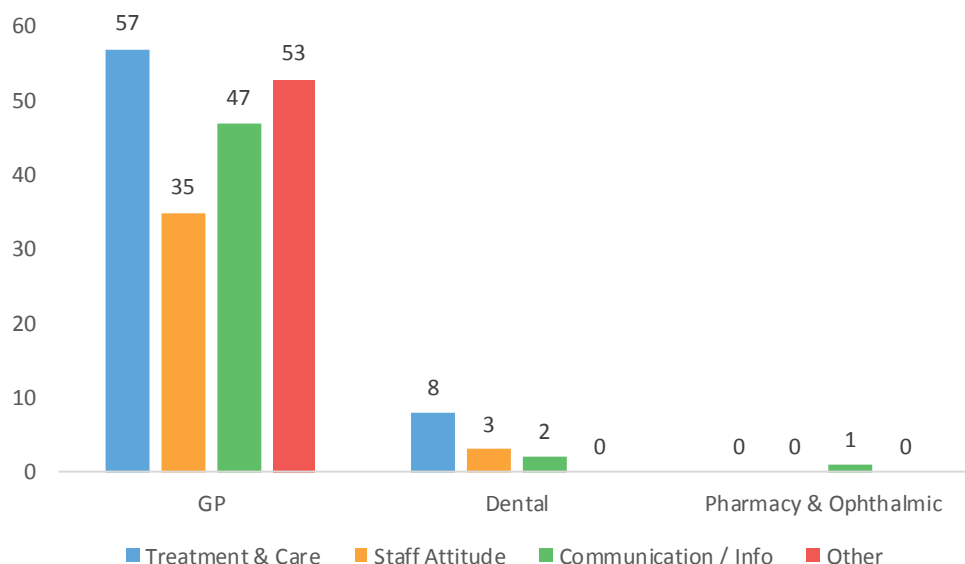
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**Table 16: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Year and Practice Type (2012/13 - 2016/17)**



During 2016/17, 'Treatment & Care' accounted for almost a third (65, 31.6%) of all complaints handled under local resolution (Table 13, Figure 17).

**Figure 17: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution by Subject (2016/17)**



## 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.

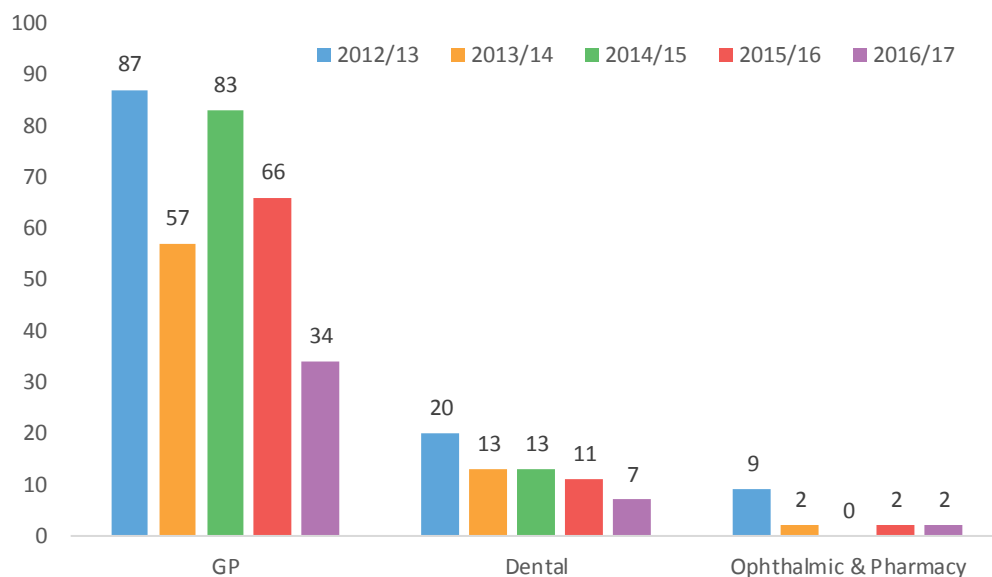
Since 2012/13, the number of complaints where the HSC Board acted as an honest broker decreased markedly, from 116 to 43 in 2016/17, a reduction of 62.9% (73) (Table 14, Figure 18).

---

**79%**  
of complaints  
where the HSCB  
acted as an  
honest broker  
related to GPs

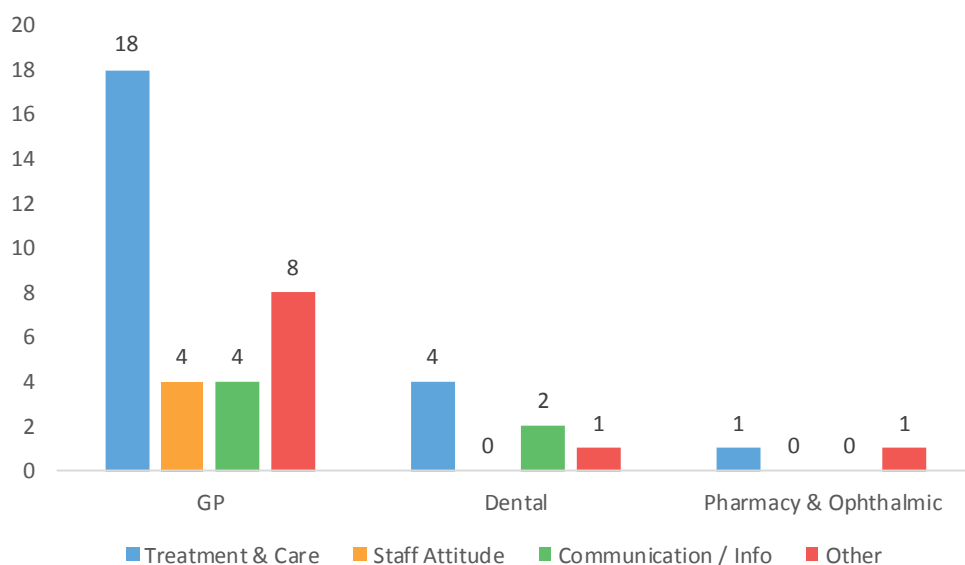
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**Figure 18: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2012/13 - 2016/17)**



'Treatment & Care' accounted for over half (53.5%, 23), of all complaints in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker during 2016/17 (Table 15, Figure 19).

**Figure 19: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker by Subject (2016/17)**





## 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 and 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.

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>

Information presented on HSC Board and 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.

### 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. Following submission, HIB carry out a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust, Board and FPS complaint issues 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 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/trust-complaints-form-ch8>

## Contact Information

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

**Michael O'Donnell**

**Email:** [REDACTED]

## ADDITIONAL TABLES

**Table 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2012/13 - 2016/17)**

| HSC Trust               | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      | 2016/17      |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Belfast                 | 2,113        | 2,514        | 2,772        | 2,019        | 2,007        |
| Northern                | 856          | 997          | 890          | 786          | 869          |
| South Eastern           | 1,459        | 1,343        | 1,332        | 1,161        | 1,076        |
| Southern                | 839          | 1,032        | 1,166        | 1,163        | 1,046        |
| Western                 | 591          | 800          | 629          | 892          | 1,030        |
| NIAS                    | 140          | 150          | 226          | 160          | 161          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>6,189</b> |

**Table 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2016/17)<sup>8</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT        | NIAS       | Total        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 1,623        | 449        | 555          | 520          | 556          | 0          | <b>3,703</b> |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 44           | 73         | 59           | 52           | 126          | 0          | <b>354</b>   |
| Family & Child Care        | 45           | 73         | 105          | 145          | 91           | 0          | <b>459</b>   |
| Elderly Services           | 72           | 83         | 57           | 93           | 73           | 0          | <b>378</b>   |
| Mental Health              | 64           | 93         | 71           | 133          | 70           | 0          | <b>431</b>   |
| Learning Disability        | 19           | 23         | 22           | 46           | 24           | 0          | <b>134</b>   |
| Sens Impair & Phys Dis     | 1            | 19         | 12           | 22           | 7            | 0          | <b>61</b>    |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 1            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 4            | 0          | <b>5</b>     |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 2            | 18         | 72           | 33           | 42           | 0          | <b>167</b>   |
| Prison Healthcare          |              |            | 46           |              |              |            | <b>46</b>    |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 136          | 38         | 77           | 2            | 37           | 161        | <b>451</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>2,007</b> | <b>869</b> | <b>1,076</b> | <b>1,046</b> | <b>1,030</b> | <b>161</b> | <b>6,189</b> |

<sup>8</sup> 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 (2012/13 - 2016/17)<sup>9</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      | 2016/17      |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 3,575        | 4,135        | 4,189        | 3,666        | 3,703        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 316          | 291          | 399          | 272          | 354          |
| Family & Child Care        | 361          | 492          | 495          | 496          | 459          |
| Elderly Services           | 320          | 437          | 457          | 439          | 378          |
| Mental Health              | 315          | 354          | 366          | 440          | 431          |
| Learning Disability        | 132          | 218          | 160          | 166          | 134          |
| Sens Imp & Phys Disability | 89           | 118          | 114          | 77           | 61           |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 2            | 5            | 0            | 1            | 5            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 222          | 178          | 214          | 194          | 167          |
| Prison Healthcare          |              |              | 109          | 62           | 46           |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 666          | 608          | 512          | 368          | 451          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>5,998</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>6,189</b> |

**Table 4: Complaint Issues Received Relating to Staff Attitude / Behaviour & Communication / Information (2015/16 - 2016/17)**

| HSC Trust               | 2015/16      | Target       | 2016/17      | Target Achieved |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Belfast                 | 591          | 561          | 538          |                 |
| Northern                | 180          | 171          | 244          |                 |
| South Eastern           | 383          | 364          | 367          |                 |
| Southern                | 289          | 275          | 273          |                 |
| Western                 | 273          | 259          | 312          |                 |
| NIAS                    | 64           | 61           | 74           |                 |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>1,780</b> | <b>1,691</b> | <b>1,808</b> |                 |

<sup>9</sup> Prison Healthcare was previously included within 'None (No POC assigned)' but from 2014/15 this information is now recorded separately.

Table 5: Subject of Complaint Issues by Trust (2016/17)

| Subject  | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT        | NIAS       | Total        |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises   | 19           | 4          | 22           | 25           | 0            | 0          | 70           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                                | 26           | 6          | 15           | 25           | 1            | 0          | 73           |
| Children Order Complaints                                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 3            | 4            | 0          | 8            |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 46           | 31         | 24           | 14           | 65           | 0          | 180          |
| Communication/Information                                  | 285          | 85         | 153          | 155          | 198          | 0          | 876          |
| Complaints Handling  | 0            | 0          | 4            | 3            | 1            | 0          | 8            |
| Confidentiality  | 6            | 12         | 10           | 11           | 15           | 0          | 54           |
| Consent to Treatment/Care                                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 3            | 0            | 0          | 4            |
| Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Services                  | 1            | 7          | 2            | 4            | 0            | 0          | 14           |
| Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing                   | 3            | 10         | 9            | 5            | 0            | 0          | 27           |
| Contracted Independent Hospital Services                   | 2            | 0          | 14           | 0            | 0            | 0          | 16           |
| Other Contracted Services                                  | 1            | 6          | 3            | 2            | 0            | 0          | 12           |
| Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients                          | 3            | 1          | 4            | 8            | 73           | 0          | 89           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                                 | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0            | 2            | 1          | 3            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                            | 29           | 17         | 15           | 39           | 23           | 1          | 124          |
| Discrimination   | 7            | 2          | 5            | 2            | 2            | 0          | 18           |
| Environmental  | 27           | 8          | 14           | 11           | 12           | 0          | 72           |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services (Ex Contracted Services)   | 21           | 16         | 10           | 6            | 2            | 0          | 55           |
| Infection Control  | 1            | 3          | 6            | 3            | 5            | 0          | 18           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem                                     | 0            | 0          | 0            | 1            | 0            | 0          | 1            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                                | 4            | 62         | 24           | 32           | 3            | 0          | 125          |
| Privacy/Dignity  | 3            | 12         | 8            | 6            | 21           | 0          | 50           |
| Professional Assessment of Need                            | 12           | 16         | 4            | 178          | 66           | 0          | 276          |
| Property/Expenses/Finances                                 | 16           | 13         | 21           | 31           | 4            | 0          | 85           |
| Records/Record Keeping                                     | 11           | 12         | 32           | 8            | 8            | 1          | 72           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                   | 253          | 159        | 214          | 118          | 114          | 74         | 932          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time                | 3            | 0          | 2            | 3            | 1            | 59         | 68           |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment                | 1            | 2          | 1            | 1            | 0            | 5          | 10           |
| Quality of Treatment & Care                                | 385          | 229        | 237          | 186          | 243          | 6          | 1,286        |
| Quantity of Treatment & Care                               | 91           | 12         | 21           | 45           | 71           | 7          | 247          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Apps      | 20           | 43         | 27           | 16           | 0            | 0          | 106          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments   | 437          | 30         | 87           | 34           | 9            | 0          | 597          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hosp | 224          | 11         | 25           | 22           | 20           | 0          | 302          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                             | 23           | 16         | 10           | 16           | 10           | 3          | 78           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                          | 6            | 1          | 2            | 10           | 2            | 0          | 21           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                      | 30           | 25         | 11           | 9            | 22           | 0          | 97           |
| Other  | 11           | 18         | 38           | 11           | 33           | 4          | 115          |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                    | <b>2,007</b> | <b>869</b> | <b>1,076</b> | <b>1,046</b> | <b>1,030</b> | <b>161</b> | <b>6,189</b> |

**Table 6: Category of Complaint Issue by Trust (2012/13 - 2016/17)**

| Category of Complaint Issue | 2012/13      |               | 2013/14      |               | 2014/15      |               | 2015/16      |               | 2016/17      |               |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges       | 356          | 5.9%          | 433          | 6.3%          | 565          | 8.1%          | 442          | 7.2%          | 429          | 6.9%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances | 85           | 1.4%          | 76           | 1.1%          | 71           | 1.0%          | 83           | 1.3%          | 72           | 1.2%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times  | 699          | 11.7%         | 844          | 12.3%         | 945          | 13.5%         | 785          | 12.7%         | 896          | 14.5%         |
| Children Order              | 13           | 0.2%          | 43           | 0.6%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 4            | 0.1%          | 8            | 0.1%          |
| Contracted Services         | 78           | 1.3%          | 118          | 1.7%          | 103          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          | 69           | 1.1%          |
| Diagnosis/Oper/Treatment    | 1,802        | 30.0%         | 1,971        | 28.8%         | 2,054        | 29.3%         | 1,905        | 30.8%         | 1,775        | 28.7%         |
| Information & Communication | 920          | 15.3%         | 1,074        | 15.7%         | 1,035        | 14.8%         | 939          | 15.2%         | 1,007        | 16.3%         |
| Mortuary                    | 2            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 3            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Patient Experience          | 1076         | 17.9%         | 1,267        | 18.5%         | 1,241        | 17.7%         | 1,108        | 17.9%         | 1,080        | 17.5%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions | 124          | 2.1%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 165          | 2.4%          | 127          | 2.1%          | 125          | 2.0%          |
| Premises                    | 214          | 3.6%          | 278          | 4.1%          | 233          | 3.3%          | 182          | 2.9%          | 214          | 3.5%          |
| Prison Healthcare           | 267          | 4.5%          | 163          | 2.4%          | 106          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          | 46           | 0.7%          |
| Prof Assessment of Need     | 153          | 2.6%          | 188          | 2.8%          | 249          | 3.5%          | 280          | 4.5%          | 275          | 4.4%          |
| Transport                   | 82           | 1.4%          | 84           | 1.2%          | 112          | 1.6%          | 91           | 1.5%          | 78           | 1.3%          |
| Other                       | 127          | 2.1%          | 109          | 1.6%          | 133          | 1.9%          | 116          | 1.9%          | 114          | 1.8%          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>5,998</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,189</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

**Table 7: Category of Complaint Issue by Trust (2016/17)**

| Category of Complaint Issue     | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT        | WHSCT        | NIAS       | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------------|
| Admissions/Discharges           | 253          | 28         | 40           | 61           | 45           | 2          | <b>429</b>       |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 26           | 6          | 14           | 25           | 1            | 0          | <b>72</b>        |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 516          | 115        | 134          | 85           | 43           | 3          | <b>896</b>       |
| Children Order                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 3            | 4            | 0          | <b>8</b>         |
| Contracted Services             | 7            | 23         | 28           | 11           | 0            | 0          | <b>69</b>        |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 525          | 273        | 256          | 256          | 452          | 13         | <b>1,775</b>     |
| Information & Communication     | 302          | 109        | 196          | 177          | 222          | 1          | <b>1,007</b>     |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0          | 0            | 1            | 0            | 0          | <b>1</b>         |
| Patient Experience              | 279          | 186        | 243          | 157          | 141          | 74         | <b>1,080</b>     |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 4            | 62         | 24           | 32           | 3            | 0          | <b>125</b>       |
| Premises                        | 68           | 31         | 51           | 45           | 19           | 0          | <b>214</b>       |
| Prison Healthcare               | 0            | 0          | 46           | 0            | 0            | 0          | <b>46</b>        |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 12           | 16         | 3            | 178          | 66           | 0          | <b>275</b>       |
| Transport                       | 4            | 2          | 3            | 4            | 1            | 64         | <b>78</b>        |
| Other                           | 11           | 18         | 37           | 11           | 33           | 4          | <b>114</b>       |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,007</b> | <b>869</b> | <b>1,076</b> | <b>1,046</b> | <b>1,030</b> | <b>161</b> | <b>6,189</b>     |

**Table 8: Specialty of Complaint Issues by Trust (2016/17)**

| Specialty                               | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern     | Western      | NIAS       | Total        |
|---|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Accident & Emergency                    | 126          | 131        | 98            | 113          | 129          | 87         | 684          |
| Allied Health Professions               | 73           | 23         | 57            | 14           | 24           | 0          | 191          |
| Anaesthetics & Pain Management          | 27           | 4          | 10            | 13           | 3            | 0          | 57           |
| Burns Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery | 2            | 0          | 31            | 0            | 2            | 0          | 35           |
| Cardiology                              | 42           | 1          | 19            | 9            | 5            | 0          | 76           |
| Child & Adolescent Psychiatry           | 10           | 3          | 0             | 7            | 8            | 0          | 28           |
| Children & Young Peoples Services       | 31           | 27         | 126           | 22           | 84           | 0          | 290          |
| Community Nursing/Midwives              | 0            | 7          | 1             | 0            | 4            | 0          | 12           |
| Community Paediatrics                   | 26           | 6          | 1             | 6            | 3            | 0          | 42           |
| Day Care Services                       | 0            | 46         | 0             | 0            | 7            | 0          | 53           |
| Dentistry                               | 36           | 14         | 0             | 0            | 4            | 0          | 54           |
| Dermatology                             | 18           | 8          | 8             | 1            | 0            | 0          | 35           |
| Domicillary Services                    | 4            | 11         | 4             | 0            | 18           | 0          | 37           |
| ENT                                     | 0            | 2          | 24            | 2            | 30           | 0          | 58           |
| General Medicine                        | 126          | 77         | 94            | 106          | 136          | 0          | 539          |
| General Surgery                         | 112          | 76         | 50            | 58           | 111          | 0          | 407          |
| Genito-Urinary Medicine                 | 15           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0            | 0          | 15           |
| Geriatric Medicine                      | 26           | 35         | 17            | 0            | 20           | 0          | 98           |
| Gynaecology                             | 97           | 2          | 28            | 22           | 30           | 0          | 179          |
| Joint Consultant Clinics                | 0            | 35         | 0             | 0            | 0            | 0          | 35           |
| Learning Disability                     | 14           | 23         | 9             | 25           | 18           | 0          | 89           |
| Mental Health Acute                     | 46           | 37         | 31            | 24           | 7            | 0          | 145          |
| Mental Health Community                 | 14           | 43         | 33            | 84           | 40           | 0          | 214          |
| Neurology                               | 71           | 0          | 14            | 0            | 11           | 0          | 96           |
| NIAS - Emergency Ambulance Control      | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0            | 22         | 22           |
| NIAS - Non-Emergency Ambulance Control  | 0            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0            | 29         | 29           |
| Obstetrics                              | 49           | 48         | 59            | 53           | 52           | 0          | 261          |
| Old Age Psychiatry                      | 0            | 10         | 2             | 2            | 17           | 0          | 31           |
| Oncology                                | 18           | 7          | 7             | 12           | 5            | 0          | 49           |
| Ophthalmology                           | 96           | 0          | 6             | 3            | 15           | 0          | 120          |
| Paediatrics                             | 107          | 6          | 22            | 16           | 36           | 0          | 187          |
| Physical Disability/ Sensory Support    | 1            | 8          | 10            | 21           | 3            | 0          | 43           |
| Radiology                               | 65           | 12         | 15            | 0            | 14           | 0          | 106          |
| Residential Care                        | 5            | 0          | 9             | 0            | 23           | 0          | 37           |
| Trauma & Orthopaedics                   | 342          | 2          | 16            | 27           | 74           | 0          | 461          |
| Urology                                 | 52           | 0          | 13            | 21           | 24           | 0          | 110          |
| Vascular                                | 24           | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0            | 0          | 24           |
| Other                                   | 330          | 165        | 262           | 385          | 73           | 14         | 1,229        |
| Unknown                                 | 2            | 0          | 0             | 0            | 0            | 9          | 11           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b> | <b>2,007</b> | <b>869</b> | <b>1,076</b>  | <b>1,046</b> | <b>1,030</b> | <b>161</b> | <b>6,189</b> |

**Table 9: Complaints by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2016/17)**

| Age Group    | Female       | Male         | Total        |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Under 15     | 135          | 216          | <b>351</b>   |
| 16 - 18      | 27           | 17           | <b>44</b>    |
| 19 - 24      | 80           | 50           | <b>130</b>   |
| 25 - 34      | 288          | 127          | <b>415</b>   |
| 35 - 44      | 262          | 132          | <b>394</b>   |
| 45 - 54      | 269          | 190          | <b>459</b>   |
| 55 - 64      | 220          | 169          | <b>389</b>   |
| 65 - 74      | 208          | 205          | <b>413</b>   |
| 75 +         | 304          | 205          | <b>509</b>   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,793</b> | <b>1,311</b> | <b>3,104</b> |

**Table 10: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2016/17)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              | Total No.    | Mean No. of Working Days |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.                       | %            |              |                          |
| Belfast                 | 966                     | 55.3%        | 781                       | 44.7%        | <b>1,747</b> | 25.4                     |
| Northern                | 586                     | 81.4%        | 134                       | 18.6%        | <b>720</b>   | 18.1                     |
| South Eastern           | 354                     | 45.9%        | 417                       | 54.1%        | <b>771</b>   | 32.4                     |
| Southern                | 437                     | 63.2%        | 255                       | 36.8%        | <b>692</b>   | 20.8                     |
| Western                 | 371                     | 72.5%        | 141                       | 27.5%        | <b>512</b>   | 21.2                     |
| NIAS                    | 51                      | 31.7%        | 110                       | 68.3%        | <b>161</b>   | 39.2                     |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,765</b>            | <b>60.1%</b> | <b>1,838</b>              | <b>39.9%</b> | <b>4,603</b> | <b>24.7</b>              |



**Table 11: FPS Complaints Handled (2012/13 - 2016/17)**

| FPS Complaints | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    | 2016/17    |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP             | 315        | 298        | 307        | 260        | 226        |
| Dental         | 34         | 25         | 19         | 26         | 20         |
| Pharmacy       | 13         | 4          | 0          | 3          | 3          |
| Ophthalmic     | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>363</b> | <b>327</b> | <b>326</b> | <b>289</b> | <b>249</b> |

**Table 12: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution by Subject (2012/13 - 2016/17)**

| Local Resolution | 2012/13    | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    | 2016/17    |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP               | 228        | 241        | 224        | 194        | 192        |
| Dental           | 14         | 12         | 6          | 15         | 13         |
| Pharmacy         | 5          | 2          | 0          | 1          | 1          |
| Ophthalmic       | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>247</b> | <b>255</b> | <b>230</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>206</b> |

**Table 13: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2016/17)**

| Local Resolution     | GP         | Dental    | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total      |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Treatment & Care     | 57         | 8         | 0                     | <b>65</b>  |
| Staff Attitude       | 35         | 3         | 0                     | <b>38</b>  |
| Communication / Info | 47         | 2         | 1                     | <b>50</b>  |
| Other                | 53         | 0         | 0                     | <b>53</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>192</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>1</b>              | <b>206</b> |

**Table 14: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2012/13 - 2016/17)**

| Honest Broker | 2012/13    | 2013/14   | 2014/15   | 2015/16   | 2016/17   |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| GP            | 87         | 57        | 83        | 66        | 34        |
| Dental        | 20         | 13        | 13        | 11        | 7         |
| Pharmacy      | 8          | 2         | 0         | 2         | 2         |
| Ophthalmic    | 1          | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>116</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>96</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>43</b> |

**Table 15: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject (2016/17)**

| Honest Broker        | GP        | Dental   | Pharmacy & Ophthalmic | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Treatment & Care     | 18        | 4        | 1                     | <b>23</b> |
| Staff Attitude       | 4         | 0        | 0                     | <b>4</b>  |
| Communication / Info | 4         | 2        | 0                     | <b>6</b>  |
| Other                | 8         | 1        | 1                     | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>34</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>2</b>              | <b>43</b> |

## APPENDIX 1: 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 Services           | 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 2: 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 Complaint

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 Issue 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**

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 3: 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 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

### **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

### **Contracted Services**

Contracted Regulated Children's Services  
Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Agency  
Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing  
Contracted Independent Hospital Services

Other Contracted Services

### **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 4: 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 5: 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>

**APPENDIX 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Further information** on HSC Trust Complaint Issues in Northern Ireland, is available from:

**Michael O'Donnell**

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

Department of Health

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Fax: 028 905 23288

Email: [statistics@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk)



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COMPLAINT

# Complaints Received by HSC Trusts, Board and Family Practitioner Services in Northern Ireland (2017/18)

## 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. |
| Authors             | Carol Murphy, Michael O'Donnell, Kieran Taggart, Siobhan Morgan  |
| Publication Date    | 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2018  |
| Reporting Period    | 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018   |
| Issued by           | Hospital Information Branch<br>Information & Analysis Directorate<br>Department of Health<br>Stormont Estate<br>Belfast, BT4 3SQ   |
| Statistician        | Carol Murphy<br>  |
| Statistical Quality | Information detailed in this release has been provided by HSC Trusts / Board and has been validated and quality assured by Hospital Information Branch (HIB) prior to release.   |
| Target Audience     | DoH, Chief Executives of HSC Board and Trusts in Northern Ireland, health care professionals, academics, Health & Social Care stakeholders, media and general public.  |
| Further Copies      | <a href="mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk">statistics@health-ni.gov.uk</a>   |
| Website             | <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/complaints-statistics</a>  |
| Price               | Free   |
| Copyright           | This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.  |

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## KEY POINTS

### Latest Year (2017/18)

- 4,441 complaints, relating to 5,814 complaint issues, were received by HSC trusts in 2017/18 (Tables 1 & 9). This is equivalent to 85 complaints a week or 12 complaints per day.
- Over half (3,371, 58.0%) of complaint issues received during 2017/18 related to the Acute POC (Table 2, Figure 3).
- During 2017/18, over a quarter (1,733, 29.8%) of complaint issues raised were related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category, whilst 737 (12.7%) concerned appointments/waiting times (Table 5).
- Of the 5,814 complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in 2017/18, 625 (10.7%) concerned the 'Accident & Emergency' specialty (Table 7).
- Of the 4,441 complaints received in 2017/18, the median age of the patient / client was 49.6 years (Figure 7).
- On average HSC Trusts took 26.7 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints received in 2017/18 (Table 9, Figure 13).

### Last Five Years (2013/14 to 2017/18)

- More than a thousand (1,022) fewer complaint issues were received by HSC Trusts in 2017/18 compared to 2013/14, a reduction of 15.0% from 6,836 to 5,814. (Table 1, Figure 2).
- The number of complaint issues decreased in all six HSC Trusts; the Belfast HSC Trust reported the most notable decrease (19.4%), 2,514 in 2013/4 to 2,026 in 2017/18 (Table 1, Figure 2).
- Between 2013/14 and 2017/18, the largest reduction in number of complaint issues (764, 18.5%) was observed in the Acute POC, from 4,135 to 3,371. However, complaint issues relating to the Maternal and Child Health POC increased by 70 (24.1%), from 291 to 361 (Table 3).
- Over the last five years, complaints made against FPS practices (GPs/Dentists/Pharmacists/Optometrists) in Northern Ireland have fallen by 26.6% (87), from 327 in 2013/14 to 240 in 2017/18 (Table 10, Figure 14).

# SECTION 1

## COMPLAINT ISSUES RECEIVED BY HSC TRUSTS

### What's 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 it relates to.

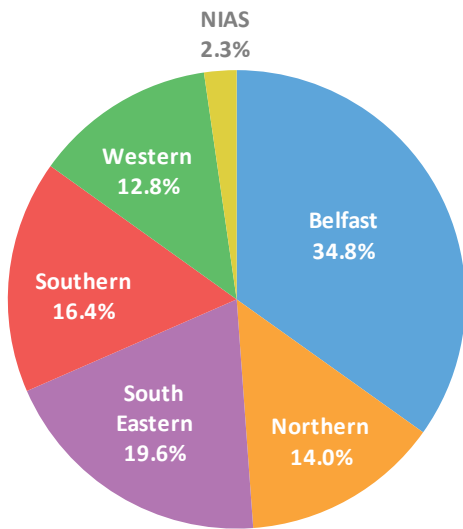
### Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts

During 2017/18, HSC Trusts received 4,441 complaints relating to 5,814 complaint issues (Tables 1 & 9).

Of the 5,814 complaint issues, over a third (2,026, 34.8%) were received by the Belfast HSC Trust, 1,140 (19.6%) by the South Eastern HSC Trust, 955 (16.4%) by the Southern HSC Trust, 814 (14.0%) by the Northern HSC Trust, 746 (12.8%) by the Western HSC Trust and 133 (2.3%) by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) (Tables 1 & 2, Figure 1).

**In 2017/18 more than a third of all complaint issues were received by the Belfast HSC Trust**

**Figure 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2017/18)**

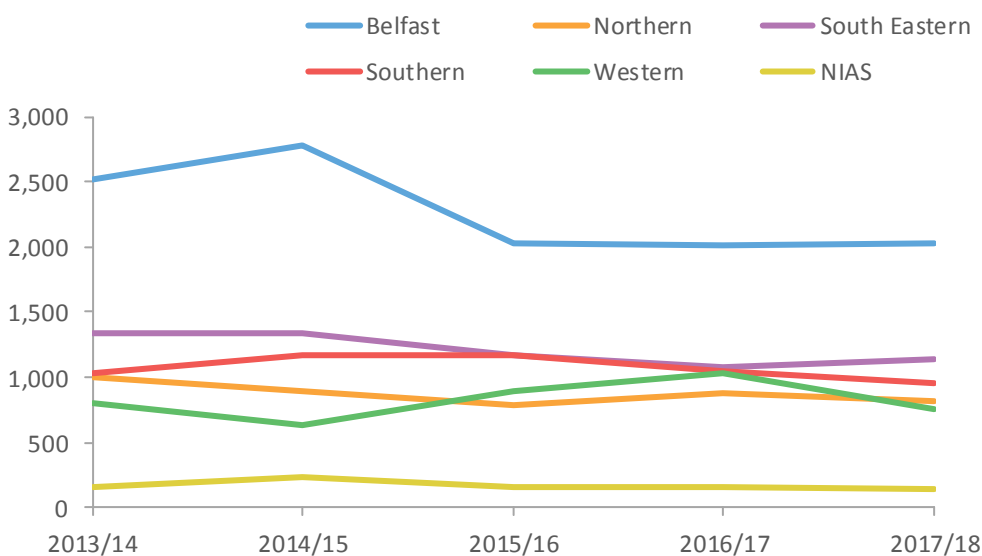


Since 2013/14,  
complaint issues  
have fallen by  
**15%**

During the last five years, the highest number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts was in 2014/15 (7,015) and the lowest in 2017/18 (5,814) (Table 1, Figure 2).

Since 2013/14, the number of complaint issues received decreased in all six HSC Trusts, with Belfast HSC Trust reporting the most notable decrease (488, 19.4%), from 2,514 to 2,026 in 2017/18 (Table 1, Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2013/14 - 2017/18)**



## Complaint Issues Received by Programme of Care (POC)<sup>1</sup>

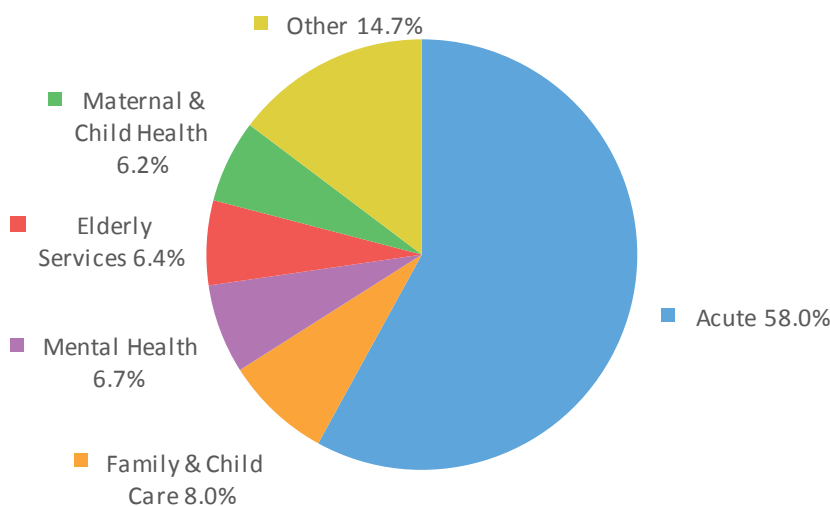
Each complaint issue received is recorded against the POC of the patient / client to whom the complaint relates. If a complaint is made by a user of HSC Trust facilities who is not a patient / client, the complaint issue will be recorded against the POC of that service.

Of the 5,814 complaint issues received by HSC Trusts in 2017/18, more than half (3,371, 58.0%) related to the Acute POC (Table 2)

Five POCs accounted for over four fifths (4,958, 85.3%) of all complaint issues received during 2017/18; the Acute POC (3,371, 58.0%), Family & Child Care POC (466, 8.0%), Mental Health POC (390, 6.7%), Elderly Services POC (370, 6.4%) and Maternal & Child Health POC (361, 6.2%) (Table 2 & Fig 3).

Since 2013/14, the number of complaint issues received by HSC Trusts relating to the Maternal & Child Health POC increased by 24.1% (70), from 291 to 361 (Table 3).

**Figure 3: POC's Receiving the Largest Number of Complaint Issues (2017/18)<sup>2</sup>**



**58%** of complaint issues received during 2017/18 related to the Acute POC

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions for full list of Programmes of Care (POC's)

<sup>2</sup> The 'Other' category includes all complaint issues not included within the five named POC's above.

## Complaint Issues Received by POC and HSC Trust

There is variation across HSC Trusts in the distribution of complaint issues across POC's. During 2017/18:

- Belfast HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Acute POC (1,490, 44.2%), Mental Health POC (106, 27.2%), Elderly Services POC (98, 26.5%) and the Learning Disability POC (30, 25.2%) (Table 2).
- South Eastern HSC Trust reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Primary Health & Adult Community POC (105, 55.3%). The South Eastern HSC Trust, the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland, reported 51 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 (142, 30.5%) and the Sensory Impairment & Physical Disability POC (24, 32.9%) (Table 2).
- The Western and Southern HSC Trusts reported the highest number of complaint issues relating to the Maternal & Child Health POC (82 each), accounting for 45.4% of complaint issues within this POC (Table 2).

**74%**

of complaint issues received in the Belfast HSC Trust related to the Acute POC



## Complaint Issues Received by Category

The category of each complaint issue is based on the subject<sup>3</sup> 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 categories<sup>4</sup>.

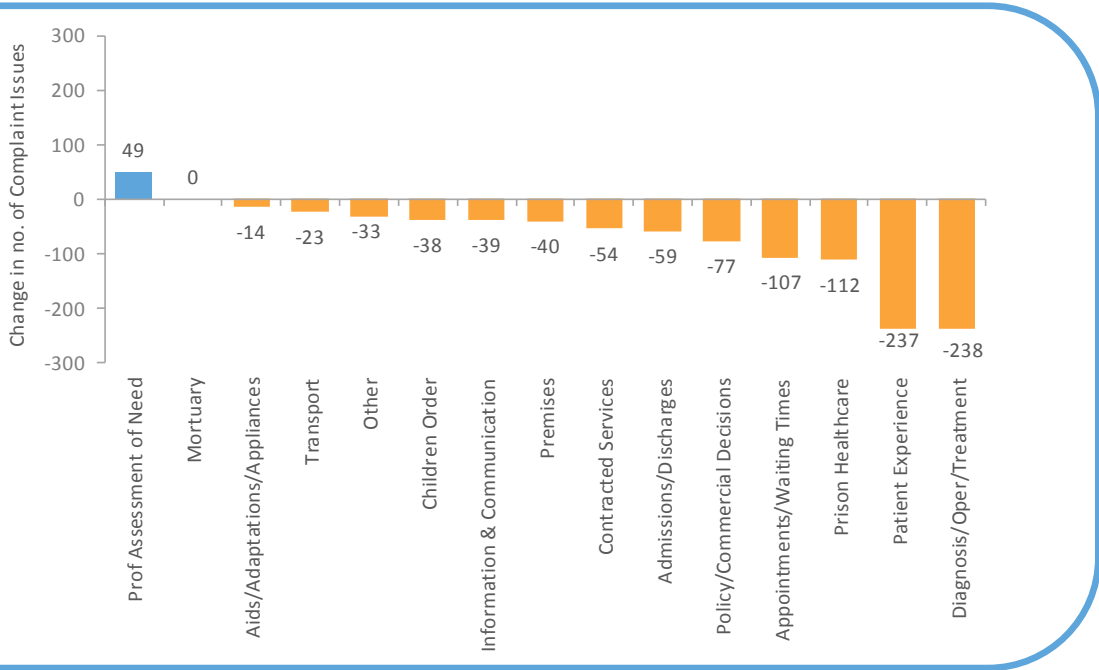
During 2017/18, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues related to ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ (1,773, 29.8%), ‘Information & Communication’ (1,035, 17.8%), ‘Patient Experience’ (1,030, 17.7%) and ‘Appointments/Waiting Times’ (737, 12.7%) (Table 5, Figure 5).

Between 2013/14 and 2017/18, ‘Professional Assessment of Need’ was the only category that saw a rise in the number of complaint issues received, increasing by 26.1% (49) from 188 to 237 (Figure 4, Table 5).

The ‘Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment’ and ‘Patient Experience’ categories reported the largest decrease in number of complaint issues received, 238 (12.1%) and 237 (18.7%), respectively (Figure 4, Table 5).

Since 2012/13, there has been a **46%** reduction in complaint issues received in relation to Contracted Services

**Figure 4: Change in the Number of Complaint Issues Received, by Category of Complaint (2013/14 - 2017/18)**



<sup>3</sup> 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 5.

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

## Complaint Issues Received by Category and HSC Trust

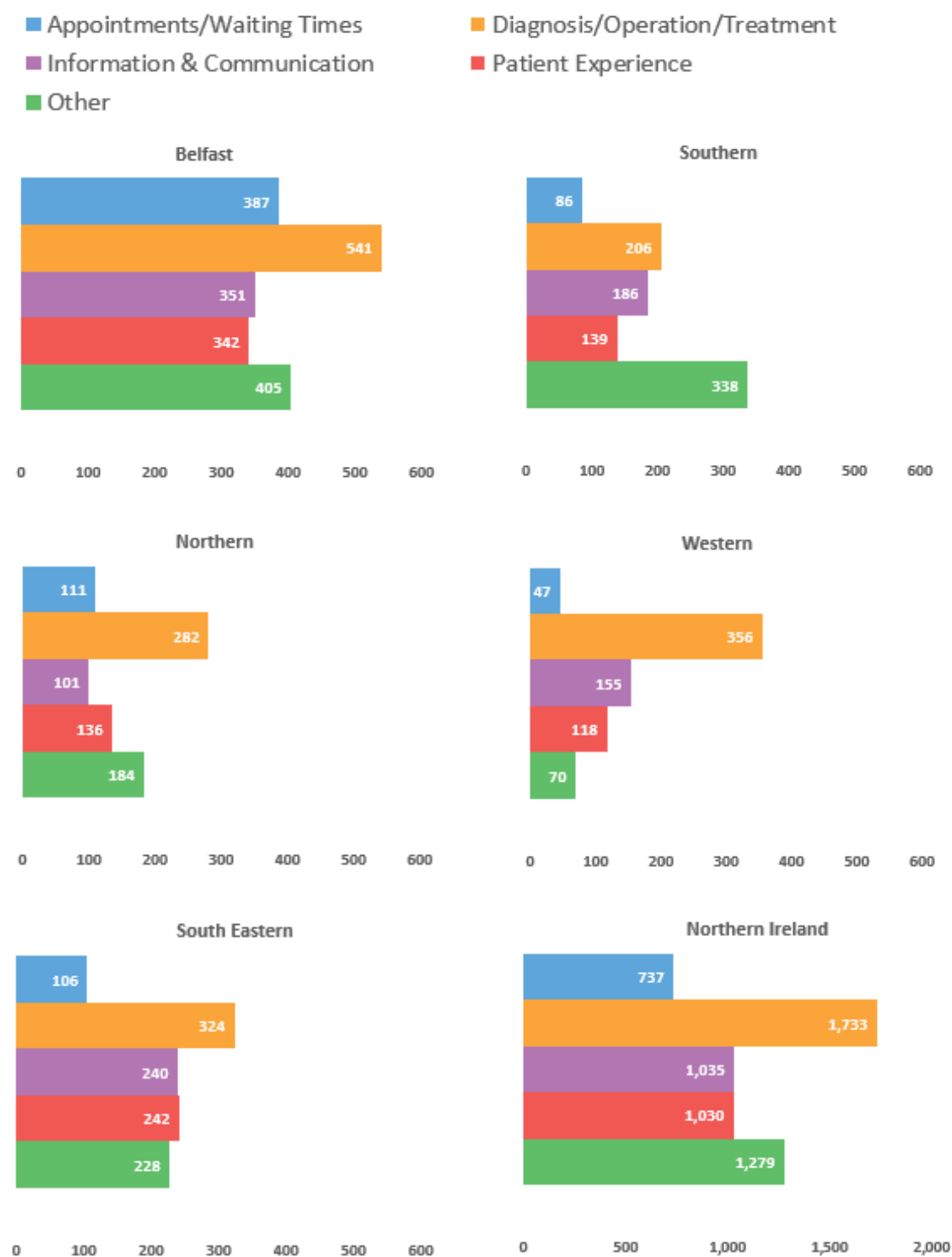
During 2017/18:

- In the Belfast HSC Trust, over a quarter (541, 26.7%) of complaint issues related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category. The second largest category of complaint issues related to 'Appointments/Waiting Times' (387, 19.1%) and the third was 'Information & Communication' (351, 17.3%) (Figure 5, Table 6).
- In the Northern HSC Trust, the largest category of complaint issues related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (282, 34.6%). The next two largest categories were 'Patient Experience' (136, 16.7%) and 'Appointments/Waiting Times' (111, 13.6%) (Figure 5, Table 6).
- The 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category received the largest number (324, 28.4%) of complaints in the South Eastern HSC Trust. Approximately a fifth (242, 21.2%) of complaint issues received by the South Eastern HSC Trust related to 'Patient Experience', a similar proportion (240, 21.1%) related to 'Information & Communication' (Figure 5, Table 6).
- In the Southern HSC Trust, the largest number (206, 21.6%) of complaint issues were related to the 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' category and almost a fifth (186, 19.5%) were related to the 'Information & Communication' category. It is also worth noting that 175 (18.3%) complaint issues related to the 'Professional Assessment of Need' category, the third largest category of complaint issues in this HSC Trust (Figure 5, Table 6).
- Almost half (356, 47.7%) of complaint issues received by the Western HSC Trust related to 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment'. The second and third largest categories of complaint issues were 'Information & Communication' (155, 20.8%) and 'Patient Experience' (118, 15.8%) (Figure 5, Table 6).
- Almost two fifths (53, 39.8%) of complaint issues received by NIAS related to 'Patient Experience', over a third (46, 34.6%) concerned 'Transport' issues with the third largest category being 'Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment' (24, 18.0%) (Table 6).

Figure 5 below presents a summary of the four largest categories, accounting for 78% (4,535) of complaint issues received during 2017/18 for each HSC Trust. In the charts below complaint issues not in the four largest categories are referred to as 'Other'.

**Most complaint issues related to Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment in all Trusts**

**Figure 5: Main Category of Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2017/18)<sup>5</sup>**



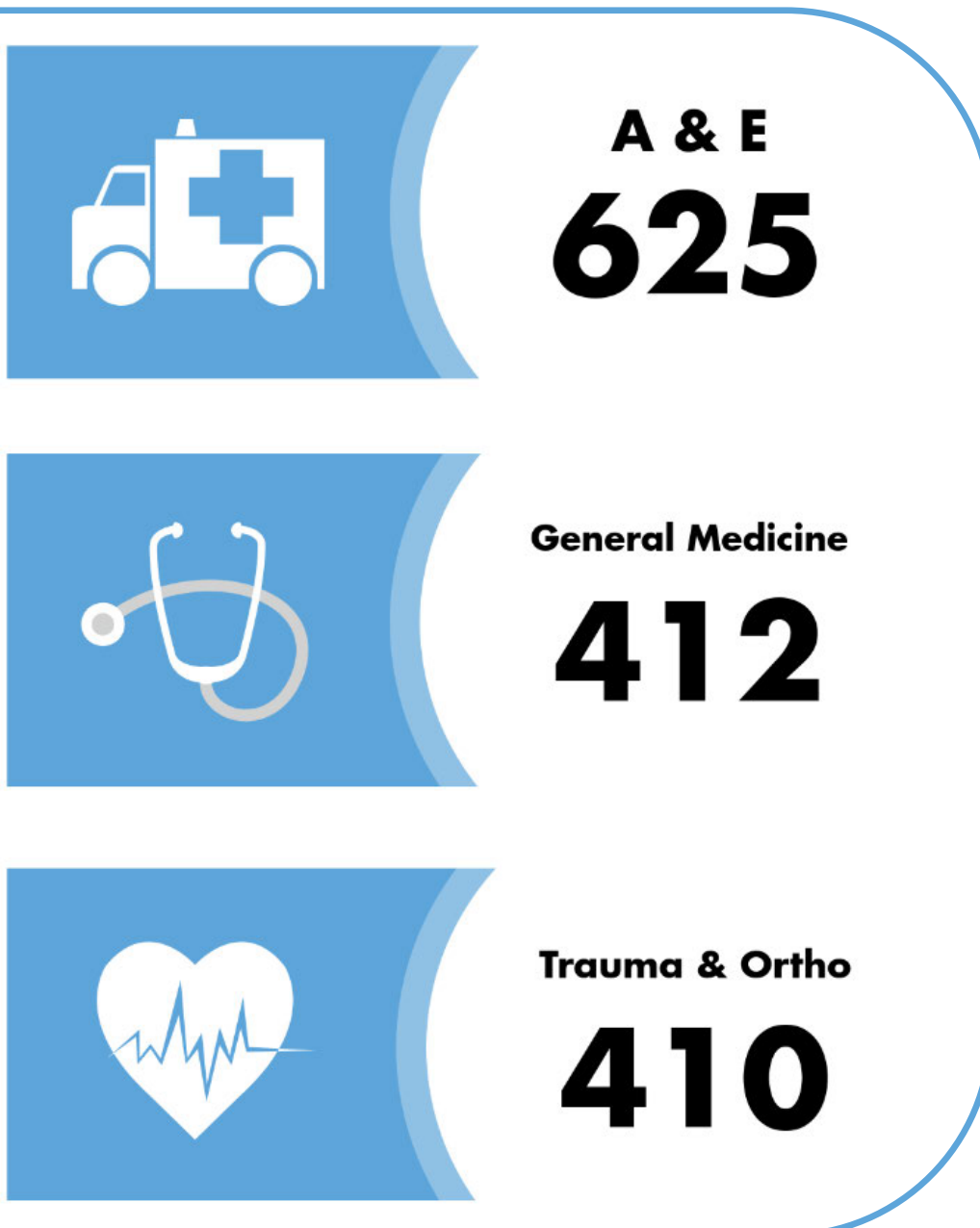
<sup>5</sup> Information for Northern Ireland includes complaint issues received by all HSC Trusts including the NIAS.

## Complaint Issues Received by Specialty

During 2017/18, HSC Trusts reported that the highest number of complaint issues received related to the 'Accident & Emergency' (625, 10.7%), 'General Medicine' (412, 7.1%) and 'Trauma & Orthopaedics' (410, 7.1%) specialties (Table 7).

These three specialties accounted for a quarter (1,447, 24.9%) 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 2017/18, HSC Trusts received 4,441 complaints relating to 5,814 complaint issues. Section 2 presents a summary of information relating to these 4,441 complaints. Further information on the difference between a complaint and a complaint issue is detailed on page 5.

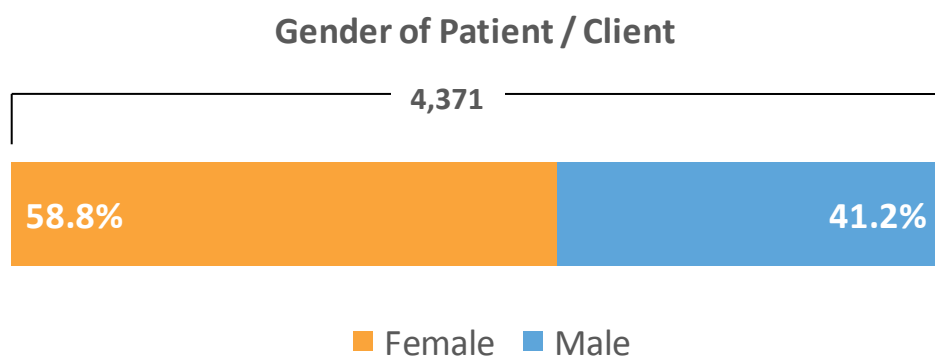
### Age and Gender of Patient / Client

During 2017/18, the gender of the patient / client was recorded in 4,371 (98.4%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts (Figure 7).

Of those complaints where the gender of the patient / client was recorded, 2,571 (58.8%) were for females and 1,800 (41.2%) for males (Figure 7).

**49.6 years**  
the median age  
of patient / client  
complaints received  
in 2017/18

**Figure 7: Gender of Patient / Client (2017/18)**



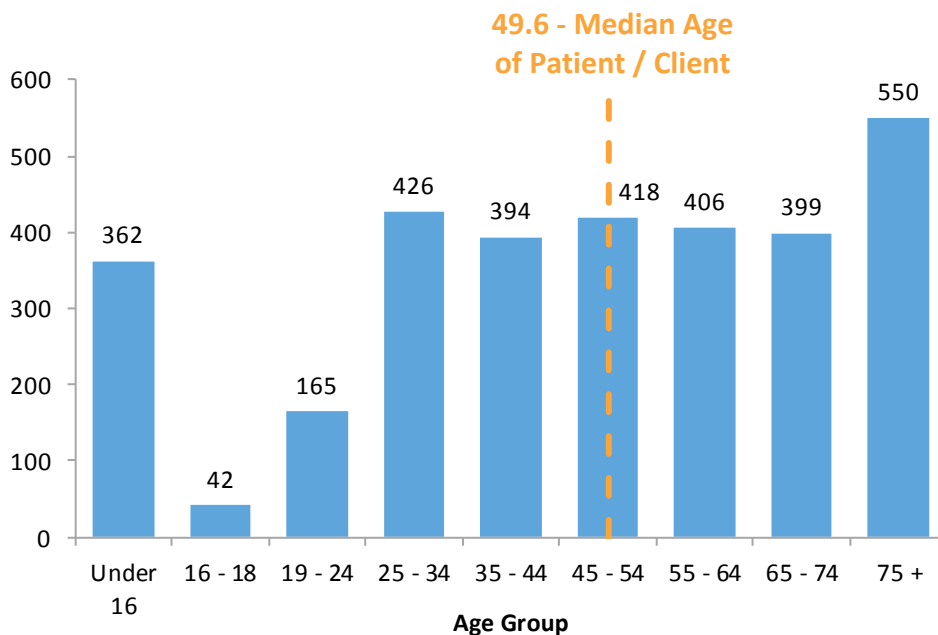
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During 2017/18, both the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded in 3,162 (71.2%) of the complaints received by HSC Trusts.

For those complaints where the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded, 550 (17.4%) related to patients / clients aged 75 & over, whilst 362 (11.4%) were for those aged under 16 (Figure 8).

Of the complaints received by HSC Trusts during 2017/18, the median age of the patient / client was 49.6 years (Figure 8).

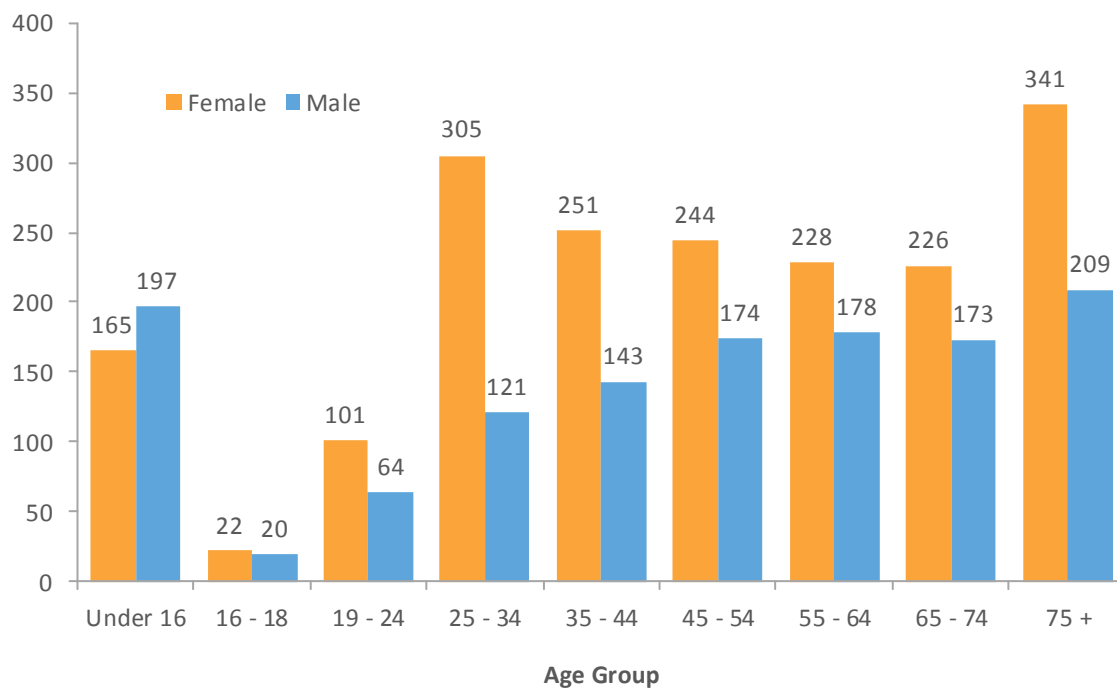
**Figure 8: Complaints Received by Age Group of Patient / Client (2017/18)**



Of the 3,162 complaints where the age and gender of the patient / client was recorded, 1,883 (59.6%) were females and 1,279 (40.4%) were males (Table 8, Figure 9).

More complaints were received relating to females than males in all age groups with the exception of those aged 'Under 16' (Table 8, Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Complaints Received by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2017/18)**



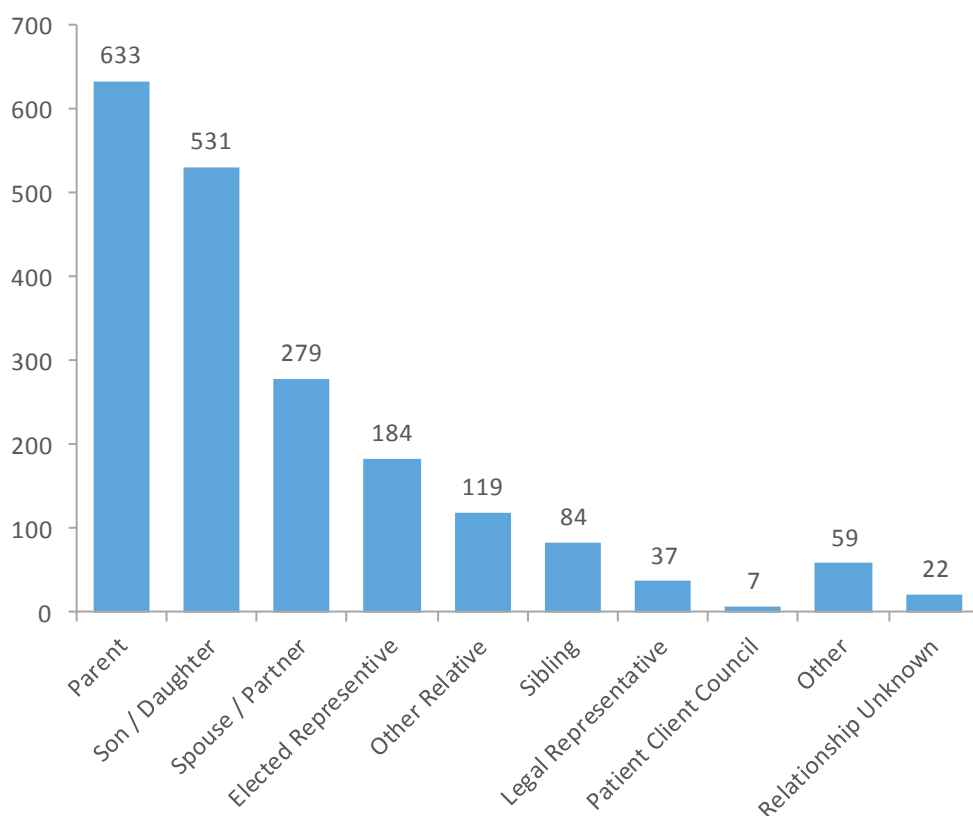
## Relationship of Complainant to Patient / Client

Over half (2,468, 55.6%) of all complaints received in 2017/18 were from the patient / client, whilst 1,955 (44.0%)<sup>6</sup> were from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client.

Of the 1,955 complaints received from persons acting on behalf of the patient / client, almost a third (633, 32.4%) were from the parents of the patient / client, 531 (27.2%) from the son / daughter, 279 (14.3%) from a spouse / partner and 184 (9.4%) from an elected representative (Figure 10).

**56%**  
of complaints received in 2017/18 were from the patients / clients themselves

**Figure 10: Complaints Received by Relationship of Complainant (2017/18)**



<sup>6</sup> There were 18 (0.4%) complaints where it was not possible to determine if the complaint was made by the patient / client themselves or if the complaint was made on behalf of a patient / client.

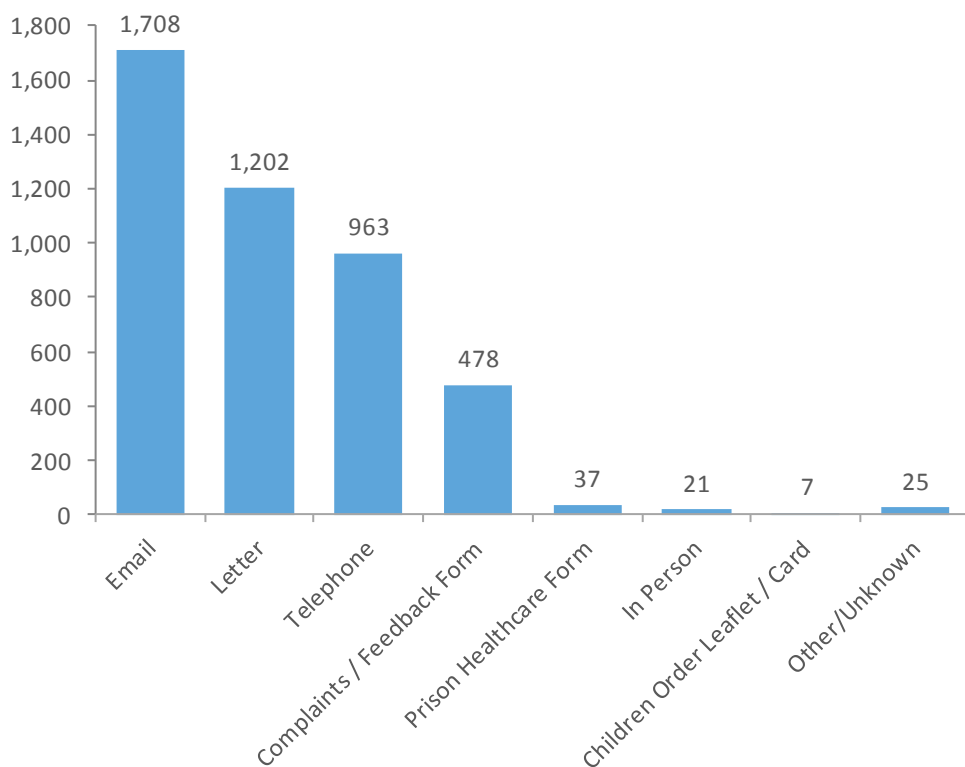


## Method of Complaint

Of the 4,441 complaints received during 2017/18, over a third (1,708, 38.5%) were sent by email, 1,202 (27.1%) by letter and 963 (21.7%) by telephone. These three methods accounted for over four fifths (87.2%, 3,873) of all complaints received during the year (Figure 11).

**38%**  
of complaints received were sent by email in 2017/18

**Figure 11: Complaints Received by Method of Complaint (2017/18)**



## 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.

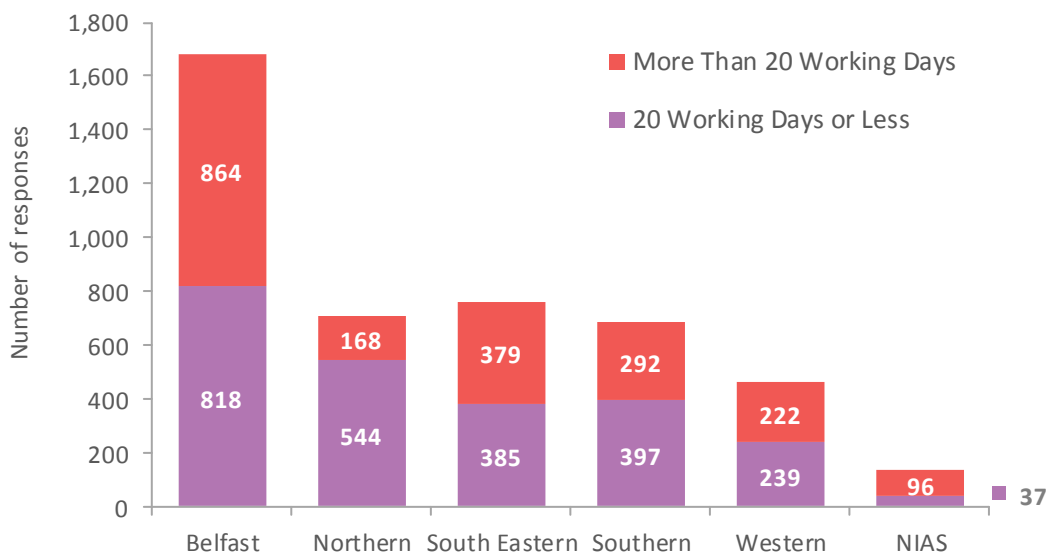
The HSC Complaints Policy requires HSC Trusts to provide a substantive response to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of a complaint. Where this is not possible, a holding response explaining the reason for the delay is sent to the complainant. **All holding responses are issued in 20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

During 2017/18, just over a half (2,420, 54.5%) 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 (544, 76.4%) during 2017/18, whilst the NIAS provided the lowest (37, 27.8%) (Table 9, Figure 12).

**55%**  
of complaints  
received a substantive  
response within 20  
working days

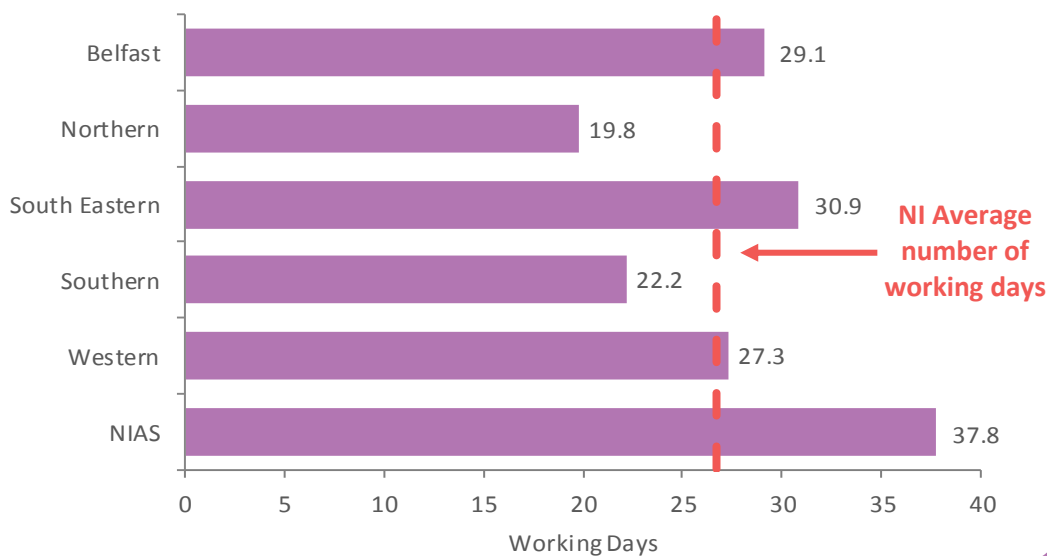
**Figure 12: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2017/18)**



### Average Number of Working Days to Substantive Response

On average HSC Trusts took 26.7 working days to provide a substantive response to a complaint received in 2017/18 (Table 9, Figure 13)

**Figure 13: Average Number of Working Days to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trusts (2017/18)<sup>7</sup>**



On average substantive responses were provided within **27** working days

<sup>7</sup> 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

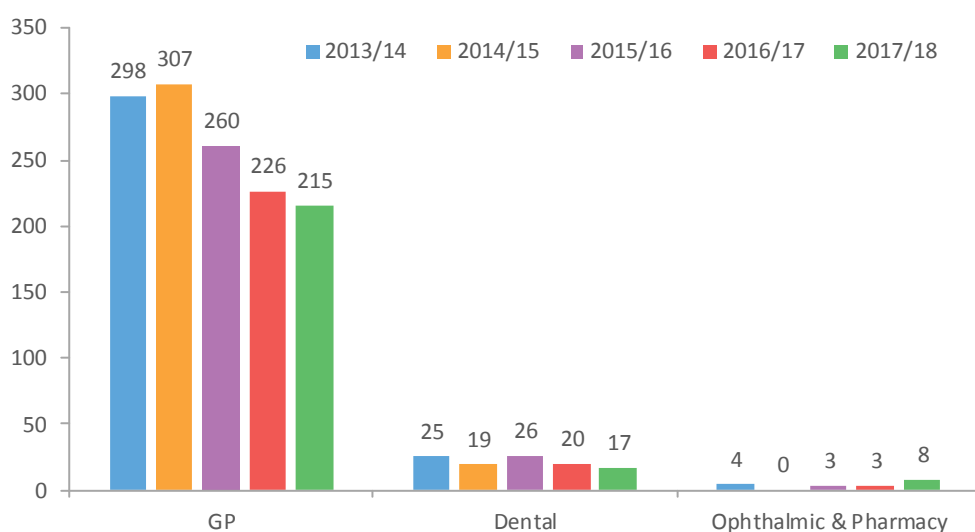
Information in this section refers to complaints received by the HSCB<sup>8</sup> regarding FPS practices in Northern Ireland.

There are over 1,600 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.

Since 2013/14, the number of complaints made against FPS practices in Northern Ireland decreased year on year, from 327 to 240 in 2017/18, a reduction of 26.6% (87) (Table 10, Figure 14).

There has been a  
**27%** reduction  
in FPS complaints  
since 2013/14

**Figure 14: FPS Complaints Handled (2013/14 - 2017/18)**



<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix 5 for further details.

## Local resolution

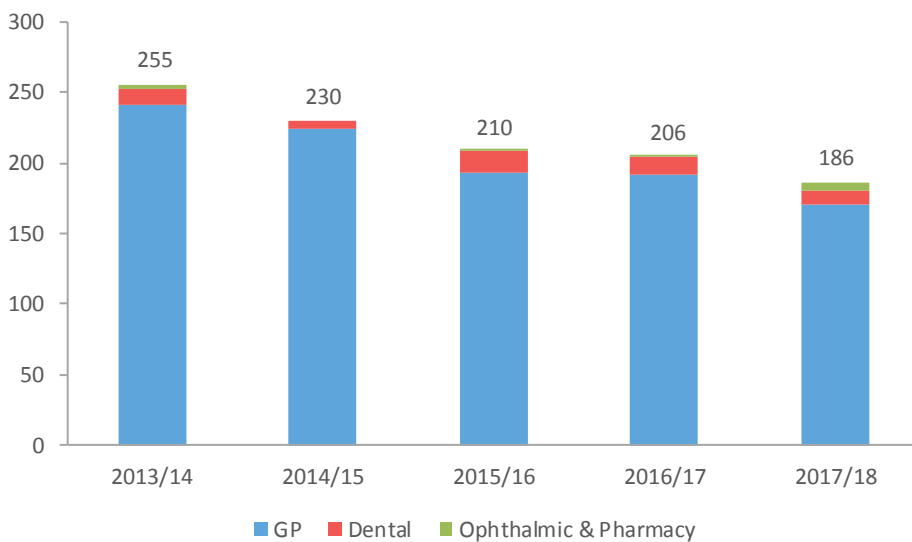
The first stage of the HSC Complaints Procedure is known as ‘local resolution’. The purpose of local resolution is to provide an opportunity for the complainant and the organisation to attempt a prompt and fair resolution of the complaint. In the case of FPS practices, local resolution involves a practitioner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

Of the 240 complaints received by the HSCB regarding FPS practices in 2017/18, 186 (77.5%) were handled under Local Resolution and the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker in 54 (22.5%) (Tables 11 – 14, Figures 15 & 17).

Between 2013/14 and 2017/18, the number of complaints handled under local resolution decreased year on year, from 255 in 2013/14 to 186 in 2017/18 (Table 11, Figure 15).

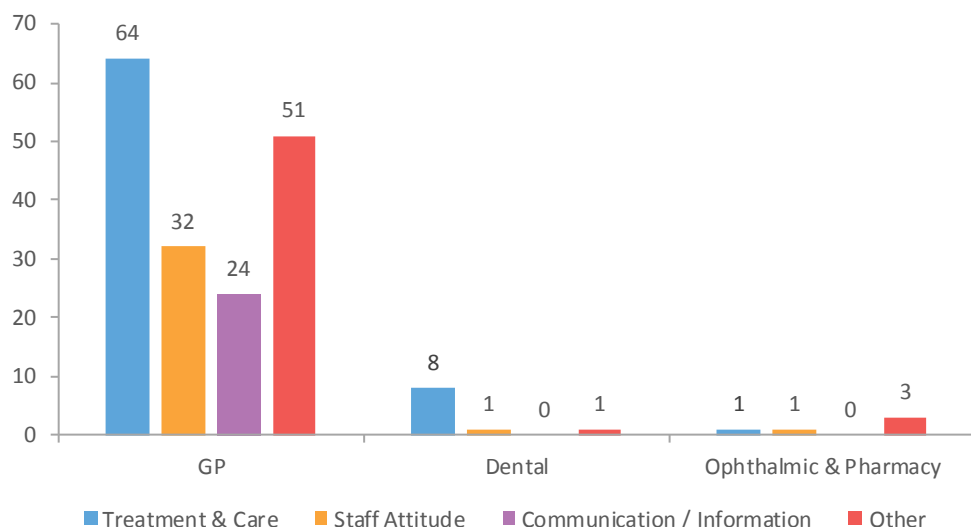
**92%**  
of complaints handled under Local Resolution in 2017/18 related to GPs

**Figure 15: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Year and Practice Type (2013/14 - 2017/18)**



During 2017/18, 'Treatment & Care' accounted for 39.2% (73) of all complaints handled under local resolution (Table 12, Figure 16).

**Figure 16: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution by Subject (2017/18)**



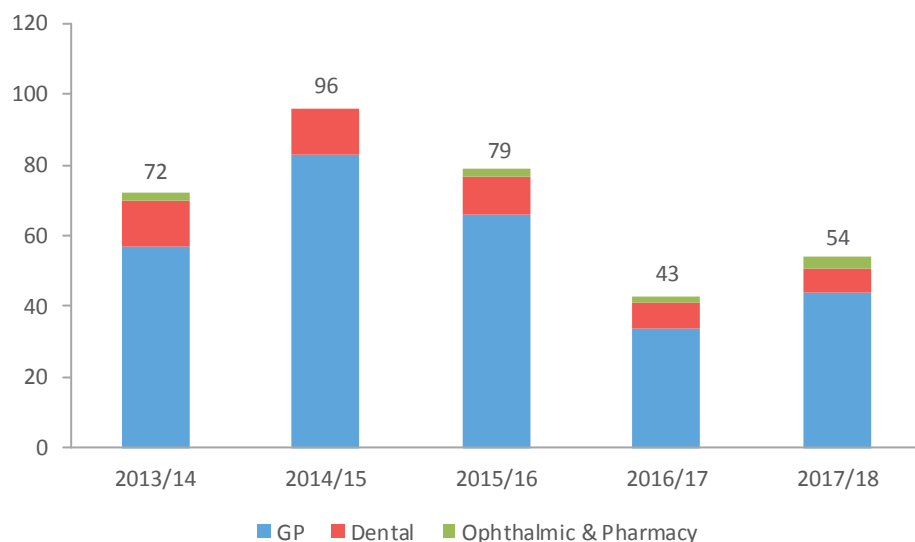
## Honest Broker

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 increased, from 43 in 2016/17 to 54 in 2017/18 (Table 13, Figure 17).

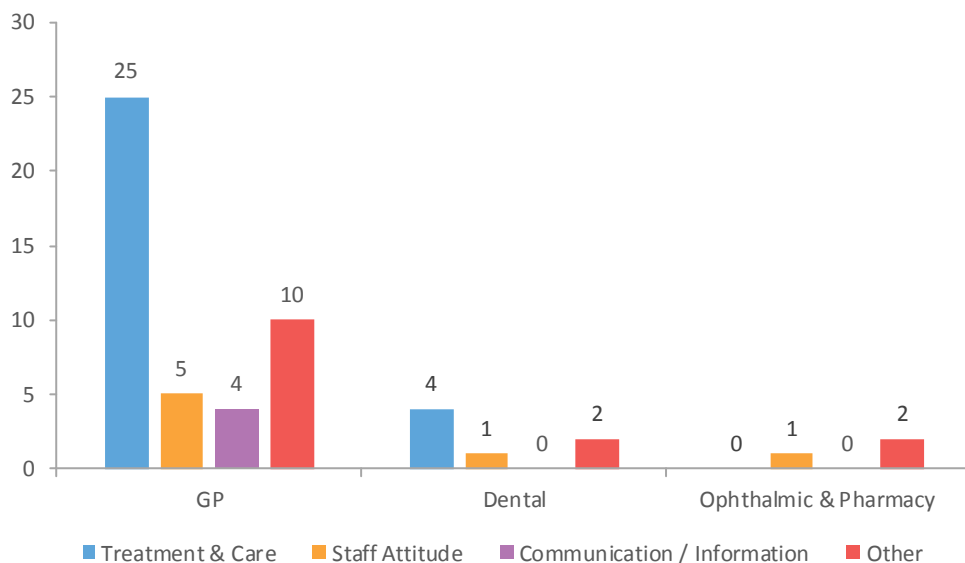
**81%**  
of complaints, where the HSCB acted as an Honest Broker, related to GPs in 2017/18

**Figure 17: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2013/14 - 2017/18)**



‘Treatment & Care’ accounted for over half (53.7%, 29), of all complaints in which the HSC Board acted as an honest broker during 2017/18 (Table 14, Figure 18).

**Figure 18: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker by Subject (2017/18)**



# SECTION 5

## ADDITIONAL TABLES

**Table 1: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts (2013/14 - 2017/18)**

| HSC Trust               | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      | 2016/17      | 2017/18      |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Belfast                 | 2,514        | 2,772        | 2,019        | 2,007        | 2,026        |
| Northern                | 997          | 890          | 786          | 869          | 814          |
| South Eastern           | 1,343        | 1,332        | 1,161        | 1,076        | 1,140        |
| Southern                | 1,032        | 1,166        | 1,163        | 1,046        | 955          |
| Western                 | 800          | 629          | 892          | 1,030        | 746          |
| NIAS                    | 150          | 226          | 160          | 161          | 133          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>6,189</b> | <b>5,814</b> |

**Table 2: Complaint Issues Received by HSC Trusts, by POC (2017/18)<sup>9</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT      | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 1,490        | 387        | 644          | 481        | 369        | 0          | 3,371        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 57           | 74         | 66           | 82         | 82         | 0          | 361          |
| Family & Child Care        | 83           | 74         | 83           | 142        | 84         | 0          | 466          |
| Elderly Services           | 98           | 75         | 59           | 64         | 74         | 0          | 370          |
| Mental Health              | 106          | 84         | 54           | 92         | 54         | 0          | 390          |
| Learning Disability        | 30           | 23         | 11           | 29         | 26         | 0          | 119          |
| Sens Impair & Phys Dis     | 5            | 15         | 11           | 24         | 18         | 0          | 73           |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0          | 2          | 0          | 2            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 1            | 33         | 105          | 38         | 13         | 0          | 190          |
| Prison Healthcare          |              |            | 51           |            |            |            | 51           |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 156          | 49         | 56           | 3          | 24         | 133        | 421          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>2,026</b> | <b>814</b> | <b>1,140</b> | <b>955</b> | <b>746</b> | <b>133</b> | <b>5,814</b> |

<sup>9</sup> 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 (2013/14 - 2017/18)<sup>10</sup>**

| Programme of Care          | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      | 2016/17      | 2017/18      |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Acute                      | 4,135        | 4,189        | 3,666        | 3,703        | 3,371        |
| Maternal & Child Health    | 291          | 399          | 272          | 354          | 361          |
| Family & Child Care        | 492          | 495          | 496          | 459          | 466          |
| Elderly Services           | 437          | 457          | 439          | 378          | 370          |
| Mental Health              | 354          | 366          | 440          | 431          | 390          |
| Learning Disability        | 218          | 160          | 166          | 134          | 119          |
| Sens Imp & Phys Disability | 118          | 114          | 77           | 61           | 73           |
| Health Prom & Disease Prev | 5            | 0            | 1            | 5            | 2            |
| Prim Health & Adult Comm   | 178          | 214          | 194          | 167          | 190          |
| Prison Healthcare          |              | 109          | 62           | 46           | 51           |
| None (No POC assigned)     | 608          | 512          | 368          | 451          | 421          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>6,836</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>6,189</b> | <b>5,814</b> |

<sup>10</sup> Prison Healthcare was previously included within 'None (No POC assigned)' but from 2014/15 this information is now recorded separately.

**Table 4: Subject of Complaint Issues by Trust (2017/18)**

| Subject  | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT      | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Total        |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Access to Premises   | 19           | 3          | 20           | 13         | 1          | 1          | 57           |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances                                    | 26           | 5          | 8            | 20         | 3          | 0          | 62           |
| Children Order Complaints                                      | 0            | 0          | 1            | 3          | 1          | 0          | 5            |
| Clinical Diagnosis   | 39           | 30         | 38           | 6          | 31         | 0          | 144          |
| Communication/Information                                      | 329          | 85         | 191          | 155        | 144        | 2          | 906          |
| Complaints Handling  | 0            | 0          | 5            | 0          | 1          | 0          | 6            |
| Confidentiality  | 10           | 9          | 18           | 14         | 6          | 0          | 57           |
| Consent to Treatment/Care                                      | 1            | 0          | 1            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 2            |
| Cotracted Regulated Children's Services                        | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            |
| Contracted Regulated Domiciliary Services                      | 5            | 10         | 4            | 2          | 0          | 0          | 21           |
| Contracted Regulated Residential Nursing                       | 3            | 11         | 5            | 3          | 0          | 0          | 22           |
| Contracted Independent Hospital Services                       | 6            | 0          | 3            | 1          | 0          | 0          | 10           |
| Other Contracted Services                                      | 3            | 5          | 2            | 1          | 0          | 0          | 11           |
| Delay/Cancellation for Inpatients                              | 2            | 0          | 5            | 3          | 49         | 0          | 59           |
| Delayed Admission from A&E                                     | 0            | 0          | 6            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 6            |
| Discharge/Transfer Arrangements                                | 27           | 16         | 18           | 33         | 12         | 1          | 107          |
| Discrimination   | 11           | 3          | 6            | 3          | 0          | 0          | 23           |
| Environmental  | 48           | 20         | 20           | 24         | 3          | 0          | 115          |
| Hotel/Support/Security Services (Excludes Contracted Services) | 19           | 24         | 6            | 5          | 0          | 0          | 54           |
| Infection Control  | 1            | 3          | 4            | 1          | 3          | 0          | 12           |
| Mortuary & Post-Mortem   | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions                                    | 5            | 50         | 22           | 33         | 2          | 0          | 112          |
| Privacy/Dignity  | 6            | 8          | 4            | 7          | 9          | 1          | 35           |
| Professional Assessment of Need                                | 15           | 15         | 8            | 175        | 24         | 0          | 237          |
| Property/Expenses/Finances                                     | 31           | 12         | 11           | 11         | 2          | 1          | 68           |
| Records/Record Keeping   | 12           | 7          | 31           | 17         | 4          | 0          | 71           |
| Staff Attitude/Behaviour                                       | 294          | 113        | 228          | 118        | 107        | 51         | 911          |
| Transport, Late or Non-arrival/Journey Time                    | 4            | 0          | 4            | 2          | 0          | 44         | 54           |
| Transport, Suitability of Vehicle/Equipment                    | 2            | 1          | 1            | 1          | 0          | 2          | 7            |
| Quality of Treatment & Care                                    | 391          | 228        | 298          | 139        | 242        | 22         | 1,320        |
| Quantity of Treatment & Care                                   | 108          | 24         | 18           | 58         | 34         | 2          | 244          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Community Based Appointments  | 16           | 27         | 15           | 4          | 0          | 0          | 62           |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Outpatient Appointments       | 298          | 48         | 55           | 30         | 30         | 0          | 461          |
| Waiting List, Delay/Cancellation Planned Admission to Hospital | 208          | 10         | 23           | 20         | 0          | 0          | 261          |
| Waiting Times, A&E Departments                                 | 9            | 21         | 10           | 14         | 3          | 0          | 57           |
| Waiting Times, Community Services                              | 4            | 1          | 3            | 11         | 2          | 0          | 21           |
| Waiting Times, Outpatient Departments                          | 60           | 14         | 24           | 27         | 12         | 0          | 137          |
| Other  | 14           | 11         | 24           | 1          | 21         | 6          | 77           |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b>                        | <b>2,026</b> | <b>814</b> | <b>1,140</b> | <b>955</b> | <b>746</b> | <b>133</b> | <b>5,814</b> |

**Table 5: Category of Complaint Issue by Trust (2013/14 - 2017/18)**

| Category of Complaint Issue | 2013/14      |               | 2014/15      |               | 2015/16      |               | 2016/17      |               | 2017/18      |               |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             | No.          | %             |
| Admissions/Discharges       | 433          | 6.3%          | 565          | 8.1%          | 442          | 7.2%          | 429          | 6.9%          | 374          | 6.4%          |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances | 76           | 1.1%          | 71           | 1.0%          | 83           | 1.3%          | 72           | 1.2%          | 62           | 1.1%          |
| Appointments/Waiting Times  | 844          | 12.3%         | 945          | 13.5%         | 785          | 12.7%         | 896          | 14.5%         | 737          | 12.7%         |
| Children Order              | 43           | 0.6%          | 0            | 0.0%          | 4            | 0.1%          | 8            | 0.1%          | 5            | 0.1%          |
| Contracted Services         | 118          | 1.7%          | 103          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          | 69           | 1.1%          | 64           | 1.1%          |
| Diagnosis/Oper/Treatment    | 1,971        | 28.8%         | 2,054        | 29.3%         | 1,905        | 30.8%         | 1,775        | 28.7%         | 1,733        | 29.8%         |
| Information & Communication | 1,074        | 15.7%         | 1,035        | 14.8%         | 939          | 15.2%         | 1,007        | 16.3%         | 1,035        | 17.8%         |
| Mortuary                    | 0            | 0.0%          | 3            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 1            | 0.0%          | 0            | 0.0%          |
| Patient Experience          | 1,267        | 18.5%         | 1,241        | 17.7%         | 1,108        | 17.9%         | 1,080        | 17.5%         | 1,030        | 17.7%         |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions | 188          | 2.8%          | 165          | 2.4%          | 127          | 2.1%          | 125          | 2.0%          | 111          | 1.9%          |
| Premises                    | 278          | 4.1%          | 233          | 3.3%          | 182          | 2.9%          | 214          | 3.5%          | 238          | 4.1%          |
| Prison Healthcare           | 163          | 2.4%          | 106          | 1.5%          | 59           | 1.0%          | 46           | 0.7%          | 51           | 0.9%          |
| Prof Assessment of Need     | 188          | 2.8%          | 249          | 3.5%          | 280          | 4.5%          | 275          | 4.4%          | 237          | 4.1%          |
| Transport                   | 84           | 1.2%          | 112          | 1.6%          | 91           | 1.5%          | 78           | 1.3%          | 61           | 1.0%          |
| Other                       | 109          | 1.6%          | 133          | 1.9%          | 116          | 1.9%          | 114          | 1.8%          | 76           | 1.3%          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>6,836</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>7,015</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,181</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>6,189</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>5,814</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Table 6: Category of Complaint Issue by Trust (2017/18)<sup>11</sup>

| Category of Complaint Issue     | BHSCT        | NHSCT      | SEHSCT       | SHSCT      | WHSCT      | NIAS       | Northern Ireland |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Admissions/Discharges           | 235          | 26         | 47           | 53         | 12         | 1          | 374              |
| Aids/Adaptations/Appliances     | 26           | 5          | 8            | 20         | 3          | 0          | 62               |
| Appointments/Waiting Times      | 387          | 111        | 106          | 86         | 47         | 0          | 737              |
| Children Order                  | 0            | 0          | 1            | 3          | 1          | 0          | 5                |
| Contracted Services             | 17           | 26         | 14           | 7          | 0          | 0          | 64               |
| Diagnosis/Operation/Treatment   | 541          | 282        | 324          | 206        | 356        | 24         | 1,733            |
| Information & Communication     | 351          | 101        | 240          | 186        | 155        | 2          | 1,035            |
| Mortuary                        | 0            | 0          | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0                |
| Patient Experience              | 342          | 136        | 242          | 139        | 118        | 53         | 1,030            |
| Policy/Commercial Decisions     | 5            | 50         | 21           | 33         | 2          | 0          | 111              |
| Premises                        | 87           | 50         | 50           | 43         | 7          | 1          | 238              |
| Prison Healthcare               |              |            | 51           |            |            |            | 51               |
| Professional Assessment of Need | 15           | 15         | 8            | 175        | 24         | 0          | 237              |
| Transport                       | 6            | 1          | 5            | 3          | 0          | 46         | 61               |
| Other                           | 14           | 11         | 23           | 1          | 21         | 6          | 76               |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,026</b> | <b>814</b> | <b>1,140</b> | <b>955</b> | <b>746</b> | <b>133</b> | <b>5,814</b>     |

<sup>11</sup> The South Eastern HSC Trust is the sole provider of Prison Healthcare in Northern Ireland.

Table 7: Specialty of Complaint Issues by Trust (2017/18)

| Specialty                               | Belfast      | Northern   | South Eastern | Southern   | Western    | NIAS       | Total        |
|---|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Accident & Emergency                    | 129          | 111        | 116           | 120        | 70         | 79         | 625          |
| Allied Health Professions               | 64           | 18         | 56            | 5          | 16         | 0          | 159          |
| Anaesthetics & Pain Management          | 21           | 3          | 31            | 4          | 1          | 0          | 60           |
| Burns Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery | 6            | 0          | 26            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 32           |
| Cardiology                              | 39           | 10         | 10            | 24         | 5          | 0          | 88           |
| Child & Adolescent Psychiatry           | 12           | 0          | 0             | 4          | 9          | 0          | 25           |
| Children & Young Peoples Services       | 67           | 72         | 95            | 45         | 88         | 0          | 367          |
| Community Paediatrics                   | 19           | 4          | 3             | 5          | 0          | 0          | 31           |
| Dentistry                               | 12           | 8          | 0             | 0          | 2          | 0          | 22           |
| Dermatology                             | 10           | 4          | 7             | 3          | 2          | 0          | 26           |
| Domicillary Services                    | 23           | 12         | 2             | 11         | 18         | 0          | 66           |
| ENT                                     | 0            | 9          | 19            | 5          | 19         | 0          | 52           |
| General Medicine                        | 106          | 59         | 113           | 61         | 73         | 0          | 412          |
| General Surgery                         | 66           | 44         | 45            | 70         | 75         | 0          | 300          |
| Geriatric Medicine                      | 38           | 19         | 53            | 0          | 15         | 0          | 125          |
| Gynaecology                             | 91           | 13         | 36            | 19         | 18         | 0          | 177          |
| Joint Consultant Clinics                | 0            | 42         | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0          | 42           |
| Learning Disability                     | 19           | 25         | 4             | 27         | 17         | 0          | 92           |
| Mental Health Acute                     | 87           | 19         | 20            | 18         | 23         | 0          | 167          |
| Mental Health Community                 | 13           | 37         | 31            | 35         | 29         | 0          | 145          |
| Neurology                               | 103          | 0          | 11            | 3          | 6          | 0          | 123          |
| Obstetrics                              | 90           | 30         | 69            | 83         | 40         | 0          | 312          |
| Old Age Psychiatry                      | 0            | 28         | 9             | 0          | 10         | 0          | 47           |
| Oncology                                | 13           | 11         | 10            | 5          | 12         | 0          | 51           |
| Ophthalmology                           | 104          | 0          | 3             | 6          | 4          | 0          | 117          |
| Paediatrics                             | 83           | 22         | 18            | 13         | 23         | 0          | 159          |
| Pharmacology                            | 2            | 19         | 3             | 0          | 0          | 0          | 24           |
| Physical Disability/ Sensory Support    | 5            | 4          | 11            | 24         | 11         | 0          | 55           |
| Radiology                               | 48           | 14         | 17            | 27         | 15         | 0          | 121          |
| Residential Care                        | 11           | 3          | 14            | 21         | 17         | 0          | 66           |
| Trauma & Orthopaedics                   | 321          | 1          | 28            | 18         | 42         | 0          | 410          |
| Urology                                 | 54           | 0          | 6             | 18         | 28         | 0          | 106          |
| Vascular                                | 20           | 0          | 0             | 0          | 0          | 0          | 20           |
| Other                                   | 346          | 173        | 274           | 281        | 58         | 50         | 1,182        |
| Unknown                                 | 4            | 0          | 0             | 0          | 0          | 4          | 8            |
| <b>Total Number of Complaint Issues</b> | <b>2,026</b> | <b>814</b> | <b>1,140</b>  | <b>955</b> | <b>746</b> | <b>133</b> | <b>5,814</b> |

**Table 8: Complaints by Age Group and Gender of Patient / Client (2017/18)**

| Age Group    | Female       | Male         | Total        |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Under 16     | 165          | 197          | <b>362</b>   |
| 16 - 18      | 22           | 20           | <b>42</b>    |
| 19 - 24      | 101          | 64           | <b>165</b>   |
| 25 - 34      | 305          | 121          | <b>426</b>   |
| 35 - 44      | 251          | 143          | <b>394</b>   |
| 45 - 54      | 244          | 174          | <b>418</b>   |
| 55 - 64      | 228          | 178          | <b>406</b>   |
| 65 - 74      | 226          | 173          | <b>399</b>   |
| 75 +         | 341          | 209          | <b>550</b>   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,883</b> | <b>1,279</b> | <b>3,162</b> |

**Table 9: Time Taken to Provide a Substantive Response to Complaints Received, by HSC Trust (2017/18)**

| HSC Trust               | 20 Working Days or Less |              | More Than 20 Working Days |              | Total No.    | Mean No. of Working Days |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|                         | No.                     | %            | No.                       | %            |              |                          |
| Belfast                 | 818                     | <b>48.6%</b> | 864                       | <b>51.4%</b> | <b>1,682</b> | 29.1                     |
| Northern                | 544                     | <b>76.4%</b> | 168                       | <b>23.6%</b> | <b>712</b>   | 19.8                     |
| South Eastern           | 385                     | <b>50.4%</b> | 379                       | <b>49.6%</b> | <b>764</b>   | 30.9                     |
| Southern                | 397                     | <b>57.6%</b> | 292                       | <b>42.4%</b> | <b>689</b>   | 22.2                     |
| Western                 | 239                     | <b>51.8%</b> | 222                       | <b>48.2%</b> | <b>461</b>   | 27.3                     |
| NIAS                    | 37                      | <b>27.8%</b> | 96                        | <b>72.2%</b> | <b>133</b>   | 37.8                     |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b> | <b>2,420</b>            | <b>54.5%</b> | <b>2,021</b>              | <b>45.5%</b> | <b>4,441</b> | 26.7                     |

**Table 10: FPS Complaints Handled (2013/14 - 2017/18)**

| FPS Complaints | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    | 2016/17    | 2017/18    |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP             | 298        | 307        | 260        | 226        | 215        |
| Dental         | 25         | 19         | 26         | 20         | 17         |
| Pharmacy       | 4          | 0          | 3          | 3          | 8          |
| Ophthalmic     | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>327</b> | <b>326</b> | <b>289</b> | <b>249</b> | <b>240</b> |

**Table 11: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution (2013/14 - 2017/18)**

| Local Resolution | 2013/14    | 2014/15    | 2015/16    | 2016/17    | 2017/18    |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GP               | 241        | 224        | 194        | 192        | 171        |
| Dental           | 12         | 6          | 15         | 13         | 10         |
| Pharmacy         | 2          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 5          |
| Ophthalmic       | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>255</b> | <b>230</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>206</b> | <b>186</b> |

**Table 12: FPS Complaints Handled Under Local Resolution, by Subject (2017/18)**

| Local Resolution            | GP         | Dental    | Ophthalmic & Pharmacy | Total      |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Treatment & Care            | 64         | 8         | 1                     | <b>73</b>  |
| Staff Attitude              | 32         | 1         | 1                     | <b>34</b>  |
| Communication / Information | 24         | 0         | 0                     | <b>24</b>  |
| Other                       | 51         | 1         | 3                     | <b>55</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>171</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b>              | <b>186</b> |

**Table 13: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker (2013/14 - 2017/18)**

| Honest Broker | 2013/14   | 2014/15   | 2015/16   | 2016/17   | 2017/18   |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| GP            | 57        | 83        | 66        | 34        | 44        |
| Dental        | 13        | 13        | 11        | 7         | 7         |
| Pharmacy      | 2         | 0         | 2         | 2         | 3         |
| Ophthalmic    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>72</b> | <b>96</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>54</b> |

**Table 14: FPS Complaints where the HSC Board Acted as an Honest Broker, by Subject (2017/18)**

| Honest Broker               | GP        | Dental   | Ophthalmic & Pharmacy | Total     |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Treatment & Care            | 25        | 4        | 0                     | <b>29</b> |
| Staff Attitude              | 5         | 1        | 1                     | <b>7</b>  |
| Communication / Information | 4         | 0        | 0                     | <b>4</b>  |
| Other                       | 10        | 2        | 2                     | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>44</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>3</b>              | <b>54</b> |



## 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.

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>

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.

### 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. Following submission, HIB carry out a series of validation checks to verify that information submitted is consistent both within and across returns.

At the end of the financial year HIB carry out a more detailed series of validations to verify that the information is consistent. 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 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

## Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are to monitor and report the number of HSC Trust and FPS complaint issues 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 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:

**Carol Murphy**

Email: 

## 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 Services           | 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: 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>

## APPENDIX 7: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

**Carol Murphy**

Hospital Information Branch

Information & Analysis Directorate

Department of Health

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Email: [REDACTED]