



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

Quality Care - for you, with you

SOUTHERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST ANNUAL SERVICE USER FEEDBACK REPORT

2023 - 2024

Introduction

This Report gives an overview of complaints and other feedback received by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) from service users, patients, their carers and family members for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

SHSCT delivers services and treatment to a population of approximately 388,700 within its area, with an annual budget of £1,202m and a workforce of 15,971 (12,822 Whole Time Equivalent) staff and managing an estate of £364m.

Within 2023-24 the SHSCT provided treatment and care for:

50,737 inpatients

360,485 out-patient day cases

158,841 A&E patients

4,772 births

The Trust welcomes and actively encourages feedback about the services provided as an extremely important and valuable resource.

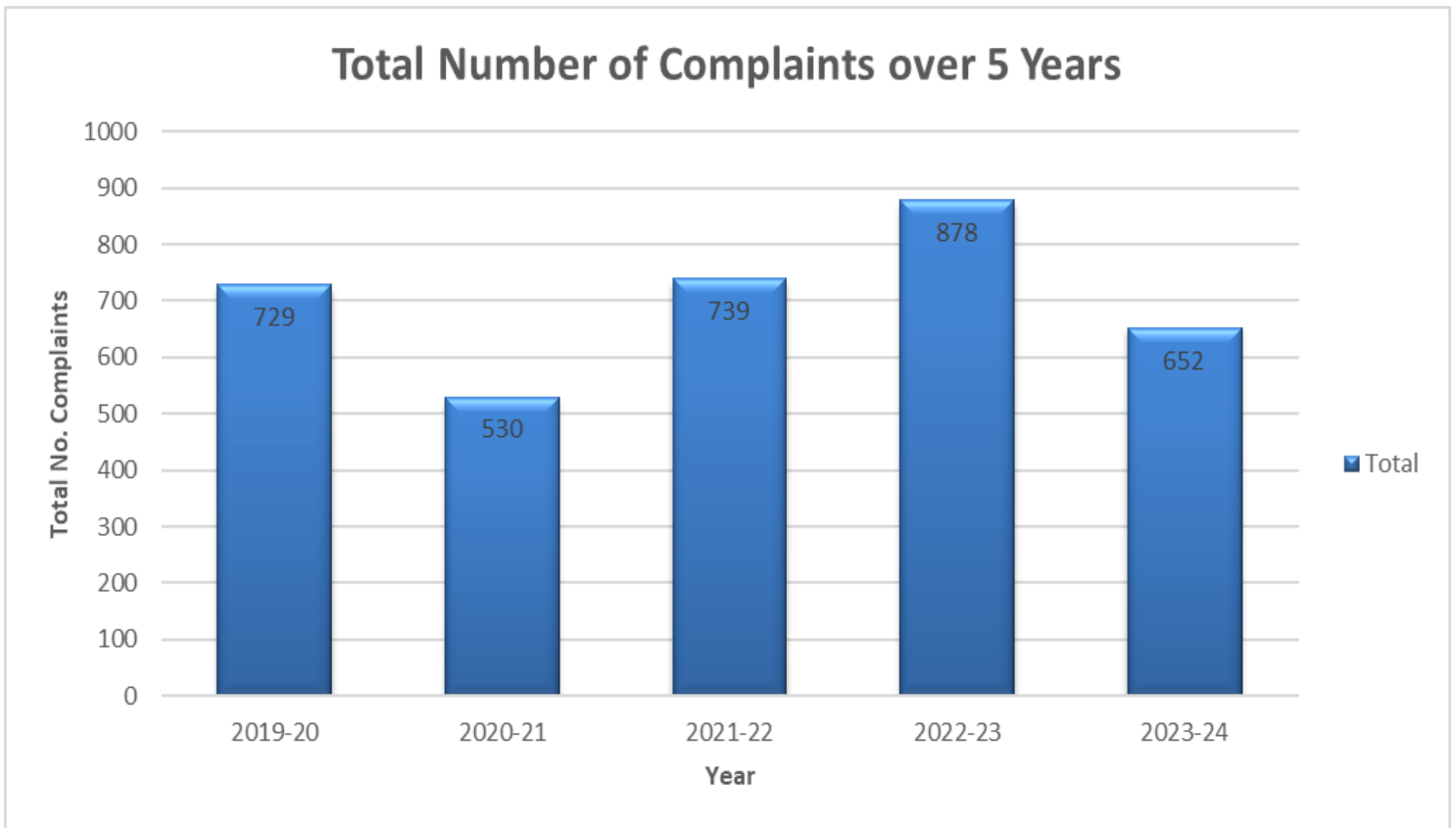
The majority of service users who receive treatment and care from SHSCT have a positive experience while being cared for by well trained, professional and supportive staff, all of whom are highly dedicated.

There may be occasions when services do not meet expectations especially when something has gone wrong or fallen below standards and expectations.

It is important that the SHSCT is made aware of these occasions to enable them to be addressed. Listening to and learning from service users experiences helps the SHSCT to improve service delivery.

Complaints

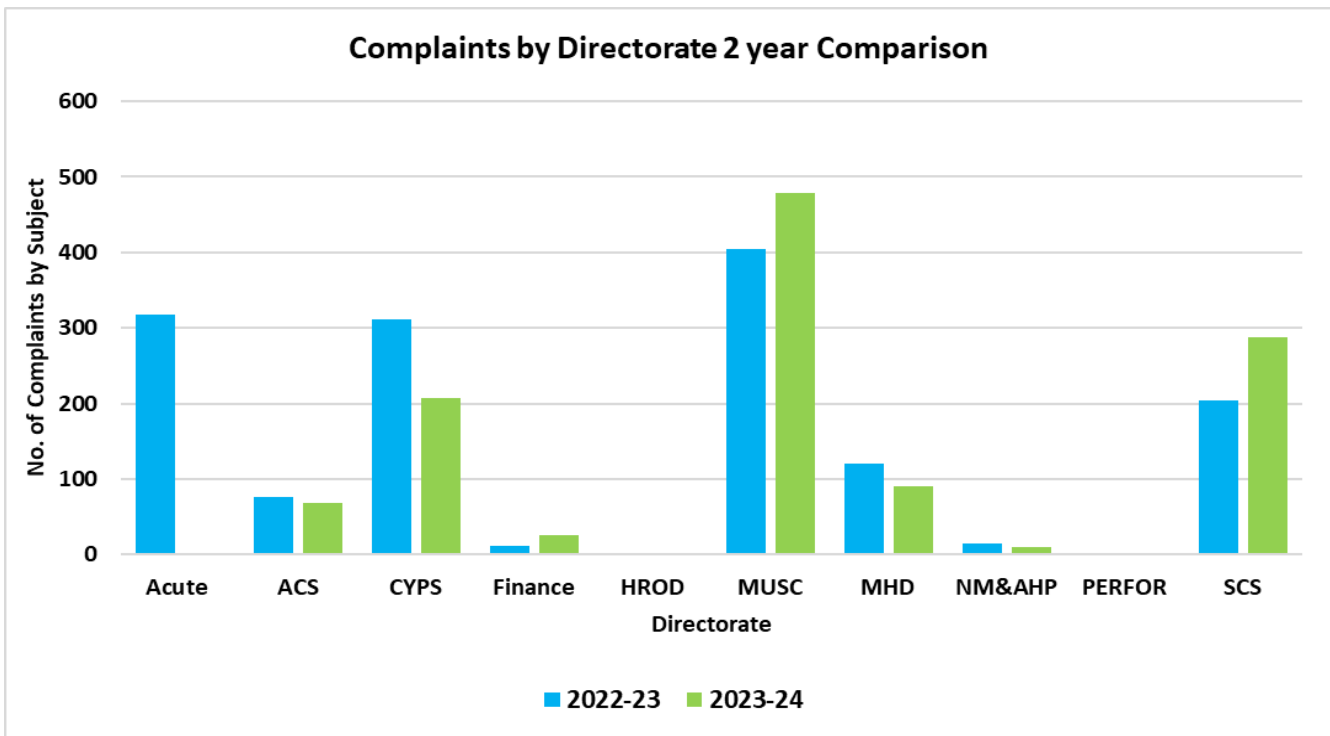
From 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, the SHSCT received 652 formal complaints, a 26% decrease compared to the number of complaints received during 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. The chart below reflects the number of complaints received by SHSCT during the past 5 years (Chart 1):



Complaints by Directorate

The SHSCT received complaints on services provided across a number of Directorates.

The number of complaints received per Directorate is illustrated in Chart 2, with a comparison to the previous reporting period (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023), which highlights Medicine and Unscheduled Care (MUSC), Surgery and Clinical Services (SCS) and Children and Young People Services (CYPS) Directorates as having received the largest number of complaints within this period.



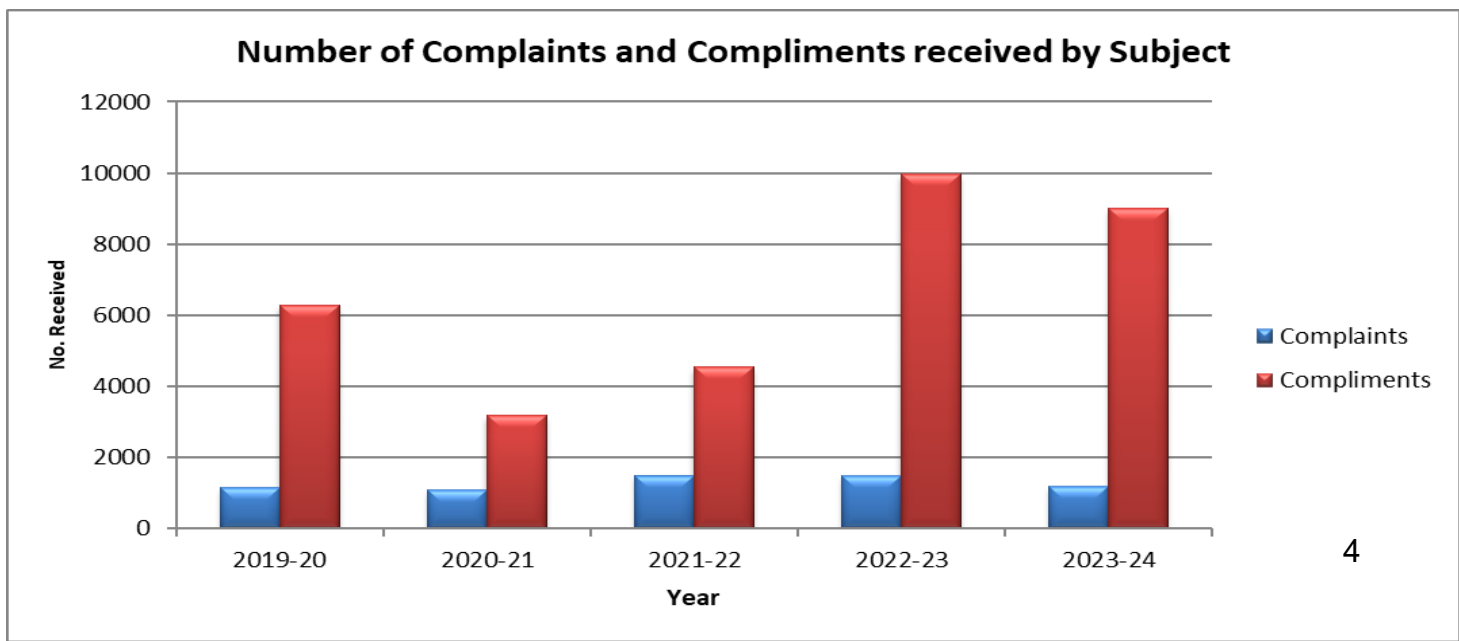
ACS - Adult Community Services, CYPS - Children and Young People Services, HROD - Human Resources and Organisational Development, MUSC - Medicine and Unscheduled Care, MHD - Mental Health and Disability, NM&AHP - Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals, PERFOR - Performance and Reform, SCS - Surgery and Clinical Services.

Complaint Subjects

Complaints and compliments received from service users can often contain more than one subject. Therefore, the SHSCT record and report on the number of subjects contained within feedback received.

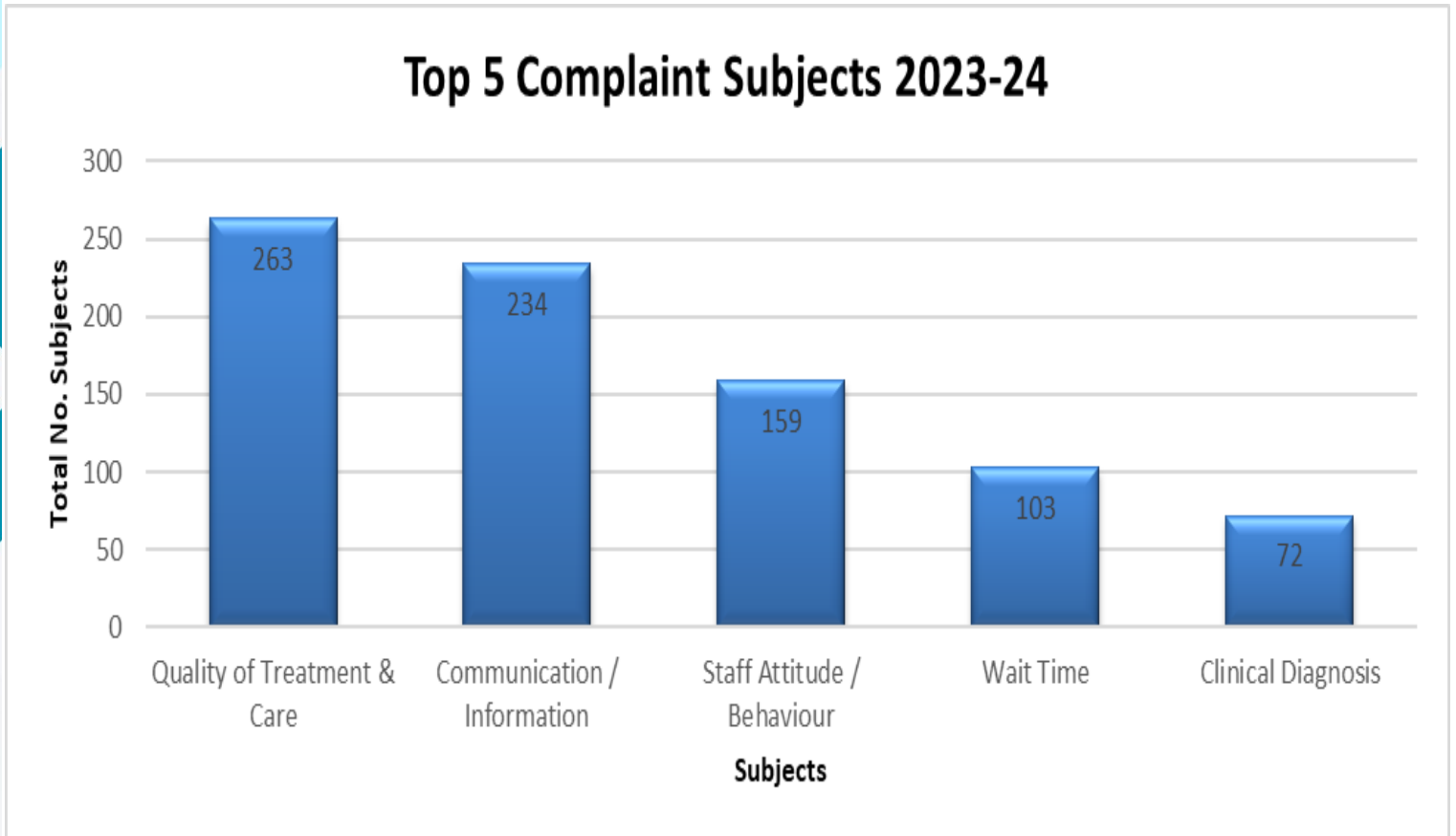
During the past year (2023-24), there has been a decrease in both the number of formal complaint and compliment subjects. The SHSCT received 1171 complaints subjects and 8991 compliment subjects from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, as illustrated in Chart 3:

Chart 3: Number of Complaint and Compliment subjects, received by SHSCT April 2019 - March 2024



Some complaints received can be complex, involving a number of services and relate to events over a short or extended period of time. Complaints regarding Quality of Treatment & Care, Communication, Staff Attitude and Behaviour, Wait Times and Clinical Diagnosis are the top five subjects of complaints received within 2023-24 (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Top 5 Complaint Subjects April 2023 – March 2024



Complaint Subjects

Details of the top 10 complaint subjects for the reporting year 2023 - 2024 can be found in Table 1, with comparative information for the previous reporting year 2022 - 2023.

Table 1: Percentage of Top 10 Complaint Subjects

Complaint Subject	Percentage Share of Total Complaint Subjects									
	Jan - Mar 2022	Apr - Jun 2022	Jul - Sep 2022	Oct - Dec 2022	Jan - Mar 2023	Apr - Jun 2023	Jul - Sep 2023	Oct - Dec 2023	Jan - Mar 2024	
Quality of Treatment & Care	21.35%	16.67%	20.78%	20.63%	21.60%	18.66%	22.77%	24.46%	24.09%	
Communication/Information	21.61%	17.41%	15.66%	19.50%	21.39%	20.90%	22.11%	19.78%	16.81%	
Staff Attitude/Behaviour	19.01%	19.90%	17.17%	14.74%	16.94%	15.30%	12.54%	11.51%	15.13%	
Waiting Lists/Times	10.42%	13.18%	12.35%	12.70%	10.00%	9.70%	8.58%	7.91%	8.68%	
Clinical Diagnosis	2.86%	4.48%	4.22%	4.76%	3.06%	5.97%	5.94%	7.19%	5.32%	
Professional Assessment of Need	4.95%	6.97%	6.33%	7.71%	4.72%	4.48%	5.94%	3.96%	5.32%	
Quantity of Treatment & Care	3.13%	3.48%	3.01%	3.63%	6.67%	4.10%	1.98%	4.32%	4.20%	
Discharge/Transfer Arrangements	3.13%	1.74%	2.41%	0.68%	1.39%	1.49%	2.97%	2.97%	3.92%	
Policy/Commercial Decisions	1.82%	4.23%	3.61%	3.85%	3.33%	3.36%	2.64%	2.52%	2.80%	
Environmental	1.04%	0.50%	0.37%	3.36%	1.87%	3.36%	2.97%	1.80%	1.12%	

Word cloud illustrating words used and themes found within complaints received by SHSCT 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024:



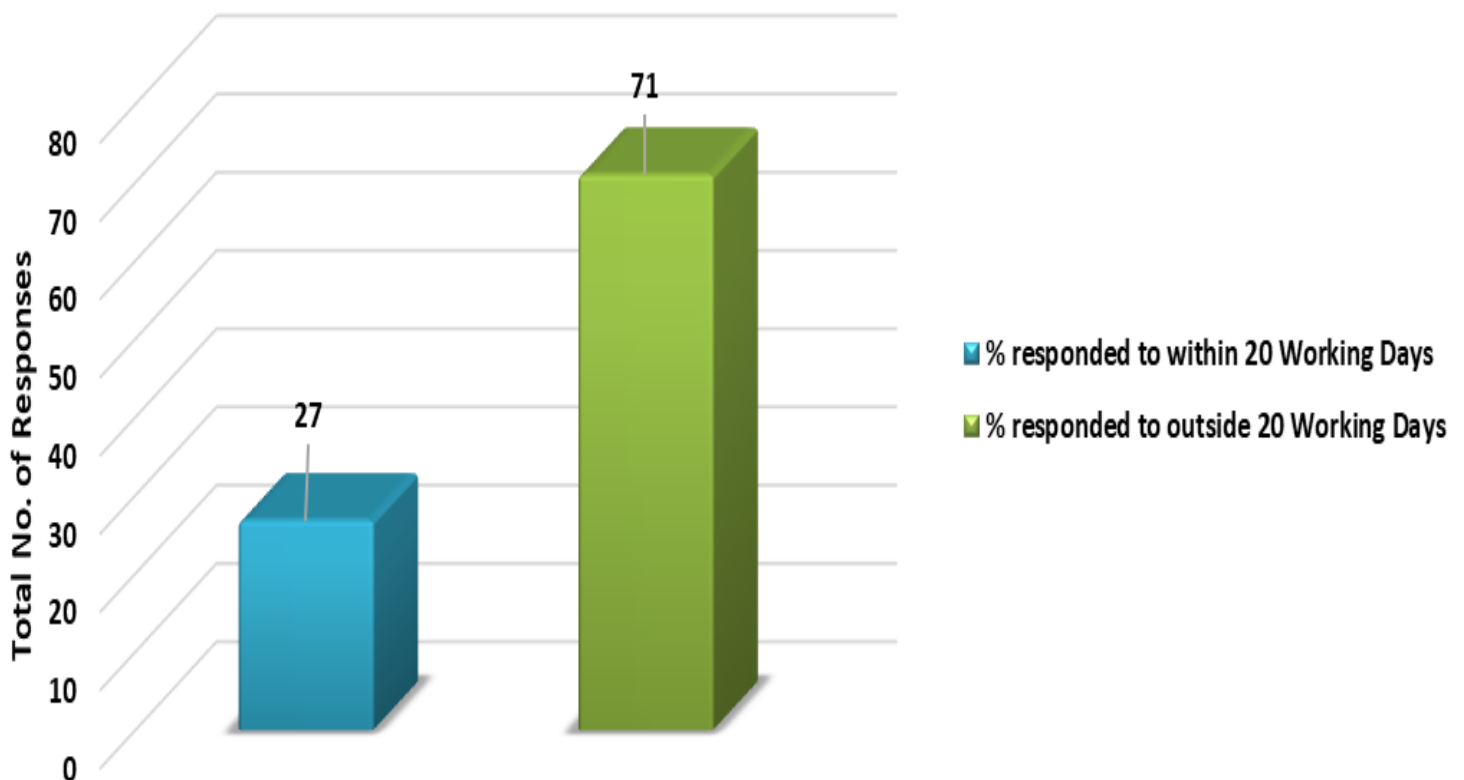
Response Times

The Department of Health (DoH) Complaints Procedure 2023 requires all Trusts across the region to acknowledge a complaint within two working days and a formal response within 20 working days. Should the Trust require additional time to complete a thorough investigation of a complaint, the complainant is notified formally explaining the reason for the delay and anticipated response date. The SHSCT may offer to meet with complainants and the relevant clinical teams to assist with resolution of the complaint. Throughout the complaints process the SHSCT aims to provide the complainant with a positive experience aiming to resolve issues identified. The SHSCT values all service user feedback and will use the information provided as an opportunity to learn and improve service provision.

99% Complaints Acknowledged within two Working Days

Chart 5: Response Times 2023 - 2024

Response Time 2023-2024

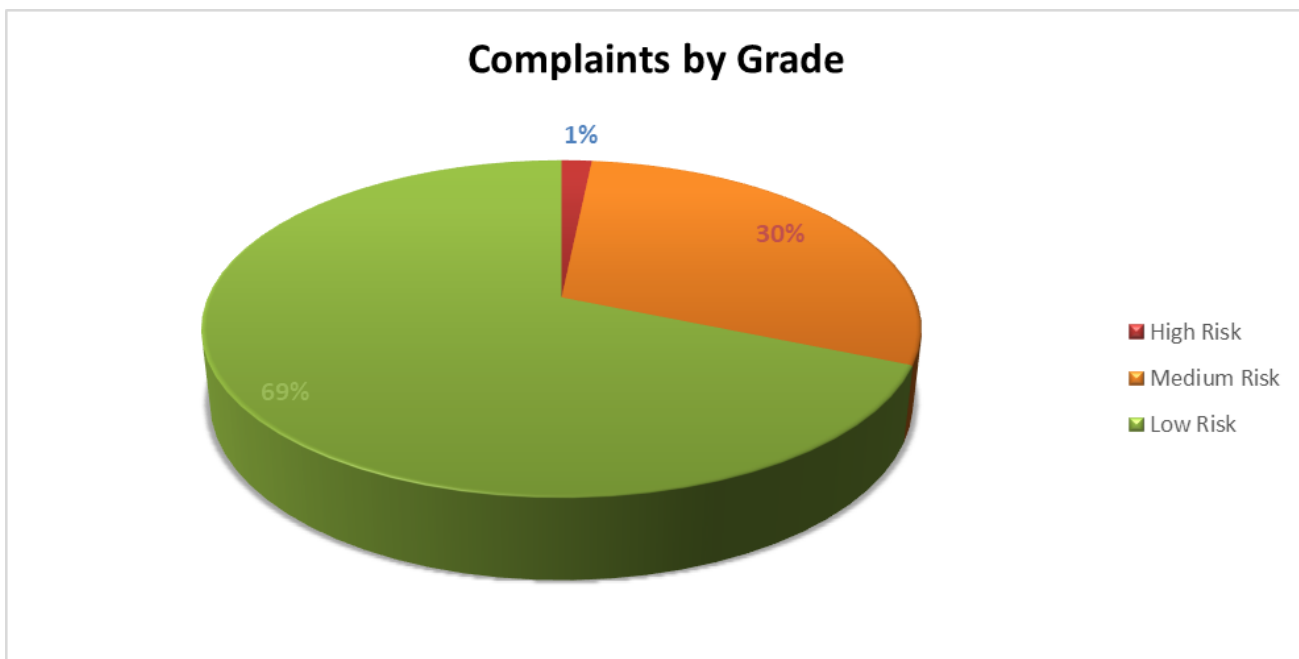


Complaints received by Grade

All formal complaints received by SHSCT are assessed, risk evaluated and graded. The grading will either be Low, Medium, High or Extremely High depending on the severity of the complaint.

As demonstrated in Chart 6, of the formal complaints received in 2023-24, 69% were Low Risk, 30% were graded as Medium Risk, 1% as High Risk and there were no Extremely High Risk graded complaints received during this period.

Chart 6: Percentage of Complaints by risk grade



Learning from Complaints

Learning identified through the review of complaints is used to inform service improvement and enhance patient experience.

Below are two examples of how learning from complaints has changed practices within the Trust:

Complaint 1	
Complaint Subjects	Privacy/Dignity
Complaint Background	Outcome / Lessons Learned / Actions Taken
<p>Mother is unhappy that her child's observations were done in the same room as an adult she felt was partially undressed.</p>	<p>Outcome: The Lead Nurse explained that patients are seen as per their appointment time. Appointment slots are scheduled according to the number of Clinicians on duty and this can result in two patients in the treatment room at the same time. Staff are instructed that no personal details regarding patients are discussed or divulged at this time. Staff are instructed not to leave patients unattended in the Treatment Room. Lead Nurse apologised if confidentiality regarding her daughter's condition and details was not maintained in the presence of the other patient. Lead Nurse apologised that her daughter could see another patient's chest and acknowledged that this was unacceptable.</p> <p>Lessons Learned: When children and adults use the same service, children should not share the same treatment room as an adult but should be treated in a separate room.</p> <p>This complaint was anonymised and discussed with staff for sharing of learning.</p> <p>Actions Taken: The Lead Nurse has addressed concerns with the staff involved and a decision has been made to bring children and their accompanying adult into an alternative single room for the purpose of completing their clinical observations.</p>

Complaint 2	
Complaint Subjects	Quality of Treatment and Care
Complaint Background	Outcome / Lessons Learned / Actions Taken
<p>Complex complaint covering full patient journey. Issues raised refer to Nursing Care, Medical Treatment, Discharge Arrangements and Confidentiality.</p>	<p>Outcome: Condolences offered, complaint answered, an apology given for the complainant's experience.</p> <p>Lessons Learned: Medication should be kept within medication drawer which should remain locked when not in use. Learning identified in regards to the importance of compassionate communication at all times.</p> <p>Patients who are at risk of falling should be monitored closely and repositioned regularly in their beds.</p> <p>Actions Taken: The importance of locking medication in drawers has been reinforced with all staff. Patients who are at risk of falling should be monitored more closely. This has been discussed at a daily safety briefing.</p> <p>Clinical Nurse Educator to ensure that all qualified staff nurses will have completed their Safe Management of Medications training as soon as possible.</p> <p>Intentional rounding is completed for each patient on the ward on a 2-hourly basis and more frequently if a patient is a high falls risk. If patient is identified as a high falls risk, a bed which has close supervision is provided and if required a 1:1 Health Care Assistants can be requested.</p> <p>Staff members will also attend a course relating to bereavement, grief and loss.</p>

Ombudsman Cases

When the SHSCT complaints process has been fully exhausted, should the service user remain unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may raise concerns with the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

In 2023-24, 64 cases were raised with SHSCT by the Ombudsman. Of these cases, 52 were closed, eight were opened and four are pending. The Trust is committed to working with the Ombudsman's office to resolve service user complaints, identify and implement learning.

Background/ Issues of Complaint	Recommendations/ Learning
<p>The complainant raised concerns about the care and treatment the Trust provided to their late father in 2018.</p> <p>Was the care and treatment provided to the patient by the Trust in 2018 reasonable and in accordance with relevant standards?</p> <p>Was the complaints handling by the Trust appropriate and in accordance with relevant standards?</p>	<p>It was recommended that the Trust issue an apology to the complainant for the injustice caused as a result of the failure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately examine the patient's wound when symptoms indicated possible deep wound dehiscence • Communicate effectively in relation to the patient's symptoms • Correctly record the patient's CRP • Adequately assess the patient before discharge • Conduct a thorough and accurate investigation • Provide honest evidence-based explanations • Follow relevant guidance when reporting an SAI <p>The Ombudsman further recommended the Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings the failures identified in this report regarding the assessment and treatment of post-surgical wounds to the attention of the clinical relevant staff, emphasising the importance of adequate review, consideration of symptoms and escalation to senior staff where necessary

Background/ Issues of Complaint

Recommendations/ Learning

- Discusses the findings of the report at senior governance level
- Discusses the patient's treatment and outcome at the next General Surgery Morbidity and Mortality meeting
- Brings the failures identified in this report to the relevant medical staff regarding the need for adequate, in-person assessment of patients prior to discharge, within three months of the date of the final report
- Ensure staff involved in this case should evidence a reasonable level of reflection of findings in the complaint including discussion of the matter in their next appraisal

Learning / service improvements:

- The Trust undertakes a review of SAIs and complaints completed over the previous three years in relation to the General Surgery Ward to identify if poor communication has been a common theme in these areas. Take action to address any identified trends or shortcomings
- The Trust should demonstrate the ways in which it has tried to achieve this and provide evidence where possible that ward staff have adopted this approach
- The Trust provides staff with training in keeping relevant and accurate records in particular identifying good practice and legislative requirements
- The Trust provides evidence that it has reviewed why its own investigation of the complainant's concerns did not identify or acknowledge all the failings highlighted here

Trust Response to Recommendations

1. The Trust issued an apology to the complainant.
2. The report and the failures identified within it were discussed at the General Surgery Patient Safety meeting on 16th January 2024 and weekly Governance paper w/c 23/10/2023, and again on w/c 03/11/2023.

Background/ Issues of Complaint

Recommendations/ Learning

3. The failings have been shared with the relevant medical staff and re-emphasised at the General Surgery Patient Safety meeting on 16th January 2024.

4. This has been scheduled for the next appraisal of the staff involved.

5. A Review was completed and returned to the Ombudsman.

6. General Surgical Team have piloted the use of iPad/Surface Pros on ward rounds, however found that the use of a computer on wheels was preferable due to size and resolution of screens, alongside the use of "Results Folder" which contains hard copy of investigation results. Newer version iPads are being repiloted during April and May 2024 on one of the General Surgical Wards.

7. Information Governance Awareness training is part of the Corporate mandatory training that all Trust staff have to complete and renew every three years. This training is designed to give staff a better understanding of Data Protection and Records Management, the legislation involved and staff roles and responsibilities in relation to this. Junior Doctors are expected to have received training in relation to record keeping as per GMC and Royal Colleges Guidelines. Record keeping is covered during the General Surgical induction for Junior Doctors and is audited throughout each Junior Rotation. The Junior Doctor Training Forum has been approached and asked to consider whether an Information Governance Module should be added to the Junior Doctor Induction Programme.

8. Upon review of complaint it was determined that this was a serious event and a Serious Event Audit (SEA) was carried out.

Compliments and Suggestions

SHSCT is also keen to learn from the positive experiences of service users and their families and understand what aspects made their experience positive.

Receiving compliments helps the SHSCT to identify and promote areas of good practice, whilst also encouraging staff who receive recognition for the vital work that they undertake.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your experience

In the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, the SHSCT received 8991 compliments by subject, a decrease of 978 compared to 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, as illustrated in Table 3 which shows the number of subjects including those received through Care Opinion.

Table 3: Compliment Subject and method of receipt

Subject of Compliment	Card	Email	Feedback Form	Letter	Social Media*	Phone call	Care Opinion	Total
Quality of Treatment and Care	357	62	93	27	2	5	2331	2,877
Staff Attitude & Behaviour	278	69	95	17	3	5	2710	3,177
Information & Communication	88	39	43	7	0	4	1401	1,582
Environment	47	14	9	2	0	0	1266	1,338
Other	10	4	1	2	0	0	0	17
Total Compliments	780	188	241	55	5	14	7,708	8,991

*Social media refers to compliments received via official Facebook and Twitter accounts only.

**Phone calls relate to calls that have been recorded/documentated in phone message books etc.

Below are some examples of the feedback the SHSCT has received in the last financial year from our service users. They have been identified per area and subject.

WE JUST WANT TO SAY... **THANK YOU!**

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Family Nurse Partnership	We had amazing support as foster parents from Family Nurse Partnership, particularly Nurse XX. She was an invaluable help during very challenging times. You can tell she loves her job and cares about each of the families she helps. She is extremely knowledgeable in her field and so compassionate. Thank you for everything.	Quality of Treatment and Care

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Autism Intervention Team	A parent of a child who attend the Autism Service, would like to show thanks and gratitude for the work that is done from the Autism team in the Oaks in Armagh. Child is currently waiting for an assessment, however, the workshops and support available whilst waiting has been amazing. It is so reassuring to know as parents we can contact the service at any time when we need some help or advice. Amazing work, well done to the Autism Service.	Quality of Treatment and Care Information and Communication

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Psychiatric Inpatient Services - Bronte	Thanks to all the staff involved in my recovery journey, As the Journey may be ending in Bronte my Journey continues & I feel better prepared for the next phase. I would like to sincerely thank everyone for the ability to restart and rebuild myself the way I want to be.	Quality of Treatment and Care

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Social Worker	Compliment for Social Worker in respect of the service provided for his mother who now resides in xxxxx Care Home. Completed her job to a high standard, maintained contact throughout and assisted mother in viewing placements ensuring mother she was happy with the home chosen.	Staff Attitude and Behaviour

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
District Nursing	Service User wishes to extend thanks and appreciation to all the District Nurses who have attended to his needs, their dedication and patience has not gone unnoticed. They have been kind and friendly. Keep up the good work and dedication.	Staff Attitude and Behaviour

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Community Stroke Team	I am getting in touch with your team to firstly compliment the excellent Community Stroke Team in Dungannon that have been helping us adjust following the devastating impact of my husband's recent stroke. The professionalism, level of expertise and continuity of care has been superb. A special mention to our OT, our physio and the support workers who have been with us through this journey and have been a terrific support. We always felt able to ask any questions knowing they would be well received and answered.	Quality of Treatment and Care

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Unscheduled Care	Thank you very much to the Doctor in CAH ED and deputy Sister for the amazing care I received during my stay in Resus on XX XXX. They were compassionate, caring and so attentive to my every need being 31 weeks pregnant. They made a difficult situation bearable and even made me smile and laugh. I am so very thankful to have been treated by them both. A complete credit to themselves and the NHS.	Staff Attitude and Behaviour

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
1 North	Acknowledgement of excellent care received in 1 North. Everyone carried out their duties with professionalism, courteousness, compassion and skilful knowledge. Everyone was friendly and attentive and even though they were under pressure nothing was a problem for them when caring for service user.	Staff Attitude and Behaviour Quality of Treatment and Care

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
4 South Surgical	I am writing to thank the wonderful staff who cared for me in 4 South during my very recent admission. Everyone was amazing! A special thank you to the nurse and senior health care assistant who supported me on XX XXX: I will never forget your kindness and encouragement.	Staff Attitude & Behaviour

Specialty	Description of Compliment	Subject of Compliment
Surgical Ward	Family wish to convey their deepest gratitude to all staff who cared for their family member including day staff, ancillary staff, medical and nursing staff who treated her with dignity and care in the time she was in hospital until transfer to the hospice.	Staff Attitude and Behaviour Quality of Treatment and Care Dignity

Patient Client Experience Committee

The Patient and Service User Experience Committee (PSU) consists of service user representatives, Trust Directorate staff and Trust Board members. The PSU aim to promote and encourage service user experience and involvement, providing assurance to the Trust Board that SHSCT services, systems and processes provide effective measures of patient/client and community experience and involvement.

On a quarterly basis, Service User Feedback information is provided to the PSU Committee in relation to:

- Variations in the number of complaints received within the reporting period benchmarked against previous reporting periods
- Examples of learning from complaints
- Variations in the number of compliments received this period within the reporting period benchmarked against previous reporting periods.
- Examples of learning and compliments
- Health Care Analysis Tool data within the reporting period benchmarked against previous reporting periods.
- Areas of improvements/achievement and concern



Care Opinion is a different way for the Trust to receive feedback from patients, visitors, relatives and carers. Care Opinion is the regional on-line service user feedback platform used within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts.

All Care Opinion stories submitted by service users are anonymous, but the platform does allow for two way communication. All story authors should receive a response to their feedback from the Trust within seven days. All feedback provided via Care Opinion should be used by the Trust for reflection, learning and improvement



SHSCT stories 23_24

During 23_24 a total number of 3866 stories were submitted to the Care Opinion website

[Click here](#)

Service User Feedback Team/Clinical & Social Care Governance
Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Lurgan Hospital
100 Sloan Street
Lurgan
BT66 3NX

Phone: (028) 37564600

Email: serviceuserfeedback@southerntrust.hscni.net



Working together



Excellence



Openness & Honesty



Compassion