

Publication Report



NHS Complaints Statistics

Scotland 2012/13

Publication date – 24 September 2013



Contents

Contents.....	1
Introduction	2
Key points	3
Results and Commentary.....	5
Hospital & Community Health Services	5
Response Time.....	6
Service Area	7
Issues Raised	7
Outcome	9
Family Health Services.....	9
Special Boards and National & Support Organisations	10
Scottish Ambulance Service	10
The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) - Donor complaints	11
NHS 24	11
The National Waiting Times Centre	12
The State Hospital Board for Scotland.....	12
Inter-UK Comparisons	13
England.....	13
Wales.....	13
Northern Ireland.....	13
Next Update	14
Glossary.....	15
List of Tables.....	16
Contact.....	17
Further Information.....	17
Rate this publication.....	17
A1 – Background Information	18
Current Complaints Procedure.....	18
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	18
Complaints data and ISD	18
Annual Process.....	19
A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details).....	22
A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)	24
A4 – ISD and Official Statistics	25

Introduction

Complaints about the NHS are valued alongside all other forms of feedback. They are a helpful way of identifying issues and areas in need of change within the service. Acknowledging these issues and taking steps to rectify associated problems is vital in creating an open and honest NHS and in maintaining the quality and safety of NHS services. The purpose of the NHS complaints procedure is to provide a simple, flexible, impartial and easily accessible system for the public as well as being fair to NHS practitioners and staff.

The NHS Complaints procedure first introduced in April 1996, was subsequently revised in April 2005 and again in April 2012. The revision in 2012 reflects the provisions within [The Patient Rights \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#), which gives patients the right to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make complaints about the health care received from the NHS in Scotland. Further details on the procedure are available in Appendix A1. The act also made provision for the introduction of the [Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#) which was published in October 2012 and summarises the rights and responsibilities that patients have when using NHS services.

Data presented in this publication includes:

- the number of complaints received;
- the time taken to deal with complaints;
- issues raised in complaints;
- staff groups who were the subject of complaints; and,
- the outcome of complaints.

The latest reporting year relates to complaints received between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013. These data are presented for NHS Boards and Special Boards (e.g. Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS 24). Family Health Services data within this report are restricted to the volume of complaints received and the percentage of complaints responded to within 20 days by primary care service providers and is presented on the basis of NHS Boards.

Key points

Hospital and Community Health Services, April 2012 – March 2013

- There was a 13% rise in Hospital and Community complaints received with 9,161 in 2012/13 compared to 8,117 in 2011/12. This follows a rise of 15% between 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- Of the 9,161 complaints made about Hospital & Community Health Services in 2012/13, 6,964 (76%) related to the Hospital acute service group compared to 6,235 in 2011/12; this represents a 12% increase.
- The percentage of complaints acknowledged within the national target timescale of three working days from receipt was 90%, consistent with 2011/12.
- The percentage of complaints dealt with within the national target of 20 working days was 61%, slightly lower than that achieved in 2011/12 (65%).
- The median time taken to deal with complaints was 19 working days in 2012/13, consistent with 2011/12 and 2010/11.
- The most prevalent issue raised in 2012/13 complaints was 'Treatment' (38%), followed by 'Staff' (32%), 'Waiting Times' (10%) and 'Environment/domestic' (10%).
- Medical and Dental staff, along with Nurses, midwives and health visitors are the most prevalent groups recorded under Staff Issues both 37%.
- In 2012/13, 28% of complaints were fully upheld, 35% were partially upheld and 36% were not upheld.

A formula error was discovered in the 'Family Health Services complaints – by service' Table originally published on 24th September 2013. The 'All NHS Boards' Total for 2012/13 was incorrectly quoted as 3,966. The correct 'All NHS Boards' Total for 2012/13 is 6,130. This resulted in the number of complaints quoted, and the associated % changes between 2011/12 and 2012/13, being incorrect in the following paragraph:

- In total the number of complaints about Family Health Services in 2012/13 was 3,966. Excluding figures for Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic complaints, which were unavailable for 2011/12, there were 2,992 complaints in 2012/13 compared to 3,538 in 2011/12; a reduction of 15%. Medical complaints have reduced by 13% and Dental complaints by 30%.

The paragraph has been revised as follows:

Family Health Services, April 2012 – March 2013

- In total the number of complaints about Family Health Services in 2012/13 was 6,130. Excluding figures for Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic complaints, which were unavailable for 2011/12, there were 4,804 complaints in 2012/13 compared to 3,538 in 2011/12; an increase of 36%. Medical complaints have increased by 39% and Dental complaints by 20%.

Special Boards, National & Support Organisations, April 2012 – March 2013

- The total number of complaints relating to the Special Boards and National & Support Organisations was 1,208 in 2012/13, a 31% increase since 2011/12.
- There has been a large rise in the number of complaints to the Scottish Ambulance Service; from 214 in 2011/12 to 412 during 2012/13. However, the number of complaints to the Scottish Ambulance Service in 2012/13 is more consistent with figures over the last 5 years, with a 16% increase seen from 356 in 2008/09.

- Complaints to the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service rose by 31% (231 in 2011/12 to 302 in 2012/13).
- The number of complaints to NHS24 decreased in 2012/13; 68 complaints were recorded, compared to 88 in 2011/12. This represents a 23% reduction.
- The number of complaints to the National Waiting Times Centre decreased for the third consecutive year; 27 complaints were received during 2012/13 compared with 38 complaints in 2011/12. This represents a 29% decrease.
- The number of complaints to the State Hospital Board for Scotland decreased slightly in 2012/13; 75 complaints were recorded compared to 79 in 2011/12.

Results and Commentary

Hospital & Community Health Services

Information is presented at Board level with a further breakdown by Division where available. Prior to 2004/05 the breakdown by Acute/Family Health Services is shown under each NHS Board.

The statistics presented relate to the number of complaints submitted to ISD. This includes all formal written complaints. In some NHS Boards/organisations, telephone and other formal oral complaints are also recorded in their submission to ISD.

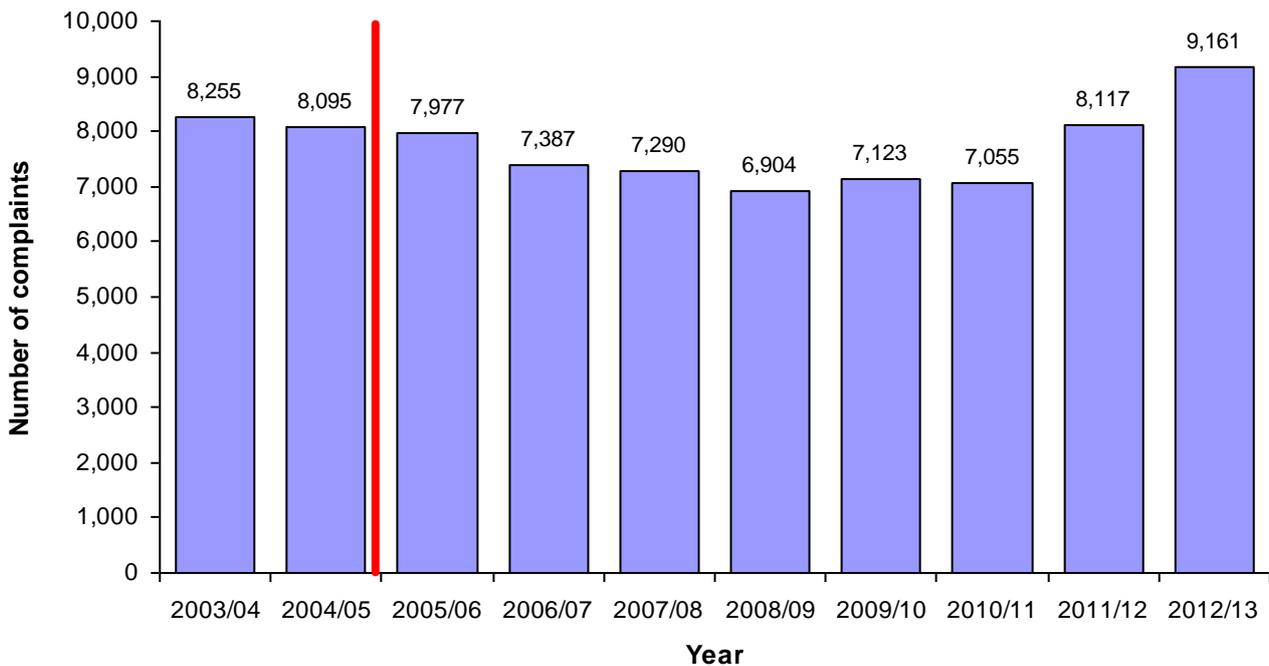
347 records that were either 'Withdrawn', 'Transferred to another unit', or 'Consent not received' have not been included in the statistics.

The figures on records not included are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following report.

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Records not included, by Health Board: 2012-13](#)

- After a gradual rise in the number of complaints received about Hospital and Community Services from 1999/00, the figure declined to 6,904 in 2008/09. This remained relatively stable in 2009/10 and 2010/11 but has increased to 9,161 complaints in 2012/13 (Figure 1). This represents a 13% rise in the last year and follows a rise of 15% between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Figure 1: Number of complaints received for Hospital and Community Health Services^{1,2}, Scotland: 2003/04 to 2012/13



1. Hospital & Community Health Services only (excludes Special NHS Boards, National and Support Organisations)
 2. Red line: New NHS Complaints Procedure took effect from 01/04/2005, caution should be exercised when comparing statistics prior to this date.

- The largest percentage increase in the number of complaints received between 2011/12 and 2012/13 was for NHS Lothian (25%). NHS Borders and NHS Tayside had similar increases (both 23%).
- NHS Fife was the only territorial NHS Board to have a reduction in number of complaints with 5% less.

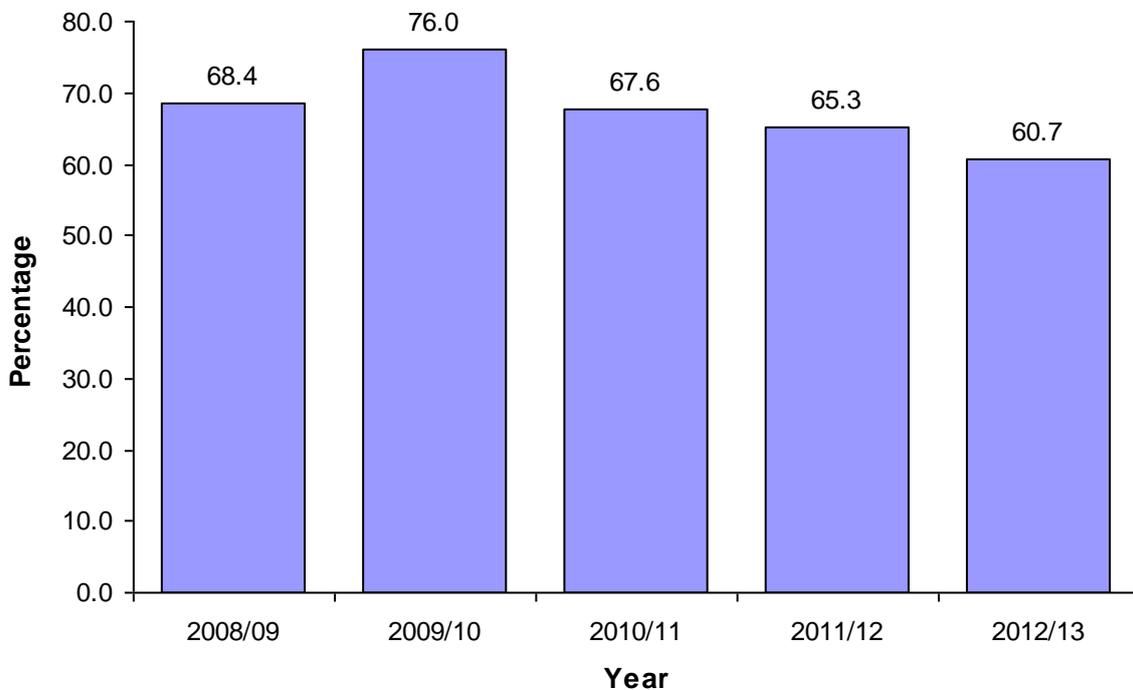
The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following report

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received, by Health Board: 03/04-12/13](#)

Response Time

- The percentage of complaints acknowledged within the national target timescale of three working days from receipt remains consistent with 2011/12 at 90% and ranges from 79% in NHS Forth Valley to 100% in NHS Dumfries & Galloway and NHS Shetland.
- Figure 2 shows that the percentage of complaints dealt with within the national target of 20 working days was 61%, slightly lower than that achieved in 2011/12 (65%). This ranges from 36% in NHS Tayside and NHS Grampian to 95% in NHS Lanarkshire in 2012/13. NB. Public holidays have been taken into account when response times were calculated.

Figure 2: Percentage of complaints responded to within 20 working days for Hospital and Community Health Services¹, Scotland: 2008/09 to 2012/13



1. Hospital & Community Health Services only- excludes Special NHS Boards, National and Support Organisations and the Scottish Health Council.

The following chart also shows the percentage of complaints dealt within 10, 20 and 40 working days at Scotland level.

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Percentage of complaints responded to within 10, 20, and 40 working days: Scotland 09/10-12/13](#)

- The median time taken to deal with complaints in 2012/13 remains the same as 2011/12 and 2010/11 (19 working days). This ranges from 16 working days in NHS Orkney to 27 working days in NHS Grampian and NHS Tayside.

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following report

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received and response times, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

Service Area

- Table 1 shows that of the 9,161 complaints made about Hospital & Community Health Services in 2012/13, 6,964 (76%) related to the Hospital acute service group.
- The number of complaints relating to Hospital Acute Services rose from 6,235 during 2011/12 to 6,964 in 2012/13, a 12% increase. Within this category and over the same period, percentage increases in the number of complaints relating to Inpatients, Outpatients and Accident and Emergency were 16%, 8%, 7% respectively. Day cases reduced by 9%.

Table 1: Number of complaints regarding hospital acute services by service area¹, Scotland: 2007/08 to 2012/13

Service area	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Inpatient	2383	2177	1992	1889	2150	2503
Day case	194	170	252	226	280	254
Outpatient	2179	2083	2028	2263	2761	2974
Accident & Emergency	448	458	521	471	592	636
Delivered in the community	86	33	15	21	13	22
Other	0	0	373	347	439	575
Total	5290	4921	5181	5217	6235	6964

1. Hospital & Community Health Services only, excludes Special NHS Boards and National & Support Organisations

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area, Scotland: 08/09-12/13](#)

Issues Raised

- A single complaint may raise more than one issue. ISD collects a maximum of 3 issues per complaint. Of the 9,161 complaints received during 2012/13, 12,956 issues were raised. There was a 13% rise in the number of complaints received between 2011/12

and 2012/13, and this was mirrored with a 13% increase in the number of issues raised from 11,472 in 2011/12.

- Figure 3 shows that the majority of issues raised in 2012/13 concerned treatment (38%) followed by staff (32%), waiting times (10%) and environment/domestic (10%).
- Within the ‘Treatment’ issue group, almost all (99%) complaints related to ‘clinical treatment’, with the remainder related to ‘consent to treatment’. Within the broader ‘Staff’ issue group, ‘attitude and behaviour’ and ‘oral communication’ were the issues most commonly raised (80%).
- Medical and dental staff along with Nurses, midwives and health visitors are the most prevalent groups of all Staff Issues (both 37%).

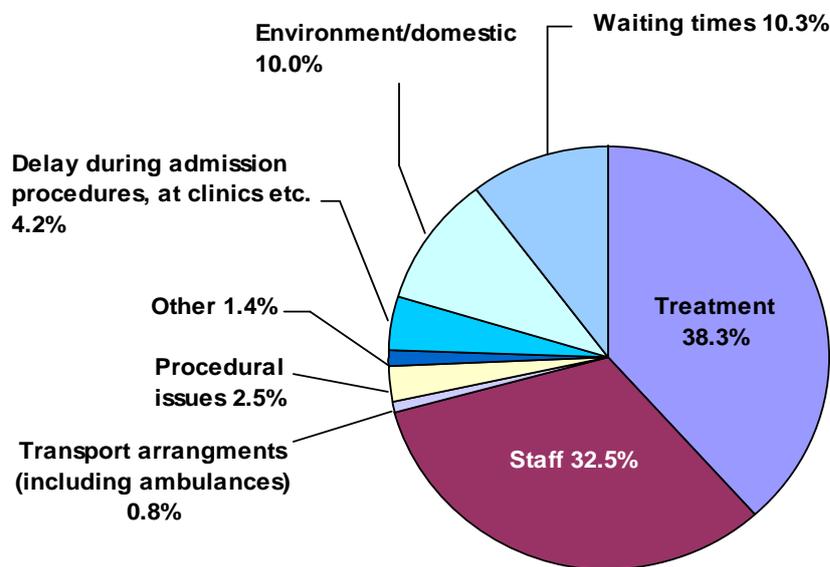
The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, Scotland: 97/98-12/13](#)

[Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Staff Group & Issue Raised, Scotland: 07/08-12/13](#)

Figure 3: Summary of all issues raised for Hospital and Community Health Services^{1,2}, Scotland: 2012/13



1. Community Health Services only- excludes Special NHS Boards, National and Support Organisations and the Scottish Health Council.

2. All issues: some complaints fall into more than one category.

Outcome

- In 2012/13, 28% of complaints were fully upheld, 35% were partially upheld and 36% were not upheld. A further 1% of complaints resulted in 'other' outcomes including conciliation pending, irresolvable and outcome not known.
- There has been a 13% increase in the number of complaints received between 2011/12 and 2012/13, however the number of complaints upheld or partially upheld has increased by 17%.

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

[!\[\]\(8b57f0e15e7dda24cf9977561475f640_img.jpg\) Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

[!\[\]\(4cafc60cd39da821525d7c6589540296_img.jpg\) Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome and Staff Group, Scotland: 07/08-12/13](#)

[!\[\]\(9479d69b60a82161c6862eaa53eb4db3_img.jpg\) Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome and Service Area, Scotland: 07/08-12/13](#)

Family Health Services

Five broad service types are included within the Family Health Services complaints procedure - medical, dental, pharmaceutical, and ophthalmic services and complaints regarding Family Health administration. Although information is collected on complaints made about Family Health Services, it was nationally agreed that, as Family Health Services practitioners are independent contractors, it would be less detailed than that collected on hospital and community health service complaints. This is the first time that complaints relating to pharmaceutical and ophthalmic services have been reported.

A formula error was discovered in the 'Family Health Services complaints – by service' Table originally published on 24th September 2013. The 'All NHS Boards' Total for 2012/13 was incorrectly quoted as 3,966. The correct 'All NHS Boards' Total for 2012/13 is 6,130. This resulted in the number of complaints quoted, and the associated % changes between 2011/12 and 2012/13, being incorrect in the following paragraph:

- In total the number of complaints about Family Health Services in 2012/13 was 3,966. Excluding figures for Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic complaints, which were unavailable for 2011/12, there were 2,992 complaints in 2012/13 compared to 3,538 in 2011/12; a reduction of 15%. Medical complaints have reduced by 13% and Dental complaints by 30%.

The paragraph has been revised as follows:

- The total number of complaints about Family Health Services in 2012/13 was 6,130. Excluding figures for Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic complaints, which were unavailable for 2011/12, there were 4,804 complaints in 2012/13 compared to 3,538 in 2011/12; an increase of 36%. Medical complaints have risen by 39% and Dental complaints by 20%.

Table 2: Number of Complaints received for Family Health Services, Scotland: 2009/10 to 2012/13^R

Total Number of Complaints Received	2009/10	2010/11 ¹	2011/12	2012/13
Medical	2,672	2,700	2,980	4,134
Dental	673	533	558	670
Family Health administration	1	0	0	0
Pharmaceutical	n/a	n/a	n/a	922
Ophthalmic	n/a	n/a	n/a	404
Family Health Services total	3,346	3,233	3,538	6,130

^R Figures for 2012/13 have been revised since Publication date.

1. Figures from NHS Highland were unavailable in 2010/11.

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

[Family Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area and Health Board, Scotland: 07/08-12/13](#)

[Family Health Services: Number of complaints received and requests for Independent Review, Scotland: 96/97-04/05](#)

Special Boards and National & Support Organisations

- Complaints relating to all Special Health Boards and National & Support organisations have been collected since 2006/07. Table 3 shows that there were 1208 complaints received by these organisations during 2012/13.

Table 3: Number of Complaints received (Special Boards, National & Support organisations and the Scottish Health Council), Scotland 2008/09 to 2012/13

Total Number of Complaints Received	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Scottish Ambulance Service	356	477	374	214	412
Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)	281	253	256	231	302
NHS 24	109	112	71	88	68
The National Waiting Times Centre	46	55	47	38	27
The State Hospital Board for Scotland	53	66	42	79	75
NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) (Excluding SNBTS)	312	284	268	257	306
NHS Education for Scotland (NES)	7	0	2	8	9
NHS Health Scotland	5	8	2	2	5
NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) (Including Scottish Health Council)	0	4	6	7	4
Total	1,169	1,259	1,068	924	1,208

Scottish Ambulance Service

- The number of complaints to the Scottish Ambulance Service has risen from 214 in 2011/12 to 412. This represents a 93% increase. However, as shown in Table 3, the

number of complaints to the Scottish Ambulance Service in 2012/13 is more consistent with figures over the last 5 years, with a 16% increase seen from 356 in 2008/09.

- Through the reporting period, the Service has been proactive in encouraging feedback, comments, concerns and complaints as part of the service's person-centredness action plan.
- In 2012/13, 97% of complaints received by Scottish Ambulance Service were acknowledged within 3 working days.
- Of the complaints received in 2012/13, 66% were responded to within 20 working days.
- The issues raised in 2012/13 included: patient transport service (22%), attitude/behavior/communication (19%), and response time (16%).

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received and response times, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Scottish Ambulance Service: Number of complaints received by Issue 2012/13](#)

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) - Donor complaints

- Around 300,000 donors attend blood donation sessions in a single year. Although the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service is a division of NHS National Services Scotland, donor complaints are collected and reported separately. In 2012/13 the number of complaints has risen to 302 compared with 231 in 2011/12; a rise of 31%.
- Complaints about 'Special design / change / disruption' have risen from 15 in 2011/12 to 81 in 2012/13.
- Complaints relating to 'donor selection health & safety', 'donor communications', 'bruising or other discomfort', and 'documentation & records' decreased by 27%, 37%, 29%, and 27% respectively between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

The figures described here are also available in the following report

 [SNBTS: Number of complaints received by Type: 97/98-12/13](#)

NHS 24

- The number of complaints to NHS 24 has reduced considerably over time. During 2004/05, when the service was expanded to all NHS Boards, 378 complaints were received. The number of complaints has since fallen to 68 complaints during 2012/13.
- For the fourth year in a row, 100% of complaints received by NHS 24 were acknowledged within three working days. 93% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days.
- Almost half of all issues raised by complainants to NHS 24 during 2012/13 related to two main areas; 'inappropriate outcome/referral/advice' (25%) and 'Expectations of service' (22%).

The figures described here are also available in the following report

 [NHS24: Number of complaints received by Issue: 03/04-12/13](#)

The National Waiting Times Centre

- The number of complaints to the National Waiting Times Centre has fallen for the third consecutive year; 27 complaints were received during 2012/13 compared with 38 complaints during 2011/12. This represents a 29% decrease.
- There was a small reduction in the percentage of complaints acknowledged within 3 days; 96% during 2012/13 compared to 97% during 2011/12 and, there was a decrease in the percentage of complaints responded to within 20 days; 67% in 2012/13 compared to 84% during 2011/12.
- In 2012/13 70% of complaints were either upheld or were upheld in part, this compares to 58% of the 2011/12 complaints.

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received and response times, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

The State Hospital Board for Scotland

- In 2012/13 the number of complaints to the State Hospital Board for Scotland has slightly fallen to 75, compared to 79 complaints in 2011/12.
- Almost all complaints received were acknowledged within three working days (99%) Complaints responded to within 20 days reduced from 94% in 2011/12 to 81% in 2012/13..
- Almost all issues raised in complaints to the State Hospital Board for Scotland from 2010/11 to 2012/13 related to 'Environment/domestic', and 'Staff' and 'Treatment'.

The figures described here are available at Scotland level and for each individual board in the following reports

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received and response times, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

 [Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome, by Health Board: 07/08-12/13](#)

Inter-UK Comparisons

Complaints data is routinely collected and published for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; however these are not directly comparable with the Scottish data presented within this publication.

England

In England the annual collection is a count of written complaints which are made by or on behalf of patients. Data are collected via two forms; KO41A (NHS Hospital and Community Health Service (HCHS)) and KO14B (Family Health Service (GP including Dental (FHS))). In Scotland the data submitted to ISD includes all formal written complaints; however, as there is a variation in recording practice across Scotland some NHS Boards / organisations include telephone and other formal oral complaints. Complaints which were initially made orally and subsequently made in writing are also included.

From 2011/12, following a review of feedback received in England, an additional data item, "Number of Complaints Upheld", has been added to the KO41 data returns. This means it is now possible to see how many complaints were upheld in addition to the number of complaints made to an organisation. This was published as experimental statistics by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) in England for the first time in August 2012.

Further information on the English complaints system is available from the following link: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?productid=12245&q=complaints&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1#top>

Wales

Up until April 2011, the Welsh annual collection was also a count of written complaints via the KO14 A and B forms. However, new regulations aimed at streamlining the handling of complaints about the NHS in Wales, referred to as [Putting Things Right](#), came into force on 1st April 2011. Under these arrangements a new set of data will be collected. This is being piloted for the first year April 2011 to March 2012 with consideration being given to developing this into a new statistical return. The new set of data will not be comparable with the KO41 A or B.

Further information on the Welsh complaints system is available from the following link: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2011/110921/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland have an integrated health and social care system, which mean that Trusts figures include complaints regarding social workers, Scottish figures do not include social workers.

Further information on the Northern Irish complaints system is available from the following link: <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/publications/Complaints/>

Next Update

The next update reporting on complaints received between 1st April 2013 and March 2014, will be made available on the ISD website in 2014.

Glossary

- **Complaint:** In the NHS complaints procedure a complaint is defined as: "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response."
- **Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force:** The data submitted to ISD includes all formal written complaints. Note however, that there is a variation in recording practice across Scotland and some NHS Boards / organisations include telephone and other formal oral complaints. Complaints which were initially made orally and subsequently made in writing are also included.

List of Tables

Name	Time period	File & size
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received and response times, by Health Board</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [63kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Percentage of complaints responded to within 10, 20, and 40 working days: Scotland 03/10-12/13</u>	2009/10 to 2012/13	Excel [16kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received, by Health Board: 03/04-12/13</u>	2003/04 to 2012/13	Excel [29kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area, by Health Board</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [99kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area, Scotland</u>	2008/09 to 2012/13	Excel [77kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, by Health Board</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [126kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Issue Raised, Scotland</u>	1997/98 to 2012/13	Excel [110kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Staff Group & Issue Raised, Scotland</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [54kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome, by Health Board</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [69kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Records not included, by Health Board: 2012-13</u>	2012/13	Excel [22kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome & Staff Group, Scotland</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [146kb]
  <u>Hospital & Community Health Services: Number of complaints received by Outcome & Service Area, Scotland</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [128kb]
  <u>Family Health Services: Number of complaints received by Service Area and Health Board, Scotland</u>	2007/08 to 2012/13	Excel [69kb]
  <u>Family Health Services: Number of complaints received and requests for Independent Review, Scotland</u>	1996/97 to 2004/05	Excel [17kb]
  <u>Scottish Ambulance Service: Number of complaints received by Issue 2012/13</u>	2012/13	Excel [19kb]
  <u>SNBTS: Number of complaints received by Type</u>	1997/98 to 2012/13	Excel [21kb]
  <u>NHS24: Number of complaints received by Issue</u>	2003/04 to 2012/13	Excel [21kb]

Contact

Robyn Munro

Principal Information Analyst

robyn.munro@nhs.net

0131 275 6967

Frank Clarke

Information Analyst

f.clarke2@nhs.net

0131 275 6148

Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

Rate this publication

[Click here](#) to provide feedback and rate this publication.

A1 – Background Information

Current Complaints Procedure

There is a wide variation in the type of contacts that patients have with the NHS (e.g. treatment as an inpatient, outpatient, attendance at A&E, blood donation and transportation by ambulance) and patients (or their representatives) can make a complaint if they feel dissatisfied with any aspect of these interactions.

The NHS Complaints procedure first introduced in April 1996, was subsequently revised in April 2005 and again in April 2012. The revision in 2012 reflects the provisions within [The Patient Rights \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#), which gives patients the right to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make complaints about the health care received from the NHS in Scotland.

Secondary legislation to support the implementation of the Patient Rights Act came into force on 1 April 2012 and revised 'Can I help you?' [Good Practice Guidance](#) on handling and learning from feedback and complaints was issued to the NHS in March 2012. This makes NHS Boards directly responsible for the collection, monitoring and reporting of complaints received in relation to services they provide and places additional responsibility on Boards for the collection and monitoring of complaints received by their Family Health service providers. The emphasis is on early and local resolution and ensuring learning is shared and improvements acted upon as soon as possible after the issue that gave rise to the complaint.

Further details on the Complaints Procedure in use between 2005 and 2012 can be found at: ["Can I help you? Learning from comments, concerns and complaints"](#)

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from the normal complaint process, there is recourse to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman who provides a 'one-stop-shop' for individuals making complaints about organisations providing public services in Scotland (www.spsso.org.uk).

[Patient Advice and Support Service \(PASS\)](#)

Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland were funded by local NHS Boards to deliver the Independent Advice and Support Service (IASS). The aim was to support patients, their carers and relatives in their dealings with the NHS and in other matters affecting their health. The Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011 made provision for the establishment of the Patient Advice and Support Service from 1 April 2012. Further information on PASS (which replaced IASS) can be found at: <http://www.cas.org.uk/patientadvice>

Complaints data and ISD

NHS Boards and other NHS organisations submit summary information about complaints they receive to ISD Scotland. The data covers complaints received by Hospital & Community Services and Family Health Services. The data submitted to ISD includes all formal written complaints.

In 2006 research was conducted into the [Experience and Attitudes in relation to NHS Complaints](#). This highlighted some discrepancies between a patient's perception of responsiveness to their complaints and what was reported in national statistics. Part of this was due to variability in the way complaints seemed to be dealt with. This was mostly down to a lack of consistency in the application of codes to record complaints made against an NHS Service in organisations across Scotland. Each Complaints Office follows general guidance about complaint recording within the NHS, but may also use their own local set of categories to register the details, or have their own interpretation of how to complete the dataset.

To help address these issues, ISD built an NHS Complaints system containing revised codes and detailed definitions and subsequently rolled out these definitions and codes nationally to ensure consistency in recording practices from Board to Board within NHS Scotland. Implementation of this new dataset for Hospital & Community Services commenced mid-way through 2008. Prior to the 2008/9 report, new codes were mapped to ensure consistency in reporting and, despite some data submission difficulties, data were received and reported against as normal. Further details of this change are available within the [Changes to the NHS Complaints Dataset](#).

Annual Process

The latest reporting year relates to complaints received between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013. These data are presented for NHS Boards and Special Boards (e.g. Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS 24). Family Health Services data within this report are restricted to the volume of complaints received and percentage of complaints responded to within 20 days, by primary care service providers and is presented on the basis of NHS Boards.

Data Sources

NHS Boards and other NHS organisations deal with the complaints received by their area. Summary information for all the complaints received is recorded by each organisation and submitted electronically onto the ISD Complaints National Database (Universe).

For Hospital and Community Services, information such as the date the complaint was received, service area, issues raised, staff group and outcome of the complaint is summarised by using standard coding convention. For Family Health Services, an annual aggregated return is completed by the NHS organisation, recording the total number of complaints received and percentage of complaints responded to within 20 days, split by service area.

This summary information is forwarded to ISD where it is validated and analysed. NHS Complaint Statistics are then published annually on the ISD website. Note that ISD does not hold any identifiable information with regards to the complaint - only summary codes for each complaint are held. The codes used are available from this link: [Definitions Document](#)

Timeliness

NHS Boards including the National Waiting Times Centre and the State Hospital for Scotland submit their hospital complaints data to ISD after the end of each quarter of the financial year. These data are validated by ISD and checked with individual boards after submission. The Family Health Services statistics relating to GP, dental, pharmaceutical, and ophthalmic services are collated via an aggregated annual return of the total number of complaints made during the previous financial year.

It was decided from 2006/07, all Special Boards and a number of National and Support Organisations would submit complaints data to ISD at the end of each financial year. Below is a list of links to the websites of these organisations if further information is required:

- [Scottish Ambulance Service](#)
- [NHS 24](#)
- [Scottish National Blood transfusion Service](#)
- [The State Hospital for Scotland](#)
- [The National Waiting Times Centre](#)
- [NHS Education for Scotland](#)
- [NHS Health Scotland](#)
- [NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#)
- [NHS National Services Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Health Council](#)

Complaints 'received' / complaints 'dealt with'

Information is reported on all complaints received within financial years, from 1996/97 onwards. In a small number of cases it is not possible to report on the response times or an outcome of complaints as the response is not known. Such complaints are classified as "response not known".

Issues raised

For any one complaint ISD collects a maximum of three different types of issue may be recorded for national returns and for this reason the total number of issues recorded may be greater than the total number of complaints.

Staff group

For each complaint an associated staff group is attributed. This does not imply, however, that a particular member of staff in that group was directly involved in the circumstances leading to the complaint. For example, a complaint against a hospital for its lack of car parking facilities would be coded under "Division administrative staff/members".

Time taken to acknowledge

The time taken to acknowledge a complaint is calculated using working days. Analysis for 2005/06 onwards has been updated to exclude public holidays; however analysis prior to 2005/06 does not take into account any local or national public holidays. Any investigation of a complaint completed within five days of receipt is notionally treated as if it had been acknowledged within three days, irrespective of whether a formal acknowledgement was actually made in that time.

Time taken to respond

The time taken to respond is calculated over 20 working days (20 working days is the equivalent of 28 calendar days). It should be noted that for analysis prior to 2005/06 public holidays are not taken into account when response times are calculated. Analysis for 2005/06 onwards has been updated to take account of public holidays.

Median time taken to respond

The median is a useful statistic for comparing response times between organisations. The median number of days taken to respond to a complaint is such that half of all complaints received were responded to in less than this time, and half were responded to in more than this time. Note that the median is used in preference to the mean (average) to ensure that complaints that took a long time to resolve do not skew the overall picture, which could present a misleading view of how long it takes to deal with complaints on the whole.

Calculation of times

The time taken to acknowledge a complaint is calculated using the date of receipt of complaint. The time taken to respond to a complaint is calculated using the date of receipt of complaint or where there is consent required the date consent is received at, and the date of despatch from, the Division or NHS Board. This excludes any delivery time between the complainant and the Division/NHS Board.

Private sector

In cases where the complainant has complained directly to a private sector organisation that is providing NHS care, information about the complaint may not necessarily be reported.

Outside agencies

Details of investigations instigated by outside agencies (e.g. Police, Health Service Commissioner, Coroner's Court) are not included in the national returns.

Updating Previous Data

Please note that historic information may change slightly as the data will have been updated to allow for further reporting on these complaints in subsequent years.

A2 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	NHS Complaints Statistics Scotland 2012/13
Description	Analysis of NHS Complaints reported from NHS Boards in Scotland showing number and percentage of complaints received; time taken to resolve; by issues raised, staff group and service area
Theme	Healthcare information
Topic	Quality Improvement
Format	Web-based publication
Data source(s)	ISD(Scotland) NHSScotland complaints
Date that data are acquired	6 weeks after 30 June, 30 September, 31 December, and 31 March
Release date	24 September 2013
Frequency	Annual
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Quarterly data for the financial year received 6 weeks after finish of each quarter
Continuity of data	Each year since 1996
Revisions statement	Revised as at 30 September 2013.
Revisions relevant to this publication	None
Concepts and definitions	See Definitions Document published on Website
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	National performance and benchmarking.
Accuracy	Quality assurance of data by NHS Boards (management information version of reports) and ISD
Completeness	Approximately 99.7% for Hospital and Community Health Service in 2012/13 as some records remain open. The percentage of expected returns from Family Health Service contractors varied from Board to Board. Overall returns were received from approximately 90% of GP contractors, and 70% of Dental practices, Pharmacies or Options. The main problem highlighted by some NHS Boards was lack of available email facilities. The majority of GP practices could be contacted via email; however this was not the case for Dental practices, Pharmacies or Opticians.
Comparability	A new dataset was introduced in 2008. The new codes in this dataset could be mapped onto older codes making data comparable. Report contains a section on inter-UK comparisons; data is not directly comparable with similar measures used in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines .
Coherence and clarity	Measures to enhance coherence and clarity within this report include: explanatory chart/table notes, minimal use of abbreviations/abbreviations explained in text, comprehensive notes on background and methodology.
Value type and unit of measurement	Number and percentage of complaints

Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed.
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Assessment report published (ref no. 249)
Last published	25 September 2012
Next published	To be confirmed
Date of first publication	April 1996
Help email	robyn.munro@nhs.net
Date form completed	22 August 2013

A3 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:

Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate
NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Communication leads

Extended Pre-Release Access

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate (Analytical Services Division)

Early Access for Management Information

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to 'management information', ie as part of the delivery of health and care:

Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate (Patient Support and Participation)

Early Access for Quality Assurance

These statistics will also have been made available to those who needed access to help quality assure the publication:

Data Providers (Complaints Officers / Lead Contacts for all NHS Boards and National & Support Organisations)

A4 – ISD and Official Statistics

About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Purpose: To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Mission: Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

Vision: To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).