Annual statistical release for Complaints
2018/19

A Management Information publication for Scotland

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division provides information on complaints received by NHSScotland organisations from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Main Points
• There was a 2% increase in the total number of NHSScotland complaints received in 2018/19 (31,849) compared to the previous year.
• The total number of complaints that were closed went down by 4% (22,228).
• Within their agreed timescales, the total number of complaints that were closed increased by 4% (15,225).
• The number of stage one complaints that were closed decreased 561 (5%) from last year to 10,590 (down to 48% as a proportion of total complaints), and the number of stage two complaints that were closed dropped 963 (10%) to 9,957 (from 47% to 44%, as a proportion of total complaints).
• The number of escalated complaints that were closed has increased by 587 (33%) to 1,741 (from 5% to 8%, as a proportion of total complaints).

Background
This report provides information on NHSScotland complaints received about hospital and community health services, family health services and special boards and national and support organisations.

It includes the number of complaints received; the time taken to deal with complaints; issues raised; actions taken; service areas and staff groups who were the subject of complaints and the outcome of complaints.

2016/17 was the last public release as a National Statistic of NHS Complaints by ISD. These data continue to be collected and reported by NHS Boards individually, in addition to National and Support organisations. From 2017/18 onwards ISD have produced an annual short statistical release and will also provide links to all NHS Board complaints reports. Users will be consulted on the format and content of future releases.
The NHS Model Complaints Handling Procedure

Our complaints process provides two opportunities to resolve (close) complaints internally: Early resolution, and Investigation.

Stage One - Early Resolution (5 working days to resolve)

Early resolution aims to resolve straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation at the earliest opportunity. This should be as close to the point of service delivery as possible. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage. In practice, early resolution means resolving the complaint at the first point of contact with the person making the complaint. This could mean a face-to-face discussion with the person, or it could mean asking an appropriate member of staff to deal directly with the complaint. In either case, you may settle the complaint by providing an on-the-spot apology where appropriate, or explaining why the issue occurred and, where possible, what will be done to stop this happening again.

Stage Two Escalated (when a resolution at Stage One is not accepted)

A complaint must be handled at the investigation stage when early resolution was tried but the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied and requests an investigation into the complaint. This may be immediately on communicating the decision at the early resolution stage or could be some time later; or satisfactory early resolution will not be possible as the complainant has clearly insisted that an investigation be conducted.

Stage Two - Investigation (20 working days to resolve)

Complaints should be handled directly at the investigation stage, without first attempting early resolution, when:

- the issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation; or
- the complaint relates to serious, high-risk or high-profile issues.

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Further Information

Data from this publication is available to download from our web page.

For more information on Complaints data see the website https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Quality-Indicators/NHS-Complaints-Statistics/Statistics/.

The next release of this publication will be Autumn 2020.

ISD and 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 Statistics. Further information about our statistics.