



Patient Feedback Annual Report 2020-2021

Produced July 2021

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please contact Patient Services by telephone on
01387 272 733, by email at dg.patientservices.nhs.scot
or via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#).

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Foreword



Understanding people's experience of our services offers us valuable insight in to what we are doing well and where we can improve.

The last year has been a challenging period and it has been heart warming to receive the many messages of support for our staff from the public. Feedback takes many forms and never has that been more evident than this past year, when people have shown incredible creativity in

sharing their stories with us. We've received many thank you cards and letters full of kind words. We've had beautiful art work and handwritten messages sent to our teams. We've had banners and giant rainbow signs installed outside our buildings by thoughtful members of the public. We've even received original poetry written in dedication to our staff. Much of this feedback is not captured in any formal way, but I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to show such kindness and support. We truly appreciate it.

There have of course been times where people's experience of our services has not been to the standard that they had hoped for. We are equally grateful to those that took the time to share those concerns with us. Whilst it is disappointing to hear of occasions where we have not met the high standards people deserve, that feedback provides an important and valued opportunity for us to learn and improve. We have captured some of that learning in this report to demonstrate that your feedback really can make a difference.

Please continue to share your stories and feedback with us. Our website details the many ways in which you can do so - www.nhsdg.co.uk/how-did-we-do.

Thank you.

Jeff Ace, Chief Executive

We Welcome Your Feedback

Encouraging and Gathering Feedback



There are a variety of ways people can share their feedback with us, including by post, webform, email, social media, phone or via ContactScotland BSL. People can speak to us face to face during appointments, events or meetings, or virtually over video calls. If people require support to contact us, or do not wish to speak to us direct, they can use the Patient Advice and Support Service or Care Opinion to share their feedback.

contact
SCOTLAND
BSL



Care
Opinion
What's your story?

What We're Doing Well

- We have a wide variety of feedback mechanisms, which are well publicised.
- Our feedback leaflet is available in multiple languages.
- We have a dedicated section on our website for feedback.

Where We Can Improve

- We don't formally record all of the positive feedback we receive. Doing so could help us better understand what we are doing well.
- There are opportunities to use technology to make it easier for people to provide feedback.

We Welcome Your Feedback

2020-21 at a Glance

166 Compliments

We recorded **166** compliments for excellent care and treatment. This is in addition to the hundreds of thank you cards and messages teams received directly.



323 Complaints

We received **323** complaints, which is significantly fewer than the 500 received during 2019-20.



147 Concerns

We received **147** concerns, which is fewer than the 181 received during the previous year.



65 Care Opinion Stories

We received **65** Care Opinion stories, which were read **10,817** times.



Document Reviews

We **reviewed** our Complaints Handling Procedure and Unacceptable Actions Policy, producing an Equality Impact Assessment for both.



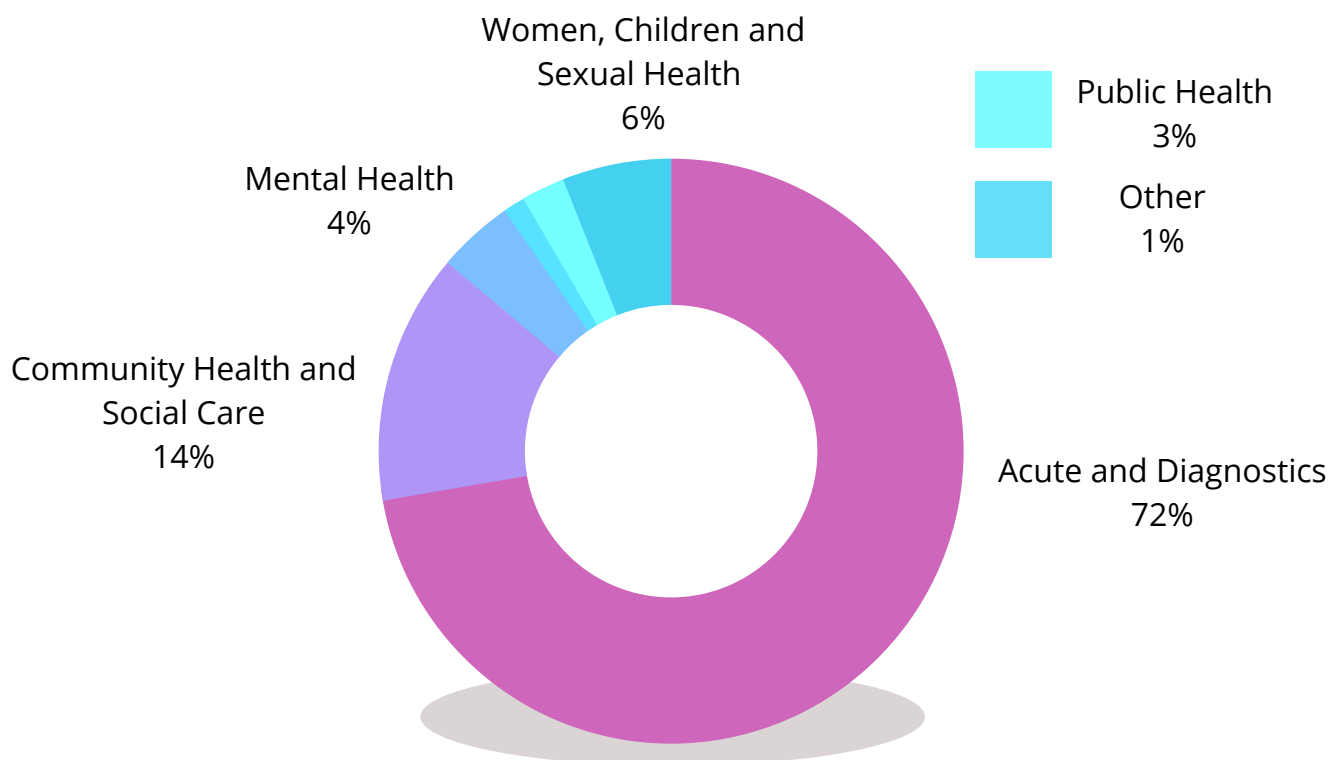
27 SPSO Cases

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) contacted us about **27** cases.

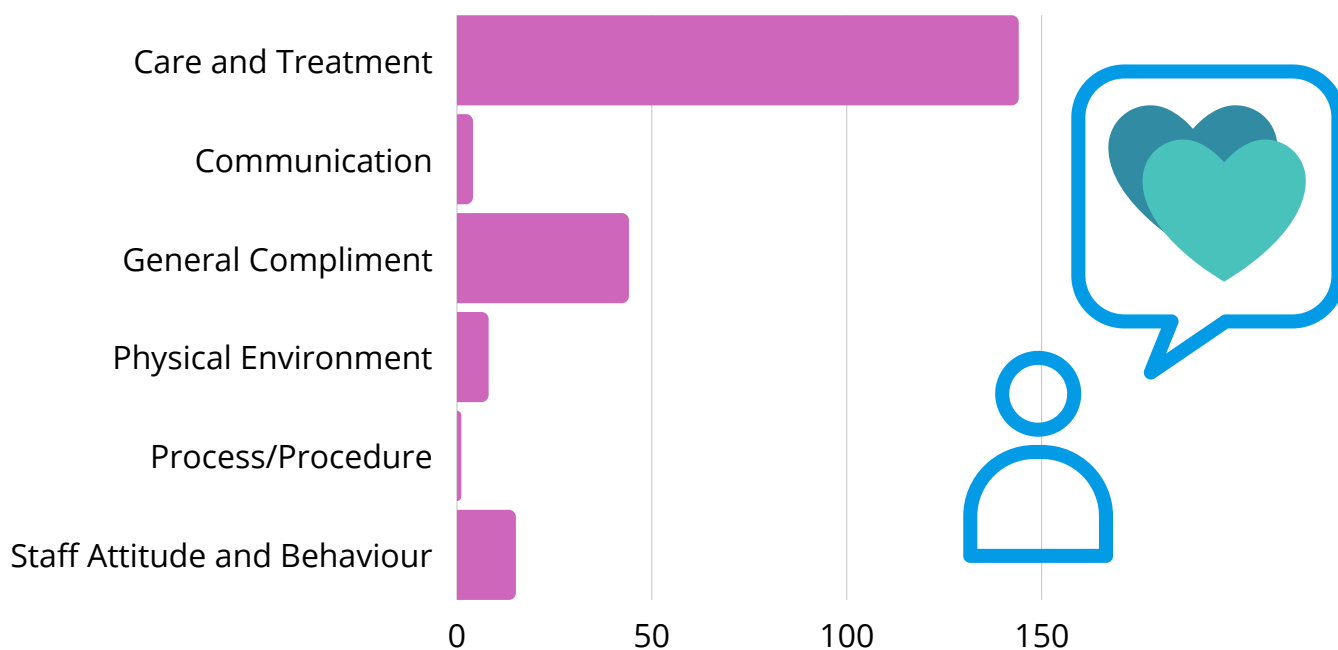


Compliments

The majority of the compliments we receive relate to Acute and Diagnostics, which is our largest Directorate.



The majority of the positive feedback we received was complimenting the quality of care and treatment. Some compliments detail several areas of excellence and others are more general in nature.



We Welcome Your Feedback

Compliments

'I cannot speak highly enough of the care and professionalism of everyone involved and appreciate very much the efforts of everybody involved.'

'You were all so kind to me...'

'I attended the breast clinic and would just like to take the opportunity to tell you what a credit the staff are to your hospital. Every step of the way the ladies really made a worrying time easier especially in what is trying times for everyone. Each one of them explained in detail what was happening and really put me at ease.'

'From start to finish I was treated with tremendous kindness and compassion and the overall care could not be faulted. I want to specifically thank all the staff on the ward and the doctors and consultant surgeons, whose skills got me through such a serious operation '

'I have been admitted to Dumfries hospital again with severe stomach pain. I had a scan today. Nurses and drs and student nurses are absolutely amazing. The atmosphere is lovely. I've been in for a whole week now. Couldn't ask for better. Thankyou.'

'My overall experience has been a very positive one. I feel very lucky I was given such excellent care in a time of such adversity...'

'I recently attended the Mountainhall Eye Clinic. I found the consultant to be very thorough and informative about my condition. He had a very pleasant manner and I consider him to be an excellent doctor.'

Care Opinion

Care Opinion is an online approach, which enables the public to provide and view feedback on our services. When a story is added to Care Opinion the relevant staff are alerted so that they can view the feedback and respond as required.

65
Stories were
shared on the
Care Opinion
website

Our stories
were read
10,817
times

We replied
to **97%**
of stories

58%
of stories
shared were
positive



Share your story at
www.careopinion.org.uk

14%
of stories
shared were
significantly
critical

The majority of the feedback the Board receives through Care Opinion is positive. When a story is critical, the author is invited to make direct contact in order that we can provide further advice and support to resolve any issues raised. The below details some of the key themes from our 2020-21 stories.

Friendly Discharge Understanding
✧ Excellent Grateful Communication
Concerned Fantastic Let Down Reassuring
Safe Thank you Caring Lack of Support Care
Helpful Amazing Compassion Dismissive
Support Conflicting Information Staff
Fortunate Not Listening Professionalism

Complaints

The Board is required to report performance against nine statutory indicators in relation to complaints. A summary of performance against each indicator is included below.

Indicator 1 - Learning from Complaints

Feedback provides a valuable opportunity for us to learn from the experiences of our patients, service users, carers and visitors. As well as our local commitment to learning and improving, we are also obliged to identify, record and report on learning under our Performance Indicators.

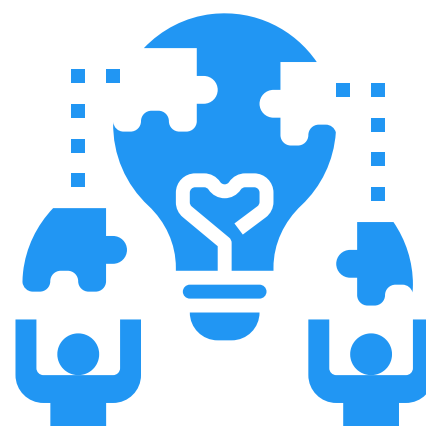
What We're Doing Well

- Services are encouraged to identify learning from all upheld and partially upheld complaints.
- Learning from complex and SPSO complaints is now considered by our Patient Safety Group to help identify wider improvement opportunities.
- We use the same learning summary template to capture learning from both complaints and adverse events, which helps bring consistency to our approach.

Where We Can Improve

- We planned to increase the number of learning summaries completed during 2020/21. This has not been achieved and remains an area where we need to improve.
- There is still scope to improve how we share learning, both locally and nationally.
- There are opportunities to improve how we identify wider themes in our learning, by considering information from sources beyond feedback.

The following pages detail the approach to learning in our four largest Directorates, as well as some of the improvements they have made in response to the feedback received over 2020/21.



We Welcome Your Feedback

Learning from Complaints

Learning is one of the key outcomes sought by complainants. People often tell us that they want to ensure that the organisation improves as a result of their feedback.

Teams use Learning Summary templates to capture and share learning from patient feedback.

For complex complaints, 'Multi-Disciplinary' meetings are organised to allow a team approach to investigating the complaint and identifying learning.

Directorates discuss complaints regularly at their management team meetings.

Details of learning and improvement actions are shared in complaint response letters.



Complex complaints are shared with our Patient Safety Group to aid wider organisational learning.

We look for opportunities to learn from our handling of complaints as well as learning from the issues raised.

We work with colleagues in other Boards to identify ways in which we could collectively improve our approach to learning.

Our improved coding of complaints will help us to identify themes and trends, which will inform our learning.

We are exploring new tools and support options to help with our thematic analysis of feedback.

Learning from Complaints

A number of patients and families reported concerns about how bad news had been delivered to them. They said that communication was not always clear or compassionate.

Staff are being offered additional training to enhance their skills in delivering bad news.

A number of families advised that they were having difficulty reaching the wards by telephone. This was particularly concerning for families during restricted visiting.

Wards have looked at various measures to improve access by phone, including increasing the amount of staff that hold ward phones and making arrangement to call carers at set times each day.

ACUTE AND DIAGNOSTICS

Patients and families reported that they did not always feel fully involved in decisions about their care, particularly in relation to end of life.

Tools are being introduced to support how we communicate with patients. This will help ensure they feel fully informed and involved in the decision making process.

Patients and visitors reported that it was difficult to find a parking space in DGRI car park. They had concerns that staff were using patient spaces.

Regular reminders have been sent to staff about the importance of not parking in patient spaces.

Learning from Complaints

Concerns raised regarding accessibility and reception arrangements at Podiatry Service on Nithbank site. Patients also commented on the building structure.

The Podiatry Service was due to move to Mountainhall Treatment Centre however, partly due to this feedback, this was progressed sooner.

In considering the best location and accessibility for the patients attending the feedback received from patients was taken into account.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Concern raised in respect of communication, arrangements and timing of visits to patients' home addresses to administer the covid vaccine.

As a direct result of this feedback the administration arrangements were reviewed and improved, this included:

- A pre-call to patients, due to receive the vaccination, at least 48 hours in advance of the visit
- Improved recording of contact and communication for assurance purposes.
- Changes to work arrangements to allow contact with patients outwith normal hours.



Learning from Complaints

A number of patients told us that they did not feel listened to and found it hard to get in touch with someone.

We introduced patient contact standards that state every patient on our caseload must be offered the opportunity of monthly contact as a minimum.

MENTAL HEALTH

Some families fed back that they don't feel fully involved in the care of their loved ones, saying that they are not always aware of what decisions have been made and why.

We Identified that families were not consistently being involved in care. In response, we reintroduced the 'triangle of care' standard and put support in place to help teams to incorporate them.

A number of patients told us that the telephone line opening times within the Specialist Drug and Alcohol Service were too restrictive.

Telephone line opening times were extended to improve availability.



Learning from Complaints

A number of patients complained about the temperature in the Birthing Suite being too hot.

Changes were made to the thermostat to reduce the maximum temperature in the Birthing Suite.

WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SEXUAL HEALTH

Some patients reported concerns about reduced opportunities for extended family to bond with babies in neonatal due to COVID related visiting restrictions.

The team introduced new technology to support sharing of videos with extended families, allowing them to see the babies.

A number of families reported concerns about partners not being able to attend pre-natal scans due to COVID restrictions.

The team risk assessed, and accessed equipment, to allow partners to attend scans. We were one of the first Boards in Scotland to introduce this.



Complaints

Indicator 2 - Complaints Process Experience

People are invited to share their experience of the complaints process when we send a complaint response letter. Our survey questions are based on the suggested themes in the model Complaints Handling Procedure from the SPSO and are consistent with the questions being asked by other Boards. We received 17 survey responses during the period, with feedback as follows:

KEY

Agree

Neither

Disagree

N/A

Finding information on how to make a complaint was easy

29.5%

35%

29.5%

6%

Submitting a complaint was easy

24%

35%

41%

The staff dealing with my complaint were helpful, courteous and professional

53%

23.5%

23.5%

The staff dealing with my complaint showed empathy and/or compassion

47%

23.5%

23.5%

6%

The staff dealing with my complaint listened to me and understood my complaint.

41%

29.5%

29.5%

The staff dealing with my complaint checked what outcome I wanted.

35.5%

29%

35.5%

The staff dealing with my complaint explained the complaints process.

53%

23.5%

23.5%

My complaint was handled in a timely manner and I was kept informed of any delays.

35%

18%

41%

6%

All my complaint points were answered.

23.5%

17.5%

47%

12%

We Welcome Your Feedback

Complaints Process Experience

KEY

Agree

Neither

Disagree

N/A

It was clear what the outcome of my complaint was.

29.5%

41%

23.5%

6%

The reasons for the outcome were clear.

23.5%

17.5%

53%

6%

I was offered an apology by the staff involved in dealing with my complaint.

35%

12%

47%

6%

Overall, the complaint response was easy to read and understand.

47%

29.5%

23.5%



At the end of the survey, people are invited to share what they feel we did well in relation to our complaints handling and where we can improve. We received comments from 11 people:

What We're Doing Well

- Staff handling the complaint were compassionate, polite and helpful.
- Staff acknowledged the distress caused by the situation.
- The outcomes were thoroughly expressed.
- Staff were supportive of the concerns raised.
- The complaint was handled efficiently.

Where We Can Improve

- The process was tedious and frustrating.
- Felt like staff were believed over patients.
- The complaint went beyond deadlines.
- It wasn't clear how the outcomes were linked to the points of complaint or what learning had been identified.

Whilst feedback was only provided by a small number of complainants, their answers help us to reflect on our complaints handling. It would be helpful to hear from more people about their complaints experience. We will review our survey approach in 2021/22 to try to improve in that area.



Complaints

Indicator 3 - Staff Awareness and Training

Training was significantly scaled back over 2020/21 as staff focussed on the pressures associated with the pandemic. For those courses that were delivered, the format changed from face to face to online training, with feedback suggesting that worked well.



Scottish Mediation delivered two Mediation Skills workshops to staff.



Patient Services delivered one Managing Conflict course.



We increased our promotion of NHS Education for Scotland's online complaints training and Care Opinion's online 'how to' courses.

We supported a number of teams to better utilise Care Opinion.

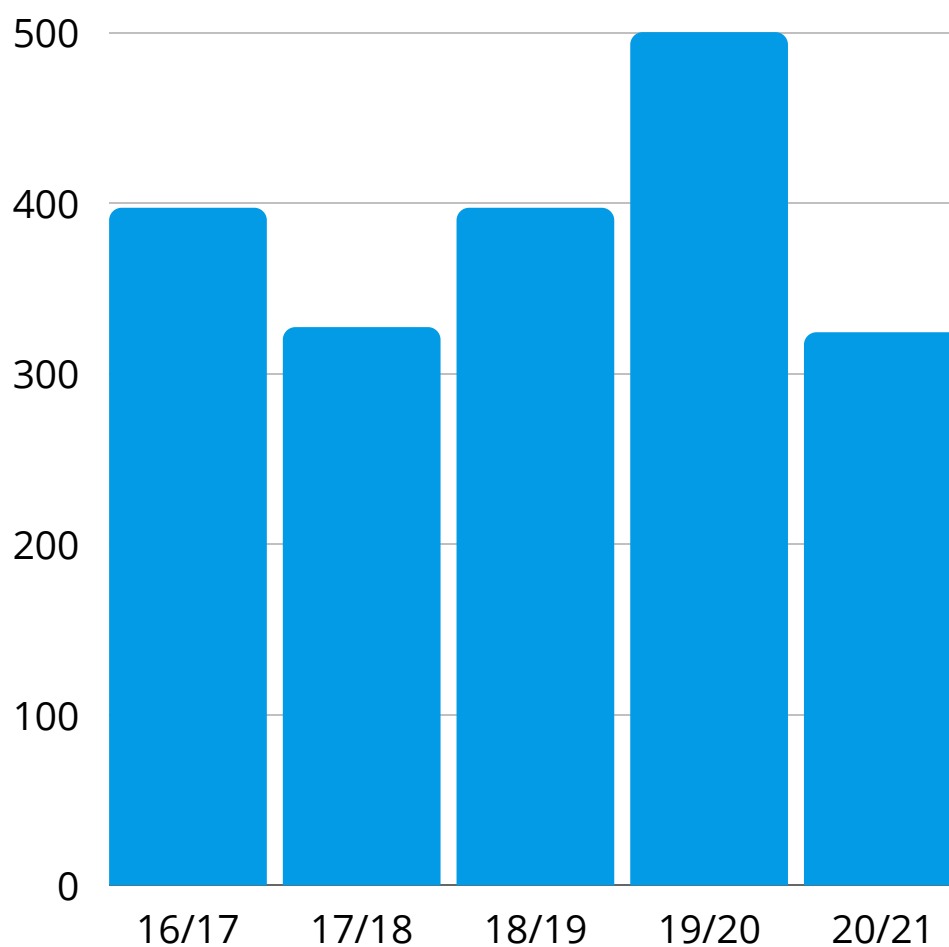


A new Patient Feedback area was developed on our intranet site. This allows staff to access procedures, templates, guidance and other key information all in one location.

Complaints

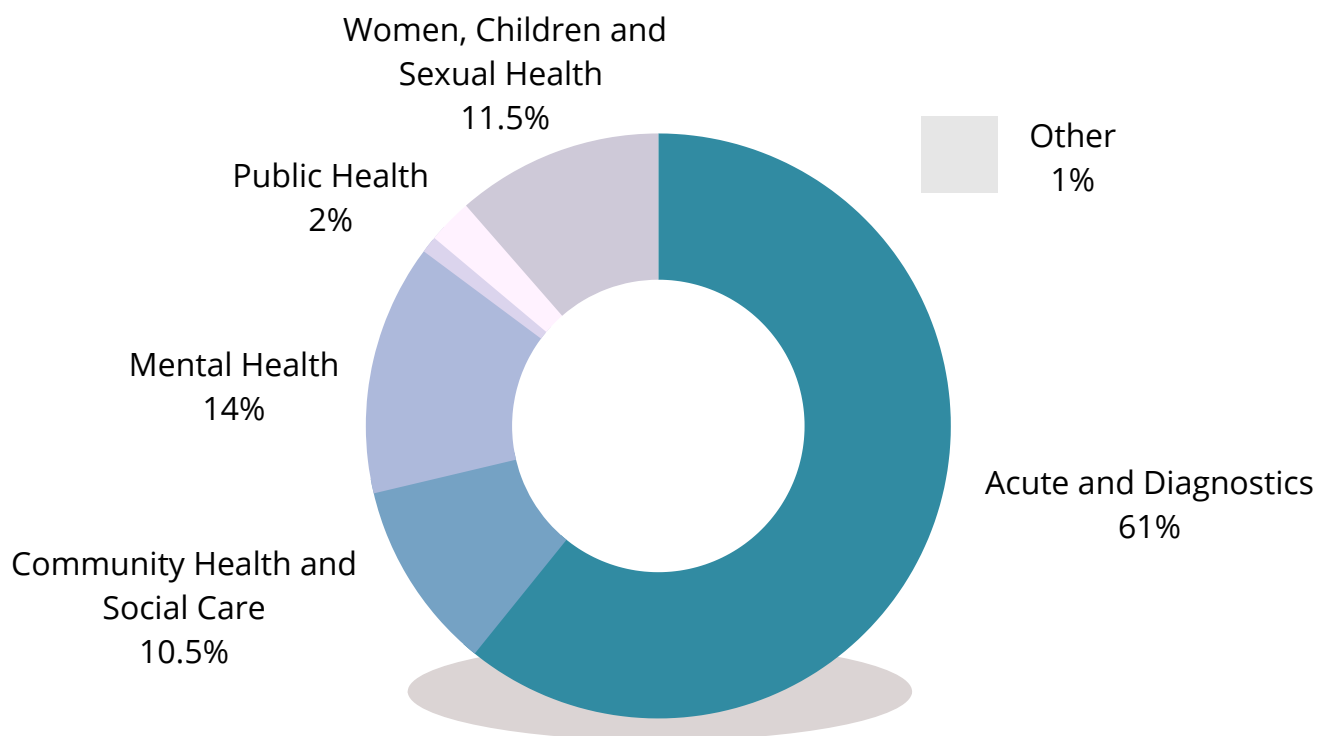
Indicator 4 - Complaints Received

We received **323 complaints** during 2020/21, which is the lowest number of complaints received in the last 5 years. In the early stages of the pandemic complaints reduced significantly. This is consistent with the experience in other Boards. Whilst numbers have increased in recent months, they continue to remain below pre-pandemic levels.

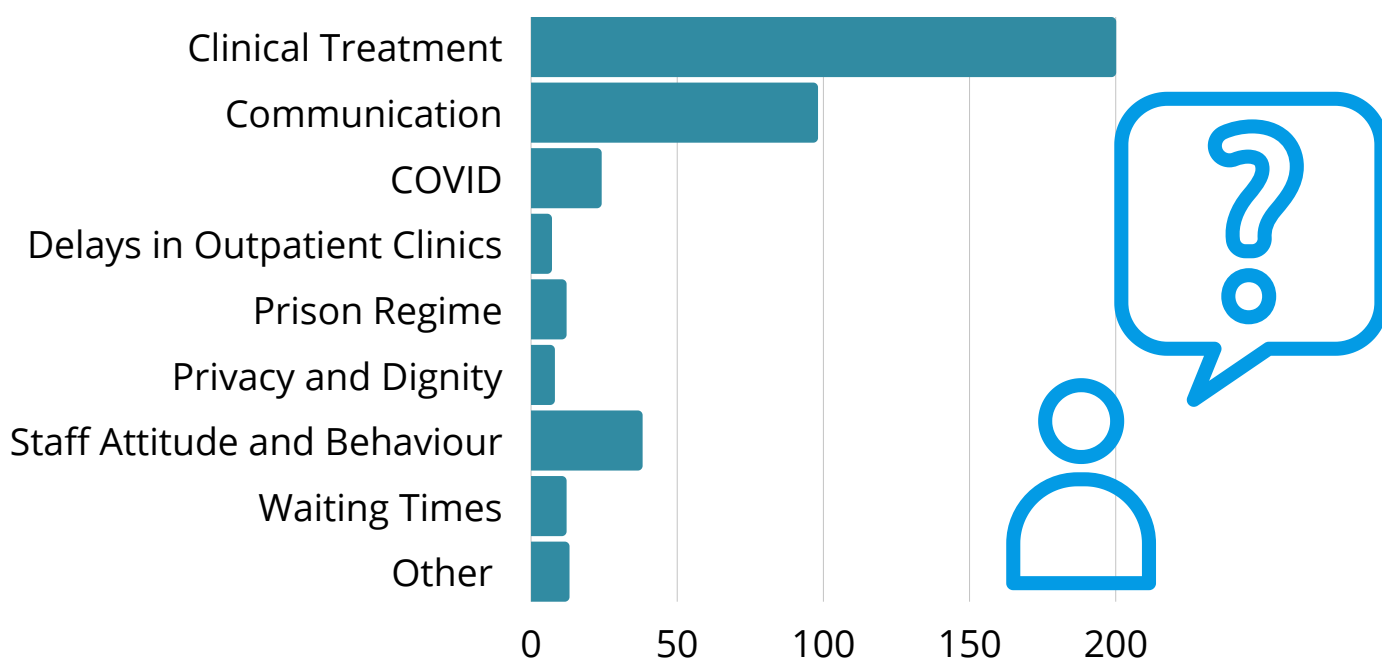


Complaints

The majority of the complaints we receive relate to Acute and Diagnostics, which is our largest Directorate.



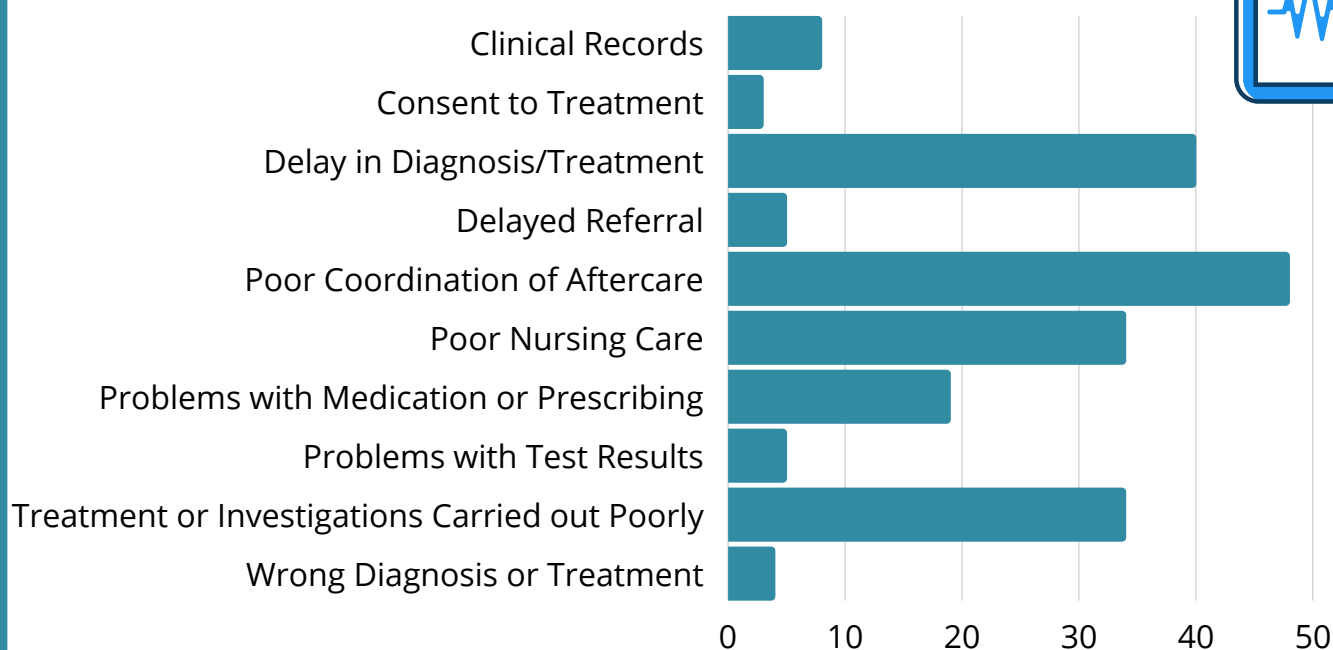
When we record complaints, we identify themes using nationally agreed 'codes'. Some complaints identify several themes. The broad themes for 2020/21 were:



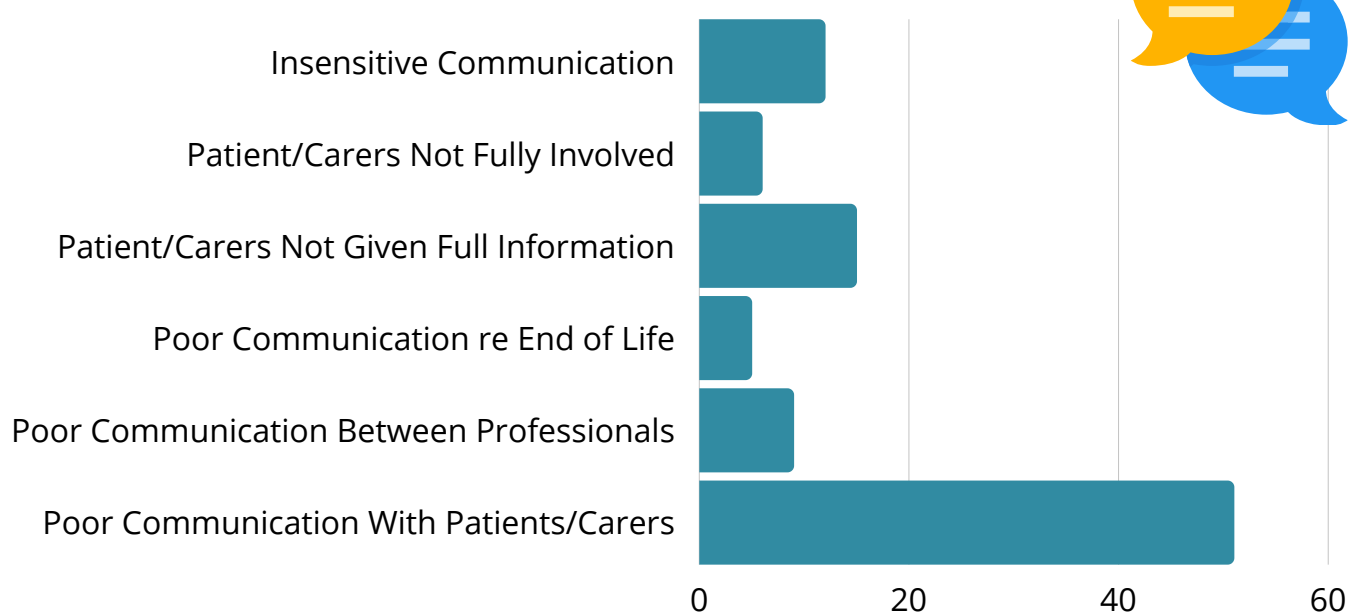
Complaints

Clinical Treatment and Communication were our top two themes over 2020/21. The issues raised under these headings can be further broken down as follows:

Clinical Treatment



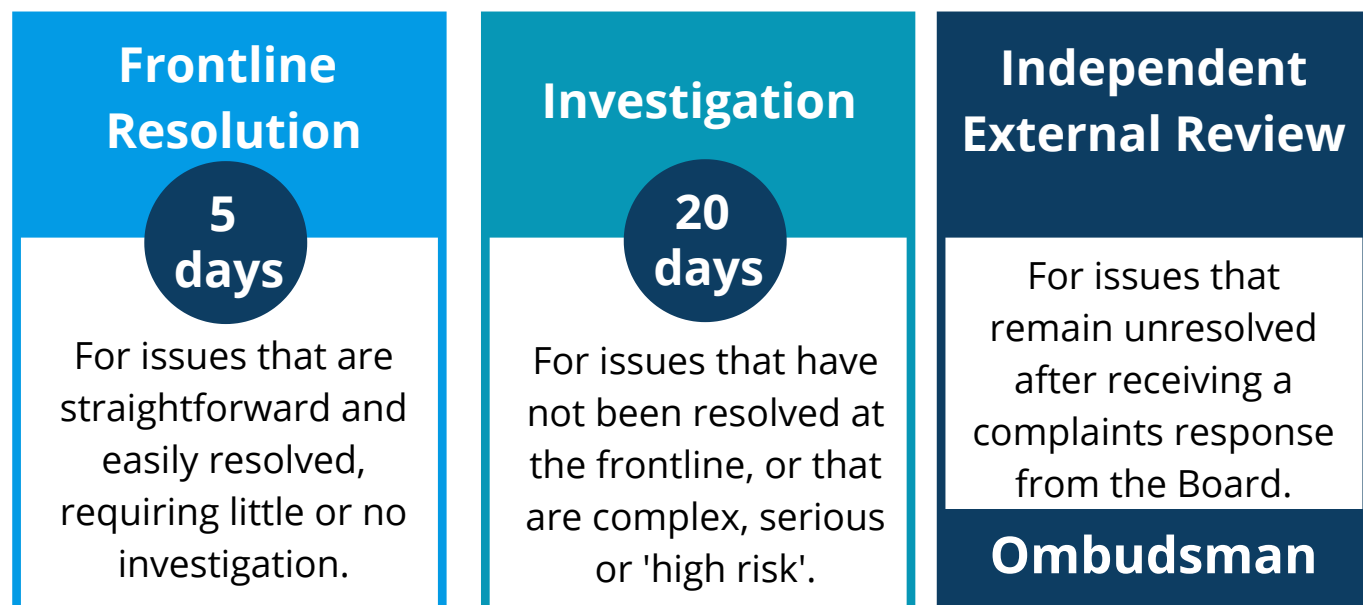
Communication



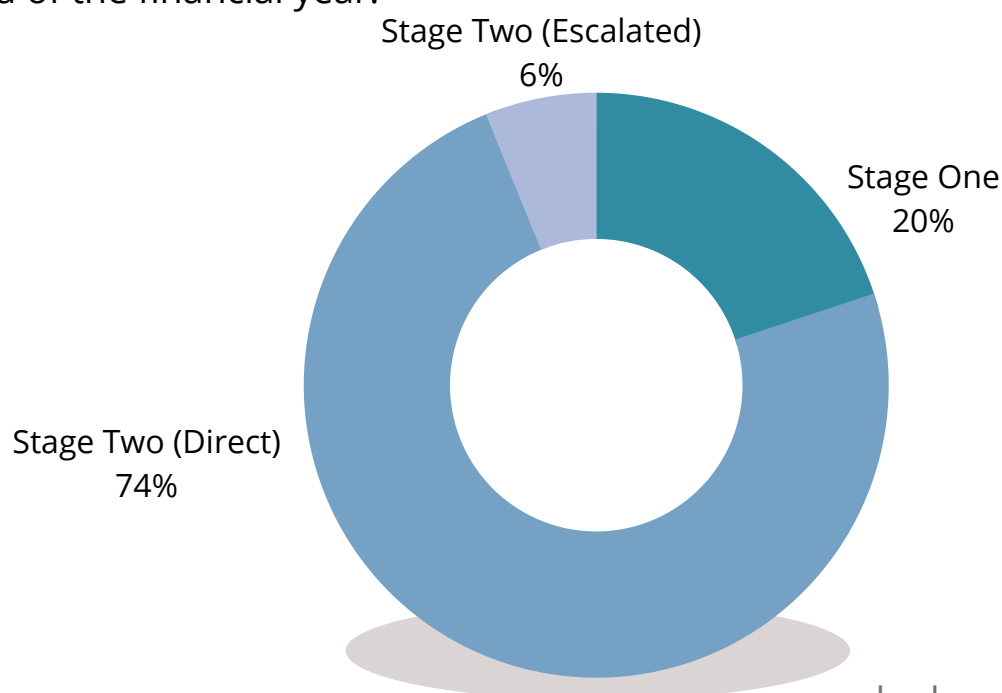
Complaints

Indicator 5 - Complaints Closed at Each Stage

NHS Boards in Scotland have a two stage complaints procedure. The first stage focuses on early resolution and the second stage provides the opportunity for detailed investigation of issues raised. Complaints can go directly to Stage Two or be escalated there after Stage One.



We responded to 276 complaints during the period. The majority of these (204) were complaints that went directly to Stage Two. We also responded to 55 Stage One complaints and 17 that were escalated to Stage Two. These numbers differ to complaints received, as some complaints remain 'live' at the end of the financial year.



Complaints

Indicator 6 - Complaint Outcomes

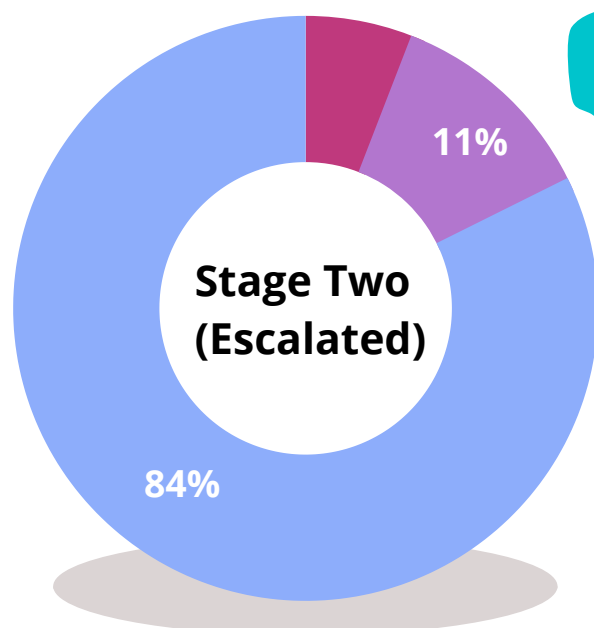
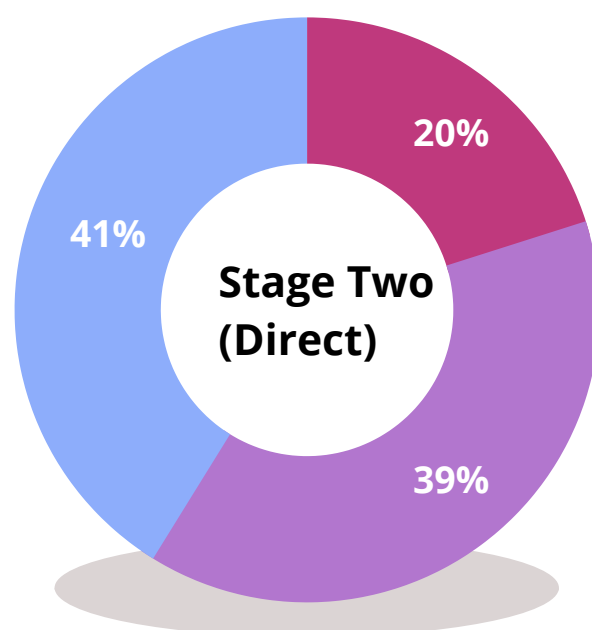
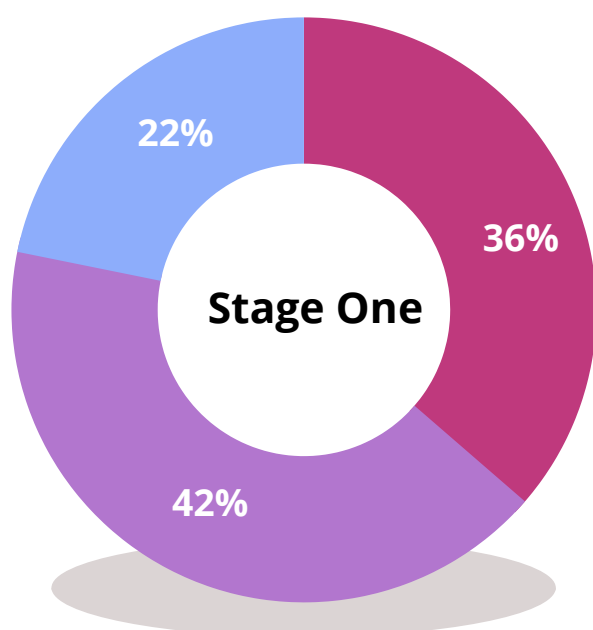
When we respond to a complaint, we provide an outcome of 'upheld', 'partially upheld' or 'not upheld'. The below details our outcomes for each Stage of the process.

KEY

Upheld

Partially
Upheld

Not Upheld

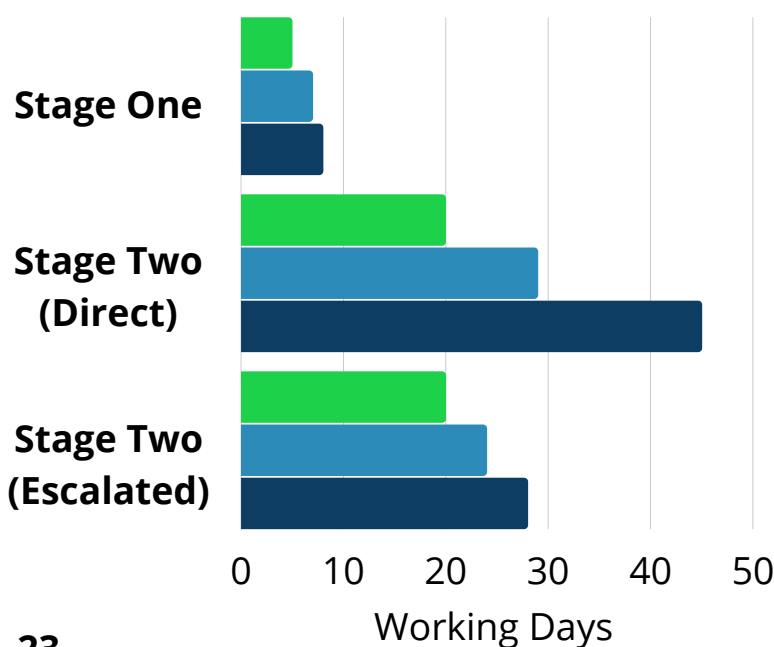
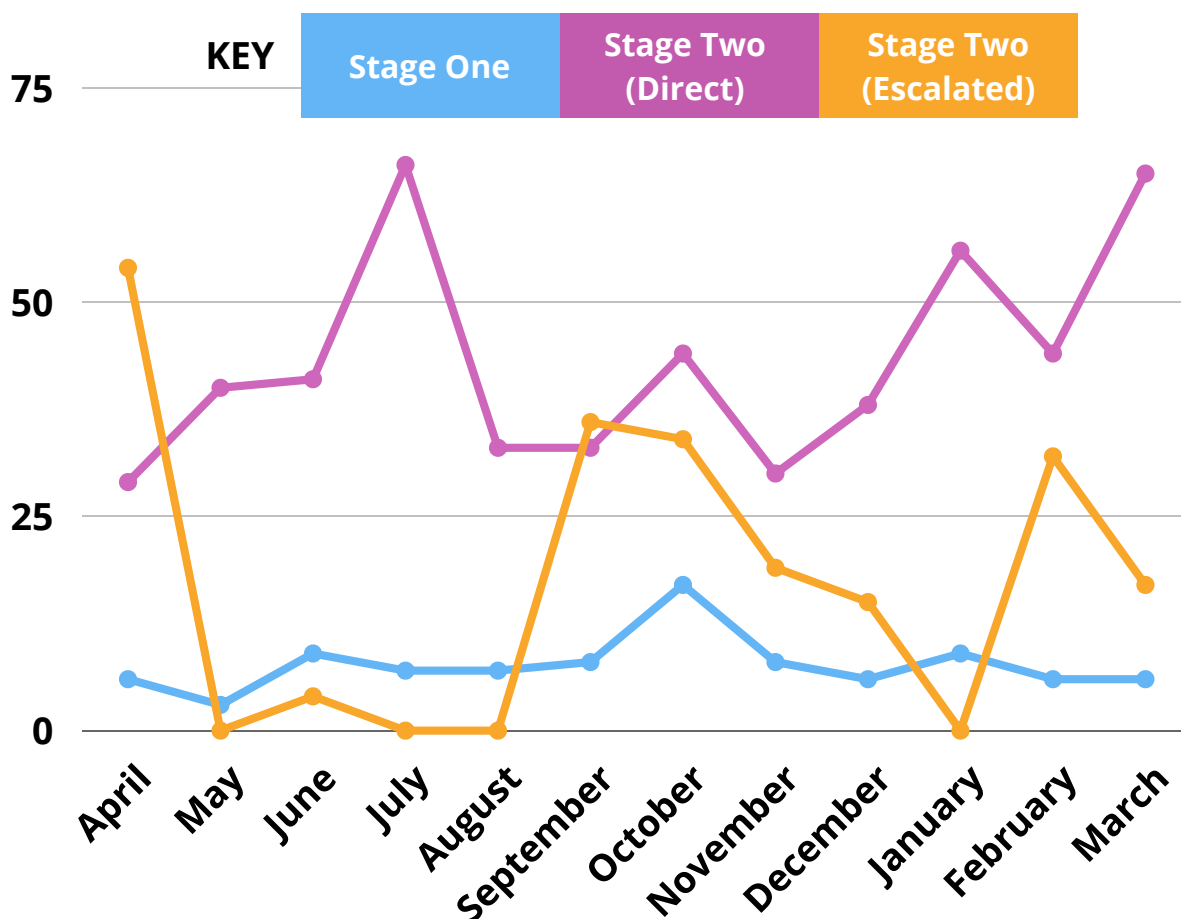


60% of our complaints were upheld or partially upheld. That's a decrease on the 63% from 2019/20 and 70% from 2018/19. The number of complaints we fully upheld has reduced from 30% in 2019/20 to 22% this period. With partially upheld complaints increasing from 33% to 38%.

Complaints

Indicator 7 - Average Response Times

The Complaints Handling Procedure requires Boards to respond to Stage One complaints within 5 working days and Stage Two complaints within 20 working days. The charts below show our average response times over the period.

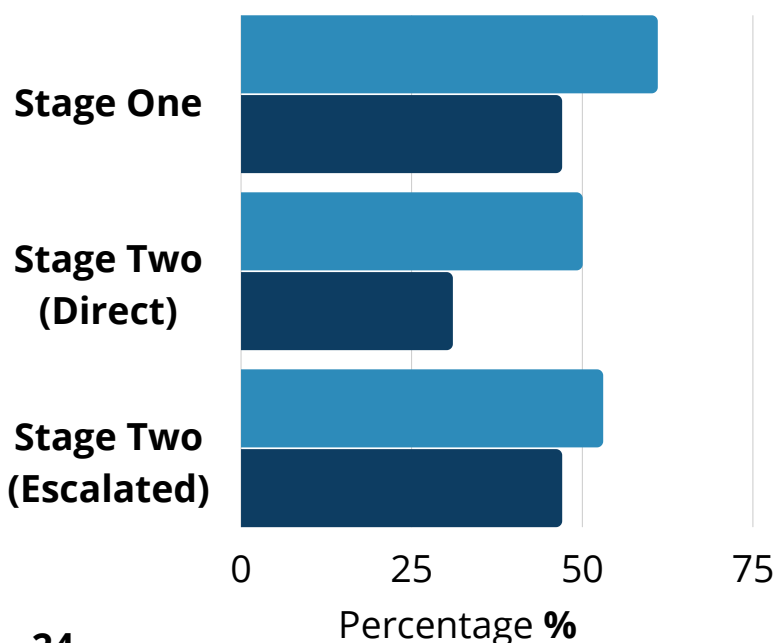
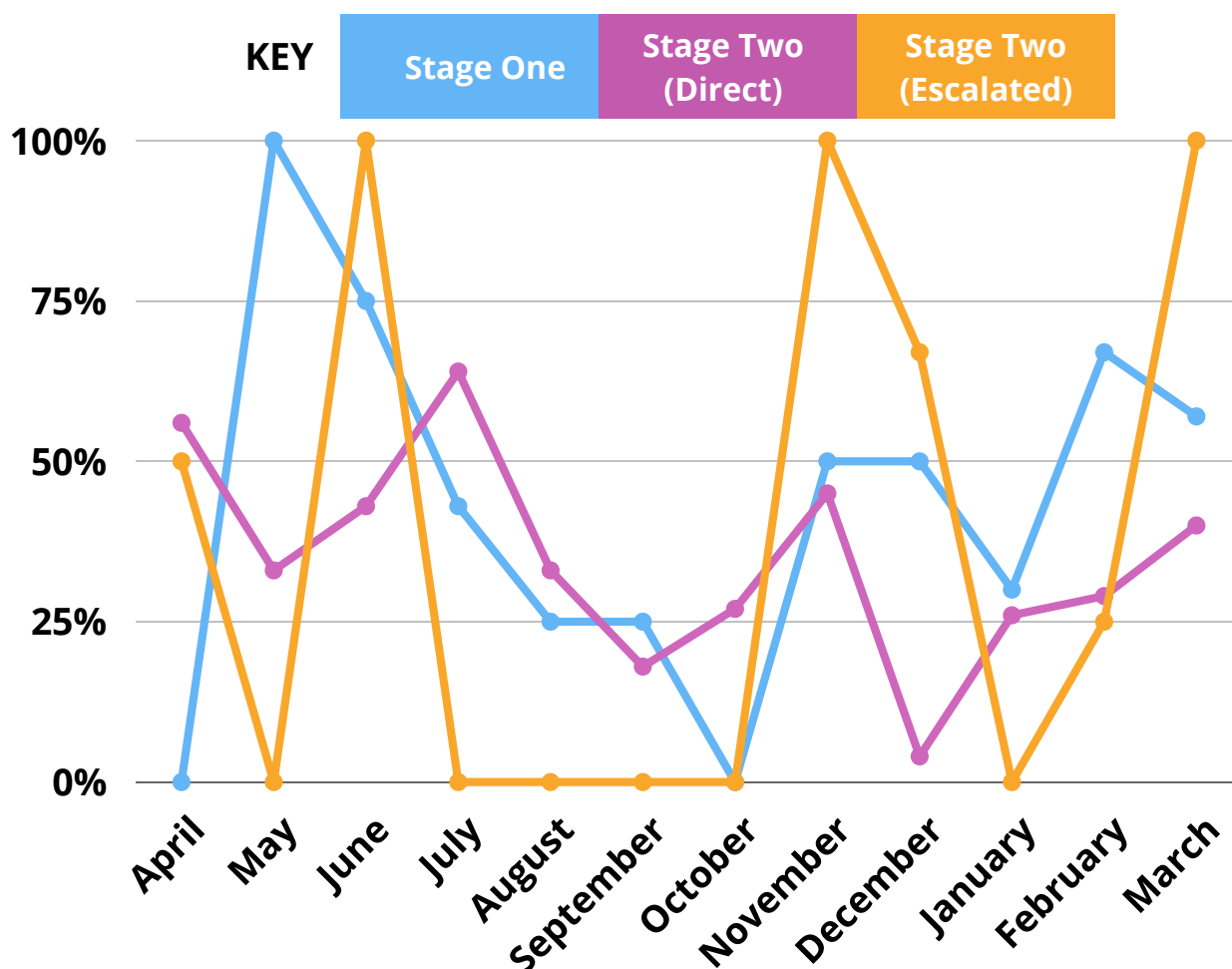


The chart to the left shows our average response times for **this year** and **last year** against the **statutory response times**. Our response times have increased for all stages, with a significant increase for Stage Two Direct complaints. This is directly linked to pandemic and capacity pressures.

Complaints

Indicator 8 - Closed Within Timescale

The chart below demonstrates how many complaints we responded to within timescale during the period. Performance for Stage Two Escalated complaints fluctuates due to the low numbers.

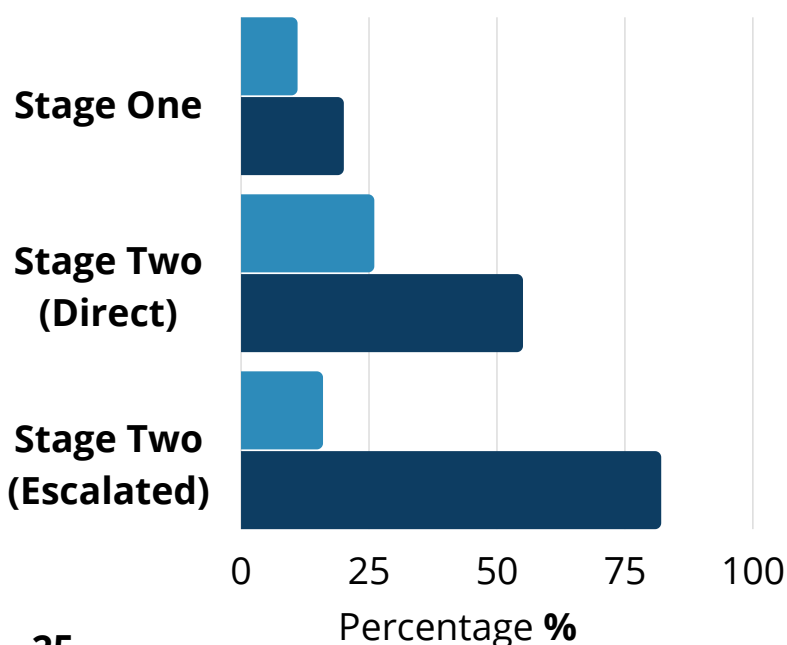
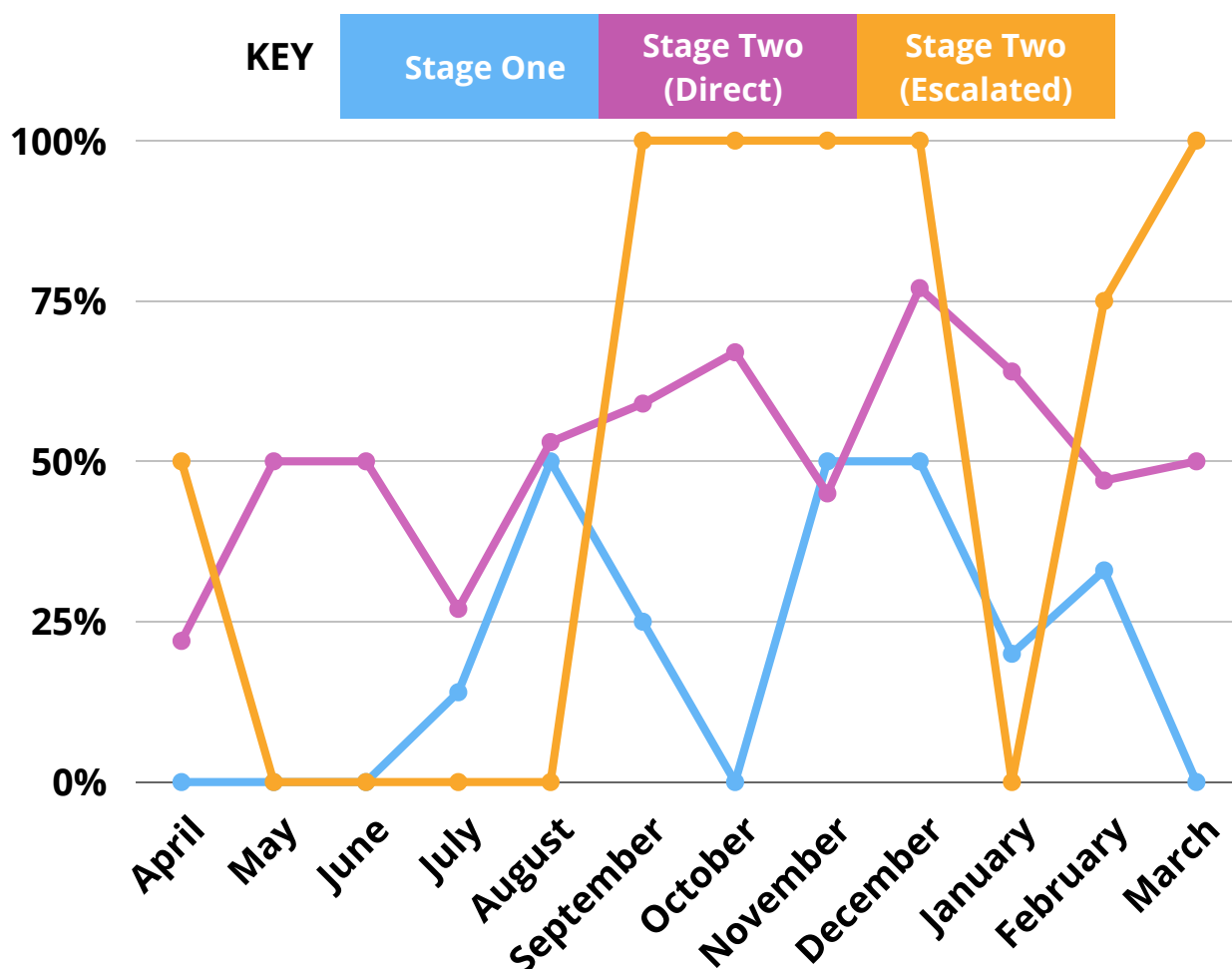


The chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints that were closed within timescales for **this year** and **last year**. We have responded to less complaints within timescale this year compared to last. Again, this is directly linked to pandemic and capacity pressures.

Complaints

Indicator 9 - Number of Cases Extended

Where we are unable to meet timescales for complaints, we have the option to agree an extension with the complainant. This indicator shows the percentage of cases where an extension was put in place.



The chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints that had extensions agreed for **this year** and **last year**. We have seen a significant increase in extensions being requested. Again, this is directly linked to pandemic and capacity pressures.

Complaints

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Individuals who are dissatisfied with the Board's handling of their concerns can refer their complaint for further investigation to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The SPSO contacted us about **27** cases during the period.

The Board has received an outcome for **25** of those cases.

15 of those cases did not progress to an SPSO investigation.

3 cases were withdrawn by the complainants.

7 cases were investigated and of those, **2** were upheld.

If the SPSO investigate and uphold a complaint, they typically make recommendations to assist the Board to ensure learning, improvement and where possible remedy. The SPSO place timescales on those recommendations and require evidence to confirm that they have been undertaken. The case remains open with the SPSO until they have confirmed that they are satisfied with that evidence. The SPSO publish all of their Decision Letters on their website.

For more information on the SPSO please visit www.spsos.org.uk

Complaints

Family Health Services, Independent Contractors Complaints

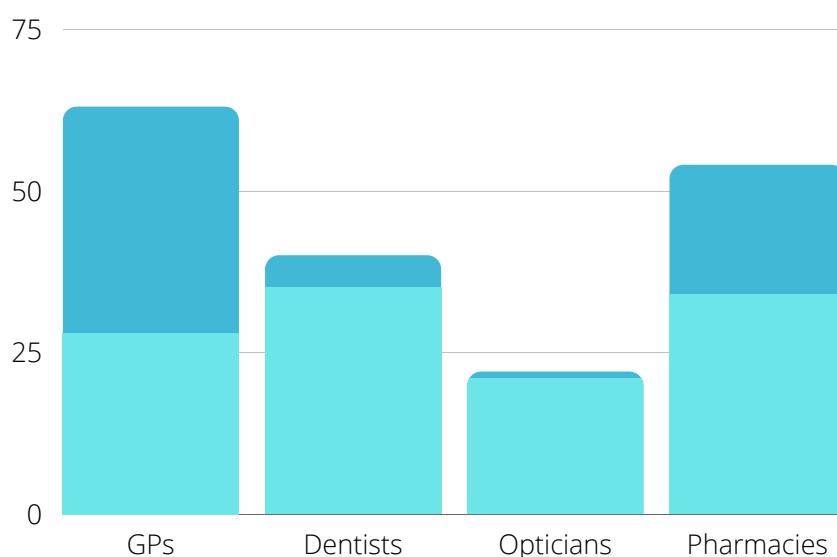
Local GPs, Dentists, Opticians and Pharmacists provide the Board with monthly performance information relating to the number of complaints they have received.

In accordance with the Complaints Directions, relevant NHS Bodies have a responsibility to gather and review information from their own services and their service providers. Service providers also have a duty to supply this information to their relevant NHS Body as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the month to which it relates.

KEY

No. of
Contractors

No. of
Complaints



Independent Contractors received a total of 61 complaints during 2020/21. That is significantly fewer than the 81 received during 2019/20.

The number of independent contractor complaints reported is unlikely to be an accurate reflection of complaints received, as not all contractors provided returns during the period. This is in part due to the pressures they faced during the pandemic. We continue to work with contractors to assist with the performance return process.

Complaints

Prison Service Complaints

NHS Dumfries and Galloway is responsible for the provision of healthcare to prisoners at HMP Dumfries. Where Boards are responsible for delivering health care within a prison, there is a requirement to provide narrative on complaints handling specific to that setting.

We received **28** complaints about Prison Healthcare during 2020/21.

That is one more than the 27 complaints received during 2019/20.

5 of those complaints were withdrawn before a response was issued.

Most complaints related to the Prison regime or clinical treatment.

One complaint was responded to slightly over timescale, the rest were on time.

22 of the complaints received about prison healthcare were not upheld and one was upheld. Where a complaint is upheld, an apology is provided and where possible, a resolution offered.



Complaints

Accountability and Governance

We produce a number of internal and publicly available performance reports (available on our website). These reports aid monitoring of our performance against the performance indicators set out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. They also support accountability and governance, as well as helping us to learn and improve.



Weekly reports on new and 'live' complaints are provided to Senior Managers and Feedback Leads



Bi-monthly reports are provided to Board and Healthcare Governance Committee, detailing performance against the national indicators.



An annual report is published publicly each year, and formally submitted to the Scottish Government and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Conclusion

Whilst much has been achieved in the last year, there is still scope for us to improve. We are aware that some complaint responses take longer than they should and we are committed to improving that where possible. We also know that there is more we could do to identify and share learning from feedback. We will continue to work with colleagues locally and nationally to identify best practice in this area with a view to improving our approach.

Once again, we'd like to thank everyone that has taken the time to provide feedback to the Board over the last year. Please continue to share your stories with us. Thank you.