



Patient Feedback Annual Report 2022-2023

Produced August 2023

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01387 272 733, by email at dg.patientservices.nhs.scot
or via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](https://www.contactscotland.org).

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Foreword



Welcome to the patient feedback annual report for 2022-23. We are grateful for the time taken by people to share their experiences with us, and the annual report provides a good opportunity for us to reflect on those stories together.

It has been heartening to read the positive feedback shared by patients and families over the last year.

We are lucky to have such committed and compassionate staff in NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and it means so much to those staff when they hear the impact that their care and kindness has had on people.

Whilst our aim is for everyone to have a good experience when they engage with our services, we know that sadly that isn't always the case. We welcome and encourage people to provide feedback to us in those situations so that we can learn from what has happened and improve for the future. The learning section of this report shares some of the improvements we have made in response to patient and family feedback.

We want it to be as easy as possible for people to share their experiences with us, so please do get in touch if you have feedback. Our website provides more information on the options and support available to help you to 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.



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 are committed to making it as easy as possible for people to provide their feedback to us and plan to review how we can improve accessibility of our feedback processes in 2023/24.

2022-23 at a Glance

143 Compliments

We recorded **143** compliments for excellent care and treatment. This is in addition to the hundreds of thank you cards and messages teams received directly.



435 Complaints

We received 435 complaints, which is similar to the 436 received last year but remains below the 500 received during 2019-20.



182 Concerns

We received **182** concerns, which is similar to the 181 received during the previous year.



70 Care Opinion Stories

We received 70 Care Opinion stories, which were read **10,403** times. Whilst we received fewer stories than the previous year, we received significantly more story views.



Training

We continue to deliver **Managing Conflict** training and **Mediation Skills** for staff to help them build on their dispute resolution skills.



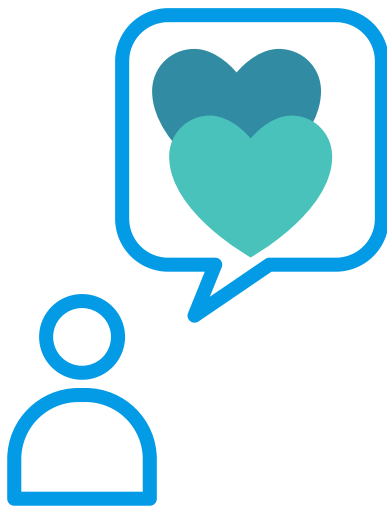
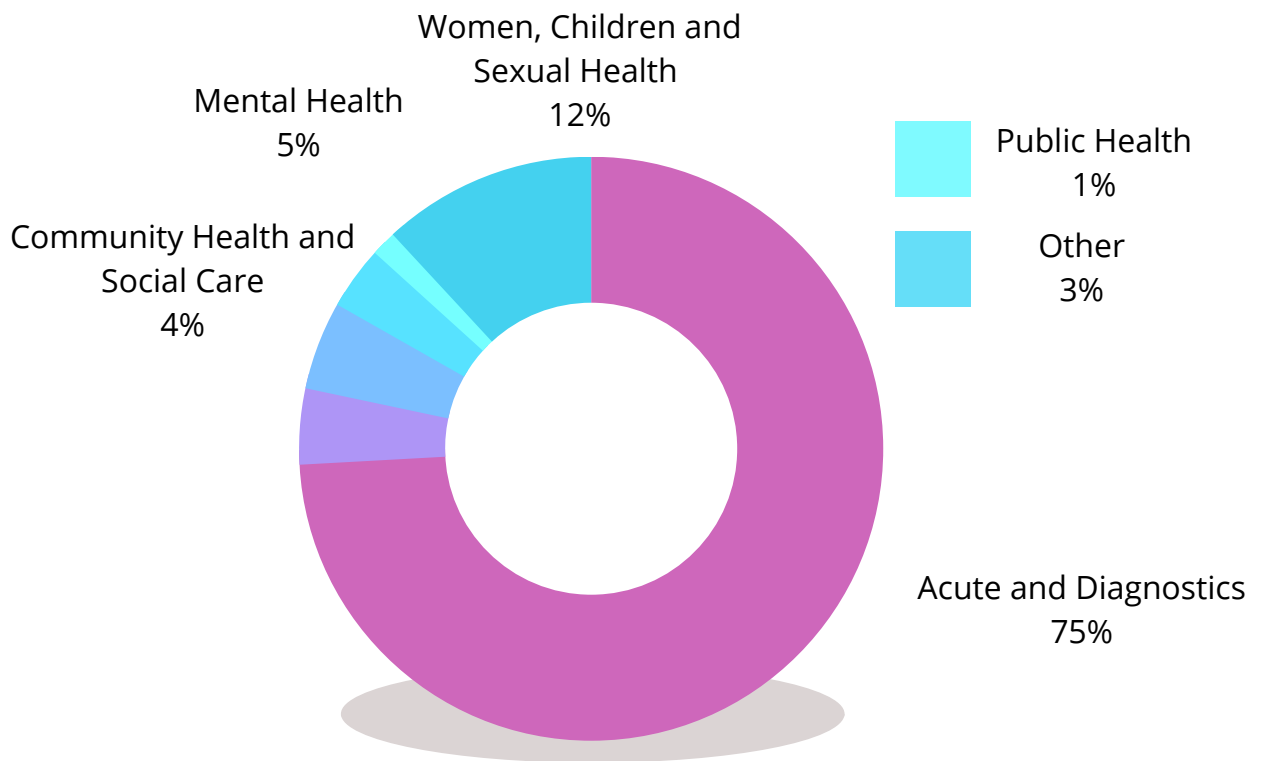
24 SPSO Cases

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) contacted us about **24** 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 detailed several areas of excellence and others were more general in nature.

Similar to last year, a number of compliments recognised the pressures that services were under and were grateful for the time taken to continue to provide compassionate care under those circumstances.

We Welcome Your Feedback

Compliments

'...thanks to all the staff in D7 for the amazing care they provided to my mum...everyone has been nothing short of wonderful.'

'The amazing support from mental health has saved my life'

'Today I attended the ophthalmic department and was attended to by a nurse and doctor. May I just say they were both patient and attentive, explaining everything in layman's terms whilst ensuring I understood what is happening...their professional and caring nature helped me immensely.'

'I had to go to A&E...all the staff were very friendly and helpful and my injury treated with medical expertise...very kind and efficient staff. Thank you very much, I felt very well cared for.'

'I had an operation at DGRI recently and would like to thank everyone involved. I arrived feeling very apprehensive...EVERYONE was so helpful and empathetic...They put my mind at ease...I trusted them.'

'Many thanks to the Physio for encouraging me to do exercises. I have really felt the benefit. The Physio was so caring and considerate. A real credit to the NHS'

'I attended A&E at Stranraer hospital after I had collapsed resulting in a wound to my head. The service and treatment I received was prompt, and all the staff. I would like you to pass on my sincere thanks to them all. They are a credit to the NHS, Stranraer Hospital and themselves'

We Welcome Your Feedback

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.

70
Stories were shared on the Care Opinion website

Our stories were read
10,403
times

We replied to **93%** of stories

56%
of stories shared were positive



Share your story at
www.careopinion.org.uk

22%
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 most frequently used words and phrases from our 2022-23 stories.



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.

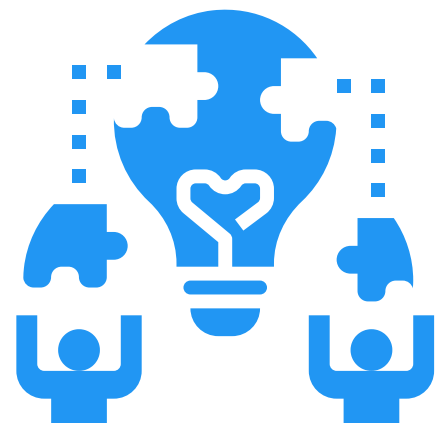
What We're Doing Well

- Services are encouraged to identify learning from all upheld and partially upheld complaints.
- Learning from complex and SPSO complaints is 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

- There are opportunities for us to improve how we collate and share learning both locally and nationally. We continue to work with national colleagues to contribute to this area of work.
- Patient stories provide a unique insight into the experiences people have had and in turn, can identify valuable learning that may not be picked up via other processes. We are exploring how we can create more opportunities for patients and families to share their stories.

The following pages detail our approach to learning and some of the improvements we have made in response to the feedback received over 2022/23.



We Welcome Your Feedback

Learning from Complaints

Learning is one of the key outcomes sought when people complain. They often tell us that they want to ensure 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.

We are working with Scottish Mediation to offer Mediation Skills workshops to staff. Mediation supports early resolution and helps us identify learning.

We are training staff in 'Managing Conflict' with a focus on working with patients and families to resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity.

Learning from Complaints

In cases where we uphold or partially uphold complaints, we share feedback from the complaint with the relevant teams for reflection and learning. The following provides a small sample of the learning identified from our complaints investigations and those reflections. We also seek to learn from positive feedback, which helps us to understand what we are doing well as well as where we can improve.

We identified a number of cases where clinical care had been appropriate but the communication with patients around that care could have been better.



The relevant teams involved reflected on the cases and identified opportunities to improve communication. These improvements included updating patient information leaflets and amending processes to ensure clearer communication with patients throughout their journey.

Feedback showed that some staff are uncomfortable dealing with patients or family members who are very angry.

We are delivering tailored conflict management training and support to teams across the organisations to assist in this area. We are also ensuring that they have support for 'de-briefs' following challenging situations to help identify learning.

Learning from Complaints

Some families shared that they felt additional support and clearer communication would have helped them during the transition from child to adult services.

We are reviewing our processes, policies and patient information to better support families during these transition periods.

We received feedback from a family that there were opportunities for us to improve how we communicate with parents of young children when they are acutely unwell.

We have reviewed our patient information for parents around what to do if a child deteriorates following a visit to our Emergency Department.

A number of complaint investigations highlighted that we had potentially missed opportunities to resolve patient concerns at an earlier stage.

Patient Experience teams now have an increased focus on the early resolution of complaints, supporting patients and colleagues to resolve issues quickly wherever possible.

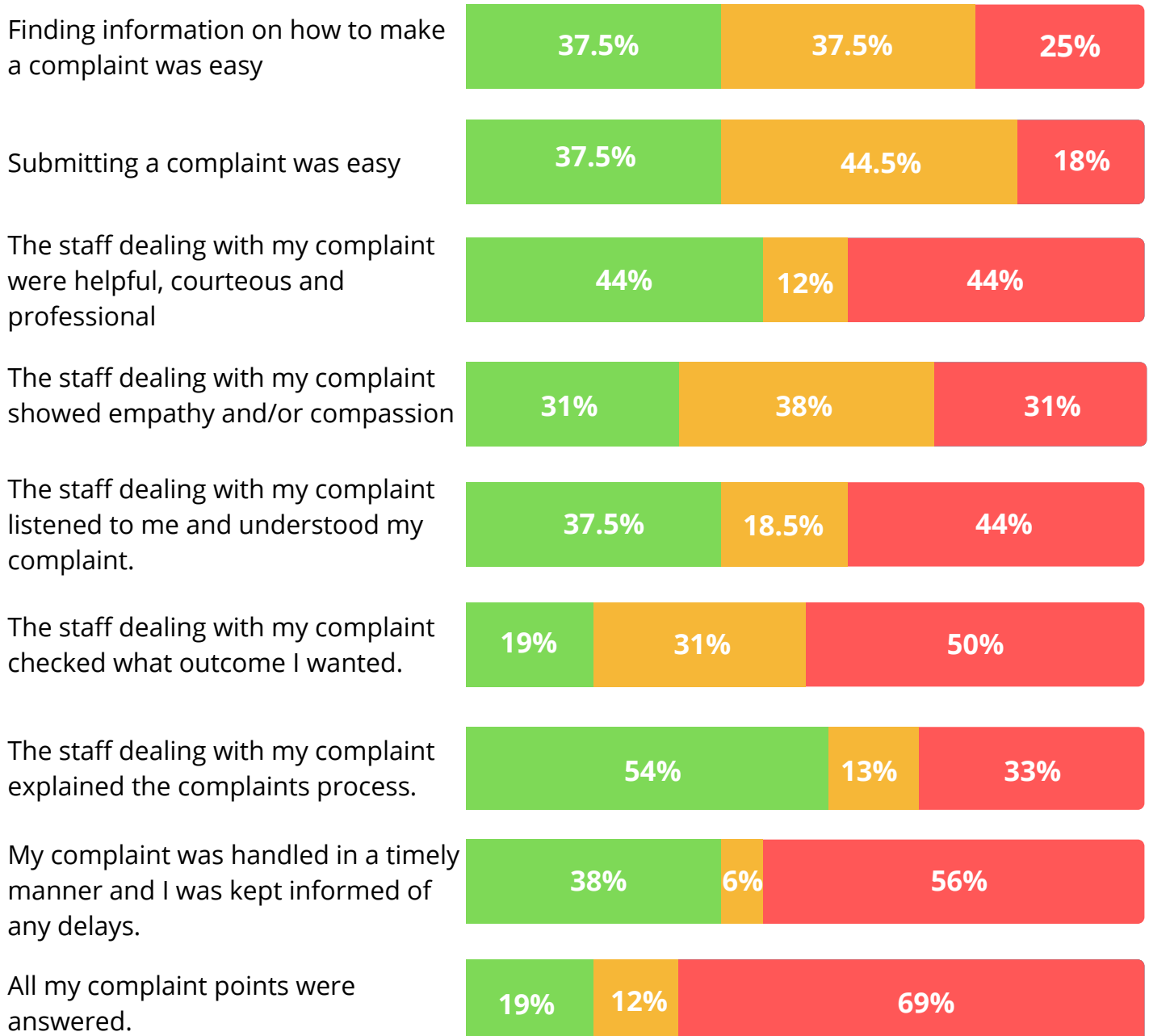
We identified that we could improve how we plan and organise multi-disciplinary team meetings in Mental Health, particularly when they involve various wards.

We have reviewed our administrative processes to address the issues identified.

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 16 survey responses during the period, with feedback as follows:



We Welcome Your Feedback

Complaints Process Experience

KEY

Agree

Neither

Disagree

N/A

It was clear what the outcome of my complaint was.

25%

37.5%

37.5%

The reasons for the outcome were clear.

25%

12%

63%

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

40%

7%

53%

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

47%

20%

33%



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 12 people:

What We're Doing Well

People commented on how well the Patient Experience teams listened to them and supported them through the process.

One respondent commented how grateful they were for the resolution offered and how pleased they were to know that procedures would change as a result.

Where We Can Improve

Some people were disappointed that we were unable to deliver the clinical outcomes they were looking for e.g. a particular course of treatment.

A number of people commented on how long their complaint responses took.

Whilst feedback was only provided by a small number of people, their answers help us to reflect on our complaints handling. We recognise that some aspects of the process could be better, particularly in relation to timescales, and we are committed to addressing those areas.

Complaints

Indicator 3 - Staff Awareness and Training

A number of training courses were delivered during 2022/23 in addition to the ongoing support offered to teams in relation to specific cases.

A number of teams were supported to better utilise Care Opinion for gathering feedback about their services.



We delivered 'Managing Conflict' training sessions to a colleagues across various teams.

Scottish Mediation delivered a number of Mediation Skills workshops and there are plans to deliver more in 2022/2023.



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

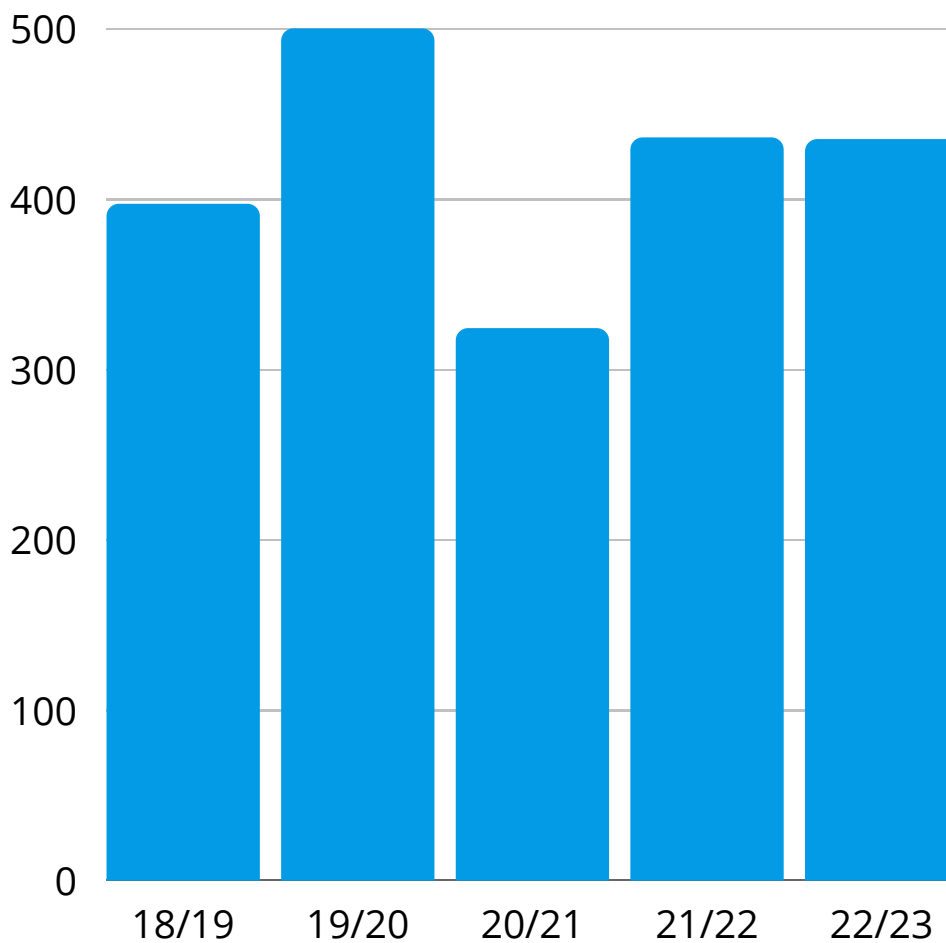


We continued to develop the patient feedback areas on both our intranet pages and our public website.

Complaints

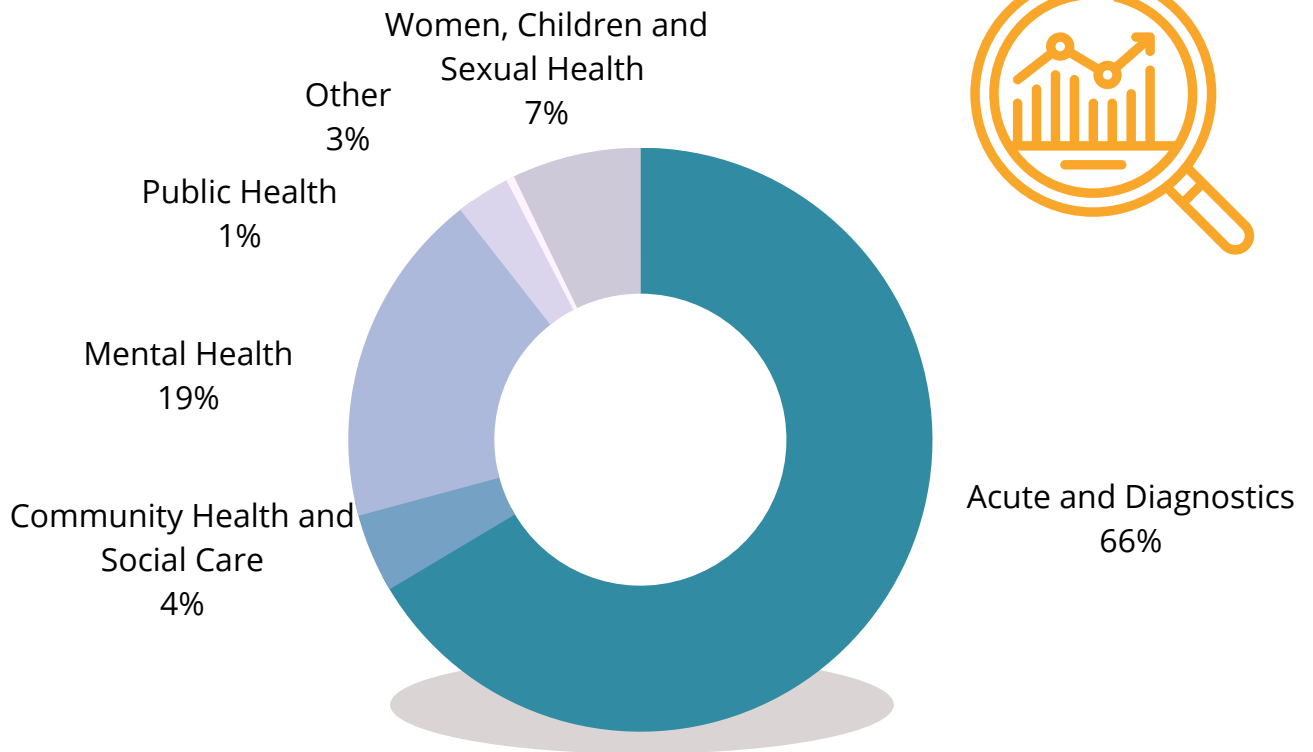
Indicator 4 - Complaints Received

We received **435 complaints** during 2022/23, which is similar to the 436 received last year. Where possible, we aim to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity and before they enter the complaints procedure.

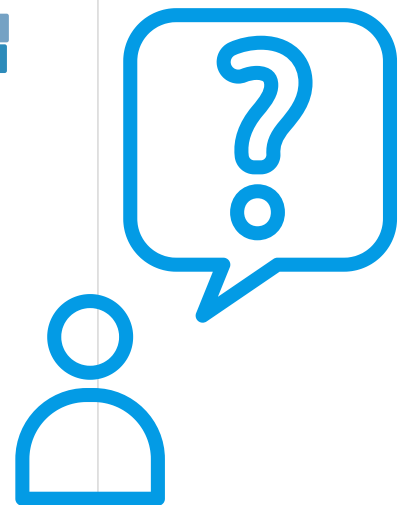
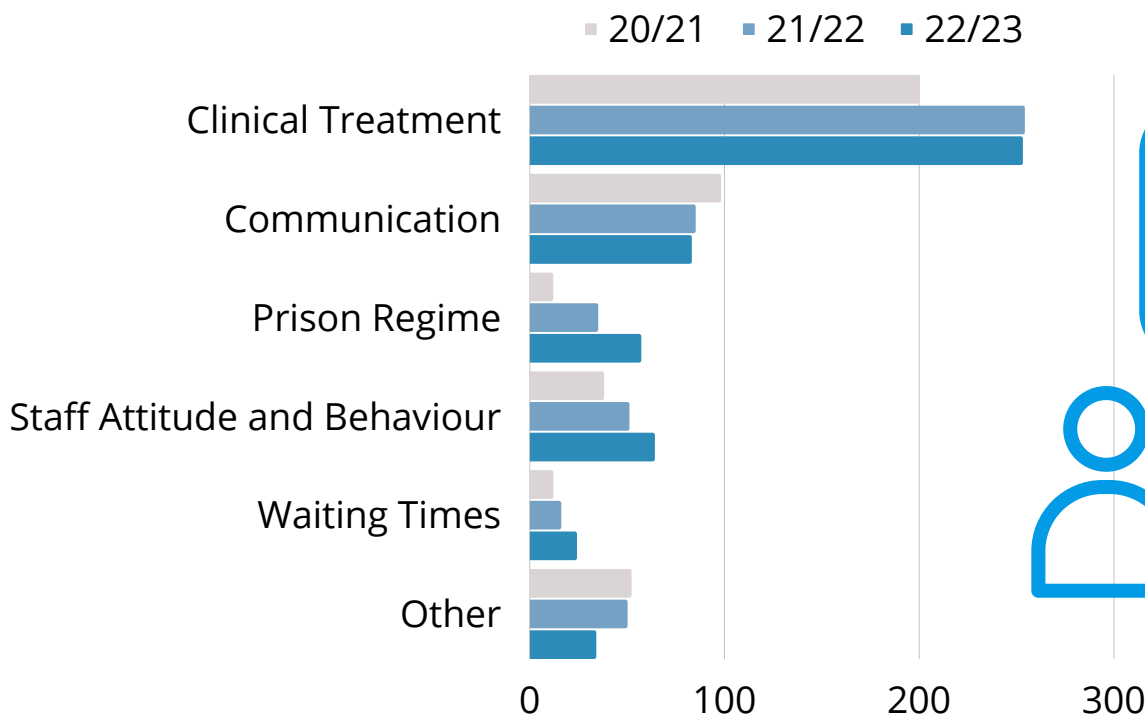


Complaints

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 top themes for 2022/23 (those mentioned in more than 10 complaints) were:



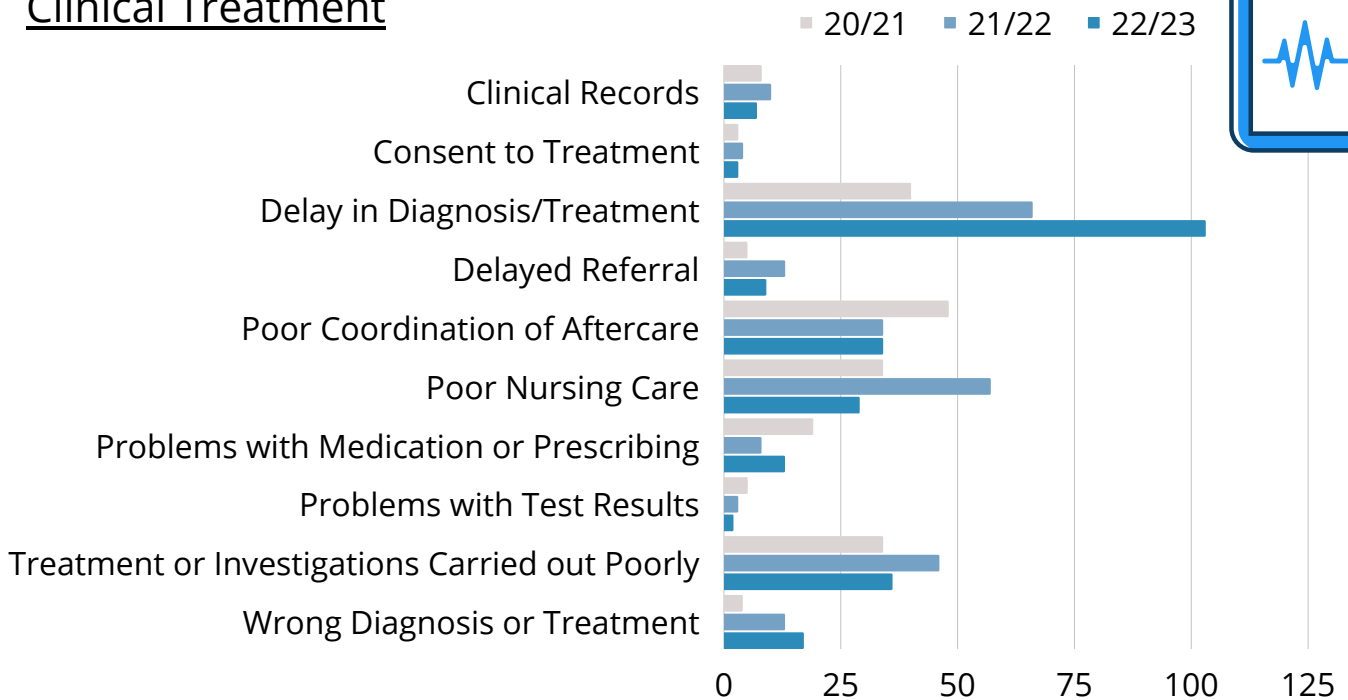
Those under 'other' covered a number of subjects relating to a wide variety of issues.

We Welcome Your Feedback

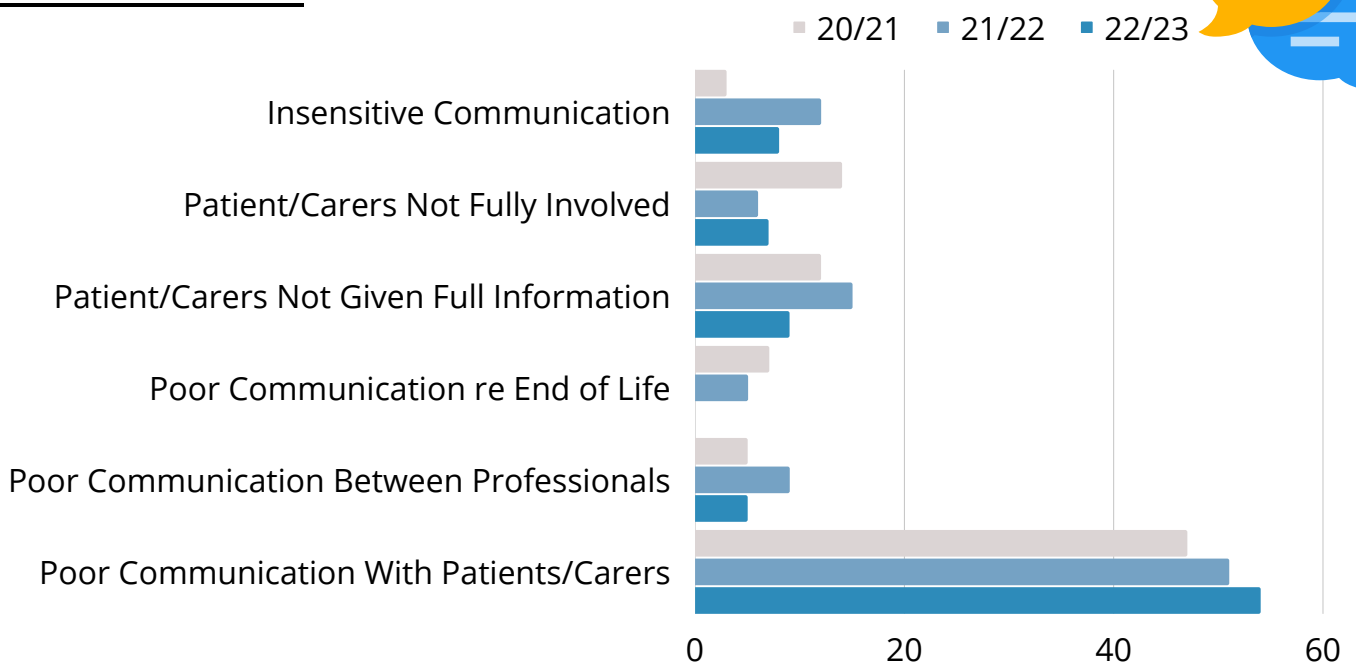
Complaints

Clinical Treatment and Communication were our top two themes over 2022/23, which is consistent with previous years. The issues raised under these headings can be further broken down as follows:

Clinical Treatment



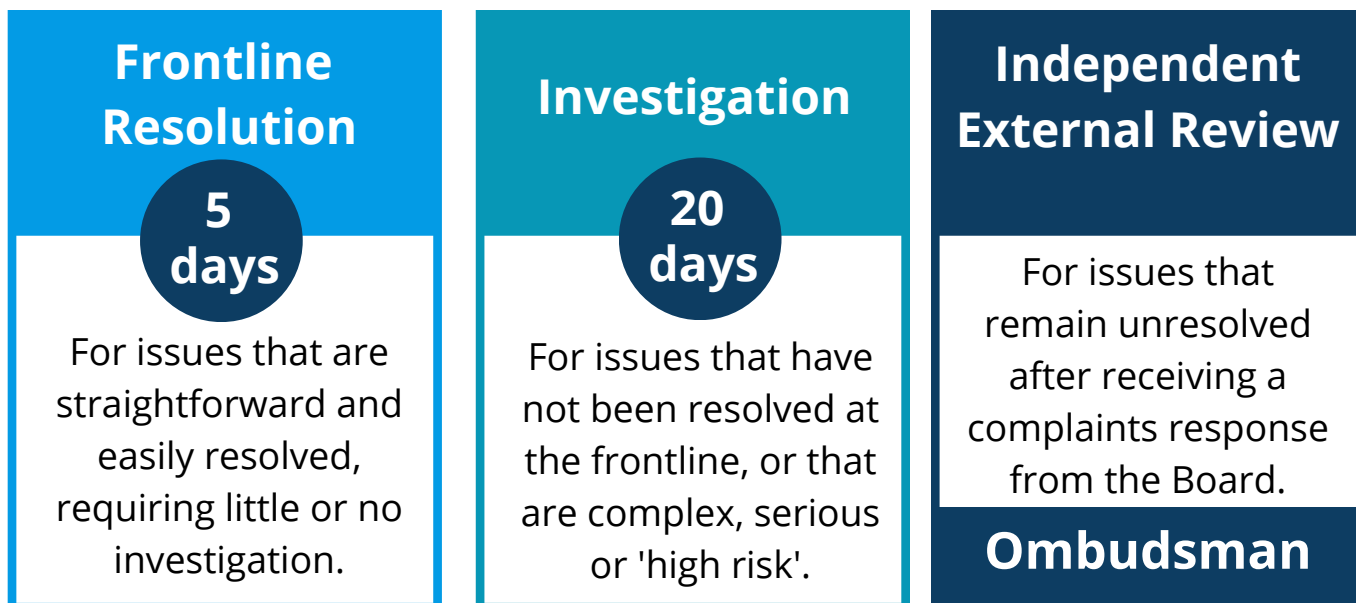
Communication



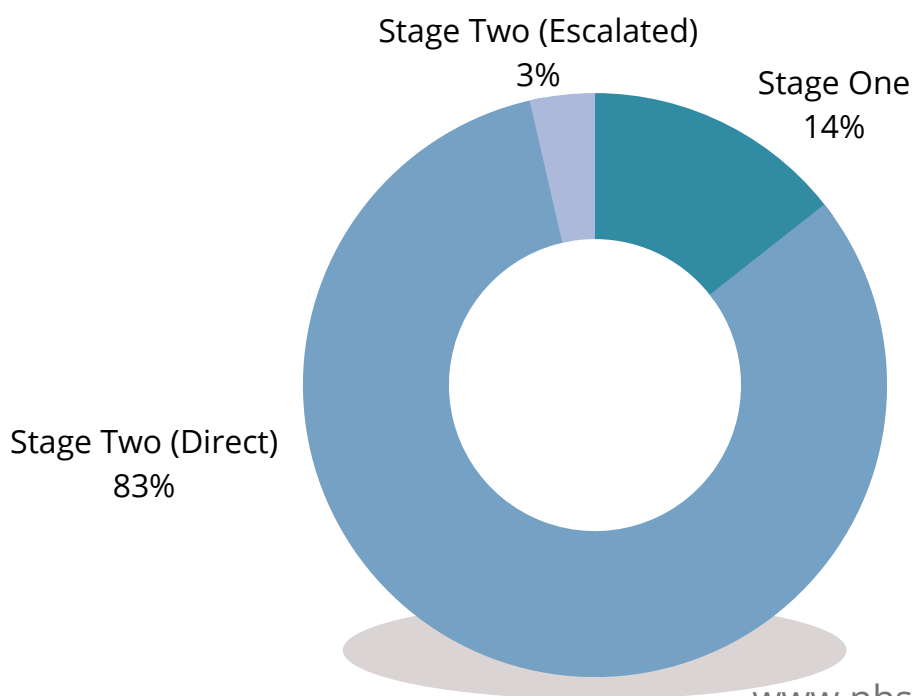
Complaints

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.



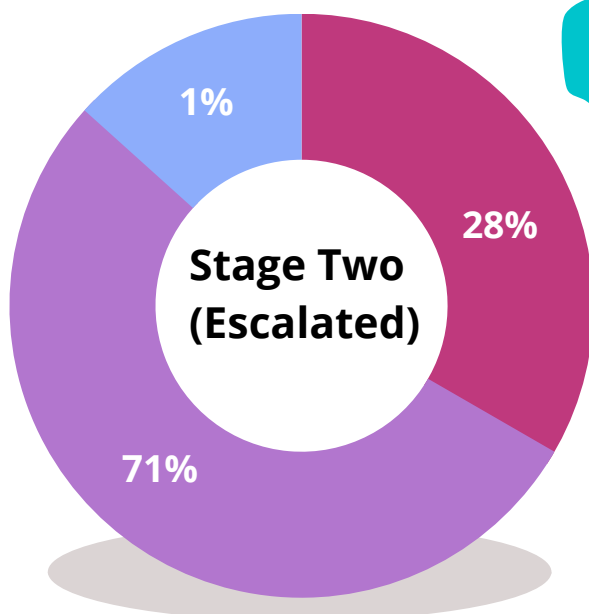
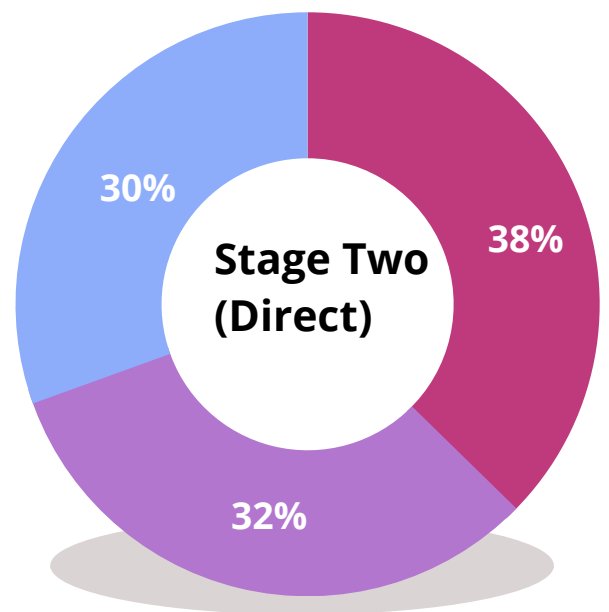
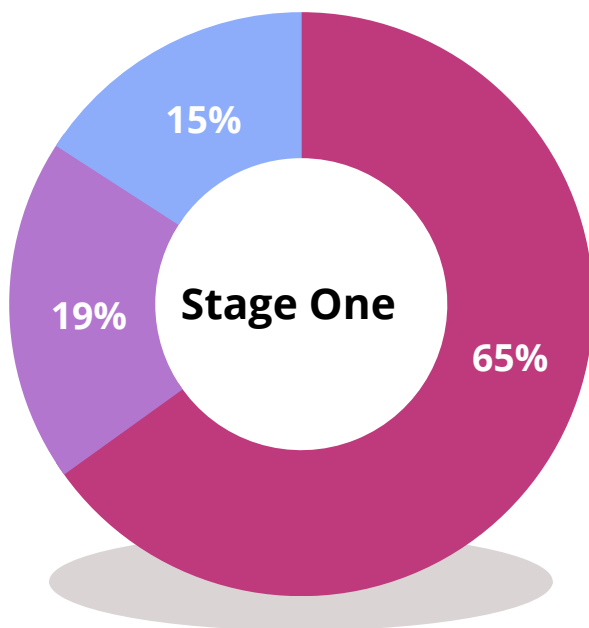
We responded to 470 complaints during the period, compared to 397 in the previous year. The majority of those (388) were complaints that went directly to Stage Two. We also responded to 68 Stage One complaints and 14 that were escalated to Stage Two. These numbers differ to complaints received, as some 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.

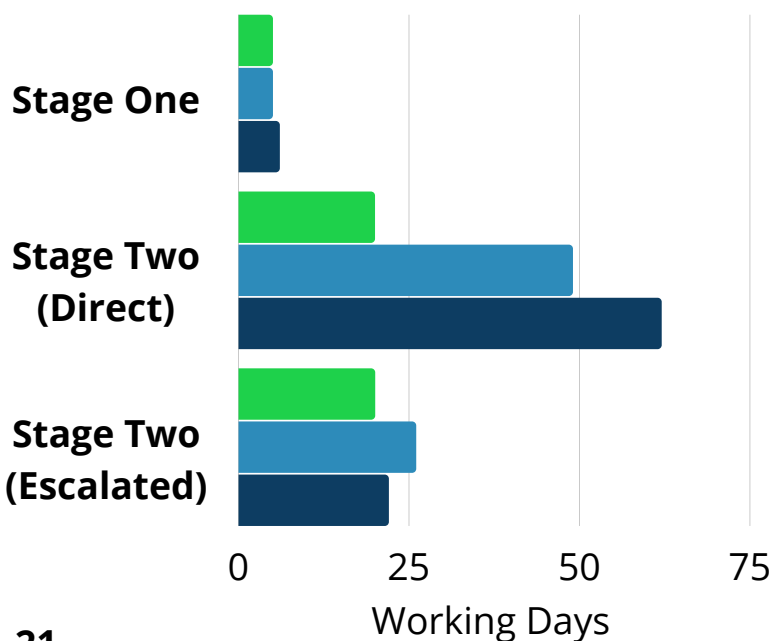
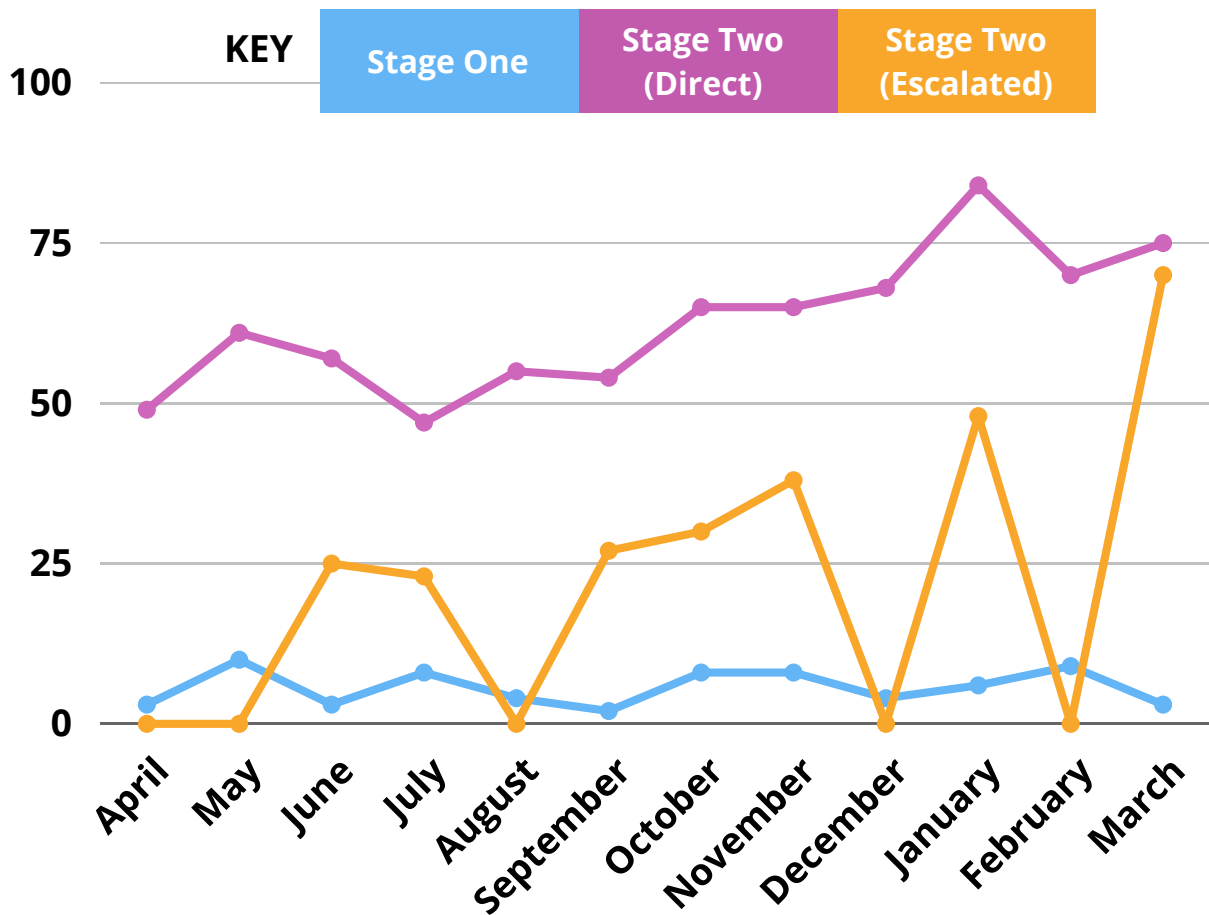


84% of our complaints were upheld or partially upheld which is an increase on 69% from the previous year. We fully upheld 48% of complaints during this period, compared to 38% from the previous year. The majority of our upheld and partially upheld complaints related to poor communication.

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 median response times over the period.



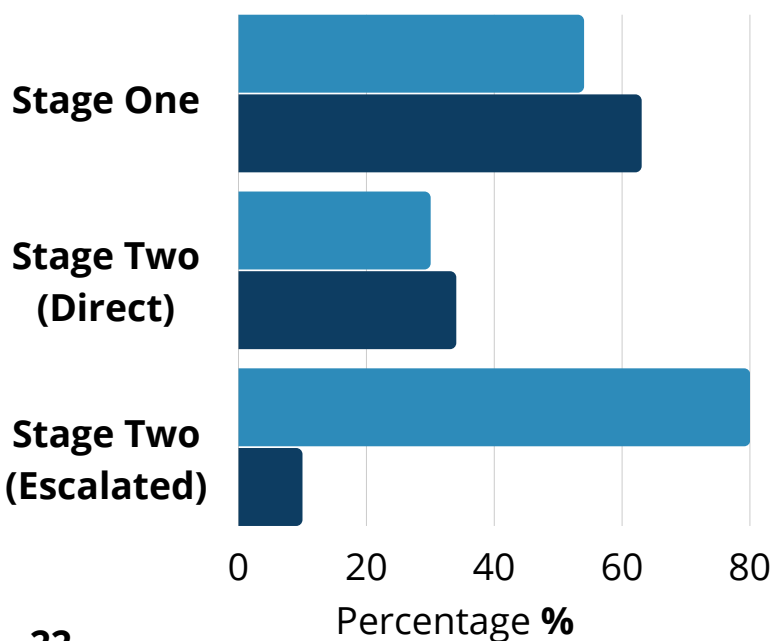
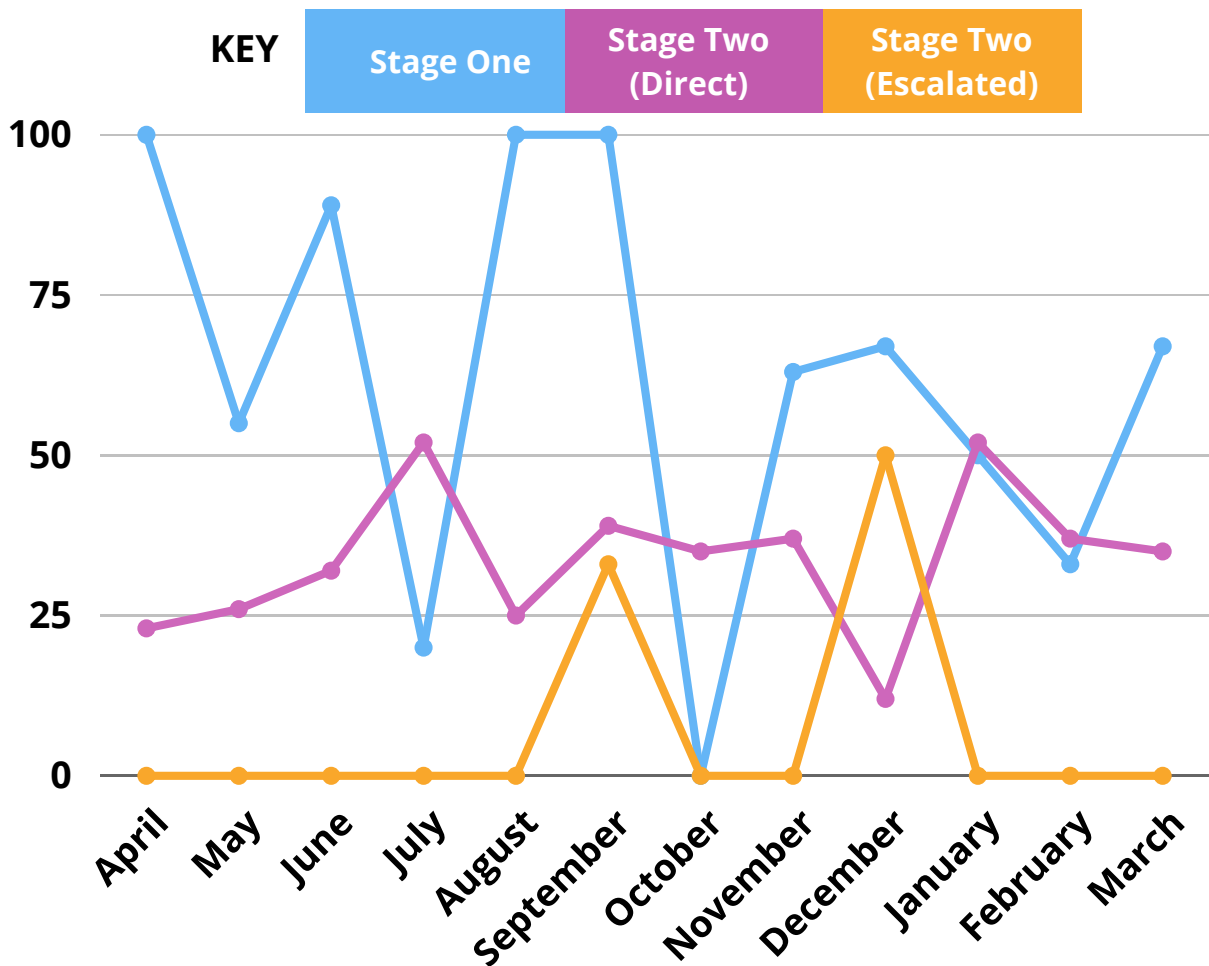
The chart to the left shows our response times for **this year** and **last year** against the **statutory response times**.

Our response times have increased for Stage Two Direct complaints, the stage at which most complaints are dealt with at. These delays in responding are as a direct result of the pressures on services.

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.

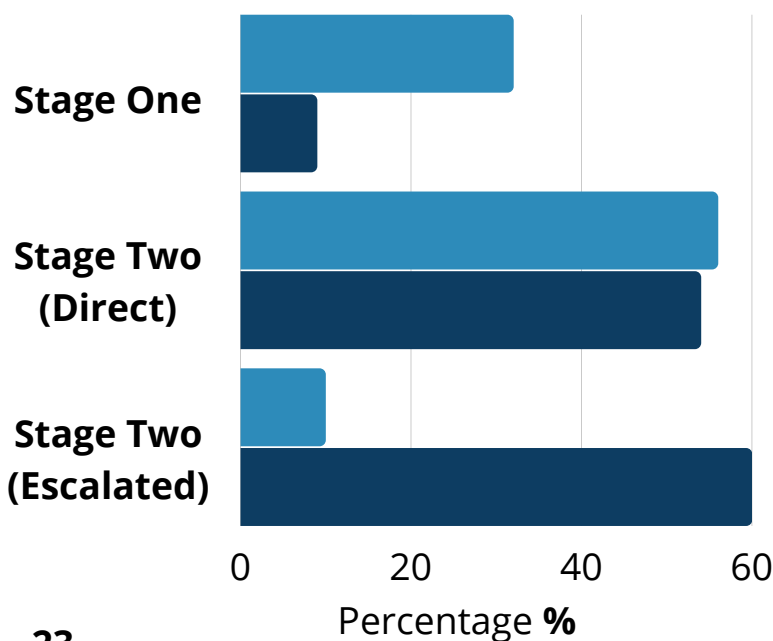
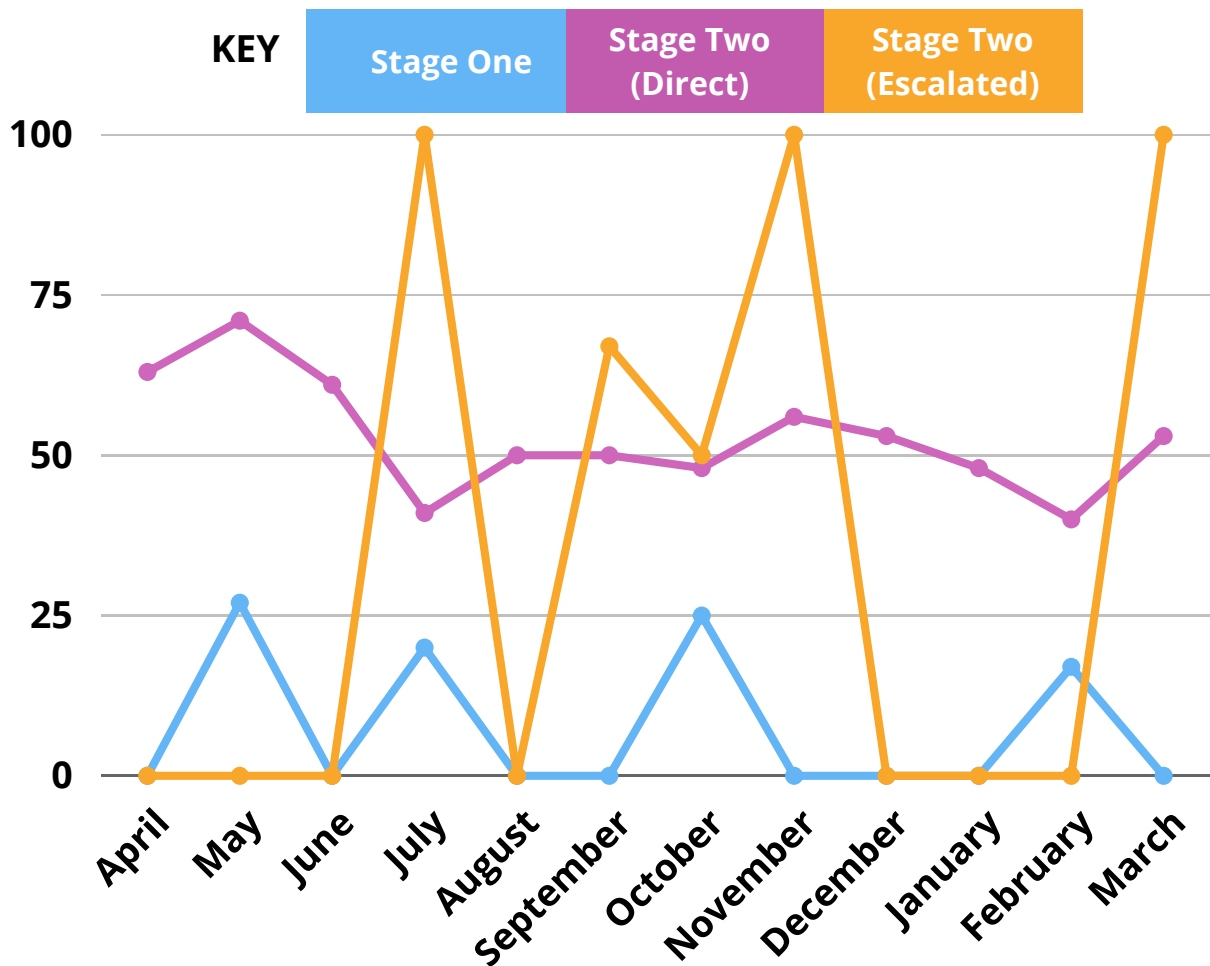


The chart to the left shows the percentage of complaints that were closed within timescales for **this year** and **last year**. We have responded to slightly less Stage Two Direct complaints within timescale this year compared to last. Stage Two Escalated complaint responses were significantly delayed due to complexity.

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**. Extension requests have remained similar for Stage Two Direct complaints. We have seen an increase for Stage Two Direct which reflects the challenges of the short timescales.

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 **24** cases during the period.

The Board has received an outcome for all of those cases.

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

One case was deferred back to the Board for a further response to be provided.

One case was investigated and one of the three points considered 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.

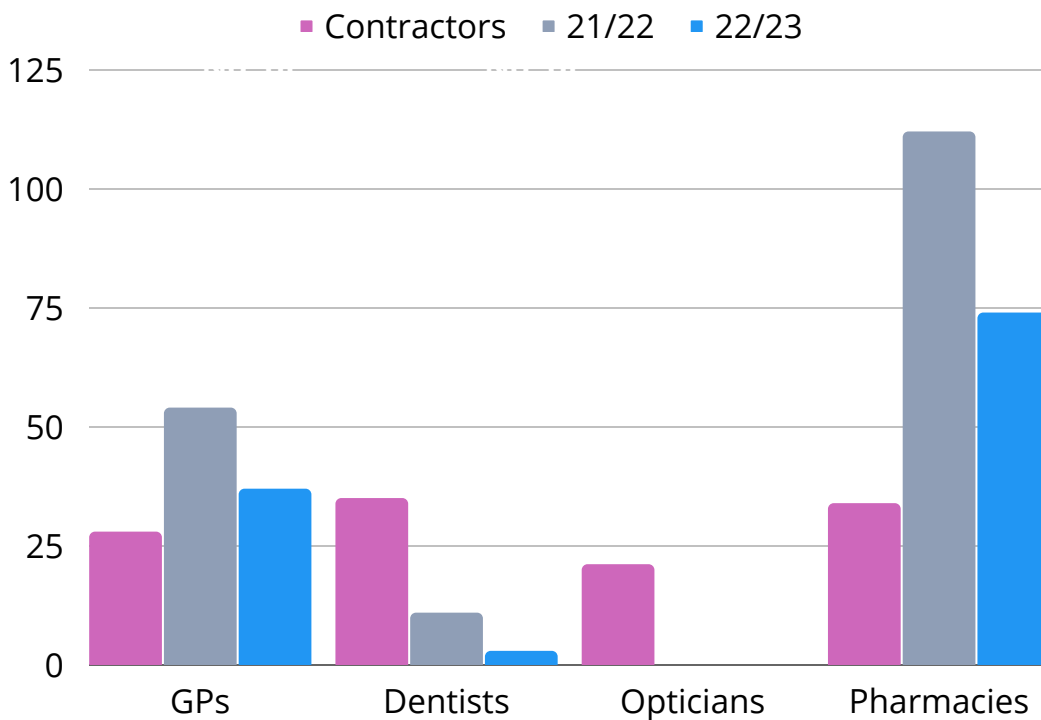
For more information on the SPSO please visit www.sps.org.uk

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.



Independent Contractors received a total of 114 complaints during 2022/23, compared to 177 in the previous year.

The number of independent contractor complaints reduced during the period, particularly for pharmacies. The majority of the complaints received by pharmacies related to a specific site which faced significant staffing pressures during the period. These challenges have now been resolved.

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 **50** complaints about Prison Healthcare during 2022/23.

That is an increase on the 38 complaints received during 2022/23.

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

Most complaints related to the Prison regime or clinical treatment.

The complaints were all responded to within timescale.

The outcome for each of the complaints responded to was 'not upheld'. This is consistent with previous years, where the vast majority of prison healthcare complaints are 'not upheld'.



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 we have built on our existing areas of good practice this year, we are aware that there are still areas where we can improve. We would like to build on the success of our increased focus on early resolution and continue to help people to find a positive way forward for their concerns at the earliest opportunity. We also want to explore how we can make better use of patient stories and the opportunities that format of feedback gives us to learn.

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.