



**Annual Report on Complaints and Informal Patient
Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Concerns**

2018-2019

1. Introduction

Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust is comprised of two acute hospital sites; West Middlesex University Hospital and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. Both sites deliver specialist and general hospital care to our patients, have major A&E departments and the Trust also provides the second largest maternity service in England.

Our specialist hospital care includes the burns service for London and the South East, children's inpatient and outpatient services, cardiology intervention services and specialist HIV care. We also manage a range of community-based services, including our award winning sexual health clinics, which extend to outer London areas.

The Trust serves a catchment area in excess of one million people and employs over 6,000 staff. The Trust's main health commissioning and social care partnerships cover two STP footprints and the following areas:

- West London CCG
- Hounslow CCG
- Hammersmith and Fulham CCG
- Central London CCG
- Ealing CCG
- Richmond CCG
- Wandsworth CCG
- NHS England (NHSE) for Specialised Services Commissioning

The Trust values are firmly embedded across the organisation and demonstrate the standard of care and experience our patients and members of the public should expect from any of our services.

They are:

- **P**utting patients first
- **R**esponsive to patients and staff
- **O**pen and honest
- **U**nfailingly kind
- **D**etermined to develop

This report summarises the activity in relation to informal concerns and formal complaints for Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust during 2018/19.

2. Definitions

Informal concerns relate to those issues raised to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which aim to resolve issues quickly and at source, and where this is not possible to resolve the issue within 5 working days.

Formal complaints relate to concerns raised through the formal trust process. Complaints are acknowledged within 2 working days, assigned to the appropriate division and investigated and responded to within 25 working days.

3. Complaints received during 2018/19

During 2018-19, the Trust received a total of **823** complaints which equates to an average of 16 complaints per week. This is an increase of 4% against the number of complaints received during 2017-18 (793).

The written complaint rate is expressed in relation to the number of WTE staff employed by the organisation. Therefore the Complaint rate = the number of complaints x 1000 / WTE employed based on the electronic staff record (ESR).

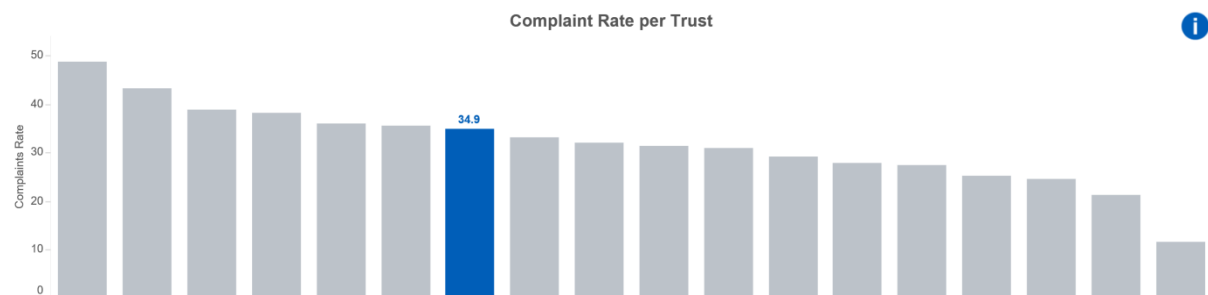
Written Complaint Rate



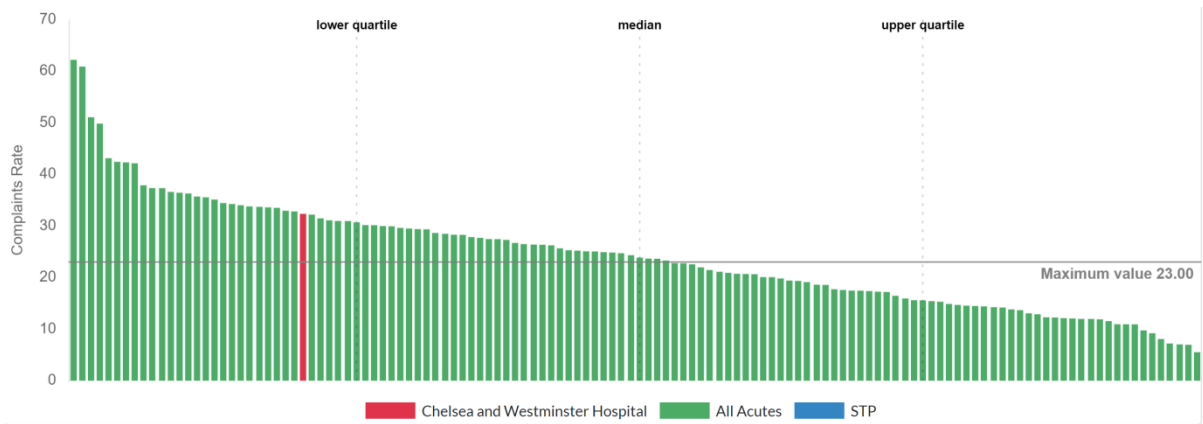
There has been an increase in the complaint rate compared to the previous year. When compared to neighbouring organisations in North West London Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust has the highest complaint rate (Q4 2018/19):

Chelsea and Westminster	34.9
Imperial College	31.3
Hillingdon	27.7
London North West	No data available
Ealing Hospital	No data available

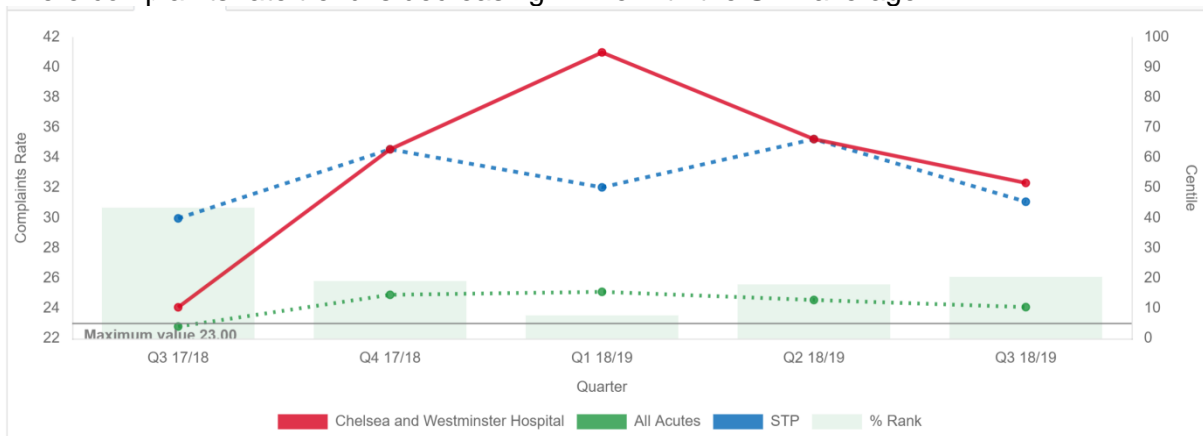
When compared to all Trusts across London, Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust is ranked 12 out of 18 Trusts where data is available (Q4 2018/19)



Nationally Chelsea and Westminster Hospital have a high complaints rate:



There complaints rate trend is decreasing in line with the STP average:



The graph below demonstrates the number of complaints received in each quarter during 2018-19 compared to the previous year.

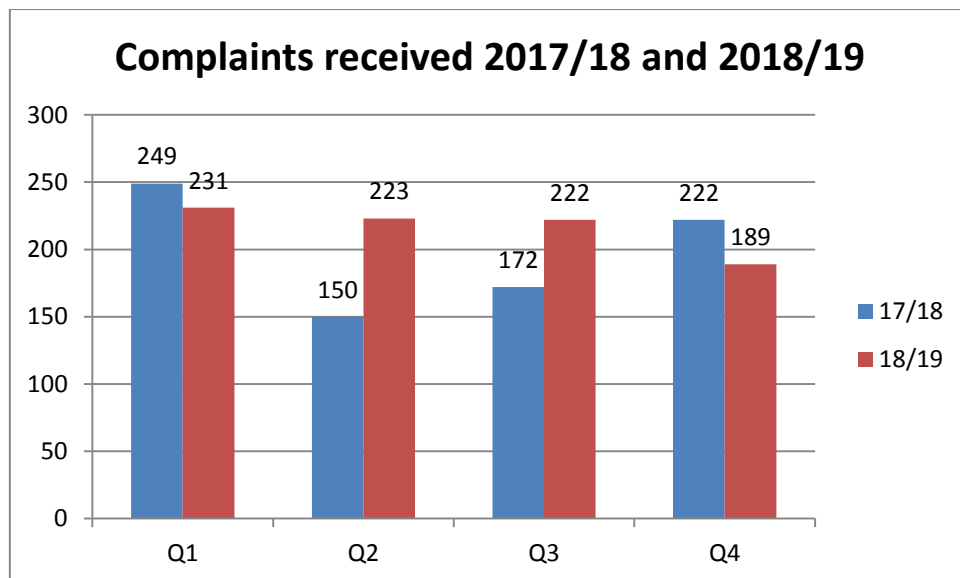


Table 1 shows the number of complaints received by Division compared with the previous year.

Division	Complaints 2018/19	Concerns 2018/19	Divisional Total 2018/19	Complaints 2017/18	Concerns 2017/18	Divisional Total 2017/18
Corporate	33 ↑	92 ↓	125	29	124	153
Emergency and Integrated Care	288 ↑	455 ↓	743	235	562	797
Planned Care	291 ↑	1,424 ↑	1,715	289	1,245	1,534
Womens Division	211 ↓	484 ↑	695	240	451	691
TOTAL	823 ↑	2,455 ↑	3,278 ↑	793	2,382	3,175

There has been a decrease in corporate and EIC PALS concerns and a decrease in formal complaints in Womens Division. There has been an increase in complaints and concerns received in all other areas.

The three main staff groups that received complaints during 2018/19 were:

- medical staff 443 (13%)
- support/infrastructure staff 272 (8%)
- nursing and midwifery staff 238 (7%)

4. Complaint themes

The Trust categorise complaints using the criteria set by the Department of Health. A complaint may involve more than one issue, however the main issue of the complaint will determine the subject it is logged under.

The table below identifies the themes and trends from complaints and highlights whether there has been an increase or decrease

Complaint theme	Total complaints 2018-19	Total complaints 2017-18
Access to treatment or drugs	32 ↑	15
Admissions, discharges and transfers	60 ↑	48
Appointments	91 ↑	64
Clinical treatment (across all specialties)	248 ↓	325
Communication	98 ↑	69
Consent to treatment	5 ↑	2
End of life care	2 ↓	6
Facilities	20 ↑	14
Patient care	66 ↑	48
Mortuary	1	1
Prescribing errors	10 ↓	14
Privacy, dignity and wellbeing	13 ↑	9
Staffing numbers	1 ↓	2
Trust administration	18 ↑	11
Values and behaviours	136 ↑	128
Waiting times	4 ↓	15
Other	18 ↓	22

There has been a 24% decrease in the number of clinical treatment complaints during the past year and complaints about waiting times have also decreased by 73%. However there has been a significant increase in complaints about access to treatment/drugs 113% and complaints about appointments have increased by 42%.

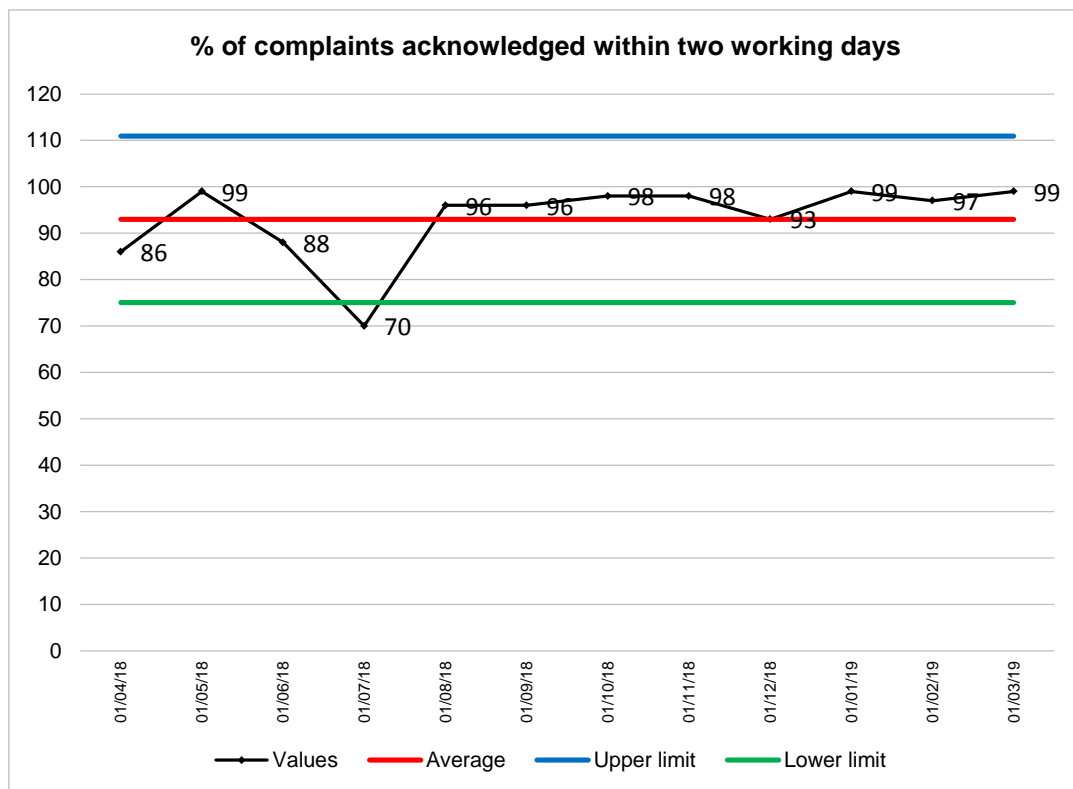
Significantly there was an increase in complaints about communication (42%) this includes lack of communication, written communication, the timeliness of communication and can include communication between staff and patients or their representatives.

There was also a 38% increase in complaints about patient care, which includes responding to the needs of the patient, nutrition, hydration and personal care.

There has also been a slight increase in the numbers of complaints about values and behaviours (6%) on last year's figures. These complaints can be about the attitude of our staff and failure to follow agreed procedures.

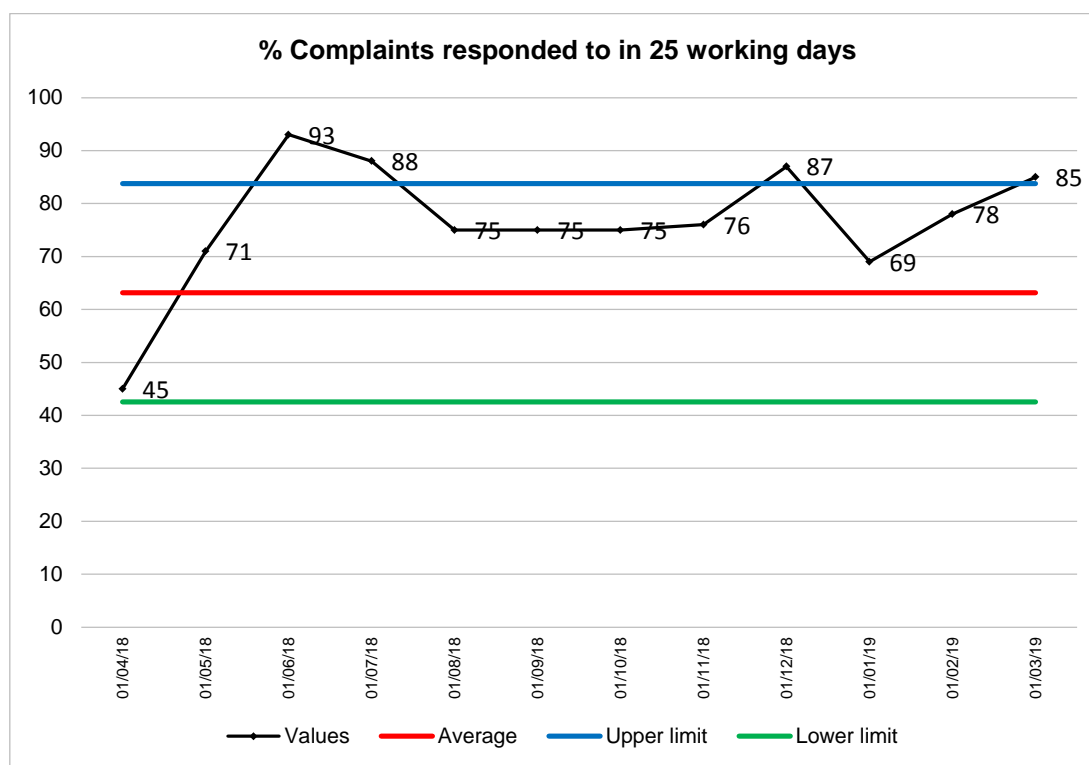
5. Performance in responding to complaints

In addition to monitoring the number of complaints received by our Trust we also monitor our performance against locally set timescales. These are to ensure that we acknowledge all complaints within two working days and that we respond to 90% of complaints within 25 working days. The chart below shows our performance with acknowledging within two working days.



The performance has steadily improved against this target during the past year.

The chart below tracks our progress with achieving the 25 day response rate.



Reasons for not meeting the target vary and include, investigation response not received on time, delays with approval, a complex or multi-division response requiring further time, difficulties in locating medical records and complaints team changes and capacity.

The reasons for breaching the response time are presented in the monthly complaints reports which are shared with the executive management team and also discussed at the Quality Committee.

6. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Eight complaints were referred to the PHSO during 2018-19 which were subsequently investigated. We received a decision on four cases, one of which was upheld and three were not upheld.

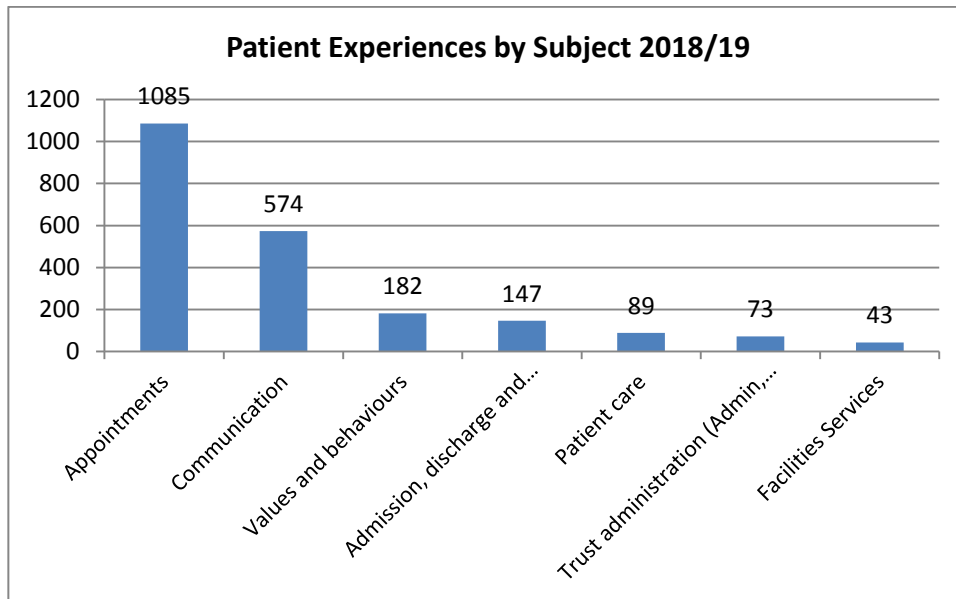
The case that was upheld identified that the Trust had not fully complied with the Trust exclusion policy, and that the complaint had not been fully answered. The claimant was awarded financial compensation and the Trust were asked to address issues with the exclusion policy. In addition a full and final response was sent to the patient.

7. Informal concerns (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

During 2018-19, the PALS team dealt with 2,455 concerns, this is an increase of 3% from 2017-18 (2,382). These figures do not include any concerns raised at ward or service level that were immediately resolved.

We receive contact from patients and their representatives by email, phone or face to face at the PALS offices at our hospital sites.

The top seven themes from concerns are demonstrated in the chart below.



The principle reason for contacting the PALS service is in relation to concerns about appointments – cancellations, bookings and changes. This has been highlighted regularly and the administrative team have developed an action plan to address this. The PALS service and administration team will be working closely together to reduce the number of concerns raised in relation to appointments and importantly to address issues promptly when they are raised by patients.

8. Compliments

The trust reported a total of 727 compliments during the year 2018/19. However a snapshot audit of the wards suggests that this is not reflective of feedback which goes directly to wards and departments. Whilst it is not possible to generalise to all areas it is clear that those cards and thank you notes which go directly to the wards are excluded from the above figure.

The volunteer team will support with regular collection of compliments in the coming year to help improve the picture in relation to compliments.

9. Looking forward

The Complaints and PALS teams continue to work hard to respond to concerns and complaints that they receive and are reliant on good working relationships with their operational and clinical colleagues to achieve this. The following objectives will be progressed in the coming year:

- To ensure there is a consistent focus on early resolution of complaints, resolving the issues for patients and decreasing the formal complaint response rate.
- To consistently achieve 90% compliance in responding to complaints within 25 working days.
- The revision of the complaints process flowchart to ensure that the complaints team are effectively and efficiently handling complaints.
- To continue to review systems and processes to ensure that learning and improvements from complaints and concerns is implemented.
- To work with our colleagues in the Patient Access Directorate to reduce the number of appointment based concerns received by PALS.

- To maximise the opportunities for training staff on the complaints process, including an in-depth training for investigators.
- To proactively work with the Volunteering Manager to recruit volunteers for both PALS services.
- Work with the volunteer service to ensure that patient compliments are better recorded and reflective of the level of compliments departments receive.