



## **Annual Report**

### **Complaints and Informal Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Service**

**2019-2020**

## 1. Introduction

Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust comprises 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 2019/20.

## 2. Definitions

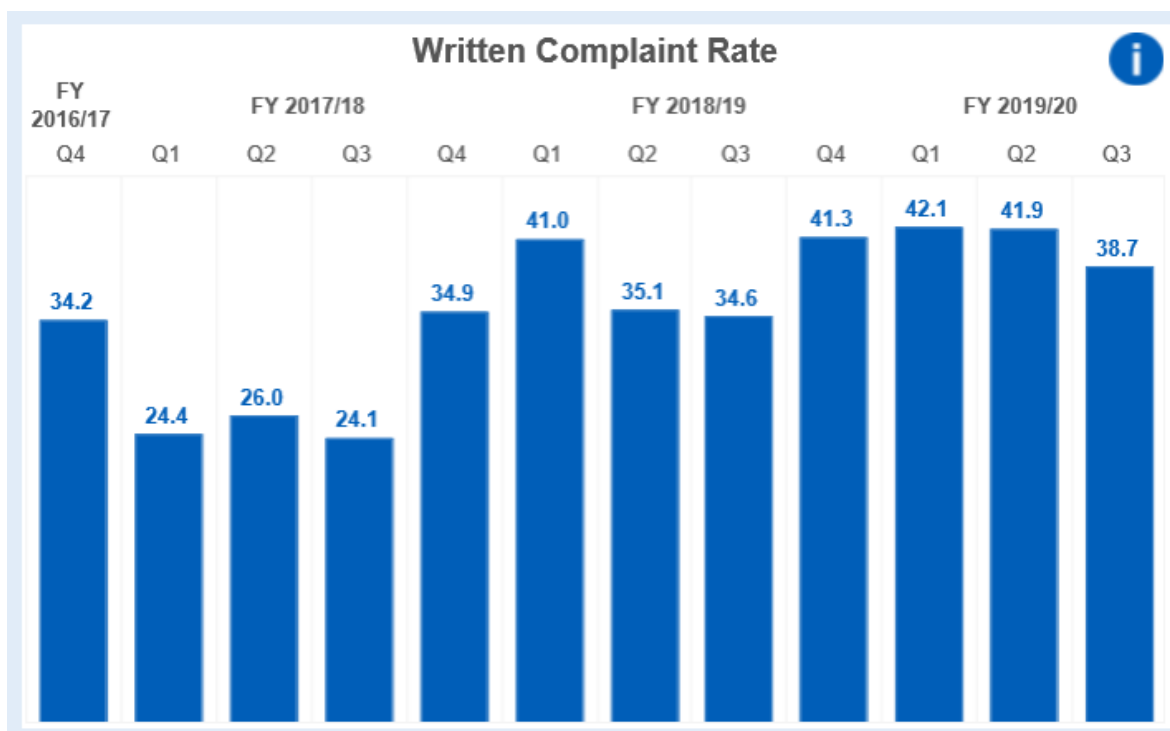
**Informal concerns** relate to those issues raised to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which aim to resolve issues quickly and at source, and where this is not possible to resolve the issue within 5 working days.

**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.

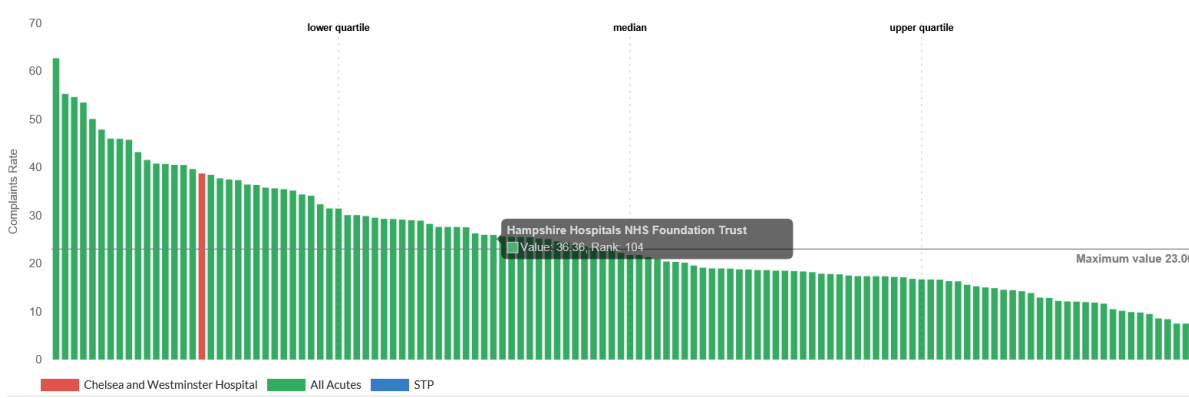
## 3. Complaints received during 2019/20

During 2019-20, the Trust received a total of **840** complaints which equates to an average of 16 complaints per week. This is an increase of 2% against the number of complaints received during 2018-19 (823).

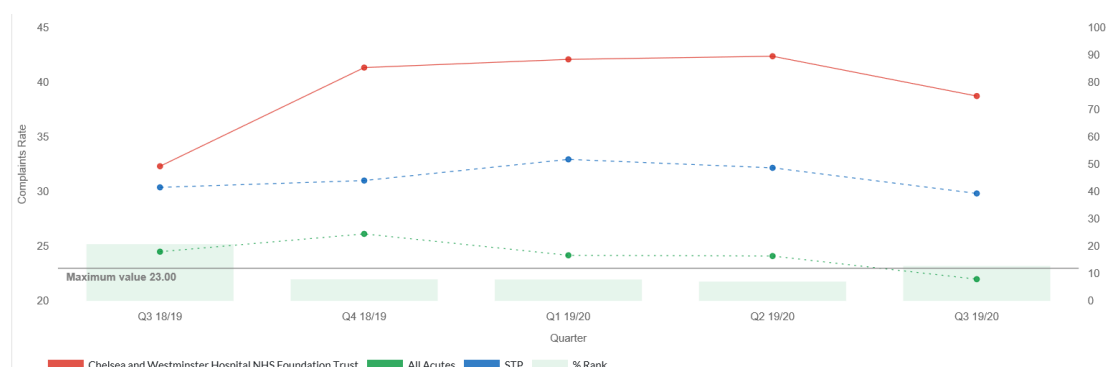
The written complaint rate is expressed in relation to the number of WTE staff employed by the organisation. Therefore the complaint rate = the number of complaints x 1000 / WTE employed based on the electronic staff record (ESR).



Nationally Chelsea and Westminster Foundation Trust has a high complaints rate:



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



The graph below demonstrates the number of complaints received in each quarter during 2019-20 compared to the previous year.

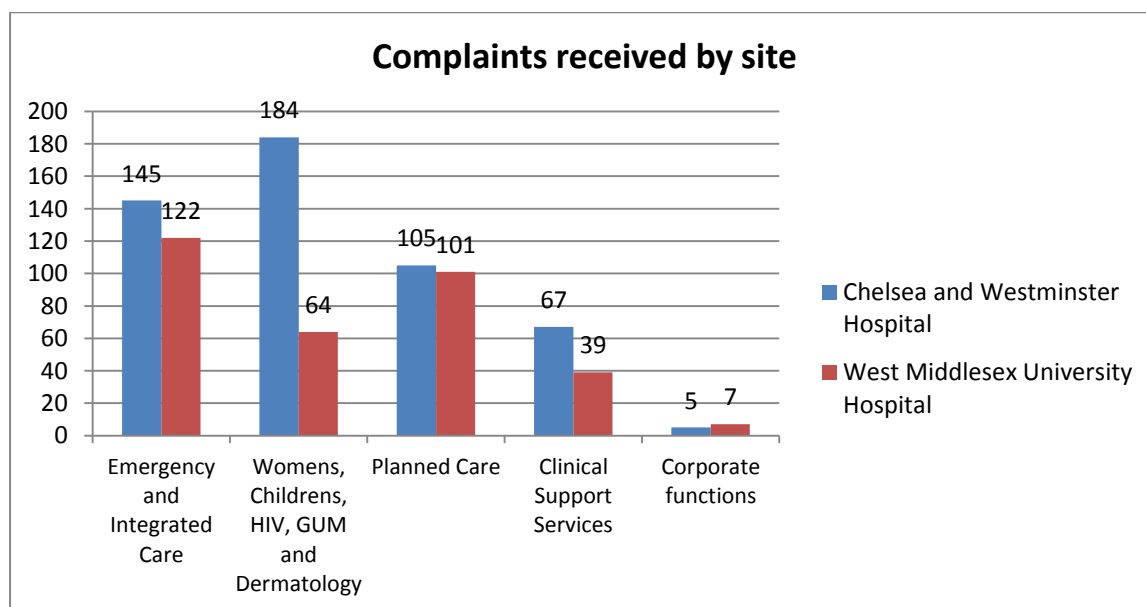
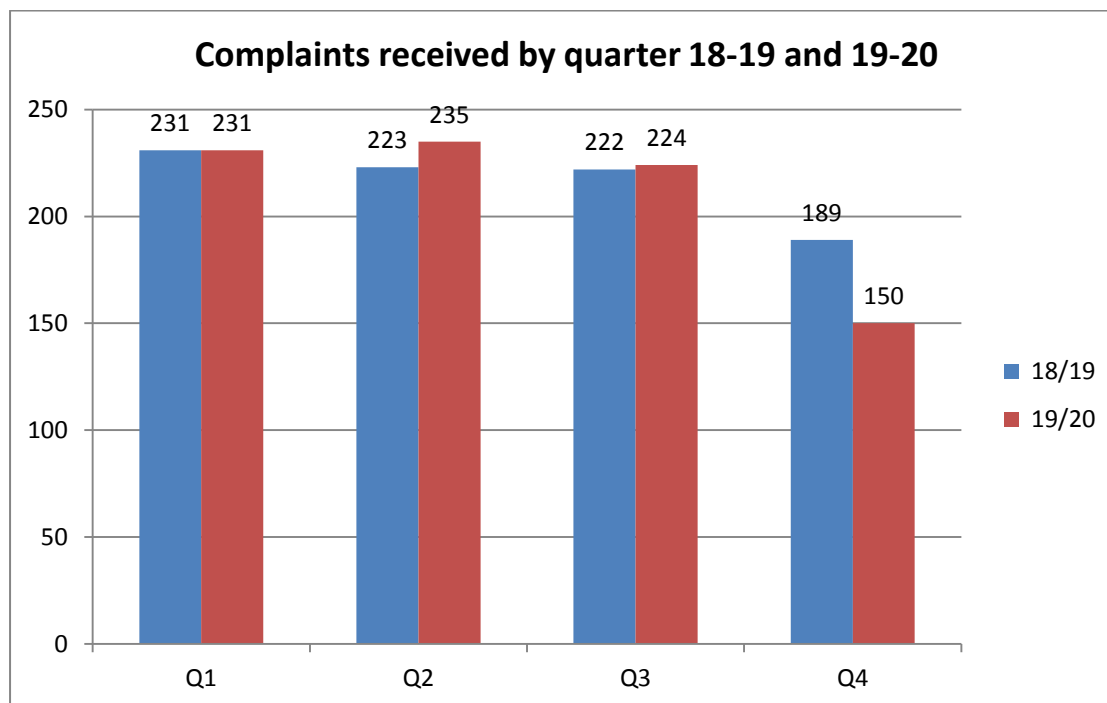


Table 1 shows the number of complaints received by Division compared with the previous year.

Division	Complaints 2019/20	Concerns 2019/20	Divisional Total 2019/20	Complaints 2018/19	Concerns 2018/19	Divisional Total 2018/19
Corporate	12 ↓	81 ↓	93	33	92	125
Emergency	267 ↓	359 ↓	626	288	455	743

and Integrated Care						
Planned Care	206 ↓	337 ↓	563	291	1,424	1,715
Clinical Support Service	106	1,597	1,703	-	-	-
Womens Division	249 ↑	496 ↑	745	211	484	695
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>3,710</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>2,455</b>	<b>3,278</b>

There has been a decrease in corporate and EIC complaints and PALS concerns and an increase in formal complaints and PALS concerns in Womens Division. The new Clinical Support Service Division has seen a large number of concerns received, especially for Patient Access Directorate.

The three main staff groups that received complaints during 2019/20 were:

- medical staff 444
- support/infrastructure staff 186
- nursing and midwifery staff 186

#### 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 2019-20	Total complaints 2018-19
Access to treatment or drugs	20 ↓	32
Admissions, discharges and transfers	45 ↓	60
Appointments	77 ↓	91
Clinical treatment (across all specialties)	215 ↓	248
Communication	121 ↑	98
Consent to treatment	-	5
End of life care	2	2
Facilities	4 ↓	20
Patient care	187 ↑	66
Mortuary	-	1
Prescribing errors	10	10
Privacy, dignity and wellbeing	4 ↓	13
Restraint	1	-
Staffing numbers	-	1
Trust administration	20 ↑	18
Values and behaviours	120 ↓	136
Waiting times	7 ↑	4
Other	7 ↓	18

There has been a 13% decrease in the number of clinical treatment complaints during the past year and complaints about appointments have also decreased by 15%. However there

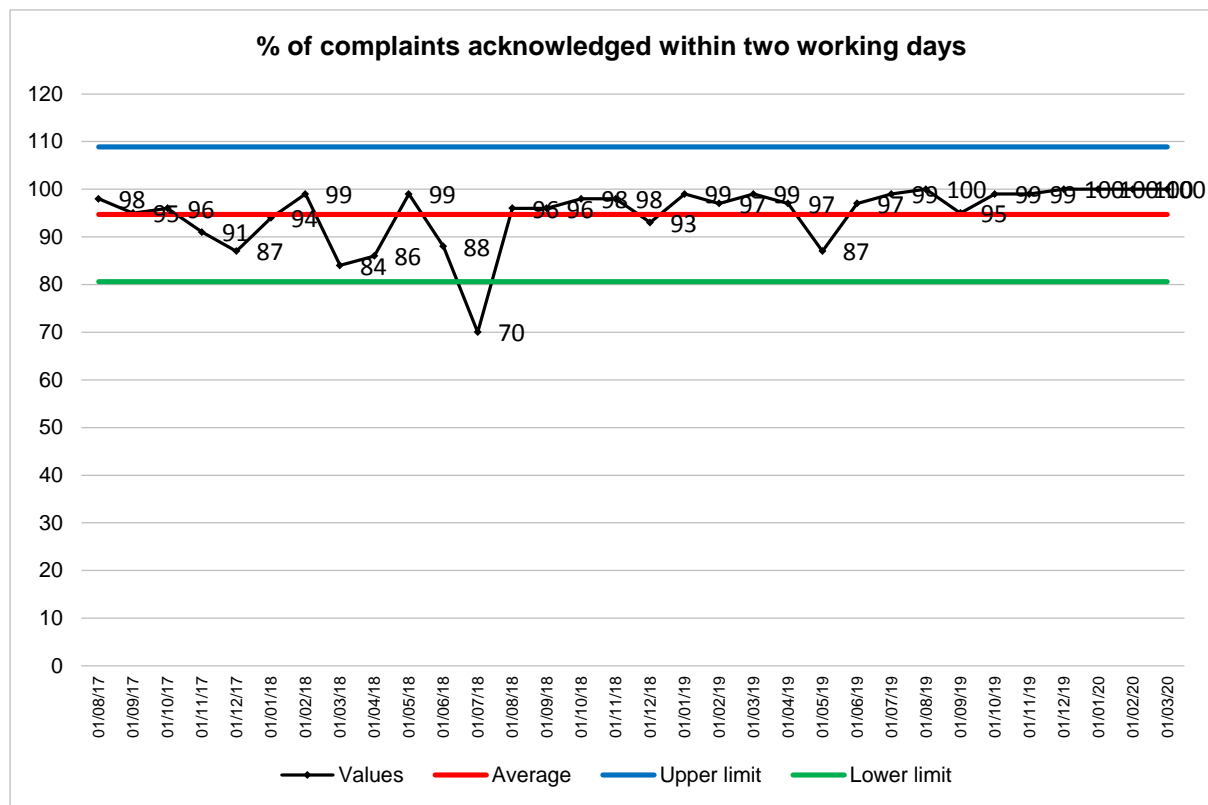
has been a significant increase (183%) in complaints about patient care which includes failing to follow agreed procedures, responding to the needs of the patient, nutrition, hydration and personal care.

There was an increase in complaints about communication (23%) this includes lack of communication, written communication, the timeliness of communication and can include communication between staff and patients or their representatives.

There has also been a slight decrease in the numbers of complaints about values and behaviours (12%) on last year's figures. These complaints can be about the attitude of our staff and failure to follow agreed procedures.

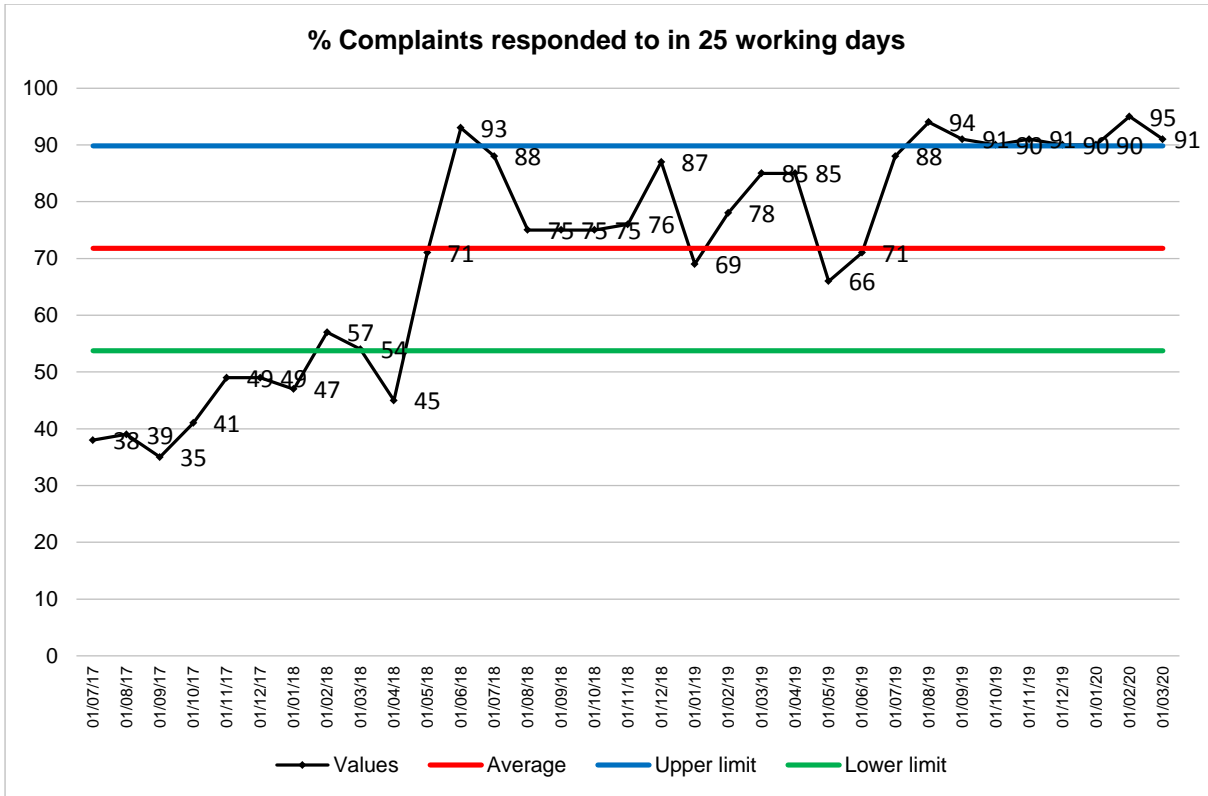
### 5. Performance in responding to complaints

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.



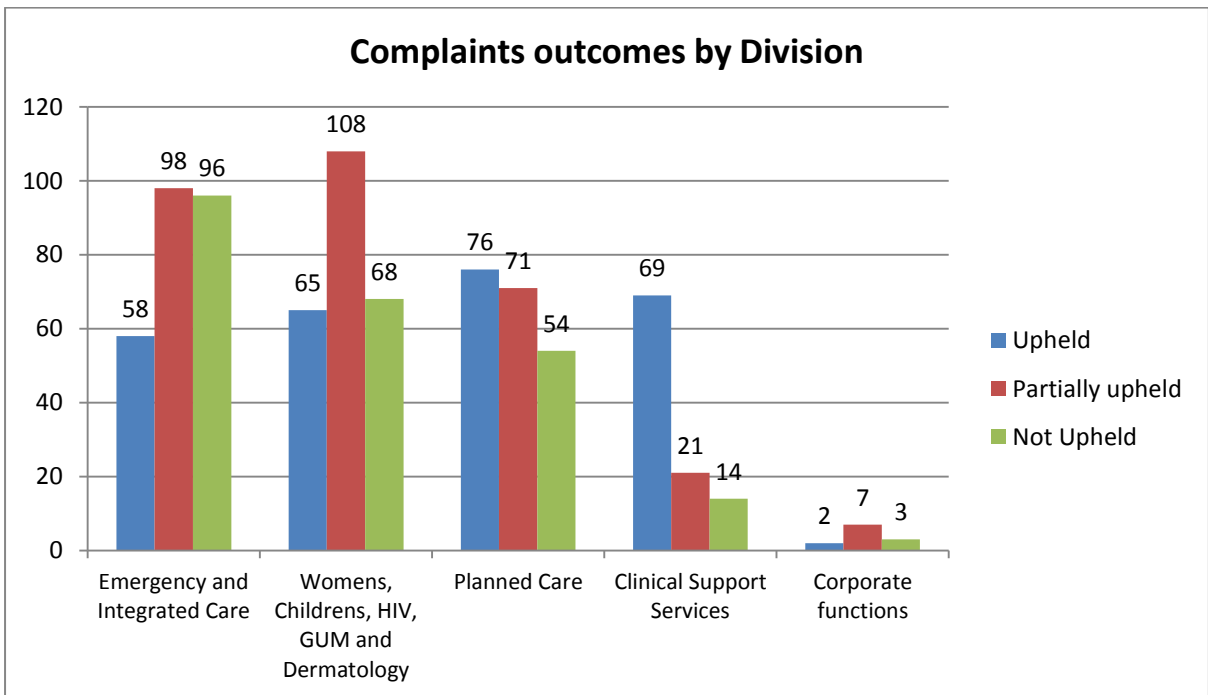
The performance has been consistently above target during the past year.

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



As you can see from August 2019 the Complaints Team has consistently met or exceeded the target of 90% of responses being sent within 25 working days of receipt of the complaint.

810 out of the 840 complaints received during 2019-20 were completed at the time of this report. The chart below shows the outcomes from each of these complaints by Division:



## 6. Learning from complaints

Here are some examples of changes to our services arising from the complaints we have received:

- A patient experienced three cancellations of Urology appointments due to clinician annual leave. The Patient Access team and Service Manager met to ensure that patients avoid multiple cancellations in future by developing an automatic alert to the Central Booking Team if previous appointments have been cancelled. The Urology service will also work with the team to manage the annual leave process more effectively to avoid multiple cancellations.
- We received a complaint from a patient about her ante-natal care and that the midwife caring for her caused pain when completing a physical examination and reported concerns which were not referred for further investigation and not recorded in the notes. We apologised for this and the team has been reminded of the need to follow clinical guidance when concerns are reported and to document all discussion with the patient.
- We received a complaint from a patient regarding their weekend visit to ED presenting with an abdominal pain and bleeding (heterotopic pregnancy) and stated that they were refused an ultrasound during the weekend – this was booked with the Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) the following Monday. We apologised that a second gynaecology review did not happen and that the patient's history of an ultrasound confirming a uterine pregnancy had falsely reassured the team. We explained that none of the London EPUs have a service between 20:00 and 08:30 but we are designing a 7 day EPU service that should become operational in the near future. We will also work towards providing an abdominal screening service when EPUs are closed.

## **7. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**

Three complaints referred to the PHSO during 2019-20 were subsequently investigated. We received a decision on two of these cases, one of which was partly upheld and one not upheld, one is still open. We sent an apology letter to the complainant whose complaint was partially upheld (WCH Division).

We received the outcome of four complaints investigated from the previous year, two of which were not upheld and two were partly upheld. For one of the partly upheld complaints we sent an apology letter and £1000 compensation and for another we sent an apology for the failings and an action plan is being finalised. Both complaints were for Medicine Division.

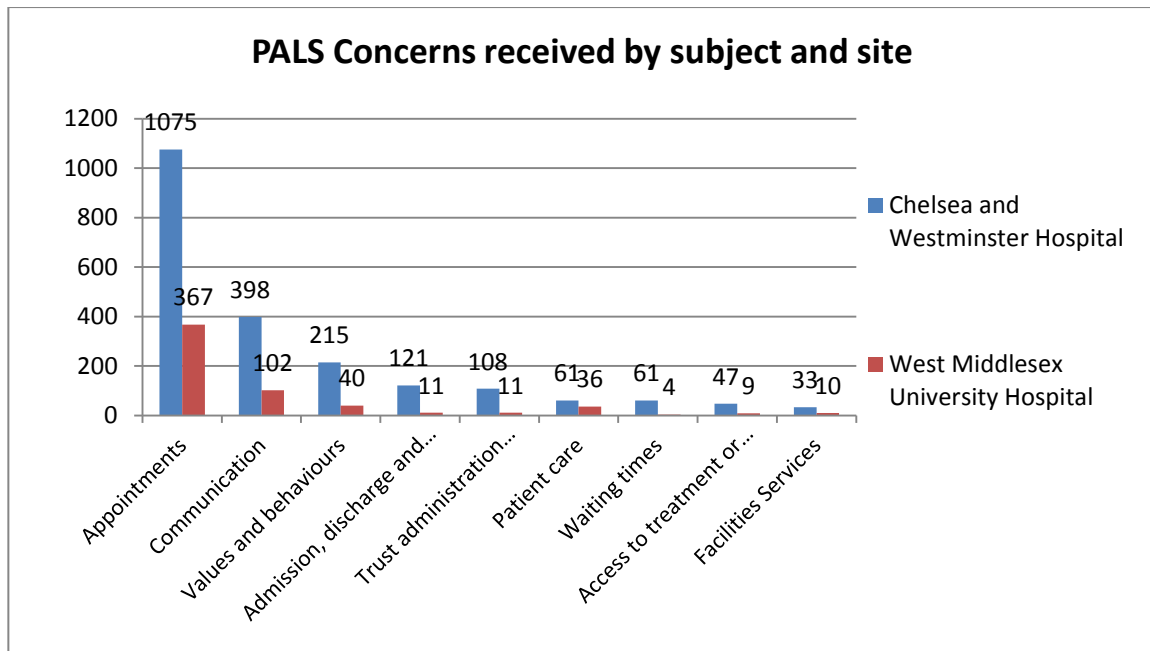
## **8. Informal concerns (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)**

During 2019-20, the PALS team dealt with 2,870 concerns, this is an increase of 17% from 2018-19 (2,455). 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.

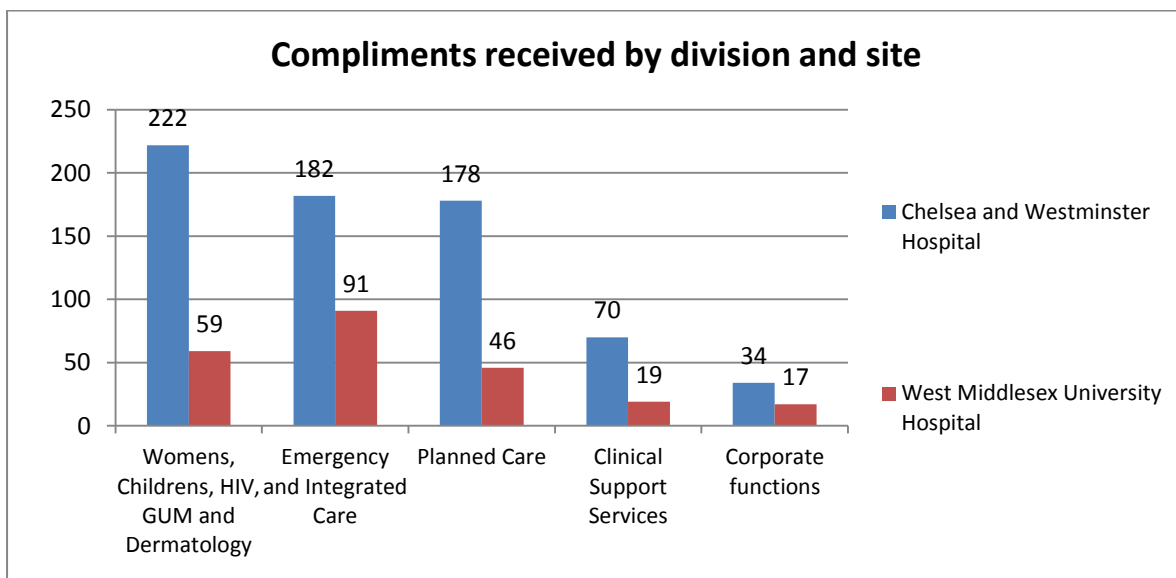




The principle reason for contacting the PALS service is in relation to concerns about appointments – cancellations, bookings and changes. The PALS team continue to work with colleagues within Patient Access to resolve appointment queries as quickly as possible.

## 9. Compliments

The PALS team logged a total of 919 compliments during the year 2019-20 and increase from 727 the previous year. Please see the table below for a breakdown of the compliments received by Division and site:



## 10. 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 re-design the current PALS service with a focus on providing immediate resolution to patients so they leave the hospital with their concerns resolved.
- 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 continue to review systems and processes to ensure that learning and improvements from complaints and concerns is captured and implemented.
- To continue to consistently achieve 90% compliance in responding to complaints within 25 working days.
- To continue to work with colleagues in the Patient Access Directorate to reduce the number of appointment based concerns received by PALS.