The Belfast Trust welcomes and actively encourages Complaints and Compliments about our services. We recognise the importance of working with our patients, clients, their families, carers and others to deliver, develop and improve the services we provide. To do this we need to listen, and take their views seriously.

The Complaints Department is an integral part of the Trust's Risk and Governance Service. However to ensure good complaints management, staff within the Department work closely with colleagues in the Service Directorates to ensure that, where possible, complaints are satisfactorily resolved at an early stage.

It has been a busy and productive year for the Complaints Department. This Report will provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Complaints Department and an analysis of the type of Complaints/Enquiries received and our response to them.

Good complaints management is fully dependent on joint working with the Service Directorates in order to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the individual at the earliest stage possible. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and ask that all staff continue to work with this positive approach towards complaints management.

I would also like to thank Dr Val McGarrell and Professor Eileen Evason, Non-Executive Directors of the Trust, who are the joint Chair of Complaints Review Group for their continued commitment and support throughout the year.

During the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 the Complaints Department managed 1,511 Formal Complaints and 617 Enquiries, these were received and successfully resolved at Service Directorate level. 191 complaints were also recorded as resolved at local level by the Service Directorates. In addition there were 215 revisited (re-opened) complaints. Approximately 3,651 recorded Compliments were also received.

The Complaints Team can be contacted at:
6th Floor McKinney House       Tel: 028 9063 0023
Musgrave Park Hospital         Fax: 028 9090 3018
Belfast BT9 7AB                Email: complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Annual Comparison of Complaints

At the year end of March 2012 a total of 1,511 Formal Complaints were managed. This is an increase of 76 on last year’s figures of 1,435.

Quarterly Comparison of Complaints for 2011/2012

A trend comparison with the 2010/11 period indicates a similar flow of complaints receipt, with it being notable that total complaints received year on year currently indicate a 21% increase in the January to March phase of complaints management.
Total Number of Complaints per Service Directorate

Trend data indicates that Acute Services remain the largest source of issue for service users, accounting for approximately 56% or all complaints generated, a reflection on the diversity of specialities within the acute Service Directorate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Complaints by Service Groups</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute Services</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer &amp; Specialist Services</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing and User Experience</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance &amp; Delivery</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Development</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Primary Care Services</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Hospitals &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>1396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What our Service Users complained about

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 6 Subjects</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication/Information to Patients</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Attitude/ Behaviour</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments, Delays/ Cancellations (Outpatients)</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment &amp; Care (Quality)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions into Hospital, Delays/Cancellations (Inpatients)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment &amp; Care (Quantity)</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 2119 subjects were raised by our service users highlighting a range of issues. The above top 6 subjects account for 71% of all issues requiring resolution. Comparison with 2010/11 figures communication/information to patients issues have increased by 60%, elevating this subject from the previous 4th to 1st subject issue for service users.

Appointments, Delays/Cancellations (Outpatients) has improved with a 7.5% reduction in complaints received. Admissions issues have also increased by 47%, the majority of those relate to Acute Services admissions issues.

Additional Information: Infection Control issues were recorded as a subject for complaint on 11 occasions.
Annual Comparison Complaints By Site

The Royal site continues to generate the largest percentage of Complaints 632 (42%), a clear reflection on the geographical make up of our Trust and location of our high volume acute services. Breakdown across all sites is as follows:

All complaints captured across all sites and services are graded according to the Trust Risk Matrix. This determines response action at the outset of complaints handling.

Review of complaints handling across the 2011-12 period indicates a low percentage (1%) are graded as High, this is a 1% reduction on the 2010-11 period.

Medium grading accounts for 49%, a reduction of 2% from the last reporting year.

Low graded complaints accounted for 50% of all complaints received in the 2011-12 year.
Response Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement Times &lt; 2 days</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Times &lt; 20 days</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Times 30 days</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints remain open as at 01st May 2012</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Complaints Department and Service Directorates over the past year have worked together in order to improve the overall response times. It is encouraging to note the increase year on year.

Comparison of General Enquiries

A total of 617 enquiries were handled by the Complaints Department in 2011/12:
Children Order Complaints 2010/2011

6 Complaints were received and investigated under the Problem Solving Stage of the Children (NI) Order 1997 Representation and Complaints Procedure.

These complaints related to issues pertaining to:

5  services to support a Child within the family home
1  denial of service
6  Complaints were successfully resolved.

In addition, a Children Order case, which was considered under Stage 2 of the Procedures, has been investigated by the Ombudsman.

Work remains ongoing on a regional basis to review the Policy and Procedures associated with the Children Order Representation and Complaints Procedure. A report will be made to the Association of Directors of Social Work and on completion the new Policy and Procedures will be implemented. Training will be provided to the relevant staff.

COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED

A total of 4,898 compliments were received and recorded across the Trust. This is a small reduction of 476 from the 2010/11 year. The Complaints Department are pleased to be able to share the distribution of compliments but continue to urge all Service Directorates to submit their compliments returns to allow for representation in overall figures.

Cancer and Specialist Services continue to forward the highest proportion of compliments to the Complaints Department for recording.

The main theme of our Compliments was in relation to the good standard of Treatment and Care received, this included communication with the family and patient, understanding and empathy shown by staff and cleanliness of Wards and Departments.
• The DHSSPSNI receive Quarterly Monitoring CH8 Subject and Program of Care Reports.
• The HSC Board receive anonymised Monthly Reports on all Formal Complaints.
• The Trust Board, on a quarterly basis, receives Internal Performance Reports, these include the Complaints Department acknowledgement and response timeframes.
• Service Directorates Governance Managers receive Monthly Complaint Reports. These reports are discussed at the Service Directorates Governance Meetings and lessons learnt are shared.
• Complaints Review Committee (CRC) meet on a quarterly basis. The Committee is jointly chaired by two Non-Executive Directors with representation from Service Directorates, Complaints Department and Risk and Governance. The purpose of the Committee is to review complaints management, to identify any lessons from Complaints and Compliments and to provide assurance to Trust Board and the Assurance Committee.

Throughout 2011/2012, as a result of complaints received and investigated, a number of service improvements/lessons have been implemented across the Trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review/Change of service</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training need identified</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/Change of system</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of service</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further assessment</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting list adjustment</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of examples reflect the above table:

Family complained about their poor experience in Emergency Department in relation to seating and hygiene.
**Outcome:** Estates to provide more appropriate seating.

A number of complaints were in relation to the delay in review appointments.
**Outcome:** additional review clinics have been arranged in Medicine and Surgery.

Several complaints were received in relation to wrong information provided on appointment letters.
**Outcome:** Clinic Appointment letters were reviewed and changed accordingly.
1 April 2011 to the 31st March 2012

There were 21 requests for information from the NI Commissioner for Complaints. (The Ombudsman)

This is a similar request in comparison to the year 10/11. The Complaints Department continues to manage 10/11 cases

Breakdown of 2011/2012 Ombudsman cases

Requests for information / Consideration stage 21
Not Upheld 14
Investigation Stage 5
Upheld 2

4 cases remain ongoing from previous year

5 cases were closed with consolatory payments made, 1 of those payments was within this reporting year the other 4 dated back to 2009

Total amount paid this financial year 2011/2012 was £40,800.

This is a significant increase from the previous year 2010/2011.

These consolatory payments were in relation to:

- Lack of information
- Poor treatment and care
- Poor documentation/recording
- Missed diagnosis
- Poor complaints investigation

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

This year the Complaints Department managed the last Independent Review case.
2011/2012 was again a busy year for the Complaints Department. The staff within the Complaints Department have worked along side the staff within the Service Directorates in order to get complaints and issues raised resolved at a very early stage for the individual and their family. This has been achieved through telephone calls, conversations and offering meetings to complainants where appropriate.

In addition to this The Complaints Final Review Group have reviewed a number of complaints files and made recommendations in order to try and assist in achieving local resolution.

This year the HSC Board have successfully recruited Lay Reviewers that can be used by the Trust at any stage in attempting to resolve a complaint. Although Lay Reviewers are not new within the Complaints Procedure, these lay reviewers will have a more hands on approach than before. Service Directorates have also engaged with independent clinical experts to review complex cases to help resolve complaints.

Over 1,000 staff have received Complaints training this year. Different packages have been developed and tailored to meet the needs of the Service Directorates. This includes basic awareness, investigation and response writing. More recently the role of the NI Commissioner for Complaints (the Ombudsman) has been added to the package. This training can be accessed by contacting the Complaints Department.

Within the Complaints Department staff have attended various training courses. In addition the Complaints Department have had a number of individuals speaking to the team on various subjects relevant to their role within the department. This has been very beneficial and the team would like to thank those people who have contributed.

As with the previous year the Trust including the Complaints Department has seen a number of changes. These changes do impact on the Complaints Department who have had to respond to the new demands and challenges this has brought.

Once again you will see our Complaints, Compliments and Enquiries have increased therefore putting greater demand on the current resources of the Department. Although the number of Ombudsman’s cases have slightly decreased, the volume and nature of this work is intensive.

The nature of the work can be very demanding on the individual and on the staff team, especially during the periods of sick leave and annual leave. However, the staff within the Department are a dedicated and committed team who continue to take on the challenges and pressures in order to provide the best complaints management possible.

Once again my sincere thanks to all staff involved in complaints management, especially Dr Val McGarrell and Professor Eileen Evason for the support, time and commitment they have given to the Complaints Department during 2011-12.