

Paper: PB.28.07.2016/10

NHS ENGLAND – BOARD PAPER

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| Title: NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints Annual Report 2015/16 |
| Lead Director: Karen Wheeler, National Director: TCO |
| Purpose of Paper: The purpose of this paper is to approve the NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints Annual Report 2015/16. |
| The Board is invited to: Approve this report for publication. We will then seek Gateway approval for publication on the NHS England website. |

NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints Annual Report 2015/16

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to approve the NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints Annual Report 2015/16.

Background

2. NHS England is required to publish an annual report on the complaints it receives and its performance in both resolving and responding to them. The report has been published in this format for the last 3 years.
3. In future we propose to include this as part of the annual report, in order to limit the number of separate NHS England publications.

Summary overview

4. The report is a relatively straightforward statement of performance. It reflects that our contact and general enquiries handling performance continues to improve. Customer Contact Centre performance specifically has been good, exceeding targets for General Enquiries and Concerns handling. However, although performance against resolving complaints within 40 days has been broadly consistent in year it is below target, reflecting issues including performance of an external provider, and regional level bottlenecks. We have insourced the function in one region, changed our policy to relieve the bottlenecks, and have recovery plans in place for 2 other regions. We have also commissioned an advisory review by internal audit to assess whether practices and staffing in regional teams are adequate to meet the targets.
5. In 2015/16, we made 3 important changes to our system and processes:
 - We have implemented a new case management system for recording and managing workflow of complaints. This will enable more systematic, consistent and faster handling across the tiers, and enable us to mine the information from complaints and contacts more effectively.
 - We have introduced and are in the process of fully implementing a Quality Framework, for ensuring all complaints are handled consistently and in accordance with good quality standards,
 - And thirdly, as a result of both of the above, we have distinguished and separated reporting of Complaints from “concerns”. This last change has caused a significant change in the numbers of formal complaints and is explained below.
6. When we introduced our new case management system, we also introduced a new case of contact called Concerns. A “concern” is an expression of dissatisfaction which has not been handled as a Complaint, in that it has not been possible to investigate it as a formal complaint. As a result, including them in our complaints performance has not accurately reflected our performance.

At year end, we received our annual collection of complaints data for Primary Care (known as the KO41 (b)) The data included in this report for 2015-16 reflects an accurate position on

complaints received, but is significantly reduced, down by 54%, from previous year's numbers. However, we have handled over 18,000 concerns. Given this is a significant change to numbers and policy for complaints recording and reporting we felt it appropriate to describe this separately.

Recommendation

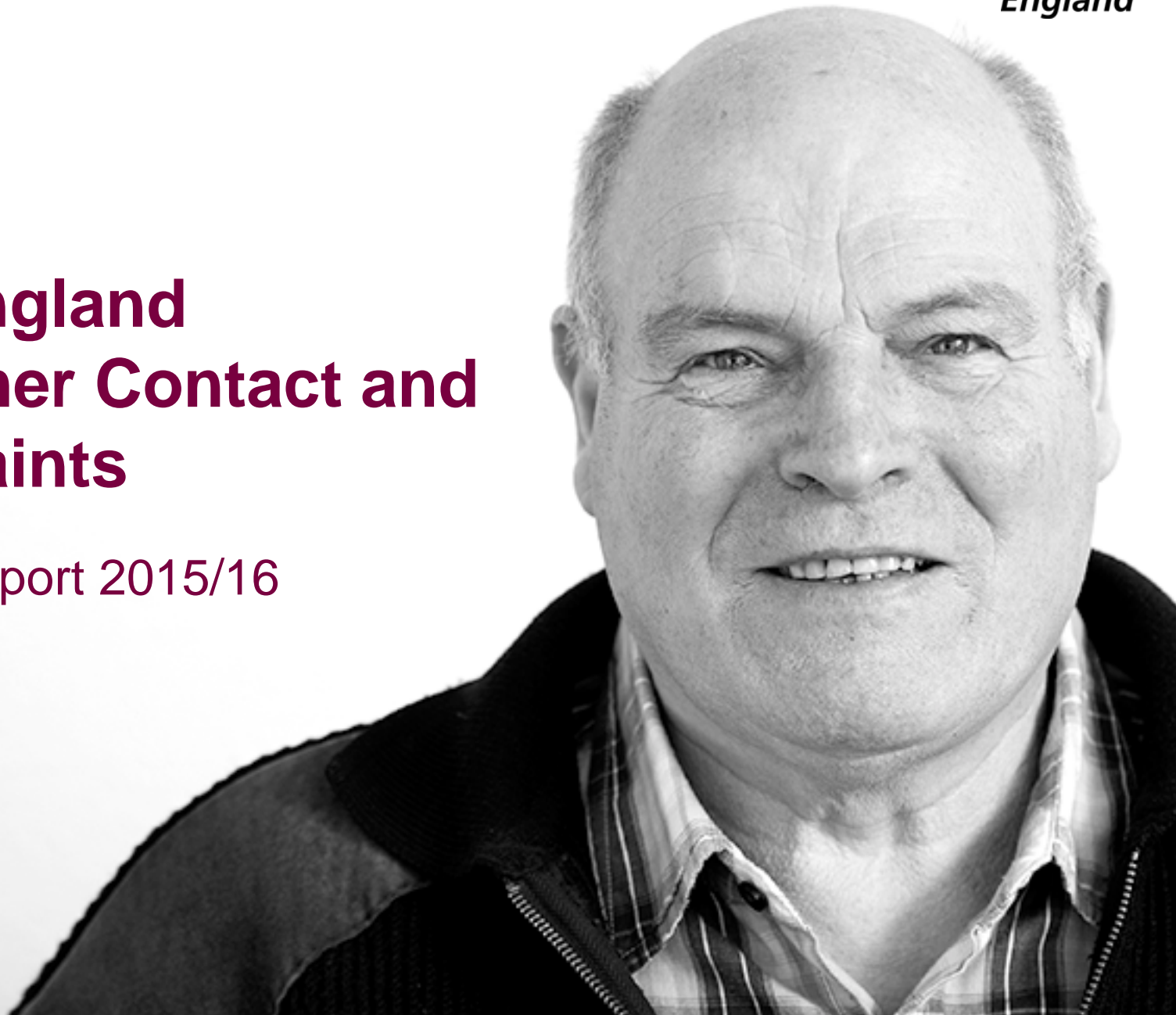
7. Approve this report for publication

Author Karen Wheeler, National Director: TCO
Date: 07/2016

NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints

Annual Report 2015/16

July 2016



Introduction

Our third NHS England Customer Contact and Complaints Annual Report covers activity between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

The report describes our performance and what we are doing to improve the services we provide, and also work to drive up standards of complaints handling in primary care. Internally we have continued to work on improving the quality and consistency of our complaints function, including the publication of a Quality Framework. Our other focus has been embedding a new software system for managing all of our customer contact and complaints.

This new system has allowed us to better understand our data, especially in relation to complaints handling and explains how we have been able to better define the type of customer contact we are handling and to better distinguish between what is deemed a complaint or a concern. This has resulted in a change in the number of complaints we are reporting in this publication and also to the Health and Social Care Information Centre as part of the annual KO41 return.

We also recognise our role in improving complaints handling in primary care. We have therefore published toolkits for complaint handling and also published a report jointly with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch which reviewed the quality of complaints management in primary care. This report made a number of recommendations, including the development of education and training programmes, that we are progressing with a range of key stakeholders.



Summary Overview

- In 2015-16, we received 198,100 contacts, down five percent on the previous year. Of these 111,500 were general enquiries, 24,600 complaints or concerns and 3,200 FOI requests. We answered more calls within 45 seconds and exceeded our target of 95% for resolving general enquiries within 3 working days. Overall customer satisfaction has also improved compared to last year.
- We have restructured , the Contact Centre increased the number of staff answering calls and implemented a new case management system . We have also improved the accessibility of our service to the public with the development of a video British Sign Language service for the deaf and hard of hearing. We expect these measures to improve access and performance further.
- We centralised our function which oversees NHS England complaints which progress to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) in order to ensure a consistent quality of information sharing between NHS England and the PHSO. We are now better able to understand any themes or trends emerging from these complaints.
- We created toolkits for primary care and acute (hospitals) which will help commissioners to improve their complaint handling.



Summary Overview

Complaint and Concerns data

With the introduction of our new case management system a new case type was introduced called “Concerns”. A “concern” is an expression of dissatisfaction which has not been handled as a Complaint, as no investigation was possible. This may be because the patient did not provide their consent to take it forward.

In previous years, our data included complaints which should actually have been transferred into concerns.

The end of year validation process for the KO41 (b) (annual collection of complaints data for Primary care) identified a greater number of “concerns” than anticipated. The data for 2015-16 reflects an accurate position on complaints received according to our clarified definitions. As a result the recorded number of complaints in 2015/16 is over 50% lower than that in 2014/15. However this does not reflect a real reduction; 18,000 “concerns” were also recorded.



Headlines by contact type

General enquiry cases

- We received 111,500 General Enquiries in 2015/16, down from 135,200 (-17.5%) in 2014/15. This reduction is partly due to some enquiries now being classified as 'Concerns'.
- 95.9% of enquiries were resolved within 3 working days, up from 91.4% the previous year.

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests

- 3,200 Freedom of Information requests were received, up from 3,000 in 2014/15. Of these, 2,700 were valid requests.
- We aim to resolve 100% of FOI requests in 20 working days. In 2015/16 88.6% of valid requests were responded to within the target of 20 working days a slight decrease compared to 2014/15 at 90%.

Complaints and Concerns

- We recorded 6,000 complaints in 2015/16. A further 18,500 concerns were received.
- Around 93.9% of complaints were acknowledged within the target 3 days, and 46.4% resolved within the target 40 days**.
- The percentage of concerns resolved within 10 working-days was 70.9%; below the 80% target. The proportion of cases handled by the CCC that were within target was higher at 91.6%.

** During 2015/16 a stricter definition of Complaints was applied. Cases classed as Complaints are only those that were handled through the formal Complaints process. As a result, figures are not comparable with previous years' data.

Key Statistics and KPI performance measures

Key Statistics by Case Type, 2014/15 and 2015/16

| | KPI Target | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | | | | 2015/16 | Change |
|--|------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | 2014/15 - 2015/16 |
| General Enquiries received | | 135,185 | 29,634 | 32,209 | 25,152 | 24,467 | 111,462 | -17.5% |
| % resolved in 3 wkg days | 95% | 91.4% | 97.6% | 94.0% | 95.3% | 96.8% | 95.9% | 4.4% |
| Complaints received ¹ | | 13,061 | 1,316 | 1,451 | 1,493 | 1,704 | 5,964 | -54.3% |
| % acknowledged in 3 wkg days | 100% | 79.2% | 92.2% | 93.9% | 93.6% | 95.5% | 93.9% | 14.7 |
| % resolved in 40 wkg days | 90% | 57.7% | 44.3% | 42.4% | 48.6% | 49.4% | 46.4% | -11.3 |
| Concerns received | | - | 3,685 | 4,484 | 4,742 | 5,605 | 18,516 | - |
| % resolved in 10 wkg days | 80% | - | 70.0% | 72.0% | 70.6% | 70.8% | 70.9% | - |
| <i>of which</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Customer Contact Centre</i> | | - | 95.6% | 90.3% | 90.9% | 90.7% | 91.6% | - |
| <i>Tier 3</i> | | - | 33.7% | 38.3% | 35.6% | 36.1% | 36.0% | - |
| FOI contacts received | | 3,026 | 716 | 745 | 828 | 945 | 3,234 | 6.9% |
| Valid FOI requests ² | | - | 619 | 595 | 701 | 765 | 2,680 | - |
| Valid FOI responded to in 20 wkg days | 100% | - | 83.7% | 89.2% | 92.0% | 89.0% | 88.6% | - |
| Other cases (whistleblowing, SARs etc) | | 1,190 | 377 | 932 | 536 | 510 | 2,355 | 97.9% |
| TOTAL CASES | | 152,462 | 35,728 | 39,821 | 32,751 | 33,231 | 141,531 | -7.2% |

1. Prior to 2015/16, Complaints included cases that would now be classed as Concerns. Year-on-year comparisons are therefore not consistent.

2. Valid FOI cases exclude requests that were not FOI or were not clarified etc. Consistent figures are not available prior to 2015/16.

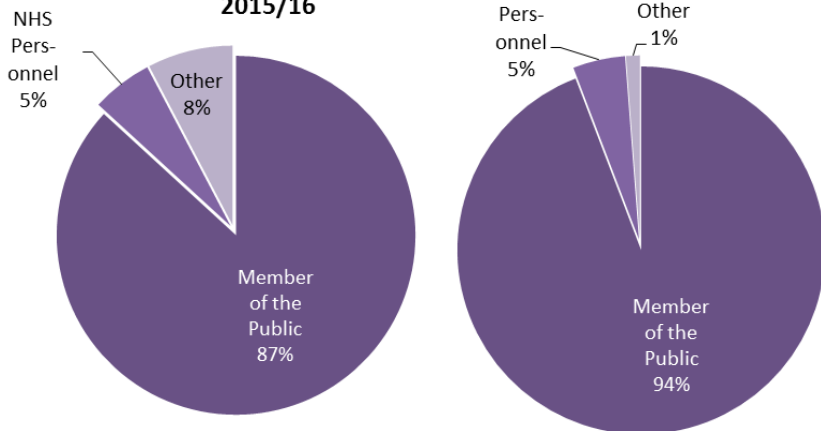
Key Statistics and KPI performance measures

Cases referred to the Ombudsman by outcome and region, 2015/16

| | Upheld | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Discontinued | Total Cases |
|-----------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| North | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Midlands & East | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| South | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| London | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| National | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 34 |

Who contacted us and why?

Contact type, 2014/15 and 2015/16

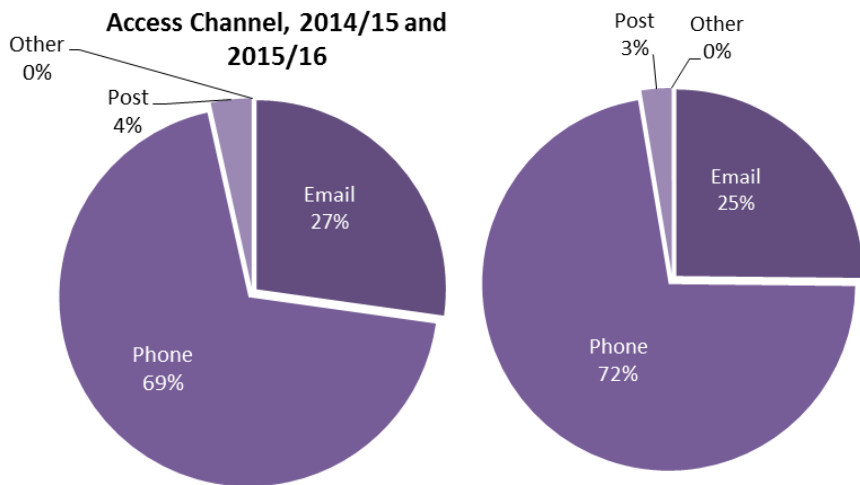


An increasing proportion of contacts came directly from members of the public (94% in 2015/16 compared to 87% in 2014/15).

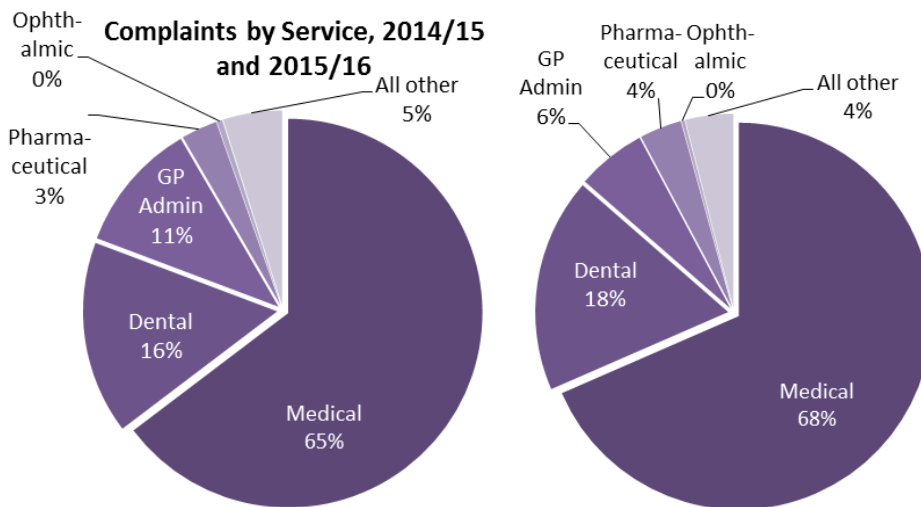
Telephone remained the most popular channel for contacting us (72%), followed by email (25%) and post (3%).

The proportion of complaints about medical services increased from 65% in 2014/15 to 68% in 2015/16. Complaints about dental services increased from 16% to 18% over the same period, while those concerning GP administration fell from 11% to 6%.

Access Channel, 2014/15 and 2015/16



Complaints by Service, 2014/15 and 2015/16



Customer satisfaction

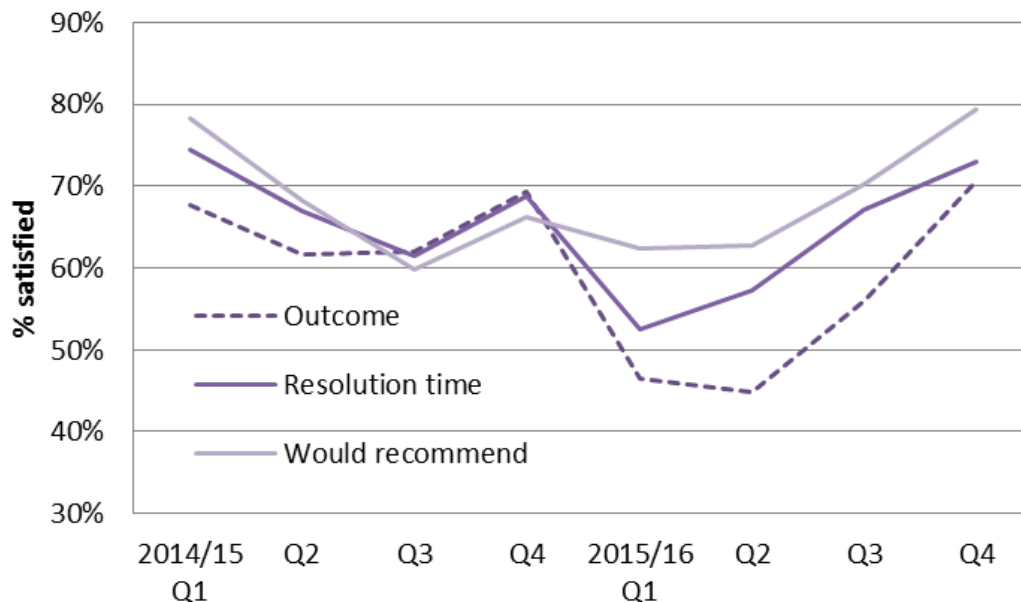
The Customer Contact Centre conducts an ongoing satisfaction survey among a sample of our customers. Customers are asked about their experience of using the service. In 2015/16 we interviewed 3,659 people about their experience.

After a sharp fall in Q1 of 2015/16, satisfaction with the outcome of cases recovered throughout 2015/16. The average figure for 2015/16 was 57%, although in Q4 satisfaction stood at 71%.

Satisfaction with the length of time taken to resolve cases also fell in Q1 (53%), but this also recovered throughout the year to stand at 73% in Q4. The annual average was 64%.

As an overall measure of satisfaction with the service, customers are asked whether or not they would recommend it to friends or family with a similar issue. Again, satisfaction increased throughout the year, from 62% in Q1 to 79% in Q4. The annual average was 70%.

Key Customer Satisfaction Measures, 2014/15 - 2015/16



Appendix 1:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report:

<http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/reports-and-consultations/reports/health/an-opportunity-to-improve>

Complaints toolkits:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/resources/resources-for-ccgs/#complaints>