



**NHS Borders Feedback and Complaints
Annual Report 2013-14**

Introduction

This annual report provides a summary of feedback provided through any complaints, comments, concerns and commendations NHS Borders received between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014. The report also includes a summary of the lessons learnt and improvements made. Included within this report is information on feedback and complaints that have been received by other health service providers, such as GPs, pharmacists and opticians that provide services to patients in the Scottish Borders. The report also details a summary of the approaches being taken to proactively gather feedback to inform and develop local services.

Encouraging and Gathering Feedback

NHS Borders gathers patient feedback in many ways; this includes but is not limited to:

- Correspondence received by the Feedback and Complaints Team
- Patient feedback provided by other organisations
- Online feedback through Patient Opinion www.patientopinion.co.uk
- Feedback in the local press
- Suggestion boxes
- Public Involvement Groups
- Better Together National patient experience surveys
- Person Centred Care Collaborative through
 - local patient experience surveys
 - feedback provided to staff during care and treatment
 - preparation of digital, video and face to face stories

NHS Borders welcomes and encourages feedback from patients, carers and family members about the services we provide. Based on the feedback we received in 2013/14 we know that most patients, most of the time, are happy with the care and treatment provided by NHS Borders. However, sometimes this care and treatment falls short of the high standards we expect. When this happens it is very important that we hear about it so we can learn from any mistakes made and improve the way we do things in the future.

NHS Borders is committed to handling feedback and complaints in an honest, open and transparent way. We welcomed the introduction of the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act (2011) that gives every patient the right to provide feedback or make a complaint and are given the support they need to do this.

During 2013/14 the Complaints Team was renamed the Feedback and Complaints Team based on feedback from patients and staff. This dedicated central Feedback

and Complaints Team will support patients to provide feedback and make a complaint. This provides a single point of contact and offers ease of access and a level of consistency for the patient or member of the public. During 2013/14, following feedback from patients, improvements have been made to the feedback and complaints section of NHS Borders website. One of the improvements is the introduction of an online form that allows patients to provide feedback electronically via www.patientopinion.org.uk

Providing Feedback or Making a Complaint

You can provide feedback to any member of staff who will be happy to help you. Alternatively you can contact:

Feedback and Complaints Team
NHS Borders
Borders General Hospital
Melrose TD6 9BS
01896 826719
complaints.clingov@borders.scot.nhs.uk
www.nhsborders.org.uk/complaints-and-feedback

We also encourage patients to provide feedback online at www.patientopinion.org.uk

To support patients to provide feedback we have established a Patient Advice and Support Service that is delivered by the Scottish Borders Citizens Advice Bureau. The service is independent and provides free, confidential information, advice and support to anyone who uses the NHS in Scotland. The service promotes an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients. It also advises and supports people who wish to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make a complaint about treatment and care provided by the NHS in Scotland.

Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS)
Peebles & District Citizens Advice Bureau
Chambers Institution
High Street,
Peebles
EH45 8AG
01721 721722
manager@peeblecab.casonline.org.uk

As well as learning from feedback and complaints NHS Borders involves the public in the design and planning of services. NHS Borders believes that involving patients, carers and the public is a very important part of improving the quality of the services it provides. There are a number of public/patient involvement groups which provide

the opportunity for people to give their views and feedback on local NHS services. We value this because it makes our services more efficient and responsive to local need, and it helps us to prioritise services and make best use of the available resources. Feedback and Complaints are routinely discussed as part of the agenda of the standing public involvement groups. This provides an opportunity for the public members to learn about feedback and complaints and make suggestions on how to improve the process and encourage more patients to provide feedback.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved please contact:

Public Involvement Team
NHS Borders
Borders General Hospital
Melrose TD6 9BS
0800 7314052
publicinvolvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk

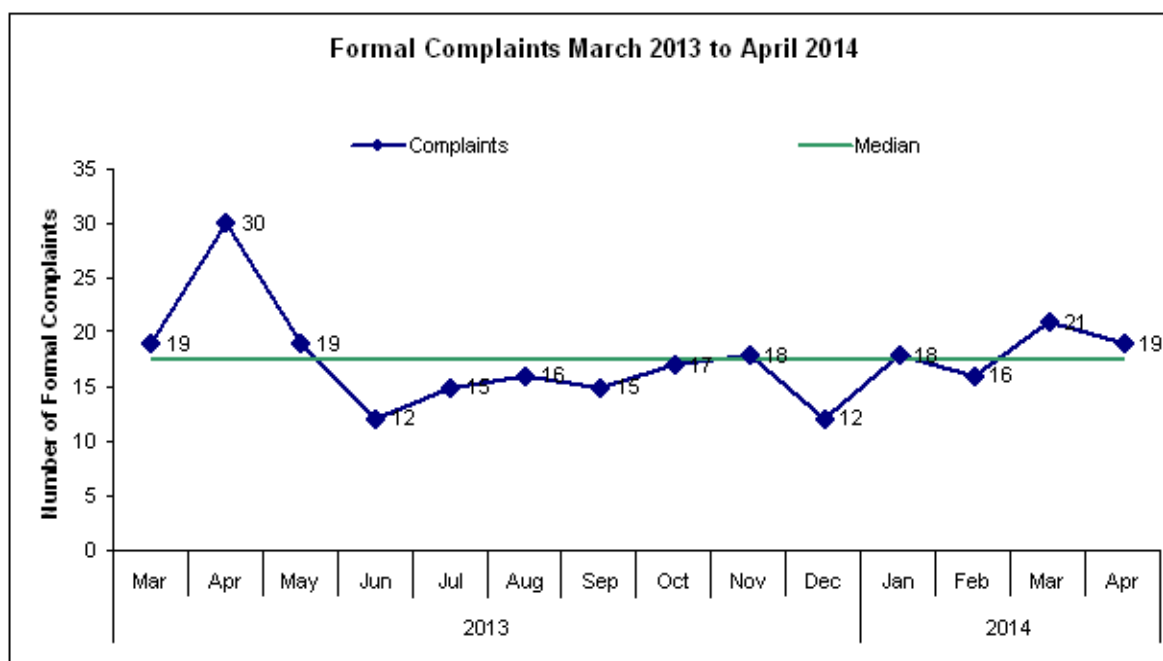
NHS Borders continues to support the provision of independent advocacy provided by Borders Independent Advocacy Service. The free confidential service supports people to be heard, access services and raise concerns. NHS Borders has funded a dedicated hospital based advocacy service. To find out more about this service contact:

Borders Independent Advocacy Service
Low Buckholmside
Galashiels
TD1 1RT
01896 752200
info@bordersadvocacy.org.uk

Complaint Handling and Improvements

NHS Borders takes complaints very seriously. During 2013/14 we have made improvements to the way complaints are handled by supporting staff to manage complaints within the service area where they are made. We have also improved our response rate. From the 210 complaints received in 2013/14 95% were acknowledged within 3 working days. Of these complaints received 91% were responded to within 20 working days, an improvement when compared with 84% in 2012/13. Of the 9% of complaints received in 2013/14 which did not receive a response with 20 working days, the majority were due to the complexity of the complaint, for example, where a complaint requires input from other health providers, is linked to an adverse event or requires external review.

Graph 1 shows the monthly number of formal complaints received between April 2013 and March 2014:



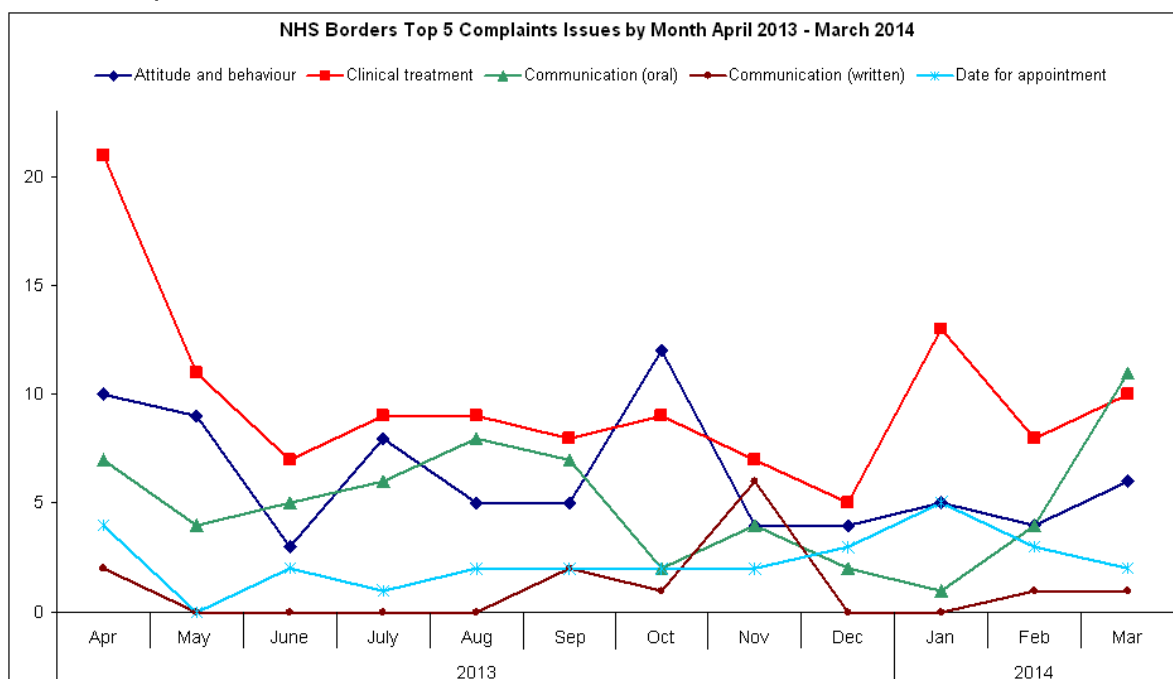
During 2013/14 within the NHS Borders area, independent contractors used alternative dispute resolution on four occasions. During this period we worked with the Scottish Mediation Network to host an awareness raising training session with operational and senior managers to ensure that they understood how and when to access independent mediators to help resolve complaints.

Each NHS Borders Clinical Board (Acute, Mental Health, Primary and Community Services and Learning Disabilities) has a clinical governance group which reviews complaint themes and tracks improvement actions. Members of the Clinical Board management teams are responsible for liaising directly with staff involved in complaints and concerns to reflect on practice and identify any learning which can be used to make improvements. This often involves meeting directly with complainants to listen to their experiences.

People who make a complaint are supported to be involved in the process. This is assessed on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the complaint and the level of involvement the complainant is comfortable with.

Complaints Themes and Improvements

Graph 2 outlines the five top themes emerging from the complaints received between April 2013 and March 2014.

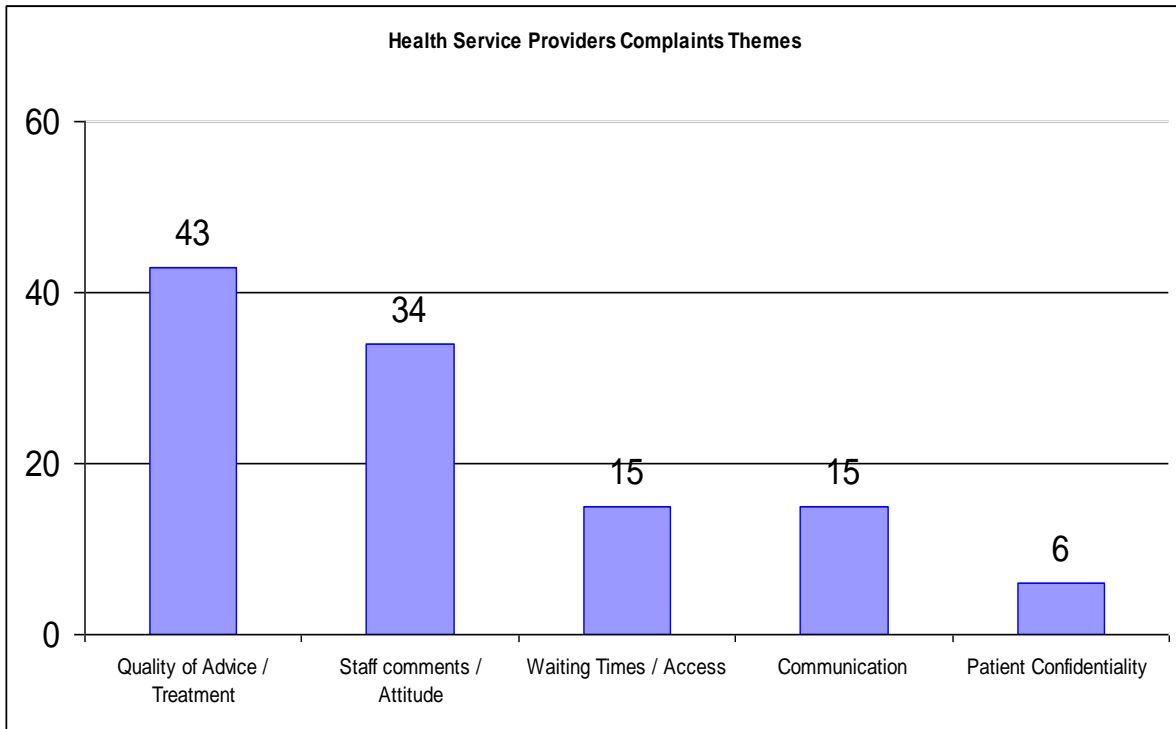


Health Service Providers Complaints

Table 1 below outlines the number of complaints received, the response rate and the number of times alternative dispute resolution was used by Health Service Providers operating in the Scottish Borders between April 2013 and March 2014.

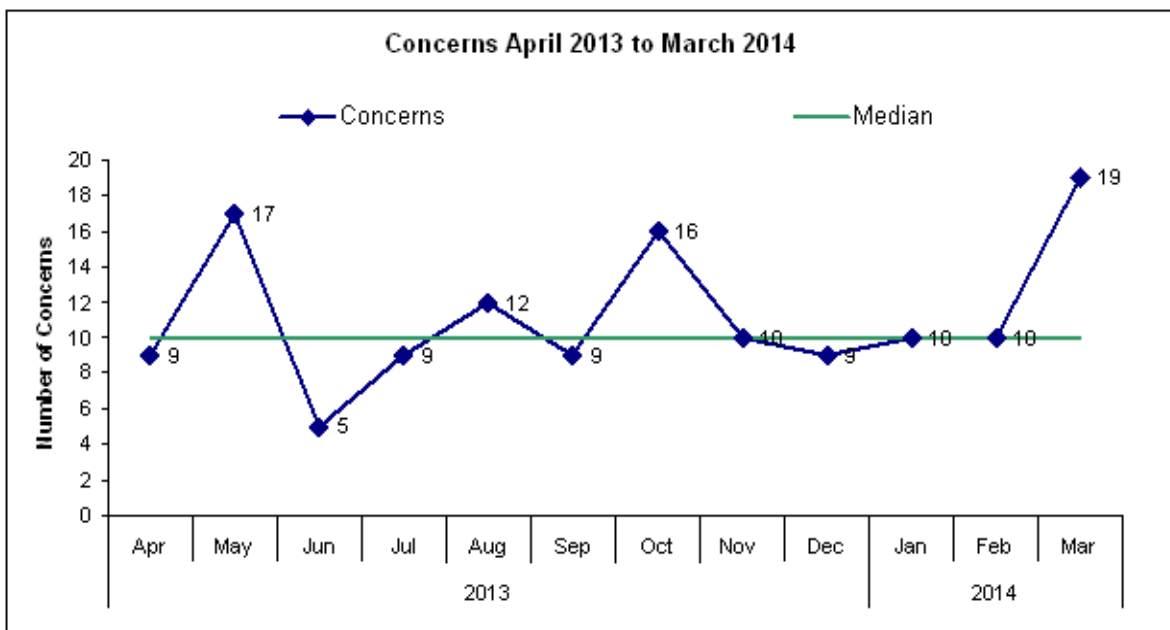
	GP	Dentist	Pharmacist	Optician
No. of Complaints received	113	2	35	5
No. of Complaints responded to within 20 working days	94	1	20	5
No. of Complaints where alternative dispute resolution used	3	1	0	0

Graph 3 outlines the five top themes emerging from the complaints received by Health Service Providers operating in the Scottish Borders between April 2013 and March 2014.



Comments and Concerns

During 2013/14 135 concerns were received by the Feedback and Complaints Team as detailed in Graph 4 below:



NHS Borders also maintains a close overview of all cases accepted by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) as a measure of the effectiveness of our

complaints response. Graph 5 below outlines the referrals accepted by the SPSO between April 2013 and March 2014:

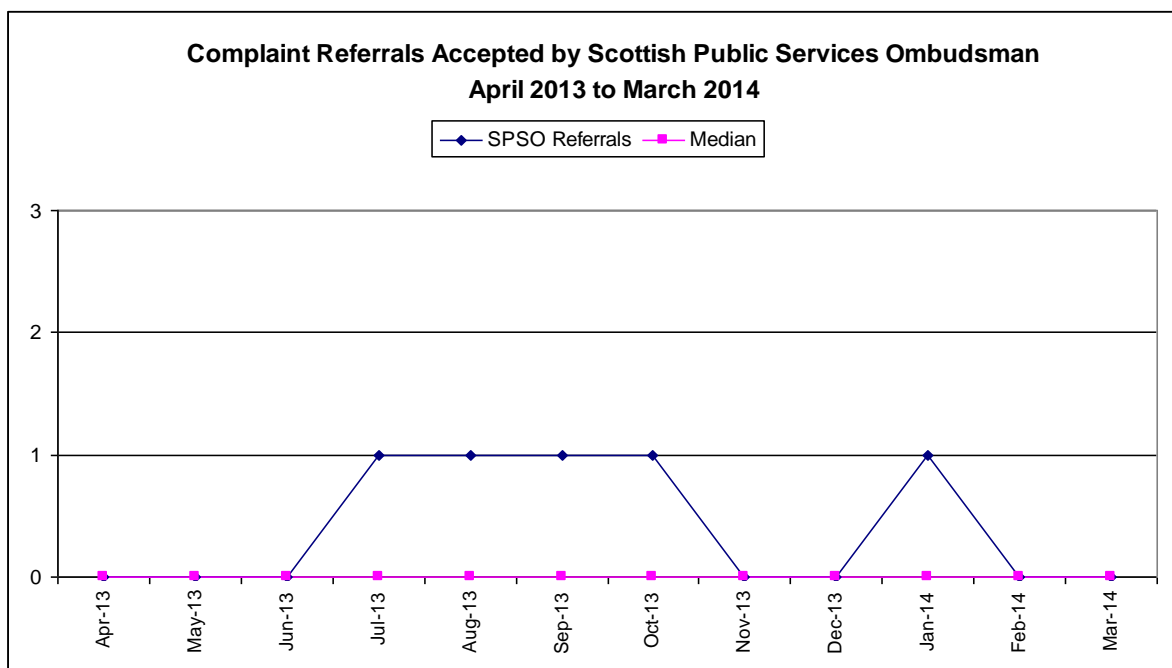


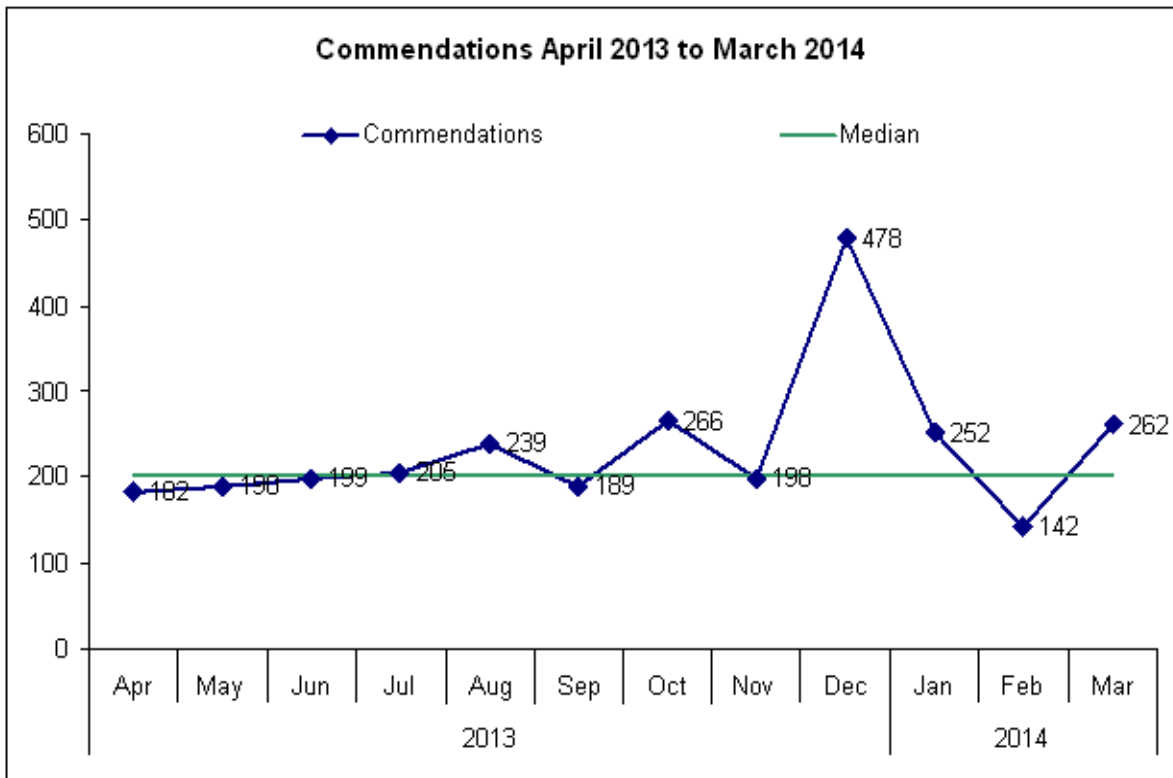
Table 2 below details the outcomes of the five cases accepted by the SPSO between April 2013 and March 2014:

Upheld	Not Upheld	Not Investigated	Ongoing Investigation
0	2	1	2

In one case that was not upheld the SPSO made a recommendation for NHS Borders to: “remind the medical staff involved in the patient's care and treatment that consideration should be given to the use of the Board's Interpretation and Translation Guidelines where a patient's first language is not English”.

Commendations

During 2013-14 NHS Borders received a total of 2802 commendations as detailed in Graph 6 below:



Patient surveys and questionnaires and feedback methods are routinely used across NHS Borders to inform improvements. Examples include:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service have set up a survey to gather the views of the children and young people receiving services and those that have been discharged. The results are routinely shared with staff and are used to improve the way the service is delivered.
- The Intensive Therapy Unit in the Borders General Hospital, have developed a questionnaire for patients and a separate one for their carers. The results are considered by their staff team and routinely displayed on the notice board on their ward.
- Ward 5 of the Borders General Hospital (Coronary Care Unit) undertakes patient satisfaction surveys.
- General Medical Council Revalidation patient surveys are systematically gathered and considered as part of the appraisal process for doctors.

In addition to the local surveys NHS Borders uses the results of the National Better Together Surveys to improve services. For example in 2013/14, the Borders General Hospital Participation Group continued to work with hospital management with a continued focus on improving awareness of the nurse in charge in each ward and reducing noise at night.

Culture and using Feedback and Complaints to inform Improvements

NHS Borders encourages a culture of openness and uses feedback and complaints to improve services. Patient feedback along with other sources of information is routinely used to inform service improvements and although it is not always possible to attribute all improvements to patient feedback, the following are examples of improvements that have been made in response to patient concerns, feedback and complaints:

- Orthopaedic Service changed the way clinic appointments are booked to reduce waiting times.
- Amended patient correspondence in Dental and Surgical Services to make the information clearer to patients and carers.
- Product availability on wards has been examined to improve access to the most appropriate continence products.
- A new, more accessible website has been developed so that patients and carers can leave feedback or make a complaint; this includes a link to Patient Opinion.
- Increased publicity of how to provide feedback or make a complaint.
- Reviewed the process and made improvements in the timeliness of diagnostic pathways for autism.
- Mental Health Crisis Team has improved the patients' understanding of their assessment by involving them in writing their care plan and providing them with a copy of the plan.
- Improved process for clinical checking of blood and imaging results in the Emergency Department.
- Improved availability of specialist nursing staff for the Out of Hours Service who can undertake patient assessment and treatment particularly for patients with palliative care needs.
- Visible and personalised notice boards are used in the Stroke Unit to ensure continuity of care and the sharing of important patient information.

In 2013/14 NHS Borders has developed a series of patient stories. We have found these stories are a powerful learning tool for improving patient experience. The stories give patients and carers a chance to reflect on their experience in a person-centred way. NHS Borders gathers patient and carer stories from a number of sources including complaint letters, commendations, online feedback forums, third sector partners and from staff. NHS Borders has also produced a series of patient and carer video stories. Patient stories are used to support organisational learning.

As well as sharing individual patient stories as a learning tool, data on complaints, concerns and commendations are routinely provided to all wards and departments as part of their quality dashboards. This data is used by teams to discuss improvements and also displayed for others to see.

A significant change we have implemented in 2013/14 is that the drafting of complaint and feedback responses is now done by the service managers for the area where it relates to. This has helped encourage local ownership and early resolution. The Feedback and Complaints Team support service managers to review the investigation findings and response and provide bespoke 1-1 support to help ensure high quality, timely and person centred responses.

For all complaints responded to, an assessment is made as to whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld. Where a complaint is either upheld or partly upheld the relevant services agree an improvement plan that is monitored by their clinical governance group. During 2013/14 all complaint and feedback responses handled centrally were reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive, or a depute, before being issued.

As well as providing one to one support to service managers, the Feedback and Complaints Team also provide training on feedback and complaints handling to professional staff groups, for example, providing a training session for dentists and a drop in training session for Allied Health Professionals. Feedback and Complaints is also covered as part of NHS Borders Corporate induction training.

NHS Borders has welcomed the Can I Help You? guidance and the NHS Education Scotland and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman e-learning modules on Feedback, Comments, Concerns and Complaints. The training has been promoted via learnPro and during 2013/14 74 NHS Borders staff completed the online modules and we will continue to encourage staff to complete them.

The Feedback and Complaints Team support staff to value feedback and complaints and to address it at the earliest possible point. The Team tries tirelessly to resolve issues in a timely manner to increase patient satisfaction and avoid escalation of problems that can be resolved. One potential complainant commented:

“I am really glad I decided to contact you for advice on how to proceed and to deal with someone who is prepared to follow up potential problems immediately and thereby hopefully preventing the problem escalating.”

Accountability and Governance

Weekly updates on feedback and complaints are shared across all NHS Borders services. A local quality dashboard for each clinical area is shared on a monthly basis. The quality dashboard uses a range of measures including falls, adverse events, infection rates and staff absence rates to identify areas for improvement. These indicators also form part of the Board and Operational scorecards and present

data over time to aid the identification of variation and to enable an assessment of improvement efforts.

A patient feedback report is provided at each NHS Borders Board and Board Clinical Governance Committee meeting that covers feedback from complaints, concerns, commendations and the Patient Opinion website, details complaint themes, information on the timeliness of responses, referrals accepted and outcomes from SPSO cases and any service improvements.

At each of NHS Borders Boards' Strategy and Performance Committee meetings a patient story is presented. This ensures that Board members hear directly about the experiences of patients to drive improvements in the organisation.

Future Developments

NHS Borders takes feedback and complaints very seriously; this is reflected in our performance and improvements we have made in 2013/14. However, there is always room for improvement and we have identified the following improvements for 2014/15:

- To introduce a system that will evaluate people's experience of providing feedback or making a complaint to help inform improvements to the process.
- To continue to develop new ways of gathering feedback, in particular to increase the use of social media.
- Promote Patient Opinion website to see how this resource can be used within NHS Borders to increase patient feedback and improve our services.
- To continue to build the link between the feedback, complaints and adverse events processes to ensure a cycle of learning is developed, and to enhance the support for patients and families during an adverse event or complaints review process.
- Include a core question in all patient feedback questionnaires/surveys undertaken across NHS Borders to build an improved understanding of overall patient satisfaction.
- Expand the role of volunteers in obtaining patient feedback both on the wards and through their involvement in the Leadership Walkround system.
- Continue to develop the use of data to drive improvement through the ward quality dashboards and an improved patient information display in clinical areas.
- To continue to produce patient stories as a way of raising the profile of the experience of patients and carers, and for use as a learning tool.

We would welcome your feedback on this annual report. If you would like to provide feedback or need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact;

Feedback and Complaints Team
NHS Borders
Borders General Hospital
Melrose TD6 9BS
01896 826719
complaints.clingov@borders.scot.nhs.uk
www.nhsborders.org.uk/complaints-and-feedback