



**NHS Borders Complaints and Feedback  
Annual Report 2012 – 2013**

## Introduction

This annual report provides a summary of feedback provided through any complaints, comments, concerns and commendations NHS Borders received between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. The report also includes a summary of the lessons learnt and improvements made. Included within this report is information on complaints and feedback 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.

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

- Correspondence received by the Complaints and Feedback Team
- Patient feedback provided by other organisations
- Online feedback through Patient Opinion [www.patientopinion.co.uk](http://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 and about the services we provide. Based on the feedback we received in 2012/13, 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 patients are entitled to. 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.

## **Making a Complaint and Providing Feedback**

NHS Borders is committed to handling complaints and feedback 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.

NHS Borders has a dedicated Complaints and Feedback Team that will support patients to provide feedback and make a complaint. You can also provide feedback to any member of staff who will be happy to help you. More information on providing feedback or making a complaint about the services provided by the NHS in Scotland can be found at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00407731.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00407731.pdf) . If you would like a hard copy of this resource, or support with making a complaint or providing feedback please get in touch:

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

We also encourage patients to provide feedback online at [www.patientopinion.org.uk](http://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 Citizens Advice Bureau  
40 – 42 Old Town  
Peebles EH45 8JF  
Telephone: 01721 721722  
[manager@peeblescab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:manager@peeblescab.casonline.org.uk)

As well as learning from complaints and feedback, 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 provides 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, it helps us to prioritise services and make best use of the available resources. 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](mailto:publicinvolvement@borders.scot.nhs.uk)

## **Complaints**

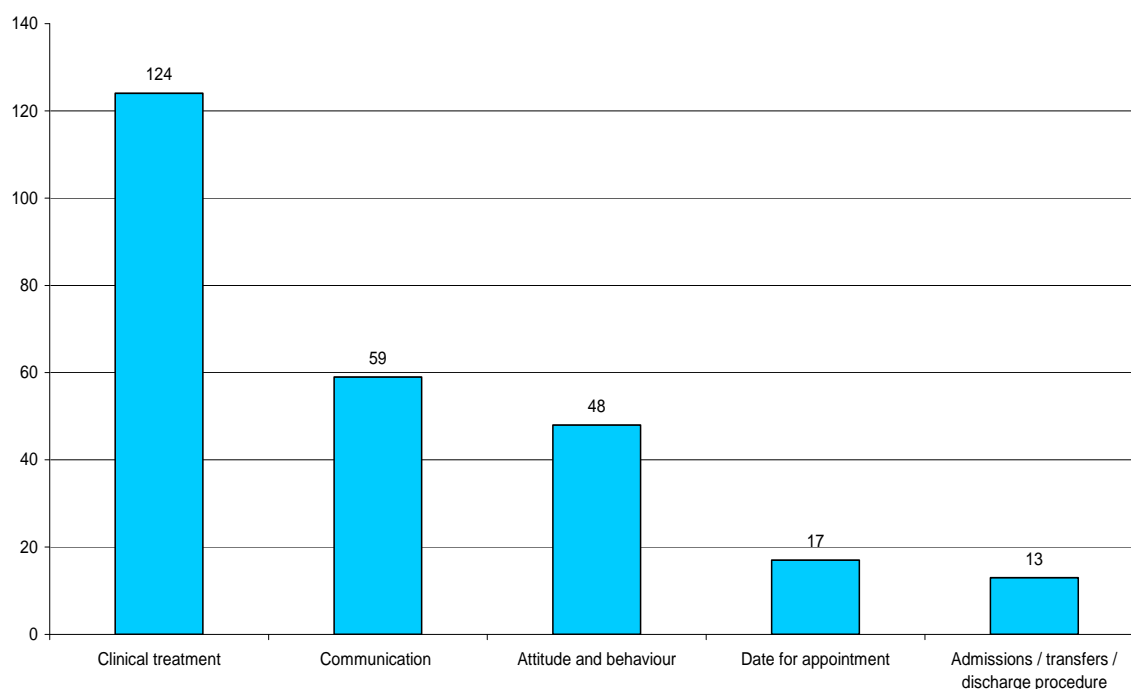
NHS Borders takes complaints very seriously. During 2012/13 we have made improvements to the way complaints are handled by supporting staff to manage complaints within the service area where they are made. We have also improved our response rate. From the 179 complaints received in 2012/13 98% were acknowledged within 3 working days. Of these complaints received 84% were responded to within 20 working days, an improvement when compared with 63.2% in 2011/12. Of the 16% of complaints received in 2012/13 which did not receive a response with 20 working days, the majority were due to complex cases requiring detailed analysis. We however, remain committed to making further improvements in our response rate over the coming year.

During 2012/13, NHS Borders did not access any alternative dispute resolution to provide mediation between the complainant and the service.

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.

## Complaints Themes and Improvements

NHS Borders Total Number of Complaints for Top 5 Themes 2012-13



The above graph identifies the five top themes emerging from the complaints received between April 2012 and March 2013.

When any aspect of a complaint is upheld the service identifies what improvements are needed. As part of the learning from complaints NHS Borders have made the following improvements:

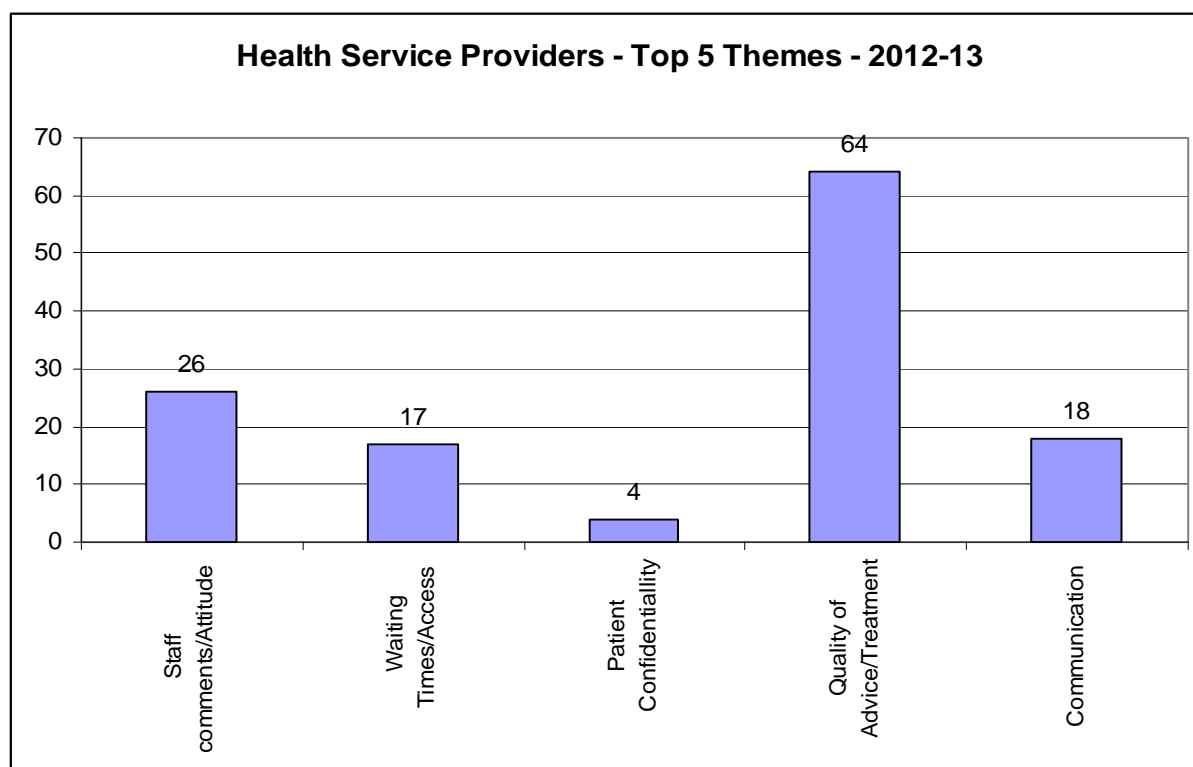
- A proposal has been developed to trial a service to provide self-propelling wheelchairs for patients to use during their stay in hospital.
- Guidance on sharing information with patients or family members has been developed for staff.
- A training session has been held for all medical and nursing staff in the Emergency Department to improve the recording and understanding of details in patients' records.
- A pilot has been initiated of a new patient transfer document to improve communication with patient's next of kin.

- To support staff who prescribe medication, an amended drug prescribing protocol has been developed highlighting practice requirements relating to consultation and patient information.
- A process has been introduced to ensure relevant staff and patients are promptly advised when a decision has been taken to cancel surgery.

### Health Service Providers Complaints

	GP	Dentist	Pharmacist	Optician
No. of Complaints received	113	0	38	3
No. of Complaints responded to within 20 working days	81	0	15	3
No. of Complaints where alternative dispute resolution used	4	0	0	0

Of the complaints themes, the top 5 were:



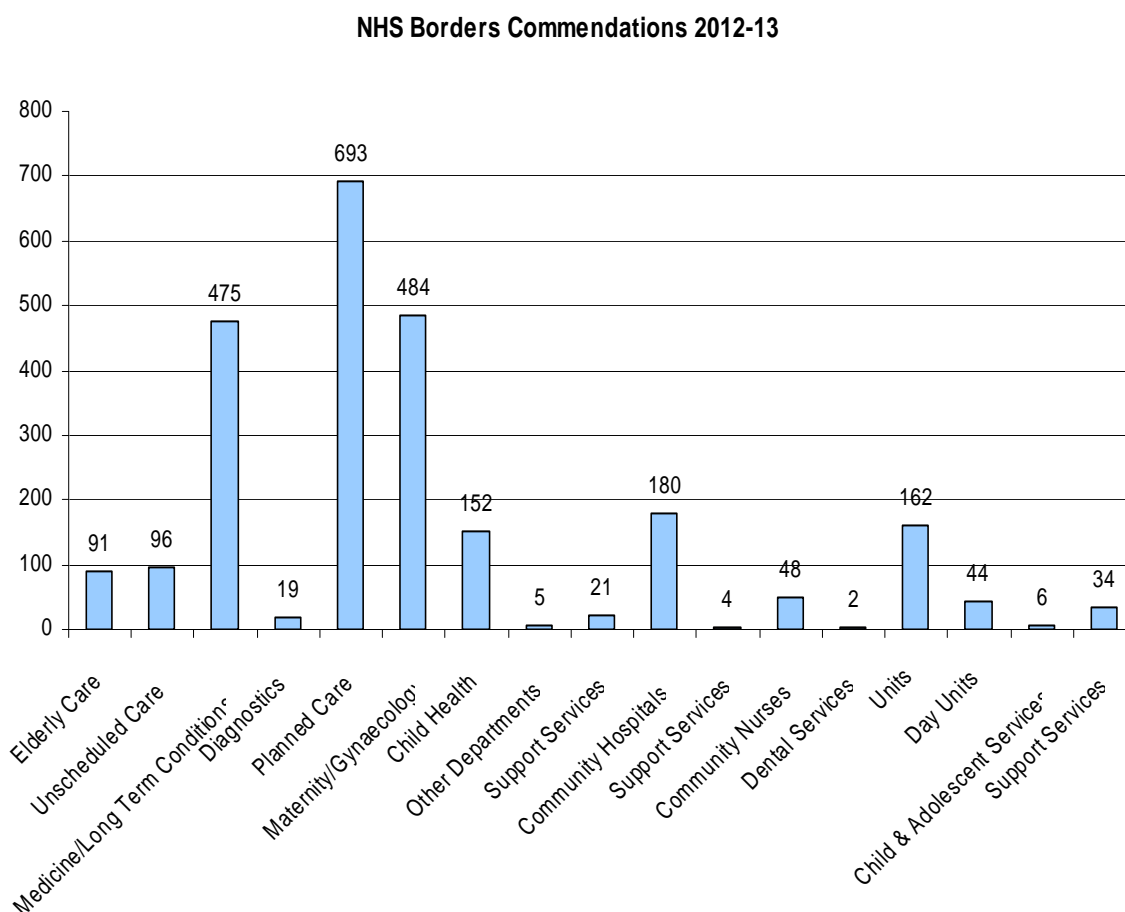
## Comments and Concerns

During 2012/13 65 concerns were received and as part of the learning from concerns and other feedback the following improvements have been made:

- Revisions have been made to the patient's lunchtime menu to reintroduce soup following feedback from patients and dieticians in January 2013.
- Changes have been implemented to the automated patient reminder system:
  - Telephone calls from the system now show a local telephone number instead of the number being withheld.
  - The security question has been changed from asking patient's date of birth to year of birth.
- Improvements in communication have been made between NHS Borders and NHS Lothian, when the patient's treatment is managed across both NHS Boards. The improvement work we have undertaken is:
  - An agreed communication pathways with staff in both NHS Borders and NHS Lothian and reinforced the importance of good communication.
  - A review of our computer tracking database with the aim of allowing all patients with cancer to be monitored to the end of their treatment.

## Commendations

During 2012-13 NHS Borders received a total of 2008 commendations. The following graph illustrates commendations by service area:



## Patient Surveys

NHS Borders undertakes patient surveys to help identify improvements. Examples of current surveys include:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service have set up a survey to gather the views of the children and young people and their carers. The staff use the results of this survey to determine how services can be delivered in a more effective way.
- A survey of patients admitted to Huntlyburn Mental Health ward, and their carers, has been running since 2003. Once a month, questionnaires are posted to patients and carers who were discharged from Huntlyburn the previous month. In 2012 the questionnaire was redesigned to ensure it was



still relevant and up-to-date. The feedback gathered is reviewed by the staff to improve their services.

- Patient interviews at discharge have started in 2013 with the aim of gaining feedback from inpatients at the Borders General Hospital. The nursing staff in the Discharge Lounge interview patients about various aspects of their stay in hospital, such as whether they felt they were treated with dignity and respect, whether their pain was controlled, or whether they were ever disturbed by noise at night. The information gathered from the interviews is then used to identify any improvements that may be required.
- A survey examining the experience of patients and their families in relation to the care they received while in the Intensive Care Unit has been developed to gather patient satisfaction levels and inform improvements.

In addition to the local surveys NHS Borders uses the results of the National Better Together Surveys to improve services. For example, the Borders General Hospital Participation Group identified that patients found it hard to identify who was in charge of the wards. In response the group worked with nursing and management staff to introduce a “nurse in charge” badge that the nurse in charge of the ward at any time now wears to help patients and carers know who is in charge in the wards.

## **Patient Stories**

Borders NHS Board members also take a proactive approach to patient feedback using a digital, video or face to face story at each meeting. Video stories are being developed to be used in reflective learning with staff. If you would like to get involved in this work please contact the Complaints and Feedback Team.

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;

Complaints and Feedback Team

NHS Borders

Borders General Hospital

Melrose TD6 9BS

01896 826719

[complaints.clingov@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints.clingov@borders.scot.nhs.uk)

[www.nhsborders.org.uk/complaints-and-feedback](http://www.nhsborders.org.uk/complaints-and-feedback)