

Complaints annual report 2019/20

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1. Summary

This report provides information on complaints received by NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS Kernow) during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. It complies with Complaints Regulations which state that the organisation should specify the number of complaints received, those which were well founded and those which were referred to the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

In addition it sets out the learning from complaints made during the period and identifies trends and themes in complaints.

2. Complaints received

There were a total of 35 complaints received by NHS Kernow during 2019/20 regarding its services, this is the same as 2018/19. The following table gives an overview of complaints broken down into areas of business.

Complaints received	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Continuing healthcare (including personal health budgets)	5	9	2	4	20
Referral management	1	1	-	1	3
Planned care	1	-	2	1	3
Children's	-	1	-	1	2
Clinical governance	1	-	-	-	1
IFR	1	-	-	-	1
Corporate governance	1	-	-	-	1
Finance	1	-	-	-	1
Mental health	-	1			1
Prescribing	-	-	1	-	1
Total	11	12	5	7	35

The average length of time taken to respond to complaints in the year 2019/20 was 24 working days. The policy timescale for a response is 25 working days, however the policy does allow for extensions to these timescales with the agreement of complainants. Additionally, this year the complaints manager has encouraged the use of local resolution meetings. Whilst this adds to the timescale for responding to complaints, it does result in a better understanding of both the complainant's point of view and the organisations response. The complaints team keeps complainants informed of the progress of their complaint and communicates with complainants the reasons for any extension to the timescales. It should be noted that the national guidance allows six months for a response to a complaint.

During the year there were three complaints withdrawn by complainants; this was due to colleagues responding to the issues raised in a timely and appropriate manner to resolve the issues raised by the individual to their satisfaction.

Of the complaints received by NHS Kernow three were fully upheld, 13 were partially upheld and 16 were not upheld and three complaints were withdrawn. At the time of writing there are no complaints in investigation from 2019/2020.

3. Themes and actions arising regarding complaints

Of the 35 complaints received 20 were regarding continuing healthcare. Throughout these complaints one of the consistent themes has been communication. The team manager is aware of this and there are actions in place to improve communication with individuals and their families. These actions include the further training of staff, and using the experience of some complainants in order to allow for further understanding for colleagues.

Some of the other actions which have been identified as a result of the complaints process:

- Further development for staff around handling personal information, a number of individuals have been asked by line managers to repeat data protection training.
- Independent case reviews, where appropriate.
- Update of guidance to providers from Referral Management Service regarding sifting of some referrals to allow for appropriate appointments to be made.
- Improving of recording of relatives input in decision support tools.
- Making interim arrangements for individuals who have had a poor or delayed service.
- Improvements to wheelchair service referral and communications.

NHS Kernow's complaints team also deals with informal complaints, or enquiries. Here we take the opportunity to work with the individual to try to resolve their enquiry or issue at the earliest possible opportunity, there were 78 such enquiries in the reporting year, some of these individuals contact us on a number of occasions through the year.

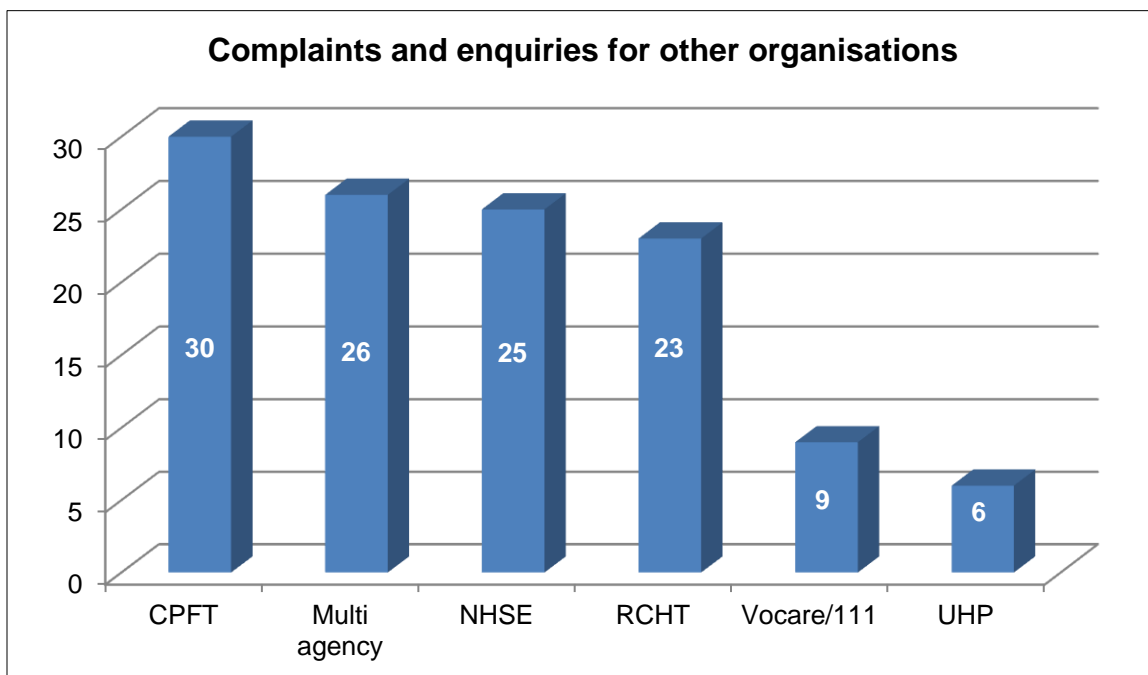
4. Enquiries and complaints for other organisations

As part of its commissioning role NHS Kernow also receives enquiries and complaints regarding other organisations.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Enquiries for NHS Kernow	16	17	32	13
Enquiries or complaints for other organisations	45	13	12	31

NHS Kernow does not investigate complaints on behalf of provider organisations, as it is the right and responsibility of all NHS providers to handle their own complaints. However, when NHS Kernow is contacted by an individual regarding another organisation the complaints manager will support them in accessing the appropriate complaints process and at times can de-escalate complaints by offering appropriate advice or information to the individual.

The enquiries and complaints for other organisations can be broken down as follows; please note this chart only includes organisations where there were greater than five contacts for the reporting year.



5. Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman

Complainants who remain dissatisfied following the local resolution of their complaint are able to seek an independent investigation and review of their complaint from the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

Three complainants referred their concerns to the PHSO for further investigation during the reporting year.

During the 12 months the PHSO closed one case. This case was closed after the Ombudsman's initial enquiries with no action for NHS Kernow to take.

6. Impact of COVID-19

On the 23 March 2020 NHS England agreed that the complaints process could be paused nationally for three months in response to COVID-19, this was in order that the NHS could focus on the response to COVID-19. NHS Kernow considered this and it was agreed this would be only implemented where required.

There have been two complaints which were delayed due to investigating officers being re-focused on COVID-19 priorities. The complainants were informed and were satisfied that the delay was unavoidable.

It should be noted that during the period of the pause, NHS Kernow has received considerably fewer complaints.