

King's College Hospital



NHS Foundation Trust



Patient Complaints Annual Report 2014/15

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Executive Summary

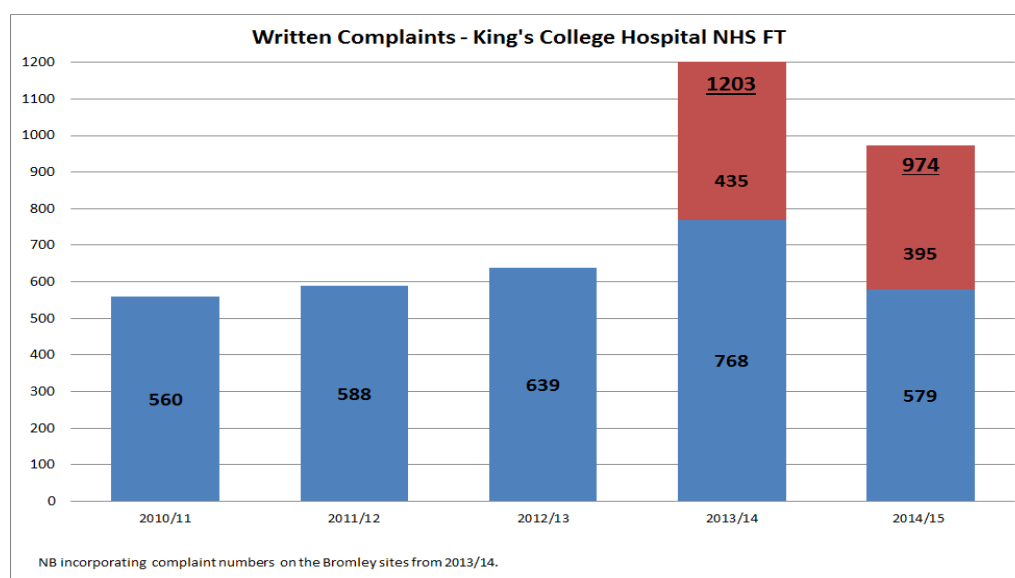
This report provides a summary of patient complaints received between April 14 and March 2015. It includes details of numbers of complaints received during the year – both for the Denmark Hill and Bromley sites, performance in responding to complaints, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman investigations, and actions taken by the Trust in response to complaints.

During the year, the Trust's Serious Complaints Committee, chaired by a Non-Executive Director, has continued to review and assess the effectiveness of our complaint handling, with an emphasis on improving the patient's experience of the complaints process, including the quality and timeliness of responses. A complaint project, led by the Associate Director of Operational Performance, set out an action plan to address improving turnaround times in responding to complaints, which included delivering training to key staff involved in the process and ensuring trust wide learning from complaints. The Serious Complaints Committee has monitored the progress against the action plan and at each committee a Division has been invited to present a case study.

Patient experience reports provide integrated monthly data on complaints, PALS contacts, HWRD survey results and the Friends and Family test survey. A complaint and/or patient video story have been a regular item on the Quality and Governance Committee Agenda.

Patient experience scores have generally improved during 2014/15 and complaints have come down by 19% following increased levels in 2013/14 which were widely seen across the NHS (this may have had some link to the published *Francis Report* and *Clwyd and Hart review* of NHS complaints in 2013). From October 2014, we applied a more rigorous approach to the triage of new complaints, and increased our focus on finding early resolution by identifying opportunities for PALS to help find immediate solutions. These were commonly related to hospital processes, for example, cancelled elective admission, outpatient appointment cancellation/delay, and would historically have been taken down the formal route. Engagement from Divisions has been positive to this approach and feedback from patients is likewise positive.

The table below illustrates activity levels over the past five years.



Main points to note:

- The Trust received 974 complaints - *Denmark Hill 579 and Bromley Sites 395*. Overall an organisation decrease of 19% compared to 2013/14.
- 8,399 PALS contacts were recorded; a 35% increase in activity.
- 25% reduction in complaints (Denmark Hill) from 2013/14 and 9% reduction on the Bromley sites.
- Trust wide the distribution of complaints to patient activity data is low at 2.32 complaints per 1000 inpatients, 0.30 per 1000 outpatient attendances and 0.75 per 100 patients attending the Emergency Department.
- End of year performance of 36% in responding to complaints within 25 working days (Denmark Hill 35% and Bromley sites 37%).
- 2.25% of complaints were referred by complainants to the Ombudsman.

The table below provides the most recent comparative data of the numbers of complaints received amongst the Shelford Group of NHS Foundation Trust Hospitals.

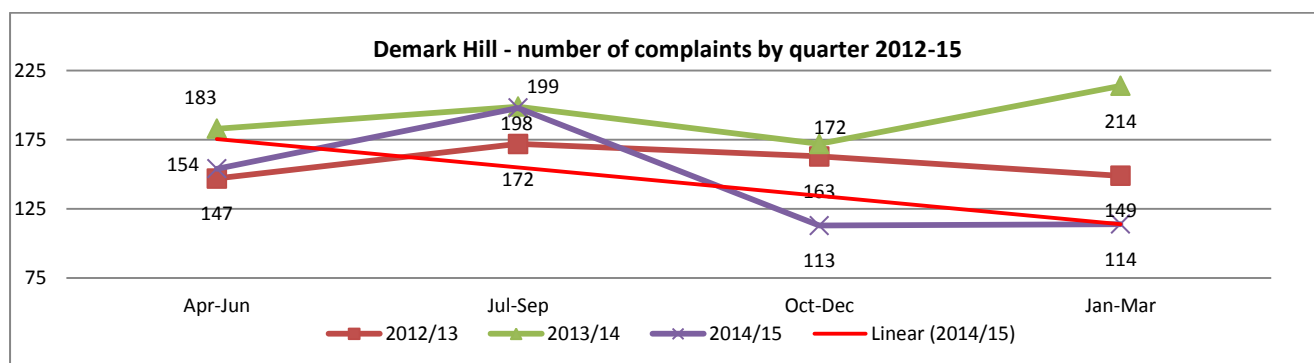
Organisation	Complaints 14/15	% increase from 13/14	Re-opened cases (as % of 2014/15)
King's College Hospital	974	-19%	9.00%
Addenbrooke's	523	12%	<i>not known</i>
Central Manchester	1,838	52%	7%
Guy's and St Thomas'	938	1.27%	<i>not known</i>
Imperial College	1,242	36.80%	8.7%
Newcastle upon Tyne	728	4%	7%
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals	1,354	-1.50%	6%
University Hospitals Birmingham	654	19%	19%
University College London	835	5.60%	8%

Within year we made some changes to the way we handle complaints from the point at which they are received and this has impacted on our activity levels particularly in the second half of the year.

We increased our focus on dealing with complaints from a service user perspective and wherever possible found immediate support in remedying problems and ensuring dialogue is established between the complainant and the service/clinical staff. This complemented the established role of PALS in resolving concerns and problems and has been positively received both by our patients and staff. This approach has continued into the new financial year.

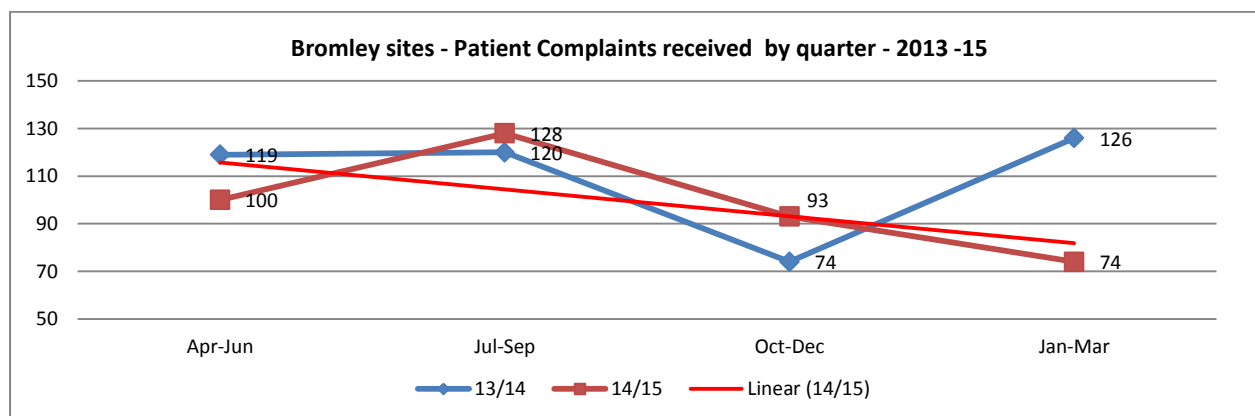
Denmark Hill

579 complaints were received in 2014/15 which is a 25% reduction in complaints compared to the previous year (768). 9% of complaints (55) were re-opened during the year for further response which is consistent with previous years. The end of year performance in responding to complaints within 25 working days was 35%. The ratio of complaints received during the year, to patient activity (per 1000 patient attendances) was 0.6 compared to 0.8 in 2013/14.



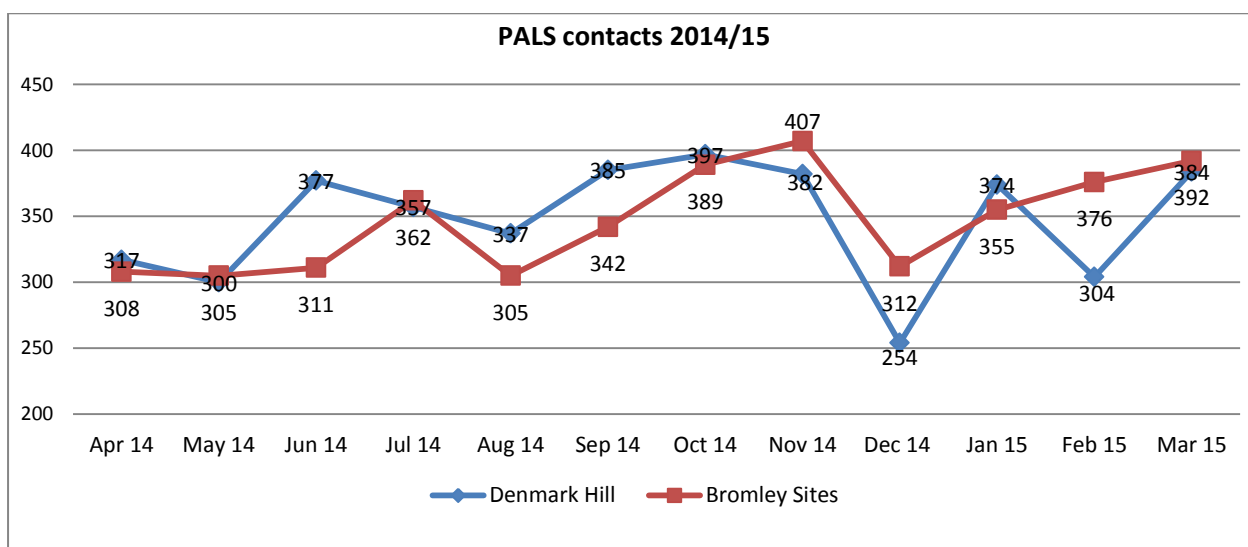
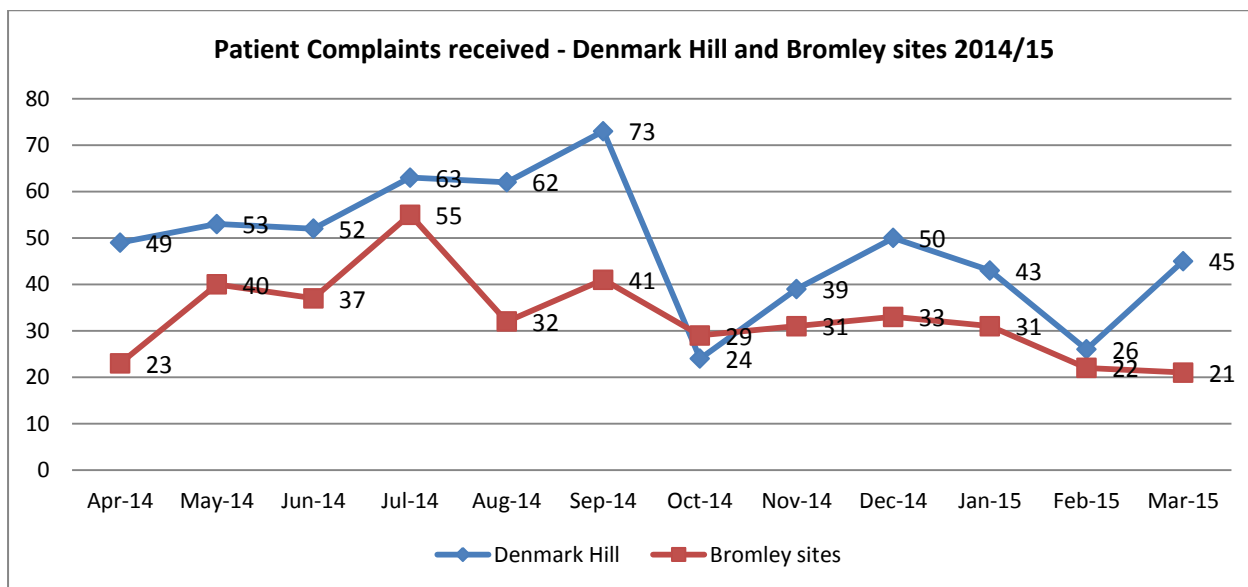
Bromley sites

395 complaints were received in 2014/15, a 9% reduction in complaints compared to the previous year (435). During the year, all legacy complaints transferred to King's from October 2013 were closed. 8.6% of complaints (34) were reopened for further response, and the end of year performance in responding to complaints was 37%. Overall the number of complaints show a downward trend compared to previously reported figures for services on the Bromley sites; ratio of 0.76 complaints to 1000 patient attendances.



Complaints and PALS contacts Trust wide for 2014/15

Complaint numbers on all Trust sites reduced in October 14 reflecting the change in the way concerns were reviewed and resolved by the Trust. This initiative followed firstly, the introduction in June 14, of a low severity pathway which enabled the sign-off of low severity complaints at Divisional level with the aim of improving the turnaround response time; then secondly the increased triage and resolution of complaints from October 14. The lower levels of complaints continued throughout the second half of the year, as shown in the chart below, due to this intervention. In turn, the PALS contacts have increased by around 35% with over 8,000 contacts recorded during the year.

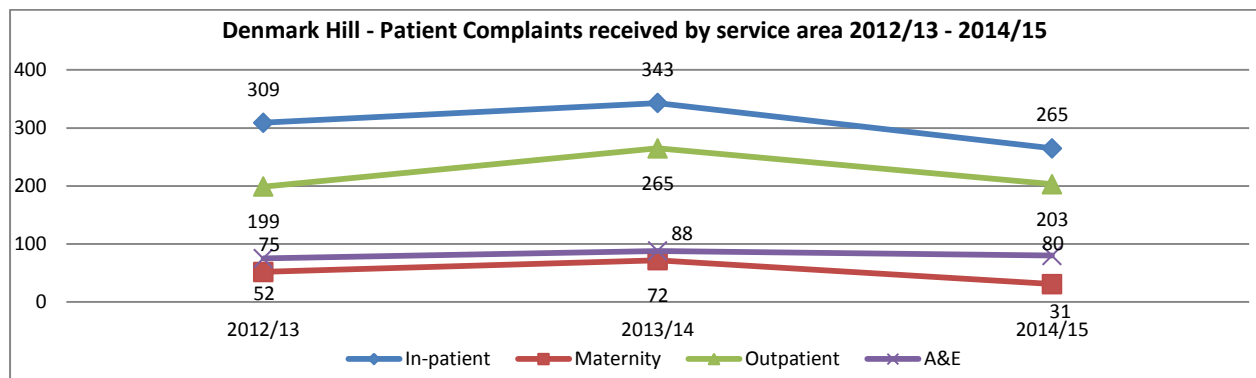


The Trust also regularly receives positive patient experience stories via patient opinion websites, HRWD, through social media networks, Twitter and Facebook.

Service Area

Denmark Hill

The following charts illustrate the distribution of complaints between the service areas of patient care over the past three years. On the Denmark Hill site the decrease in the number of inpatient complaints (23%) is evident, while the number of complaints relating to the Emergency Department has overall remained static.

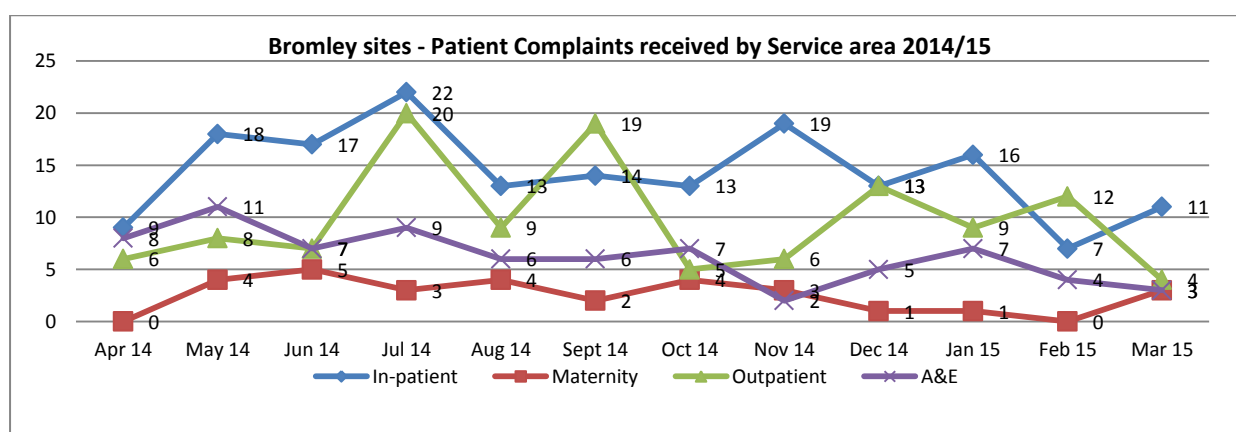


However while activity is down, there is little change in the percentage of complaints received in each corresponding group, compared to previous years; with the exception of maternity complaints, which have fallen to 5% of the total number of complaints from 9% last year.

	In-patient	Maternity	Outpatient	A&E	Total
2012/13	309 (49%)	52 (8%)	199 (31%)	75 (12%)	635
2013/14	343 (45%)	72 (9%)	265 (35%)	88 (11%)	768
2014/15	265 (46%)	31 (5%)	203 (35%)	80 (14%)	579
Totals:	931	171	651	231	1984

In 2014/15 there were overall 959,838 patient attendances (inpatient, outpatient and ED). Against this high level of activity, complaints represented 0.6 per 1000 attendances which is down from 0.8 in the previous year. The biggest decrease was in the ratio of complaints to outpatient attendances which represented 0.29 per 1000 compared to 0.40 in 2013/14.

Bromley sites

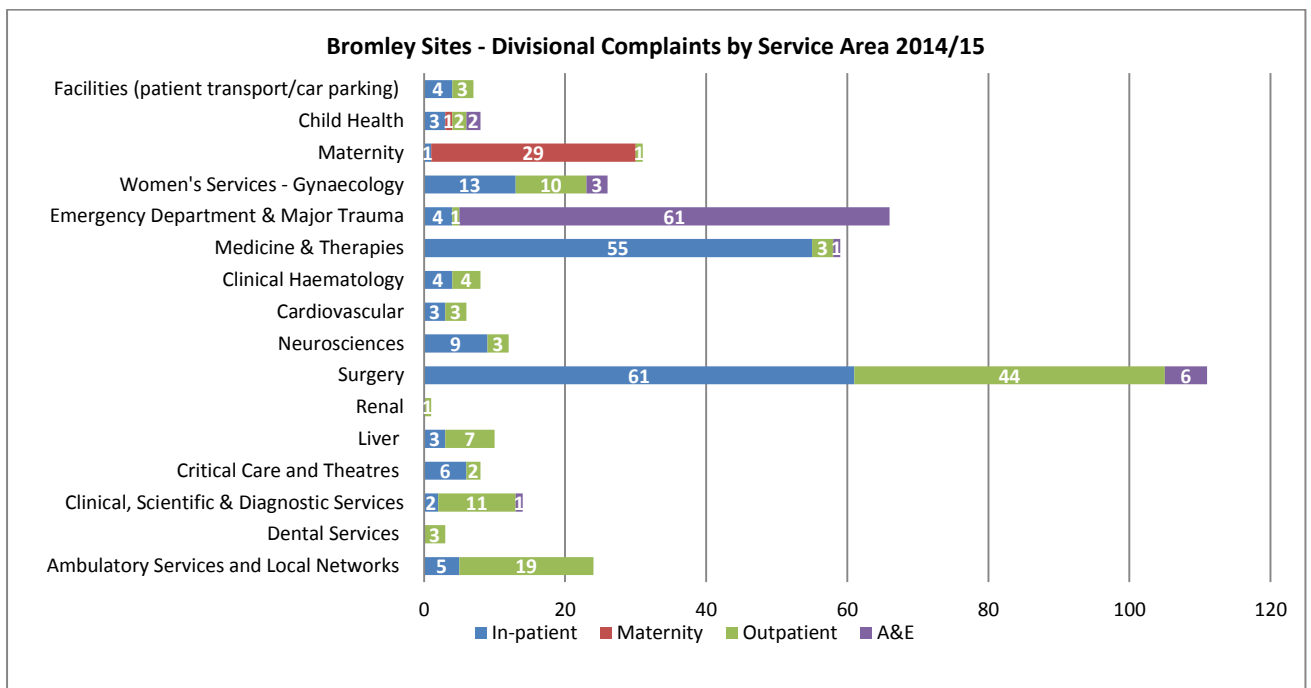
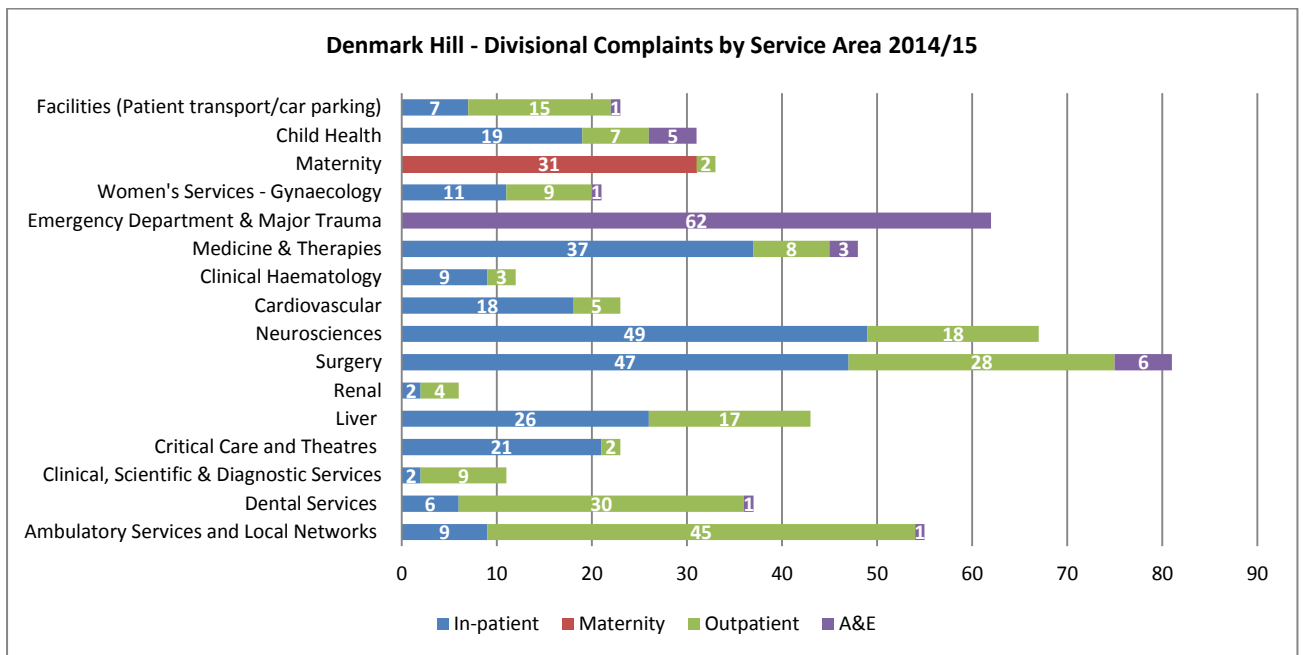


	Inpatient	Maternity	Outpatient	A&E	Total
2014/15	173 (44%)	30 (7.5%)	118 (30%)	74 (19%)	395

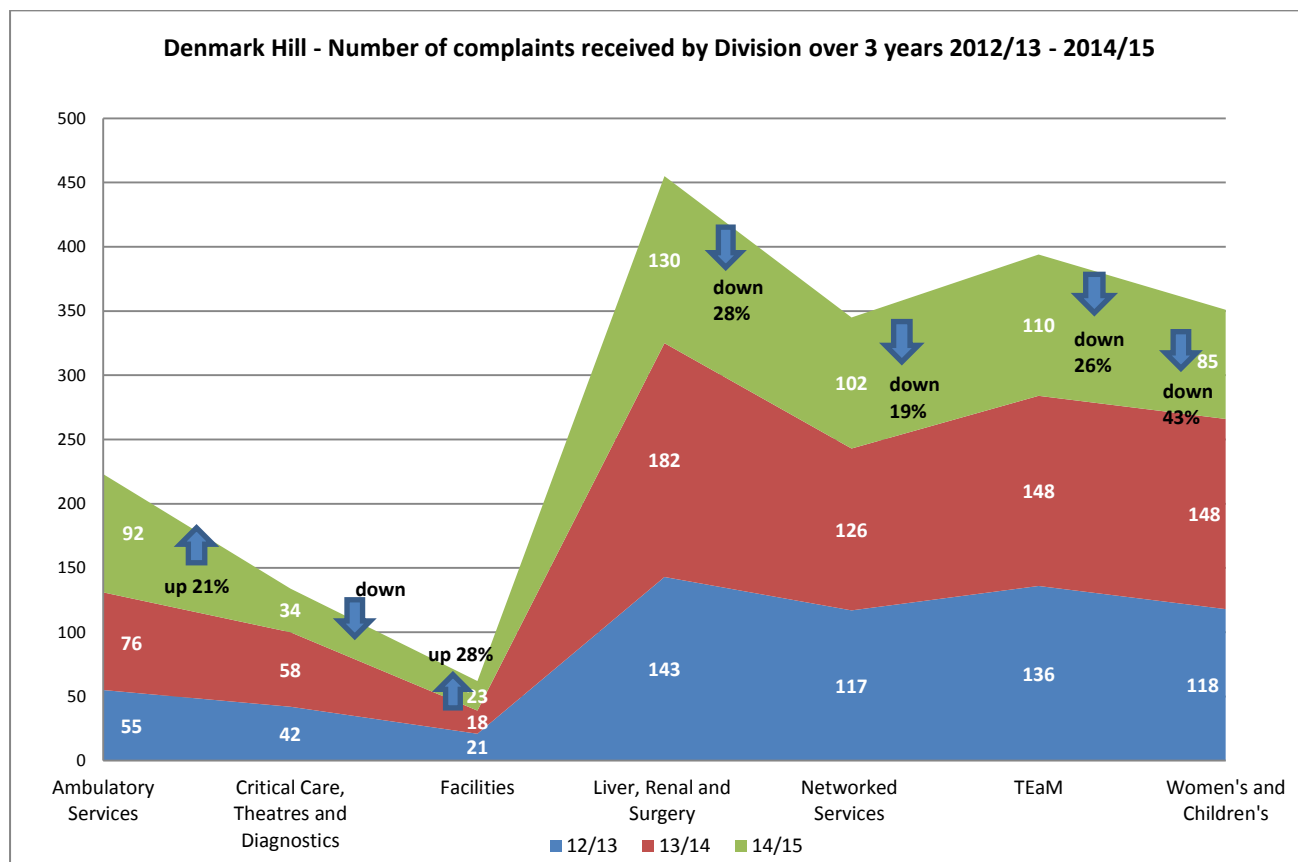
The ratio of complaints to patient activity during 2014/15 is down, with 0.76 per 1000 patient attendances compared to 1.01 per 1000 in 2013/14 (based on 6 month data October 13 – March 14). Outpatient complaints to patient attendances has lowered to 0.29 per 1000 patient attendances from 0.40 in the six months October – March 2014.

Complaints by Division

The following tables illustrate the distribution of complaints by division during 2014/15 for Denmark Hill and Bromley Sites.



The following chart shows the distribution of complaints over 3 years on the Denmark Hill site, and the encouraging reduction in complaints seen in 2014/15 particularly within Critical Care (down by 41%), Liver, Renal and Surgery (down by 28%), Networked Services (down by 19%), TEaM (down by 26%) and Women's and Children's (down by 43%).



It is worth noting in particular that:

- Ambulatory and Local Networks** (including Dental) had an overall increase of 21% in complaints compared to 2013/14 (92, 76). The increase is attributable to a small rise in some of the ambulatory specialties (breast care and endocrinology) which had more complaints in year compared to 2013/14. Complaints often related to communication with patients and availability or timeliness of investigation results. Dental complaints decreased this year from 40 to 37 which is consistent with historical data.
- Liver, Renal and Surgery** (LRS) had an encouraging 28% reduction in complaints compared to 2013/14 which reflects a downward trend across the Division. The distribution of complaints to patients also reduced in all areas compared to relatively high activity in the previous year. Liver halved its number of complaints per 1000 inpatient attendances, from four to two, and Surgery received 3 complaints per 1000 inpatient attendances, from 5 in 2013/14. The decrease in complaints is particularly linked to a reduction in concerns relating to communication and cancellation of an elective admission across both Liver and Surgery. In surgery, complaints concerning an admission were down 48% (25 to 13), likewise liver admission complaints reduced by 78% (9 to 2).

- **Trauma, Emergency and Acute Medicine** had a reduction of 45.5% in inpatient complaints, predominately reflecting a fall in concerns relating to clinical treatment (44 to 27).
- **Women's and Children's** had the largest decrease in complaints of 43% compared to 2013/14. This reflects a 42.5% reduction in maternity (obstetric) complaints and a significant 74% reduction in gynaecology outpatient complaints from 39 to 10.

Complaints measured against Trust activity

Hospital activity data includes all elective, general, and acute admissions (inpatients) and all outpatient attendances. By measuring complaint data against hospital activity data it provides an approximate indication of the numbers of complaints within the context of the overall level of activity. Overall Denmark Hill received 0.6 complaints per 1000 episodes and 0.76 complaints per 1000 episodes on the Bromley sites.

Demark Hill	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Inpatient attendances			
Number of inpatient complaints	361	415	296
Inpatient episodes	129,383	137,298	131,409
Complaints per 1000 attendances	2.8	3.0	2.3
Outpatient attendances			
Number of outpatient complaints	199	265	203
Outpatient episodes	596,913	667,421	689,461
Complaints per 1000 attendances	0.33	0.40	0.29
ED patient attendances			
Number of ED complaints	75	88	80
ED episodes	132,364	135,788	138,968
Complaints per 1000 attendances	0.57	0.65	0.57

Bromley sites	6 months Oct-Mar 2013/14	2014/15
Inpatient attendances		
Number of inpatient complaints	110	203
Inpatient episodes	36,437	82,983
Complaints per 1000 attendances	3.0	2.45
Outpatient attendances		
Number of outpatient complaints	57	118
Outpatient episodes	124,343	371,143
Complaints per 1000 attendances	0.5	0.3
ED patient attendances		
Number of ED complaints	32	74
ED episodes	35,510	65,425
Complaints per 1000 attendances	0.9	1

The following tables break down the activity by Divisions.

Denmark Hill

Inpatient Complaints	14/15	Patient episodes	complaint per 1000 episodes	13/14	Patient episodes	complaint per 1000 episodes	12/13	Patient episodes	complaints per 1000 episodes
Ambulatory	9	13,104	1	5	14,346	0.3	5	13,169	0.4
Dental	6	11,943	1	11	13,346	1	4	11,846	0.3
Liver	26	11,125	2	44	10,576	4	24	9,516	2.5
Renal	2	1,412	1	4	1,583	3	6	1,537	4
Surgery	47	13,641	3	66	13,977	5	55	12,830	4
Cardiac	18	6,557	3	16	6,587	2	17	6,551	3
Haematology	9	13,218	1	9	12,995	1	10	12,121	1
Neurosciences	49	8,560	6	54	8,615	6	50	8,332	6
TEAM	37	17,584	2	68	18,911	4	67	16,854	4
Child Health	19	13,870	1	18	13,871	1	18	13,471	1
Gynaecology	11	4,736	2	10	5,147	2	24	5,370	4.5
Obstetrics	31	13,385	2	54	16,869	3	53	17,018	3
Outpatient Complaints	14/15	Patient episodes	Complaint per 1000 episodes	13/14	Patient episodes	Complaint Per 1000 episodes	12/13	Patient episodes	Complaints Per 1000 episodes
Ambulatory	46	134,654	0.3	32	134,266	0.2	22	154,088	0.1
Dental	31	111,618	0.3	29	118,791	0.2	21	155,827	0.1
Liver	17	36,639	0.5	27	40,986	0.7	18	38,468	0.5
Renal	4	15,158	0.3	5	21,657	0.2	6	21,372	0.3
Surgery	34	82,574	0.4	38	91,235	0.4	32	84,621	0.4
Cardiac	5	27,486	0.2	8	30,445	0.3	11	27,017	0.4
Haematology	3	23,806	0.1	1	22,388	-	3	20,537	0.1
Neurosciences	18	35,763	0.5	40	43,953	0.9	27	38,594	0.7
TEAM	8	81,651	0.09	5	118,788	-	9	103,822	0.1
Child Health	12	28,588	0.4	14	37,995	0.4	5	34,944	0.1
Women's Health	10	32,387	0.3	39	106,856	0.4	12	79,961	0.2

Bromley Sites

Inpatient Complaints	14/15	Patient episodes	complaint per 1000 episodes
Ambulatory	5	11,153	0.45
Dental	0	1322	0.00
Liver	3	4,903	0.61
Surgery	61	20,694	2.95
Cardiac	3	2223	1.35
Haematology	4	6,077	0.66
Neurosciences	9	1702	5.29
TEAM	59	16,486	3.58
Child Health	4	6,262	0.64
Gynaecology	13	3,782	3.44
Obstetrics	30	5,807	5.17

Outpatient Complaints	14/15	Patient episodes	Complaint per 1000 episodes
Ambulatory	19	126,724	0.15
Dental	3	21,726	0.14
Liver	7	8,416	0.83
Renal	1	1,607	0.62
Surgery	50	97,060	0.52
Cardiac	3	11,030	0.27
Haematology	4	9,397	0.43
Neurosciences	3	6,029	0.50
TEAM	4	27,995	0.14
Child Health	4	9,869	0.41
Women's Health	13	17,067	0.76
Obstetrics	1	26,284	0.04

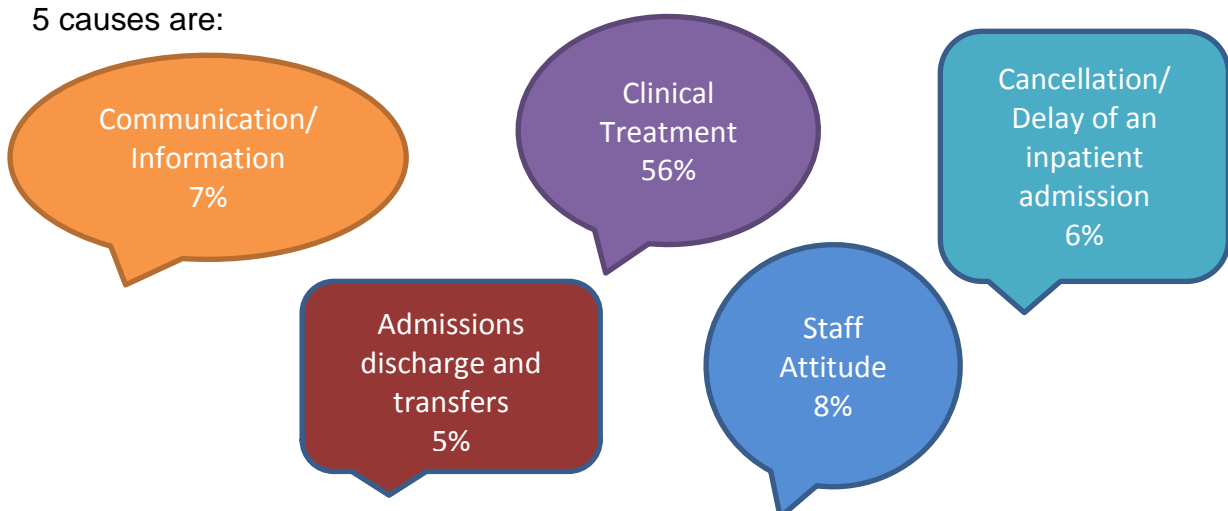
Causes of complaint

Each complaint is considered on a case by case basis to ensure we address the issues in the most appropriate way. Many complaints relate to a simple enquiry or problem and can be resolved with prompt local action. From June 2014, a low severity pathway was introduced to prioritise and track complaints of this type and to improve response times; Divisional Managers were given the responsibility of signing off responses which were overall 25% of the total complaints received. It should also be noted that the 32% increase in PALS contacts during 2014/15 will in part, reflect the increase in patients/relatives who were given immediate help, rather than directing these enquiries through the formal complaint route.

At year end, 48.5% of low severity complaints requiring a written response were closed within 25 working days.

The Department of Health issued a new national data set from April 2015 for complaint subject areas, and will allow a greater degree of granularity in the categorisation of complaints from 2015/16.

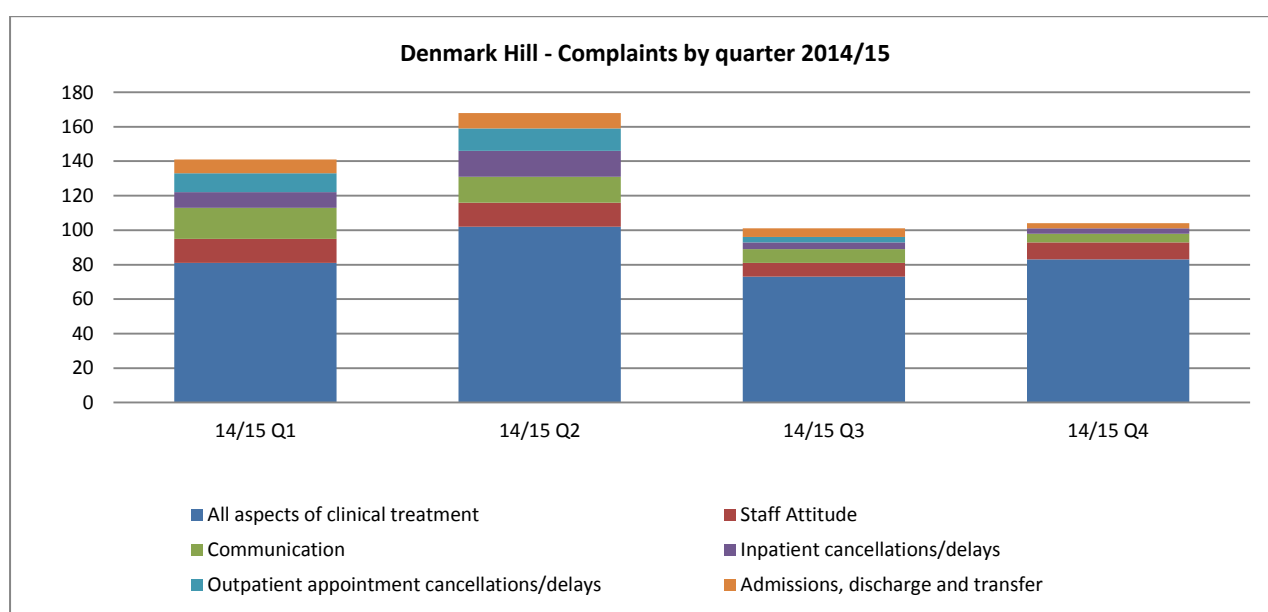
As an enlarged organisation, over half of the complaints received concerned clinical treatment (549) - this is also reflected nationally. As a proportion of complaints, this is a slight increase in the number of complaints received about clinical treatment compared to 2013/14 with 56% of complaints relating to care and treatment. Our top 5 causes are:



Denmark Hill

Complaint subjects decreased in all but 3 subject areas (consent to treatment, patient transport and hotel services). Because we increased the opportunity for early intervention from the second half of the year, the distribution of complaints changed with just under 60% of contacts concerning an aspect of clinical treatment.

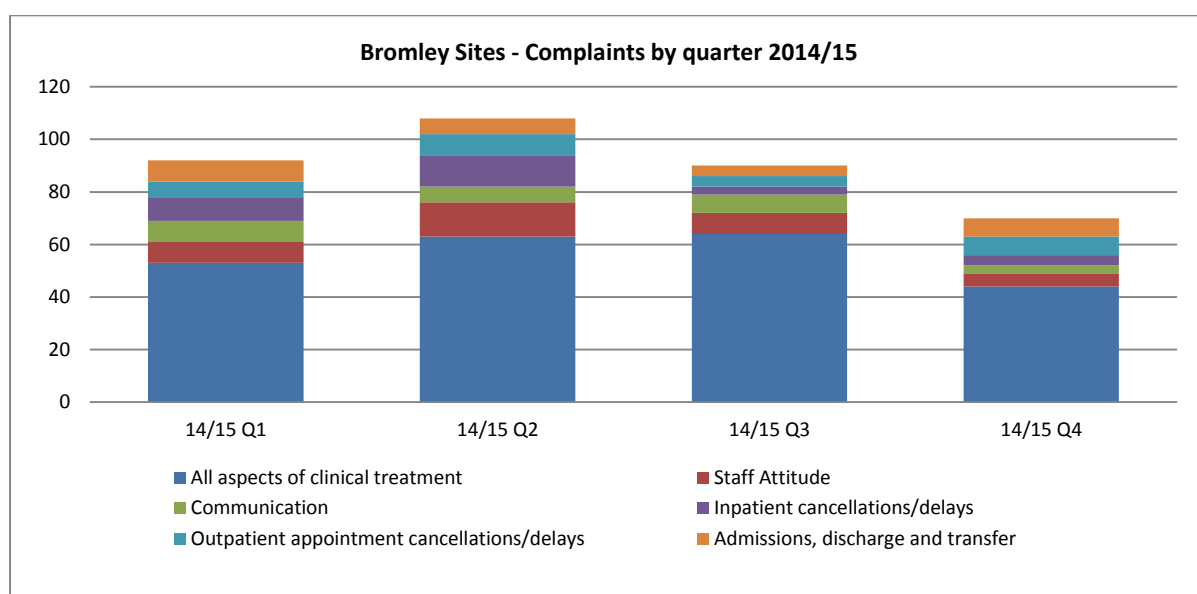
Primary subject of complaint	2014/15	% of complaints	2013/14	% of complaints	2012/13	% of complaints
Admissions, discharge and transfer arrangements	25 ↓	4%	33	4%	38	6%
Aids and appliances, equipment and premises	8 ↓	1%	10	1%	6	1%
Outpatient appointments – delay/cancellations & delay in clinic	27 ↓	5%	54	7%	35	5%
Inpatient – delay/cancellations	31 ↓	5%	54	7%	28	4%
Attitude of staff	46 ↓	8%	80	10%	58	9%
Clinical Treatment – all aspects	339 ↓	59%	390	51%	357	56%
Communication – oral and written	46 ↓	8%	76	10%	55	9%
Consent to treatment	3 ↔	1%	3	0%	2	0%
Privacy and Dignity	11 ↓	2%	13	2%	18	3%
Patient's property and expenses	4 ↓	1%	7	1%	3	0%
Personal records	5 ↓	1%	9	1%	10	2%
Transport (ambulances and other)	15 ↔	3%	15	2%	15	2%
Hotel Services (including food)	2 ↑	0%	1	0%	3	0%



From October 2014 (Qtr 3), the profile of complaints significantly changed reflecting the effectiveness of the triaging and early resolution of complaints, particularly those cases concerning an outpatient appointment or an elective admission. In Qtr 4, all outpatient appointment complaints were successfully handled by PALS and complaints relating to our communication with patients were the lowest on record.

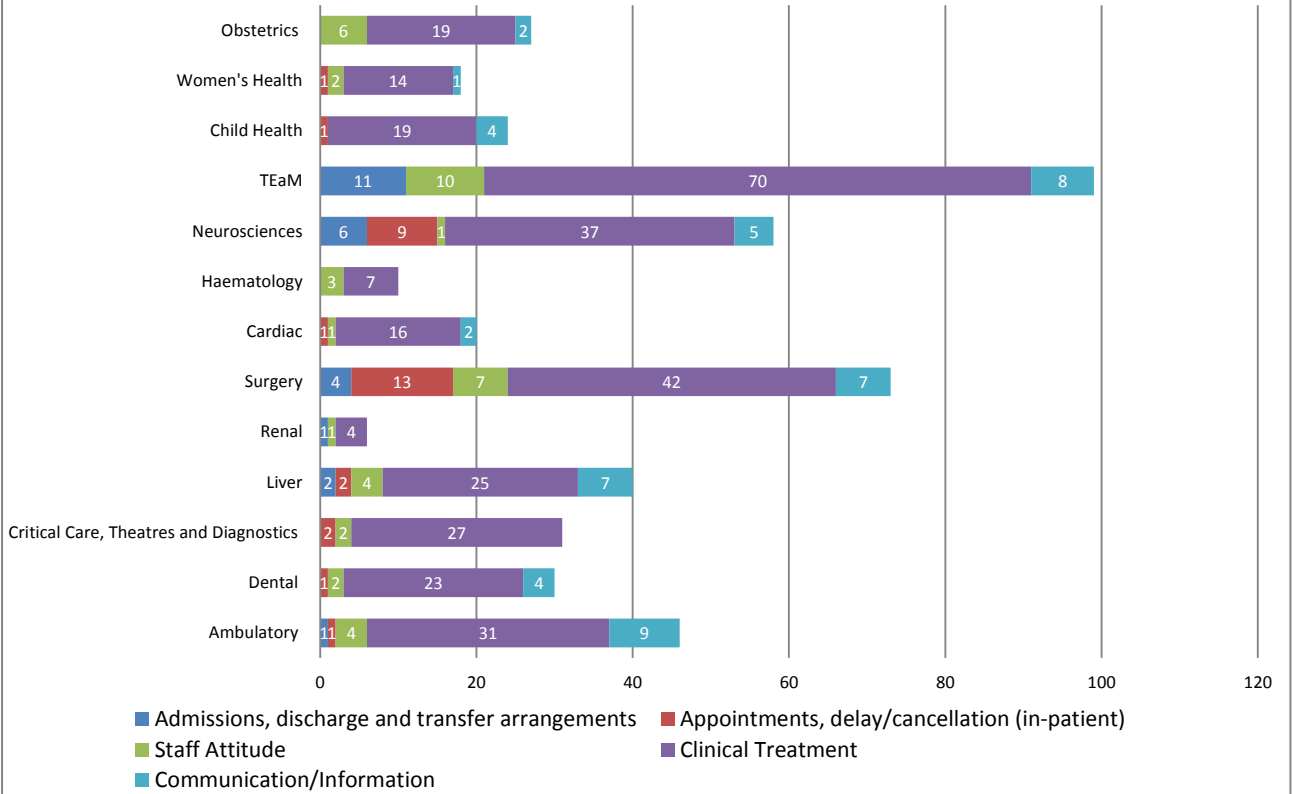
Bromley sites

Primary subject of complaint	2014/15	% of complaints	6 months Oct-Mar 2013/14	% of complaints
Admissions, discharge and transfer arrangements	28	7%	9	5%
Outpatient appointments – delay/cancellations & delays in clinic	25	6%	11	6%
Inpatient – delay/cancellations	28	7%	20	10%
Attitude of staff	34	9%	15	8%
Clinical Treatment – all aspects	224	55%	106	54%
Communication – oral and written	24	6%	25	13%
Consent to treatment	1	0%	1	1%
Privacy and Dignity	2	1%	1	1%
Patient’s property and expenses	0	0%	1	1%
Personal records	9	2%	3	2%
Transport (ambulances and other)	6	2%	2	1%

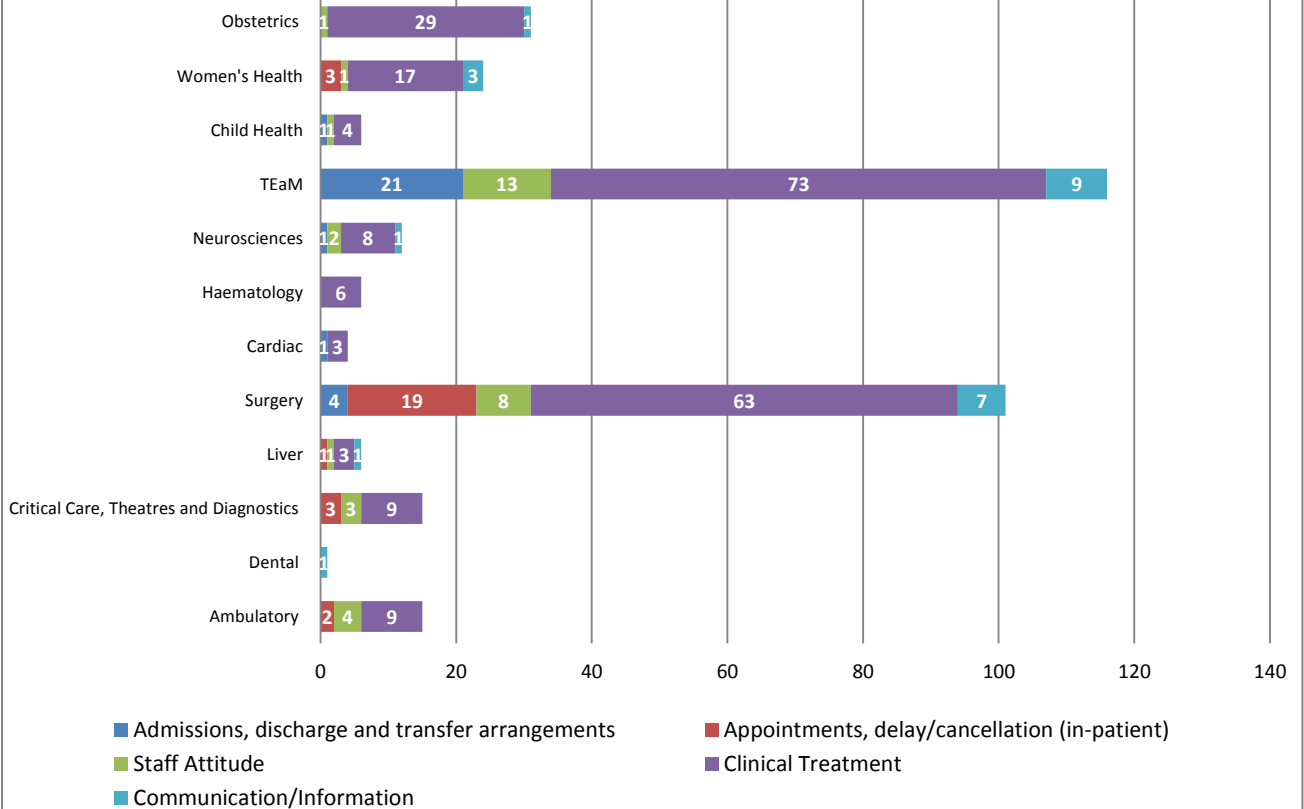


Complaints on the Bromley sites were broadly similar in the theme during the first part of the year, and apart from clinical treatment, concerns relating to communication, staff attitude, admissions/discharges, outpatient appointments and inpatient admission rescheduling or delays, were fairly consistent. During the second half of the year the profile changed and the level of complaints relating to outpatient appointments and inpatient admissions notably reduced. This was due to early intervention preventing complaints of this type escalating through the formal process. Complaints relating to admission and discharge were however fairly constant. These often concerned the decision to discharge from hospital or the process of discharge and care package arrangements.

Denmark Hill - Top 5 causes of complaint by Division 2014/15



Bromley Sites - Top 5 causes of complaint by Division 2014/15



Grading and outcomes

All complaints are graded for severity using the Department of Health's grading guide. The table below illustrates the severity of complaints received in 2014/15. Overall, complaints graded high in priority have decreased on the Denmark Hill site during 2014/15 at 90 from 138 cases in 2013/14. Low severity complaints also decreased from 391 in 2013/14 to 174 cases. This reflects the local resolution work we have focused on this year which has resulted in the overall reduction in complaints. On the Bromley sites, over half of the complaints have been low severity but have required written response from the Divisional management team. All complaints that indicate an adverse incident may have occurred are flagged as a high priority for the investigating team.

From 1 October 2014 a pathway was introduced for complaints that raised issues of concern and required investigation under Duty of Candour (proposed by the *Francis Report* in 2013). The central patient complaints team flag all cases and liaise with the Patient Safety and Risk Management team and the complainant accordingly. On the Bromley sites, 4 cases were linked to a Duty of Candour investigation and 5 cases on Denmark Hill.

Grading	Denmark Hill Number of complaints & %	Bromley sites Number of complaints & %
Low <i>unsatisfactory experience</i>	174 (30%)	232 (58%)
Medium <i>service or experience below reasonable expectations</i>	312 (54%)	111 (28%)
High <i>significant issues regarding standards and quality of care</i>	90 (15.15%)	50 (13%)
Serious <i>serious failure causing serious harm</i>	3 (0.5%)	2 (0.5%)

During 2014/15, over half of the complaints investigated have issues (either in full or in part) which were considered to be substantiated. Denmark Hill – 54% were upheld, which is unchanged from 2013/14 (53%). Bromley sites – 61% were upheld from 59% in 2013/14.

Ethnicity, age and access

The ethnicity of patients on the Denmark Hill site is fairly consistent with previous years, with a slight increase (4%) in patients stating their ethnicity as White British.

Ethnicity	Denmark Hill % of complaints	Bromley sites % of complaints
White British	53%	76%
White Irish	1%	1%
White – other	6%	2%
Indian & Pakistani	2%	0%
Asian – other	2%	0%
Black Caribbean	5%	1%
Black African	3%	0%
Black – other	8%	1%
Other ethnic category	4%	2%
Not stated	15%	17%

Comparing the profile of the age range of patients captured, who are affected by the concerns raised with the Trust, there is a small increase from 2013/14 in the 40-60 age range on the Denmark Hill (174 – 144). On the Bromley sites, the 60-80 age range has the highest number of complaints (120).

Age	Denmark Hill % of complaints	Bromley sites % of complaints
Under 20	64 (11%)	25 (6%)
20-40	142 (25%)	76 (19%)
40-60	174 (30%)	67 (17%)
60-80	142 (25%)	120 (30%)
80+	41 (7%)	89 (23%)

During 2014/15 the predominant method for making a complaint was by letter/email – 62% Denmark Hill and 75% Bromley sites. 15% of complaints were made online via the Trust’s website or by a complaint form – 18% Denmark Hill and 10% Bromley sites; and 18% were either referred to patient complaints via PALS, taken in person or by telephone – 20% Denmark Hill and 15% Bromley sites.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) helps to investigate complaints where an organisation has not been able to resolve the complaint at a local level. People can go to the PHSO once the organisation has been given the opportunity to respond and put things right. If the complainant remains unhappy, the PHSO will make an assessment. The PHSO are independent of the NHS and are accountable to Parliament. During 2014/15 the PHSO received 8,853 enquiries about acute trusts (an increase of 8% from 2013/14), and investigated 1,652 cases – twice as many investigations compared to the previous year.

In 2014/15, the Trust was informed of 22 complaints that had progressed to the Ombudsman for independent review. This is an increase of 6 investigations compared to 2013/14. The Ombudsman has investigated 15 of the 22 complaints and partly or fully upheld 10 cases. Outcomes for the remaining 7 complaints are pending. A further 8 complaints were investigated which related to the previous year 2013/14; 7 were partly or fully upheld.

Service	Site	Number of PHSO investigations	Upheld	Not upheld
Anaesthetics and Pain	Denmark Hill	2	1	1
Child Health	Denmark Hill	1	1	
Corporate Services	Denmark Hill	1	1	
Dental	Denmark Hill	3	1	2
Emergency Department	Denmark Hill	3	3	
Emergency Department	PRUH	2	2	
Liver	Denmark Hill	3	3	
Medicine	Denmark Hill	1		1
Medicine	PRUH	1		1
Neurosciences	Denmark Hill	3	3	
Obstetrics	PRUH	1	1	
Private Patients	Denmark Hill	1	1	
Surgery	PRUH	1		1
Total		23	17	6

Learning from feedback

Since 2013 we have regularly surveyed complainants to obtain their views on how we handled their complaint and to pinpoint the areas of the process that we could improve.


These are some of the actions we have taken as a result of feedback:

- Provided bespoke training in writing complaint responses to staff who are involved in the process. This was facilitated by an external communications expert and over 100 staff have, to-date, attended a half-day workshop with the aim to improve the quality of responses.
- Increased our telephone contact with complainants to ensure the cause of complaint is clearly understood.
- Reduced the number of our formal complaints (by 19%) by identifying opportunities for local resolution.
- Ensure we regularly update all complainants of delays until the complaint is closed.
- Through the Serious Complaints Committee, progress in improving the turnaround time of complaints has been monitored in addition to making recommendations in how complaints are handled, and how staff are supported.


Through investigation we are able to address the experiences which have caused the complaint and will provide the opportunity to discuss our response in person; during 2014/15 over 50 complaint resolution meetings have been held. Nearly all complaints relate to clinical treatment or their experience as a patient and we aim to provide a full and sensitive response to all the issues raised. Actions arising from complaints are reported and discussed through local governance meetings.

Throughout the year complaints have fed into staff education and learning, reflective practice across multi-disciplinary teams and changes to local practice and procedures where lessons have been learnt. Below are some of the initiatives being developed by the Trust in response to feedback:

- Pharmacy are rolling out the use of 'drugs not in use' bags to minimise the chance of a patient being sent home with medicines that they do not need.
- Nursing staff plan to introduce a day after discharge telephone call as a courtesy follow-up call to check the patient has settled in at home and to help with any further questions.
- Change to the visiting hour's policy on the Intensive Care Unit to accommodate complex and special situations.
- Training for intensive care nurses in caring for patients with complex needs and learning difficulties
- Improvements to the environment for children attending the Day Surgery Centre.



I felt I was able to state exactly how I felt and that I was being listened to and hopefully will make a difference.



It was obvious that a thorough investigation had taken place. What I wanted from my complaint was recognition of the situation, an apology and new procedures put in place.



We greatly appreciate the time and care that has been spent investigating the complaint.