



**NHS 24
PATIENT EXPERIENCE TEAM**

**PATIENT AND SERVICE USER FEEDBACK ANNUAL
REPORT
2020/21**

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1. Introduction and Key Information

- 1.1 NHS 24 is the national provider of digital and telephone based health and care services for Scotland. We provide people with access to information, care and advice through multiple channels including telephone and online.
- 1.2 The NHS 24 2020/21 Patient and Service User Feedback Annual Report details the feedback, their outcomes and some improvements made as a result. The detail below demonstrates a decrease in patient feedback this year despite a 9% increase in call demand. This may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS 24 is not isolated in seeing a decrease in patient feedback as this trend appears evident also for territorial Health Boards.

A summary of key information is detailed below:

- 992 items of patient feedback were managed via the NHS 24 Patient Experience Team for 2020/21
- This is a 24% decrease from the previous year (1,229 items managed in 2019/20)
- A 39% decrease in Stage 2 complaints from 39 in 2019/20 to 28 this year
- A 21% decrease in Stage 1 complaints to 261 compared to 316 received for the previous year
- A total of 43 Shared Complaints were managed which is a 25% decrease from 54 last year
- A 19% decrease in Comments from 232 to 195
- A 31% decrease in Compliments from 319 to 244
- A 27% decrease in Enquiries from 265 in the previous year to 209 this year
- 12 items of feedback were managed as concerns

1.2 The chart below details the feedback figures over the previous two years and demonstrates a reduction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

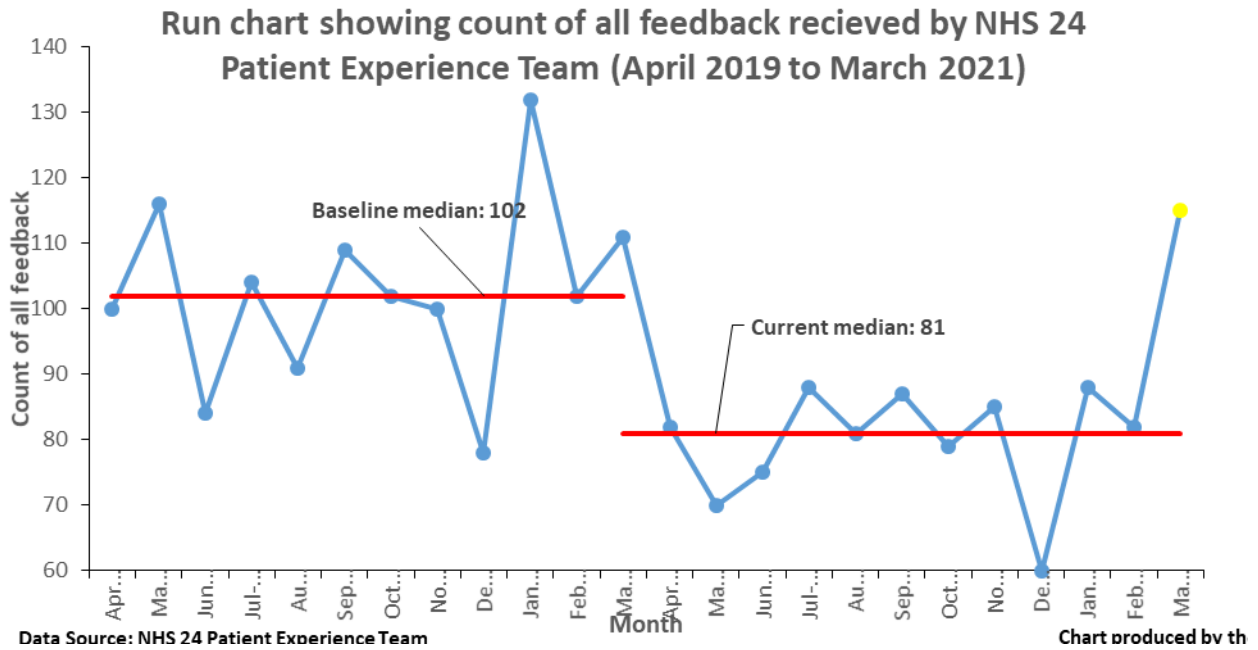


Table 1 – Total Feedback

	2019/2020	2020/2021	
Feedback Type	Call Demand	Call Demand	% variance
	1,656,804	1,790,228	+9%
Stage 2 Complaints	39	28	-39%
Stage 1 Complaints	316	261	-21%
Shared Complaints	54	43	-25%
Comments	232	195	-19%
Compliments	319	244	-31%
Concerns	4	12	+300%
Enquiries	265	209	-27%
Total Feedback	1,229	992	-24%

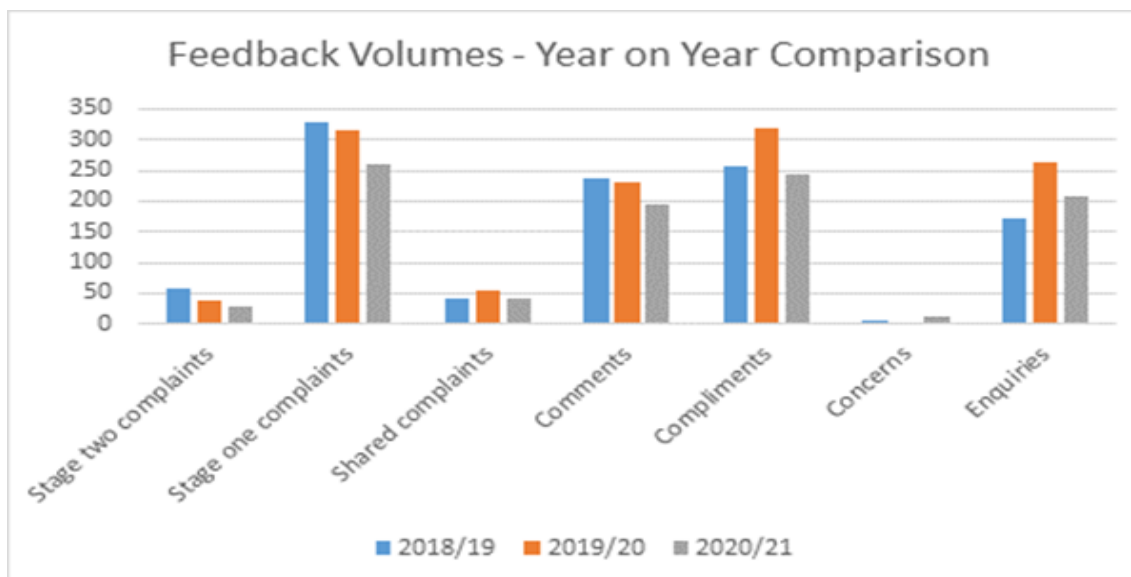


Table 2 – Stage 2 Complaints vs Call Demand

Year	No. Of Stage 2 Complaints	Call Demand	Percentage
2020/21	28	1,790,228	0.0016%
2019/20	39	1,656,804	0.002%
2018/19	58	1,496,877	0.003%

Table 3 – Service Involved

Stage 1, Stage 2 and Shared Complaints 2020/21		
	Total	Upheld/Part Upheld
Unscheduled Care Services (NHS 24 111)	276	133
Scottish Emergency Dental Service (SEDS)	24	9
Breathing Space	13	7
Mental Health Hub	19	7
TOTAL	332	156

1.3 Comments

1.3.1 Comments received by NHS 24 on its services are primarily managed and responded to by the Patient Experience Team. Examples are:

Comment regarding the link on NHS inform re Covid information. Technical issue identified, subsequently rectified and response provided.

Feedback regarding discrepancy within patient record. Patient Experience Team liaised with the Clinical Development Team, amendment made to record and patient advised of amendment.

1.4 Compliments

- 1.4.1 NHS 24 welcomes complimentary feedback and recognises the importance and value of positive feedback. Where possible, compliments are shared directly with staff members. This year, 244 compliments were received.

Some examples of complimentary feedback:-

I have called NHS24 several times in the last number of months seeking urgent help for my wife who suffers with serious mental health struggles. Whenever I have called NHS 24 and without exception I have been lifted by the professional, empathetic, efficient and effective service from their mental health hub. I mean exceptional and decisive support from the nurses at a level never experienced in the local mental health service. They not only have provided the ongoing arrangements of help for my wife but have been extremely supportive of myself and offer great advice and encouragement at the most challenging of moments. Thank you to you all in that service. I have no doubt I will need to use your service again and I will be hugely relieved in doing so knowing I will achieve the outcome I need. (Received via Care Opinion)

Patient very happy with his dental call today, he was provided with the emergency dental number and has an appointment to see a dentist tomorrow - The patient wanted to thank the call handler and the dental advisor who dealt with his call.

Just wanted to thank the call handler and the clinician involved in my call last night. I had become quite concerned about my symptoms and my call was treated with speed, efficiency, respectfully and gave reassurance at all times. I called NHS 24 at approximately 10pm last night and by midnight I had been prescribed and had started medication to help with my symptoms. We have an amazing NHS, one that we should all value. You do incredible work. Thank you.

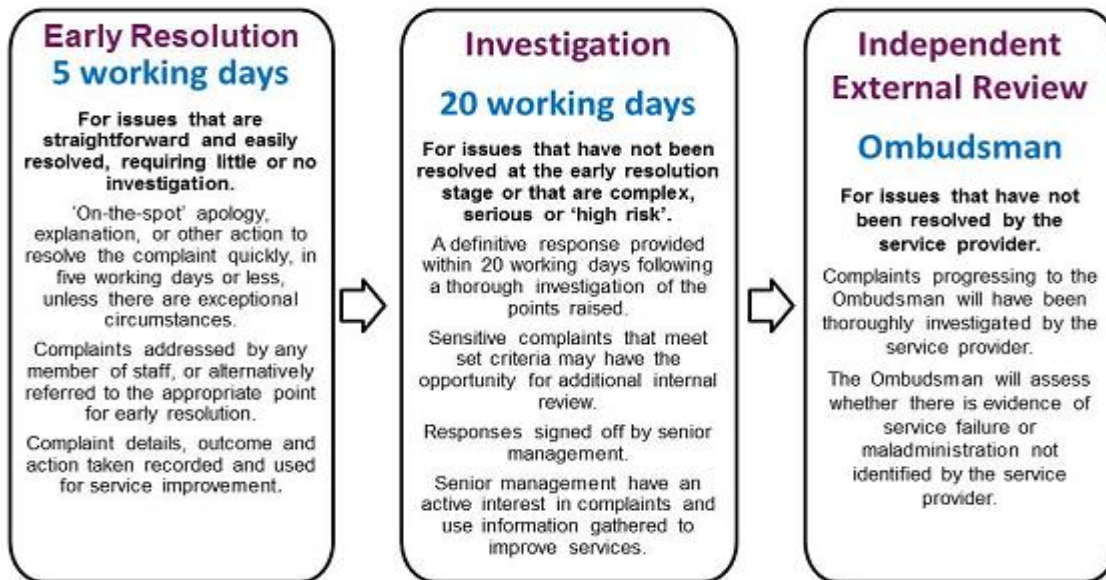
2. NHS 24 Patient Experience Team

- 2.1 The NHS 24 Patient Experience Team forms an integral part of the Nursing & Care Directorate. Emphasis is on local accountability, which involves resolution of issues at the point of contact, where appropriate.
- 2.2 The Team have established relationships with all Directorates and call on organisational clinical and non-clinical expertise to assist in the effective management of patient feedback. The Team thank their colleagues for the support shown to them and look forward to continued collaborative working to ensure a positive experience for patients and service users who provide feedback.

3. NHS 24 Complaints Handling Procedure

- 3.1 The NHS 24 Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) ensures a standardised approach by all Health Boards in relation to the management of patient feedback with focus on early local resolution.

The NHS Model Complaints Handling Procedure



- 3.2 The majority of complaints received by NHS 24's 111 service require some level of clinical review. NHS 24 has attempted, as much as possible, to adhere to the five working day timeline for Stage 1 complaints, however this year, due to the pressures on our Service Delivery colleagues, a reduction is noted in compliance with the 5 day target for managing Stage 1 complaints. Indicator seven of the attached Appendix applies.
- 3.3 Figures show a marked reduction in Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints when compared to the previous year. Whilst this may be attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic, some of this reduction is attributed to the excellent real-time management of patient feedback by frontline staff and the Patient Experience Team. Where appropriate, early local resolution, where appropriate, is the preferred outcome for the patient/complainant and the organisation.

4. Encouraging and Gathering Feedback

- 4.1 Feedback is received in the following ways:
- Verbally, in writing, or in person, to any NHS 24 Centre or to the Patient Experience Team
 - Via the dedicated feedback page within the NHS 24 websites and the external facing feedback page on the Internet
 - Via Care Opinion
 - Via social media channels
 - Via Community Engagement undertaken by the NHS 24 Engagement Team.
- 4.2 Patient feedback received by NHS 24 forms an integral part of the quarterly National Healthcare Quality Report (HQR), which is presented to the National Clinical Governance Group and the NHS 24 Clinical Governance Committee. The Committee consists of internal and external partners, non-executive directors. Patient Experience data is also provided monthly to the Performance Team.
- 4.3 NHS 24's process of continuous improvement is facilitated by patient feedback, feedback from partner Health Boards, the Adverse Event process and Adverse Incident report forms. Information from these processes is captured within a single data capture system to ensure effective cross referencing, thereby informing organisational visibility.

5. Service Improvement and Engagement

- 5.1 As a result of feedback, NHS 24 evaluates and implements changes to enhance patient and service user experience. When a process, guidance document, or clinical support tool requires to be reviewed, relevant approval involving governance bodies is sought. For the NHS 24 111 Unscheduled Care Service, clinical content is evaluated regularly to ensure safe, effective, person centred care is provided.
- 5.2 Recent changes to the provision of the 111 service has demonstrated an improved patient journey. An initiative entitled 'Better Work, Better Care' set an organisational target of 75% of calls to the service being managed to a clinical outcome without the requirement for patients and callers to await a return call. This target has been exceeded consistently throughout this year and in recent months over 90% of calls have been managed via this model. This has also shown to improve staff experience. This is the current operational model of the service.

- 5.3 NHS 24 is a key stakeholder in the Scottish Government directive in relation to Redesign of Urgent Care. This directs patients to call NHS 24 for clinical assessment prior to attending at the Emergency Department (ED). This initiative has involved collaborative working with partner health boards and again has demonstrated an improved patient experience as patients are now offered appointment times for accessing ED or they are referred to more appropriate services.
- 5.4 To support the delivery of effective services during the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS 24 employed a number of Doctors and Dentists. The Doctors assisted in providing clinical supervision to frontline staff. The Dentists were able to prescribe medication and undertake consultations using digital technology. This again provided an improved experience for service users.
- 5.5 This year, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have been challenged to obtain 'real time' feedback from service users. Exploration is currently underway into effectively capturing the experience of our service users.
- 5.6 The NHS 24 Public Partnership Forum (PPF) receive regular updates on sharing of learning from feedback. This is welcomed by the group and informs their understanding of the importance NHS 24 places on the value of patient feedback. Information on patient feedback activity is also shared with the NHS 24 Youth Forum.

6. Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

- 6.1 NHS 24 fully engages with the SPSO and this year the SPSO contacted us regarding four complainants who had requested a review. In three cases, the SPSO did not progress the investigation further as they were satisfied that learning from the complaint had been completed. One complaint is currently being progressed to the investigation stage.

7. Care Opinion

- 7.1 NHS 24 welcomes feedback via Care Opinion and has a 100% response rate. More than 200 staff members receive alerts when a Care Opinion story is posted which involves NHS 24. This includes staff at all levels.
- 7.2 The 'wordle' below highlights key words used by authors who chose to share their story via Care Opinion.

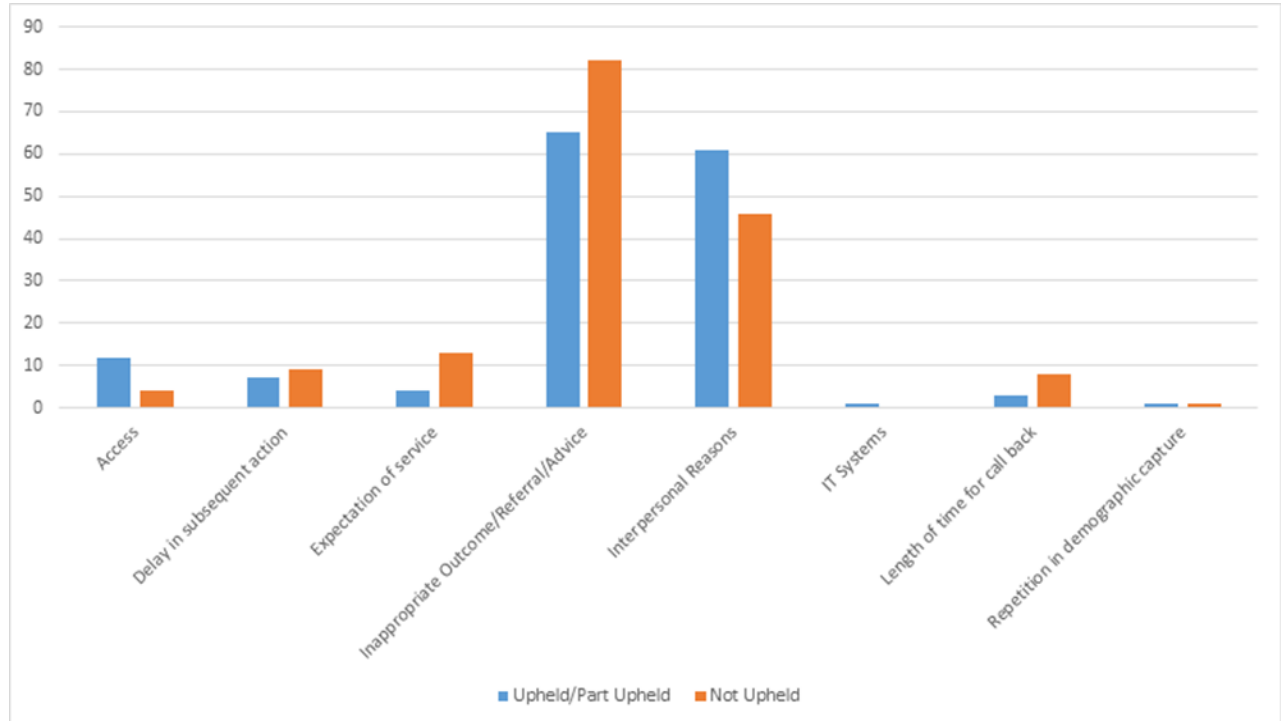


- 7.3 This year, 86 stories were shared which, at the time of preparing this report, have been read in excess of 24,716 times. This is an increase from 76 stories received the previous year (13%). The high level of readership of stories by the public demonstrates the importance of providing measured informative responses to all feedback received via Care Opinion. The Patient Experience Team is working with the NHS 24 Quality Improvement Team to improve the readership of stories internally.
- 7.4 Of the stories shared this year, 20% were moderate or strongly critical of the NHS 24 111 service with the vast majority of feedback being complimentary.
- 7.5 The Patient Experience Team works closely with Care Opinion to ensure effective tagging and appropriate criticality ratings are awarded to stories.

APPENDIX 1 – COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Indicator One - Learning from complaints

- 1.1 NHS 24 is a learning organisation and appreciates the valuable contribution patient feedback makes to overall service improvement.
- 1.2 Individual learning from complaints is recorded, actioned and monitored to ensure closure of actions identified. During 2020/21, 184 individual learning actions were identified which are tracked to ensure closure. Evident themes were:
- Importance of accurate record keeping
 - Importance of adherence to process
 - Comprehensive assessment of clinical symptoms
- 1.3 During 2020/21, NHS 24 has not met face to face with complainants due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, communications with complainants and families has continued and meetings will resume as soon as restrictions are eased. Offers of meetings have been made via MS Teams should patients/families not want to wait until restrictions ease.
- 1.4 NHS 24 has activated the Duty of Candour legislation in six cases this year and engagement has taken place with the patients/families involved. A separate NHS 24 Duty of Candour Report is available.
- 1.5 The table below shows the upheld/part upheld complaint categories for 2020/21.



- 1.6 As a result of complaints and feedback, NHS 24 evaluates and implements changes to enhance the overall patient experience. Where it is identified that a process, guidance or clinical support tool requires to be reviewed, appropriate

approval is sought from the relevant governance body. In addition, clinical content is evaluated regularly by the NHS 24 Clinical Development Team to ensure the delivery of safe, effective, person centred care. Detailed below is service improvement work undertaken by NHS 24 during 2020/21.

1.7 Examples of completed organisational learning from feedback:

NHS 24 Clinical Development Team reviewed the use of the descriptor "Assault" within the leg keyword, to cover blunt force trauma as in this call it may not have been obvious that the injury sustained was an assault (dog running into patient)
Change to Introductory Voice Message heard by callers during essential telephony downtime due to system maintenance. This now provides an indicative time for this work thereby enabling callers to make an informed decision regarding onward care.
Hot Topic (electronic communication) issued to frontline staff concerning managing requests from patients/callers who request Access to Health Records (ACR).
Mental Health improvement and suicide prevention e-Learning modules now mandatory and completed annually.
To support frontline staff to effectively manage and respond to feedback, an improved Patient Experience Section is being developed for the Intranet. This will provide guidance and support to ensure staff feel confident in managing feedback.

1.8 NHS 24 issues communication to frontline staff fortnightly via 'Team Talk'. This electronic communication contains information, updates or direction for staff. In addition to this, the Patient Experience Team are developing a 'Feedback Friday' Newsletter which will inform staff of the figures, trends and themes from feedback. This communication will also be used to share complimentary feedback and give direction and support to frontline staff in the receipt and management of patient feedback.

Indicator Two - Complaints Process Experience

2.1 Following closure of a complaint, the Patient Experience Team request feedback from complainants of their experience of the complaints procedure. This year, survey information was collated for the first two quarters. A technical issue impeded the issue of further survey forms. In addition, a decision was taken to suspend paper surveys due to COVID-19. Alternative means of collating this data is under review. For the first six months of 2020/21, 59 survey forms were issued of which 20 forms were returned (33%). These indicated a satisfaction rate of 90%.

Indicator Three - Staff Awareness and Training

- 3.1 NHS 24 Frontline staff are trained in the receipt and progression of patient feedback during their core induction training programme. An e-Learning module is available to support this and this was updated during 2020/21. Regular updates are provided to staff in relation to numbers, trends, themes and outcomes from complaints and feedback at the Regional Clinical Governance Meetings.
- 3.2 'Patient stories' form an integral part of the NHS 24 Board Meeting Agenda. These outline the patient experience and any individual or organisational learning identified. These are well received by the NHS 24 Board Members who welcome this valuable insight. During 2020/21, a comprehensive Patient Experience presentation was provided to Board Members, which was well received.
- 3.3 The detail below shows the learning completed for 2020/21.

Learning	No. of staff completed
NHS 24 Model Complaints Handling Procedure	332
The Value of Feedback	204
Duty of Candour	159
Patient Experience Core Induction Session	502

Indicator Four - Total number of complaints received

- 4.1 NHS 24's local delivery plan (LDP) sets out the levels of performance which we plan to achieve against each of the key performance measures. For complaints, it is to ensure these do not exceed 0.01% of all calls received. NHS 24 achieved 0.002% in 2019/20 and 0.018% in 2020/21.
- 4.2 The total number of complaints received is detailed below:

	2019/20	2020/21
Feedback Type	Call Demand	Call Demand
	1,656,804	1,790,228
Stage 2 Complaints	39	28
Stage 1 Complaints	316	261
Shared Complaints*	54	43

*Complaints involving another partner Health Board in which NHS 24 has contributed to the overall response.

- 4.3 Complaints per call demand in 000's

Stage 1 Complaints	0.015%
Stage 2 Complaints	0.0016%
Shared Complaints	0.003%

Indicator Five - Complaints closed at each stage

5.1 The term 'closed' refers to a complaint that has had a response provided to the complainant and, at the time, no further action is required (regardless of which stage it is processed and whether any further escalation takes place).

5.2 The table below shows the number of complaints closed as a % of all complaints

Stage 1 Complaints	79%
Stage 2 Complaints	8%
Shared Complaints	13%
TOTAL	100%

Indicator Six - Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

6.1 Outcomes for 2020/21

	Upheld	%	Part Upheld	%	Not Upheld	%
Stage 1 Complaints	99	38%	35	13%	127	49%
Stage 2 Complaints	9	32%	7	25%	12	43%

Indicator Seven - Average times

7.1 The table below demonstrates the average in working days to close complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Stage 1 Complaint	8 Days*
Stage 2 Complaint	14 Days
Stage 1 – 2	-

*To support Service Delivery to manage the demand on the 111 service due to COVID-19, the review of Stage 1 complaints was managed centrally with limited resource. This impacted on compliance with the five day KPI.

Indicator Eight - Complaints closed in full within the timescales

8.1 Complaints closed in full within timescales:

Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 within 5 working days as a % of total Stage 1 complaints	74%
Number of Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 days as a % of total Stage 2 complaints	96%
Stage 1 – 2 complaints closed within 20 days	n/a

8.2 Of the 28 Stage 2 complaints managed, 27 were responded to within 20 working days. One complaint was delayed due to the requirement to involve translation services. The complainant was kept updated in this regard.

Indicator Nine - Number of cases where an extension was authorised

9.1 Authorised extensions.

Number of complaints closed at Stage 1 where an extension was authorised, as a % of all complaints at Stage 1	0.4%
The number of complaints closed at Stage 2 where an extension was authorised, as a % of all complaints at Stage 2	0.0%

Examples of extension reasons:

- Pressures within Service Delivery
- Availability of key staff to review

Glossary of Terms

Stage 1 Complaint	Less complex complaints, which may, or may not, require clinical review. Early local resolution within five working days
Stage 2 Complaint	More complex complaints, which require a full clinical review. These are acknowledged within three working days and a full written response provided within 20 working days
Shared Complaint	Complaint in which complainant has raised issues relating to the service provided by more than one Health Board or organisation. Lead responder Board identified who provides written co-ordinated response from all agencies concerned
Concern	Some concerns may require an investigation. Follows the same process of a Stage 1 complaint with outcome provided verbally with the agreement of the feedback provider
Comment	These can be a range of issues relating to the services of NHS 24. Some of these require a response and some do not
Enquiries	Enquiries received which may be managed locally or which may require re-direction to a partner Health Board or other organisation for progression
Upheld	Complaint where all issues following investigation are accepted
Not upheld	Complaint where all issues following investigation are not accepted
Partially upheld	Complaint where some issues following investigation are accepted
Enquiry	These are a variety of ad hoc general enquiries received by the Patient Experience Team
Care Opinion	Public on-line facility to enable patients and service users to document their experience of NHS services