

Handling and Learning from

Feedback

Annual Report (2024 - 2025)



On behalf of

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Foreword

At NHS Grampian, we are committed to listening, learning, and improving—values that are central to our Plan for the Future 2022–2032. I am pleased to introduce the NHS Grampian Complaints and Feedback Annual Report for 2024-2025. This report is a vital reflection of how we listen to, learn from, and act upon the voices of those who use our services.

At the heart of our work in NHS Grampian is a commitment to delivering safe, person-centred, and compassionate care. We know that to truly achieve this, we must be open to feedback — both positive and critical — and use it to drive meaningful improvement. Every concern raised and every compliment shared presents an opportunity: to reflect, to understand, and to do better.

This year's report highlights the breadth of feedback we've received and the actions we have taken in response. It is clear that while there is much to be proud of, there are also areas where we must do more. Whether in response to communication issues, delays in care, or other concerns, our focus remains on understanding the root causes and making sustained changes that improve patient and family experience.

We are also committed to supporting our staff in handling feedback well — with empathy, professionalism, and a willingness to learn. We continue to invest in training and systems that support a just culture, where listening and responding with compassion is the standard, not the exception.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to share their experience with us — whether through a complaint, a concern, or a compliment. Your voice matters.

As we look ahead, NHS Grampian will continue to place the patient, their families, and carers at the centre of everything we do. Feedback is not just a requirement; it is a cornerstone of how we improve and ensure accountability to those we serve.

Thank you for your continued trust and engagement.



Professor June BrownExecutive Nurse Director & Interim Deputy Chief
Executive

2024 - 2025 at a Glance



425 Compliments

A total of **425** formal compliments were received by the Feedback Service.



41 SPSO

The Scottish Public Services
Ombudsman contacted
NHS Grampian about 41
complaints.



1,605 Complaints

We received 1,605 complaints during the year.



4,878 Care Assurance Tool Completions

We are grateful to the 4,878 staff, patients and carers who have shared feedback during care assurance walkrounds.



Our social media accounts have attracted thousands of new followers helping us to provide, promote and highlight information and to receive feedback.



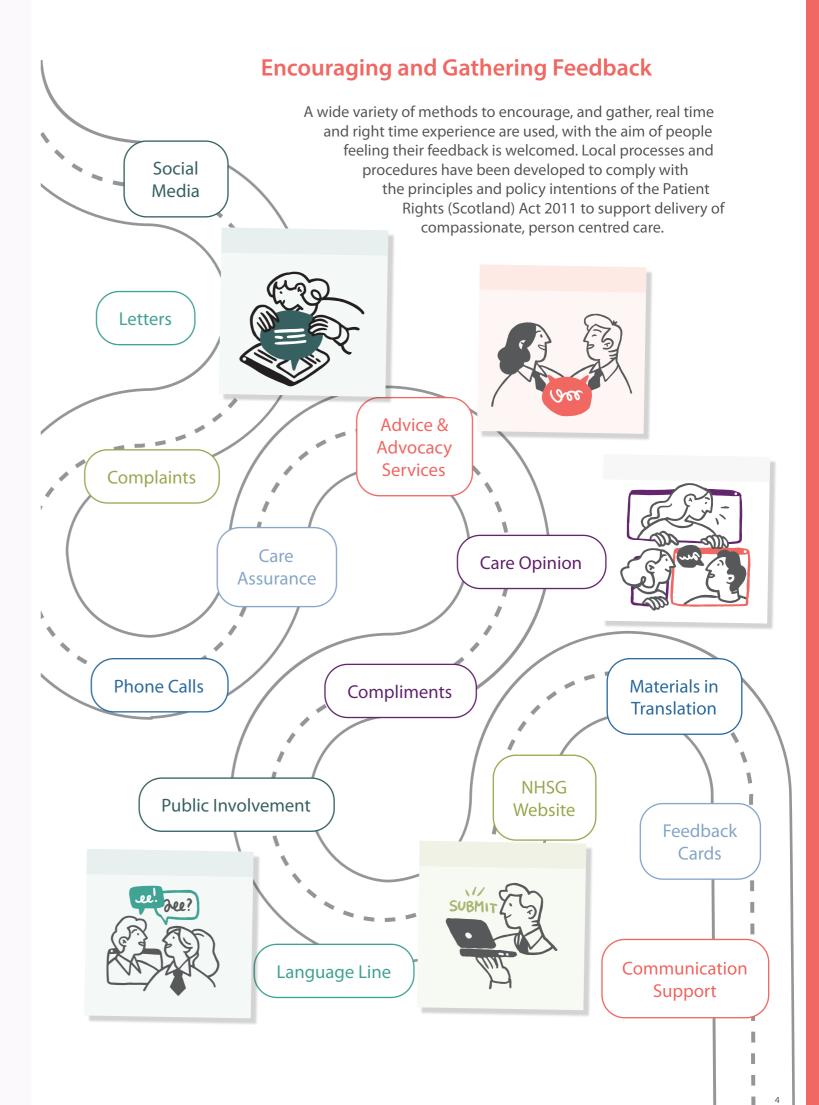
- 575 stories shared on Care Opinion about NHS Grampian.
- 71% of these were completely positive.
- These stories have been read 160,668 times, averaging 279 reads per story.



3,411 Training Modules

During the year staff have completed 3,411 training modules in:

- · Complaint Handling online
- Equality and Diversity
- Adverse Events
- Duty of Candour

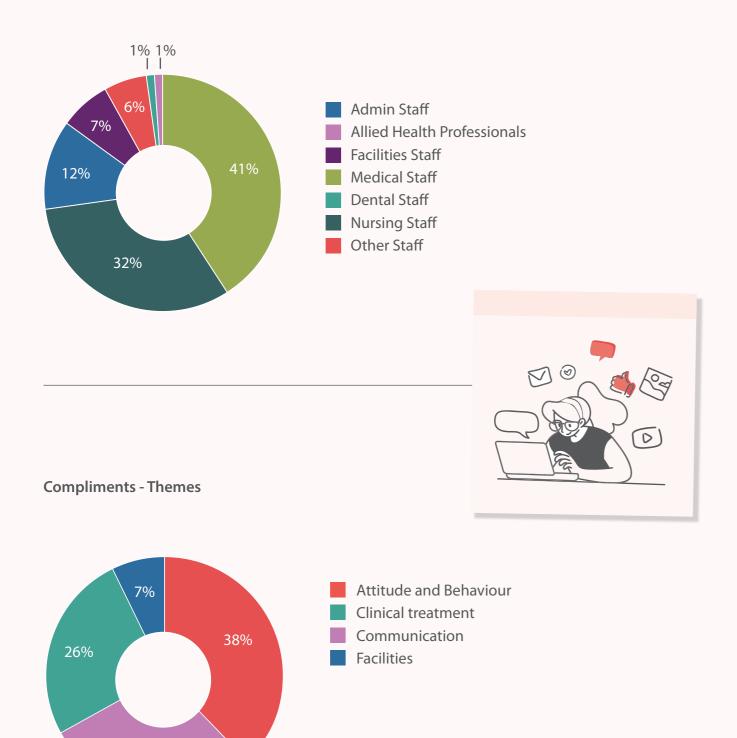


Compliments:

We received 425 formal compliments. The chart below shows the themes of these compliments and the staff groups these related to.

Compliments - Staff Groups

29%







Care Opinion plays a crucial role in enabling citizens to provide honest, safe and anonymous feedback on the healthcare services we provide. Citizens can share their feedback (often described as story) via the easy-to-use online platform, by telephone, or by completing a feedback card and returning freepost. Anonymous feedback allows citizens to safely express their views, whilst helping the healthcare provider understand what matters most and where to focus improvement. When feedback is added to Care

Opinion the relevant staff are directly alerted and can respond as required. All feedback and our responses are available to view <u>here</u> where you can also share your story.



The diagram below shows the themes identified within the stories shared. Green bubbles indicate what was good and the pink tags indicate what could be improved, highlighting that most stories are positive.



When a service is responding to a story, they have the ability to identify if a change is planned or made. The progress can then be shared with the story author, and any other readers, via the Care Opinion platform. This helps enhance trust between our services and our citizens by demonstrating we are listening and continuously evolving. An example of this is shared below: You can also view the full story here

'New Needles for bloods"

About: Aberdeen Royal Infirmary / Outpatients Posted by centaurus/q47 (as the patient) 8 months ago

I attended an outpatient's appointment at Clinic G. Purple Zone, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary this week. At this appointment I had bloods taken at the outpatients department. The nurse was fantastic, which is more than can be said about the new needles being used.

This is the third time I have had to suffer these needles and honestly. I don't think they should be allowed to be used. I have been attending clinics for over 25 years and I have never had so much bruising after bloods being taken.

I always have tried to take care of the veins that bloods are taken from and for those getting bloods on a regular basis, these new needles could undoubtedly damage veins to the extent they cannot be used for bloods. I have experienced several other patients commenting on this and I think consideration should be given to using the older type needles for those who have to attend on a regular basis.

As I say, the nurses are brilliant but to have to work with this inferior equipment is not correct. I hope consideration could be given to this to help patients and nurses alike.

Responses

Response from Jennifer Thomson, Senior Charge Nurse Maxillofacial Out-patient Department NHS Grampian 6 months ago

Hello centaurusyq47,

Thank you for sharing your experience of having bloods taken at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. I'm really sorry it has taken me a while to reply, I wanted to make sure I had confirmation of a change before sharing a response.

Starting with the positive feedback for the nursing staff - thank you! As Senior Charge Nurse in Clinic G it means a lot to me, and the team, to know that the nurse you saw was fantastic. We all work as hard as we can to make patients time with us as easy as possible but sometimes, as you have mentioned, equipment lets us down.

I'm sorry to hear you came away with bruising (and not for the first time) due to the needles. I am pleased to confirm that new needles were released at the end of September. The team have viewed prototypes of these and are much happier with the design as they seem very similar to the needles used previously. Sometimes new orders can take a wee while to reach the teams but we are working as quickly as we can to ensure they are available in the clinic soon.

Thanks again for sharing your feedback which has helped to ensure a change was made for the benefit of both patients and staff.

Take care, Jen

In addition to being available to view on the Care Opinion website, stories shared about NHS Grampian are also shared regularly on our social media sites and at various local meetings and events.

Care Assurance / Excellence in Care

Excellence in Care aims to develop and implement a world-class, evidence-based, national approach to assuring nursing and midwifery care, aligned with the 'Once for Scotland' ethos. This ensures that nurses and midwives feel valued and work in environments where they can thrive, whilst also having the time and support to consistently deliver high-quality care to patients, clients, and communities.

In NHS Grampian, one of the ways we provide assurance is through local care assurance processes, including the use of tools that enhance our understanding of staff, patient, and carer experience. Each month, four assurance walk rounds are conducted across all areas, helping to identify strengths, highlight areas for improvement, and guide our quality enhancement initiatives.

We continue to contribute data to the Care Assurance and Improvement (CAIR) data dashboard, enabling us to measure and monitor key indicators of high-quality nursing and midwifery care. This provides assurance, facilitates the identification of improvement opportunities, and allows us to share examples of best practice.

Our next steps and plans for 2025 include implementing the recently launched Quality of Care Review, which establishes a 'Once for Scotland' approach to care assurance visits and quality of care reviews. This national framework will further strengthen our ability to assess, enhance, and consistently deliver excellence in nursing and midwifery care across NHS Grampian.

These give more senior staff who are not ward based a view of care given by our staff and received by patients. Managers are more visible to staff on the ward while on these walk rounds allowing time for introductions, to talk and connect with our manager peers. They are an opportunity for fresh eyes to look at practice which may lead to opportunity for shared learning and improvements."

Lorna Stephen, Senior Charge Nurse, ARI.

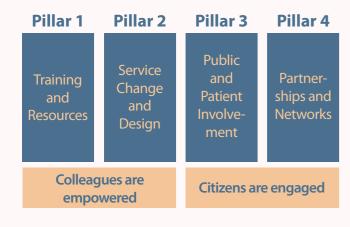
"For me as a Chief Nurse, Care and Quality assurance walk rounds are essential in my role to provide the opportunity to connect with teams, patients and relatives so that I know first-hand what is important to each of them, where improvements are required and how to focus the support from our senior nursing leadership team."

Denise Johnson, Chief Nurse, Integrated Specialist Care Portfolio

".....Gaining insight to the experience of our patients and visitors, often seeing how this correlates with challenges the clinical areas may be experiencing. If this is the case it provides me with the time to provide some feedback at the time to patients and visitors."

Caty Smith, Nurse Manager, Surgical 1

Public Involvement Team



'Evolving through Involving'

The NHS Grampian Public Involvement Team encourage and support people from across Grampian to be involved and have their say about services provided by NHS Grampian. The diagram demonstrates the range of ways the Public Involvement Team are supporting our workforce and our communities to work together to improve the patient experience.

Pillar 1 - Training and Resources

During 2024 – 25, the Public involvement Team have worked with colleagues, including, NHS Grampian Public Health, Aberdeen Community Planning Partnership and through the Grampian Engagement Network, to develop a portfolio of training and resources that will empower our workforce to do every day great engagement and make it easier for colleagues to set up for success.

Pillar 2 - Service Change and Service Design

The NHS Grampian Public Involvement Team provide guidance and support for teams across Grampian to design or redesign services and progress capital projects as a statutory requirement. This support ensures that communities and stakeholders have opportunities to be involved and to influence, ensuring that services are designed 'with' people and not 'for' people.

Projects have included:

- · The Baird Family Hospital
- The ANCHOR Centre
- The Foresterhill Mortuary Project
- The use of drones in medical care
- Long COVID project
- Maternity Services
- New Pharmacy Applications



Spotlight

You said, we did examples:

Feedback from
Long COVID Lived
Experience Group difficult to know where
to go/look for reliable
support and additional
information.

Action - drop-in events held, with a number of services and organisations represented for members of the public to speak to and find out more about the support available. NHS Grampian Long COVID webpages created, with involvement of lived experience group.

Feedback from
Long COVID Lived
Experience Group ongoing difficulties
with GPs being aware
of Long COVID service.

Action - service identified available opportunities to share information with GPs and raise awareness. By end of 2024, 76% of GP practices in Grampian had referred to the Long COVID service.

The ANCHOR Centre - Due to early consultation with a men's cancer group there are more toilets in The ANCHOR Centre than the building notes suggest. This is due to feedback from a patient group that when receiving treatment you have to go to the toilet more and it's not ideal if you are having to wait and queue in the treatment area.

The ANCHOR Centre being built on the Foresterhill Health Campus – NHS Grampian's new day and outpatient facility for oncology and haematology.



Pillar 3 - Public and Patient Involvement

It is now easier than ever for members of the public to get involved in the work of NHS Grampian, without even having to leave home. Through the NHS Grampian Public Involvement Network (PIN), people can access a range of involvement opportunities, including being a Public Representative on boards and committees and can give feedback on a range of projects by completing questionnaires or participating in workshops and other exciting and interactive activities.

Spotlight 'Come Dine With Me @ ARI'

Come Dine With Me is a joint piece of work that has been developed by the NHS Grampian Public Involvement Team and NHS Grampian Catering Manager. These events have been welcoming members of the public since around 2019 and have contributed towards ARI becoming the first Celiac Accredited Hospital in Scotland.

During the event, participants have the opportunity to find out:

- How NHS Grampian serves over 2,000 meals a day
- Where NHS Grampian sources the produce which goes into all their meals AND
- Be a meal taster and give feedback on a selection of dishes

In November 2024, Come Dine With Me gave a special welcome to the Shmu Wellbeing Cafe.

Following the event, participant's told us:

"This lunch time event is sure to change the way you think about hospital food – all dietary requirements are catered for"

"I enjoyed this event very much. I was able to see behind the scenes of ARI and the food was good too!"

"This event gave our Wellbeing Café participants an interesting insight into what it takes to cater for ARI (and other hospitals) on a day-to-day basis. We had a great opportunity to taste test some of the food items and found out more about how different dietary needs are met. Our friendly and cheerful host Liz made the event even more enjoyable. I would recommend other community groups take Liz up on her invite."

"I would like to thank Liz for inviting us along. The food was good, and it was interesting to see the food prep process. It was the first time I saw a cutler machine too – it's brilliant"

Pillar 4 - Partnership and Networks

We recognise and celebrate the diverse range of voices and empowered communities across Grampian, and where possible we will proactively support existing community capacity through partnership working and development. We value the expertise of our public sector partners and our third sector colleagues and aim to co-design and collaborate as a wider Grampian system as much as possible.

For further information <u>gram.involve@nhs.scot</u> or visit webpage by searching 'NHS Grampian Get Involved' or follow us on X @NHSGInvolvingU



Social Media

use policy.

Social media remains one of the key communication resources used by NHS Grampian to help support the organisation's efforts to connect and engage with its various stakeholders. As social media is ever changing and evolving, NHS Grampian continues to develop and pioneer how its various main corporate accounts are used to ensure that its presence there remains vital, relevant and accessible for people living in Grampian who make use of these platforms.

NHS Grampian started using social media in 2011 by establishing a presence on Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter); this has subsequently expanded to include creating accounts on LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. During the past year, NHS Grampian has also created accounts on BlueSky and Threads. Departments and services within NHS Grampian can also set up and manage accounts on these sites, within the scope of the organisation's social media for business

As well as posting various updates to these sites, colleagues respond to any appropriate feedback (such as comments, questions etc) posted in response to items published, or via direct messaging on sites where that feature is enabled. Colleagues liaise with the relevant departments to provide clear information in response to any queries or feedback received and also to source useful information to share.

To help manage its social media presence, NHS Grampian uses Hootsuite which connects multiple social media accounts. This allows posts to be published and scheduled to those accounts as well as managing and responding to social media feedback (comments and messages) in real-time – all from the one system.

Updates posted during 1st April 2024–31st March 2025 include:

- Media releases and various corporate updates
- Human interest updates (such as those highlighting and recognising the contributions and achievements of our staff, teams, services/departments and partner agencies)
- Sharing appropriate feedback items posted to Care Opinion either sharing posts Care
 Opinion have posted or linking directly to Care Opinion stories often on a Friday using the
 #FeedbackFriday hashtag.
- Highlighting new services, initiatives and support being offered by NHS Grampian, health and social care partnerships and other partner agencies
- Supporting various local, national and international health awareness/improvement (and health related) social marketing campaigns and advertising various vacancies across the organisation (including ongoing support for the 'Wish You Worked Here' Moray recruitment campaign).

The number of Facebook page likes has increased from 52,630 on 1st April 2024 to 54,058 on 31st March 2025 – this represents an increase of 3%. During the same period, the number of Facebook followers increased from 65,061 to 68,320 – an increase of 5%.

The number of X followers was 24,451 on 1st April 2024 and peaked at 24,457 on 17th October 2024. Since then there has been a slight decrease in the number of followers with there being 24,107 followers on 31st March 2025 – this represents a decrease of 1% since 1st April 2024. Our LinkedIn page followers increased from 16,923 on 1st April 2024 to 20,216 on 31st March 2025 – an increase of 19%.

Our Instagram account followers increased from 13,091 on 1st April 2024 to 14,077 on 31st March 2025 – an increase of 8%.

The number of followers for the NHS Grampian Threads account was 2,606 (on 1st June 2024 – the earliest date this data was available) and had reached 2,622 followers on 31st March 2025 – an increase of 1%.

The NHS Grampian BlueSky account was created in January 2025 and as of 31st March 2025 had 303 followers.

Our YouTube account subscribers have increased from 1,777 on 1st April 2024 to 2,163 on 31st March 2024 – increase of 22%. Our videos have been viewed on YouTube 142,901 times during the same period.



0

Page likes > Facebook Page



The number of people who like your Pages



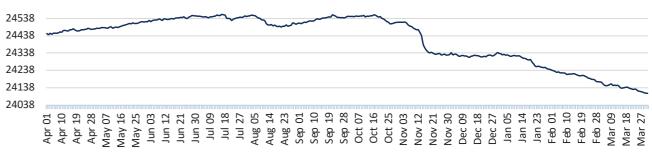
Page followers > Facebook Page



The number of people who followed your Pages



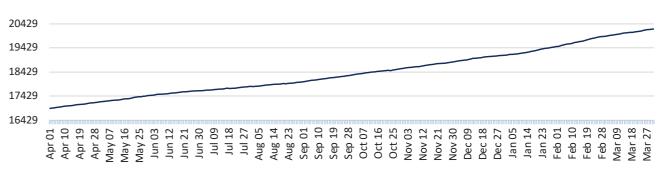
Followers > X (Twitter)



The number of people who followed your X account.



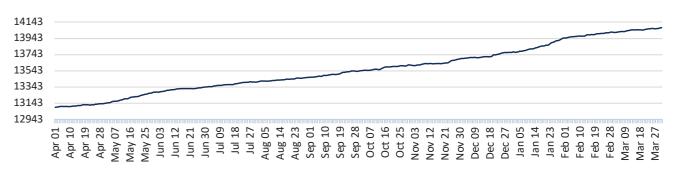
Followers > Linkedin



The number of people following your Pages



Followers > Account





Putting People First

The NHS Grampian board has agreed an intent to improve how we listen to and involve the public through the creation of Putting People First. The full framework can be viewed here: Putting People First The approach focuses on creating equal partnerships with the public, building trust and relationships through ongoing dialogue with people and our communities.

In 2024-2025, it was agreed to set the foundations for this new approach and a range of tests of change have begun. Despite

limited resources, we have made progress across all priorities in the delivery plan and important learning from this initial phase. The full progress report can be found here:

Supporting people's skills and confidence

This year, we have developed resources to support people (colleagues, citizens and communities) to improve how we involve and engage with the public. A digital toolkit has been developed through engagement with community members and organisations across Aberdeen, and also through the **Grampian Engagement Network**.

<u>The Community Empowerment Toolkit</u> provides tips and information for anyone looking to take action and make changes in their community. It is also for anyone looking to undertake community engagement as part of their role and includes the following:

Community members can find out a wide range of <u>information</u>, including getting in touch with their local Community Council, where to get help with funding, useful data to support projects, and how to connect into existing groups and organisations.

For organisations looking to undertake community engagement, the toolkit provides a <u>step-by-step guide</u>, with lots of useful resources to help support good community engagement. While the toolkit has been developed by Community Planning Aberdeen, the community engagement section can be used for any location.

Alongside the toolkit, a new introductory training course 'Foundations of Community Engagement' is now being offered to community engagement practitioners across Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. This course is for anyone who wants to learn the basics of community engagement and apply these skills as part of their job role.

In addition, a specific introductory training for NHS staff has also been developed. This is called Engagement 101 - 'Why you should be engaging with your patients every day and how to get started' and offers a one hour workshop for staff who are new to patient engagement. A first pilot workshop took place in February and was attended by approximately 15 colleagues in a range of different roles from across Grampian. A feedback form has been shared with attendees and will be used to improve the experience for future cohorts. This will be further developed in the next year.

The toolkit and new training were launched in Q4 and the update and impact will be evaluated in the year ahead.



Developing Community-Led Health responses – Community Appointment Days (CADs)

Over the past year, we have focused on supporting the development of Community Appointment Days to improve how we involve the public, wider services and the third sector, applying a learning approach to this work.

Community Appointment Days (CADs) are a new way of working which bring clinical services into non-clinical settings and offers under one roof a wide range of third sector, peer support, wider public sector and community based support. This approach provides unhurried person centred, holistic care and support, promoting prevention and self-management, seeing the whole person, beyond their presenting condition.

To date we have had 3 Community Appointment Days in Grampian, one in Elgin focusing on Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy and Podiatry and two in Aberdeen focusing on Chronic Pain, with further CADs planned for 2025 across a range of conditions and populations. In the past 6 months, over 370 people have attended a CAD in Grampian, providing high quality care and important learning to inform how we transform the system.

Moray Appointment Community Day - Full Video (youtube.com)
Aberdeen Community Appointment Day - Chronic Pain (5/2/25) - YouTube



Patient Experience - high-level of satisfaction around key themes:

Having Time - people were not rushed and had time to talk about their concerns.

Being Listened to – people fed back that they felt truly listened to.

One-stop-shop – people spoke positively of having services all in one place, learning what support was available in their community.

Patient Centred – advice was specific to each person, looked at as a whole person, not just one ailment.

Motivational - people expressed intent to become more active as a result of attending.

Staff Experience – learning and positive feedback around key themes

Operational – really positive about working this way and using these events going forward.

Consultations – really good to have a more holistic conversation with patients.

Preparation and support – staff taken out of 'what they know' can cause anxiety, also highlighted importance of scheduling breaks and debriefing after intense conversations.

Waiting Lists – staff talked of how this way of working could help to reduce waiting lists/improve uptake of prevention/self-management advice. This will feature in future evaluation activity.

Stakeholder feedback – positive feedback from partner organisations who attended, highly valued feeling an equal partner with the NHS and keen to participate in future sessions.

"To be heard, listened to and understood" I am so happy to be a part of this group, to help share my "lived experience of long term chronic pain", to promote a better understanding for the CAD professionals to assess the best and safest way to share all the help that they can, to the people that matter the most. It is so debilitating living with long term chronic pain and events such as these, give everyone "hope" for the future. A huge THANK YOU to everyone for caring and for wanting to make this a regular event in the future and I for one, am so grateful!

Member of Chronic Pain Service User Reference Group



Realistic Medicine

Realistic Medicine is about shifting away from an over-medicalised approach to health and care. One of the core pillars of Realistic Medicine is shared decision making. This means that patients are recognised as experts on what is important to them and clinicians are recognised as technical experts. By working together in this way, we know that better healthcare decisions are made.



The NHS Grampian Realistic Medicine programme uses shared decision making to include patients and the public in designing and shaping how we work.

Here are some examples:

Improving Migraine Management

We have led a joint project between The Migraine Trust (a third sector organisation) and NHS Grampian. Migraine is a condition which affects 1 in 7 people. It is the second highest cause of global disability in the general population, and the first in women aged 15–49.

The aim of the project was to train pharmacists on managing migraine to improve service provision from community pharmacy teams and primary care pharmacists.

Before developing training for pharmacists, we arranged a focus group for people living with migraine. This was followed up with a wider survey to get more views. Sixteen people living with migraine attended the focus group and 162 completed the wider survey.

Through engaging with people living with migraine, we were able to understand what would enable them to access support from pharmacy. We were able to use their experience and ideas to shape up the training and resources developed as part of the project.

Future Care Planning

We have taken a similar approach for an ongoing project on Future Care Planning. There is a growing body of evidence that shows future care planning helps improve the quality of end-of-life care. This is because we can make sure decisions about healthcare are made based on what matters most to the person. Good future care plans start with kind and realistic conversations.

We are designing resources and tools to help health and social care staff, and the public to think about and have these conversations. Illness, death and dying can be very difficult and sensitive things to talk about. We have held a range of online and in-person meetings to seek views and suggestions from staff, patients and the public to help us design this work.

Combined Child Health Patient and Family Experience Survey

A quarterly patient experience survey is conducted in Combined Child Health, covering all inpatient wards and ambulatory areas of RACH, as well as the Paediatric Ward in DGH and the Neonatal Unit in AMH. This survey is conducted by an external provider, BPA, and contributes to the evidence required for our journey to Magnet Recognition®. The results are benchmarked against similar units worldwide, enabling an understanding of how the quality of patient experience and care at our facilities compares to other hospitals and services. Nursing staff review the survey results each quarter and use the data to celebrate good practice and identify opportunities for improvement.

Key findings from April 2024 to March 2025:

• Response Rates:

- Total responses: 882 (Q2 2024: 190, Q3 2024: 203, Q4 2024: 210, Q1 2025: 279)

Patient Experience:

- In the most recent survey, 91.8% of patients and families expressed satisfaction with the care provided, with only 1.91% reporting dissatisfaction.
- Similarly, when asked whether their expectations were met, 90.9% of respondents were satisfied, with only 2.83% dissatisfied.
- Both satisfaction and expectation fulfilment have consistently remained above 90% for the entire year.

When comparing our results with those of other public hospitals and healthcare services worldwide, our performance is at or above average for over three-quarters of the questions surveyed (26 out of 34).

These results reflect the ongoing commitment to providing high-quality care and ensuring a positive patient experience across our services. Continued benchmarking allows us to identify areas for further improvement, ensuring that we maintain and enhance the standard of care we provide to our patients and their families.



Complaints Handling

Complaints come into the NHS Grampian Feedback Service from various routes, with the majority by email. Once a complaint is received, an email communication takes place with the relevant complaint lead on the day the complaint is received. This is to encourage prompt investigation and resolution of the complaint by telephone, where appropriate. All complaints, associated documents and communications are held centrally within our electronic risk management system, Datix.

Complaint leads are encouraged to make direct contact with individuals involved by telephone providing a more person-centred approach to complaint handling. We understand how important this is for complainants to clarify the issues they wish to raise and the outcome they are looking for.

Meetings can also be offered to allow further discussion of the concerns raised. If the complaint can be resolved at an early stage, a written response to confirm the outcome, and any agreed actions to be undertaken by the service is offered.

Clinical treatment, bereaved, sensitive and complex complaints are, when suitable, supported by a named Feedback Officer, who will contact the individual to clarify issues, explain the process and to ask if they would like a meeting. This helps to ensure that individuals are aware of who to contact, understand the process and helps to make it clear that complex or cross sector complaints may take longer than 20 working days to complete. In addition, the Feedback Officers are always available should any of the independent Contractors require assistance dealing with a complaint. The Feedback Service remain in contact with independent contractors throughout the year.

To ensure learning occurs from feedback, service managers identify the learning opportunities for improvement, and record actions taken on Datix. Learning outcomes are included in shared learning events and assurance reports to demonstrate the learning and actions taken across NHS Grampian.

The Team Leader for the Feedback Service is a clinician and is also the NHS Grampian lead for adverse events. This has afforded the opportunity for triangulation of learning from complaints, adverse events as well as duty of candour and clinical risk. The Team Leader attends the weekly Clinical Risk Meeting led by the Medical Director and Executive Nurse Director. This meeting enables system-wide discussion, action and appropriately managed performance against national standards, in this case supporting timely responses to complaints.

NHS Grampian understands the importance of striving to improve the complaints handling process and electronic survey link is sent to all complainants to offer the opportunity to share feedback on how their complaint was handled.

All staff in the Feedback Service have completed training in Equality and Diversity including a bespoke session provided by the Interim Equality and Diversity Manager. The team have instructions on how to use Language Line and how to enable letters to be translated into native languages and different formats. The Feedback Service Manager and Interim Equality and Diversity Manager are commencing work this year in raising awareness through social media, public websites and with partner agencies and community groups. The intention is to post messages and information in various languages and formats to raise awareness and encourage feedback.

People are invited to share their experience of the complaints process via an online survey. Our survey questions are based on the suggested themes in the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) from the SPSO (1).

For the period April 24 to February 2025 we received a total of 300 responses (34% of those invited to complete the survey).

At the end of the survey, people are invited to share what they feel we did well in relation to our complaints handling and where we can improve. We received comments from 176 people.

What we are doing well

Praise was received for both the NHSG Feedback service and service managers with the following words used to describe their experience:

willingness to listen; empathetic; professionalism, supportive; incredible; understanding. And gratitude was expressed for help with addressing or resolving issues whilst also learning from feedback received.

Where we can improve

A number of people commented that they were unaware their complaint had been closed and felt that some or all of the issues of the complaint had not been addressed/ answered or resolved.

Others felt the process for handling a complaint took too long and felt written responses were not always imparted with genuine empathy and/or lacking in apology.

Thanks to all the people who took the time to share their experience with us. This helps us understand and reflect on what we could do to improve your experience and we will take action to address these themes at Organisational and local level. Results are shared on illuminate which means all service providers can access and reflect on the results for complaints that originated in their sector.

[1]Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) SPSO Complaints Improvement Framework. Edinburgh; 2017 Mar. Revised: March 2017.

Learning & Action

Service Leads are responsible for ensuring that the learning from complaints is identified and action recorded in the appropriate fields in Datix. The learning and actions fields are reviewed by the Feedback Service to support services and share, as appropriate transferable learning across the organisation.

Actions taken as a result of a complaint	Total
Improvements made to service access	
Improvement plans created and instigated	
Communication - Improvements in communication staff-staff or staff-patient	727
Professional issues addressed	45
Staff Development	165
Policy reviewed	8
Risk issues identified and managed	18
System - Changes to systems/processes	36
Share lessons with staff/patients/public	
Waiting - Review of waiting times	

Actions taken as a result of a complaint

The family of a patient complained around results not being passed on by the locum Consultant as they had left the service.

A generic email account was created by the service for all communication by the medical team on the outcome of multi-disciplinary reviews.



A complaint was received around staff member's poor attitude. Complainant was called soon after the complaint was received and the service apologised for the experience sharing that all feedback has been shared with those involved for learning.



A complaint was received regarding lack of review whilst waiting in the Emergency Care Department. Complainant contacted and apology offered. The manager highlighted the circumstances the staff were faced with that day as well. Complainant commented on the empathetic and professional way this complaint was dealt with.



A complaint was received regarding ADHD diagnosis and medication for this. Although unable to provide her with an appointment date, the complainant appreciated the update and was sympathetic to the pressure the service is currently under.



Complaints Response Times and Outcomes:

Stage 1

- Early Resolution
- Resolved within 5 working days

Stage 2 (Non-Escalated)

- Not able to be resolved at early resolution
- Investigation and response in 20 working days

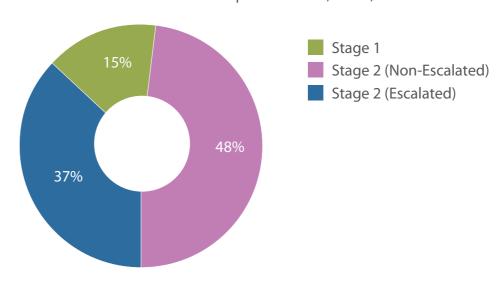
Stage 2 (Escalated)

- Immediately passed for full investigation
- Response within 20 working days

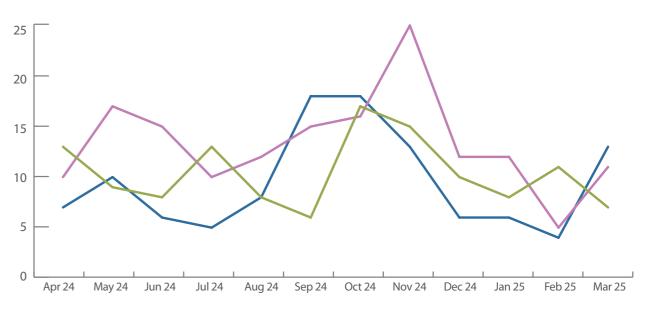
Complaints Closed

This chart illustrates the percentage of complaints closed this year at each stage.

The chart below shows the complaints closed, in full, within timescales for each stage per month.



Complaints closed in full within timescale



Number of Stage 1 Complaints Closed within 5 days

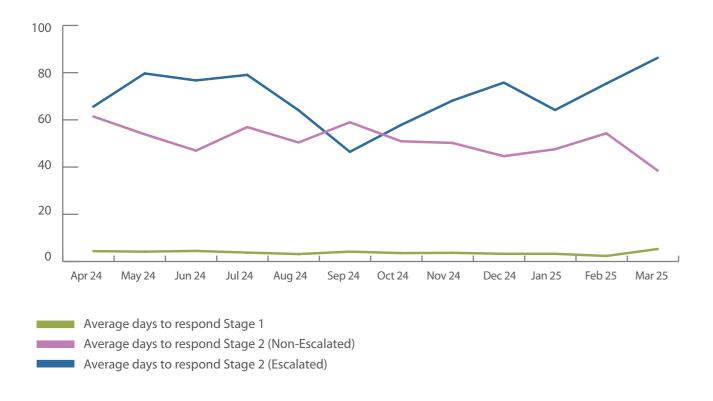
Number of Stage 2 (Non-Escalated) Complaints Closed within 20 days

Number of Stage 2 (Escalated) Complaints Closed within 20 days

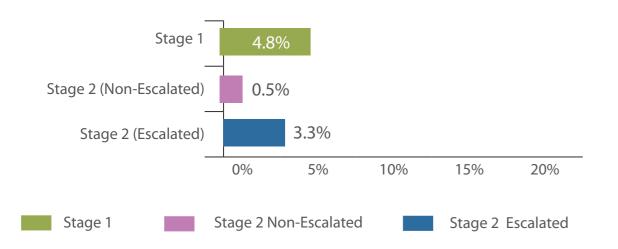
Average Response Times

The response times for each stage in working days, is illustrated in the chart below, along with complaints closed within timescales. This remains an area for further work to show sustained improvement.

Some complaints may involve multiple services. In order to ensure that a full investigation of the complaint is completed there are times when an extension to the response time is authorised. This is to ensure a comprehensive response answering all concerns is provided to the complainant. As can be seen from this chart the percentage of complaints that require this authorisation are small in number.



Percentage of cases where an extension was authorised



Complaints Outcomes

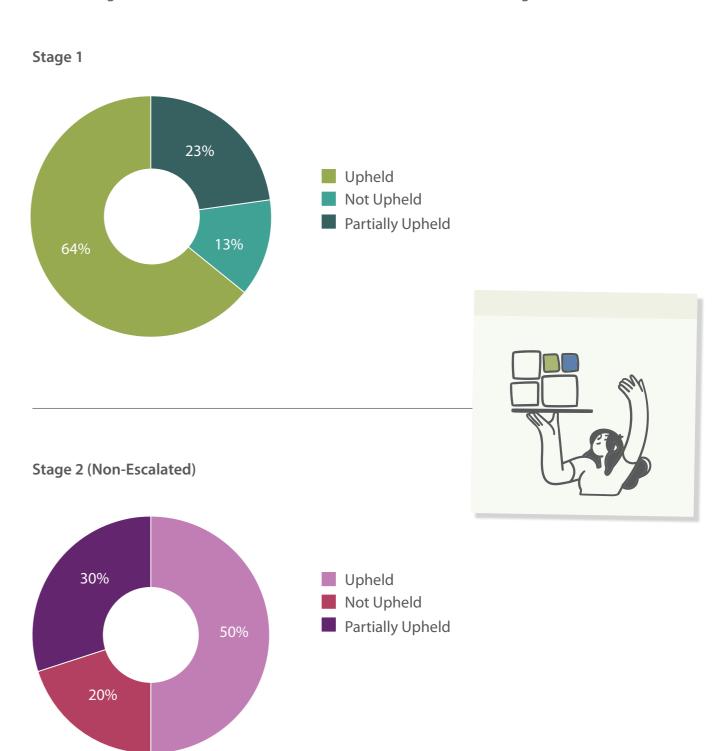
These charts illustrate the outcomes for complaints closed at each stage.

Chart 1 shows that over the year 64% of Stage 1complaints were upheld, 13% were not upheld and 23% were partially upheld.

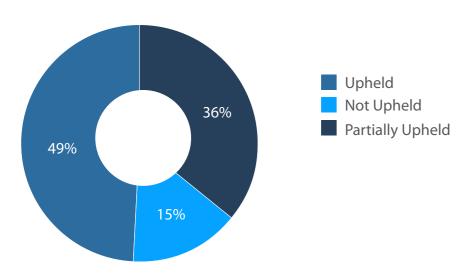
Chart 2 illustrates that 50% of Non-Escalated Stage 2 complaints were upheld, 20% were not upheld, and 30% were partially upheld.

Chart 3 for Stage 2 Escalated complaints shows that 49% were upheld, 15% were not upheld, and 36% were partially upheld.

The learning from these outcomes will be factored into our shared learning events.



Stage 2 (Escalated)

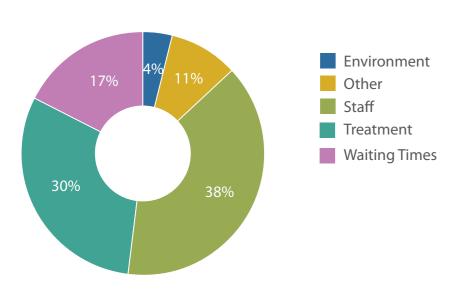


Complaints Summary

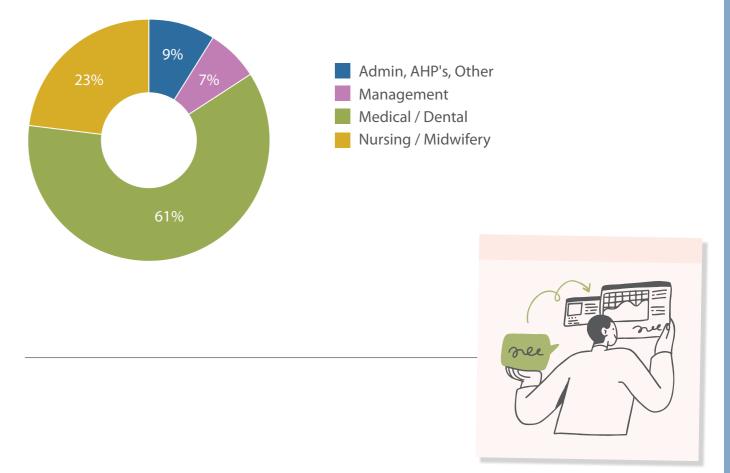
The charts below show the themes of the complaints we received over the year and the staff groups these complaints related to.

It is important that NHS Grampian utilises all feedback not just the lessons from moderate and major complaints, in order to identify common themes that can support changes to our processes and services.

Complaints Summary

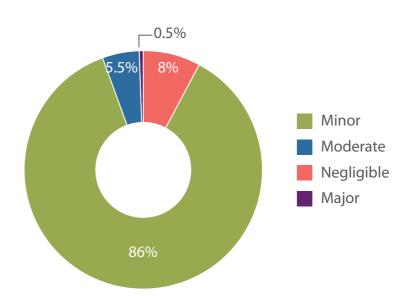


Staff groups people complained about



Complaint Severity

In looking at the severity of the complaints that are recorded on Datix we can see that the majority of complaints can be categorised as negligible or minor.



Service Improvements

NHS Grampian recognises this approach as crucial to maximise the value of the feedback we receive and has taken steps to support learning and improvement are recognised as the main outcome from feedback:

- Feedback is discussed at multidisciplinary clinical quality/governance meetings;
- Clinical treatment complaints are shared at a wide variety of learning events;
- Analysis of feedback is part of service reviews to identify any learning or themes that are transferable and may require focused improvement support.

Change Example:

Haemodialysis patients have for a long time shared their interest, through feedback with the service and in conversation, in the option of home therapy. Work to deliver this has been ongoing for the last few years, as colleagues have worked through the development of a new framework. Over the last year this has come to fruition and NHS Grampian is now working alongside specialist contractors on the home conversion and installation work needed to roll this option out to many more patients at pace. The home dialysis setup involves education, training, and converting a home space for the necessary equipment. For patients who typically attend a dialysis unit multiple times a week, this option provides flexibility and saves time. While not suitable for everyone, it allows some patients to enjoy a more rewarding lifestyle. Patients will have the ability to control their treatment schedule, with nursing support available via phone, video call, and routine visits.

Victoria Adams-Ross, Haemodialysis Patient, pictured alongside Scott Arnot, Service Manager, NHS Grampian in her home in Kincorth.

"The anxiety levels are so much less, as I was so stressed about getting the bus over to the unit in the mornings. It's so much more relaxed at home – you're in your own house, you can sit and watch TV, listen to music. I can have my heating on full blast with my electric blanket on and I choose what time I do my dialysis now. I'm beginning to feel better. I love to swim and I can swim in the morning and do the dialysis in the afternoon. That means I can sleep after if I need to. Sometimes before, having it in the morning would wipe me out for the rest of the day."

Victoria Adams-Ross, Haemodialysis Patient

You can read about Victoria Adams-Ross experience of moving to home haemodialysis here.

Staff Development

NHS Grampian provided a range of opportunities to support development of person-centred experience:



137

137 eLearning complaint handling process modules have been undertaken by staff. The training helps ensure staff are aware of the complaints handling process and the work of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Real cases, anonymised, are discussed and staff are always interested to follow a case from beginning to end and learn about a person-centred approach to complaints.



416

416 Modules of NHS Grampian Adverse Event Review training have been completed by staff. The recently developed eLearning is a valuable opportunity for staff to learn the keys skills needed for review of an adverse event and to support the safety of our healthcare system for everyone. The modules are designed to allow staff to complete the sections most relevant to the area of adverse events they are involved in.



2,667 Staff completed a comprehensive Equality and Diversity programme ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities in this field.



191 staff have completed Duty of Candour eLearning to support staff in understanding the Duty of Candour and what it means for their role.

What Next?

It is acknowledged that the Grampian health and care system remains under very significant pressure. However, NHS Grampian is committed to continue to ensure that all feedback is encouraged, that the service demonstrates compassion and is person-centred with a commitment to utilise the learning to support improvement to the services we deliver.

Over the next 12 month period we will work to:

- Improve uptake of training across services.
- Improve our response times.
- Raise awareness through social media, post messages and information in various languages/ formats to encourage feedback.
- Engage with services to ensure all points raised in complaints are fully responded to.



