

Agenda Item 8

TO: West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust

FROM: Debbie Townsend, Complaints & Claims Manager

DATE: 20 November 2003

SUBJECT: **WEST GLOUCESTERSHIRE PRIMARY CARE TRUST
COMPLAINTS SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL – 30
SEPTEMBER 2003**

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform the Trust of complaints received against the Trust and against FHS Contractors for the period 1st April 2003 – 30th September 2003.

2.0 INFORMATION

2.1 Complaints against the Trust:

29 complaints have been received (Apr – Sept 2003) or carried over from the previous quarter, with 10 new complaints being received for quarter July – Sept, broken down by speciality as follows:

Health Visiting	3
District Nursing	0
Occupational Health	8
Podiatry Service	11 (0 in Gloucester, 4 in Forest, 3 in Cheltenham, 4 in Stroud and 0 in Cotswolds)
Community Hospital	7
Others	0
Total	29

2.2 27% of complaints related to clinical concerns and 58% related to length of wait for appointments.

- 2.3 2 requests for an Independent Review Panel have been received and these have both been turned down by the Convenor. (1 related to Health Visiting and 1 to Occupational Therapy waiting times).
- 2.4 15 complaints have been closed for this period.
- 2.5 The Complaints Manager in conjunction with Heads of Service and PCDMs have continued to meet with a number of patients either in their homes or at Highnam in an attempt to:
- a) Listen to their concerns
 - b) Provide an honest explanation and apology if something has gone wrong and steps to be taken to rectify the situation
 - c) Provide an explanation regarding pressures on various services such as Occupational Therapy and Podiatry
 - d) Resolve problems where possible as quickly as possible

The feedback from patients has been that they have appreciated the time taken by Senior PCT managers to listen to them, the openness and honesty if something has gone wrong, the assurance that steps will be taken to remedy the situation and the opportunity to discuss and explore options for greater involvement in either their own personal care or in shaping local services as this is seen as an opportunity to engage with the public and to inform them that the PCT is looking for help from patients regarding the future development of health services in their area.

2.6 **Correspondence performance**

Please see attached Annex 1

Qtr 2:

6 (42.9%) complaints exceeded the 20 day response time target and this was due to:

- 1 very complex complaint requiring an extremely careful and thorough investigation
- staff on summer annual leave. Please see action plan below to ensure similar problems do not happen again

2.7 **Star Ratings**

The performance of complaints (measured against the target response times) is included in the Trust's overall performance which feeds into the star ratings. With this in mind the correspondence performance table has been amended to include quarterly performance, year to date and previous years outturn.

An action plan has been drawn up and improvements put in place to help achieve an improvement overall in the 2002/2003 target response times which includes:

- A review of system between Complaints and Director of Ops & Nursing to avoid unnecessary delays in agreeing responses to patients
- A review of annual leave cover arrangements when Complaints Manager is away

The Trust's overall performance regarding complaints for 2002/2003 was slightly above average at 68.852% against a national average of 66.667%. The table attached as Annex 1 provides an indication of performance to date and a comparison with the previous year.

2.8 **Complaints against FHS Contractors:**

This is the quarterly monitoring report, which provides an overview of the total numbers and types of FHS complaints received at West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust for the period 1st April – 30th September 2003.

The total number of current complaints for the period 1st April 2003 – 30th September 2003 is 36.

This includes 14 new complaints for the quarter (June – Sept) and 22 existing complaints.

The total number of closed complaints is 21. 15 complaints remain current and are carried forward to the second quarter.

Of the 36 total complaints received, 23 (64%) relate to clinical issues, 21 (58%) relate to complaints against GPs (13 in Gloucester – 62% and 8 in Forest – 38%) and 13 (36%) relate to complaints against Dentists (8 in Gloucester – 61% and 5 in Forest – 39%).

8 complaints have been referred to a Conciliator (6 GP, 1 Dental and 1 PCT).

3 requests (2 GP and 1 Dentist) for an Independent Review Panel have been received (April - Sept). 1 (GP) has been referred to a Panel (final report awaited), 1 (dental) has been turned down and 1 (GP) is currently awaiting a decision by the Convenor.

3.0 **COMPLAINTS FROM OTHER SOURCES**

- 3.1 Although this is not a statutory requirement, the following information reports on the numbers of complaints/concerns raised by other people such as MPs, GPs, schools for the period 1st April 2003 – 30th September 2003 and contributes to the overall themes relating to concerns/issues raised.

	MPs	GP/Consultant	Schools	Other	Total
Occupational Therapy	2	4	2	0	8
Podiatry Service				1	1
Access to GP Records	1				1
GP				1	1
Glucose Tolerance Test		1			1
Lack of NHS Dentists				1	1
Change of repeat med.				1	1
Waiting Times Lydney Physio		1			1
Totals	3	6	2	4*	15

* Others include complaints from Bream Forum (Podiatry), National Care Standards (GP), NHS Dental Staff (lack of NHS Dentistry), DOH (repeat medication)

4.0 COMPLIMENTS

4.1 34 Compliments have been received for this period:

Podiatry Service	2
Care at Dilke Memorial Hospital	1
Care at Lydney Hospital	29
Health Visiting	1
Wheelchair Assessment Unit	1

5.0 PALS

5.1 The first and second quarter's report has been received for the period April – June 2003 (Qtr 1) and July – September 2003 (Qtr 2). From these reports West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust has received the highest number of contacts in comparison to the other 2 PCTs. These contacts are as follows:

Enquiry type	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
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Community	33	37
Mental Health	7	7
Raising concerns	19	16
Requesting information	12	16
Requesting advice	9	18

PALS are required to record the number of contacts made within five main areas of the Patients Experience which are:

1. Access and Waiting
2. Safe, high quality co-ordinated care
3. Better information, communication and choice
4. Building relationships
5. Clean and comfortable place to be

For West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust PALS have reported the following. Little or no information is available for the categories of Building relationships (4) and Clean and comfortable place to be (5):

Access and Waiting Times Category

Enquiry type	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Waiting Times	57%	44%
Delays	29%	0%
Transport	14%	19%

Safe, High Quality Care Category

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Concerns re clinical care information available	58%	little
Pain Control information available	17%	little
Discharge arrangements information available	17%	little

Medication information available	8%	little
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Better Information, Communication and Choice Category

	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Request for information	little information available	54%
Request for advice	little information available	34%

The PALS Manager has been asked to provide more detailed information regarding concerns relating to clinical care to ensure any concerns/issues are addressed appropriately and any necessary action taken.

- 5.2 The 3 PCTs and the Partnership Trust are currently exploring different options for the delivery of PALS from April 2004/April 2005.
- 5.3 Each PCT has been asked to support and meet quarterly with the PALS Manager to discuss the development and strategy of the service. For West Gloucestershire PCT, it has been decided that PALS would be a valuable link in providing feedback from patients on "The Patients Experience" and as the PALS Manager is a member of the Trust's PPI Group this would be an appropriate link. The PALS Manager is proposing to the next PPI Group meeting in November that a PALS Link Worker is identified in each PCDM patch. PALS would continue to provide support with informal complaints/concerns raised by patients, but the emphasis for WGPCT is for PALS to provide feedback from patients.

6.0 COMPLAINTS REFORM and CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE AND LEGAL CLAIMS

- 6.1 There is no further definitive information available regarding the Complaints Reform. However plans still suggest that CHAI are still looking at a Spring 2004 implementation date. Draft regulations relating to the role of CHAI were expected August/September 2003 but no further information has been issued.
- 6.2 The DOH issued a report "Making Amends" on 30th June 2003 addressing proposals for the reform of clinical negligence in the NHS. The report outlines 19 recommendations to improve the system making it fairer and faster not only for patients but also for NHS Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals.
- 6.3 The major recommendation is the proposal to establish an NHS Redress Scheme which builds upon the work of the NHSLA. The aim is to create a no fault liability, a structured claims system and a tariff system to fix compensation. Complaints Managers may be responsible and have authority to pay up to £30,000 for individual claims (which should also include mediation) in recognition that some harm has been caused to the complainant/claimant.

- 6.4 The remaining recommendations cover the areas of complaints, litigation and rehabilitation.
- 6.5 The DOH has asked for views on the report and the expected implementation date is not expected until 2005.

7.0 PROTECTED LEARNING TIME

- 7.1 The Clinical Governance Manager arranged and led 2 Protected Learning Events (1 in Gloucester and 1 in Forest) relating to Confidentiality. The Information Manager attended regarding Data Protection and Caldicott Guardian issues and the Complaints Manager regarding issues relating to Patient Confidentiality and Access to Health Records and legal claims.
- 7.2 The events were very well attended by Practice Managers, receptionists and medical secretaries from GP practices with very positive feedback received. Several follow up visits have been requested by individual practices asking for help in drawing up their own in-house protocols relating to access to health records and legal claims. These events provided a further opportunity to develop closer links with GP practices.

8.0 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 A copy of the Complaints Summary is attached to this paper.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Trust is recommended to note the contents of this report.