

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY S.M. AHIER OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 17th JANUARY 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 24th JANUARY 2022**

Question

In relation to the General Hospital, will the Minister advise the Assembly –

- (a) to whom complaints are reported and who adjudicates on them;
- (b) how many complaints were made in each of the last three years; and
- (c) how many of those complaints, if any, were upheld and what resultant actions took place?

Answer

- a) Complaints received about the general hospital follow the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy:

<https://www.gov.je/Government/Comments/Pages/CustomerFeedbackPolicy.aspx>

There are three stages to the complaints process –

- Stage 1 frontline complaint handling by staff and an early resolution approach;
- Stage 2 escalation to head of service or manager for issues that require further investigation or are more complex/serious/high risk; and
- Stage 3 if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response at Stage 2, they can request a review of their complaint. The Health and Community Services Director General will delegate this to the executive clinical leads – the Chief Nurse and Group Medical Director.

[If the Government of Jersey complaints process above has been completed and issues have not been resolved to the customer's satisfaction, the next stage is independent external review by the States of Jersey Complaints Panel.]

The process is that complaints should be forwarded on to the Feedback team which is responsible for the administration of the complaint and which records it on the Datix system. When the complaint is logged on the system it is allocated to the relevant care group management team to be investigated and responded to in the most appropriate manner (telephone, written response or face to face), which has been agreed with the complainant. The investigation is undertaken by the most relevant member of staff which is decided based on the type of complaint at stage 1 or 2. For example, a stage 1 complaint could be investigated by a ward manager with a response direct to the complainant by phone; a stage 2 more complex complaint that may involve different services will be investigated and a response formed by a lead nurse, which is signed off by the care group Associate Medical Director or General Manager.

b) The total number of complaints received and recorded via the Feedback team in the last three years in relation to the general hospital is as follows:

- 227 in 2019
- 255 in 2020
- 321 in 2021

The number of complaints in 2021 may have increased due to the work that has been undertaken to raise awareness on how to provide feedback within HCS. The increase in the number need not be seen as a negative, instead demonstrating that individuals are better informed to raise concerns and feel confident in being able to do so.

c) All complaints received are looked at as an opportunity to learn from individuals' experiences. Complaints are investigated and, where appropriate, the responses provided to the complainant include learning and actions based on the outcome of the investigation. This is the reason we do not record on the Datix system if the complaint has been upheld or not upheld. HCS uses a different system to other Government of Jersey departments which use the Central Feedback Management System (CFMS). Any health-related complaints that come via CFMS are directed to the Feedback team.

Each complaint is different and resulting actions will depend on the circumstances of each case. It is not possible to list all resulting actions from complaints in the period given, but the following are some examples of actions derived from analysis of the main themes from complaints which are communication and staff attitude/behaviour:

- Improving written communication about discharge by standardizing the patient folder so that it goes with the patient.
- Introducing boxes for personal items to reduce the risk of missing items and therefore the potential emotional impact that relatives experience.
- Reviewing the process for lost property to include guidance for staff and patients.
- Developing customer care and communication skills training which is being delivered in HCS on a monthly basis.