



Your Service Your Say

Anonymised Feedback Learning Casebook



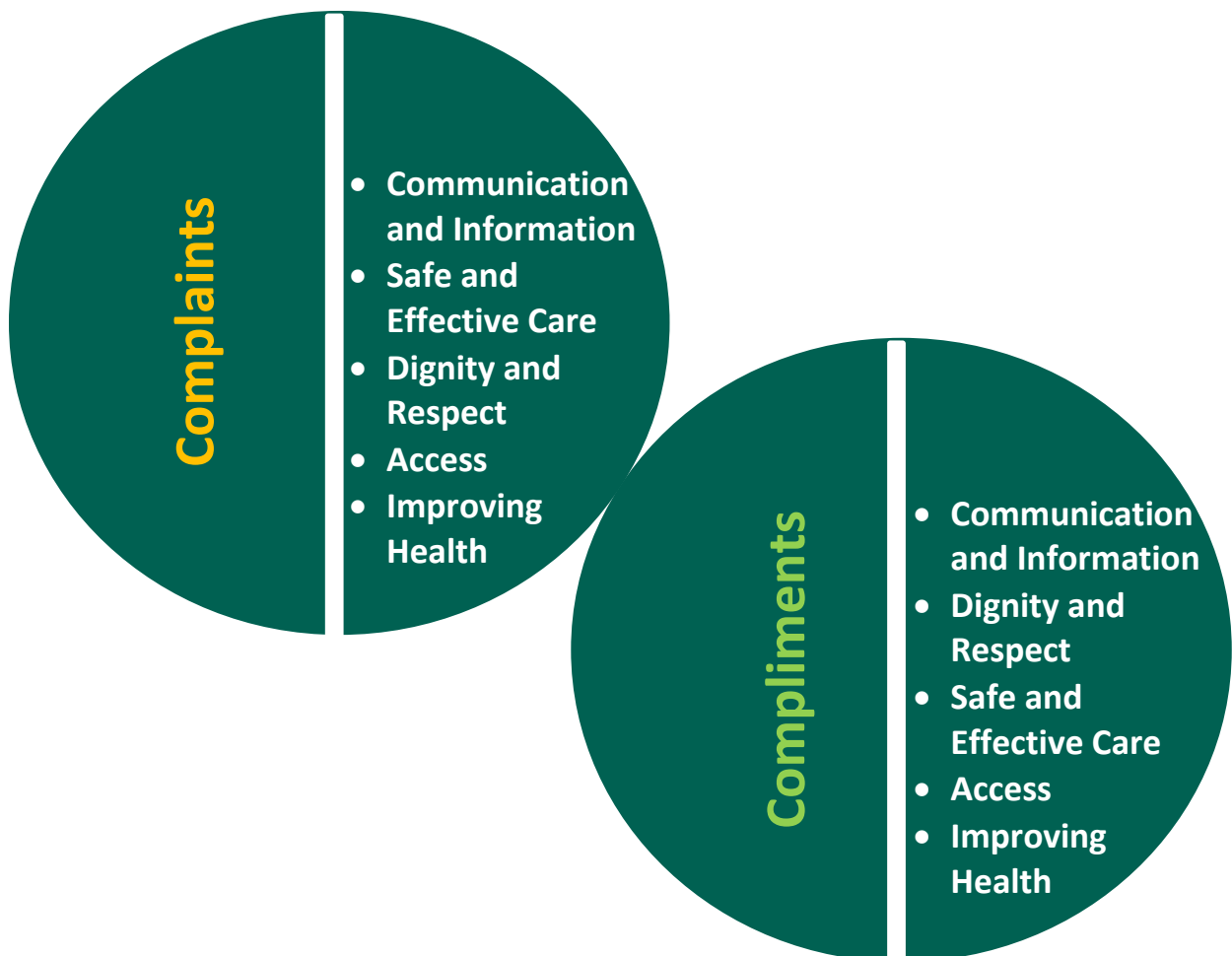
Introduction

Welcome to the full year 2024 edition of the national anonymised feedback learning casebook. The casebook presents a total of 35 cases covering both complaints and compliments received by hospitals, community services and national services.

The cases presented in the casebook contain themes and issues that need to be examined in the context of quality and service improvement. The learning gained from patient and service user feedback helps target and prioritise improvement efforts as well as highlighting good practice to be promoted and replicated.

The 2024 casebook features a total of **18 complaints**; 6 complaints from hospitals, 9 from community services and 3 from national services that were investigated along with their outcomes. The casebook also features **17 compliments**; 9 from hospitals, 4 from community services and 4 from national services, which highlight the learning to be gained from positive patient and service user feedback.

Key Categories



Complaint Issues

14 | **18 complaints**

Communication and Information

Communication and Information relates to issues such as accessing and being provided with sufficient or appropriate information at relevant times. It also concerns the availability of accurate service information as this can be a barrier to supporting people to access services. Being clear when communicating, providing detailed explanations and the proper recording or documenting of information that would be relied upon for accessing supports is also highlighted. Issues were also raised around general communication skills such as how those using our services were spoken with.

Safe and Effective Care

Safe and Effective Care issues concern the failure to identify care needs resulting in a delay in receiving treatment, delays in accessing necessary treatment due to process issues as well as delays in providing time sensitive treatment. The general care provided as well as follow up care post initial treatment also features.

11 | **18 complaints**

Other complaint categories such as *Dignity and Respect*, *Access* and *Improving Health* were also identified within the cases.

Dignity and Respect concerns the delivery of care that is responsive to and respectful of individual needs. The lack of awareness and sensitivity around engagements with families of young patients caused upset and impacted a family in the final days of a young patient. Dignity and respect also concerns the behaviours of staff towards patients and service users.

Access relates to having the appropriate facilities available to accommodate patients/service users with different or additional needs comfortably and contribute to a more positive service experience. *Improving health* concerns having no healthy snack options available as per the HSE Vending policy 2019.

Compliment Categories

12 | 17 compliments

Communication and Information

Communication and Information relate to being provided with clear information and being kept updated. Providing detailed explanations of treatments, risks and options was valued and support informed decision making. Engaging in a calm and respectful manner helped patients and service users feel listened to and less anxious. Tailoring communication for younger patients and providing the time within consultations to ensure their understanding was appreciated and contributed to a positive experience.

Dignity and Respect

Dignity and Respect concern the delivery of care and the difference it made when delivered with kindness and compassion and where it took into account an individual's circumstances. The value and importance of initiatives, such as a palliative care room to support end of life care, was appreciated and provided comfort, practical support and privacy for family going through a very difficult experience.

11 | 17 compliments

Other categories of positive feedback featured are *Safe and Effective Care, Improving Health, Access and Participation*.

HCAT Classification

New for 2024 is the highlighting of the HCAT rating applied to complaints.

Service users and their families process a huge amount of data; observing and evaluating all care interactions. Complaints are often written with the aim of contributing to the improvement of services. However, the tools for harnessing the potential of these insights have been limited.

The Healthcare Complaints Audit Tool or HCAT is an innovative method of classifying complaints developed by the London School of Economics (LSE). By applying HCAT to complaints, it can assist services to identify 'hot spots' for harm, i.e. an area in care where harm occurs frequently, as well as 'blind spots', i.e. areas in care that are not easily observed.

Following an extensive project with National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and the London School of Economics to examine the suitability of HCAT within the Irish healthcare context, HCAT is now a mandatory feature of complaints recording on the national Complaints Management System (CMS).

The improved classification system will support the identification of systemic issues and trends within services leading to improvements in healthcare delivery and ensuring high standards of quality and safety.

Where HCAT has been applied to the complaints presented in this casebook, the rating has been assessed as:



Learning from feedback is fundamental in providing high quality healthcare services. Listening to and acting on the views, concerns and experiences of Patients, Service Users and their families enable us to guide decision making to improve services and provide the best possible care.

Publication of the casebook is part of the HSE's commitment to use Patient and Service User feedback as a tool for learning and to facilitate the sharing of that learning.

The casebook will be widely circulated to staff within the HSE and shared with Health Region Management who will consider the learning from these cases.

Hospital Services

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

An email was received from a patient who attended the Emergency Department. They wanted to pass on their sincere thanks to all the staff that they observed working so hard in the Emergency Department. The patient explained that when they were canvassing for an electorate candidate, and while putting a leaflet in a letterbox, their finger was bitten by a dog on the other side of the door. They went to their local pharmacy who advised them to attend the Emergency Department.

Nature of positive feedback

The patient explained that when they arrived at the emergency department, the waiting room was very busy. However, they noticed that there was a clear system in place and the flow of patients was being managed at all times. The patient was triaged by a nurse and then seen by an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). The ANP cleaned and dressed the wound, administered a tetanus injection, and then directed them to the x-ray unit, where the x-ray confirmed there was no fracture. Finally, the ANP provided them with a prescription for antibiotics and explained why they were indicated. The patient was discharged within two hours of arriving. The patient commented that all of the staff that they observed was professional, respectful, and courteous at all times. The ANP in particular was gentle, informative, and reassuring. When the patient left the hospital, they felt incredibly proud of the health service and grateful to live in a country that provides a high-quality public service to everyone. The patient felt that the €100 public charge was well spent.

Outcome and Learning

The positive feedback was relayed to the staff of the Emergency Department. They were delighted to hear about this patient's positive experience and that the system in place for managing the flow of patients through the ED was working well. This positive feedback reinforced the good practice in place and boosted the morale of staff.

Hospital Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A compliment email was received in the Patient Experience Office from a patient who attended the Endoscopy Department for a procedure.

Nature of positive feedback

The patient stated in their feedback that they *“would just like to say thank you to your staff on my visit today, they were from start to finish kind, helpful and with great sense of humours and very professional. Nobody looks forward to hospital appointments and unfortunately, I've had a few lately, but these comments apply across the board for every department I've visited. I can say that never in my visits have I ever had anybody be unkind or short tempered, this, especially under the pressure they must work under. I don't know if your staff ever receive these comments, I hope so because they deserve to.”*

Outcome and Learning

The Complaints Officer acknowledged and thanked the patient for their lovely comments and for providing such valuable feedback and assured them that the staff do receive the compliments submitted.

The feedback was documented on the Hospital's Feedback Management system. This feedback was then forwarded to the relevant Managers and Consultants for their review and dissemination amongst their team. It was such a positive message for the staff in the Endoscopy Department to receive and they were very appreciative of it.

Compliments and comments from patients, their families and carers help us understand what matters to them and what makes a positive difference to their treatment and care.

Hospital Services

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*)

HCAT Severity: Not Available

HCAT Harm: Not Available

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

An oncology patient attending the day ward for treatment, expressed dissatisfaction that they experienced significant delays during their attendance for the administration of an injection. The prolonged sitting and stress experienced as a result of the waiting times, caused them to experience pain and elevation of their blood pressure.

Investigation

The complaint was examined by the Operations and Nursing Management Team with responsibility for the day ward and the Director of Pharmacy.

Outcome and Learning

The investigation concluded that when the complainant and other patients attended the day ward for their scheduled injection, they were firstly reviewed by the doctor, who then approved the preparation of the injection. The nursing team then ordered the injection from the pharmacy department. This had to be dispensed and delivered to the day ward, which resulted in a three-hour waiting time.

The complaint was upheld and an explanation and apology provided for the prolonged waiting time and distress experienced.

As a result of the complaint a review and change to the process was implemented to improve waiting times for patients. Injections are now dispensed and delivered to the day ward in the morning prior to commencement of the service. Nursing staff no longer have to place the order while the patient is in attendance or wait for the delivery. Once the patient is reviewed and preparation of the injection approved by the doctor, the injection can be administered immediately by the nursing staff. This has significantly reduced the waiting times.

Hospital Services

Category: Access (*Hospital facilities*); Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Improving Health (*Catering*); Accountability (*Finance*)

HCAT Severity: Not Available

HCAT Harm: Not Available

Status: Partially Upheld

Background to Complaint

A parent submitted a complaint following a poor experience they had in the Emergency Department (ED). The parent presented to ED with their child after they were unable to get an appointment with their General Practitioner (GP) earlier that day.

The parent was dissatisfied with the following:

- Long wait times to be seen by a doctor
- The long waiting time exacerbated by poor infrastructure e.g. hard metal chairs in the waiting room
- The long waiting times resulted in the need to avail of the vending machines, which were not stocked with any healthy options. The parent believed the vending machine snacks were not in compliance with the HSE Vending Policy 2019.
- The parent took issue with an ED invoice being promptly issued the next day.

While the parent acknowledged that they expected there to be a delay in the ED, they felt their wait was too long and that simple things like more comfortable waiting areas and healthier options in the vending machines would make a big difference to family's experiences during an already very stressful time. The parent felt that an efficient invoicing system was in contrast to the very poor ED service they experienced just a day earlier, this prompted the parent to submit their complaint.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer brought the complaint to the attention of the ED Consultant Lead and the Catering Manager.

The ED Lead expressed their apologies to the family for their long wait. The patient was triaged as Category 3, meaning patients who were triaged as Category 1 and 2 needed to be seen ahead of Category 3 patients. The target for Category 3 patients is to be seen by a doctor within 1 hour. The ED Consultant apologised that this target was not met and explained that on the evening of their presentation, there were many patients in ED with respiratory illnesses that required more immediate attention from staff.

The Catering Manager explained that the vending machines are managed by an outsourced company. However they carried out an audit of the vending machines and found three areas of non-compliance with the HSE Vending Policy 2019. Non-compliance related to a lack of availability of snack products such as nuts and seeds, a percentage of snacks being over the recommended calorie amount, and calories amounts not on display to assist purchasers making an informed product choice. The Catering Manager contacted the supplier to action their findings to ensure full compliance with the policy in the future. They would also carry out regular audits going forward.

Outcome and Learning

The Complaints Officer phoned the parent to acknowledge their complaint and apologise for their experience. They explained that staff are working within very limited infrastructure in an old building, and experiences such as theirs helps to highlight the need for the new children's hospital which will be purpose built for the needs of children and their families.

The Complaints Officer explained the findings and actions taken by the Catering Manager and apologised for their experience and that they felt the need to complain. The Complaints Officer thanked them for their feedback as it resulted in actions taken to ensure compliance with the vending policy going forward.

A written response was also issued to the family who then thanked the complaints team for responding and listening to their concerns. They appreciated that their feedback had been considered and would contribute to an improved service.

Hospital Services

Category: Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*); Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

The parents of a patient wrote to the hospital to relay their positive experience during a visit to the Emergency Department (ED). The parents were happy with the facilities and how they were treated by staff.

Nature of positive feedback

The Complaints Officer acknowledged the compliment with the parent and thanked them for their feedback which was in turn was brought to the attention of the ED Lead.

The compliment detailed how this was the parents first time attending the ED with their young child who had obtained an injury from a fall. They admitted they had low expectations of having to attend the children's ED from hearing negative stories of overcrowding and long waiting times, however this was not their experience. Apart from the reason of having to attend the ED, they had an overall positive experience.

The parents "*were so impressed with the service*" which was "*swift and thorough*", also noting how the "*place was spotless and welcoming*". They felt listened to and reassured by the nursing staff. They were impressed by how the medical staff were patient and kind when interacting with their child, and how they did not rush the consultation. The parents concluded that they cannot thank all the staff enough for everything they did for their child and for them as two very shaken parents.

Outcome and Learning

This family's experience was greatly impacted by how staff demonstrated kindness, patience and reassurance during a stressful time. The ED environment was welcoming and the family left feeling positive about their experience.

Hospital Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (Delivery of Care); Accountability (Finance); Communication and Information (Communication Skills) (Information)

HCAT Severity: Not Available

HCAT Harm: Not Available

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

Parents who had sadly lost their child at a very young age submitted a complaint regarding how the precious time they had to spend with their child was negatively impacted by the following:

- Not being allowed to spend enough time with their seriously ill child; being asked to leave during medical procedures without communication on when they could return, visiting times perceived as not family friendly, and being asked to leave during certain treatments whereas they would have preferred to remain to comfort their child.
- Being asked about insurance details at inappropriate and upsetting times.
- A poor experience in registering their child's death; a doctor's illegible writing resulted in the family having to make two attempts at registering their child's death.

The parents submitted the complaint in the hope that it would spare other families the distress they experienced as a "consequence of thoughtless procedures".

Investigation

The Complaints Officer acknowledged the complaint via phone call and email and expressed their condolences to the parents. They then brought the complaint to the attention of the clinical nurse manager of the ward, the accounts manager and the child's consultant.

The accounts manager liaised with the relevant staff and established that a member of the accounts team had not checked the ward details before calling the parent to enquire about their insurance details. Had the staff member checked the ward beforehand and noticed that they were in a high acuity ward, they would have waited until a more appropriate time, such as if the patient was transferred to a lower acuity ward. The accounts team extended their apologies to the family and reiterated with their team the importance of checking ward details in advance of calls, to avoid any upset.

A face to face meeting was offered to the parents which was welcomed by them. This was swiftly arranged and the parents met with the Assistant Director of Nursing, the Clinical Nurse Manager, and the patient's primary consultant. The parents were satisfied that their concerns had been heard and taken on board to improve the experience of others. They were happy with the outcome of the meeting and were satisfied to close the complaint at that point.

Outcome and Learning

Providing an opportunity for complainants to meet with relevant staff to voice their concerns reinforces our commitment to learn from their experience and to use that to improve how we deliver our care. Both the parents and the staff welcomed this form of resolution.

Hospital Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (End of Life Care)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

The parents of a patient receiving palliative care wrote to the hospital to highlight the importance of the Palliative Care Room in the hospital and how invaluable it had been for them, their child and their extended family during very challenging times.

Nature of positive feedback

The Complaints Officer acknowledged the correspondence with the parents and thanked them for their very valuable and meaningful feedback. The feedback was also acknowledged directly by their palliative care team.

The compliment highlighted the many benefits that the room has brought to their family during the difficult times they found themselves in need of it. These included the following:

- A larger private space that gave the family a sense of normality and comfort amidst the turmoil of loss; including a pull-out bed for longer stays, an outdoor area that facilitated play, reflection and fresh air for a sick child, all things that are not ordinarily or readily available to a child on a ward.
- A separate self-contained living and kitchen space, giving the families autonomy to use this as needed.
- Private access to the room and an ensuite bathroom; allowing for privacy, discretion and uninterrupted time for families.
- The private access to the room also gave the parents and their extended family freedom to be with the child without constraints of general hospital visiting restrictions.

The room provided practical and clinical resources not otherwise readily available if the child was at home. It relieved the parents from tasks such as managing medications and medical devices, thus giving the family more precious time with their child.

Outcome and Learning

The feedback commended the hospital in supporting the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of children and their loved ones, highlighting how it is a “*thoughtful, caring response to the needs of families in their most vulnerable moments*”. The home away from home gives families a dignified environment with peace, privacy and the security of having a medical team on hand.

In looking to the future, the parents advocated for the presence of Palliative Care Rooms to be in all paediatric settings, as it is the “*essence of compassionate care*”, honours the journey of the child and family, and provides crucial support for families facing unimaginably difficult times.

Hospital Services

Category: Access (Admission – delays); Safe and Effective Care (Treatment and Care)

HCAT Severity: Not Available

HCAT Harm: Not Available

Status: Partially Upheld

Background to Complaint

A Complaints Officer received a telephone call from a patient's daughter about the repeated cancellation of her parent's surgical procedure. The procedure had been cancelled for a second time with the explanation given that there was no bed available for admission. The complainant asked the Complaints Officer to relay her concerns about her parent's health to the Consultant with responsibility for their care. She wished to highlight that her parent is on repeat antibiotics and had developed a cellulitis. She was very concerned about her parent's health.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer apologised for the distress these cancellations had caused both the patient and their family. The complaint was brought to the attention of the Consultant whose care the patient was under, the Operations Manager responsible for surgery and also the hospital's Bed Manager.

The Bed Manager clarified that regrettably, all scheduled procedures were cancelled due to the high number of patients presenting at the Emergency Department requiring hospital admission. The volume of patients requiring admission exceeded the inpatient bed capacity of the hospital. The Bed Manager confirmed that the patient was provisionally booked for their procedure the next week and the Bed Management Team was aware of the patient's requirement for this surgery. The Bed Manager provided assurance that every effort would be made to secure a bed for this patient.

Outcome and Learning

As part of the hospital's management of the cancellation of procedures and waiting lists, the hospital outsources procedures to an external private hospital. The patient subsequently had their procedure performed the following week.

Providing more detailed explanations as to why planned surgeries are cancelled along with outlining the contingency plans in place to ensure that the patient would not experience further cancellations will help to reassure patients and their families.

Hospital Services

Category: Access (*Hospital Facilities*); Communication and Information (*Information*) (*Communication Skills*); Dignity & Respect (*Delivery of Care*), (*End of Life Care*); Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A patient with a diagnosis of advanced Alzheimer's disease who was being cared for at home by their daughter for 13 years, experienced a sudden acute episode. The daughter immediately called an ambulance which arrived promptly. The Advance Paramedic immediately recognised the signs of sepsis and advised of the necessity of immediate acute care.

Nature of positive feedback

Care Setting - Ambulance: Paramedics were described as 'calm and gentle in the middle of a crises', identified sepsis immediately, explained everything and talked calmly, respectfully and continually to the patient throughout the journey to the hospital.

Care Setting - Emergency Department: The patient and their family were met by Emergency Department staff who explained the requirement to immediately bring the patient into the Resuscitation area. At all times, the family were kept abreast of the evolving situation and permitted to have key family members accompany the patient. The doctor outlined the surgical treatment necessary to address the case of sepsis while also explaining the risks and the reasons why palliative care was the most appropriate pathway of care in the circumstances. The family welcomed the clear, honest communication and the realistic expectation of outcome.

Care Setting - Medical ward: Following swift transfer to the medical ward, the handover of care was described as seamless. The aspects of care that stood out for the family were described as: time to process the evolving situation – kindness – empathy – the freedom to leave to avail of breaks knowing that nursing care was exceptional and pain relief was managed promptly. The family were made to feel welcome at all times and this welcome was extended to the grandchildren who also stayed the night. A palliative care referral was made on a Friday night with a consultation within 36 hours and ongoing input from palliative care team as required - continuous explanation of the evolving situation was to the fore which included how patient care would be managed and the rationale behind this.

End of Life Care: The family related that there was never any pressure to stay with their loved one or to leave. They welcomed the calm compassionate approach to the delivery of care and were given time plenty to say goodbye. They greatly appreciated that their mum was transferred into a single room which afforded both their mum and the wider family with privacy, dignity and respect. The End of Life symbol was placed on the door. Family who stayed overnight were offered a mattress to sleep on if they wished. Particular gestures were greatly appreciated, such as a doctor making a cup of tea for the patient's grandson after the patient had passed, knowing that it was this young man's first time to experience a death. The catering staff were greatly appreciated as they continually offered the family tea and a sandwich which eliminated concern around the requirement to leave their loved one alone to avail of food.

The family related their experience to be overwhelmingly positive.

Outcome and Learning

This positive experience demonstrated;

- The value and importance of continuity of care to provide seamless care throughout a patient's journey.
- The importance of including and involving the family throughout the patient's journey.
- The value and importance of clear communication and information were demonstrated in that at all times, the family knew what was happening, and were offered the care options together with an explanation of reasons for the most appropriate care pathway.
- A person centred care approach ensured the patient was at the centre of all decisions.
- A culture that demonstrated the HSE Values of care, compassion and trust were to the fore.
- The healthcare team, worked as a team with each discipline and staff member contributing to the needs of the patient and wider family, with each addressing the needs unique to their own service and potential.
- The overall experiences of this family in using our health services has been extremely positive impacting three generations of the one family and ensuring a positive foundation built on trust.

Hospital Services

Category: Access (*Hospital Facilities*); Information & Communication (*Information (Communication Skills)*); Participation (*Patient, Family, Relatives*); Dignity & Respect (*Delivery of Care*); Safe & Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A gentleman and his wife were visiting the West Coast of Ireland to celebrate a significant wedding anniversary. Just before they were due to return home to their country, the gentleman suffered a heart attack. The person described this as 'an extremely frightening experience, especially as both he and his wife were a continent away from home and loved ones. The gentleman related that he was extremely fortunate to be very close to a University Hospital.

Nature of Positive Feedback

Coronary Care - Acute Hospital:

The gentleman related that he was 'incredibly fortunate' to have received great care within the Coronary Care Unit. He described the nursing care as 'excellent and absolute models of caring professionals', adding that he was treated with 'care, warmth and dignity'.

The patient related that the doctors, nurses, technician and other staff were attentive, warm, and patient throughout his one week stay. He described the communication as 'clear' and at all times the treatment and care provided was explained to him. He emphasised the added appreciation to staff for dealing with repeated requests for information from his home country insurance company.

The gentleman was very appreciative that the nurses linked his wife with 'Croi', a West of Ireland Cardiac Foundation and registered Charity, who were able to provide her with a place to stay close to the hospital and which also served as a place for the gentleman to fully recover following discharge from hospital.

The gentleman praised the Coronary Care Unit for its warm, calm and peaceful environment where care was 'attentive and warm' where he was treated with 'warmth and respect' at all times.

Medical ward – Acute Hospital.

The gentleman related that he was discharged from the Coronary care Unit to a medical ward, when in a less critical condition, appreciating that the specialist bed was required for incoming patients. The gentleman described his experience on the medical ward as "less comfortable, less peaceful and altogether more difficult to bear" emphasising that none of that was due to the "unequivocally dedicated nurses and staff". The gentleman observed what he described as 'understaffing', with staff being overworked and under resourced, but despite this, they were "heroically good natured, caring and expert", adding that although the environment was less comfortable, he felt he was in 'just as good hands'.

Feedback focused in particular on the warmth, communication, good positive nature of staff and the security he experience because of the information and clear communication from staff throughout his entire stay.

The gentleman requested that his experience be shared with the administrators and managers that oversee hospitals operations requesting that the “nurses in Coronary Care and the Medical ward receive the highest recognition for their professionalism and humanity emphasising the need for increased funding, better working conditions and improved workload”.

Outcome and Learning

- The gentleman has related his experience as occurring over a year ago and related that he and his wife are “forever grateful to everyone who cared for them in the hospital and that the hospital itself should be very grateful for their staff, adding that as a result of the care and information he received, he is in better shape than he has been for decades.
- Although physical infrastructure is not always sufficient and as modernised as we would like, the attitude, communication, dignity and respect from staff to our service users can mitigate aspects of healthcare which staff often have no control over.
- The importance of participation and person centred care, in the provision of healthcare cannot be underestimated and this was demonstrated in this situation whereby a non-statutory stakeholder (Croi) was contacted and utilised effectively to provide accommodation close to the hospital for the gentleman’s wife and for the gentleman himself as a place to recuperate prior to returning home to the USA.

Hospital Services

Category: Communication and Information (*Information*); Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*)

HCAT Severity: n/a

HCAT Harm: n/a

Status: Resolved informally at first point of contact

Background to Complaint

A patient contacted the hospital advising that they were a public patient due for surgery but was referred to a private provider because of delays. The patient underwent the surgery, received an assessment 3 months post surgery and was signed off. The patient returned to normal everyday living and work but has been struggling with constant knee pain and swelling.

Investigation

The patient complained to the referring hospital that if they return for a further assessment to the private provider that they will be charged for scans and assessments when the referring hospital should see them first to assess what the ongoing issue is.

PALS contacted the outsourcing department in the hospital, who advised that the patient had two follow-up appointments scheduled at the private provider's facility.

The referring hospital's outsourcing department contacted the private provider who in turn arranged for a third appointment with the surgeon.

Outcome and Learning

The patient was very grateful for the further appointment and the comprehensive follow up.

The additional concern regarding the cost of attending the private provider was a worry for the patient.

Where possible, being able to respond to the patient's concerns, at the first point of contact and without delay resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

Hospital Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (*End of Life Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A patient's family sent in a thank you card following the death of their loved one.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The card stated that this is, *"just a very belated and small gesture to express our thank you for all you did for our precious and most wonderful father in his final days from the moment he was admitted to the ward in your hospital. Dad was so blessed to have been cared for by such a dedicated team from catering, cleaning, care assistants, nurses and doctors – at each touchpoint he was treated with such wonderful care and respect during his final weeks. One of our family remarked on the sense of teamwork and comradery that we never experienced on other wards (and during the last 2 years we have experienced many wards in many hospitals), but your ward was a little different. We remarked saying this to the consultant one day who advised "it is because each person treats the patient as if it was their mother or father was been cared for", and this was very evident. The last number of weeks have been hard and lonely, but it is such a comfort that, in our dad's final days, he was treated with care, respect, dignity and we could not have asked for more."*

Outcome and Learning

A copy of the feedback was shared with all relevant staff including the Director of Nursing & Integrated Care. The Director of Nursing & Integrated Care wrote to the staff directly thanking them for their kindness and dedicated care to the patient and their family. The End of Life Co-ordinator brought the feedback to the attention of the End of Life Committee

Learning:

Acknowledging, supporting and being sensitive to the end of life journey of a patient and their family member is important. The experience will remain with the family for many years and we have only one opportunity to get it right.

The approach and care demonstrated by the clinical and support staff reflects the culture of positive team work and this is evident to patients and families.

Sharing positive feedback is meaningful and encouraging for all staff.

Hospital Services

Category: Safe and Effective Care (Treatment and Care)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A hospital received feedback from a long term patient with regard to their recent experience as an inpatient.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The patient wrote to the hospital states that, 'once again it is my pleasure to write to the Board of the Hospital to commend the wonderful medical and clinical care I received during my recent stay. My condition has become increasingly complex over the years. However, nothing was too much trouble to ensure my treatment, comfort and care in seeking to afford me the opportunity to have the best quality of life going forward. My medical treatment encompassed the care of a number of clinicians and I was privileged to avail of their exceptional expertise and world class professional care.

The management of the Ward ensured quality nursing care was provided to patients in a very pleasant ward atmosphere. As I witnessed on the Ward in the past, the standard of care, kindness and attentiveness I received from all of the nurses, nursing assistants and phlebotomists during very busy days was always evident.

The catering staff went out of their way to facilitate the needs of my awkward diet. I very much appreciated the cheerfulness and hard work of the cleaning staff.

Since my previous long stay in you hospital in 2017 I have noticed a general improvement in efficiency in all aspects of my care. As our hospital services constantly receive adverse media attention, I would like to commend all who work in your hospital for a job well done and for demonstrating such pride in their patient care.'

Outcome and Learning

- PALS acknowledged and thanked patient for their feedback
- A copy of the feedback was forwarded to relevant managers
- PALS logged the feedback onto the software system.

Learning:

- All members of the hospital team have a role to play in the experience of a patient while in hospital
- Patients appreciate how staff make them feel as well as the clinical care provided to them.
- Sharing positive feedback is meaningful and encouraging for all staff.

Hospital Services

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Information*) (*Communication Skills*); Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A parent of a patient wrote to the hospital to relay their thanks to a number of staff who treated their child during a long stay in hospital.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The parent highlighted how “*every nurse, doctor and staff that interacted with us was so nice and understanding*” and also “*kind and professional*”. The parent wanted to give special thanks to their child’s consultant in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The compliment highlighted how a number of doctors always spoke to them professionally and calmly and saw the scared family who were beyond the child’s medical condition. They highlighted the ICU doctor’s frankness, calmness, honesty, and how they managed their expectations well with regard to the seriousness of their child’s medical condition. The parent also valued the information leaflets provided by the doctor.

The parent detailed one particular experience in which they witnessed their doctor strongly advocate for their child. The experience involved a large number of medical staff discussing the next steps for their child’s care as their condition had worsened; the ICU doctor advocated for a specific treatment plan which was ultimately successful and contributed to the significant improvement of the child’s condition. The parent felt the actions of the doctor in advocating for their child “*had a hugely positive influence*” on their child’s outcome which ultimately led to their eventual discharge home.

The parent concluded that the ICU doctor is an “*exceptional talent and human being*” and their name would always be spoken of fondly in their home.

Outcome and Learning

The hospital acknowledged the compliment with the parent and thanked them for their feedback which was in turn brought to the named staff.

The compliment highlights how good communication can have a huge impact on the experience of families during particularly difficult times in hospital. This family appreciated being spoken to honestly and also being provided with information leaflets that they could refer back to when needed. The compliment also highlights how staff with the relevant medical expertise can advocate for the best needs of a child, which parents are not always in a position to do themselves.

Hospital Services

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*), Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*); Communication and Information (*Information*) (*Diverse Needs*); Access (*Hospital Facilities*)

HCAT Severity: Not Available

HCAT Harm: Not Available

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

The parent of a neurodivergent patient submitted a complaint regarding their poor experiences with both staff and hospital facilities. They felt that their child's additional needs were not accommodated for, and as their parent, they constantly had to advocate for better services.

The following issues were identified:

- A lack of staff awareness regarding the needs of neurodivergent children
- Planned admissions being cancelled that can lead to a need to present to the Emergency Department (ED)
- ED environment and facilities do not adequately cater for the needs of neurodivergent children e.g. overcrowding, long waiting times and poor communication regarding this, loud and bright surroundings.
- No access to sensory areas for neurodivergent children with sensory needs

Investigation

The Complaints Officer spoke with the parent and apologised for their experience, and assured them that their feedback would be brought to the attention of relevant hospital staff. The Complaints Officer then shared the parent's experience with the ED management team and with the hospital's Access Officer (AO).

The ED team apologised that this family had a negative experience and felt that communication from staff was poor. They highlighted the limitations of current infrastructure and that trying to accommodate the needs of all patients can be challenging, considering the large volume of patients treated on a daily basis. They accepted that ED does not have a specific waiting area or room to appropriately accommodate children with sensory needs, however they provided reassurance that appropriate transition spaces for neurodivergent children have been taken into account as future infrastructure designs include sensory rooms in the ED.

The AO engaged with the parent directly, they discussed Disability Awareness Training that is available to hospital staff and the AO assured the parent that ED staff would be reminded of this training. The AO also informed the parent about some upcoming initiatives that may help the parent in communicating their child's needs and in turn improve staff's understanding of their child's needs.

Outcome and Learning

This complaint highlighted the importance of staff awareness when treating and communicating with neurodivergent children, children with sensory needs, and their families.

With appropriate training, staff can be better equipped to manage the needs of neurodivergent patients even when working in an environment without appropriate facilities.

Consideration and implementation of appropriate transition spaces in new infrastructure designs will help to improve the overall experience for patients in the future, taking into account space and funding implications.

This complaint also highlighted the importance of the role of the Access Officer.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (Information) (Delay and failure to communicate); Safe and Effective Care (Treatment and Care)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A complaint was received via email from a parent in relation to home support for their daughter. They had been advised that their application was not approved as the public health nurse had documented that supervision support was required and not care support needs. The parent was advised that the application would be reviewed in 3-6 months. The complaint was in relation to the non-approval of the application, lack of understanding of the current situation and miscommunication in relation to application outcome.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer contacted the complainant to ensure full understanding of the complaint, to explain the complaints process and to establish what outcome the complainant expected. The Complaints Officer also contacted the home support staff, reviewed the application and sought additional information from the service user's current service and public health nurse.

Outcome and Learning

This complaint identified the need for an improved communication protocol regarding engagement with service users and their families.

The complaint also highlighted the requirement for improved understanding from referrers in relation to the home support criteria.

The outcome of the investigation was discussed with the complainant and the home support staff.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (Telephone calls)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: N/A

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A service user wished to contact the audiology department to re-schedule an appointment that had been notified to them in writing.

The service user tried repeatedly over two days to get through on the number provided and then submitted a written complaint about the phone not being answered during that time.

The service user complained that there was regularly no answer on the contact number provided for the audiology department.

Investigation

On examination, it was established that there had been a resource issue with limited administrative cover for phone calls in the audiology department for a period around the time of the calls being made by the service user.

Outcome and Learning

The circumstances were explained to the service user with an apology. The complaint was upheld with alternative appointment arrangements offered.

Learning was identified in relation to the need for communication supports for the audiology department particularly when a full complement of staff may not be available to attend the phone lines.

In this instance a recommendation was made and implemented to ensure that an up-to-date voice mail service was made available that allowed for staff to revert to service users as necessary with follow-up information and advice on services and appointments within that department.

Community Services

Category: Access (*Accessibility/Resources*); Communication and Information (*Information*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: N/A

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A service user complained that the provision of a personal assistant service at the weekends was no longer available to them.

Investigation

On examination, it was established that the personal assistant service had been temporarily suspended due to an acute shortage of resources - multiple members of staff were on unplanned leave due to seasonal illness. Interim measures to recruit temporary staff and cover these absences had not been successful.

Outcome and Learning

The circumstances were explained to the service user with an apology and an assurance that the service would resume as normal at the earliest opportunity.

In this instance, it was acknowledged that resourcing issues experienced by the service in the short term had impacted on the circumstances of service provision at the time and the complaint was upheld. In addition, it was recommended that any changes to service provision, even temporary changes, should be fully explained to clients so they are aware and can plan as needed.

Community Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (*delivery of care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*) (*Information*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A service user submitted an email complimenting the registrar of the Civil Registration Service.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The service user had issues with the documents needed to proceed with getting married. It was reported that the registrar guided and '*went above and beyond what their duties were*'. According to the service user the wedding ceremony with the registrar officiating '*was made very special with her friendly, professional, curious manner. She is an asset to your department*'.

Outcome and Learning

The service acknowledged the email and the complimentary nature of the content including the time and effort taken to submit this. Congratulations and best wishes were extended to the service user and their spouse on their marriage and future.

Feedback is important in respect of learning, as well as from a service growth perspective. The dedication of staff was acknowledged and the positive impact that the good engagement on this occasion had, not only on the person who used the service, but on the wider family circle. The staff's abilities, training, and experience as well as their fulfilment of the ethos of this service were evident.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (*Delay and Failure to Communicate*); Improving Health (*Holistic Care*)

HCAT Severity: N/A

HCAT Harm: N/A

Status: Informally Resolved

Background to Complaint

A client was referred to Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons (ICPOP) due to their increased frailty and an inability to provide care and support for their spouse who had advanced dementia. The client is their spouse's main carer and is responsible for bringing them out for walks and community activities. The couple's wish was to remain at home to live independently for as long as possible. The family were very supportive of this and were working towards providing a safe environment for their parents in their own home. The family expressed their frustration to the service due to difficulty in accessing appropriate services; describing poor and fragmented communication processes that caused the family to lose hope in the health system.

Investigation

The service conducted a comprehensive geriatric assessment. This was followed by an interdisciplinary team meeting with a client-centric approach at which realistic goals were discussed. The team concluded that the current care package in place was insufficient and was a main factor in what the client expressed as carer stress. It was evident that the couple and family required extra care hours to help meet their goal which was to stay at home in a safe and supportive environment for as long as possible.

Outcome and Learning

The integrated, person centric response and approach from the ICPPOP team gave this client and the family confidence in the health service. The specialist team are fully aware of the importance of listening to their clients' needs and setting goals with the client and their family, while at the same time ensuring that these goals are achievable and realistic. The delivery of care in the client's home helped the client and family feel at ease and supported an environment for family involvement with joint decision making and care goals.

When concerns raised are dealt with in a responsive and person centred way, issues can be resolved quickly, appropriately and informally. Such an approach demonstrates the core values of care and compassion, where services learn from service users and in turn builds trust.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*); Improving Health (*Holistic Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

Following a client receiving an episode of care from the Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons (ICPOP), the client's daughter sent a complimentary email to the team.

The client had been referred to ICPOP by their G.P. A comprehensive geriatric assessment was conducted in the client's home. During the assessment the ICPOP team noted and highlighted that there was an element of carer stress.

The team worked with the client and their family to develop an individualised and client centred care plan. Realistic and shared goals were discussed and agreed with the client and their family.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The compliment highlighted the proactive approach taken by the team, the communication with client and the family and their inclusion in the planning and development of a care plan that yielded a positive and supportive outcome, enabling their parent to remain in their own home.

Outcome and Learning

An interdisciplinary approach was adopted to ensure that the care goals were achieved. Additional home support services were provided to support the family and carers and address and reduce carer stress. Overall the plan provided an appropriate level of care for the client to continue living in their home.

The compliment highlighted how imperative communication and assessing a client's living arrangements in a holistic manner, such as taking into account the carers' abilities and capacity, is to understanding the key issues. The inclusive approach with the client and their family to devising care plans and care goals delivered tangible results with the client remaining to live at home and supporting the family to enable this.

Community Services

Category: Improving Health (*Holistic Care*); Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A Service User was admitted to a residential care facility for end of life care. The Service User required maximum support due to their dementia, existing pressure sores that had not healed over the past year as well as a pattern of avoiding sleeping in a bed.

Remarkably, on the Service User's first night in the residential care facility, they slept in the bed, and within three weeks, all of their pressure ulcers were completely healed. Sadly, the resident, who was receiving end of life care within the facility, passed away.

Nature of Positive Feedback

A heartfelt compliment from the family was received. In their communication they praised all the staff and management for the exceptional care given to their parent, and as gesture of gratitude in their parent's memory, they organised a fundraising event through their musical group for the facility's resident comfort fund.

Outcome and Learning

The resident experienced a significant improvement in their quality of life during their time in the care of the residential facility.

This case highlights the importance of individualised care and a supportive environment in achieving positive outcomes for residents with complex needs. It reinforces the value of holistic care that addresses both physical and emotion well-being. Additionally, it demonstrates the profound impact compassionate care can have on residents and their families, adding quality to end of life and fostering meaningful connections.

Community Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (*Alleged Inappropriate Behaviour*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A service user admitted to an acute inpatient psychiatric unit complained in relation to interactions and comments made with regard to their appearance and clothing which caused upset and distress.

The service user was walking along a corridor to the Day Ward where the majority of service users spend their day when a staff member from the centre approached the service user and made some comments in relation to their general appearance and clothing attire.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer had a number of telephone conversations with the service user, spoke with and received a report from the Assistant Director of Nursing for the Approved Centre and reviewed the clinical records.

The Approved Centre promotes the use of Safewards Model which is based on 10 interventions, namely; Mutual Expectation, Soft Words, Positive Words, Build New Mitigation, Reassurance, Know Each Other, Discharge Messages, Calm Down Box, Mutual Help Meeting, Talk Down.

The first of these interventions is clear mutual expectations between service users and staff in the unit that has resulted in the identification of and agreement on a number of expectations, one of which is that "Everybody should try and look after themselves, keeping themselves clean and well dressed". Staff in the Approved Centre are available to assist service users in this regard and seek to promote independence in self-care and positive self well-being through words of encouragement and practical guidance and support.

The Complaints Officer, on examining the clinical records, did not find any supporting documentation that noted that the conversation, as outlined, occurred. While the staff member does not recall the exact detail of the conversation, they acknowledged and accepted that they spoke with the service user on the corridor in relation to their general appearance and clothing attire and that the conversation happened within the hearing of other service users.

Outcome and Learning

The Complaints Officer, based on the available documentation and evidence, was of the view that the comments by the staff member were well intentioned and made in the context of supporting the dignity of the service user and within the overall framework of the Safewards Model, as practiced within the Unit. However, the Complaints Officer also acknowledges that the concerns raised by the staff member regarding the service user's appearance could have been handled with more sensitivity and mindful of the service user's right to privacy, dignity and respect.

An apology was provided to the service user from the service, which was accepted.

The Complaints Officer recommended that the Assistant Director of Nursing remind all staff working in the Approved Centre to be mindful of the privacy of service users and to be sensitive and respectful in the promotion of the Safewards Model of care. This recommendation was forwarded to the Head of Service for Mental Health and accepted.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (*Telephone Calls*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Not Upheld

Background to Complaint

A service user contacted a service in relation to a missing referral and later complained that there was no update from the staff member contacted about this.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer undertook a file review, requesting files from the Central Referrals Office. Information was also requested from the local staff member and the local line manager. The Complaints Officer followed up with a call to the complainant.

Outcome and Learning

Unfortunately, while it was not possible to reach a determination regarding the call or subsequent lack of follow up, the Complaints Officer expressed regret for the service user's experience and assured them that a recommendation was made to remind staff of the importance of documenting queries and following up on same.

Community Services

Category: Access (*Accessibility*)(*Parking*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A Service user, who is a wheelchair user, and who attends a mental health service in a Primary Care Centre, complained about the lack of disabled parking available for the size of the centre. There was an added issue with gaining access to the car park as the access panel was currently not working and, while there is parking available at another car park 100m away, roadworks on the road and path make accessing the centre very difficult. They are then obliged to have someone take them or get a taxi.

Investigation

The Complaints Officer spoke to the service user about the matter including what actions were possible. The Complaints Officer also acknowledged the impact of the roadworks and how unfortunate it was but once complete the other car park would again be a viable option for easy access to the centre.

Outcome and Learning

The Complaints Officer contacted the landlord of the centre to request that the fixing of the access panel be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Complaints Officer also reached out to the local council to explore whether additional on street parking could be provided near the centre, given the nature of the building and the needs of the service users accessing it.

The Complaints Officer followed up with a call and an email to the service user to outline the actions taken and to close off the complaint. The Complaints Officer thanked the service user for their feedback that provided an opportunity for quality improvement and risk management and identified corrective actions needed. The service user expressed their thanks for the prompt phone call and for listening to their concerns. Effective communication is essential to reassure service users that their concerns are heard and that their feedback is valued.

Community Services

Category: Communication and Information (Information)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: N/A

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A service user was dissatisfied at not being correctly advised about what information was necessary to make an appointment at the Public Health Nursing department.

The service user wished to arrange an appointment for their child following a visit by the Public Health Nurse.

On contacting the department by phone the Service User was advised by the staff member that the name of the Public Health Nurse was required to make an appointment.

During subsequent contact the Service User established that appointments were allocated according to area/address only – irrespective of which Public Health Nurse was assigned the case.

The Service User was dissatisfied at being required to provide unnecessary information and submitted a complaint.

Investigation

On examination it was established that the staff member who had taken the call had not been fully informed about the specific appointment arrangements and requirements for that department.

Outcome and Learning

The circumstances were explained to the Service User with an apology and the complaint was upheld.

Learning was identified in relation to the need for accurate information being available to reception staff for effective advice to service users.

In this instance a recommendation was made and implemented by local governance to review with phone reception staff their understanding of the specific requirements for making appointments within that department.

Community Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (End of Life Care); Participation (Patients, Family, Relatives)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A gift and thank you card was received by the Integrated Care Programme for Older People (ICPOP) Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) from the family of a loved one who passed away peacefully in their own home.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The family wished to express their gratitude to the team for helping to keep their loved one at home in the last months of their life which was the wishes of the person.

The Integrated Care Programme for Older People (ICPOP) are community specialist teams that provide services for older people with complex needs and who require specialist multidisciplinary intervention to help maintain their independence and live well at home.

Outcome and Learning

The positive feedback was brought to the attention of the ICPOP multi-disciplinary team members.

- The ICPOP service provides patient-focused and person-centred care. The significant holistic approach to patient care contributed to the service user's wider quality of life while in their own home and highlighted the extent to which this can have a positive impact at the end of a person's life.
- The importance of the ICPOP care team to the most vulnerable in helping them to live a safe and holistic life in their own home was recognised by the family.
- Supporting people to live independently and safely in their own home is a key aim of community healthcare. The compliment highlighted and acknowledged the work and commitment delivered by the ICPOP dedicated team.
- Such initiatives also empower people to participate in maintaining their well-being. The ICPOP approach of providing support in a person-centred manner encourages people to get involved and be more proactive in their care and well-being for as long as possible.

Community Services

Category: Dignity and Respect (*Alleged Inappropriate Behaviour*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*); Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: N/A

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A Service User had a bad experience while attending a primary care service for an assessment with their child. They found the staff member to be 'extremely unprofessional' with them 'rudely dismissing the assessment earlier than anticipated'. The staff member undertook to make a further referral on the day but this had never materialised. Despite numerous efforts to make contact with the staff member, the Service User was unable to do so.

Investigation

The complaint was investigated and an apology issued for the unpleasant experience on the day which also included an apology for the unnecessary delay that ensued for the further referral.

Outcome and Learning

- Staff within the service were reminded of the HSE's code of conduct supporting a culture of safety, quality and kindness.
- Staff are reminded of appropriate communication, follow-up and engagement regarding next steps care and the avoidance of abandonment felt by the service user which is contrary to the MPS teachings in the ASSIST model of communication.
- A reminder to staff to complete HSeLanD 'Effective complaints handling training' which highlights the impact of individual behaviour and the benefits of positive and respectful interactions on service user experience.
- At all times upholding and delivering on the Sláintecare vision, providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Delay and Failure to Communicate*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A Service User wrote in to complain about their experience during a recent appointment. The Service User explained that, when they arrived, the technician did not introduce themselves or provide any information about what to expect during the appointment. During the assessment, the use of eye-drops caused a stinging sensation and the Service User raised this with the technician. No reply or reassurance was provided to alleviate the Service User's concerns about whether this was a normal reaction. The Service User felt the whole experience was 'nerve-wrecking' and was disappointed with the service provided on this occasion. The Service User requested to be seen by a different technician at the next appointment.

Investigation

The Team Leader spoke to the technician about the issues raised by the Service User. The Complaints Officer was advised that the technician who carried out the screening was training under the guidance of another technician.

Outcome and Learning

As a result of the complaint, the technicians recognise that their focus should have been on the Service User rather than solely on the equipment and training. They were reminded of the importance of interacting with and reassuring Service Users during appointments. Both technicians will be reminded of the HSE's 'Hello my name is' campaign principles and will undergo further training on positive patient engagement skills with their line manager.

An apology was provided to the Service User for their negative experience and they were thanked for providing this feedback. The Complaints Officer explained the investigation findings to the Service User and described what measures were put in place to minimise the possibility of a similar experience for other service users. The Service User appreciated the call and was satisfied that their concerns were taken seriously.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A Service User's family member contacted the programme to advise how well their elderly parent was treated at their most recent appointment.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The family member advised that their elderly parent (service user) had some health issues, including dementia, which causes challenges when communicating with staff at appointments. The family member advised that the technician who attended to their parent was '*really lovely*', and '*kind, warm, patient and efficient*'. They passed on their thanks and compliments to the technician, and that they '*genuinely appreciated her care and attention*'. The family member said that they felt they wanted to give feedback that would reflect their experience with the service so that staff would know the difference they had made.

Outcome and Learning

The Complaints Officer acknowledged the positive feedback and sent a message of thanks to the service user and the family member to express appreciation for sharing their experience. This compliment was relayed to the individual responsible for the treatment and care provided to the service user at their appointment. The feedback was also shared with the relevant managers and wider team, to show how that all teams members have a role to play in creating a positive experience and outcomes for service users. This compliment highlights that good communication, kindness and compassion have a big impact on the service user's experience of the services provided to them.

National Service

Category: Communication and Information (*Delay and Failure to Communicate*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A Service User made a formal complaint to the screening programme to express their dissatisfaction about the delay in receiving a re-issued screening result as requested. The Service User advised they had contacted the programme's free phone number two weeks previously to request a further copy of the result letter following their screening test and informed the staff member of their new postal address during the call. It was noted that the original result letter was sent to the correct address on file at the time of the screening test.

The Service User was informed by the staff member that their result letter would arrive within 3-5 business days. Unfortunately, due to a breakdown in communication, the request was not passed on to the programme team and the result letter was not re-issued to the Service User as promised, which caused upset and frustration.

This prompted the Service User to make a data subject access request to obtain the result under an alternative pathway within the National Screening Service.

Investigation

On receipt of the complaint the Complaints Officer acknowledged the Service User's email and reassured them that the issues raised in their complaint will be thoroughly investigated and addressed, and a copy of the result will be re-issued.

To investigate the complaint, the Complaints Officer listened to the audio call between the Service User and the staff member to ensure all information was accurate. The Complaints Officer raised the issue with the relevant staff member to determine why the Service User's request was not followed-up.

Outcome and Learning

A response letter with a copy of the result was issued to the Service User. A sincere apology was given to the Service User on behalf of the programme for the breakdown in communication and the measures that were taken to prevent this happening in the future were outlined. Reassurance was also provided that the Service User's new address details had been updated on the programme's database for future reference.

All staff have been reminded of the importance of escalating requests for information to the programme so that they can be followed-up and actioned appropriately and to prevent recurrence of this error.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*); Communication and Information (*Information*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A Service User submitted a compliment by email to the screening programme following their attendance at a recent appointment.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The Service User advised that they were very impressed at the knowledge and care the screener demonstrated.

The Service User felt compelled to write to the programme and let the team know how good the experience was. The Service User said the screener who attended to them on the day, carried out the test perfectly which resulted in feeling little or no pain during the procedure.

The Service User said that the screener “was brilliant”, being “very nice and friendly” towards them.

Outcome and Learning

The team member acknowledged the positive feedback from the Service User and thanked them for taking the time to contact the programme.

The team member confirmed that the positive feedback had been forwarded to the programme manager and the staff member concerned.

The screener’s knowledge of the process and personable approach helped this client to have a positive experience which resulted in a compliment being received. It also highlights that the professionalism and knowledge demonstrated by staff have a big impact on service users’ perspective of the services provided to them.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*); Dignity and Respect (*Delivery of Care*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A Service User sent a compliment by email to the screening programme to say how thankful they were following their recent experience at their appointment.

The Service User advised that after their screening appointment they were told they required further investigation and follow-up. The Service User was worried about the waiting time for their next appointment and what the next steps involved.

The Service User advised that they were offered an appointment 5 days later which was reassuring and when they arrived, was seen immediately.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The Service User submitted an email complimenting the staff who attended to them at their appointment.

“From the lady who admitted me, to the two female medical staff who examined me and were present in the room, the service was nothing short of excellent, welcoming, efficient, professional and kind”

In the Service User's email, they expressed sincere appreciation and acknowledged the excellent service they received under the National Screening Programme.

Outcome and Learning

The team member acknowledged the positive feedback and sent a message of thanks to the Service User. This compliment was forwarded to the team members who provided the treatment and care to the service user at their appointment.

The feedback was also shared with the relevant programme managers and the wider team, to show that all team members have a role to play in creating positive experience and outcomes for service users. This compliment highlights that good communication, professionalism and kindness have a big impact on service users' perspective of the services provided to them.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Information*) (*Delay and failure to communicate*)

HCAT Severity: Low

HCAT Harm: Minor

Status: Upheld

Background to Complaint

A complaint was received from a Service User who had recently attended for an appointment. Following the appointment the Service User wrote to complain about the discomfort felt during and after assessment.

The Service User felt that their physical requirements were not taken into account during the assessment which directly resulted in the discomfort experienced during the assessment and in the days that followed.

Investigation

On receiving the complaint, the unit manager telephoned the Service User to apologise for their experience and to reassure them that experiencing some discomfort or pain following this kind of assessment is not unusual and to offer advice on aftercare. The Service User remained dissatisfied, so the unit manager arranged a call to the Service User from a member of the clinical team. They were unable to reach the Service User, so the complaint was progressed by the Complaints Officer.

The Complaints Officer acknowledged the complaint and advised the Service User that a formal response will be issued once a thorough investigation takes place. As part of the investigation, the Complaints Officer engaged with the relevant programme staff, including the programme manager and the unit manager, to address the concerns raised and to investigate what information was required to provide a full explanation to the Service User.

An explanation was provided to the Service User that outlined all of the factors that contribute to ensuring a high-quality outcome following assessment. It also explained that physical positioning together with the limitations of the machinery used, can result in discomfort for some patients.

The team explained that they do try to make patients aware that the assessment can cause some patients to feel discomfort by informing them through leaflets issued with appointment letters, and the website information, so that they can prepare in advance of their appointment.

The team apologised to the Service User for the upset caused as a result of their experience.

Outcome and Learning

The Programme Manager discussed the issues raised in this complaint with the relevant staff to reiterate the importance of reassuring clients about the possibility of pain or discomfort following examination and communicating the challenges of positioning during examination.

This complaint will be anonymised and shared with the wider teams to ensure the shared learning opportunity from this complaint positively impacts on the service going forward.

Following receipt of the final response issued, the Service User contacted the programme to advise that they were satisfied that their complaint was dealt with in a thorough manner.

National Service

Category: Safe and Effective Care (*Treatment and Care*); Communication and Information (*Communication Skills*)

Status: Compliment

Background to Compliment

A Service User had recently attended for an appointment at a screening clinic. Following the appointment, the Service User sent an email to the screening programme to compliment the staff who attended to them on the day of their appointment.

Nature of Positive Feedback

The Service User advised that this appointment was not one they were particularly looking forward to. However, the treatment received was absolutely brilliant. The Service User stated that all the staff were fantastic but in particular, the two members of staff in charge of the clinic that day.

The Service User also added that the staff member who performed the screening examination that day was very kind, patient and understanding, and highlighted that this staff member was an asset to the team.

The Service User also requested that their positive feedback be passed on and shared with the relevant members of staff at the clinic.

The unit manager thanked the Service User for taking the time to send in the positive feedback to the screening programme.

Outcome and Learning

This compliment was brought to the attention of the relevant staff who were happy to receive such positive feedback. This demonstrates that effective treatment and care is essential and provides comfort to service users when attending the screening service.