



REPORT TO: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD – 24 JUNE 2026

REPORT ON: ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK REPORT 2025/26

REPORT BY: CHIEF OFFICER

REPORT NO: DIJB21-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of complaints and feedback received by the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership over the past financial year, 2025/2026. This includes complaints handled using the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership Social Work Complaint Handling Procedure, the NHS Complaint Procedure, and the Dundee City Integration Joint Board Complaint Handling Procedure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB):

- 2.1 Notes the analysis of Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership's complaints performance and governance during 2025/26, improvement actions, service compliments and development of Care Opinion as outlined in this report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 From the 01 April 2017 both NHS and social work complaints have been required to follow the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman Model Complaint Handling Procedure. Both NHS Tayside Complaint Procedure and the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnerships Social Work Complaint Handling Procedures have been assessed as complying with the model complaint handling procedure by the SPSO.
- 4.2 Complaints are categorised by 2 stages: Stage 1: Frontline Resolution and Stage 2: Investigation. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1: Frontline Resolution complaint, it can be escalated to a Stage 2. Complex complaints are handled as a Stage 2: Investigation complaint. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2: Investigation complaint they can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman who will investigate the complaint, including professional decisions made.

- 4.3 In 2025/26 a total of 266 complaints were received about services in the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership. This is almost a 50% increase overall in complaints across Health and Social Care from 2024/25. Total number of complaints received by year for the last five years were:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of complaints received	217	202	193	179	266

5.0 Complaint Themes

- 5.1 In 2025/26, the highest proportion of complaints for Health continues to be regarding Mental Health Services at almost 34%.
- 5.2 Mental Health Services thoroughly investigate all complaints and meet weekly with the NHS Tayside Patient Experience Team as well as the Customer Care and Governance Officer to ensure that the complaints are being managed appropriately.
- 5.3 Due to the complexity of the Mental Health complaints these can be about service process issues or issues that are specific to the individual making the complaint. Where the complaints are about service process issues, improvements are identified then appropriate actions are taken to improve the service processes. Complaint investigation and service outcome should be treated and handled as separate processes.
- 5.4 For Social Work Complaints the most common complaint themes were Failure to provide a service with 26% of complaints followed by Treatment by, or attitude of, a staff member with 23% of complaints. Complaints received are about a range of services.

6.0 Number of Complaints closed at Stages

- 6.1 The number of complaints closed per stage:

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
Social Work	34	35	8
Health	36	144	9
Total	70	179	17

Complaints closed do not total 100% as some complaint data was missing or were closed as resolved / withdrawn / no consent / transferred.

- 6.2 Wherever possible Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership aim to handle complaints as a Stage 1 complaint where the complaint is handled close to where and when it is raised. Stage 2 complaints are used for more complex complaints that require a more thorough investigation.
- 6.3 The number of complaints closed per stage represent the results that would be expected given the spread of complexity of complaints received.

7.0 Complaint Outcomes at Stages

7.1 Complaint outcomes at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 1:

	Upheld- Movement	Not Upheld - Movement	Part Upheld – Movement
Social Work	9% ↓	44% ↓	35% ↑
Health	39% ↑	19% ↓	36% ↑
Total	24% ↑	31% ↓	36% ↑

Movement is based on the figures from 2024/25 compared to 2025/26.

Complaints do not total 100% as some complaints were closed as resolved / withdrawn / no consent / transferred / missing.

7.2 The outcomes show that for social work complaints under half are upheld or partially upheld whereas Health complaints, around 3/4 of complaints are upheld or partly upheld.

7.3 Complaint outcomes at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 2:

	Upheld - Movement	Not Upheld - Movement	Partially Upheld - Movement
Social Work	14% ↓	43% ↓	34% ↑
Health	14% ↑	43% ↑	34% ↓
Total	14% ↑	31% ↓	40% ↓

Movement is based on the figures from 2024/25 compared to 2025/26.

Stage 2 complaints do not total 100% as some complaints were closed as resolved / withdrawn / no consent / transferred / missing.

7.4 Similarly to stage 1 complaints, the total percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld is around half of all stage 2 complaints received.

7.5 Complaint outcomes at stage 2 escalated as % of all escalated complaints closed in full at stage 2:

	Upheld - Movement	Not Upheld - Movement	Partially Upheld - Movement
Social Work	0% ↓	38% ↑	38% ↑
Health	11% ↑	22% ↓	56% ↓
Total	6% ↓	29% ↓	47% ↓

Movement is based on the figures from 2024/25 compared to 2025/26.

Stage 2 escalated complaints do not total 100% as some complaints were closed as resolved / withdrawn / no consent / missing

For escalated stage 2 complaints the total percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld is around half of all stage 2 escalated complaints.

7.6 Where complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 2 complaint, they have the option to refer the complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

7.7 During 2025/26 Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership had six complaints referred to the SPSO. Half were Social Work complaints, and half were Health Complaints. The majority of these complaints have not been taken forward for further investigation by the SPSO, however, we are still awaiting further communication regarding two where the Partnership has provided further documentation regarding the investigation.

8.0 Complaints closed within timescale

8.1 Number of complaints closed within timescales as a % of total complaints by stage:

	Stage 1 within 5 working days	Stage 2 within 20 working days	Escalation
Social Work	59% ↑	60% ↑	50% ↑
Health	69% ↓	33% ↓	33% ↓
Total	64% ↓	39% ↑	41% ↑

Movement is based on the figures from 2024/25 compared to 2025/26.

Stage 2 escalated complaints do not total 100% as some complaints were closed as resolved / withdrawn / no consent / missing

8.2 Complaints not being closed within timescales is having a significant impact on the volume of repeat communication from complainants who are chasing up responses.

8.3 Overall, across the Partnership more responses are being provided within timescales however, an increase of around 50% has been noted in complaints being received. Partnership staff continue to be regularly reminded that a stage 1 complaint being closed in a timeous manner, can prevent it being escalated unnecessarily.

8.4 Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership complaints co-ordinators for services meet weekly with the NHS Tayside Patient Experience Team to discuss ongoing complaints.

8.5 Senior Management team are provided with regular updates on outstanding complaints and the reasons for the delays.

9.0 Governance around Complaints

9.1 Currently complaint reporting happens quarterly however across Health and Social Care however as the partnership has received an increase in complaints of around 50% within 2025/26 so monitoring may be required more often to identify trends/ increases and to respond to the reasons for these quickly.

9.2 Complaint increases have been noted across many services with the highest being District Nursing with an 89% increase followed by Older People Services and DDARS at 57% and 50% respectively. AHP has seen an overall increase of 30% in complaints and Mental Health only 12% although the number of Mental Health complaints were much higher to begin with.

The table below details the complaints received per service area over the last year along with the percentage change and whether this has been an increase, decrease or stayed level.

Health	AHP	MH	DN	CBIR	LD	Corporate	DDARS	GP	OP Services	Palliative Care	Stroke & Neuro	TSRH	Primary Care
202425	20	81	9	1	1	3	4	16	7	4	2	7	0
202526	26	91	17	0	0	3	6	16	11	5	1	5	4
% Change	30%	12%	89%	-100%	-100%	0%	50%	0%	57%	25%	-50%	-29%	400%
Movement	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↔	↑	↔	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑

9.3 While Health complaints can be easily broken down into service category, the same cannot be said for Social Work complaints as this data has only just begun being collated with the introduction of the new complaints system. However, overall, Social Work partnership complaints have experienced a 175% increase in 2025/26 which has a significant impact on workloads / service capacity.

9.4 While complaints have increased generally, there has also been a significant increase of complaints made from repeat complainants. We are also seeing complainants using AI (such

as Chat GPT) leading to lengthier and more complex complaints. A similar pattern has been observed in relation to Freedom of Information Requests and Subject Access Requests and the cumulative impact of this on workforce capacity is also a significant challenge.

10.0 Planned Service Improvements

- 10.1 Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, services identify planned service improvements to reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising again for patients and service users.
- 10.2 A selection of Planned Service Improvements for Social Work complaints include prompts for address checks; all POA's to be updated regarding Service Users; and, new multi-agency pathways now developed due to feedback received in the form of complaints.

11.0 Compliments

- 11.1 Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership's compliments are held locally by teams. However, one social work compliment about Adult Care Management was passed along for inclusion within the 2025/26 annual report:

"I just wanted to send a quick email to thank you for allocating XX case for assessment and review.

We had a very positive meeting yesterday and I have also emailed XX to thank XX for his understanding and compassion. He listened to our views and concerns and demonstrated genuine empathy which was so very reassuring for us after such a stressful time.

I know how stretched and demanding your jobs are at times but think it's really important to recognise when things are handled sensitively and positively as in our situation.

XX has settled so well in XXX which is down to the approach of the staff team, they have been such a great support. Although we see a marked decline in her cognitive ability we know that she's safe and being very well cared for."

12.0 Care Opinion

- 12.1 Care Opinion has now been launched with the Partnership and we are developing the full functions available in Care Opinion such as QR codes and further feedback options for questionnaires. The team regularly attend network meetings with Care Opinion and other Local Authorities to discuss best practice.
- 12.2 Across the 2025/26 financial year, Dundee HSCP received 55 stories shared by members of the public on Care Opinion. 84% of these stories were completely positive, with 16% containing some level of criticality. These stories were responded to 37 times by staff and have been read more than 3,628 times.
- 12.3 Here are three examples of stories submitted to Care Opinion about Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership teams.

"I was referred by the GP to the Dundee Adult Psychology Unit in 2024, as I could not manage my OCD.

I was suffering frequent panic attacks and felt I could not function properly as I was in a constant state of anxiety. My main anxiety was around food preparation and germs. My psychologist was Glen and he changed my life. He took time to get to the root of my obsessions and worked on a strategy to help me manage the anxiety when it left me"

"Have tried for the past two days (at least 8 times) to make arrangements by phone for blood and urine tests with Dundee Community Care and Treatment Services, only to find each time I am between numbers 12 and 16 in the phone queue. This happened every time I called.

I am very disappointed to report such a poor service and would appreciate advice on how to better access this facility.”

“We all know MacMillan nurses are very special people, what I did not know was how much of themselves they put into the job. I have watched our amazing MacMillan nurse look after my husband and myself in the last weeks of his life. From diagnosis to him passing was less than two months, that was just a week ago. “

- 12.4 The Partnership is preparing for Care Opinion Week which is due to begin 8th June. Promotional items will be handed into areas where required.

13.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

14.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Risk Score No Controls	Risk Score Controls	Appetite	Risk Level	Movement
9 IJB	Information Governance	16	12	Cautious		same

Risk	Information Governance
Risk Level	12
Risk Appetite	Outwith appetite
The report demonstrates:	
x	An increase in risk level
	A reduction in risk level
	The effectiveness of current controls
	The identification and implementation of additional controls
x	The presence of a new / emerging risk

15.0 CONSULTATIONS

15.1 The Chief Finance Officer, Heads of Service, Health and Community Care, Acting Head of Strategic Services and the Clerk were consulted in the preparation of this report.

16.0 DIRECTIONS

The Integration Joint Board requires a mechanism to action its strategic commissioning plans and this is provided for in sections 26 to 28 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014. This mechanism takes the form of binding directions from the Integration Joint Board to one or both of Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside.

Direction Required to Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside or Both	Direction to:	
	1. No Direction Required	x
	2. Dundee City Council	
	3. NHS Tayside	
	4. Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside	

17.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 None

Dave Berry
Chief Officer

DATE: 29 May 2026

Clare Lewis-Robertson
Lead Officer