

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Meeting Date	20 November 2025
Title	Annual feedback and complaints report: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025
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Executive Sponsor	Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Executive Summary The purpose of this paper is to provide ARAC with an overview of complaints and feedback received by the HCPC between April 2024 and March 2025, including key trends, performance against service standards, learning outcomes, and positive feedback. In this time: • The HCPC received 748 complaints in 2024–25, up from 433 the previous year, averaging 62 per month with increases driven by international application challenges and a surge in Q4. • Performance against the 15-day response standard fell to 64%, impacted by high volumes and resource constraints, though October to January saw improvement. • Positive feedback rose to 71 instances, highlighting staff professionalism and support.	
Action required	The Committee is asked to review the information provided and seek clarification on any areas.
Previous consideration	Annual Report
Next steps	None as a result of this report.
Financial and resource implications	None as a result of this report.

Associated strategic priority/priorities	Continuously improve and innovate Develop insight and exert influence Be visible, engaged and informed
Associated strategic risk(s)	1. We are unable to deliver our regulatory requirements effectively in a changing landscape, affecting our ability to protect the public 4. We are unable to effectively build trust, engage with and influence our stakeholders, reducing our ability to understand their perspectives and regulate effectively
Risk appetite	Regulation - measured Compliance - measured
Communication and engagement	None as a result of this report.
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impact and Welsh language standards	Tracking trends in complaints enables us to monitor and identify if there are any EDI or Welsh Language issues which we need to address.
Other impact assessments	None as a result of this report.
Reason for consideration in the private session of the meeting (if applicable)	Not applicable

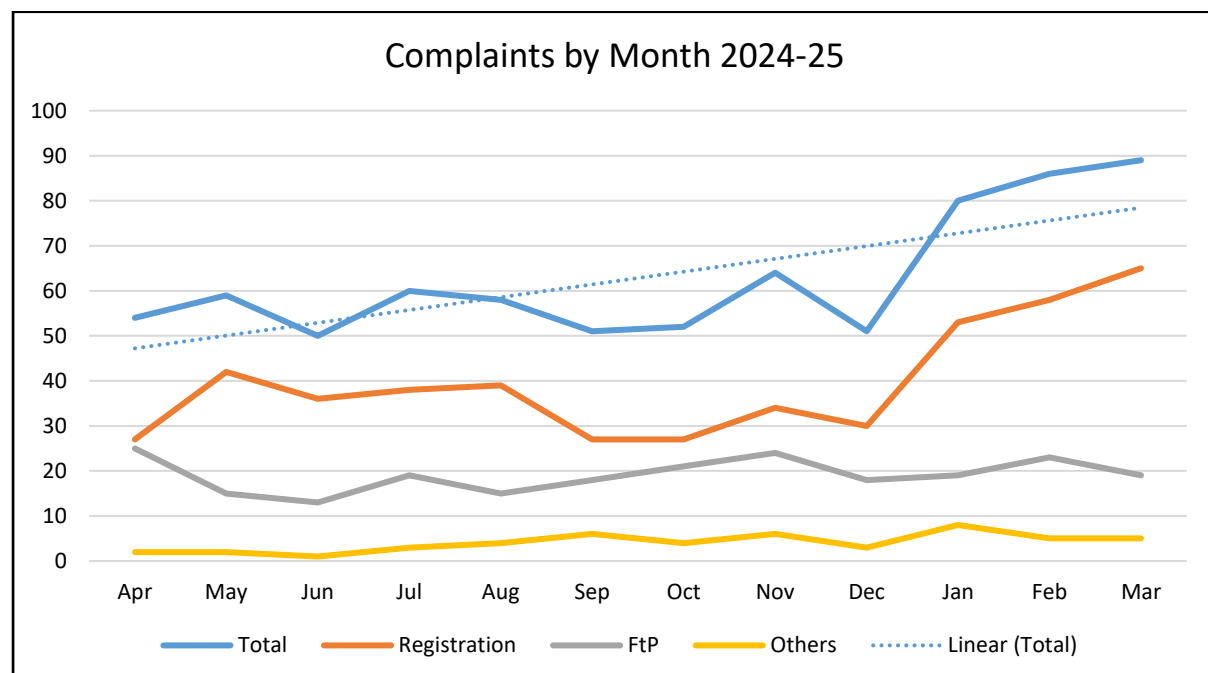
Annual feedback and complaints report: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report is a summary of complaints and feedback that the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) received between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- 1.2. The Feedback and Complaints Manager manages the customer feedback received across the organisation in accordance with our Customer Service Policy and Process. Requests for information and general comments about processes and procedures are also logged and reported on.
- 1.3. This report provides a review of the feedback and complaints received during the period and the main themes in complaints, learning identified, and changes made as a result of feedback. Examples of positive feedback are also included.

2. Complaints received 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

- 2.1. The table below shows the number of complaints received each month in total and by department.



- 2.2. 748 complaints were received during the reporting period, an average of 62 per month. Complaint activity increased from April through to March. Looking forward to the next reporting period, the number of new complaints coming in

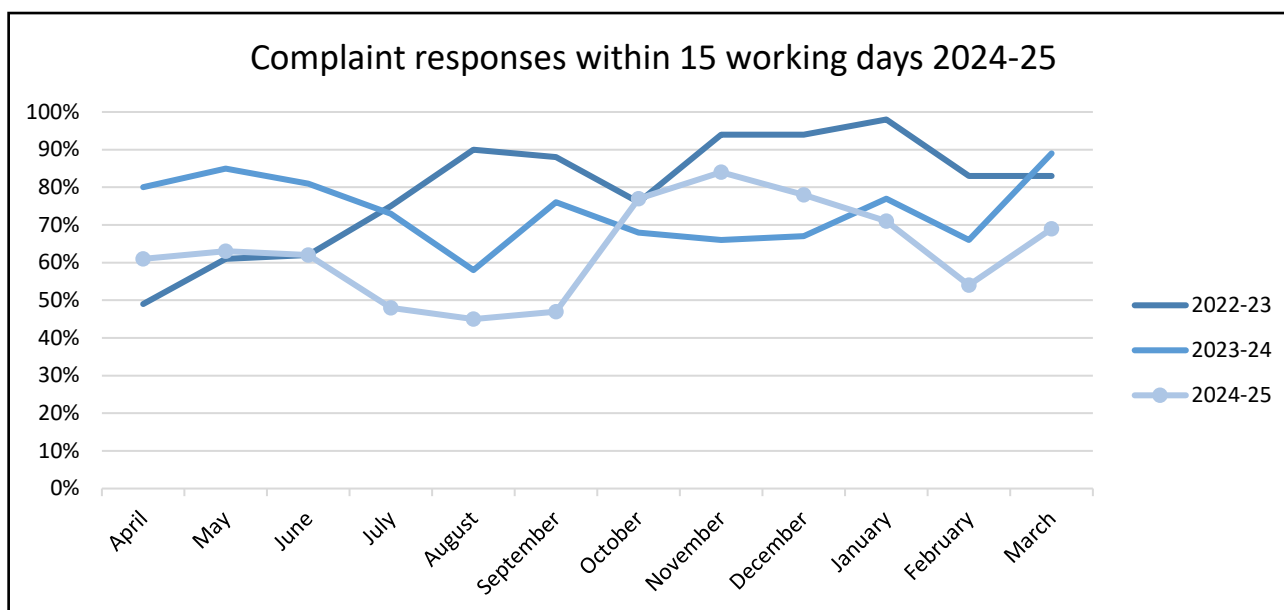
remains higher going into 2025-26, with current numbers included in the table below.

Year	Total Number	Monthly Average
2021-22	709	59
2022-23	650	54
2023-24	433	36
2024-25	748	62
2025-26 (to date)	580	97

- 2.3. The majority of complaints received were about functions and activities carried out by the Registration and FTP departments, which received 63% and 30% of the complaints respectively; in comparison this was 51% and 42% for the previous reporting period. These departments get the bulk of the complaints every year as they are the most public facing departments.
- 2.4. Sudden increases in complaints can be an indicator of issues that require addressing, such as with renewal challenges. Continued from the previous reporting period there were no significant spikes in complaints for 2024-25 relating to registration renewals, which is reflective of the improved service in an area that previously generated higher levels of feedback.
- 2.5. A surge in applications made in January 2025 presented further challenges throughout Q4 2024-25, with a significantly increased workload for the department, and resultant capacity issues.
- 2.6. Complaint activity related to international registrations did rise noticeably in the first and fourth quarters of 2024-25. The Registration department experienced challenges with progressing international applications. Specific complaint areas include applications initially determined as needing further information, applications that were placed under plagiarism investigations, and applications found without assessor availability.

3 Performance against service standard

- 3.1 Our service level is 15 working days to provide a substantive response to complaints from the date of receipt. Internally we aim to provide responses sooner and according to priority.
- 3.2 Fewer complaints (64%) were responded to within our service level in 2024-25 when compared with the previous two years. However, there were periods of fluctuation throughout the year such as between October 2024 and January 2025 when an average service level of 78% was achieved.
- 3.3 The graph below illustrates performance over the year against the previous two years.



3.4 The overall drop in performance was impacted by the higher volume of complaints as outlined above (paragraph 2.5) in the first and fourth quarters of 2024-25 with most of the complaints related to international applications. Other impacting factors were a limited availability of complaint responders in the first two quarters of 2024-25 in Registration and FTP throughout the year.

3.5 It should also be noted that some FTP complaints are related to threshold or Investigating Committee Panel decisions. The review of some of these cases can be complex and time consuming, with a limited pool of responders. They can take longer to investigate, often longer than the 15 working days we aim for.

4 Professional Standards Authority

4.1 In 2019-20 the PSA introduced a standard (Standard 4) focusing on regulators addressing concerns identified about it, including through feedback received from stakeholders. We have continued to meet this standard since its introduction, including in their 2024-25 report. We record where we undertake changes as a result of feedback and provide evidence requested by the PSA when carrying out their annual review.

4.2 The Feedback and Complaints Manager contributed to the PSA working group and is part of a Healthcare Regulators Complaints Forum.

5 Learning from complaints

5.1 Where complaints are upheld, apologies are given and as far as is possible remedial action is taken. Where the complaint identifies a systemic issue, corrective action is taken, and we seek to learn from what went wrong to prevent a recurrence.

5.2 During this review period, a number of corrective actions and learning points have resulted from complaints or feedback in the following areas:

Process Improvements

- Issues in Q1 2024-25 impacting international applications resolved with updated processes (website updates, guidance, targeted emails).
- Recruitment campaign launched to address assessor shortages and process review to avoid delays.

Training & Development

- Training on deed poll name change rules for Scotland vs England.
- Further training for Registration Advisors on empathy and patience.
- Training and development team addressed representative details issue across multiple cases.

Compliance & Legal

- Legal advice sought on NHS Trusts using protected title 'Physiotherapist' to understand options.

Website & Communication Updates

- Targeted emails and website updates implemented to mitigate Q1 issues.
- Corrected typographical and graphical errors on HCPC webpages and social media posts.
- Amended misleading info on patient outcomes from clinical supervision.
- Removed documents/information wrongly published on hearings and issued apologies.
- Corrected error in allegations published on website after discontinuance.

5.3 Most learning from complaints is departmental specific.

- One theme which has been cross-organisational, particularly in relation to the Registration and FTP departments, is the negative impact on stakeholders when they are not kept regularly updated or have difficulty in contacting a suitable person to assist them.
- Complaints about the tone and content of correspondence were previously a consistent theme that appears to have been successfully addressed through the tone of voice review two years ago. It was noted to keep this under review, and there were no significant indications of tone of voice being an issue in 2024-25, which is a positive outcome.

We recently received (outside of this reporting period) some positive feedback in relation to tone of voice. In response to the threshold closure decision complaint outcome, the complainant said, *"the tone of the recent emails from FTP has improved since I initially raised the complaints against your registrant;"* and *"Thank you for that. It does make a difference"*

5.4 Monthly complaint reports are disseminated to the relevant Heads of the departments that receive complaints during the month, which contains a summary of every complaint received during that month and themes of complaints received. The Executive Leadership Team also receives a monthly

complaints summary report. Where feedback identifies serious systemic errors, these are considered for inclusion on the Operational Risk Register or Assurance work-planning.

6 Complaint themes

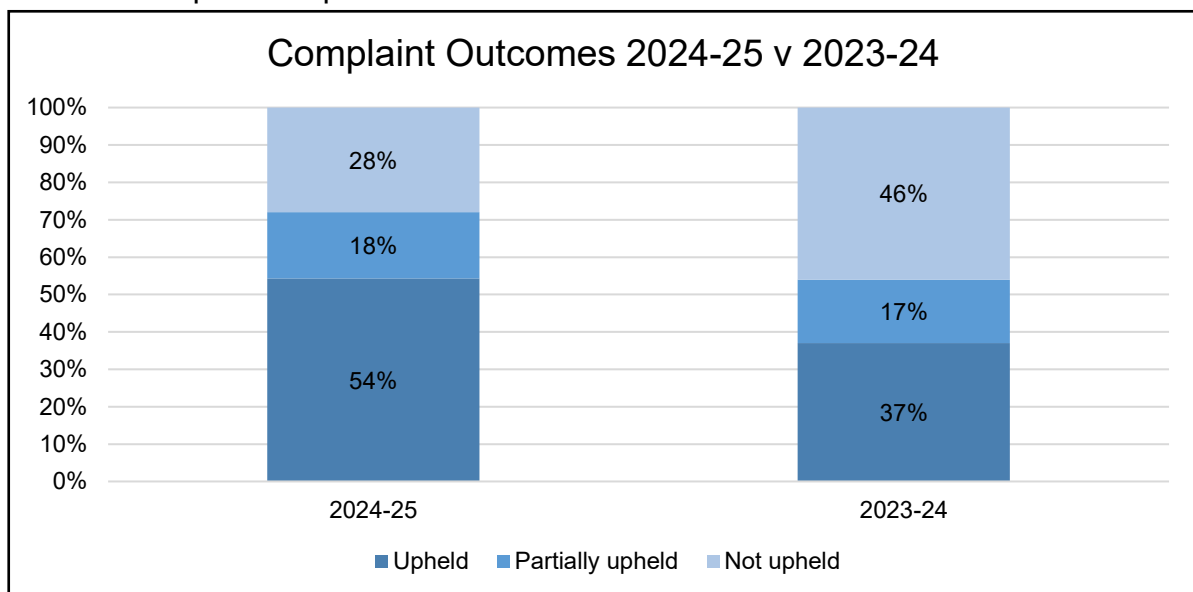
6.1 This section provides further details about the main areas of negative feedback received during the review period.

FTP	HCPTS	Registration
•Pre-Investigating Committee Panel (ICP) threshold decisions •Communication •Transparency •Delays •Case handling	•Management of Hearings •Conduct of hearings •Notice of hearings •Website	•UK applicants •International application process and processing times •International applications – documents; delays; consistency; assessor availability •IELTS tests •Communication •Fees •Refunds

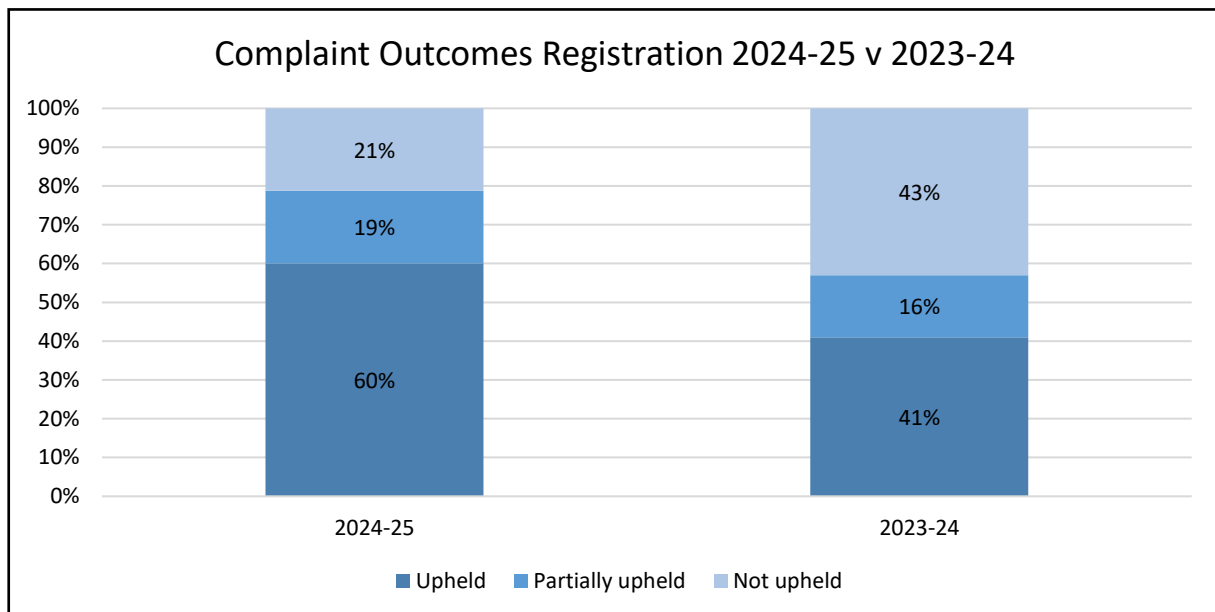
7 Complaint outcomes

7.1 The HCPC records whether complaints are upheld, not upheld, or partially upheld. This is a subjective assessment based on the validity of the main aspects of the complaint and any subsidiary issues. The Feedback and Complaints Manager makes this assessment to ensure consistency and neutrality.

7.2 The graph below shows the distribution of outcomes across the organisation in the three categories during the current reporting period 2024-25 in comparison with the previous period 2023-24.

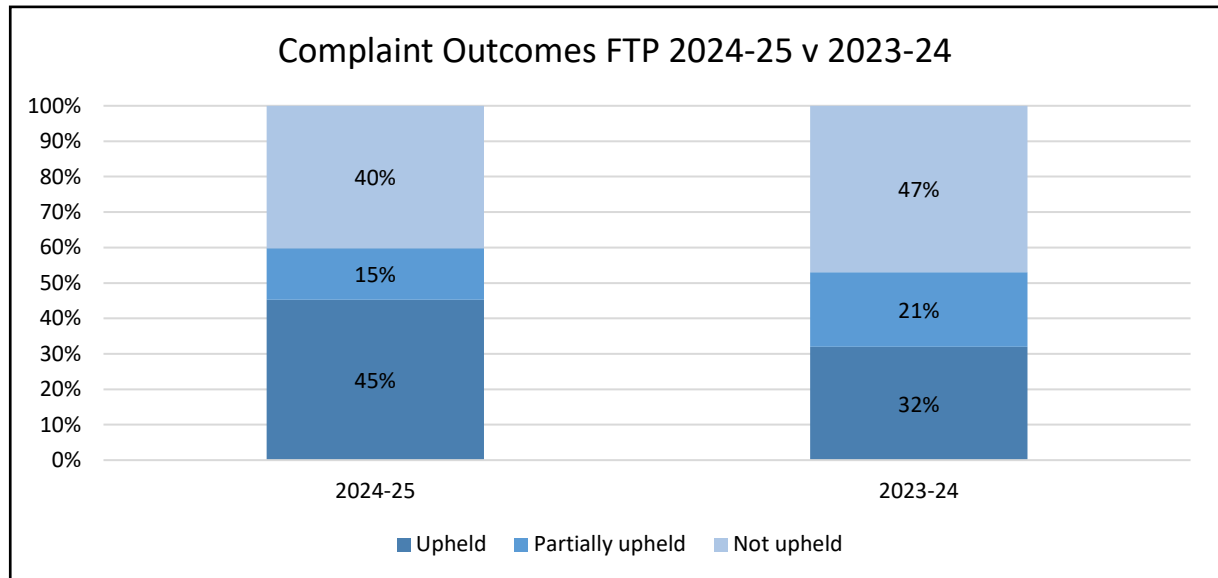


- 7.3 Complaint outcomes that were either upheld or partially upheld have increased from the previous years' performance. The main areas of upheld complaints were in relation to poor communication and delays (as described in section 6 above).
- 7.4 For complaints that are not upheld, the complainant is provided with details of any relevant actions, policies and procedures relevant to their complaint so they can understand why actions have or have not been taken.
- 7.5 The Registration department has seen since the previous reporting period, a halving of complaints that were determined as not upheld (21%), and a significant increase of upheld or partially upheld complaints. These increases can be attributed to the challenges in the department already highlighted in the report.
- 7.6 However, the improved performance that was reported in the 2023-24 report was attributed to changes made to processes such as renewals, and it should be noted that renewals have continued to attract very few complaints in comparison to previous years.
- 7.7 The graph below shows the distribution of outcomes for Registration during this reporting period alongside that of the previous period for comparison.



- 7.8 The reporting period for FTP has seen little change in comparison to the previous year for upheld, partially upheld and not upheld determinations.

- 7.9 The graph below shows the distribution of outcomes for Fitness to Practise (FTP) during this reporting period alongside that of the previous period for comparison.



8 Positive feedback

- 8.1 The HCPC logs positive feedback alongside complaints to help ensure that good practice is noted alongside areas that could be improved. During the review period, we logged 71 incidents of positive feedback which is an increase on the 54 received in the previous period.
- 8.2 Below are three examples of the type of positive feedback we receive:

From a Registrant involved in a fitness to practise case. *"I was impressed by the support the HCPC provided for those going through the process."*

From an international applicant, *"I would like to express my gratitude for a staff member who has gone above and beyond today to help resolve the issues I experienced with my HCPC application. This has taken a lot of her time up today but has managed to resolve the issues I was having, and without her help today I would not have sorted my HCPC application. I would like her manager to know what an exceptional member of staff (she) is and dealt with my issues professionally and efficiently. Had I spoke with (her) prior to today it would have saved a lot of stress. Please again pass on my sincere gratitude to (the Registration Advisor) for her help today."*

From a member of the public who had raised concerns about an education provider: *"Thank you (Education Quality Officer) for your support during the reporting process, I appreciated your time and on how to complete the concern document, and have appreciated your updates. You have made a very difficult situation easier. Thank you."*

- 8.3 Positive feedback is highlighted to employees and their managers when received. A personal thank you from ELT is sent to the person named in the positive feedback using our feedback and rewards system.
- 8.4 We have continued to increase awareness of positive feedback received and the fact that it is valued and recorded, and examples of positive feedback are posted on the intranet every month.