

By e-mail
Ms D Speers



25 November 2009

Dear Ms Speers

Further to my e-mail of 4 November and your clarification of 5 November, I write to respond to the various information requests set out in your e-mails of 30 October 2009. I will respond to these in turn.

Is it correct that about 300 cases a year are accepted for investigation by PHSO?

I have taken this to relate to complaints made to the Health Service Ombudsman. Information on the number of complaints accepted and investigated is set out in the Ombudsman's Annual Reports published on the Ombudsman's website. The link to these is set out below:

http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/improving_services/annual_reports/index.html

From these reports you will see that in 2008/09 we accepted 289 complaints about NHS bodies for investigation, in 2007/08 703, and in 2006/07 862. The figures for 2007/08 and 2006/07 exclude complaints against the NHS about continuing care funding. An explanation for the decrease in acceptances is on page 29 of the 2008/09 report.

Do PHSO only investigate 1.5% of complaints made to them?

From 1 April to 30 September 2009 the Health Service Ombudsman accepted 153 complaints against the NHS for investigation (see below). This equates to 2.4% of enquiries received in the same period. I should explain that the Ombudsman terms all complaints made to her initially as enquiries. Please note that some of the 153 complaints will have been received as enquiries prior to 1 April 2009. For your information, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman closed 15639 enquiries in 2008/09 (page 26 of the annual report), and a total of 457 complaints were investigated, which equates to approximately 3% of enquiries. It may be helpful to note that there is further information on page 27 of this report about enquiries, which includes the information that 79% of enquiries were not properly made or were premature.

How many cases have been referred to PHSO since the Healthcare Commission finished [on 31 March 2009]?

Again I have taken this to relate to complaints made to the Health Service Ombudsman. The Health Service Ombudsman received 6428 enquires relating to complaints about the NHS in the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009.

How many cases (complaints against Health Service Ombudsman) from those selected for investigation in the same period have been upheld?

We do not hold statistics solely relating to the 6428 enquiries received from 1 April to 30 September 2009, but I can provide some relevant information to aid and assist you. Of the 153 complaints which were accepted for investigation during the period the majority, if not all, of these investigations will not have been completed by 30 September 2009. From 1 April to 30 September 2009 the Ombudsman concluded 57 investigations into complaints about NHS bodies, of which 10 were discontinued, 12 were fully upheld, 15 were partly upheld and 20 were not upheld. I should explain that not all these 57 investigations were selected from the 6428 enquiries referred to above and that many investigations take longer than six months to complete. A complaint which is partly upheld is defined as such when some of the elements of the complaint are upheld, whilst others are not upheld. Complaints are discontinued for a variety of reasons, including request from the complainant and the achievement of resolution prior to completion of the investigation.

What is the expected annual budget to PHSO this year?

This information is published on HM Treasury website, at the below link:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/main_supply_estimates_0910.htm

The figure relating to the Ombudsman is towards the bottom of the list. The figure provided for 2009/10 for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is £34,226,000.

What is the total number of PHSO staff?

At 4 November 2009 PHSO has 391.3 full time equivalent staff, being 425 members of staff working on a full or part time basis.

How many PHSO staff were formerly employed by the Healthcare Commission?

To provide this information would require the examination of individual files for every member of staff. You will appreciate that this is both impractical and costly. There is

an exemption at section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act which provides that where the cost of compliance is excessive release of the information can be declined.

Were the former employees of the Healthcare Commission TUPEd across or were they recruited directly by PHSO?

No staff were transferred from the Healthcare Commission to PHSO using the TUPE provisions. The provisions did not apply, and all PHSO staff have been recruited directly by PHSO.

How many PHSO decisions are modified as a result of review or re-review?

Eleven enquiries have been reopened as a result of review between 1 April and 30 September 2009.

How many investigations are opened by PHSO following review of a previous decision not to investigate?

Of the eleven enquiries which are being reassessed as a result of reviews, eight assessments are still in progress. The remaining three enquiries have been declined for investigation following re-assessment of the complaint.

How many review requests/complaints against PHSO have been processed by the Review Team in total since 1 April 2009?

From 1 April to 30 September 2009 the Review Team have completed 564 reviews.

Please note that the figures I have provided for the period 1 April to 30 September 2009 have not been audited, and that the final audited figures for the business year will appear in the Ombudsman's annual report for 2009/10. I have now completed my response to your information request, and I hope that you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Liz Hannan
Freedom of Information and Data Protection Manager