

Update on performance of the Dental Complaints Service – Q1 2018

Purpose of paper	To report on the performance of the Dental Complaints Service (DCS) for quarter 1, 2018
Action	For noting and discussion.
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Patients: Objective 4 – To direct patients who have concerns to the most appropriate organisation, so that problems can be resolved quickly, fairly and cost effectively. .
Business Plan 2017	Continue to raise awareness of the service and drive down the number and age of complaints.
Decision Trail	
Next stage	Not applicable.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to note and discuss the paper.
Authorship of paper and further information	<p>Hazel Adams Head of Service hadams@dentalcomplaints.org.uk T: 020 8253 080</p> <p>Tom Scott Executive Director, Fitness to Practise Transition Tscott@gdc-uk.org T: 020 7167 6209</p>
Appendices	None

1. Executive summary

1.1. This paper summarises the performance of the service in Q1, 2018 as well as providing information about current challenges and how these are being addressed. The Council is aware that the review of DCS falls under the Shifting the Balance Portfolio. Phase 1 of that work (reviewing and improving the operational efficiencies of DCS) has been completed and plans are now being put in place to commence phase 2 of this project.

2. Analysis of Performance

Incoming enquiries

2.1. The DCS record data for all initial enquiries and complaints. During Q1, 586 enquiries were received compared to 710 for the same period in 2017, a decrease of 17%. 497 enquiries were received in Q4, 2017. The fall in the number of enquiries received is likely to be due to clear signposting on the GDC and DCS websites indicating the most appropriate organisation to deal with patient concerns and also the need to raise awareness of the service. The opportunity to raise awareness is being explored as part of the Communications plan for the DCS Review Project and DCS are working with the Communications team in order to do so.

The DCS receives most of its initial enquiries via the telephone. Please see figure 1 below which shows the number of telephone enquiries received in Q1, 2018.

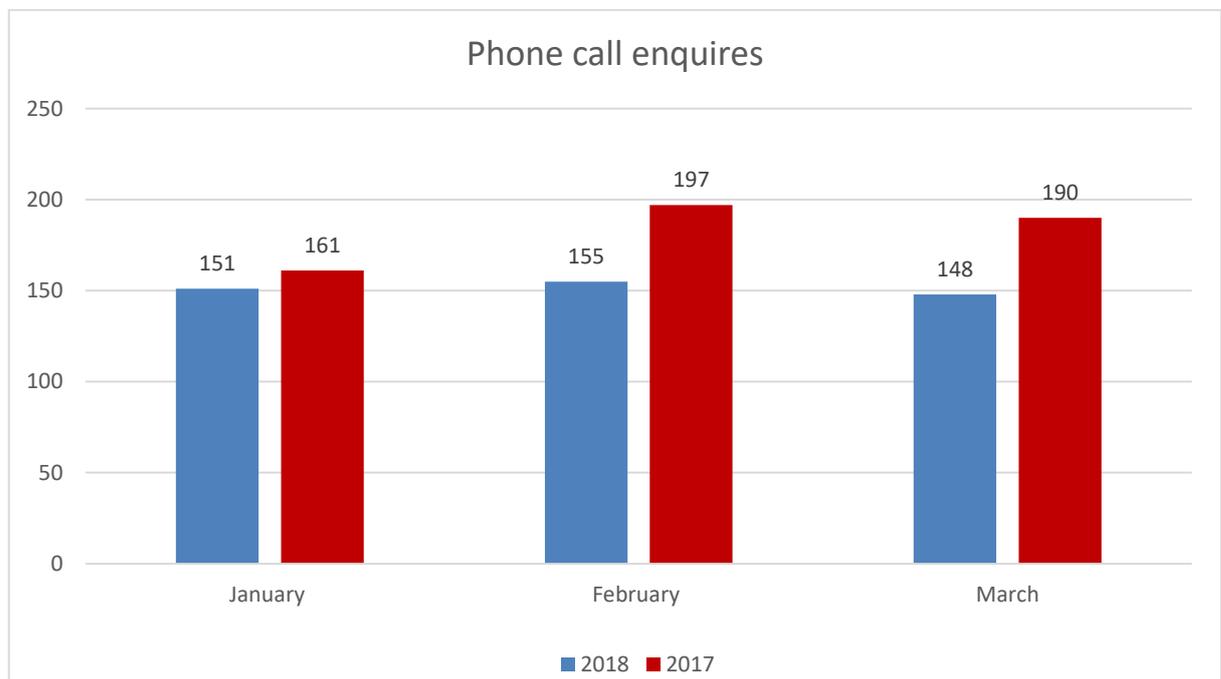


Figure 1 – Phone call enquiries 2018 v 2017

2.2. Enquiries are also received via the DCS online platform and by post. The respective figures for Q1, 2018, benchmarked against 2017 figures for the same period are set out in figure 2 below.

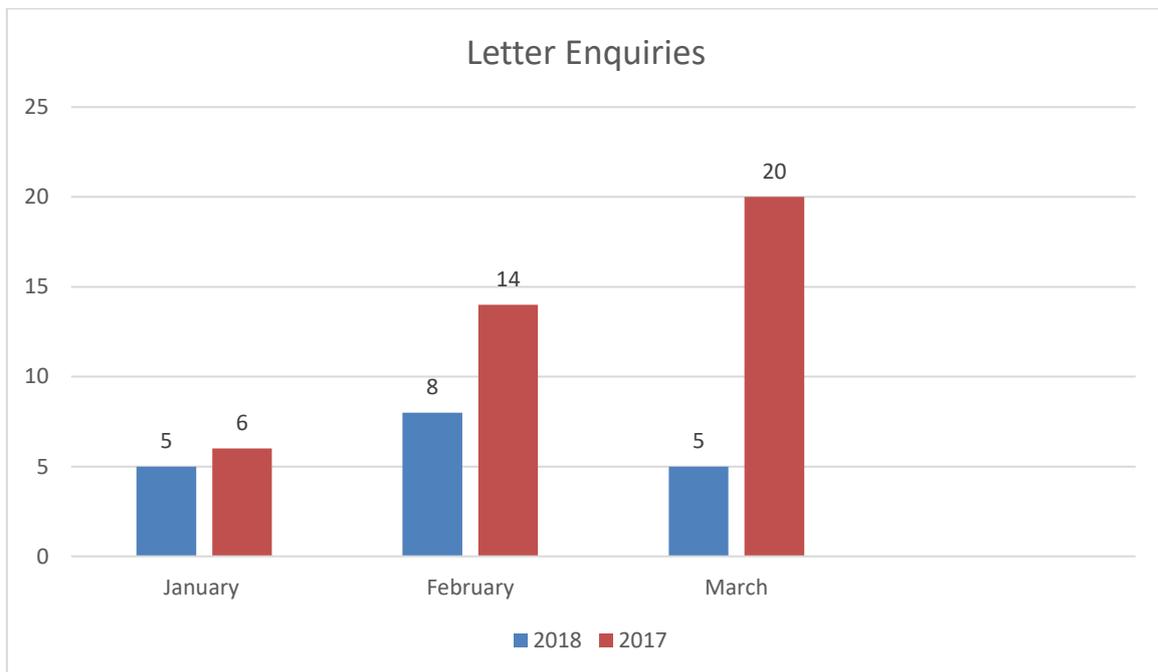
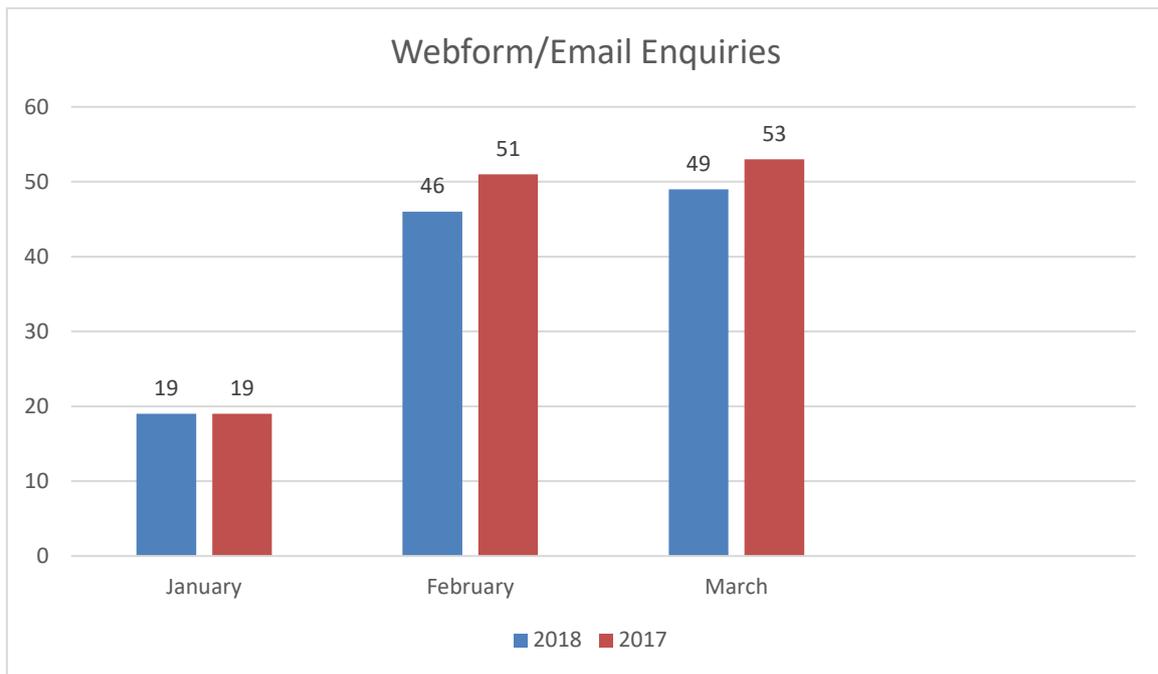


Figure 2. Incoming Q1 2018 – enquiries by webform, email and letter

2.3. The number of incoming enquiries, 586 in Q1 is a decrease of 17% compared to the same period last year (710).

Complaint issues

2.4. The most common issues raised in Q1 by complainants were:

- Perceived failure of treatment – 80%
- Alleged inappropriate treatment – 4%
- Access – dental professional's availability for treatment – 3%
- Treatment received inconsistent with treatment plan – 2%
- Post-operative pain – 2%

Treatment types

2.5. Main treatment types relating to complaints raised:

- Braces – 15%
- Crowns – 13%
- Implants – 9%
- Fillings (Tooth coloured) – 9%
- Bridges – 9%
- Denture (full set) – 8%
- Denture (partial) – 7%

Outcomes

2.6. In Q1 2018, the outcomes relating to concluded cases were as follows:

- DCS secured a full refund of fees in 31 concluded complaints
- partial refunds were secured in 2 other cases
- In 3 cases, patients received a financial contribution from their treating dentist for remedial work required
- In 1 complaint, a full explanation of issues arising during dental treatment was received
- 4 complaints were closed after patients had received full apologies

The following figure shows the origin of enquiries received in Q1

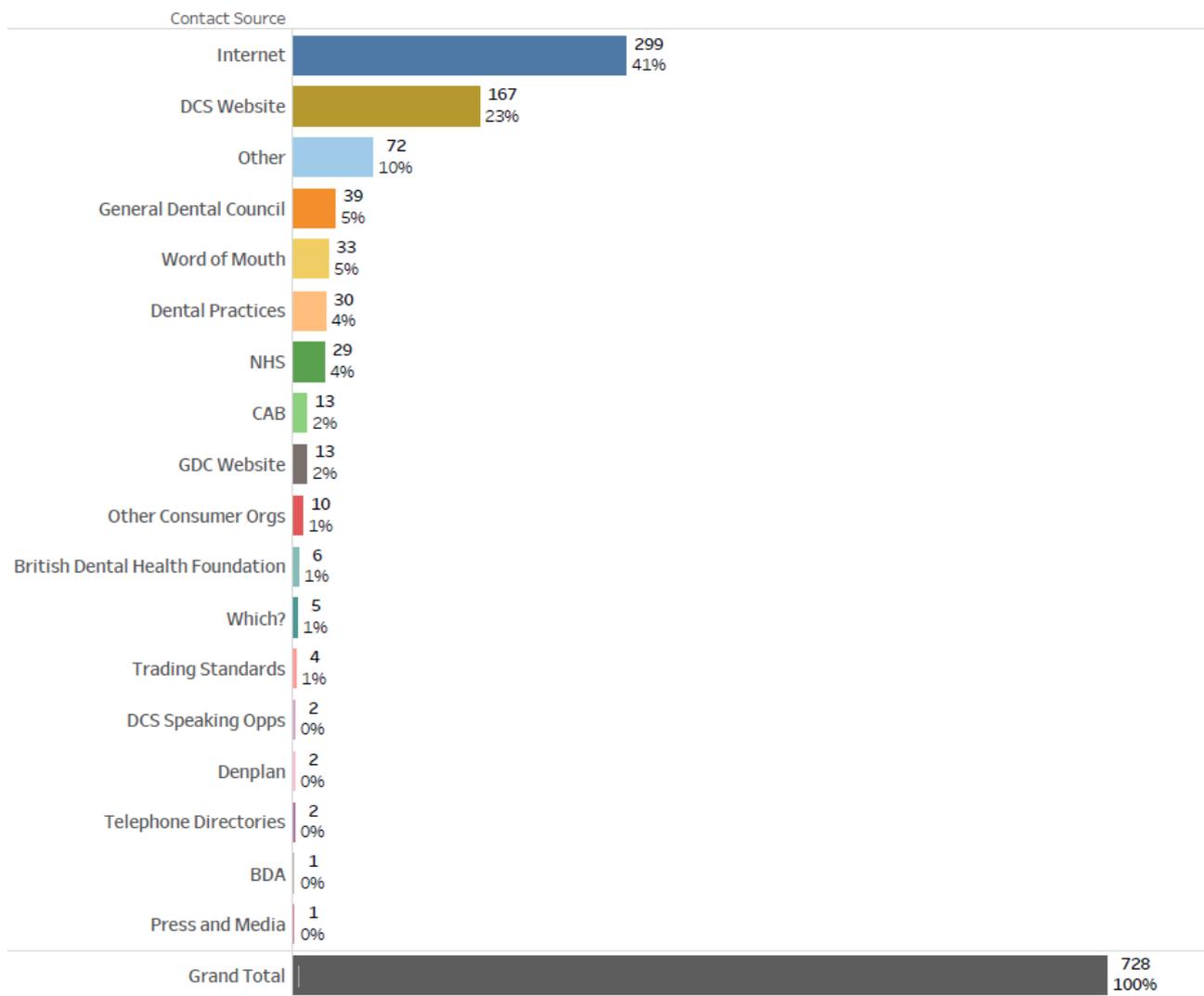


Figure 3 – sources of DCS enquiries in Q1 2018

The relationship with FtP

- 2.7. Incoming complaints are assessed against the DCS remit and FTP referral criteria. If the DCS are unable to assist, the patient is referred to the appropriate organisation, this includes NHS England, ICO, CQC, FTP or they are advised to seek independent legal advice.
- 2.8. All enquiries that either fall within the DCS remit or raise FTP concerns in-line with the FTP criteria, are logged and processed as cases.
- 2.9. The new DCS to FTP referral principles were introduced in March. Based on this, we anticipate that the number of referrals made by DCS to FTP will be significantly reduced.
- 2.10. A comparison between the cases logged and the number of referrals made to FTP have been detailed below.

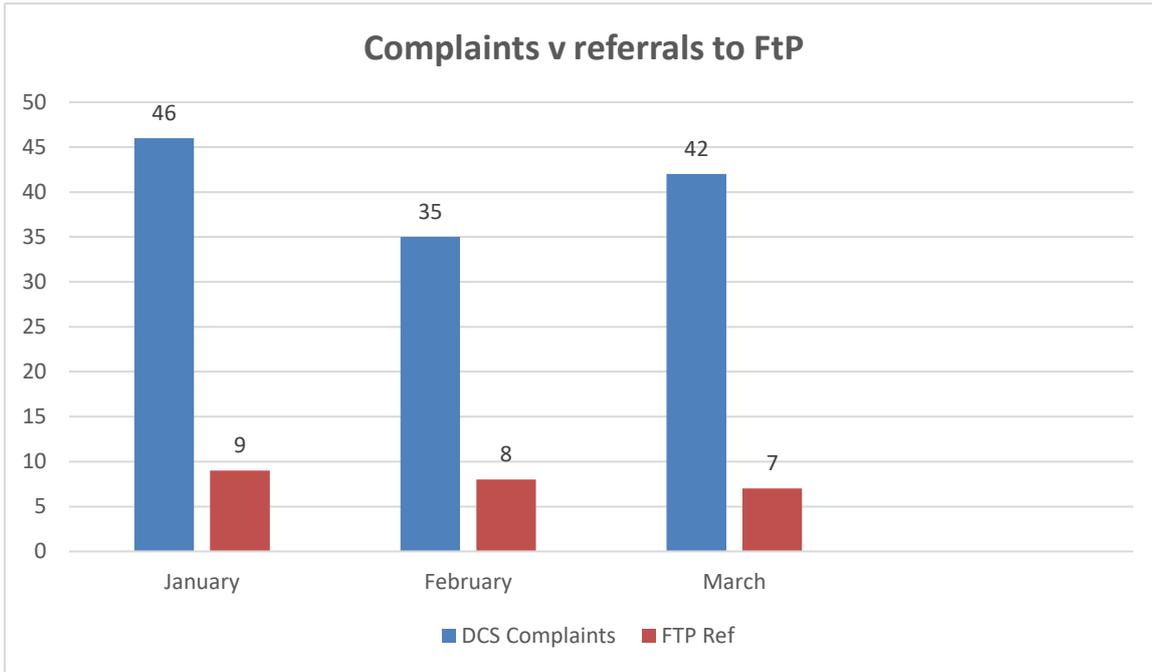


Figure 4. DCS complaints v referrals to FtP in Q1 2018

- 2.11. In Q1 2018, on average, 8 referrals were made per month from DCS to the FtP process, representing between 19% and 23% of complaints received. This compares with a figure of 28% for the same period last year.
- 2.12. 3 referrals were made from DCS to the Illegal Practice Team in Q1 2018, the same number of referrals were made in Q1 2017. A total of 10 cases were referred to illegal practise throughout 2017.

Performance

2.13. The performance against the indicative time targets is set out below in figure 5.

Month	Target	Average time Q1 2018	Month	Average time Q4 2017
January 2018	Stage 1 – 2 days Stage 2 – 21 days Stage 3 – 90 days	Stage 1 – 8 days Stage 2 – 60 days Stage 3 – 84 days	October 2017	Stage 1 – 11 days Stage 2 – 44 days Stage 3 – 100 days
February 2018	Stage 1 – 2 days Stage 2 – 21 days Stage 3 – 90 days	Stage 1 – 2 days Stage 2 – 40 days Stage 3 – 104 days	November 2017	Stage 1 – 7 days Stage 2 – 34 days Stage 3 – 112 days
March 2018	Stage 1 – 2 days Stage 2 – 21 days Stage 3 – 90 days	Stage 1 – 4 days Stage 2 – 32 days Stage 3 – 65 days	December 2017	Stage 1 – 3 days Stage 2 – 44 days Stage 3 – 149 days

Figure 5 – DCS performance against expected time targets for completion Q1,2018

2.14. Figure 5 shows a comparison between timeliness in Q1 2018 and Q4 2017.

2.15. In Q1, timeliness improved month on month in Stage 2 of the complaints process. Although the target was not met in February for Stage 3 of the process, improvements were made to timeliness in Q1 compared to Q4 2017.

2.16. 3 panel meetings were held in Q1 2018. The DCS panellists were able to facilitate and endorse agreements between the patients and dental professionals concerned in all 3 cases.

2.17. The number of cases concluded by DCS in Q1 are set out below in figure 5.

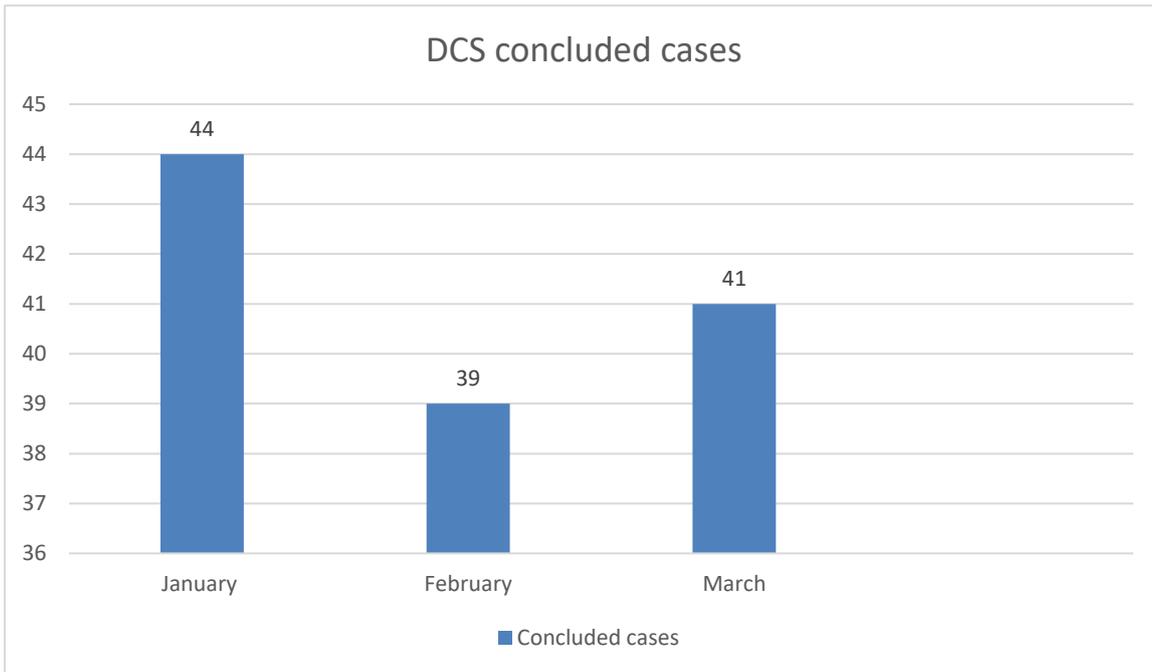


Figure 6. DCS concluded cases for Q1 2018

2.18. Concluded cases are complaints that have closed at either of the four operational stages. In Q1 the team concluded 124 cases compared to 152 in Q4 2017

2.19. When all cases are closed, feedback forms are sent to both the patient and Dental Professional to obtain feedback on the service that they have received. In Q1, 2018, the overall level of customer satisfaction shows 96% of respondents found the service they received good or excellent.

Resourcing

2.20. The DCS will be relocating from their Croydon office to Wimpole Street as of Monday 14 May

2.21. The current DCS team consists of a Head of Service, Operations Manager, Panel Secretary, 4 full time complaints officer and a part time complaints officer.

2.22. Following a restructure, as of 1 June 2018 the team will consist of the following, Head of Operations, Senior Complaints Officer, 4 full time complaints officers and a part time Complaints officer.

2.23. DCS are currently in the process of recruiting for 3 full time Complaints Officer roles as a result of team members who are unable to make the transition to Wimpole Street.

3. Recommendations

3.1. For Council to note and discuss the performance of DCS in Q1 2018