

Customer Service Annual Report for 2018 – Re-presentation

Purpose of paper	This paper sets out a summary of the Customer Service feedback received in 2018
Status	Public
Action	For noting
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Performance - Objective 1: To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator.
Business Plan 2017	2017 Priority 2: Improve our overall performance.
Decision Trail	This paper is prepared on an annual basis as previously agreed with SLT. The paper was discussed at SLT on 3 September 2019.
Next step	
Recommendations	N/A
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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The Fitness to Practise directorate is dedicated to ensuring a high standard of customer service is maintained in all cases. The customer and registrant feedback surveys were introduced in 2016 to provide a platform for external stakeholders to voice their opinions.
- 1.2. We have seen an improvement in 2018 for the number of responses received as compared to 2017. With a total of 100 responses received in 2018 and 57 received in 2017. Although we have seen an improvement in the response rate, the numbers are still very low when considering trends. We are developing proposals to undertake a far more pro-active approach to feedback gathering that will boost the qualitative and quantitative value of feedback going forward. This will also help mitigate any tendency on the part of respondents to couch their feedback within the context of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding the *outcome*, rather than the service provided during the *process*. As part of our improvements we will also seek

feedback from other Healthcare Regulators and seek to benchmark our current and any future process against these organisations.

2. Background

2.1. The Shifting the balance programme is focussed on making improvements to better help the GDC to improve its regulatory work. As part of this programme of work there are four main themes being explored. Moving upstream, improving engagement, refocusing fitness to practise and better first tier complaints resolution.

2.2. A working group developed the core principles regarding complaints resolution that we aim to communicate to patients:

1. All of your feedback is important to us
2. We want to make it easy for you to raise a concern or complaint
3. We follow a complaints procedure and keep you informed
4. We will try to answer all your questions and any concerns you raise
5. We want you to have a positive experience of making a complaint
6. Your feedback helps us to improve our service

2.3. This report looks to analyse the responses received from registrants and informants for 2018. The survey is sent out following the closure of a Fitness to practise (FtP) case at one of the following stages:

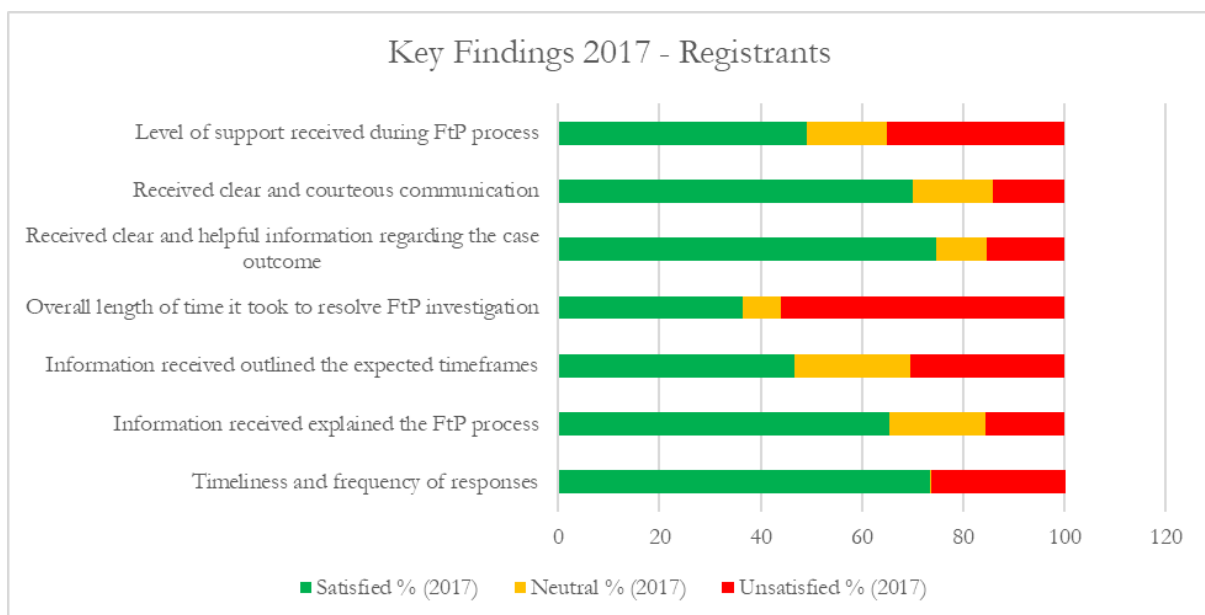
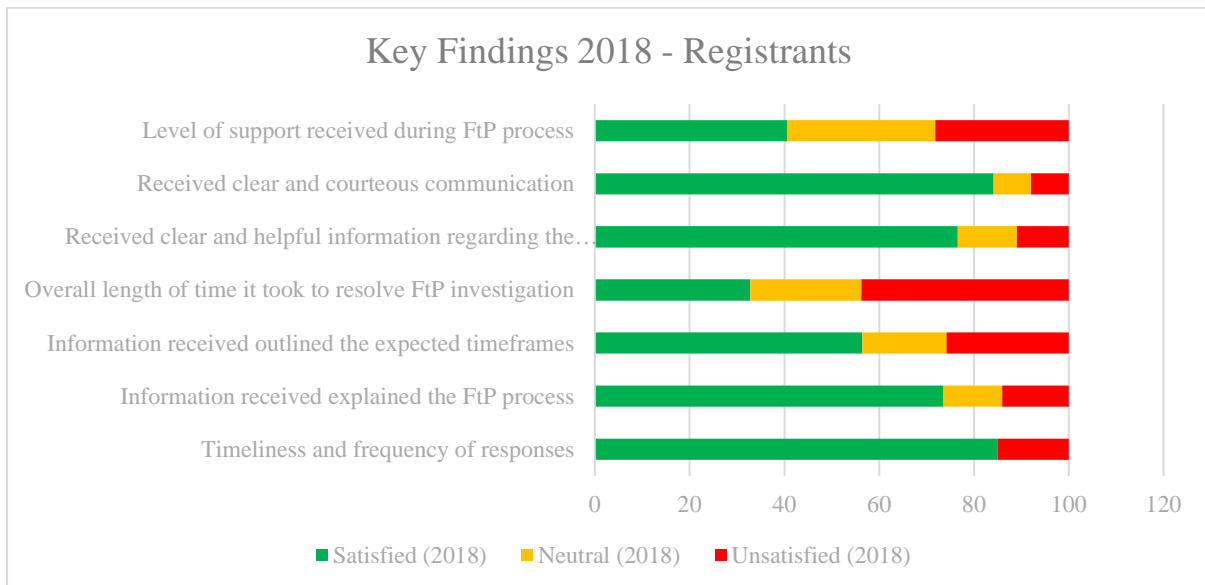
- Initial Assessment (informants only);
- Assessment (only those registrants who were informed that they were in the FtP process);
- Investigating Committee (IC) where (a) there was no further action (b) closed with advice (c) closed with warning;
- Case Examiners (CE) where (a) there was no further action (b) closed with advice (c) closed with warning;
- Prosecutions (registrant who have been involved in the FtP process);
- Hearings (witnesses and registrants who have been subject to a FtP hearing);
or,
- Case Review (those registrants who have had suspensions or conditions imposed, including at the conclusion of interim orders)

2.4. In 2018, a total of 59 registrants and 41 informants responded to survey requests in comparison to 2017 where 34 registrants and 23 informants responded.

2.5. The survey asks whether the individual would like a response to their feedback, giving us a chance to address any issues raised. Only 24.62% of registrants requested a response to their feedback compared to 51.11% of informants. In 2017, 34% of registrants and only 12% of informants requested responses to their feedback. There has been a substantial increase in the number of informants requesting responses to their feedback.

3. Key Findings - Registrant

3.1. This report looks to assess responses to seven pre-determined questions. There are three additional questions for collecting comments, case and contact information. The following charts summarise information received in 2018 as compared to 2017.



Key Themes - Registrant

3.2. When asked if Registrants had any comments the main themes that have arisen from the 2018 surveys were:

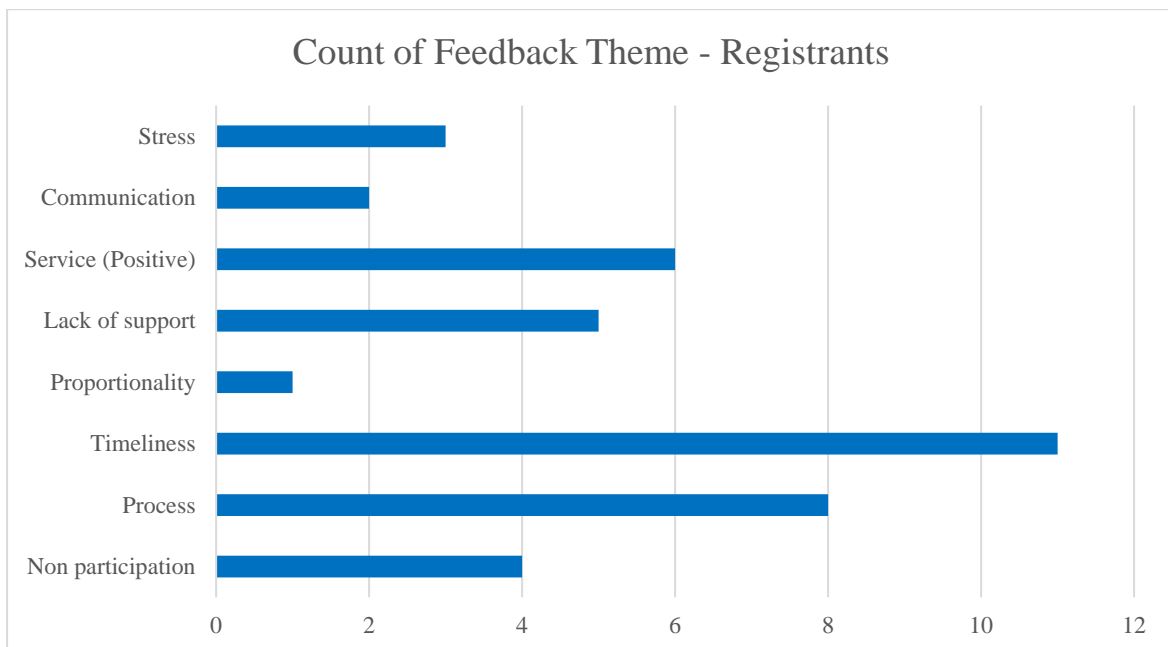
- Lack of timeliness accounted for 27.5% of the total comments received.
- Issues with the FtP process accounted for 20% of the total comments.
- Positive Service accounted for 15% of the total comments.
- Lack of Support accounted for 12.5% of the total comments.

In comparison with the main themes that arose in 2017 were:

- Issues with the FtP process accounted for 32% of the total comments received.
- Lack of timeliness accounted for 22% of the total comments.
- Communication accounted for 19% of the total comments .
- Lack of Support accounted for 16% of the total comments.

3.3. Although lack of timeliness was mentioned more often in 2018, overall fewer registrants have stated dissatisfaction with timeliness in 2018 compared to 2017. Issues with the FtP process and Lack of Support have decreased. Positive Service has arisen as a theme to note.

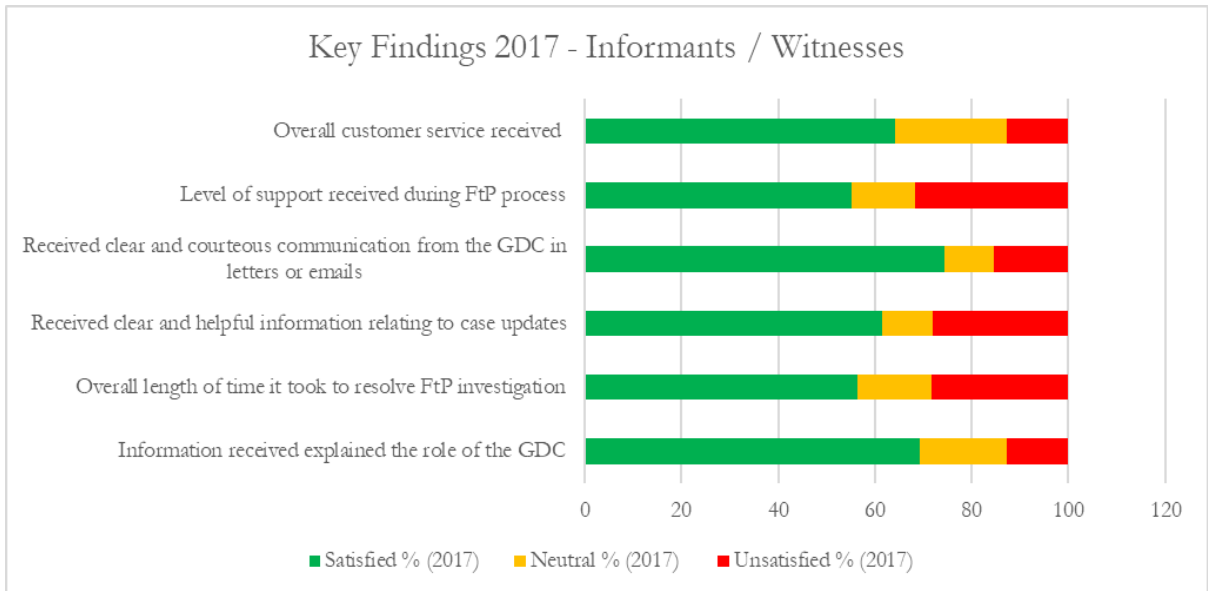
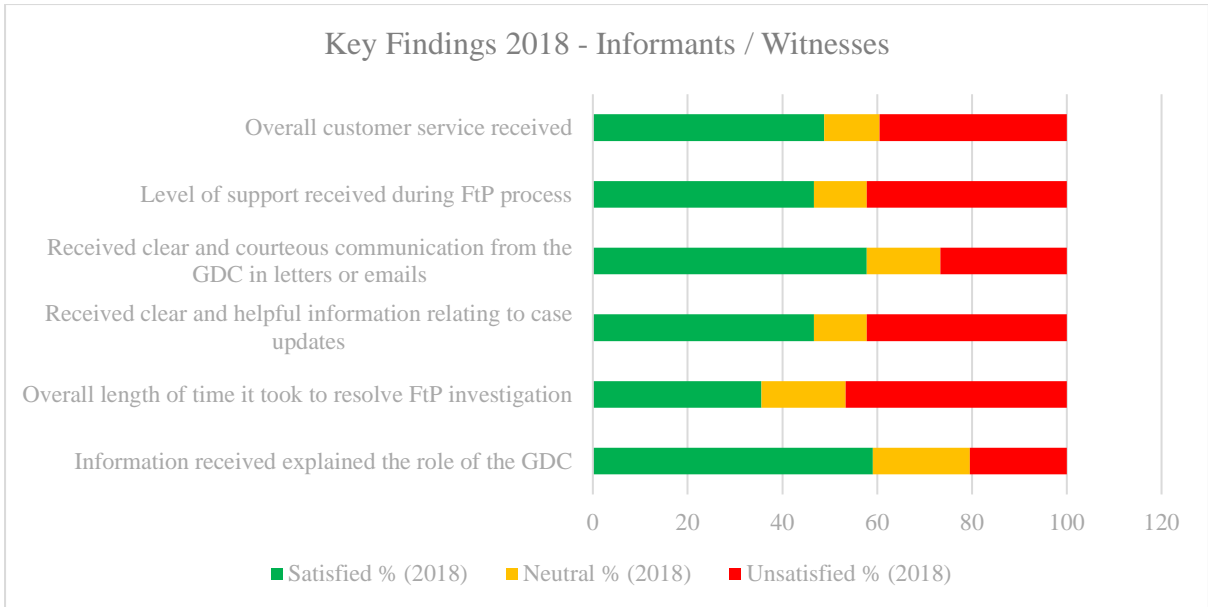
3.4. Feedback from the 2018 surveys suggest that 59.4% of registrants were satisfied with the overall customer service they received from the GDC. This has improved compared to 2017 where 48% of respondents indicated satisfaction.



3.5. When looking at the overall themes identified from registrant feedback, a lack of timeliness is identified as the largest issue noted.

4. Key Findings - Informants

4.1. There are six set questions whereby the answers have been analysed below. There are three additional questions which are used for collecting comments, case and contact information and two additional questions relating to the GDC witness support service. The charts below summarise the responses to the customer survey received in 2018, compared to answers received in 2017.



Witness support

- 4.2. A smaller percentage of respondents indicated that they were aware of the witness support service which is less than the 70% that were aware in 2017.
- 4.3. In addition, a lower percentage of respondents felt supported with the witness service as compared to 77% in 2017 although the majority of respondents were individuals who were not aware of the service.

Key Themes - Informants

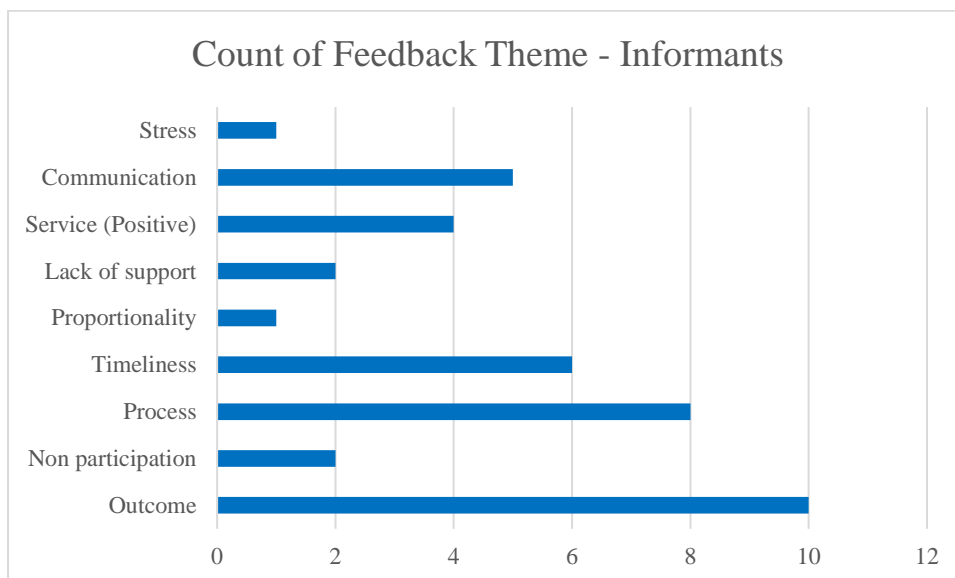
4.4. The main themes that have arose from informant feedback on whether there was anything the GDC could improve was:

- Unhappy with the outcome accounted for 26% of the total comments received.
- Issues with the FtP process accounted for 21% of the total comments.
- Lack of timeliness accounted for 15% of the total comments.
- Poor communication accounted for 13% of the total comments.

In contrast the main themes from 2017 were:

- Issues with the FtP process accounted for 39% of the total comments received.
- Poor communication accounted for 17% of the total comments.
- Unhappy with the outcome accounted for 13% of the total comments
- Good service accounted for 22% of the total comments.

4.5. Good service no longer remains a theme that has been identified and those unhappy with the outcome has increased whereas issues with the FtP process have decreased by a similar margin. Poor communication has decreased however lack of timeliness has arisen as a point of interest to report upon, in contrast to the registrant feedback. Further analysis of this last point identified that since the implementation of team-based-tasking for many casework assessment cases informant satisfaction in relation to the overall length of time taken to resolve FtP investigations was 60% positive.



4.6. When looking at the overall themes identified from informant feedback, issues with the outcome is identified as the main theme to note.

5. Customer Service Initiatives

- 5.1. The customer and registrant feedback surveys are a mechanism to enable us to monitor the levels of customer service that are provided by the FtP directorate to external parties although this is hampered by the lack of response.
- 5.2. Accompanying our external monitoring we have a monthly Outstanding Customer award which has been running since January 2016. Since launch there have been 95 nominations and a variety of winners from across the FtP directorate and across the organisation. This helps to promote and recognise good customer service and cross directorate/department working, encouraging positive work culture.

6. Summary

- 6.1. The lack of volume response makes drawing conclusions and basing subsequent resources on action plans arising from any analysis problematic; there is a real risk that the feedback may not be representative of the broader experience, ultimately resulting in management misdirecting itself in the allocation of scarce resources. We are exploring the cost-effectiveness of undertaking a biannual proactive survey approach to complement our reactive response gathering to help provide much greater levels of confidence in the survey results. Our intention would be to raise overall levels of feedback to around 10% of all participants; around 250-300 responses per annum and create a richer dataset through focused qualitative response gathering and analysis.
- 6.2. Nevertheless, whilst no more than indicative, the general picture of strengthening registrant satisfaction but declining informant satisfaction has chimed with comments received from patient groups participating in the End to End Review of FtP programme insofar as their perception was that the improvements appeared to be focused more on areas impacting on the registrant experience.
- 6.3. This is being responded to through the specific focus on communication with informants and the informant/witness experience within the scope of the End to End Review of FtP Phase II that is due to commence in early 2020 (subject to Council approval).