

# BACKGROUND

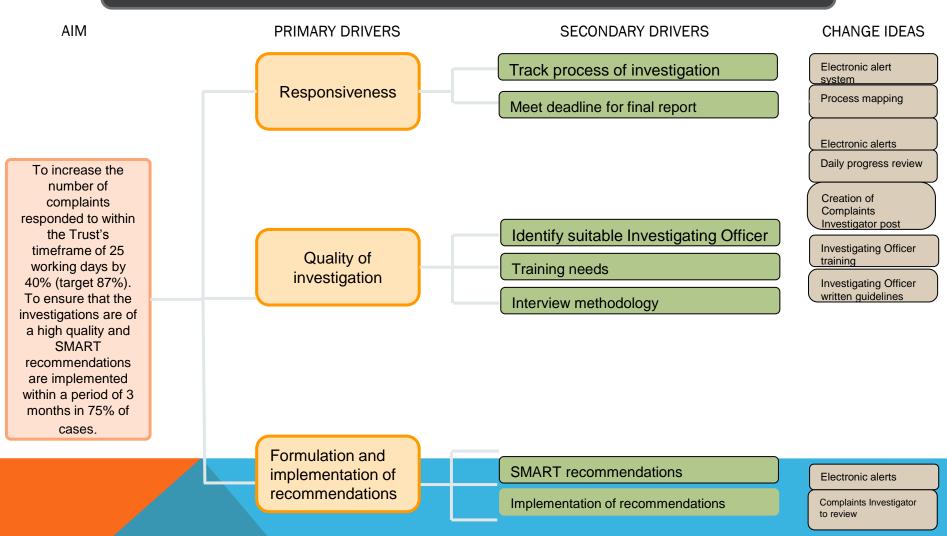
The response time to complaints in Tower Hamlets was resulting in breaches. Staff allocated to investigating complaints, had to find time in their workload to complete investigations.

The quality and follow-up of recommendations arising from complaints were not occurring regularly and were not always SMART :

- Specific Measurable Assignable Realistic -
- Understaffed no dedicated Complaints Coordinator in Tower Hamlets

In Dec 2014, a QI initiative was formulated to change the process for the better....

## **Complaints investigation**



## **COMPLAINTS - PROCESS MAPPING**

When a complaint is received, it will be acknowledged and processed by the complaints team in head office within 3 working days of receipt to the trust. The team will attempt to establish from the complainant how they would like their concern handled ; if they would like to meet the investigating officer, if they are happy for their medical records to be reviewed, what outcomes they would like and any other requirements. If telephone contact is unsuccessful, the Complaints team will write to the complainant, asking them to get in touch within 5 working days.

> Once signed, the response will be sent to the complainant. A scanned copy will also be sent to the Complaints Lead, who forwards it to any members of staff involved/named, as well as the Complaints Coordinator.

In Dec 2014, a secondment post was created (QI) in Tower Hamlets and a complaints coordinator came into post.

When a complaint arrives for Tower Hamlets, the complaints team forwards it the Complaints Coordinator.

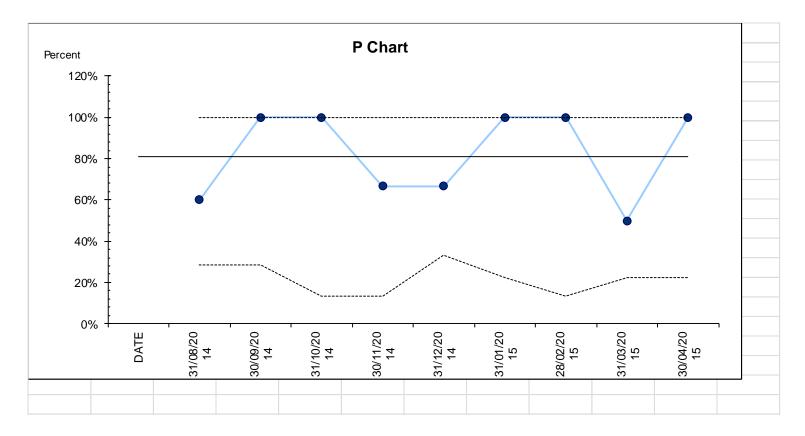
When an investigation report is finished, the complaint coordinator send the completed dossier to the complaints team who will review it and establish if all the concerns have been met, If there are outstanding concerns to be addressed the team will contact the coordinator for further information.

The complaints team will draft a formal response which will be signed by Dr Robert Dolan, Chief Executive or A plan, detailing how the complainant would like their concerns handled (if known) and highlighting the key issues to be investigated will be drafted in a dossier by the Complaints Coordinator, which will include a copy of the complaint as well as a supporting staff pack. This pack includes a questionnaire about the complaints process and information regarding support available to staff during the process. This should be forwarded to any staff members named in a complaint.

> Once a plan has been completed and finalised the dossier is sent back to the complaints team for verification. With workload permitting, the Tower Hamlets Complaints Coordinator will investigate the complaint.

Staff are given 15 working days to investigate a complaint. If the Complaints Coordinator has any difficulties during their investigation and do not feel that they will complete it on time, they should contact the team immediately, who will be able to discuss a possible extension to the deadline or assistance with the investigation.

# **P CHART**



#### COSTINGS

#### These costings are based on....

Costings						Annual Cost No. of Complaints a we		
								eek
		Annual Cost	Daily rate	(7.5 hours)	1	2	3	4
Band 6 worker		43,523	167		8,705	17,409	26,114	34,818
Senior Psychiatrist (ST4-6)		66,000	254		13,200		39,600	52,800
Modern matron (band 8a)		61,766	238		12,353	24,706	37,060	49,413
Complaints Investigator Band 6 (0.6wte)		26,114						

## SUMMARY

- The change idea was initially successful in eliminating breaches of waiting time due to the recruitment of the Complaints Coordinator in Tower Hamlets.
- There were 2 unfortunate breaches due to a staff changeover in the new post of Tower Hamlets Complaints Coordinator, thus demonstrating how essential the new post has proven.
- Over a 5 month period, we have completed 90 % of investigations and responses to complaints within 25 working days, unless there was an agreed extension.
- Since March, we have been free of breaches, however it is still too early to generate a "trend" or "shift".
- The QI project has also proven cost-effective as it frees up senior clinical staff to focus on their own service areas.



# WHAT'S NEXT...

- At present, the Complaints Coordinator works 3 days a week. In future we are looking at extending the role of Complaints Coordinator to include monitoring of recommendations.
- Broadening the scope of the post to Newham
- Improving the quality of the process by organising training for other investigators lacking experience who might step in from time to time when required

