NHS
Lancashire and South Cumbria
Integrated Care Board

Integrated Care Board

Date of meeting	5 November 2026
Title of paper	Supplementary background paper: ICB Annual Complaints Report 2025/26
Agenda item	Supplementary to agenda item 8: Quality and Outcomes Committee escalation and assurance report.
Confidential	No

Executive summary

The Annual Complaints Report 2025/26 is provided as supplementary background reading for the relevant Board agenda item.

The report fulfils the requirement under Regulation 18 of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 for the ICB to publish an annual complaints report.

It summarises complaints and MP correspondence received and closed during 2025/26, complaint themes and outcomes, handling performance, learning, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman contacts, governance arrangements and informal concerns and enquiries.

Key matters highlighted include increased overall activity, growth in ICB and All Age Continuing Care complaints, delays in complaint handling, and learning arising from complaints.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The report draws on feedback received through the ICB complaints process and explains how complaint themes and learning are reported through established governance routes.

Recommendations

The Board is requested to note the Annual Complaints Report 2025/26 as supplementary background information to Item 8.

Which Strategic Objective/s does the report relate to:		Tick
SO1	To improve population health and reduce inequalities through effective strategic commissioning.	
SO2	Commission high quality, safe and accessible services that deliver better and more equitable outcomes and patient experience.	✓
SO3	To develop and sustain the workforce, leadership and organisational capability required to operate as an effective strategic commissioner.	
SO4	Improved financial sustainability through directing available resources to deliver the greatest possible value.	
SO5	To deliver agreed national and local outcomes through a balanced focus on performance, improvement and long-term system resilience.	

Implications				
	Yes	**No**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Associated risks	✓			Yes – the report identifies risks relating to complaint handling delays, patient experience and the impact of commissioning decisions. These are described within the annual report.
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?		✓		
Financial Implications		✓		

Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)		
Meeting	**Date**	**Outcomes**
Quality and Outcomes Committee and associated complaints assurance forums	Periodic reporting during 2025/26	Complaints activity, performance and learning were reported through the ICB's established governance arrangements.

Conflicts of interest associated with this report
Not applicable. No conflicts of interest have been identified in relation to this supplementary report.

Impact assessments				
	Yes	**No**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Quality impact assessment completed			✓	Not applicable – retrospective statutory annual report; no new service change or decision is proposed.
Equality impact assessment completed			✓	Not applicable – retrospective statutory annual report; no new policy or decision is proposed.
Data privacy impact assessment completed			✓	Not applicable – the published report contains aggregated information and does not propose new data processing.

Report authorised by:	Jane Scattergood Interim Chief Nurse

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Annual Complaints Report 2025/26

1. Introduction

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 require that each NHS 'Responsible Body' produces an Annual Complaints Report. Regulation 18 provides that the report must cover:

- The number of complaints received.
- The number that were well founded.
- The number referred to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).
- The subject matter of complaints.
- Matters of importance arising from the complaints or handling thereof
- Action taken, or being taken, to improve services as a result of complaints received.

This report satisfies those requirements for NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria (LSC) Integrated Care Board (ICB).

2. Complaints and MP Letters – Background and Introduction

All patients or their representatives who are dissatisfied with a service funded or provided by the NHS have a right to complain. Some complaints to the ICB are about our actions or decisions. Others will be about the services that we commission for our population. ICBs have an unqualified duty to handle complaints about our own actions and omissions but for provider complaints are afforded a discretionary power of whether to manage the complaint directly or decide it would be more appropriate handled by the provider. The cases in this report are only those handled by the ICB.

The role of commissioners is covered in Regulations and is reinforced by national guidance. We have a Complaints Policy which supports us in managing complaints well, learning and using findings to improve. It commits us to being accessible, open, and transparent and is published on our website. The Patient Experience Team page explains how to complain by telephone, post, email, or an online form.

We also receive correspondence from our local MPs which we categorise into three types. Firstly, enquiries that come directly from MPs about any aspect of local health policy, funding, or services. Secondly, some constituents approach their MP with an enquiry or concern about the NHS and these are forwarded to the ICB for us to respond. Thirdly, our residents make formal complaints through their MPs. We treat these in the same way as a complaint directly from a patient and they are investigated and responded to in line with the legislation.

3. Complaints and MP letters - Volumes