

Customer Service Annual Report for 2018

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.
Next step	N/A
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 Separately it was noted through The General Dental Councils Public and Patient Survey from 2017 that 97% of dental patients were satisfied with their dental treatment and only 8% considered making a complaint. However, of those that would consider making a complaint 33% did not know where to start.

1.3 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 low when considering trends therefore we hope to improve this going forward.

1.4 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.

1.5 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

It is these factors that will help us improve our relationships with both registrants and informants and help to improve the fitness to practise process.

2. Customer Service Feedback

2.1 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)

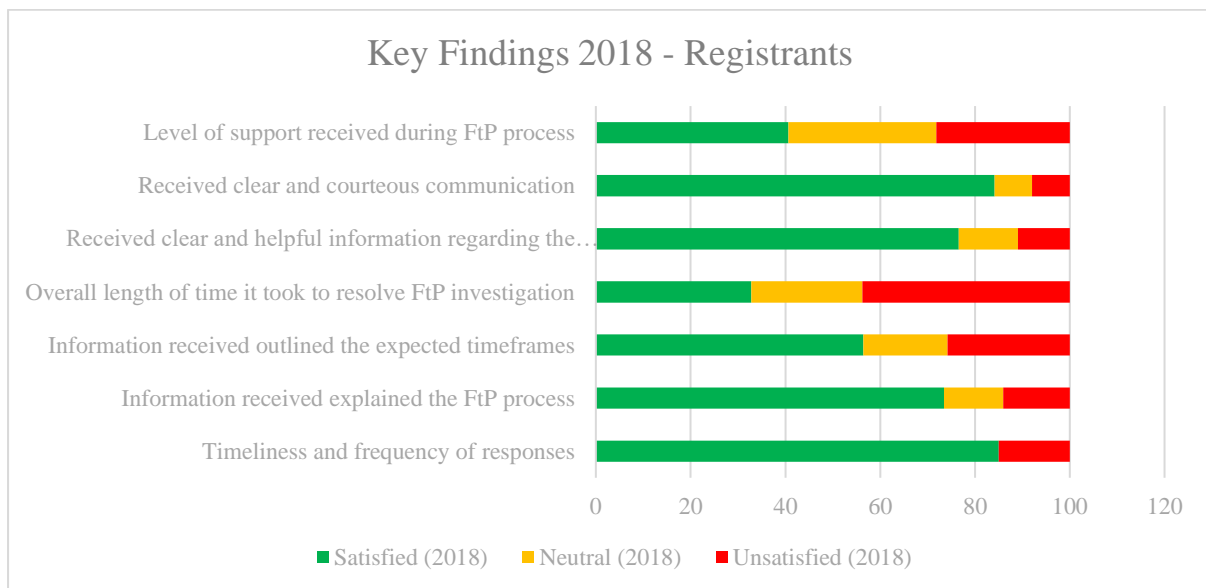
2.2 The responses are received via our online feedback system known as SmartSurvey. Using this system, the responses are logged, and the data can be exported to map trends.

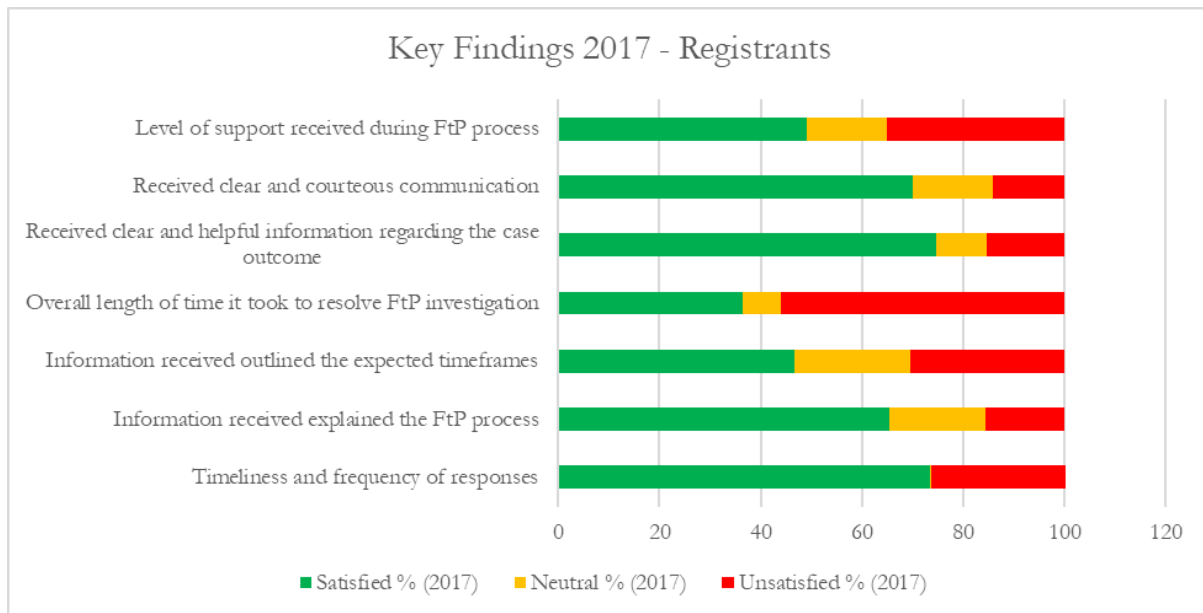
2.3 In 2018, a total of 59 registrants and 41 informants responded to survey requests in comparison to 2017 where 34 registrants and 23 informants responded.

2.4 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:

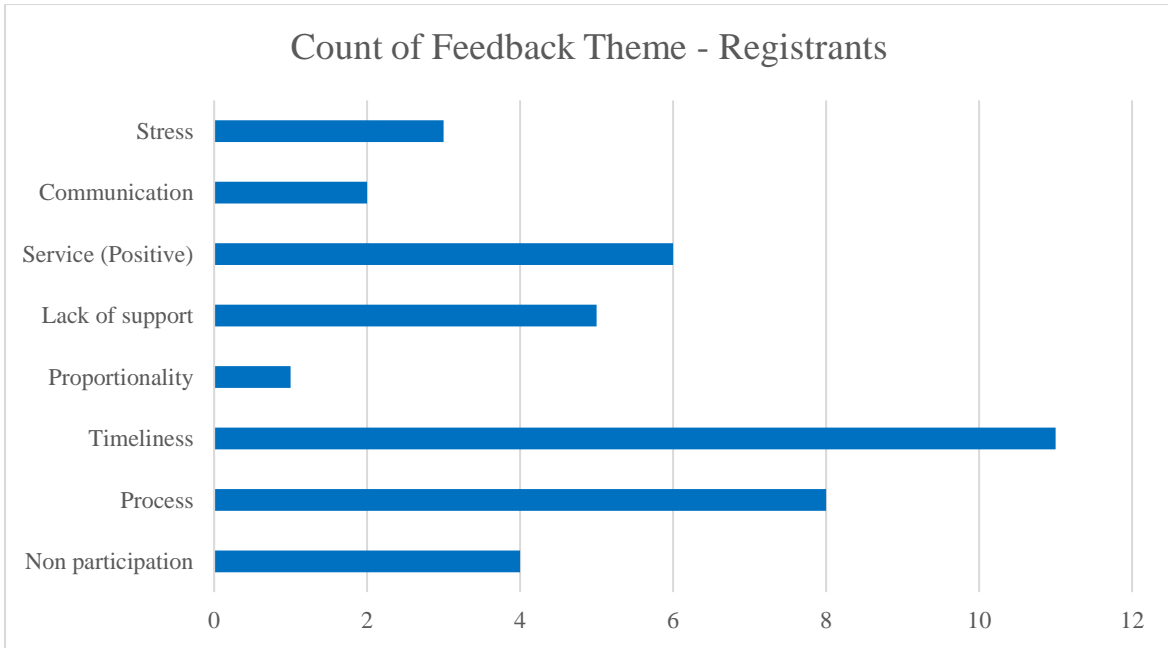
- Lack of timeliness accounted for 27.5% of the total comments received.
- Issues with the FtP process accounted for 20% of the total comments.
- Positive Service accounted for 15% of the total comments.
- Lack of Support accounted for 12.5% of the total comments.

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 A lack of timeliness has increased by 5.5%, although overall fewer registrants have stated dissatisfaction with timeliness in 2018 compared to 2017. Issues with the FtP process has decreased by 12% and Lack of Support has decreased by 3.5%. Positive Service has arisen as a theme to note.

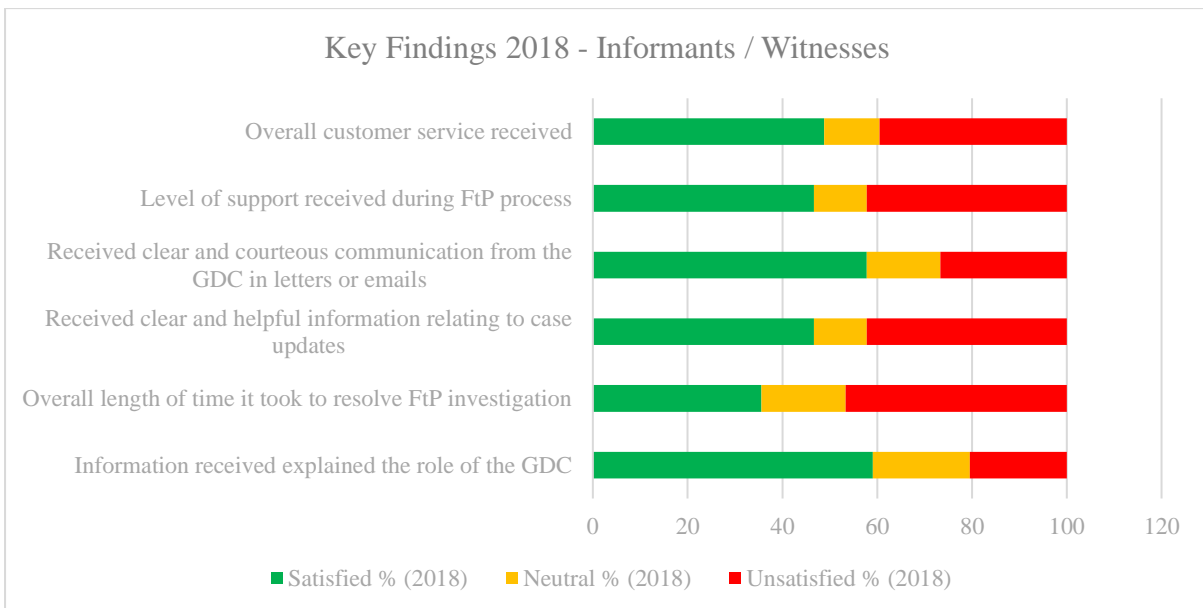
3.4 Feedback from the 2018 surveys suggest that 59.4% of registrants were satisfied with the overall customer service they received from the GDC. This has improved by 12% compared to 2017.

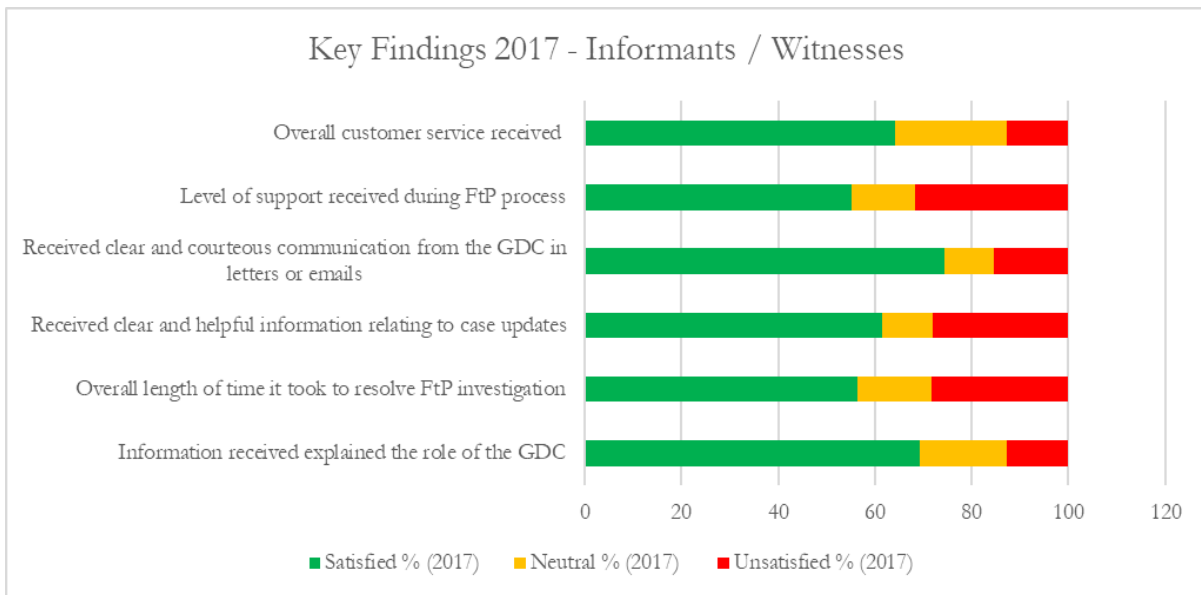


3.5 When looking at the overall themes identified from registrant feedback, a lack of timeliness is identified as the largest issue noted.

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 57% of informants were aware of the witness support service which is less than the 70% that were aware in 2017.

4.3 57% of informants felt supported with the witness service as compared to 77% in 2017.

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.

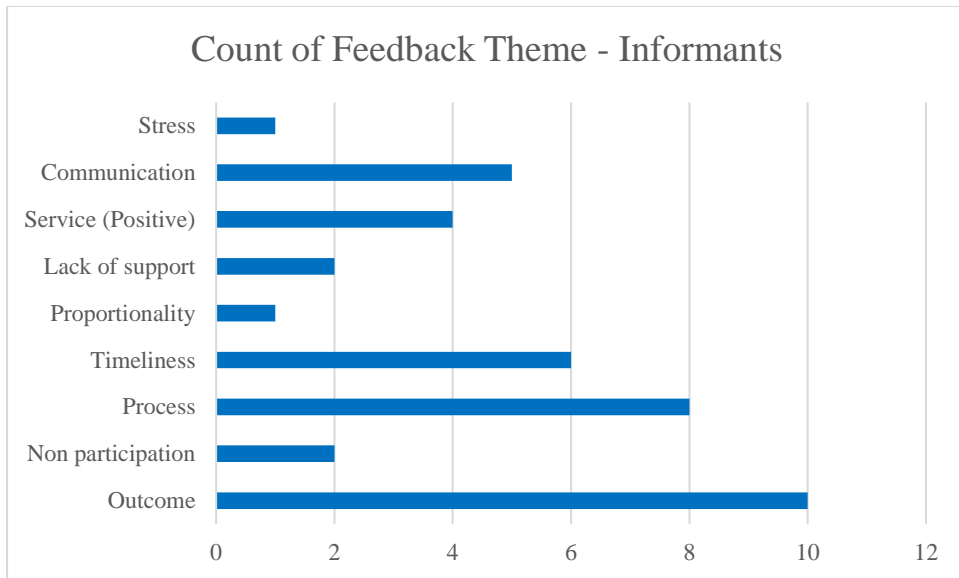
In contrast the main themes from 2017 were:

- 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, those unhappy with the outcome has increased by 13%, issues with the FtP process has decreased by 18% and poor communication has decreased by 4% as a theme that was commented on. Lack of timeliness has arisen as a point of interest to report upon.

4.6 In Q4 a Team Based Tasking (TBT) approach to working was introduced. Our expectations are that timeliness will be improved as a result of this. It can be seen that since its implementation informant satisfaction in relation to the overall length of time taken to resolve FtP investigations was 60% positive.

4.7 As this process is embedded further, we expect to see a steady increase in customer satisfaction in relation to timeliness going forwards.



4.8 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 useful platform that enable us to monitor the levels of customer service that are provided by the FtP directorate to external parties. We have a monthly Outstanding Customer award which has been running since January 2016. We have had 95 nominations and a variety of winners from across the directorate and the business.

5.2 This helps to promote the positivity of good customer service and cross directorate/department working, encouraging positive work culture.

5.3 Through the End to End review programme of work, a new way of working known as Team Based Tasking was introduced. This involves cases not being individually owned but rather split into tasks which are delegated between members of the team. This approach has helped to improve visibility of ongoing cases. Now that the continuous improvement phase of this project is live we hope to incorporate our surveys into an automated task earlier in the process rather than when cases are closed as it currently is. The main challenge regarding the Registrant and Informant surveys remains the lack of response. We hope by introducing the survey at an earlier stage in the process, we will receive more responses and collect more data about how we are performing.