

Health Service Journal

Revealed: CQC inspects 40 providers after whistleblower concerns

13 APRIL, 2017 BY [SHARON BRENNAN](#)

Whistleblowing complaints to the CQC resulted in 15 NHS and 25 independent providers having an inspection instigated or brought forward

Twenty per cent of private providers and 9 per cent of NHS providers subject to a complaint had an inspection unexpectedly scheduled

Between 1 April 2016 and 17 February 2017, 824 complaints were made about 165 NHS providers and 126 private providers

Whistleblowers' complaints to the Care Quality Commission have resulted in 40 providers having inspections instigated or brought forward in the last year.

The data, obtained by *HSJ* under a freedom of information request, showed 15 NHS trusts and 25 independent providers ([see table below](#)) had their CQC inspection brought forward or a new one scheduled in response to concerns shared directly with the regulator by employees or former employees.

Airedale was one of the trusts to have an inspection following a whistleblowing complaint

This means 14 per cent of all 291 providers that had complaints lodged against them (165 NHS and 126 private) had a new or rescheduled investigation.

Although the private sector had a higher number of new or rescheduled inspections, more complaints were submitted about NHS providers. The data showed that between 1 April 2016 and 17 February 2017, 549 complaints were made about 165 NHS providers, and 275 complaints were about 126 private providers.

The nature of the concerns was not identified but the CQC's response said that in general whistleblowing concerns could be about "malpractice, risk (for example about patient safety), wrongdoing or possible illegality, which harms, or creates a risk of harm, to people who use the service, colleagues or the wider public".

Twenty per cent of private providers that were the subject of a complaint had a CQC investigation unexpectedly scheduled or rescheduled. In comparison, 9 per cent of NHS providers where whistleblowers had raised concerns faced similar action.

When broken down by the proportion of complaints that resulted in an investigation, a similar pattern emerges. Twenty-one per cent of all complaints (115) about NHS providers resulted in CQC action, compared to 40 per cent of complaints (110) about private providers. However, a spokeswoman for the CQC said there may be several

complaints about the same provider but “an inspector may only have recorded a responsive review as the outcome to only one of these”.

She added: “Whether a service is privately run doesn’t affect how we respond to concerns. What does affect our response is the extent to which there is evidence that people may be at risk or that standards of care are not being met...”

“A number of those enquires will have been followed up on future inspections, some of which may have already been imminent; some will have been referred to other bodies such as the police, who might be better placed to deal with the issue; and there will also be a proportion that remain under review currently.”

The CQC said that half of all the complaints contained information “noted for future review”, while 16 per cent led to “no action taken” and 5 per cent were dismissed as “unqualified whistleblowing”.

A fifth were still waiting for an outcome to be concluded and 3 per cent were referred to another body for review.

The 40 providers that had a new or rescheduled CQC inspection as a result of whistleblowing

NHS trust	Private provider
Airedale Foundation Trust	Aissa
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust	Barcester Healthcare homes
Barts Health Trust	BMI Healthcare
Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust	Coperforma
Colchester hospital University FT	Cygnnet Health Care
Cornwall Partnership FT	Healthlinc Individual care
Medway FT	John Munroe Group
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole FT	Langford Clinic
Oxleas FT	Marie Stopes International
Penine Care FT	Medical Services International
Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals FT	Medical Service
Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust	Medisec Ambulance Service
The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust	Mosaic Medical Events
Walsall Healthcare Trust	Mr Matthew Davey
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust	Partnerships in Care 1
	Partnerships in Care
	Personal Security Service
	Priory Healthcare
	Private Ambulance Service
	Ramsay Health Care UK Operations
	SRCL
	St Matthews
	Thames Valley Ambulance and Paramedic Services
	The Recovery Hub Ipswich Community Interest Con

The whistleblowing statistics were first published in the [February's CQC board papers](#). They said that 12.3 per cent of 6,684 whistleblowing concerns between April 2016 and February 2017 “related to hospitals”. Concerns were submitted via the CQC’s national call centre and its website.