

North of Tyne Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Annual Report 2009-10

Introduction

PALS, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service is an NHS service which is free and confidential, providing information and advice to patients and service users, their families and carers. PALS can help sort out any problems, liaising with NHS staff members and others, if requested, to help sort things out quickly. PALS also provides information and 'signposting' to local and national support groups and when appropriate explains how to make a complaint.

PALS provides a person centred service, responding to contacts from the public and from staff within the health and social care community providing information and advice, with any aspect of health services and at any point on their 'journey' through the NHS.

This information is recorded and collated in an anonymised format and reported to Trusts on a monthly and quarterly basis, to contribute to their governance arrangements, patient experience feedback systems and service design and development.

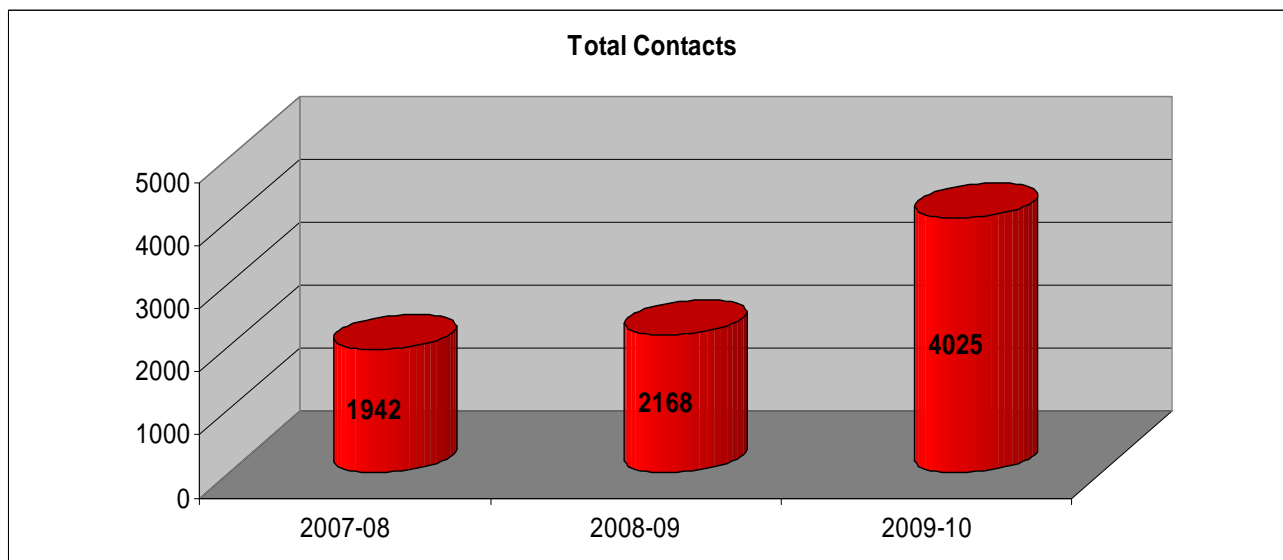
North of Tyne PALS works within the seven NHS Trusts and all NHS services in Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside and for the North East Ambulance Service.

Quote from PALS client: - *" It was reassuring to have my concerns dealt with by professionals who obviously knew what they were doing. If they promised to ring back they did. I felt that my concerns mattered and my problems were treated seriously. I was really pleased with the outcome."*

Summary of activity 2009-10

Contacts

The total number of contacts increased by 86%, which continues a year on year trend.



The number of contacts has increased within each Trust with the ratio of distribution remaining similar to previous years. The exception to this is within the two acute Trusts, Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. In 2009 an accessible 'walk-in' PALS office opened in the main atrium of the New Victoria Wing of the RVI in Newcastle which increased the number of 'face to face' contacts in that Trust. It is now 45% compared with 17% in Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. However the main method of contacting PALS remains via the Freephone, which continues to be promoted widely, along with the text number and email address to ensure equity of access to the service.

Patient experience

The experience and knowledge of North of Tyne PALS staff, in receiving first hand feedback from patients their families and carers across the full range of NHS services and in understanding the patient experience has been utilised, with increased involvement in:-

- Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) and Community Environment Action Team (CEAT) inspections
- reviewing Trust information
- developing questionnaires and other 'tools' and processes to capture patient experience
- contributing to the development of equality and diversity groups
- explaining the process with respect to summary care records
- answering queries and concerns with regard to 'swine flu'

Revised NHS complaints process

The implementation of the revised regulations with respect to responding to complaints (Local Authority and National Health Service Complaint (England) Regulations 2009) clarified the complaints process and provided challenges and opportunities for PALS. A local protocol was developed, by North of Tyne PALS, clarifying the role and functions of PALS. This includes a robust process, developed in consultation with each Trust, to identify a 'complaint' and make an appropriate referral to the relevant organisation. This referral is recorded and reported as such to avoid duplication of 'counting'.

Quote from PALS client: - *"They knew what to do and who to contact. Brilliant!"*

Access to North of Tyne PALS

Freephone

The North of Tyne PALS consortium model approach enables the use of one free-phone telephone number for any aspect of healthcare, wherever it is delivered. The free-phone is staffed during normal office hours and continues to be the primary method of contacting the service.

Direct dial phones

During the course of 2009 -2010 the PALS officers based in the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) (Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) moved to new offices within the new Victoria wing of the RVI and the PALS officer based in St Nicholas hospital, (Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust) moved to a desk within the new information centre. PALS direct dial phones to the PALS freephone number (similar to taxi phones) are now in place at points within Newcastle Hospitals and are planned for points within Northumbria Healthcare. This enhances direct access to PALS from key locations.

Transferred calls

During 2009-10 work was undertaken with switchboard staff in Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust to explain the role of PALS and to develop a process to transfer calls to PALS directly from the switchboard to the PALS free- phone line.

Referrals

A number of clients are referred by health and social care staff and from support organisations within the community, including Citizens Advice Bureaux and Age Concern.

Face to face contact

Within hospitals clients access the service by making direct contact with PALS officers on site. PALS staff visit services and groups in the community to explain the role of PALS, to answer questions about NHS services and to respond to individual questions or concerns.

Publicity material

PALS leaflets and cards are widely distributed and information is available on Trust and service websites.

Material in different formats

The PALS leaflet is available in 27 languages, and in large print which can be downloaded from Trust websites. The leaflet contains the PALS fax number, freepost address, email address and a text number to provide greater accessibility, particularly for members of the deaf community.

There are close links with the interpreting service with a protocol in place to streamline a referral to PALS.

Easy-read leaflet

Work continues with different communities and 'seldom heard' groups. The 'easy-read' leaflet for people with different communication and literacy needs has been reviewed and redesigned with support from the learning disabilities services within Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, in consultation with patients, their carers, service users and staff.

Access for people with learning disabilities

Work has been undertaken within Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust which has improved access to PALS. Following the 'Complaining the Healthy Way' conference held in Sunderland in November 2009 various initiatives have begun to explain PALS to people with learning disabilities. North of Tyne PALS is working across all Trusts and services to identify opportunities to be proactive in advising people about PALS, particularly where there are service changes, when people are accessing services for the first time and where they have specific needs.

Home and community visits

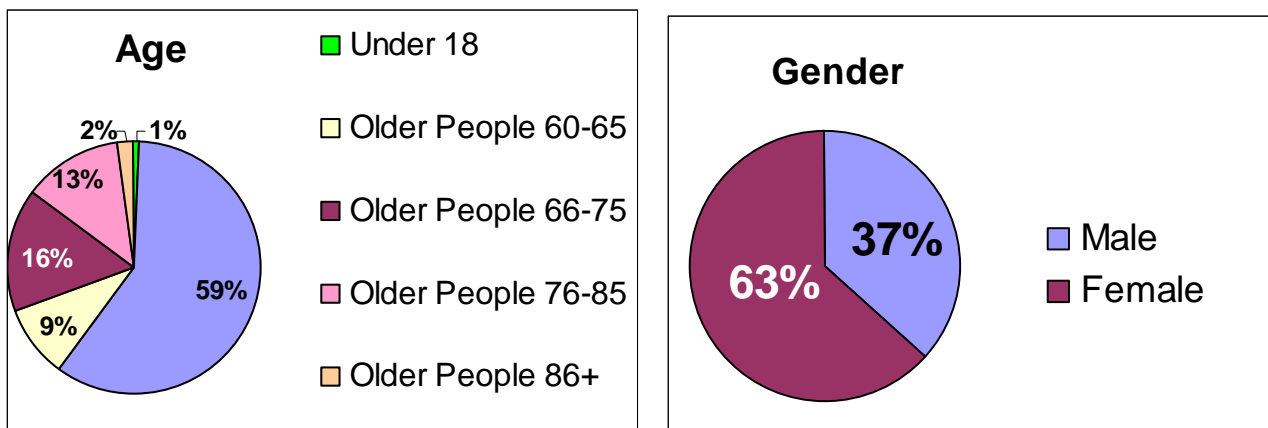
PALS staff are happy to visit clients in their own homes, if required, and have access to Trust premises and other community meeting rooms across the area to maximise the availability of venues which are 'neutral', convenient and have disabled access.

'First Contact'

North of Tyne PALS has been one of a number of key organisations involved in the 'First Contact' initiative in Newcastle. This generated queries and requests for information from older people who would not usually have used PALS.

Equality and diversity

PALS staff have been involved with a number of equality and diversity activities and contributed experience and knowledge to audits and reviews.



Recording and Reporting

Database

North of Tyne PALS records and collates details of all contacts and issues raised on a DATIX database, configured by North of Tyne PALS to record and collate information across the seven Trusts, taking account of the separate structures within each Trust and reporting requirements. This local configuration enables the database to be amended, as these change, to ensure that recording reflects the nature of issues and that reports remain relevant to the needs of each Trust. The review of the categorisation of issues which took place at the end of 2008-2009 to ensure the relevance and consistency of recording and to better reflect standards within 'Essence of Care' has ensured more focussed reporting and analysis.

Reports

Reports are submitted to Trusts on a monthly and quarterly basis as agreed.

'Raw-data' reports

These are submitted to operational managers for their review and dissemination, particularly with respect to any actions taken or lesson learnt as a result of issues having been raised via PALS. These reports, which record 'real time' feedback of the experiences of individual service users, their families and carers, are essential in providing opportunities for learning, to stimulate service development and to evidence Trust specific, Strategic Health Authority and Department of Health targets and requirements.

Summary reports

Quarterly summary reports are collated to include; statistics, an analysis of any themes and trends, an activity report and information on changes to service delivery or systems made as a result of issues being raised via PALS. These reports are presented to clinical governance, quality groups and committees and discussed within patient involvement and complaint, risk and incident groups.

'Ad hoc' reports

In addition to routine monthly and quarterly reports information about patient experience, which has been collected and collated by North of Tyne PALS has been reported, on request, to various monitoring and service development groups as 'real time' patient feedback to help inform their work.

During 2009-10 these have included, discharge from hospital, falls, privacy and dignity and bereavement and patient safety and questions relating to 'swine flu'.

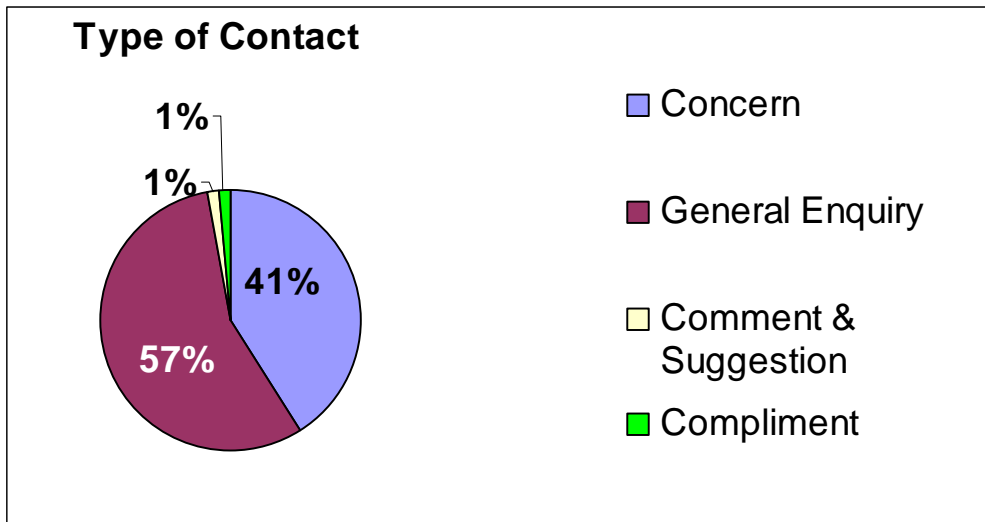
Reports are presented to: -

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Complaints concerns and claims monitoring group
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Patient and Public Involvement sub committee
North of Tyne NHS (Newcastle and North Tyneside PCT's and Northumberland Care Trust)	Joint Integrated Clinical Governance Committee
Newcastle and North Tyneside Community Health	Governance and Risk Management Committee
Northumberland Care Trust	Integrated Governance group
Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust	Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust Complaints Assurance Group
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Patient Involvement & Complaints Clinical Governance Committee

How PALS helped

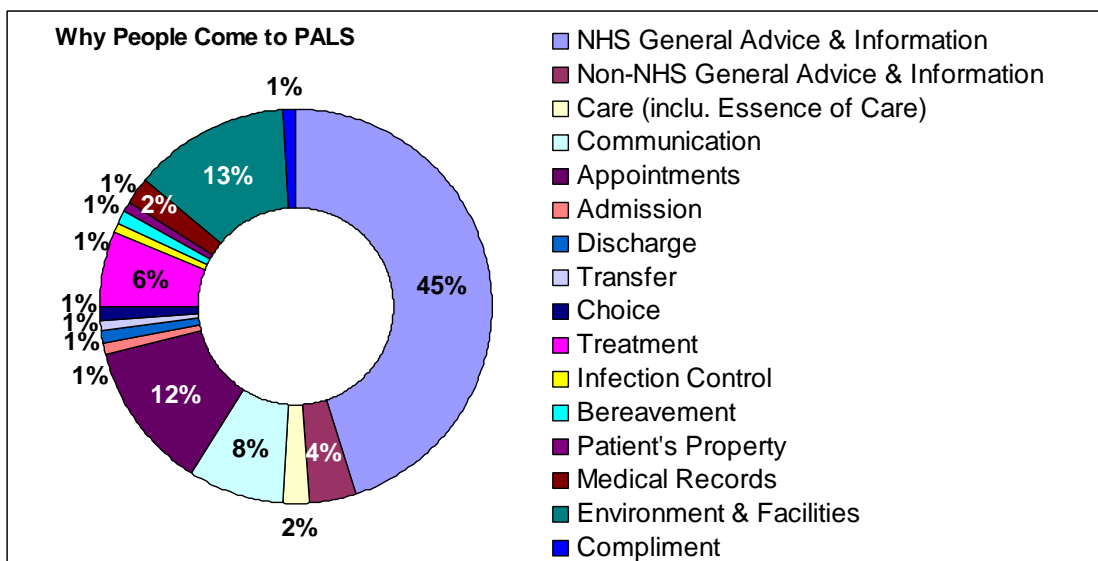
Customer service

PALS is the 'customer services' team for NHS services in the Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland and the North East Ambulance Service. North of Tyne PALS provides advice and support at all stages in the patient journey; queries about access to services and information about the range of services; assistance to resolve any problems 'on the spot' and advice and support when the patient their family or carer is unhappy with their experience.



Types of issues

During 2009-2010 PALS continued to respond to a wide range of issues including; those relating to access to GP's and dentists, appointments and waiting times, bereavement, discharge from hospital and transfer of care, privacy and dignity, parking and lost property.



Changes to services

Services have been proactive in advising patients, their families and carers to contact PALS if they have any questions where there were changes to services, for example when the access criteria changed or when GP practices closed, or where there were changes to the access and environment when there had been rebuilding, refurbishment and relocation. PALS staffed 'drop in' sessions to answer questions.

New initiatives

PALS staff received information about summary care records and the procedures relating to 'swine flu' to enable them to answer questions and solve any problems which arose.

Appointments

PALS support has enabled patients to keep appointments and avoid DNAs (did not attend) and the resulting impact on services, where appointment details hadn't been confirmed or where there was confusion or problems about transport to appointments via the Patient Transport Service.

Improving relationships

The intervention of PALS in finding answers and resolving problems quickly has facilitated positive relationships between the patient, service user, family member or carer and Trusts.

Using PALS mediation skills has resulted in positive outcomes for many people, influencing and often changing their perception of NHS services.

Enhancing the patient experience

Providing explanations and answers to questions and putting people in touch with relevant support, as the need arises, has provided reassurance, avoided the necessity for contact with a number of separate organisations and minimised the need to utilise additional specialist resources at a later stage when issues may have become more complex and distressing.

'Real time' feedback

All questions and issues which are raised with PALS are recorded and reported to Trusts, providing 'real time feedback' on services.

LINKs (Local Involvement Networks)

North of Tyne PALS has ongoing contact with Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland LINKs and with the LINK group for the North East Ambulance Service. PALS reports are received by LINKs from the Trusts and help inform their work. PALS staff attend LINK events and individuals or groups who approach PALS with general areas of concern or comment which are specific to an individual are referred to LINKs.

Consultation and involvement

PALS have been present at consultation events and activities to respond appropriately to any individual questions or issues. In addition staff have been part of involvement and patient satisfaction initiatives including interviews and questionnaires.

What people think of PALS

All North of Tyne PALS clients receive an evaluation form to record and report their views about the PALS service. The majority, 93%, of those responding, would use PALS again and 94% were satisfied with the service. The additional feedback clients provide informs the development of new ways of publicising the service. Some of the additional comments are incorporated into the body of this report.

301 evaluation forms were returned with the responses as follows:-

“Were we able to help with your request?”

Yes = 262 87% Middle = 22 7% No = 10 3%

“Would you come to us again if you needed information?”

Yes = 267 89% Middle = 12 4% No = 9 3%

Overall satisfaction

Yes = 264 88% Middle = 19 6% No = 8 3%

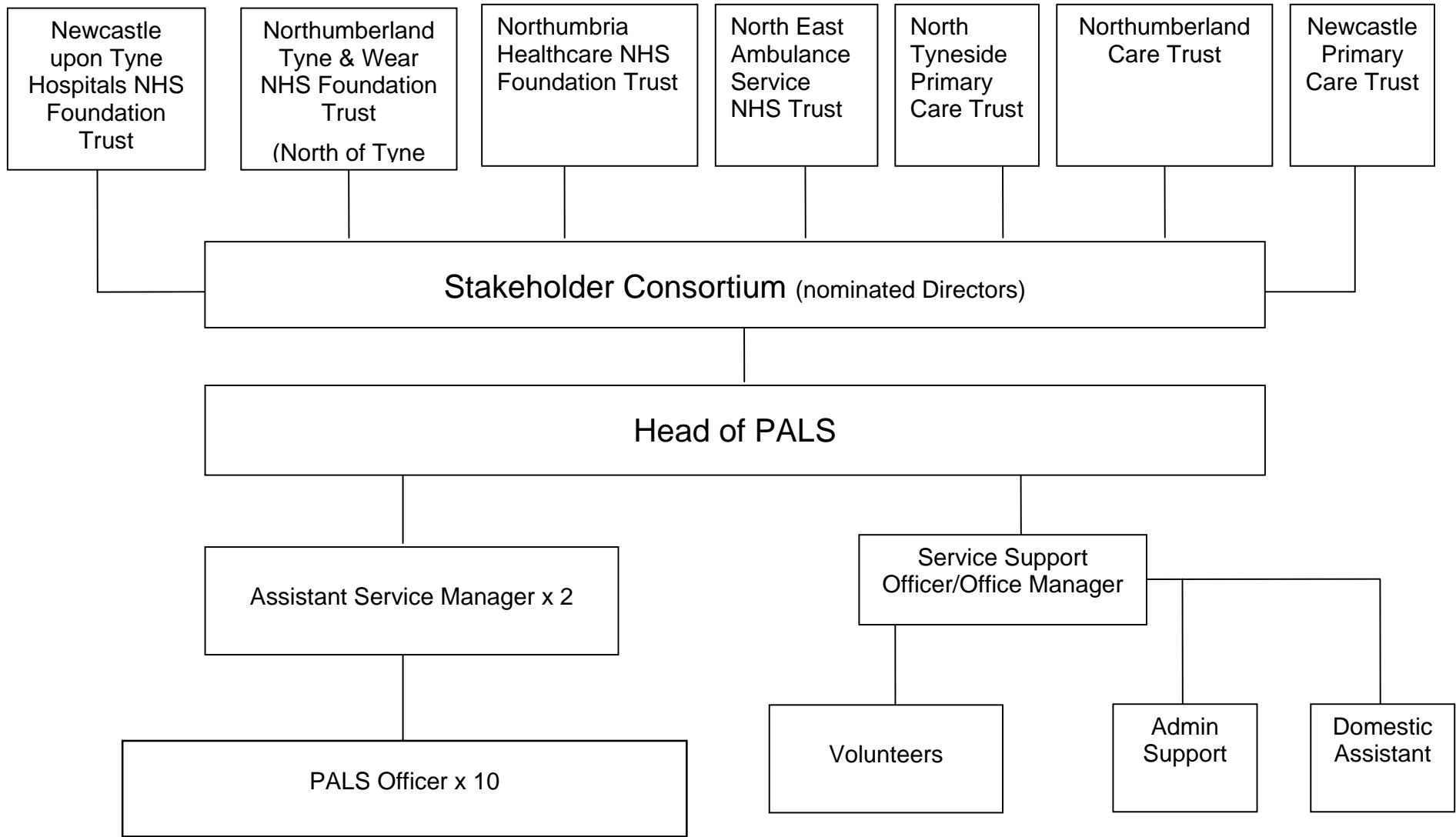
Where else would you like to see publicity?

The majority of people who responded would like to see publicity in hospital clinics, their GPs and dentists. This included specific suggestions of; on Hospedia, in lifts, above patients' beds and on hospital discharge and appointment letters. Other suggestions included key locations within the community such as libraries, supermarkets, community centres and local transport networks. Many of these suggestions are already in place and other suggestions have been acted on.

Accountability

The North of Tyne PALS service is directed by a Stakeholder Consortium Group made up of directors of the constituent NHS Trusts. This is chaired by the Chair of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the host organisation for employment and operational purposes. The purpose of the group is to; receive reports from the PALS Manager, make decisions regarding the strategic direction of North of Tyne PALS and monitor its activities.

PALS activity is also monitored via the reporting mechanisms to Trust; Clinical Governance, Patient and Public Involvement, Complaints and Incidents, Patient Focus and Patient Safety groups. The direction of the service and resource allocation is informed and influenced by the requirements of Trusts, as agreed within these groups.



Quote from PALS clients: - *“I found PALS very friendly and easy to talk to, which is what you need....”*

Staff

At the end of this year 10 PALS Officers (9.5 whole time equivalent) were in post with one member of staff on maternity leave and 0.5 vacancy.

Staff Support

All staff have regular 1:1 meetings and annual appraisals. There are monthly staff meetings to disseminate information and discuss operational issues and support meetings to discuss practice issues.

Location

PALS Officers are based throughout the area, enabling them to be accessible, and be part of the local 'team' of health professionals. Each PALS Officer has a 'lead' responsibility for the Trust and/or locality where they are situated. The 'lead' responsibilities include:-

- having a detailed knowledge and understanding of the Trust/locality and its services and being a resource for colleagues, sharing knowledge and information
- to be aware of the key themes and issues relating to the Trust/locality
- establishing links and key contacts
- promoting PALS within the Trust/locality explaining the role of PALS
- responding to concerns within that Trust/locality

Training

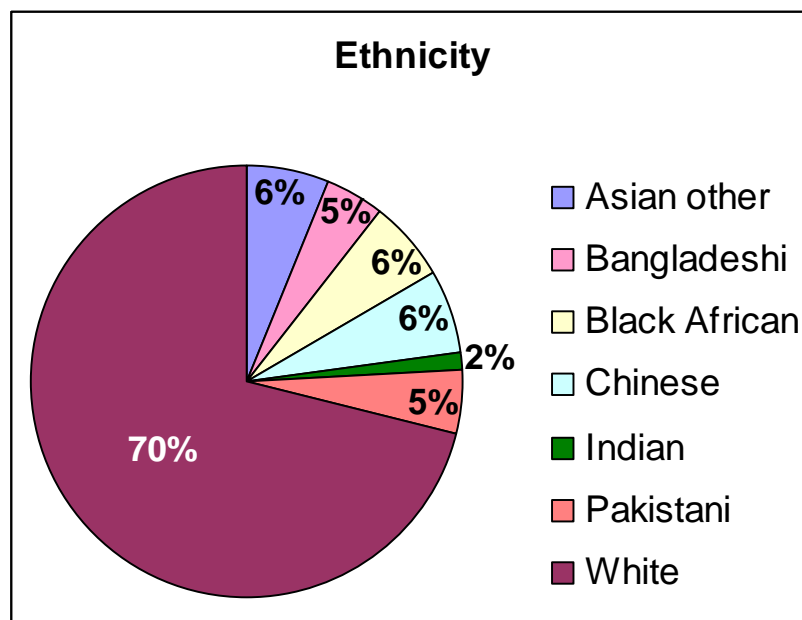
All staff have undertaken appropriate mandatory training and additional specialist training individually, within staff meetings and within the North East PALS network. This has included working with people who have been bereaved and awareness about advocacy.

Volunteers

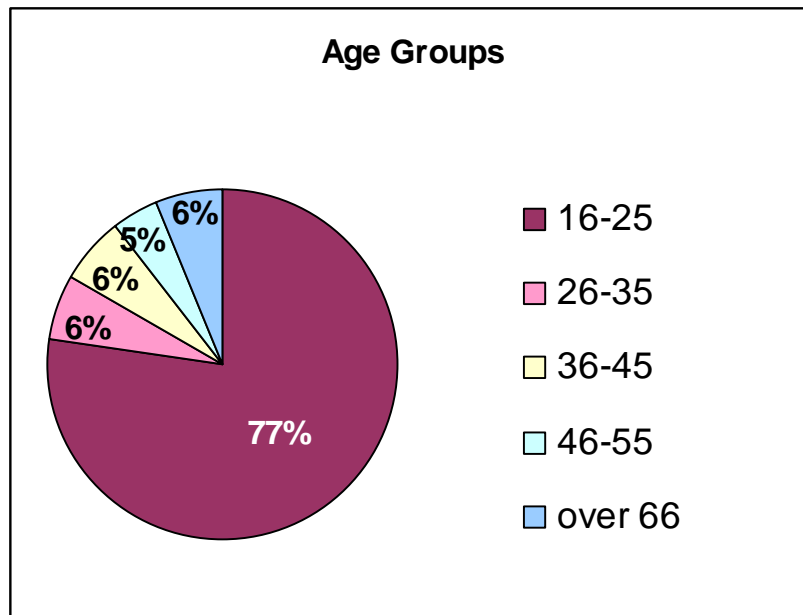
PALS Volunteers are recruited from across the North of Tyne area. After they have received Criminal Records Bureau and Occupational Health clearances they complete comprehensive training and induction.

Their main objectives are: -

- to raise awareness by talking and listening to patients and distributing leaflets
- to enhance accessibility by acting as a gateway to PALS
- to collect, record and feed back comments and suggestions from patients, families and carers



North of Tyne PALS has continued to be successful in recruiting volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities.



The age profile of North of Tyne PALS Volunteers differs from the usual profile of volunteers working within health or social care in that we have a large proportion of 16-25 year olds which can be a 'hard to reach' group when recruiting volunteers. This means that young people are actively involved in the delivery of the PALS service.

Younger volunteers have told us that they have chosen to volunteer with PALS because they want to gain experience of how the NHS operates and how patients have a voice. They feel that the experience gained is helpful whilst studying for and embarking on a career in health and social care.

The volunteers help to raise awareness by chatting to patients and leaving a leaflet in case they need PALS at a future date.

Volunteers refer patients to PALS Officers when they want help with concerns about, for example, their worries about coping when they are discharged or on how to register with a GP.

General comments and suggestions are collected then recorded on feedback sheets. These are circulated to the relevant managers and incorporated into the PALS quarterly reports. This ensures that valuable patient views and feedback are not lost.

Volunteers collect a number of compliments about the service and especially their provision of care. This is fed back to the staff and managers have told the service that this is a positive influence on morale.

This has included updates from various services and organisations; advocacy, working with and supporting people who have been bereaved and information governance with specific reference to 'consent'.

Quote from PALS client: - *“As a result of the meeting organised by PALS staff our concerns were dealt with very satisfactorily by the appropriate medical personnel”*

Research

PALS details are included in information which goes to patients and carers explaining research projects, as the 'independent' organisation they can contact to ask any questions they may have or clarify any points of concern.

North East PALS Network

The North East PALS network was formed in June 2007 to be co terminus with the area covered by the North East Strategic Health Authority. North of Tyne PALS staff are involved with the development of the network and the planning for activities and work streams.

The aim of the network is to:-

- raise the profile and public awareness of PALS
- act as a focal point for stakeholder involvement
- be a focal point for disseminating feedback from local, regional and national events
- support local PALS to develop and promote standards of best practice
- develop and promote common standards of education and training for people engaged in providing PALS services. Promote the standing of people employed within NHS organisations to provide the PALS service
- facilitate service improvement through identification of specific pieces of project work

North East PALS network activities during 2009-2010

- Additional work with 'PALS online' to further develop a facility for a North East PALS 'area' within the PALS online website.
- Arranged training from the National Children's Bureau, based on their research entitled; 'Getting it Right for Children and Young people'.
- Update and opportunity to ask questions from Chris Bostock, Head of User Experience, Public and Patient Experience and Engagement, Department of Health; following the implementation of the new complaints regulations.
- Agreed that future meetings, although focussed on issues for PALS staff should be open to 'complaints' staff.

Quote from a PALS client: - *"member of PALS staff... was a bright star in a very dark few months. I have no doubt that without their help we would still be in the same position"*

Background to PALS – NHS Plan 2000

'The Patient Advice and Liaison Service was established throughout the country, in all NHS Trusts, in 2002 as part of a new system of patient and public involvement to provide:-

- confidential advice and support to patients, their families and carers
- information on the NHS and health related matters
- confidential assistance in resolving problems and concerns quickly
- information on and explanations of NHS complaints procedures and how to get in touch with someone who can help
- information on how you can get more involved in their own healthcare and the NHS locally
- a focal point for feedback from patients to inform service developments
- an early warning system for NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and Patient and Public Involvement Forums (now replaced by LINKs) by monitoring trends and gaps in services and reporting these to the Trust management for action.

PALS act on behalf of their service users when handling patient and family concerns. They liaise with staff, managers and where appropriate, other relevant organisations, to negotiate speedy solutions and to help bring about changes to the way that services are delivered. PALS will also refer patients and families to local or national-based support agencies, as appropriate.'

NHS Plan 2000

PALS North of Tyne

In the area **North of the Tyne** (Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland) all NHS Trusts decided on a partnership approach with the Trusts working together to develop a PALS service, managed as one service but working within and operating across all Trusts.

The advantages of this approach are:-

- A freephone access point which is staffed at all times during office hours.
- A seamless service for patients, families and carers across NHS trusts so they only need to have contact with one PALS even though their concerns about health care may involve two or more Trusts.
- The ability to cover annual leave, sick leave, attendance at meetings and training to ensure that there is always a PALS officer available to deal with a concern wherever it is raised within the North of Tyne health community.
- The infrastructure necessary to provide a service across a large geographic area.
- An appropriate infrastructure to ensure the sharing of resources and good practice. The ability for PALS officers to develop a 'lead' for both a specific Trust and an area of health provision.
- The ability to 'act independently' separate from the infrastructure and hierarchy of individual Trust department frameworks.
- A comprehensive, specialist knowledge of all NHS, social care and third sector provision within the area, shared within the service.
- The economies of scale to enable the provision of a 'professional' volunteer service to promote PALS and a PALS 'culture' in health service provision in a wide range of contexts to complement the work of PALS Officers and contribute to the Patient Carer and Public Involvement function.
- The ability to respond flexibly to changes in demand and expectations.

PALS North of Tyne works across and within:-

- Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NuHT)
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHCT)
- North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust (North East area) (NEAS)
- Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust (North of Tyne area)
- Newcastle Primary Care Trust (NPCT)
- North Tyneside Primary Care Trust (NTPCT)
- Northumberland Care Trust (NCT)

For a local population of over 750,000 and for patients their families and carers who live outside of the area but who use these services:-

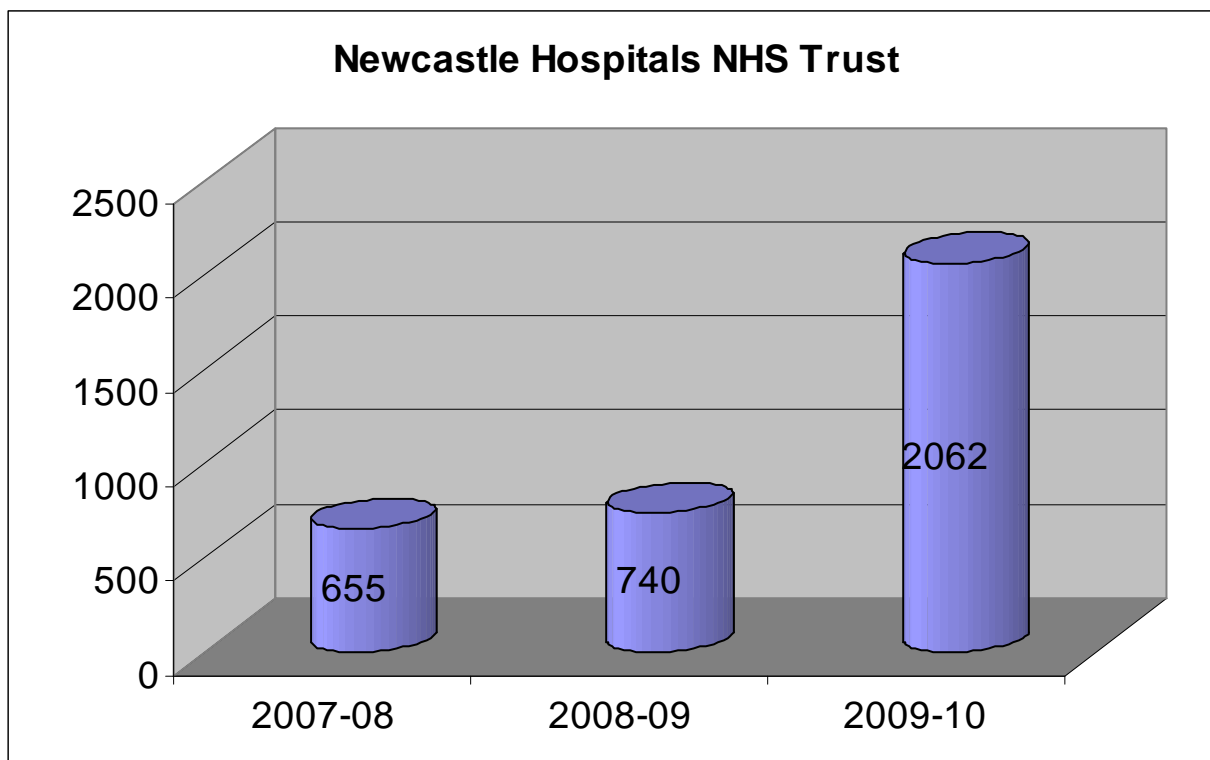
- over 500 square kilometres, (not including the area south of the Tyne covered by NEAS)
- 22 hospital sites
- 126 General Practitioner practices
- 109 dental practices
- 75 opticians
- 176 pharmacies

Quote from PALS client: - *“I had no help prior to speaking to PALS. After speaking with PALS things went into motion.”*

Quote from PALS client: - *“This is the second time I have used the service – it is good to be able to access a service which is both professional and person centred.”*

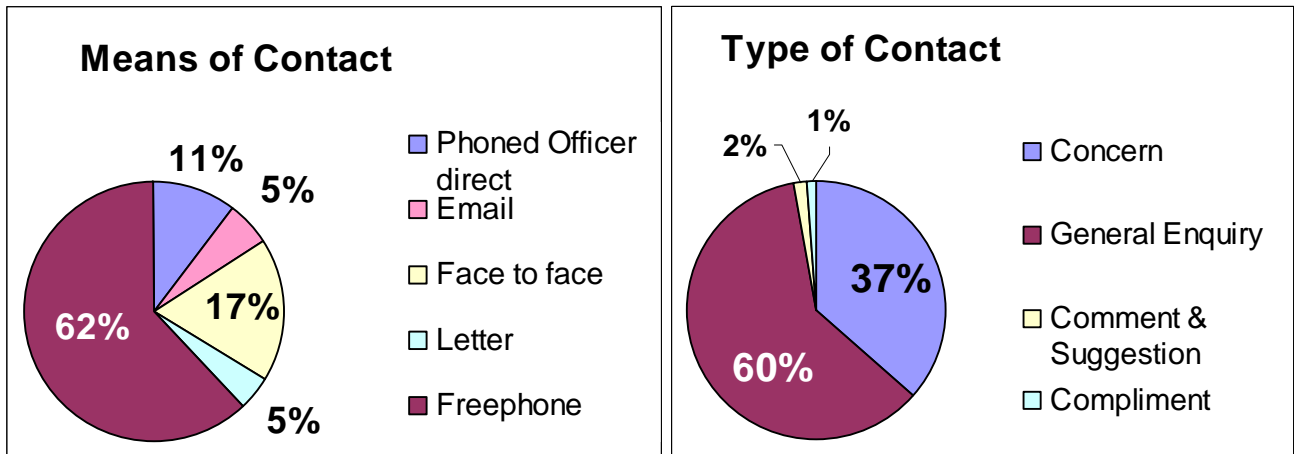
Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

During 2009 PALS took possession of a new office to accommodate two PALS officers, in the new Victoria Wing. This has enabled PALS to have a presence in a front of house public area to make it easier for patients, their families and carers to access the PALS service. The number of contacts from the public has increased significantly since the office opened. 2062 contacts were made in 2009-10 compared with 740 in the previous year, an increase of 179%.



For occasions when staff are not in the office, either during office hours or at evenings and weekends there is a dedicated telephone which gives direct access to a PALS Officer during office hours and to the answer phone at other times. PALS has also initiated the installation of similar PALS telephones at the RVI Leazes Wing reception and at the Freeman hospital main reception where there is no permanent dedicated PALS staff presence. These enable direct access, by telephone, to a PALS officer and have increased the accessibility of PALS.

In addition to helping to solve any problems patients, their families and carers may have experienced and assisting with individual information requests and enquiries, PALS staff were particularly proactive during the introduction of the new electronic record system, liaising between departments and patients with respect to appointments.



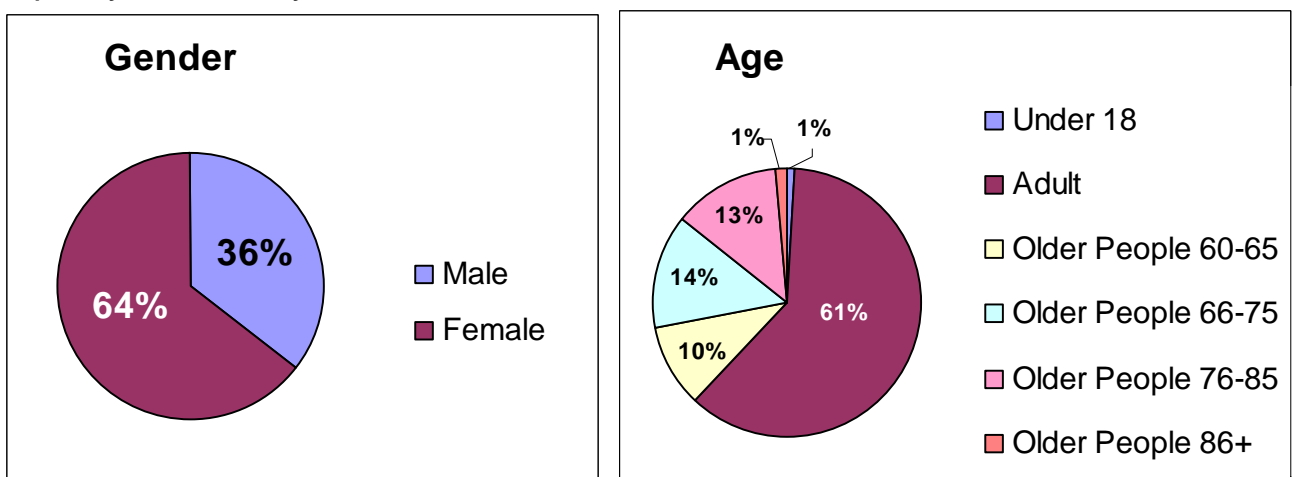
PALS staff continue to promote the service through talking to staff, patients and families and by the distribution of leaflets, posters and cards. In addition there have been several targeted initiatives to explain the role of PALS. Information sessions have taken place with key reception staff, telephone switchboard staff, Modern Matrons and medical students.

PALS contributes to the Equality and Diversity Human Rights Working Group, Patient Information Panel and the Trust Induction process. Work also continues within the Critical Care Unit Memorial Service and Musculoskeletal User Involvement group.

During the ongoing building work and refurbishment within the RVI PALS officers have assisted with directions and raised awareness of signage issues and problems with access, particularly for patients with disabilities or mobility problems.

PALS continues to monitor gender, age and ethnicity of people who contact the service to inform the promotion of the service.

Equality & Diversity:

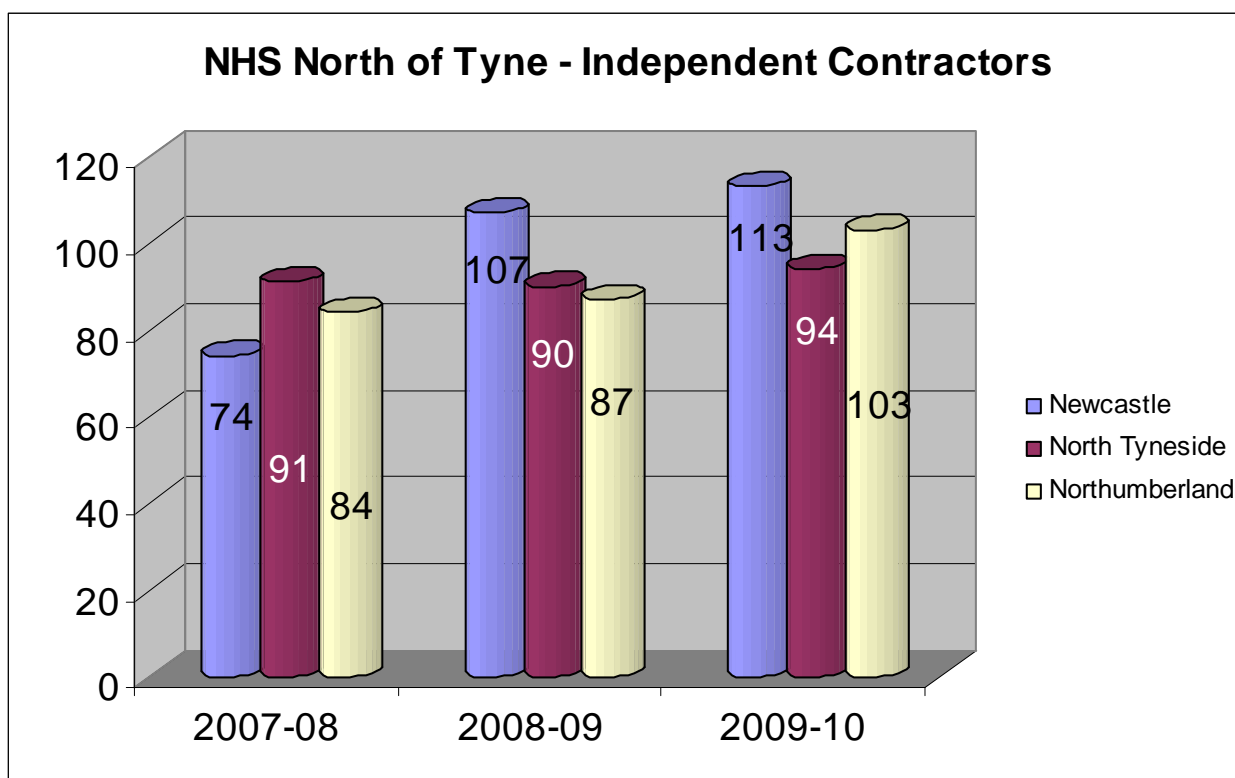


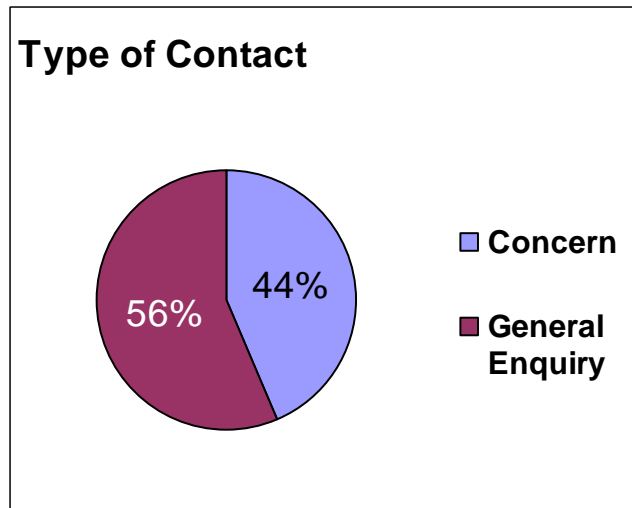
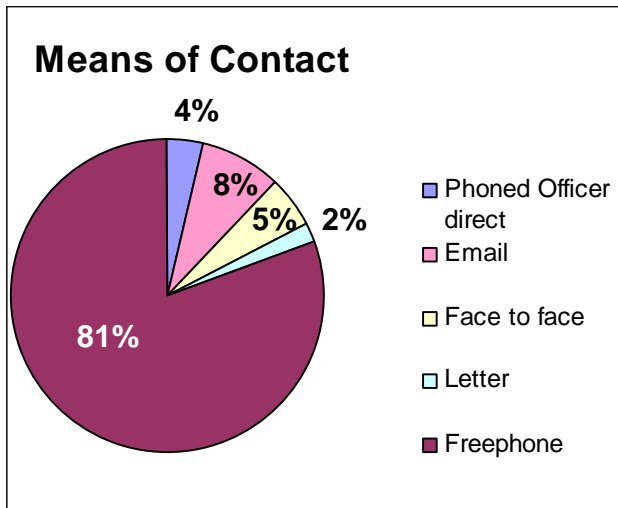
North of Tyne NHS: - Northumberland Care Trust, North Tyneside Primary Care NHS Trust, Newcastle Primary Care NHS Trust

North of Tyne PALS has worked closely with colleagues in NHS North of Tyne, Newcastle and North Tyneside Community Health, Northumberland Care Trust and independent contractors across the whole of the area, providing information and helping to solve problems for patients their families and carers.

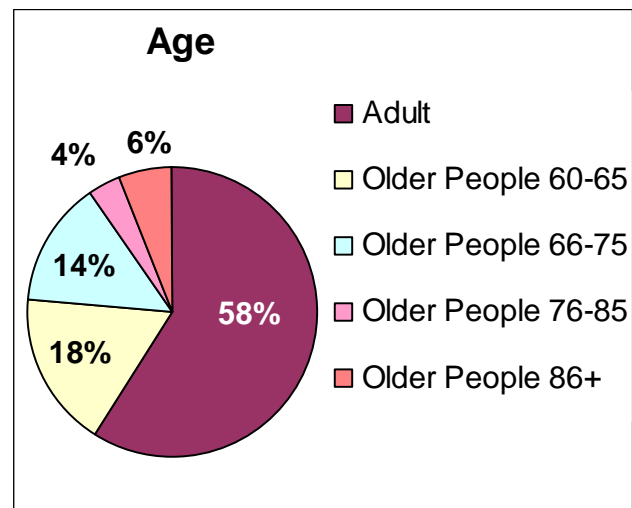
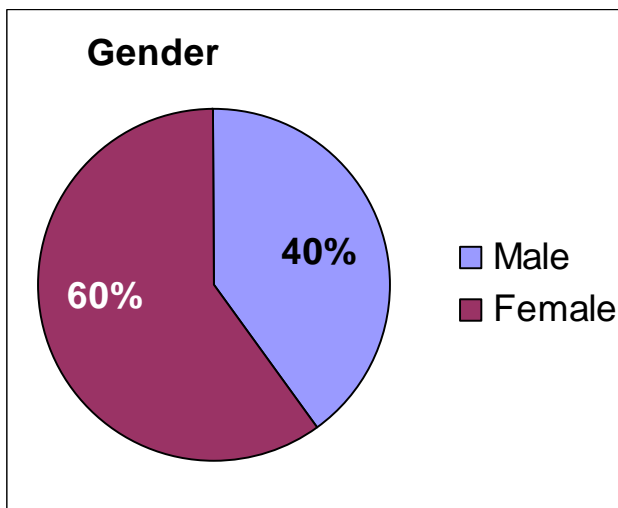
PALS staff have held information sessions and been a focus for advice and information during service changes, when GP practices have closed and when there have been changes to the access and scope of services.

They have distributed information and publicity materials, talked to staff groups in all NHS services and in a variety of community settings and encouraged the inclusion of details about accessing PALS in patient and service user information.



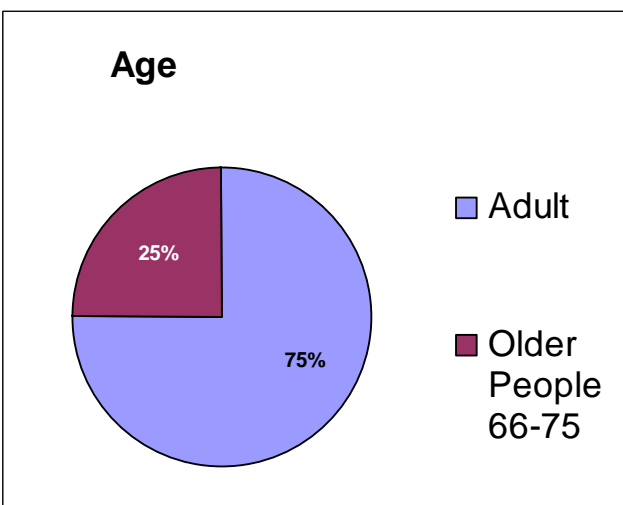
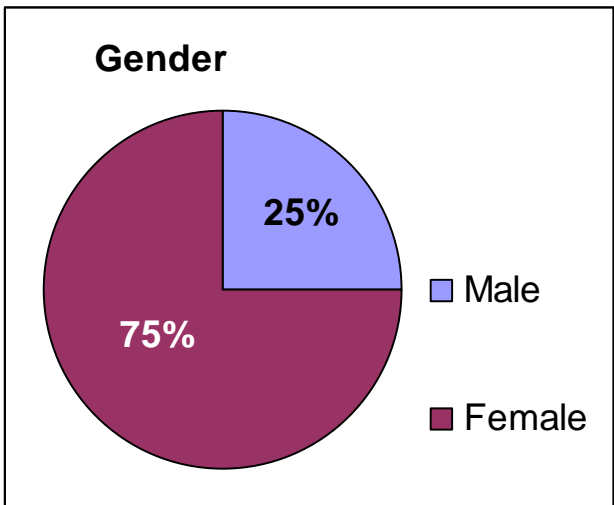
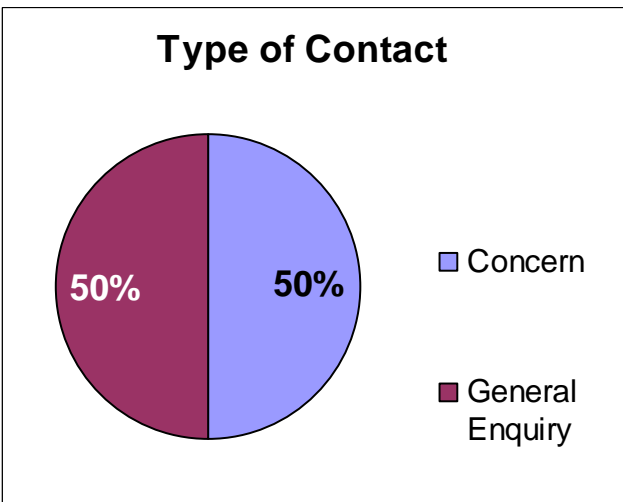
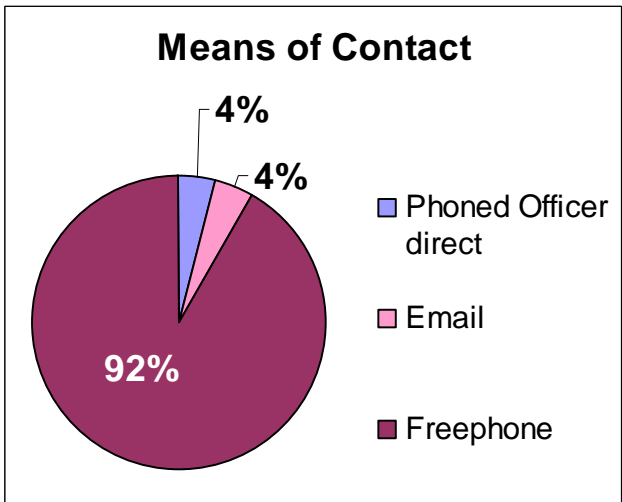
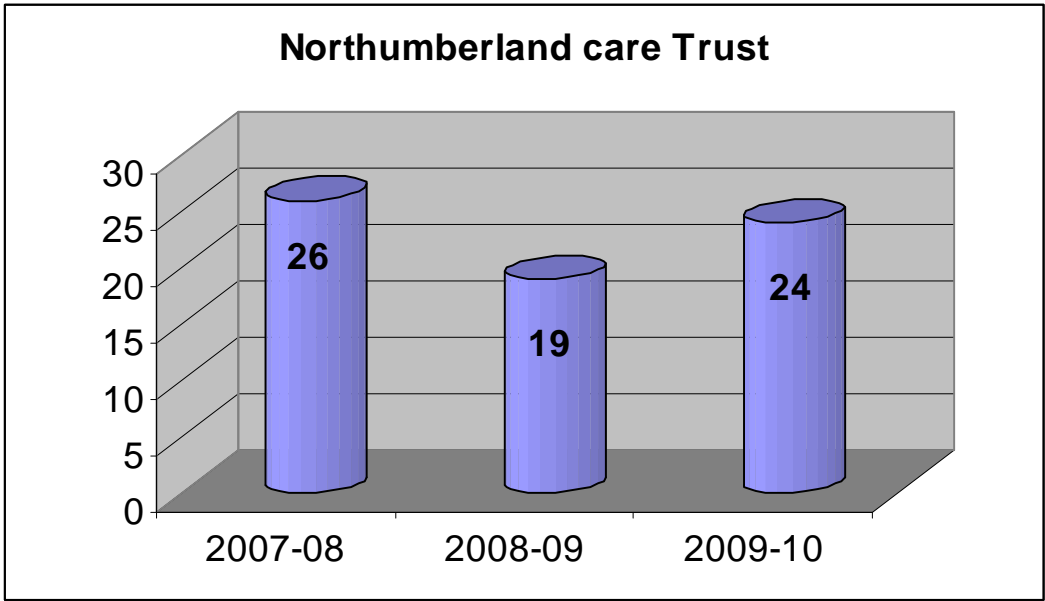


Equality & Diversity:

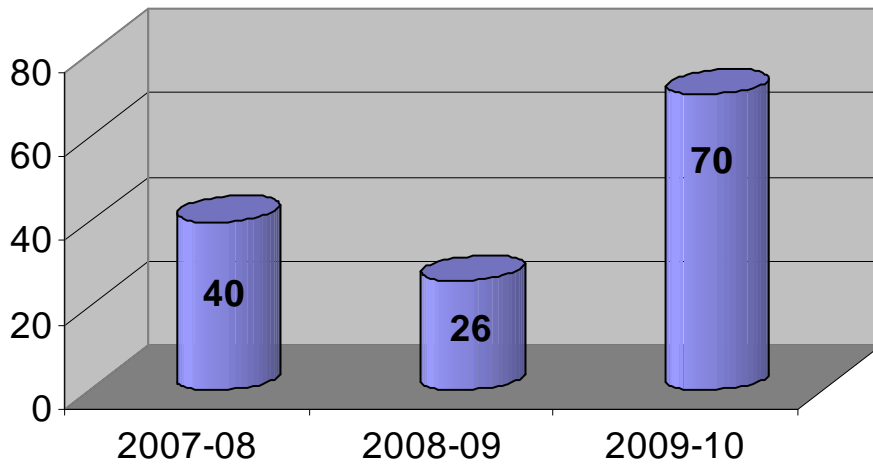


Newcastle and North Tyneside Community Health invited PALS staff to be part of the CEAT (Community Environmental Action Team) visits to inspect premises with regard to infection control. This has proved to be a useful contribution to the process and will continue into 2010-11.

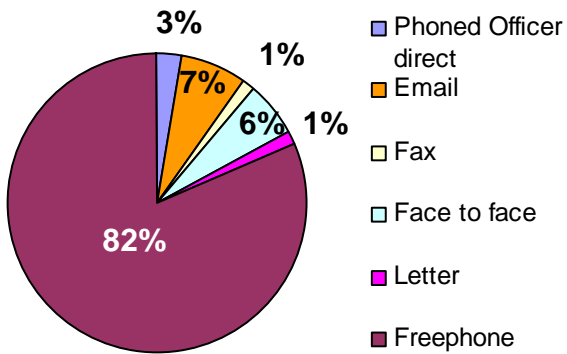
North of Tyne PALS has been one of a number of key organisations involved in the 'First Contact' initiative in Newcastle. This generated queries and requests for information from older people who would not usually have used PALS. Following a request for information about MRSA by residents of a sheltered accommodation scheme, who were very worried about the infection and were reluctant to go to hospital for treatment for fear of 'catching' MRSA, infection control staff visited the residents and were able to give accurate information and reassurance.



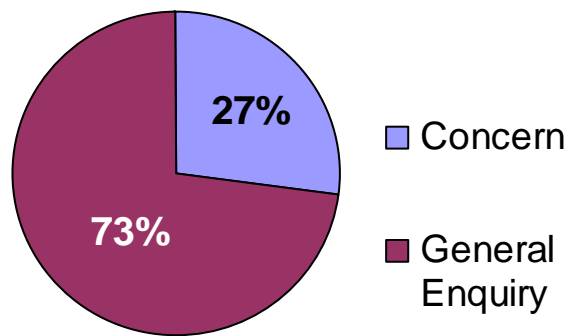
Newcastle & North Tyneside PCT



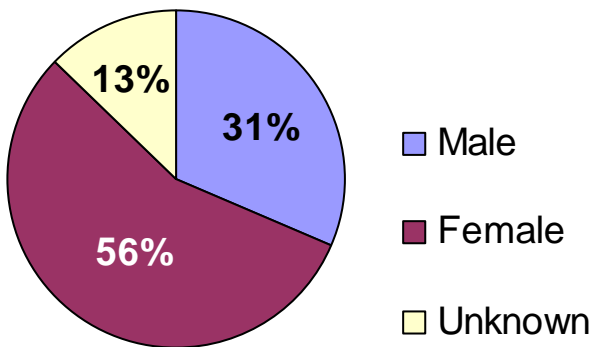
Means of Contact



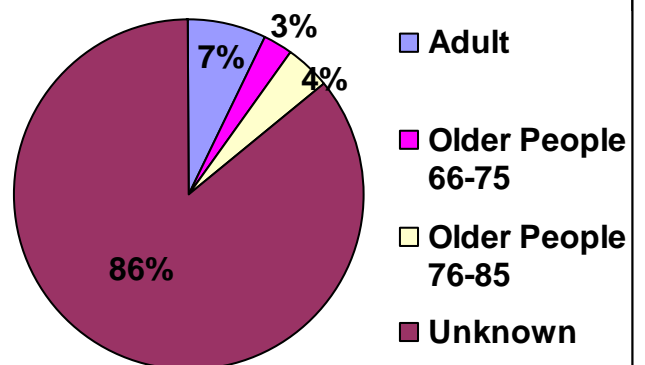
Type of Contact



Gender

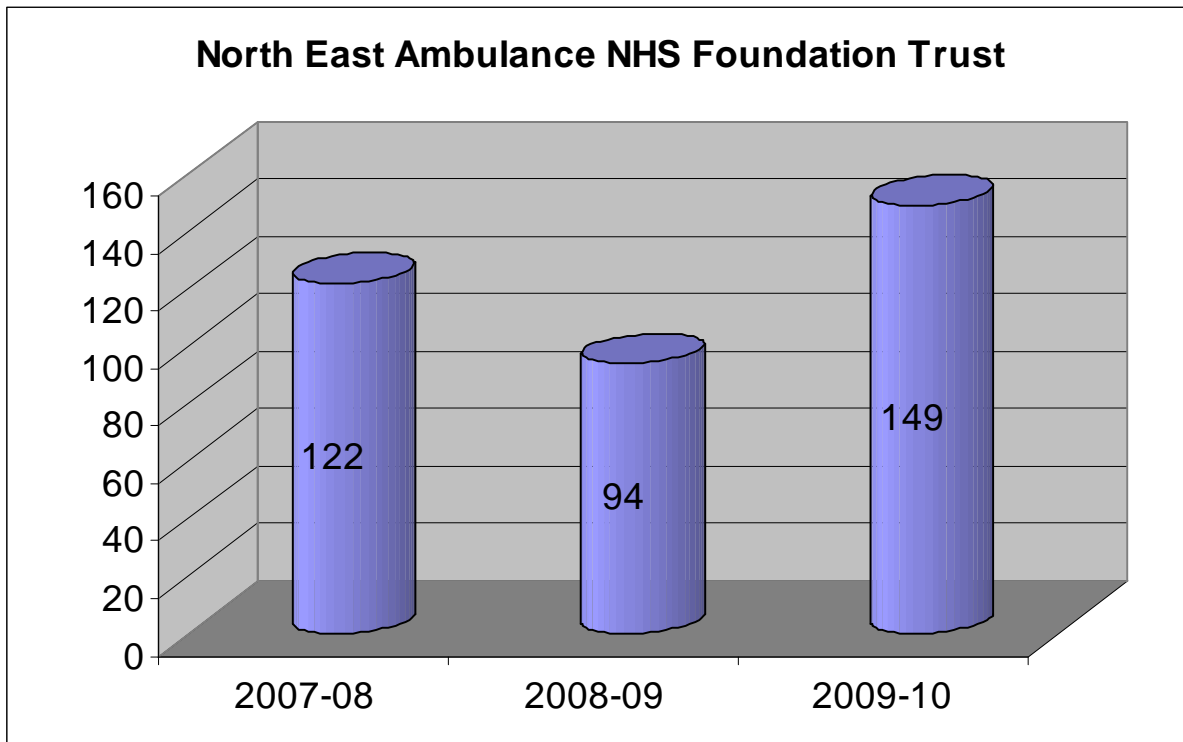


Age

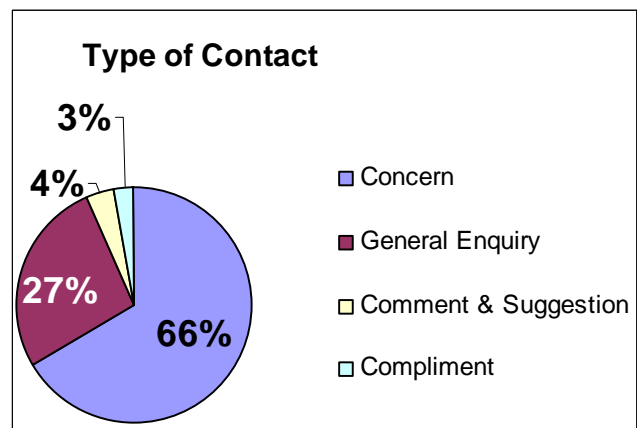
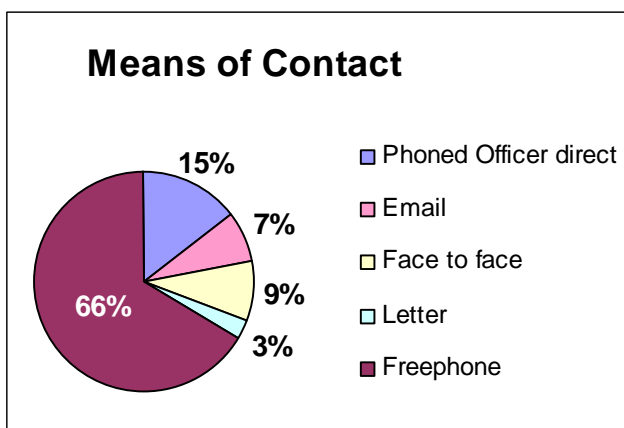


North East Ambulance Service

North of Tyne PALS responds to requests for information and advice and helps to solve any problems patients their families and carers may have experienced from across the whole of the area covered by the North East Ambulance Service.

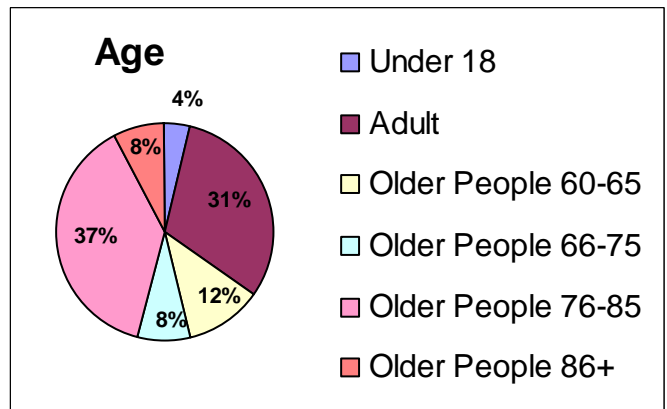
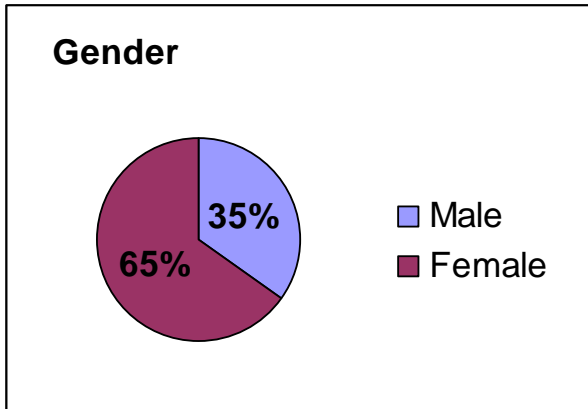


People contact PALS directly, via the freephone, email or letter. Work was undertaken with the complaints manager and reception staff at NEAS to clarify the role of PALS and to transfer relevant calls to the PALS freephone number. This makes access to PALS as seamless as possible and provides a timely answer to questions and problems.



Referrals to North of Tyne PALS are also received via local PALS staff based in acute or primary care NHS Trusts in the area south of the Tyne. There is a protocol in place, which was reviewed during this year, to clarify the process for the recording and reporting of these issues.

Equality & Diversity:

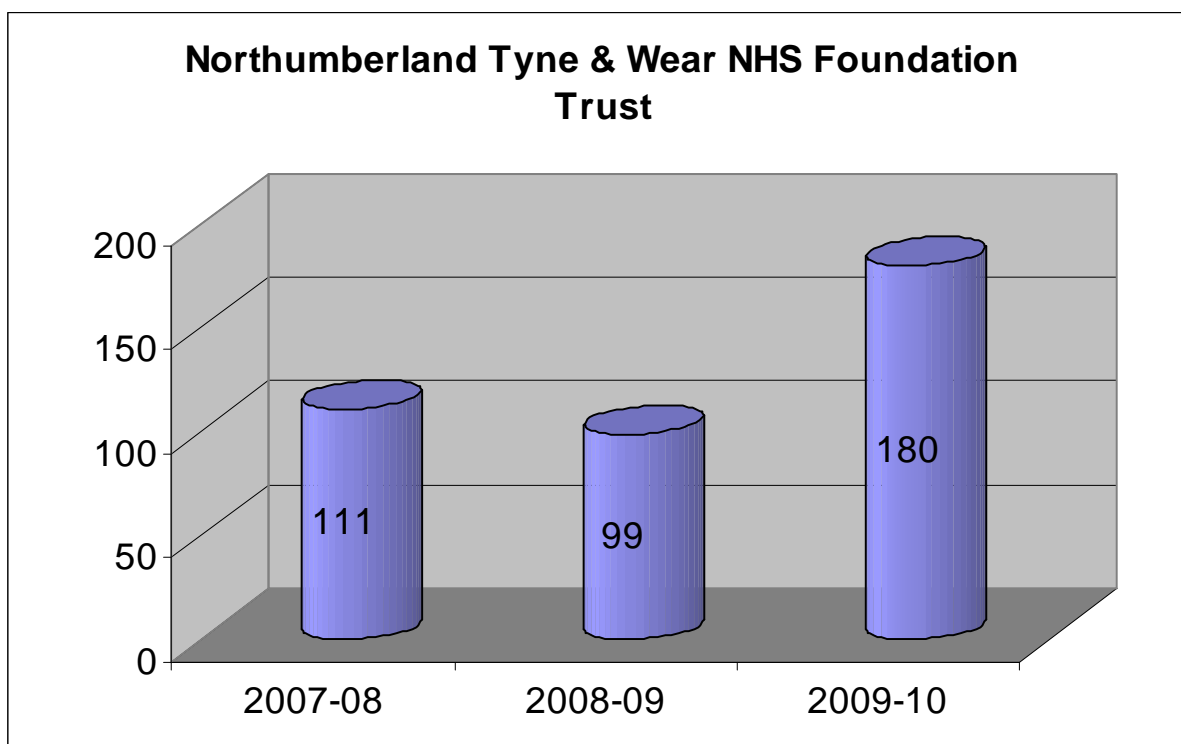


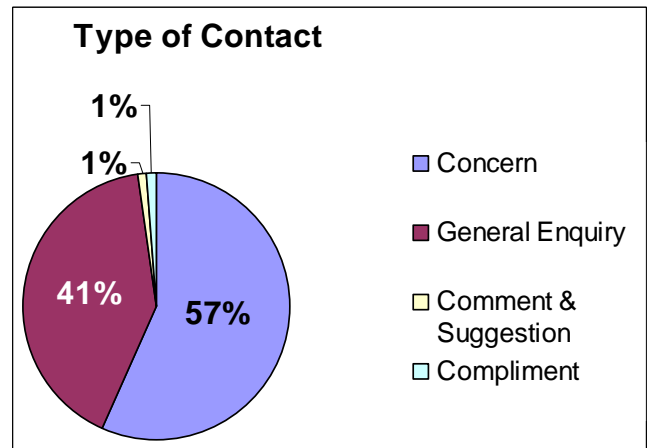
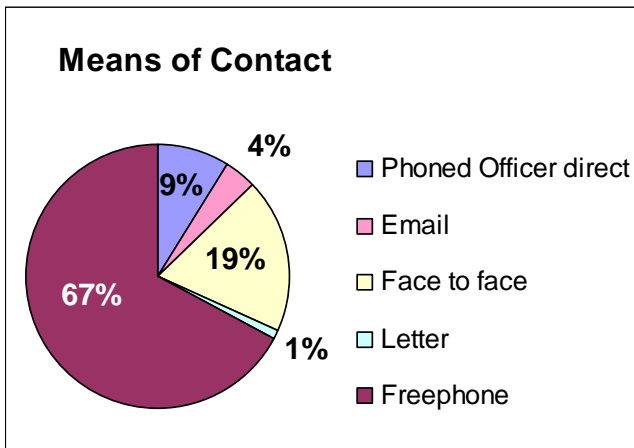
Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

North of Tyne PALS delivers the PALS service for Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, liaising with colleagues in South of Tyne PALS, as appropriate.

During the course of 2009 and 2010 work has continued to promote PALS and for the service to become further integrated into the work of the Trust.

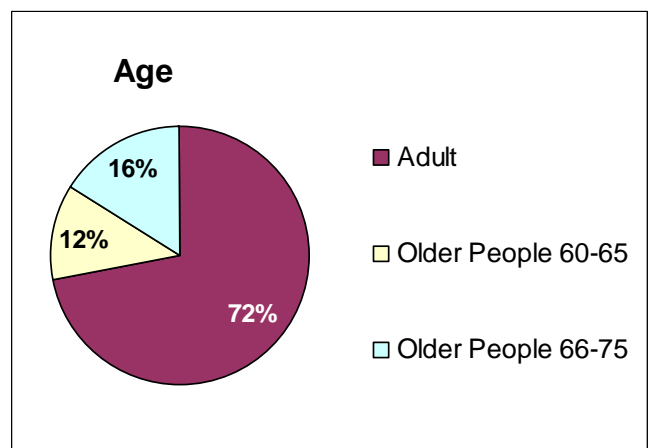
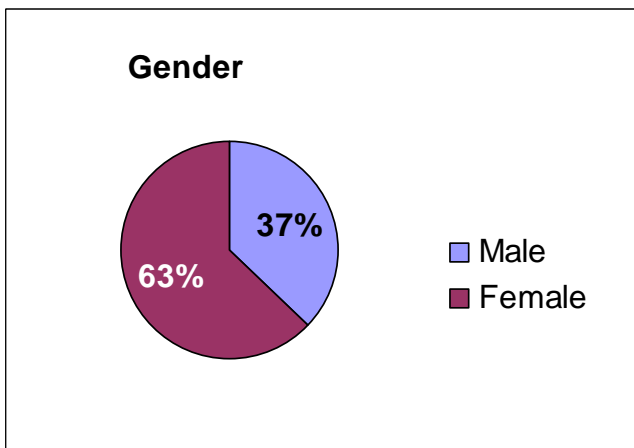
Recognising the context of service delivery within the Trust targeted work has been undertaken, taking advantage of a range of events, activities, meetings and social activities to explain the role of PALS to service users and members of staff. This has resulted in an increase in the issues which have come to PALS, specifically with respect to learning disability and older people.





PALS staff have been part of initiatives within St Nicholas', Northgate, Prudhoe and St George's hospitals and with community based services. This has included being part of PEAT inspections, being involved in initiatives with respect to essence of care, food and nutrition, health and well being and undertaking 'How's it going?' questionnaires at Northgate hospital. These questionnaires are undertaken when the service user has been in the service for a few weeks and are to assess how things are. They are also an opportunity to ask questions and raise any problems. PALS staff have been involved in the further development of the questionnaires to be used as a follow up to the initial questionnaire and within other services.

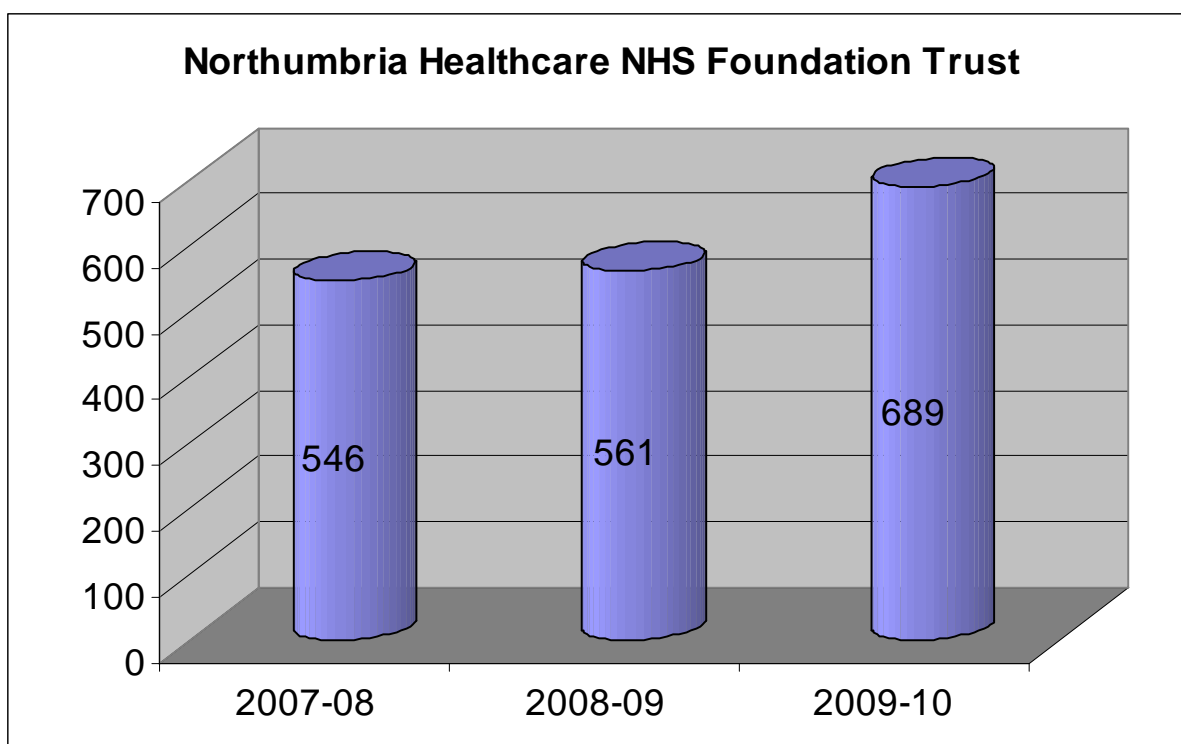
Equality & Diversity:



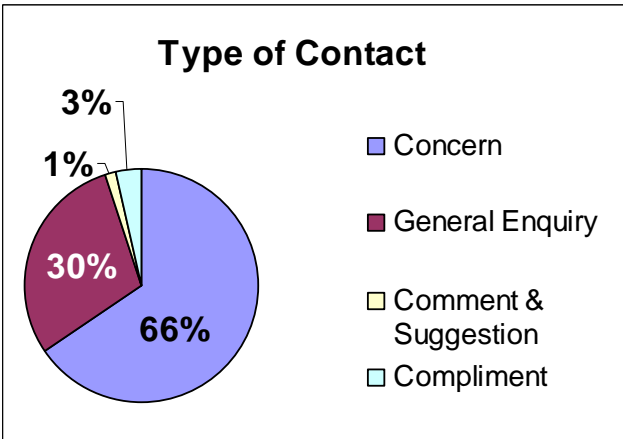
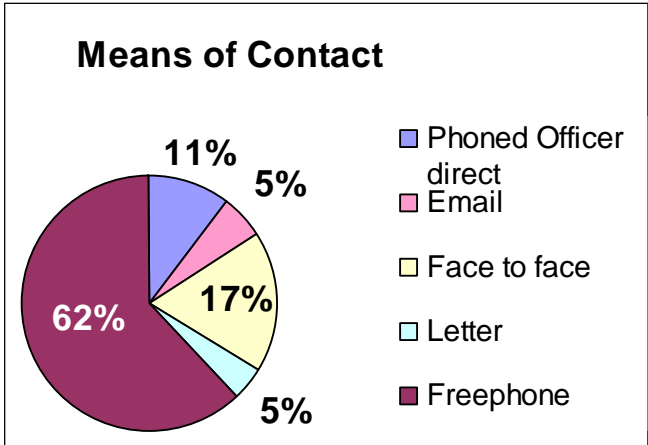
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

During 2009-10 PALS has been involved in various activities and initiatives to enhance access to PALS. PALS staff have contributed to discussions around the upgrading of the entrance to North Tyneside General Hospital entrance and the proposed Emergency Care Centre to ensure a PALS presence and easy access to the service when PALS staff are elsewhere, via dedicated telephones with a direct connection to the PALS free phone.

In addition to general publicity about PALS, through talking to staff, patients and families and the distribution of leaflets, posters and cards there have been several targeted initiatives to explain the role of PALS. Information sessions have taken place with reception staff and telephone switchboard staff.



PALS contributed to the Patient Information Group and the development of the information strategy, the Equality and Diversity Group, Patient Safety and Essence of Care and PALS staff have been part of PEAT (Patient Environment Action Team) visits.



An initiative from the Equality and Diversity Group has included PALS in targeting the provision of information about PALS to people with disabilities, their family and carers to provide them with a contact point whilst accessing services in the Trust if they have any questions or problems.

Equality & Diversity:

