



 @lizharrisFCPara

# PEOPLE LIKE US?

## UNDERSTANDING COMPLAINTS ABOUT PARAMEDICS

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# People like us? Understanding complaints about paramedics and social workers



This report aims to improve understanding of the number and nature of complaints to the HCPC about paramedics and social workers in England, and to consider what actions might help prevent complaints in these professions.

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## Available formats



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Understanding  
complaints about  
paramedics and social  
workers  
Adobe PDF Document  
1890Kb

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Referral/complaint rates

**Average referral rate to the HCPC across all 16 professions was 6 per 1000.**

**Referral rate for paramedics was 11 per 1000.**

**(Referral rate for social workers was 12 per 1000)**

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Methodology

## The two primary research questions

- 1) Why is there a disproportionate number of fitness to practise concerns raised about paramedics, and what might be the reasons for this?**
- 2) What preventative action could be taken to address this?**

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Methodology



**Literature review**

**Delphi exercise**

**Interviews**

**Focus groups**

**HCPC FtP case analysis**

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### Case analysis

	2014-2015	2015-2016	Number sampled at each stage
Number of concerns received	231	239	
Number closed at Initial Stage	115*	162*	30
Number closed by ICP	49*	44*	9
Number considered at Final Hearing	48*	58*	13
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>52</b>

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## Results

**Did not find a disproportionate number of complaints leading to a judgment of impairment.**

**Instead identified a disproportionate number of referrals to the regulator that did not meet the threshold for further investigation.**



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## Results

**The average self-referral rate across all the professions was 6%**

**The self-referral rate for paramedics in this sample was 46%**

**84%** of which resulted in no further action by  
the regulator

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Findings: key themes

- **Public and societal expectations**
- **Pressurised work environments**
- **Evolving nature of the profession**
- **Challenging work practices**

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# Key theme: Public and societal expectations

## Mismatch of expectations

## Headline news

THE TIMES

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### Patient is forced to wait 62 hours for ambulance

Duncan Geddes  
August 23 2018, 9:00am,  
The Times

Media



North West ambulance service was the best performing in the country, with a longest wait of three hours and 26 minutes  
PETER BYRNE/PA

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### Paramedic struck off after turning off his ambulance tracker on shift

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Key theme: Pressurised work environments

**Don't have enough staff**

**Mopping up**

**No time for training**

**Stress and sickness**



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Key theme: Evolving nature of the profession

**Why should I change?**

**Embryonic profession**

**Professional values**



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Key theme: Challenging work practices

**Practicing defensively**

**Enough of this!**

**Frustration that builds**



**Head-down**

**Discipline first**

**What leadership?**

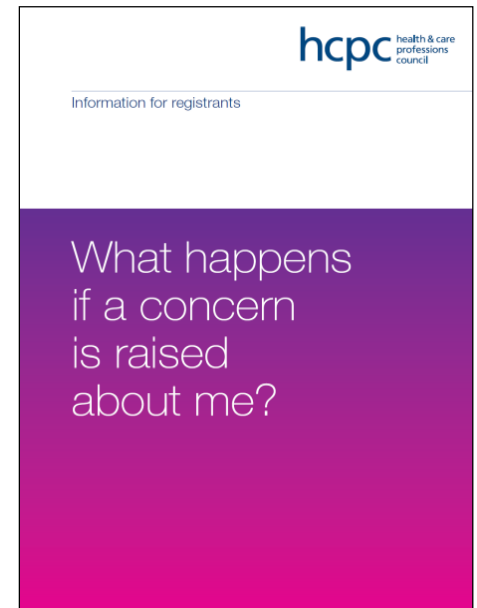
**Big brother**

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### Report Recommendations:

- 1: Engage further with the public to raise awareness of appropriate avenues for complaint and support**
- 2: Prioritise reducing inappropriate self-referrals from paramedics**
- 3: Intervene at the local level in dispute resolution**
- 4: Enhance the fitness to practise process**
- 5: Develop learning and teaching materials**
- 6: Proactive engagement with employers to enhance support and supervision for registrants**
- 7: Partner and collaborate with systems regulators**
- 8: Proactively engage with registrants**





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To conclude...

**The work of professionals has increasingly moved away from technical/procedural complexity towards interpersonal/psycho-social complexity.**

**The concept of “right touch” regulation with increasing focus on prevention and reduction of harm and collaboration.**

**The findings of this study exposed negative aspects of culture which could be addressed through employer-led engagement processes rather than through regulatory channels.**



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- LEGAL REPRESENTATION AT HCPC FITNESS TO PRACTISE HEARINGS





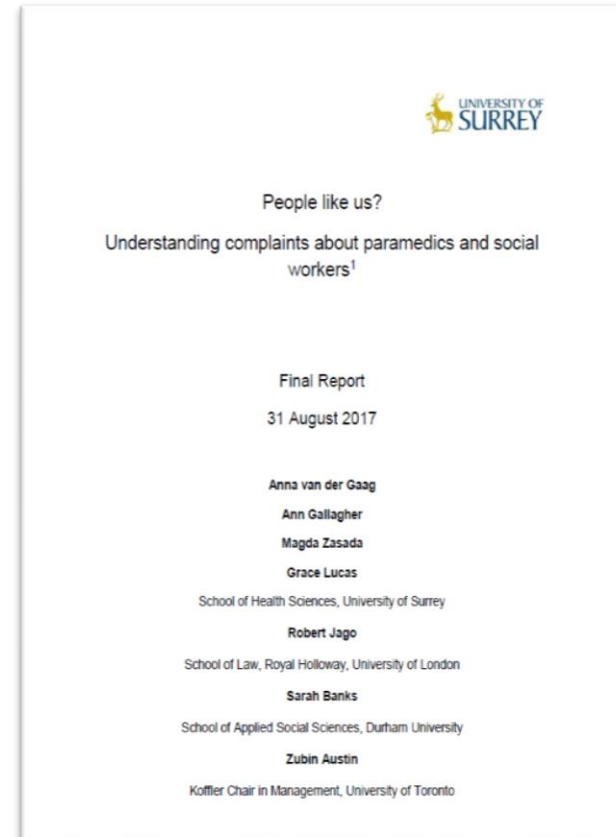
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GPLA MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT 2019

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### Case analysis

**Table 23** Referral characteristic

	<b>Initial Stage n=30</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>ICP n=9</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FH n=13</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Misconduct	10	33%	3	33%	3	23%	<b>16</b>	31%
Lack of competence	10	33%	0	0%	1	8%	<b>11</b>	21%
Misconduct and lack of competence	7	23%	5	56%	8	62%	<b>20</b>	38%
Conviction/caution	3	10%	1	11%	1	8%	<b>5</b>	10%

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### Case analysis

#### Paramedics: Final Hearings Stage

**Table 27** Breakdown of sanctions at the final hearing stage

<b>Sanction</b>	<b>Number of cases in FH</b>
Struck Off	4
Disposal by Consent (voluntary removal order)	1
Suspended for 12 months	3
Conditions of Practice for 6 months	1
Caution Order	2
Not well founded	2

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### Results: typology of final hearings

