

Logging Complaints (Subject Codes) on Datix

Complaints Team (Head of PALS and Complaints, Case Managers and Administrative Team)

Abstract: Over the course of the pandemic, the complaints team had become very much reduced and there was a lot of cross over of tasks in logging new complaints between the Complaints Case Managers and Admin. As the team has recruited (to almost quadruple in size) it has become clear that some of the tasks being were being completed by the admin team members. One example was the logging of Datix subject codes. These are quite complex in nature - there are currently 19 main Datix subject codes (nationally reportable) and 394 subject sub codes. It was also proving time consuming and inefficient in that the administrators who are less familiar with the coding were having to review each case in detail in order to apply the codes. This was effectively a doubling up of efforts given that the case managers themselves must familiarise themselves with the cases in detail when sending them out for investigation.

SMART Aim

The aim is to reduce the complexity and time taken to record Datix subject codes when logging new complaints onto the system by the end of March 2023 as evidence by the amount of time take to log complaints.

Plan

Admin colleagues were reporting that they were finding adding Datix codes when logging complex cases was time consuming and led to a desire to procrastinate on this task.

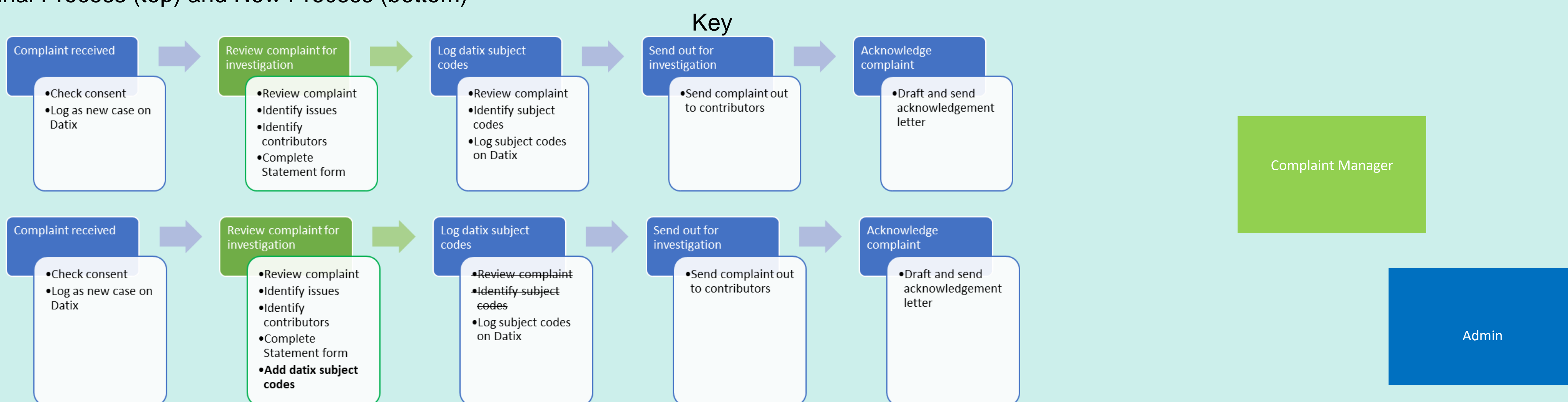
The initial plan was to consider looking at the list of 394 sub codes and see if it could be reduced, however the plan to use 5S methodology to do this was not implemented due to time constraints and other issues within the team taking priority.

After further brainstorming with colleagues, it was felt that a simple change in process, would possibly solve the problem without taking too much time. Therefore, a plan was made for Complaints Case Managers to themselves identify and record the appropriate Datix Codes for each issue identified when sending them out for investigation to then be shared with admin colleagues for logging.

Do

The Complaints Case Managers were already using a 'Complaints Statement Form' which did historically have fields in which to record the Datix subject code. The decision was made to reformat and simplify this template. A spreadsheet was shared of the available Datix Codes and Subcodes for easy reference. As planned, Complaints Case Managers then identified the appropriate Datix Codes whilst identifying key issues for investigation. When sending out the complaints to contributors, the administrative team were then able to refer to the 'Complaints Statement Form' and essentially manually input them into the Datix system with no requirement for further review of the details of the complaint.

Original Process (top) and New Process (bottom)

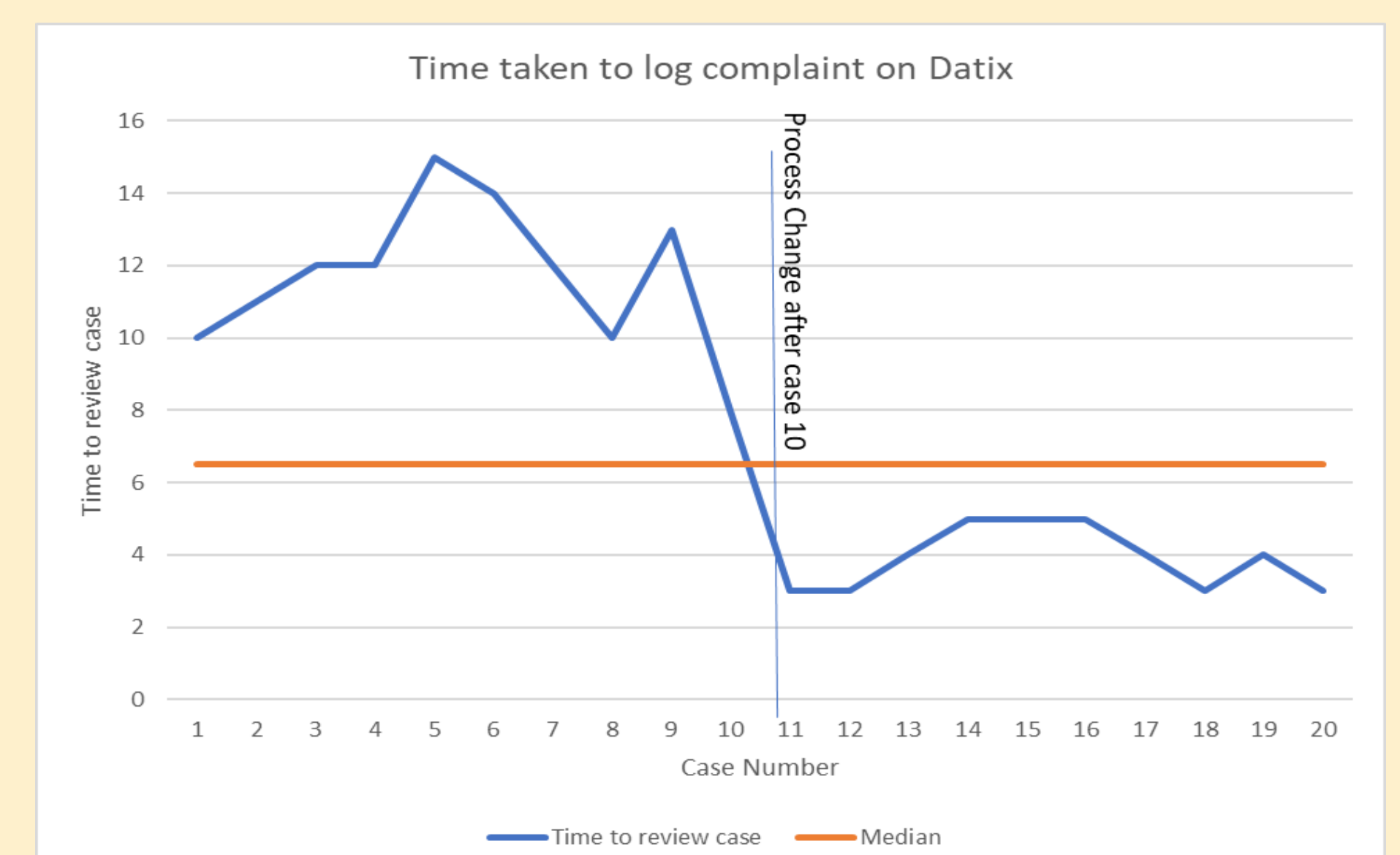


Study

The administrative team members have reported that they feel that, by having the subject and sub-category defined by the Complaints Case Managers, has reduced the time taken to input the subject codes by 66.6%.

They also subjectively feel that the task is now easier and therefore are less likely to put off completing the task in favour of other tasks.

By contrast, because the Complaints Case Managers were already having to be very familiar with each case, it has not notably increased the time taken for them to 'triage' and send out cases for investigations. Furthermore, there is some anecdotal evidence that, in being selected by Complaints Case Managers who mostly work over dedicated work streams, this has enabled a greater degree of consistency in applying the codes across different areas of the Trust, allowing, potentially, for more accurate recognition of trends.



Act

This relatively small step has been successful in reducing the complexity of this part of the administrative role. Consequently, it has significantly improved the time taken to log these Datix Subject Codes, as was the aim. Through regular review and feedback in team huddles the decision has been made to **adopt** the change.

What is not known however is whether the task being moved to being done by the case managers and improved the accuracy of the reporting, as this aspect of data was not collected and would be difficult to collect retrospectively. This provides good learning regarding any future projects regarding secondary aims and process measures.

There is still scope also to review the number of the Datix Subject Codes and Sub-codes, as was the original plan and this would be a further improvement project for the future.