

Complaint Statistics

Adult Social Care

In June 2007 the Department of Health provided a set of proposals to unify and reform the current arrangements for making complaints across Health and Adult Social Care; 'Making Experiences Count.' As well as fulfilling the commitment in 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say', it proposed a radical new approach to complaints handling which is more flexible and supports organisational learning.

The formalised guidance for the new arrangements was published on 25 February 2009; 'Listening, Responding, Improving' and the Regulations were laid before Parliament on 27 February 2009 for councils and health organisations to implement from 1 April 2009.

These Regulations enshrine a duty to co-operate with health partners in relation to complaints that cut across Health and Social Care Services.

The Council introduced a joint complaints process for dealing with Health and Adult social care complaints from 1 April 2009. It relates to concerns received from this date onwards and is in line with the Making Experiences Count initiative.

Where a complaint is received about Adult Social Care Services functions or functions of any party to the Joint Protocol (i.e. Health Partners) the organisation which receives the complaint handles the co-ordination of the complaint.

The process for dealing with Adult Social Care complaints is a one stage process. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they may refer their concerns for consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Not all complaints received by Adult Care are eligible to be considered under the statutory procedure, and where a complaint does not meet the criteria, it will be considered under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. Details of Adult Care complaints considered under both procedures will be included in this report.

10 new complaints were received by Adult Care Services during the second half of 2017-18. Details of these complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

The types of complaints received

3 new complaints were received during the third quarter

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- 1 Actions of Team Leader

2 complaints were not upheld.

7 new complaints were received during the fourth quarter

1 complaint was upheld:

- 1 Invoice received for Appointee fees

2 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Joinery work carried out by Home Improvement Agency
- 1 Care costs & discharge arrangements from Tudor Court

4 complaints were not upheld.

Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned

Third Quarter

As a result of the partially upheld complaint regarding the actions of a Team Leader, a recommendation was made for a review of internal managerial processes to be undertaken to address any concerns raised in respect of practice issues.

Fourth Quarter

Following the complaint regarding receipt of an invoice for Appointee fees, changes were implemented in relation to the confirmation of RBC Appointee fees due and the issuing of invoices relating to these fees following the death of a service user.

As a result of the complaint regarding discharge arrangements from Tudor Court, an apology was given that the complainant found the financial information provided to be unclear. Communication was issued to ensure that this is made transparent to all involved parties when considering provisions requiring financial contributions in the future.

Timescales

There is no statutory timescale for dealing with Adult Social Care complaints, and the timescale is agreed between the Investigator and the complainant in each case. However, the aim is to complete investigations within 25 working days. The average time taken to deal with Adult Care complaints during the second half of 2017-18 was 25.8 working days which was slightly over target.

Complaint Example

The following is an example of a how an Adult Social Care complaint has been dealt with from receipt to resolution.

Complaint

A complaint was submitted via the online feedback form by a relative of a service user regarding care charges and discharge arrangements from Tudor Court. The Customer Feedback Team contacted the complainant by telephone for more details of the concerns and to confirm details of the service user. The complaint was then passed to the Head of Service and allocated to a senior manager for investigation.

The Investigating Officer contacted the complainant to discuss their concerns and desired outcome, and a timescale was agreed for response.

An investigation was undertaken into the issues raised, which included meeting with staff from Tudor Court and reviewing information held on the case file regarding care provision and information provided to the family regarding the required contributions. The investigation was completed within the timescale agreed with the complainant, and the overall finding was that the complaint was partially upheld.

A full written response was provided to the complainant detailing the findings of the investigation and actions taken as a result of the complaint. An apology was included

for the points of complaint that were upheld.

The Investigating Officer also contacted the complainant by telephone to discuss the findings and the complainant was happy with the outcome.

A number of recommendations for service improvement were implemented following the investigation, details of which are included under 'Lessons Learned' above.

Compliments

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. A total of 20 compliments were recorded for Adult Care Services during this reporting period, a breakdown and examples of which can be found below.

Team/Service Area	No.	Compliment received from
STARS	14	Service User (9) Relative of Service User (5)
STARS Plus Team	3	Service User (1) Relative of Service User (1) Professional (1)
Home Improvement Agency	1	Relative of Service User (1)
Occupational Therapy	2	Service User (2)

"I want to say a heartfelt thank you for the care and assistance I have enjoyed for the past three weeks from your excellent STARS service. The service swung into action the morning after I came out of hospital following a hip replacement and has helped me very quickly to achieve independence around the home. I am now able to get out on crutches round the gardens in the village. The care was kind and thoughtful as well as efficient as they enabled me to do things for myself again and regain independence with dignity. Please thank the lovely ladies who visited and my thanks to you for your personal encouragement. The STARS service is very aptly named."

Compliment for STARS Team

"I received a phone call from a gentleman who explained how he had been into Number One Riverside to look into getting a white stick as he is partially blind. He said that the service he received from the front desk Receptionist and the Senior Rehabilitation Officer was exceptional and he wanted to pass on this positive feedback. The gentleman advised that in addition to him acquiring a white stick, the officer will also be attending his home address to see if there is anything else Adult Care is able to offer him. He said he was very pleased with the service he received."

Compliment for Community OT Team

"To each and every carer, just a note to thank each of you for your hard work, commitment, care, love and compassion shown towards my nan. She has had a great few weeks and come on so much. We are very grateful. Excellent service, keep up the great work. Each and every one of the workers has shown a high level of care."

"We wanted to note our appreciation on record for the officer for giving advice, supporting us when we were frustrated, understanding when we were feeling

impatient, listening to us when we were struggling and more importantly working with officers behind the scenes to ensure the unknowns attached to the project were addressed to the best of his professional ability.

Compliment for Home Improvement Agency

“I would like to thank all my carers for their help and kindness during the weeks they came to help. I would also like to thank the OT who made everything easier for me to manage.”

Compliment for STARS & Occupational Therapy Teams

“I am most grateful for all the help you provided for my mother. The considerate and respectful care from all members of the STARS Team has enabled my mother to make good progress. We have enjoyed your company and will miss your friendliness and chats. Best wishes for the future.”

Compliment for STARS Team

Children's Social Care

Changes were made to the children's social services representations procedure as a result of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003.

Complaints are dealt with in accordance with The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

The handling and consideration of complaints under this procedure consists of three stages:

Stage 1 - Local Resolution

Stage 2 - Investigation

Stage 3 - Review Panel

Local Resolution requires the local authority to resolve a complaint as close to the point of contact with the child or young person as possible (i.e. through front line management of the service). In doing so the local authority should consider the wishes of the complainant about how the complaint should be dealt with. In most circumstances complaints should be considered at Stage 1 in the first instance.

Consideration of complaints at Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an investigating officer and an independent person. Stage 2 commences either when the complainant requests it after an investigation at Stage 1, or where the complainant and the local authority have agreed that Stage 1 is not appropriate.

Where Stage 2 of the complaints procedure has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, he/she will be eligible to request further consideration of the complaint by a Review Panel. It is not possible to review a complaint that has not yet been fully considered at Stage 2 (including providing the reports and adjudication to the complainant).

Following the conclusion of all three stages of the complaints process, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they may refer their concerns for consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Information relating to Children's Social Care complaints is available on the Council's website, and leaflets providing full details of the complaints process and how to raise concerns are provided as required. The Children's Rights Service has also developed complaints leaflets specifically for children in care.

Not all complaints received by Children's Social Care are eligible to be considered under the statutory procedure, and where a complaint does not meet the criteria, it will be considered under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. Details of complaints considered under both procedures will be included in this report.

A total of 19 new complaints were received by Children's Services in the second half of 2017-18, 15 of which were dealt with under the statutory Children's Social Care complaints procedure at stage one. 4 complaints were dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. In addition, 2 complaints were considered at stage two, 1 of which was dealt with under the statutory procedure and 1 of which was dealt with under the Corporate complaints procedure.

As can be seen below and from the graphs in appendix 2, the number of complaints received increased during the 4th quarter. None of the complaints received in the 4th quarter were fully upheld, and 9 were partially upheld. Details of the complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

The types of complaints received

5 new complaints were received during the third quarter

5 new complaints were considered at stage one

5 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Actions of Social Worker and issues with contact arrangements
- 1 Delay in telephone calls being returned
- 1 Level of support provided by Additional Needs Service
- 1 Preparation of Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP) (corporate complaint)
- 1 Breakdown in communication regarding EHCP (corporate complaint)

1 complaint was received at stage two

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- 1 Actions of Social Worker

14 new complaints were received during the fourth quarter

14 new complaints were considered at stage one

9 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Lack of communication and actions of Social Worker
- 1 Issues relating to contact arrangements
- 1 Adoption Support Funding (ASF)
- 1 Safeguarding assessment process
- 1 Reduction in Special Guardianship allowance
- 1 Actions of Social Worker from Children with Disabilities Service
- 1 Response to concerns raised re contact arrangements
- 1 Failure to provide information
- 1 Delay in processing invoice (corporate complaint)

5 complaints were not upheld (including 1 corporate complaint)

1 complaint was received at stage two

The complaint was being dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure and was subsequently withdrawn.

Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned

Third Quarter

Following the complaint regarding a Social Worker and issues with contact arrangements, one point of complaint was upheld which related to minutes of core group meetings not being provided to the complainant. An apology was given, and

assurances that the newly allocated Social Worker will ensure minutes are made available going forward.

Further to the corporate complaint regarding preparation of an EHCP, a number of recommendations were made:

- The final EHC Plan captures any parental views expressed on the draft plan where a significant change is made between the draft and final plan.
- The service asks a parent at the onset how regularly they wish to be updated and a timescale is agreed.
- Any telephone conversations are confirmed in writing.

Following the corporate complaint regarding a lack of updates about an EHCP, an apology was given for the breakdown in communication that had occurred. If the team has difficulties in contacting the parent in the future they will obtain an alternative contact number or send a message via the school. The school was also asked to arrange an early annual review meeting which would be attended by an officer from the SEN Assessment Team.

Fourth Quarter

Following the complaint regarding the actions of a Social Worker and a lack of communication, the Manager discussed the concerns raised with the Social Worker concerned for them to consider the impact of their actions and make appropriate adaptations to practice.

Further to the complaint regarding the safeguarding assessment process, one point of complaint was upheld with regards to a delay in providing information relating to a Child in Need meeting. This was discussed with the worker concerned, and subsequent meetings were arranged when the complainant was able to attend.

As a result of the corporate complaint relating to a delay in an invoice being processed, a reminder was given to staff to keep people informed if their invoice is delayed and to provide an explanation for the delay. A review of internal communication processes to take place between Finance and the service to ensure more robust communication between the two areas, especially when new requirements are introduced relating to external providers and invoicing.

Timescales

There are statutory timescales for dealing with Children's Social Care complaints at each stage of the process. Every attempt is made to resolve complaints within the initial timescale; however, the regulations allow the timescale for each stage to be extended in consultation with the complainant.

Stage 1	10 working days (can be extended to up to a maximum of 20 working days)
Stage 2	25 working days (can be extended up to a maximum of 65 working days)
Stage 3	Acknowledgement within 2 working days, review to be held within 30 working days.

15 of the complaints received during the third and fourth quarters were dealt with under the statutory Social Care complaints procedure at stage one, 9 of which were

responded to within the statutory timescale. 4 complaints were dealt with under the corporate complaints procedure, 3 of which were dealt with within timescale.

Complaint Example

The following is an example of a how a Children’s Social Care complaint has been dealt with from receipt to resolution.

Stage one complaint

A complaint was received via email to the Customer Feedback Team and the Director of Children’s Services. The complaint was from parents and related to the process for completing an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). As the nature of the complaint did not meet the criteria to be considered under the Children’s Social Care statutory complaints procedure it was considered under the Council’s Corporate Complaints procedure. The complaint was allocated to a senior manager for investigation and a formal acknowledgement was sent to the complainants confirming the timescale for response.

The Investigating Officer arranged to meet with the complainants to discuss their points of concern and desired outcome from the complaint. A full investigation followed, which included reviewing information held within the service, and discussing the concerns with the officers involved. On conclusion of the investigation the complainants were provided with a full written response detailing the findings and recommendations. The complainants were invited to contact the Investigating Officer if they wished to discuss the outcome of the investigation or clarify any points within the response.

The complainants subsequently advised that they were not happy with the outcome of the investigation and requested that their complaint was escalated to stage two of the process. The request was acknowledged and the complaint was allocated to another senior manager for a stage two investigation to be undertaken, however the complaint was subsequently withdrawn by the complainant.

A number of recommendations were made following the outcome of the complaint at stage one, details of which are included under the ‘Lessons Learned’ section above.

Compliments

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. 14 compliments were recorded for Children’s Social Care Services during the second half of 2017-18, a breakdown and examples of which can be found below.

Team/Service Area	No.	Compliment received from
First Response Team	5	Professional (2) Young person (2) Parent (1)
SEN Team	2	Professional (1) Parent (1)
Fostering Team	1	Foster Carers

Cared for Children	1	Professional
ACT Service	1	Parent
Sunrise Team	1	Parent
Children with Disabilities	1	Relative of young person
Occupational Therapy	1	Relative of young person
Additional Needs Service (RANS)	1	Professional

“Hi how are you, hope you are good. I really miss you and everyone does and thanks for your help that really helped me and I have more make up hahaha. I hope I will see you again. Bye.” **Compliment from young person for First Response Team**

“Just to let you know, I really enjoyed the skills to foster course! I would absolutely love to go on any more that would be available or suitable for me. It was delivered fabulously and even though it was very informative it was very interesting. The officers were brill! You could really see how passionate they were about their job roles and also for these young children, it was so refreshing! It has really made me want to foster, if I had home space and time it will definitely be something I would consider doing. Thank you for setting us up on this course, I loved it!”

Compliment for Fostering Team

“I would also like to add that the child’s EHC paperwork is one of the most thorough and informative plans I have seen. I actually felt like I had met him just from reading his plan!” **Compliment for SEN Team**

“Just a quick note to say thank you. I know Social Services get a bad reputation, but at the end of the day they are here to help children. We had a very good experience with you, and the children loved seeing you and are going to miss you. So thanks again and hopefully we won’t see each other again (in a nice way). So thanks for all your help and support.” **Compliment for First Response Team**

“I would like to bring to your attention the fantastic work and support that the officer from Rochdale Additional Needs Service brings to schools and families. Her advice and support has been greatly appreciated and has had a positive impact on many of our families thus far this year. Her commitment, flexibility and knowledge has been second to none that as a school we felt it should be passed on to yourselves. The work that Rochdale Additional Needs Service does for the borough is a credit to the local offer and towards supporting our Rochdale families.”

Compliment for RANS Team

“I really want to thank you for this morning, as stupid as it sounds you two have given me what I needed to fight, I don’t feel helpless and I’m really grateful for that. So thank you.”

Compliment for Sunrise Team