

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 & Social Care 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.

7 new complaints were received by Adult Care Services during the first half of 2018-19. Details of these complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

The types of complaints received

6 new complaints were received during the first quarter

3 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Lack of communication and contact
- 1 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) application (joint complaint with Children's Social Care)
- 1 Various issues including contribution to care home fees (joint complaint with Health)

2 complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint is still ongoing.

1 new complaint was received during the second quarter

The complaint was not upheld.

Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned

First Quarter

An apology was provided in response to the complaint regarding a lack of communication and contact from the service. The poor customer care that the family experienced will be fed back and discussed within team meetings to identify mistakes and best practice.

As a result of the complaint regarding the DFG process, more detailed written information about the process and the options for applicants to receive funding for alternative schemes will be made available online and at the point of initial enquiry. This will ensure that applicants are clear from the outset how long the process is and what is involved.

Second Quarter

Only one complaint was received in the second quarter which was found to be not upheld, therefore there was no requirement to take any further action.

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 closed during the first half of 2018-19 was 22.4 working days which was well within 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 letter of complaint was received by the Customer Feedback Team in April from a relative of an Adult Care service user. The concerns related to a lack of communication and contact from the service with regards to a financial assessment, the care plan and required financial contributions. An acknowledgement was sent to the complainant and the complaint was allocated to a Team Manager for investigation.

The Team Manager contacted the complainant and arranged a meeting with the complainant and service user to discuss their concerns and formulate an action plan. A timescale for completion of the investigation was agreed with the complainant, and a copy of the action plan was provided and agreed.

An investigation was undertaken into the issues raised, which included interviewing staff and reviewing information held on the case file.

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 offered to meet with the complainant to discuss the findings of the investigation and a visit was arranged at the complainant's home. The complainant and service user were happy with the outcome.

Details of the action taken as a result of the complaint are included under 'Lessons Learned' above.

Compliments

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. A total of 43 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	24	Service User (18) Relative of Service User (6)
STARS Plus Team	2	Service User (2)
Transfer of Care Team	7	Service User (1) Relative of Service User (6)
Home Improvement Agency	1	Relative of Service User
Occupational Therapy	3	Service User (1) Relative of Service User (2)
Support Planning	2	Relative of Service User (1) Professional (1)
Tudor Court	1	Relative of Service User
Rochdale Central Neighbourhood Team	1	Service User
East & Pennine Neighbourhood Team	1	Relative of Service User
Young Adults Team	1	Relative of Service User

"My wife was assessed yesterday by an Occupational Therapist. She was the nicest person and most helpful person we've ever had interacted with in adult social care. She was keen to listen, offer solutions and support which is the first time this has happened. She is a credit to the authority and to adult social care."

Compliment for OT Team

I would like to say a very big Thank You to all the STARS Team. Once again you looked after my husband after his stay in hospital. He could not have been cared for better. He was looked after professionally with care, kindness and such devotion as if he was a friend! His dignity was restored! You even walked through the deep snow in order to make sure all was well! You really are 'STARS'! with our best wishes to you all and many, many thanks."

Compliment for STARS Team

“Further to our discussion on Tuesday, I write to again express appreciation for the high quality of rehabilitative care provided to my mother during the period of time she was in your charge. The care provided has exceeded my greatest expectations.”

Compliment for Tudor Court

*“Thank you so much for all your help today, you have been AMAZING!
Thank you for all your understanding, patience, help & most of all respect for my father, (& my mum & I), not just for listening, but for hearing what we were saying to you regarding our concerns & needs in getting my dad home.”*

Compliment for Transfer of Care Team

“Service user’s mother made some very complimentary comments about the Social Worker saying he is marvellous, goes above and beyond his role. He has really helped them out and she has been singing his praises to everyone.”

Compliment for Young Adults Team

“Could not wish for any better care than I have received from these ladies, they are caring, considerate, dedicated and a credit to their profession. Can't recommend them enough. Thank you.”

Compliment for STARS Plus 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 & Social Care 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 11 new complaints were received by Children's Services in the first half of 2018-19, all of which were dealt with under the statutory Children's Social Care complaints procedure at stage one. In addition, 2 complaints were considered at stage two.

As can be seen below and from the graphs in appendix 2, fewer complaints were received in the second quarter. The number of complaints dealt with under the

Appendix 1

statutory procedure has reduced for three consecutive quarters, with 14 complaints being received in quarter four, 7 complaints received in quarter one and 4 complaints received in quarter two. Where possible concerns are resolved by the service informally without progressing to a formal complaint, which is beneficial to the complainant and contributes to the reduction in the number of formal complaints being received.

The types of complaints received

7 new complaints were received during the first quarter

7 new complaints were considered at stage one

4 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Regulation 24 assessment process
- 1 Lack of communication re contact arrangements
- 1 Lack of information re Trust Fund for parent of child in care
- 1 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) application (joint complaint with Adult Social Care)

3 complaints were not upheld.

2 complaints were received at stage two

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- Response to various concerns raised by foster carers relating to contact issues and support provided by the service.

1 complaint was not upheld.

4 new complaints were received during the second quarter

4 new complaints were considered at stage one

2 complaints were upheld:

- 1 Delay in reallocation of Social Worker to support child with additional needs
- 1 Delay in completing assessment & comment made by Social Worker

2 complaints were partially upheld:

- 1 Management of allegation against foster carer
- 1 Concerns from young person regarding former foster placement

Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned

First Quarter

In response to the complaint regarding the Regulation 24 assessment process an apology was given for a delay from when the process was initiated to when a written response was provided. Clarification on the process and outcome of the assessment was provided.

Appendix 1

Following a complaint regarding communication around contact arrangements, future contact dates will be set in advance and communicated to the parent. In addition a re-assessment of contact was undertaken as previously agreed.

As a result of the complaint regarding the DFG process, more detailed written information about the process and the options for applicants to receive funding for alternative schemes will be made available online and at the point of initial enquiry. This will ensure that applicants are clear from the outset how long the process is and what is involved.

Second Quarter

An apology was given for a delay in the allocation of a permanent Social Worker for a child with additional needs. The service was in the process of recruiting new members of staff, and looked to source an agency social worker in the interim.

In response to a complaint regarding a delay in completion of an assessment and comments made by a Social Worker, an apology was given and a new timescale agreed for the assessment to be completed. The inappropriate comments made by the Social Worker were addressed by the Practice Manager.

Following a complaint regarding management of an allegation against a foster carer, practice issues were identified and raised with all Supervising Social Workers. The Fostering Service also reviewed its policy and procedures in relation to allegation management.

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.

All 11 of the complaints received during the first and second quarters were dealt with under the statutory Social Care complaints procedure at stage one, 6 of which were responded to within the statutory timescale. One of the complaints dealt with outside of the statutory timescale was responded to within an extended timescale agreed with the complainant.

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

Appendix 1

A letter of complaint was received by the service from a young person in care and was allocated to a Practice Manager for investigation. The letter was also passed to the Customer Feedback Team to be registered as a formal complaint and an acknowledgement letter was sent to the young person.

The Practice Manager met with the young person to discuss and clarify their concerns and explain the complaints process. A full investigation was undertaken into the points raised, which included meeting with the young person's previous foster carers and reviewing information recorded on the case file.

On completion of the investigation a written response was provided to the young person which addressed each of the concerns raised. Not all points of complaint were upheld, giving an overall finding of the complaint being partially upheld. The Investigating Officer also offered to discuss any points in the response with the young person if they wished to do so. The complaint was resolved at this stage.

The young person's views and feelings were taken into account and the learning from the complaint was shared with managers within the service.

Compliments

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. 11 compliments were recorded for Children's Social Care Services during the first half of 2018-19, a breakdown and examples of which can be found below.

Team/Service Area	No.	Compliment received from
Cared for Children	5	Foster Carer (2) Young person (1) Professional (1) Guardian (1)
First Response Team	3	Professional (2) Parent (1)
SEN Team	1	Parents
Safeguarding	1	Professional
Occupational Therapy	1	Parent

"I like my social worker and I would trust her with anything really. And as well she has a variety of things to tell me in life and for the future. She is doing well with her job and is one of the best social workers I have ever had. And as well whenever she comes to our house I like to tell her my favourite things and chat with her. And she tells me about my mum and sister and that everything is OK."

Compliment from young person for Cared 4 Children Team

"Good news. We had our follow up appointment today. According to the CT scans/Xrays, it looks like the surgery was a success!!Thanks for all your help and guidance."

Compliment for Occupational Therapy Team

Appendix 1

I would like to begin by saying how grateful we are to have X as our child's Social Worker..... She is kind, considerate, insightful, understanding, has great empathy, funny, clever, has true insight and has the child's best interest at heart but can find an even balance to suit all parties involved.....I conclude by saying that it is our absolute pleasure and a privilege working with her.

Compliment for Cared 4 Children Team

"We just wanted to thank you for all the work you do trying to help children with disabilities or extra needs....from experience we know that services for disabled children at school are a fight to get and it isn't fair, but we know you do all you can in the situation we all find ourselves in. You must have put up with a lot of grief from parents when the problems they are facing are not your fault so thank you."

Compliment for SEN Team

"I would just like to share with you how wonderful the social worker was with the children in her care this morning. She came into school to do some direct work with the children and the way in which she questioned and supported the children was incredibly skilful. She worked tirelessly for almost 2 hours in order to ensure that she fully understood what the children were saying to her."

Compliment for First Response Team

"Just wanted to say a big thank you for being such a professional social worker, it has been a privilege working with somebody who is willing to go the extra mile for the children in our care. We want to wish you every success in the future and we will truly miss you.

Compliment for Cared 4 Children Team