

## **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.

19 new complaints were received by Adult Care Services during the second half of 2019-20. Details of these complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

### **The types of complaints received**

#### **8 new complaints were received during the third quarter**

2 complaints were upheld:

- Concerns regarding outcome of safeguarding review and insufficient communication with family.
- Standard of care provided to service user by Care Agency was not in accordance with agreed care package.

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- Concerns regarding assessment and support process for service user and disputed invoice.

5 complaints were not upheld.

#### **11 new complaints were received during the fourth quarter**

4 complaints were partially upheld:

- Concerns regarding reassessment of service user and possible reduction in allocated budget.
- Response time for Careline service.
- Timing of service user's discharge from care home.
- Lack of communication regarding service user's discharge from hospital.

6 complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint is still ongoing.

### **Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned**

#### Third Quarter

In response to the complaint relating to the outcome of safeguarding review and insufficient communication with family a number of actions were taken including:

- Apology given that regular contact was not maintained with the family during the safeguarding investigation and that a closure letter was not sent.
- Changes have been made to develop the way in which Adult Care responds to safeguarding concerns and how quality of care is monitored within care homes.
- Each care home within Pennine Locality now has a link worker who visits and makes contact with the care home on a regular basis. This has promoted the communication between Rochdale Adult Care and the care homes in the locality and has allowed the service to identify and respond proactively to any areas of concern.
- Rochdale's safeguarding policy has been updated, emphasising individual outcomes and family involvement. The safeguarding closure process has also been developed, which highlights the importance of closure discussions and meetings that are followed up with a closure letter to all parties involved in the safeguarding enquiry.

Following the complaint regarding the standard of care being provided by a Care Agency, a meeting was arranged with the care providers to discuss contract arrangements and issues that had been raised and the Regional Manager advised there would be more managerial oversight. The Manager also agreed to attend monthly implementation meetings with Adult Care and the Commissioning team to monitor the performance and standards of care. Adult Care will continue to work with service providers to promote communication and highlight any changes to a person's care needs or when an early review is required.

Further to the partially upheld complaint regarding the assessment and support process the following actions were taken:

- The protocol for sending correspondence relating to discharge from hospital will be reviewed to ensure that relevant information is provided.
- It is now a requirement that all individuals who move to residential care via the Discharge to Assess pathway, Short Term Care or permanent arrangements, receive a NHS Continuing Health Care checklist. This is checked by the line manager who is approving the support plan to ensure that NHS Continuing Health Care eligibility is explored at the point of assessment.

### Fourth Quarter

In response to the complaint regarding a reassessment of a service user and possible reduction in allocated budget, an explanation was provided that a reassessment had been started however this was not completed and was now out of date. There was no plan at the present time to re-assess the service user.

Following the complaint regarding the response time for the Careline Service, the provider responded as per the contract with them. However the Investigating Officer concluded that the information on the website and provided to service users / families is not detailed enough. The following actions were taken as a result:

- Information on the website will be updated
- A more detailed leaflet is being produced
- An improved welcome pack will be provided to new customers in the future.
- An Assistive Technology Officer to visit the service user to check the Careline equipment & reassure the service user about the service.

The Investigating Officer also offered to meet with the complainant and service user to understand more about the incident and how the service can be improved in the future with any further feedback they have.

An apology was given in response to the partially upheld complaint regarding a lack of communication about a service user's discharge from hospital. The issue was addressed as a practice issue by the Practice Manager.

### **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 second half of 2019-20 was 27.9 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 received via email to the Team Manager and was passed to the Customer Feedback Team to be recorded as a new formal complaint. The complaint related to the standard of care provided to the complainant's relative by a Care Agency which they felt was not in accordance with the agreed care package.

An acknowledgement was sent to the complainant and the Team Manager shared the complaint with the Commissioning Service to assist with the investigation with regards to the issues relating to the Care Agency.

The Team Manager contacted the complainant to discuss their concerns and a review of the service user's care package was agreed.

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An investigation was undertaken into the issues raised, which included reviewing a breakdown of the support hours provided and meeting with the Regional Manager for the Care Provider to discuss contract arrangements and the issues that had been raised. A number of actions were agreed to resolve the issues.

The investigation was completed within timescale and the overall finding was that the complaint was upheld. A response letter was sent to the complainant which explained the findings and agreed actions and included an apology for the issues experienced in relation to the service user's care package.

Details of the action taken as a result of this complaint 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.

<b>Team/Service Area</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Compliment received from</b>
STARS	14	Service User (8) Relative of Service User (6)
STARS Plus Team	2	Relative of Service User (2)
Occupational Therapy	1	Relative of Service User
East Neighbourhood Team	1	Professional
Central Neighbourhood Team	1	Relative of Service User
Business Support Team	1	Service User

*"To all the STARS ladies, thank you so much for looking after my mum these last two weeks with her personal hygiene, eating and her medication. My mum has come on even more especially with all your help and made her more independent. I will carry on with all your hard work and encourage and care for her the way you all did."*

#### **Compliment for STARS Team**

*"I just wanted to email and say a huge thank you for coming to see us last week"*

#### **Compliment for Central Neighbourhood Team**

*"I just wanted to thank you for looking after my dad. You are all brilliant and your help has been much appreciated."*

#### **Compliment for STARS Plus Team**

*"I appreciate so much the care & speed this has been dealt with. I had no idea initially what help could be offered, as I'd never heard of "our Rochdale" before. I sent a garbled email, with no idea what I was asking for or what was available, yet the officer somehow managed to pass me through to the people who can help. She was so patient, kind, helpful & she "listened", that, to me, is important. I've had experience in the past where people seem to have no patience for disabled people, we're a "drain on society" or "lazy" or invisible. Both officers showed compassion, understanding &*

## Appendix 1

*are helpful. I find people are very quick to complain, but not to compliment, so I guess I just want to say a massive Thankyou to them both, they are both amazing, & a credit to Rochdale Council.”*

### **Compliment for Business Support Officer**

*“On behalf of the service user and myself I would like to thank the team of carers who have provided over the last few weeks, such a caring and thoughtful level of care and attention. Always ready with a laugh to brighten the spirit they have been most uplifting in carrying out their duties. This has been our first experience of having carers and we could not have wished for a better team of STARS.”*

### **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 & 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. Advocacy Focus provide an advocacy service and complaints information 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 15 new complaints were received by Children's Services in the second half of 2019-20, 13 of which were dealt with under the statutory Children's Social Care complaints procedure and 2 complaints were dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Details of the complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

## **The types of complaints received**

### **10 new complaints were received during the third quarter**

#### 10 new complaints were considered at stage one

3 complaints were upheld:

- Information provided to foster carers regarding a 'Staying Put' agreement for a young person in their care.
- Complaint from grandparent regarding 'letterbox' contact and how contact with grandchild has been managed via the child's adoptive family.
- Inaccuracy in 'later life' letter for adopted child, and delay in the letter being received.

6 complaints were partially upheld:

- Complaint from carers regarding level of support and intervention from CSC to safeguard the children.
- Lack of communication regarding welfare of complainant's children.
- Delay in completion of adaptations to property for child with additional needs.
- Lack of support for complainant to have contact with their child and insufficient communication.
- Decision taken to change Social Worker allocated to the family.
- Complaint from childcare provider regarding the manner of a Local Authority Officer (Corporate complaint)

1 complaints was not upheld.

### **5 new complaints were received during the fourth quarter**

#### 5 new complaints were considered at stage one

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- Lack of support and communication with foster carers following allegation being received.

3 complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint is still ongoing (corporate complaint).

## **Examples of Action Taken and Lessons Learned**

### Third Quarter

Following the upheld complaint from a grandparent regarding contact with their adopted grandchild through the letterbox scheme, arrangements for all letterbox contact with the adoption agency were reviewed. In addition the service agreed to assist the complainant with completing this year's letterbox contact, reviewed the circumstances with a view to the possibility of reinstating letterbox contact, and ensured a consistent point of contact was provided for the complainant and the adoptive family.

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Following the complaint regarding an inaccuracy in the 'later life' letter for an adopted child and delay in the letter being received the Head of Service met with the complainant to discuss their concerns. An apology was given for the delay, a way forward was agreed in terms of the life story work and engagement with the birth mother.

A number of recommendations were implemented in response to the partially upheld complaint regarding the level of support provided to carers including:

- A copy of the original assessment was provided.
- A referral was made to the Post Order team in regards to a support plan being completed and a reassessment of the financial situation
- A life story book and later life letters to be completed to support the children with their understanding of their journey.
- An assessment to be completed of the children's therapeutic needs in order to secure the appropriate resources to assist them.

### Fourth Quarter

Following the partially upheld complaint regarding a perceived lack of support and communication with foster carers following an allegation being received, an apology was given that the complainant felt there had been confusion about the situation. The service acknowledged the level of complexity of the case, and as a result made the decision to transfer the case to an Advanced Practitioner.

### **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.

13 of the complaints received during the third and fourth quarters were dealt with under the statutory Social Care complaints procedure at stage one, 7 of which were responded to within the statutory timescale. 1 of the complaints dealt with outside of the statutory timescale required a more detailed investigation and the timescale was extended with the agreement of the complainant. The response was sent within the extended timescale agreed.

### **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

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A complaint was received via email to the Director of Children's Services from a foster carer. The complaint related to a lack of support and communication with the carers following an allegation being received.

The complaint was allocated to a Practice Manager for investigation and as the points of complaint cut across both fostering and field social work, a joint response was provided. A copy of the complaint was also passed to the Customer Feedback Team to be registered as a formal stage one complaint and an acknowledgement was sent to the complainant.

A full investigation was undertaken into the points raised, which included discussing the case with the Social Workers concerned and reviewing information held on the case records.

On completion of the investigation a full written response was provided which addressed each of the issues raised and reassured the complainant that their concerns had been fully considered. The majority of points of complaint were found to be not upheld, however, the Investigating Officer accepted that this was a very stressful time and apologised for the confusion about the situation for the family. It was acknowledged that this was a case with a level of complexity and as a result a decision was taken to transfer the case to an Advanced Practitioner. The overall finding was that the complaint was partially upheld.

When the response had been sent the Investigating Officer also contacted the complainant by telephone to discuss and explain the findings of the investigation.

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

### **Compliments**

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. 23 compliments were recorded for Children's Services during the second half of 2019-20, a breakdown and examples of which can be found below.

<b>Team/Service Area</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Compliment received from</b>
CP & Court Proceedings	6	Professional (5) Carers (1)
Fostering	4	Foster Carer (3) Professional (1)
Cared for Children	4	Young person (3) Parent (1)
First Response Team	2	Professional (2)
Occupational Therapy	2	Parent (2)
Youth Offending Service (YOS)	2	Professional (2)
EHCP Team	1	Parent
Business Support	1	Resident

RANS	1	Grandparent
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*“The gentleman was kind, polite and professional. This is the best person I have ever interacted with at the department of Children with Disability. All the information and help he furnished me with was good and satisfactory. This is a very compassionate person. I really appreciate all his effort to make my son and I comfortable.”*

**Compliment for Occupational Therapy Team**

*I just want to give some feedback on the officer’s work on this case. His assessment is excellent and when I have discussed the progress of it on the phone with him, he has provided lots of relevant information and analysis. Clearly he had a good working relationship with the person being assessed and a good understanding of all the factors that needed to be discussed and considered.*

**Compliment for Fostering Team**

*“It’s been lovely working with you and I think your one of the best social workers I’ve worked with while in Rochdale! Keep up the good work!”*

**Compliment for CP & Court Team**

*“This is from the bottom of the heart to thank you for everything you have done for me, I really appreciate it, really means a lot. I’m lucky to have people like you and Furness Road in my life. We must find time to stop and thank the people in my life which is you.”*

**Compliment from young person for Cared for Children Team**

*“The officer has taken on the role of teacher, mentor, advisor and friend to the whole family. She liaises with the teachers at their school, helping them to bring more accessibility to the curriculum which the boys badly need. She always shows positivity and understands the problems which they face, working in a way which encourages them to do their best whilst faced with their difficulties. I would like this e-mail to go on her record along with the thanks of the whole family. She has been a godsend.”*

**Compliment for Rochdale Additional Needs Service (RANS)**