

## **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.

27 new complaints were received by Adult Care Services during the second half of 2020-21. Details of these complaints and their outcomes can be found below.

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

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

1 complaint was upheld:

- Disagreement with payment contribution of 'Top Up' fees due to standard of care provided to service user whilst in care home.

8 complaints were partially upheld:

- Miscommunication regarding service user's 'Top Up' fees and client contribution.
- Concerns regarding policy for cash budget not to be used to pay family member living in the same household.
- Complaint relates to an outstanding invoice for personal budget care package for care services which service user did not receive.
- Standard of care provided to service user whilst in care home.

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- Lack of communication and management of debt recovery process regarding outstanding care charges.
- Concerns regarding arrangements in place by care provider to provide essentials for service user during pandemic restrictions.
- Management of service users care assessment and support package.
- Concerns that changes to service user's well-being and safety not reflected in the care plan.

8 complaints were not upheld.

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

1 complaint was upheld:

- Standard of service provided to service user by care home.

4 complaints were partially upheld:

- Social worker's handling of assessment process.
- Lack of communication / information regarding service users care charges.
- Concerns regarding content of assessment for service user and insufficient updates provided to family in respect of placement move to care home.
- Length of time service user was in care accommodation resulting in associated costs.

4 complaint was not upheld.

1 complaint is still ongoing.

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

#### Third Quarter

Further to the upheld complaint relating to the concerns raised about disagreement with payment contribution of 'Top Up' fees due to standard of care provided to service use the following actions were taken:

- Care Home developed information which could be provided to families when a person first moves in to ensure they have all of the relevant information available and that this is provided in a clear format to prevent any misunderstandings of this nature in the future.
- The Quality Assurance Team visited the care home to look at the areas of concerns raised in the complaint and any training needs were explored as part of the Team's input.
- Managers within the Pennine Locality to re-screen the priority of cases waiting for allocation on a weekly basis.
- Following considering of the complaint, the Investigation Officer has requested for an adjustment with regards to the outstanding care charges to reflect the concerns raised.

Following the complaint regarding the outstanding invoice for personal budget care package, it was confirmed that Adult Care had not been informed the personal assistant support had ended resulting in cash budgets still being sent. It was identified there had been a clerical error relating to the final audit and invoice in applying the end date of the cash budget. This was discussed with the officer in question and the

Team Leader reviewed the process within the team to identify any improvements, therefore, complaint is partially upheld.

An apology was given in response to the complaint relating to lack of communication regarding the debt recovery process. The Service has acknowledged there was a delay in informing the complainant the service user's benefit payments had been frozen and apologised to the complainant for not contacting them sooner.

### Fourth Quarter

Following the upheld complaint regarding standard of service provided to service user by the care home, the Quality Assurance Team undertook visits to the care home to complete audits and spot checks as part of the service's continuous monitoring of care homes within the Rochdale Borough. Any further concerns which may have been identified would be progressed accordingly via a Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry or a Multi-Agency Concerns meetings where appropriate. The Service arranged for the short term care charges to be waived due to the concerns that had been identified.

As a result of the complaint relating to handling of the assessment process a review of the case was conducted with the relevant practitioner to identify any learning opportunities for clearer communication. This was also raised with managers and staff for further reflection in an attempt to ensure change and improve practice and people's experiences when using Adult Care Services.

Further to the partially upheld complaint regarding insufficient updates provided to the family in respect of placement move to care home, the concerns were discussed with the Locality Team to remind staff to maintain regular contact with families during placement moves.

### **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 2020-21 was 21.5 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 complaint was received by the Service from an Advocate of a service user. The concerns related to the service user receiving invoices for care services which were no longer being provided. An acknowledgement was sent to the complainant and the complaint was passed to the Head of Service to be allocated for investigation.

The Head of Service allocated this to the Team Manager for investigation and the Team Manager corresponded with the Advocate to confirm the service user's points of complaint and expected outcomes.

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 timescale, and the overall finding was that the complaint was partially upheld.

A report was produced detailing the findings of the investigation and the actions taken as a result of the complaint. A copy of the report was provided to the complainant together with a covering letter which included an apology for the points of complaint that were upheld. The complainant was thanked for raising the issues and providing the opportunity for recommendations within the administration process for personal budgets to be made for service improvement.

### **Compliments**

Compliments received from service users are also recorded and shared with staff. A total of 28 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	12	Service User (8) Relative of Service User (4)
Assessment & Support Planning	7	Relative of Service User (6) Professional (1)
Home Improvement Agency	2	Service User
West Locality Team	2	Professional
Occupational Therapy	1	Relative of Service User
Central Locality Team	1	Relative of Service User
East Locality Team	1	Service User
Heywood Locality Team	1	Relative of Service User
Pennine Locality Team	1	Service User

*"I wanted to send you a card to say thank you for your wonderful care and support to us all. You were so helpful to us as I felt we were sinking at times. You gave me a lot of knowledge, confidence and understanding. In a word - Angel."*

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

*"I have had a shower room put in my flat and I would like to say everyone on the team were so professional, kind, and considerate. They went above and beyond to put me at ease from start to finish. Well done lads."*

#### **Home Improvement Agency**

*I would like to make sure that the Assessment and Support Planner from the Adult Care Team is commended, as in my opinion she has gone above and beyond in the*

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*help that she gave me and my daughter. She is a credit to the team and a wonderful human being. I find it very difficult to talk with strangers but she was so pleasant, and friendly I soon felt as though I had known her for years, she put me at almost complete ease. Please tell her that her efforts were sincerely appreciated.”*

### **Compliment for Assessment & Support Planning Team**

*“A big thank you for all your help. You have been a life line for me and good company.”*

### **Compliment for STARS Team**

*“I would like to thank the Social Worker for his hard work in supporting me into an independent living supported tenancy.”*

### **Compliment for Pennine Locality Team**

*“Recently a member of your Team engaged with us over an issue for re-assessing X for his bathing slings. The Occupational Therapist was very professional in her approach towards our situation, arranged to visit at a convenient time to suit ourselves, carried out her assessment, we were very comfortable in her company and within several days the slings were with us, there was another request the Occupational Therapist dealt with for us, which was to have removed a ceiling track hoist from our dining room of which X no longer uses, the timescale from her initial involvement to the hoist being removed was approximately 2 weeks, fantastic. Praise were it is due, the Occupational Therapist is an asset to your Team.”*

### **Compliment for Occupational Therapy 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 19 new complaints were received by Children's Services in the second half of 2020-21, all of which were dealt with under the statutory Children's Social Care complaints procedure.

Where possible concerns are resolved by the service informally without progressing to a formal complaint, which is beneficial to the complainant and contributes to a reduction in the number of formal complaints being received.

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

## **The types of complaints received**

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

6 new complaints were considered at stage one

1 complaint was upheld:

- Social Worker's handling of complainant's confidential information.

2 complaints were partially upheld:

- Actions of Children's Social Care / Social Worker when working with the family with regards to child protection procedures.
- Lack of support from Social Worker and handling of complainant's son's personal information.

3 complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint was dealt with direct at stage 2 due to the complexity of the case, however, the complaint was later withdrawn.

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

12 new complaints were considered at stage one

5 complaints were partially upheld:

- Delay in family contact sessions being arranged and concerns regarding support from foster carers.
- Sharing of information held by the Early Help and Schools team with the family and school.
- Decision for young person to move into full time foster care.
- Lack of care and support from residential placement 'Our Place'.
- Lack of communication / support for looking after grandchild and decision by Children's; Social Care to close the case.

6 complaints were not upheld.

1 complaint is currently on hold as the Head of Service has been in correspondence with the complainant with a view to arranging a meeting date to discuss the concerns.

1 complaint was received at stage two

1 complaint was partially upheld:

- Lack of care and support from residential placement from 'Our Place'.

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

Third Quarter

As a result of the complaint relating to handling confidential information, this was investigated appropriately and necessary action was taken. The outcome was shared with colleagues within the Service to highlight the impact this can have from both individuals and procedural elements.

An apology was given in response to an unfair statement made by the Service with regards to the decision for the children to have contact with their parent as part of the child protection process.

Following the complaint regarding the handling of the young person's personal information it was established from the investigation there had been a data breach. The social worker updated their data protection training and lessons from this were shared with other social workers to highlight that they should be taking more care when sending out information via the postal route.

### Fourth Quarter

Following the concerns raised regarding support from foster carers, it had been acknowledged that some health appointments had been missed when the children were in foster care. This was due to the appointment letters being sent to the parent's address rather than the address of the foster carer's. The Service have apologised for this and the issue was rectified at the time.

Further to the complaint relating to lack of communication / support to the complainant looking after grandchild, the Practice Manager arranged a Child in Need meeting to discuss the plan for the young person and multiagency decision around threshold for continued involvement. Practice Manager has also spoken with the Social Worker to ensure regular face to face home visits are completed whilst the case is open to Children's Social Care.

As a result of the partially upheld complaint for the 'Our Place' placement, the Practice Manager has arranged for the team to take part in a training session in Autism awareness, supporting young people with a diagnosis of Autism and enabling staff to communicate effectively with young people. Individual staff members will be supported through supervision to review outreach support and its effectiveness in addition to the care planning process with the allocated social worker.

### **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.

19 of the complaints received during the third and fourth quarters were dealt with under the statutory Social Care complaints procedure at stage one, 11 of which were responded to within the statutory timescale and 1 complaint was withdrawn.

### **Complaint Example**

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

#### Stage one complaint

A complaint was received by the Customer Feedback Team via email. The complaint was from a parent and related to a lack of support from the Social Worker and handling of complainant's son's personal information.

The complaint was registered at stage one of the statutory complaints procedure and was allocated to a Practice Manager for investigation. An acknowledgement was sent to the complainant.

The Practice Manager spoke with the complainant to discuss the concerns raised and the complainant provided a more detailed written version of the complaint. The Practice Manager had previously spoken with the complainant regarding similar issues, however, the complainant raised further concerns within their formal complaint.

A full investigation was undertaken including discussing the case with the Social Worker and the Head of Service. The findings of the investigation were that the Social Worker had acted appropriately in supporting the family, however, it was confirmed there had been a data breach where information had been shared regarding the young person. The Social Worker updated their data protection training and lessons from this were shared with other social workers to highlight that extra care needs to be taken when sending information.

The Practice Manager arranged for the case to be allocated to a new Social Worker, as per the complainant's request. The complaint was found to be partially upheld and was resolved at stage one.

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. 28 compliments were recorded for Children's Social Care Services during the second half of 2020-21, a breakdown and examples of which can be found below.

Team/Service Area	No.	Compliment received from
Child Protection & Court Team	19	Professional (15) Parent (4)
First Response Team	3	Professional (2) Grandparent (1)

Cared for Children	1	Parent
Family Time Facilitator	1	Foster Carer
Residential Childcare Worker - 'Our Place'	1	Parent
Occupational Therapist – Children with Disabilities	1	Parent
Assessment & Review Officer – Children with Disabilities	1	Grandparent
Youth Service	1	Foster Carer

*“I just wanted to take a moment to say a massive well done to the Social Worker for the work she has completed in regards to the above young person it is clear from the report and professional feedback that the Social Worker has gone above and beyond to support this parent, It was very refreshing for a parent to be able to verbalise in the child’s Cared for review how a social worker has supported and affected change in her life. This parent was able to pin point the turning point in regards to the direct work the Social Worker has completed with her in which she spoke openly about how this work has impacted on her understanding of why CSC became involve.”*

**Compliment for Child Protection & Court Team**

*“Just want to feed back in what a great Practice Manager Z is. She really does understand X’s context and risk. In every case I’ve been involved with her and her team, they’re forward thinking and quick to respond. Great discussions and actions always come from their strategy meetings. They often contact me and seek advice early on, so we can work together. I really appreciate all the work they put in, just want that to reach the right person.”*

**Compliment for First Response Team**

*“It’s been a pleasure working with you and all the professionals and just wanted to say big thank you for all the support you’ve given to me and X.”*

**Compliment for Child Protection & Court Team**

*“I honestly can’t praise Youth Services in Rochdale enough. Specifically, the two support workers who run Milnrow Youth Club have been beyond fantastic right through the pandemic and I feel they have been a lifeline for many families who have children and young people with additional need.*

*From lockdown in March 2020, when everybody was isolated, they kept in touch and were doing regular welfare phone calls, then calls to the front door, later doing visits to the garden and when they couldn’t come in the garden, they were dropping off activities for us. I feel they were one of the first services to recognise the emotional impact of the pandemic on young people with additional needs and very early on began opening up services, initially taking X and his friend for walks and then opening the youth club just for two to three young people initially. I feel this went above and beyond in putting themselves out there and potentially at risk themselves to support the welfare of young people. I am more than happy for you to use my comments within your feedback too - they really do deserve praise.*

**Compliment for Youth Service**

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*"I am writing this letter to inform you how wonderful and outstanding the Social Worker has been while working on our case as a whole we are very grateful and happy for her time and support she has given us. She has supported us throughout this pandemic while dealing with our case and as a family we personally would like to say a massive thank you for guiding us in the right direction and for pushing us to be a better family and for also helping us with our children. I wouldn't ask for anyone else and also our children think highly of the Social Worker and they look forward to her visits. So on that note thank you to all of you involved."*

### **Compliment for Cared for Children**

*"We've met a lot of social workers/adoption workers over the last 3 and half years and in our opinion your one of the best. Kind, compassionate and made us feel listened to, which as a foster carer that rarely happens, so thank you!"*

### **Compliment for Family Time Facilitator**