



Complaints, Compliments and Representations Report 1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017

Hartlepool Borough Council
Adult and Community Based Services
Children's and Joint Commissioning Services



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1. Introduction

Welcome to Hartlepool Borough Council's Child and Adult Services Department's Complaints, Compliments and Representations Annual Report. The report covers statutory complaints for adult services, children's services and public health for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The report outlines:

- Details of the complaints and compliments received over the reporting period;
- Actions implemented, any lessons learned and resulting improvements following enquiry into complaints;
- Performance in relation to handling of complaints.

2. Background

Complaints and compliments are valued as an important source of feedback on the quality of services. Each complaint is investigated and, where appropriate, redress made. Equally important is the work to learn lessons to prevent a repeat of failure in service quality and continually improve services.

2.1. What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about a service that is being delivered, or the failure to deliver a service. The Local Government Ombudsman defines a complaint as *"an expression of dissatisfaction about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or on its behalf by a contractor or partner) that requires a response."*

A complaint can be made in person, in writing, by telephone or email or through the council's website. It can be made at any office. Every effort is made to assist people in making their complaint and any member of staff can take a complaint.

2.2. Who can complain?

A complaint can be made by:

- A person who uses services
- A carer on their own behalf
- Someone who has been refused a service for which they think they are eligible
- The representative of someone who uses services or a carer acting on their behalf. This could be with the consent of the service user or carer or in the case of someone who does not have the capacity to give consent, where they are seen to be acting in the best interests of that person.
- Anyone who is or is likely to be affected by the actions, decisions or omissions of the service that is subject to a complaint.

3. Child and Adult Services Complaints Frameworks

Hartlepool Borough Council's Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Public Health complaint handling is derived from separate statutory complaint procedures. Complaints which fall outside of statutory complaint regulations are handled under the corporate complaints procedure. The complaints function for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Children's Services sits within the Department's Standards, Engagement and Development Team under the management of the Principal Social Worker. The remit of the Complaints Manager's function is:

- Managing, developing and administering the complaints procedures.
- Providing assistance and advice to those who wish to complain.
- Overseeing the investigation of complaints that cannot be managed at source.
- Supporting and training staff.
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity.

The framework covers situations where there is dissatisfaction about actions, decisions or apparent failings of services within the department.

3.1. Adult Social Care Complaints Framework

A single level integrated complaints process was introduced on 1 April 2009 with the implementation of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

These regulations place a duty on NHS bodies and adult social care organisations to coordinate handling of complaints and to advise and support complainants through the procedure.

A joint protocol for the handling of complaints that span more than one health or social care organisation had been developed to ensure a comprehensive response is provided to complaints that cross more than one organisation.

The complaints procedure aims to be as accessible as possible. The policy is flexible to ensure that the needs of the complainant are paramount and allows the Department and the complainant to agree on the best way to reach a satisfactory outcome. The full detail of the complaints procedure is available on the council's website. On receipt of a complaint the level of impact is determined and complaints screened according to their content as being red (high impact), amber (moderate impact) or green (low impact). The process for handling the complaint is dependent on the impact.

3.1.1. Timescales for the resolution of complaints

Staff will always try to resolve problems or concerns before they escalate into complaints and this ensures that, wherever possible, complaints are kept to a minimum.

Since the introduction of the 2009 regulations the only mandatory timescale is that the complainant receives an acknowledgement within 3 working days. The legislation allows for a maximum 6 month timescale to investigate and respond to a complaint. This offers a more flexible approach to the amount of time in which complaints should be dealt with. In our policy, we aim for even the most complex of complaints to be completed within 65 working days. If timescales cannot be met, a new timescale should be discussed with the complainant. Locally, timescales have been introduced for amber and green complaints of 40 and 20 working days respectively.

There is a time limit of 12 months from when the matter being complained about occurred to when a complaint may be made. After this time, a complaint will not normally be considered. However, the 12 month time limit does not apply where the local authority is satisfied that the complainant had good reasons for not making the complaint within that time and where it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

3.2. Children's Social Care complaints framework

The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 came into force from 1 September 2006. This procedure is for all representations received from children and young people, their parents, foster carers or other qualifying adults about social care services provided or commissioned by children's social care. The full detail of the complaints procedure is available on the Council's website.

The Regulations are now fully embedded into the children's social care complaints system and information derived from complaints is included in the annual monitoring of children's social care and reported to Ofsted.

A child, young people or their families/carers who make a representation are offered the services of an Advocate to enable their views to be effectively promoted.

There are three stages to the procedure.

» Stage 1

Local Resolution: The aim of stage 1 is to sort out the matter as quickly as possible. The complaint will be allocated to a manager who will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint. Stage 1 of the complaints procedure should be completed within 10 working days but if there are a number of issues to look into, this can be extended up to 20 working days. The complainant will receive a response to the complaint in writing.

» Stage 2

Investigation: This part of the procedure is used when the complainant remains unhappy after their complaint has been responded to at Stage 1 or the complaint is sufficiently serious enough to warrant a more formal investigation. Investigations are conducted by an Investigating Officer who must be independent of the service area being complained about. An Independent Person is also appointed at Stage 2. This is a statutory role and the Independent Person (who is external to the council) works alongside the Investigating Officer with a remit to ensure that the process is open, transparent and fair.

Reports completed by the Investigating Officer and Independent Person are submitted to an Adjudicating Officer (usually the Assistant Director).

The investigation and adjudication process should be concluded within 65 working days.

» Stage 3

Independent Complaint Review Panel: If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, they may request that the issues are taken to a Complaint Review Panel (Stage 3). The Panel consists of an Independent Chair and two independent panel members. The Panel considers the complaint and can make recommendations to the Director of Child and Adult Services within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.

The Director is required to make a formal response to any findings and recommendations of the Review Panel within 15 working days of receiving the Panel's report.

3.3. Public Health Complaints

When complaints are received into the department relating to a public health function the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure provides the framework for resolution.

Where a person is dissatisfied with a public health function they have received, they have a right to complain. The complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days. The complaint would usually be investigated by a senior officer. The regulations allow a maximum of 6 months to respond to a complaint (NHS Bodies and Local Authorities Partnership Arrangements, Care Trust, Public Health and Local Healthwatch Regulations 2012) but the person allocated to the investigate the complaint will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible.

3.4. Corporate complaints

Where complaints are received in to the Department that do not come under the jurisdiction of the statutory social care or public health complaints procedures, the Corporate Complaints Procedure provides the framework for resolution. A mechanism exists for those complaints which are considered by the Department under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure to be reported via corporate arrangements within the Chief Executive's Department. Complaints in relation to schools are dealt with by individual schools and their governing bodies. Local authorities have no legal obligation to investigate the substance of a complaint regarding an individual child and have no powers of direction in this regard.

» Pre-formal Complaint Stage

An initial attempt should be made to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible. A complaint at this stage should be responded to within 5 working days.

» Formal Complaint

Where a person remains dissatisfied with a service they have received, they have a right to proceed to a formal complaint. The complaint should be completed within 20 working days.

3.5. Referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If, at the end of the relevant complaints procedure, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which their complaint has been handled under any of the procedures, they may ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) to investigate their complaint. Complainants may also approach the LGSCO directly without accessing the complaints process. In these cases it is usual for the LGSCO to refer them back to the council for their complaint to be examined through the relevant complaints process before they intervene.

4. Principles and outcomes

Good handling of complaints and representations involves:

- Keeping the complainant at the centre of the complaints process;
- Being open and accountable;
- Responding to complainants in a way that is fair;
- Being committed to try to get things right when they go wrong;
- Seeking to continually improve services.

Statutory complaints are underpinned by the following:

- A procedure that aims to be fair, clear, robust and accessible;
- Support being available to those wishing to make a complaint;

- Timely resolution following enquiry into complaints/representations;
- Lessons learnt following complaints and services improved;
- Monitoring being used as a means of improving performance.

5. Public information

Information about the complaints and representations framework is accessible via the council's public access points and also the Council's website. Carers and service users of children's and adults social care are provided with factsheets explaining the procedure when they take up a new service and when care plans are agreed and reviewed.

Information in other formats such as large print or Braille or translation in languages other than English are made available upon request.

6. Summary of representations

6.1. Adult Social Care

6.1.1. Compliments

Compliments are generally recognised to be an indicator of good outcomes for service user and carers. They also serve to provide wider lessons regarding the quality of services.

During 2016/17, 94 compliments have been received relating to Adult Social Care. These range from an expression of thanks and appreciation in the form of a thank-you card to written letters where the benefit of social work or care interventions can be seen to have improved a person's quality of life. Appendix 1 provides some examples of compliments received during the period.

6.1.2. Complaints received in 2016/17

A total of 19 complaints were received. One complaint, which was suspended pending the conclusion of the safeguarding adult process, has been carried forward for investigation in 2017/18. The number of complaints received has increased by 3 from last year.

Of the 18 complaints investigated in 2016/17, 17 have concluded local statutory complaints processes and one remains ongoing. To date, one complainant, from the 17 complaints that have concluded local statutory complaint processes, has approached the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) with their complaint.

There were no complaints carried forward from 2015/16.

Complaints that were either partly upheld or upheld are outlined in Appendix 2.

6.1.3. Client groups

Adult Social Care			
Client group	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Older Persons	5	6	4
Learning Disabilities	1	1	1
Physical Disabilities and Sensory Loss	3	1	2
Adult Mental Health (Integrated Service) or AMHP function	1	1	4
Contracted Services	7	7	6
Carers	2	0	0
Total number of complaints received	19	16	17

Complaints were received from 8 males and 11 females.

Complaints which are considered either complex or have a number of elements are usually investigated by someone independent of the council. In 2016/17, Independent Investigating Officers were appointed to 10 of the 19 complaints received. The remaining 9 complaints were investigated and responded to internally.

6.1.4. Advocacy services

Of the 19 complaints received, one of the complainants chose to have an advocate assist them with their complaint. However, another complainant approached an advocacy service about how they made a complaint but chose to submit their complaint to the council without the support of the advocacy service to do so.

6.1.5. Timescales and the Grading of Complaints

There is a maximum 6 month statutory timescale for investigating and responding to a complaint relating to adult social care. However, the overall aim is to respond to complaints in a timely manner. The likely timescales for investigation are discussed with the complainant at the outset of a complaint investigation and updates on progress of the investigation are provided by the Investigating Officer at regular intervals. There are a range of factors that can impact upon timescales such as:

- Whether the complaint has been considered low, moderate or high impact;
- The number of points of complaint for investigation;
- The availability of the complainant and other key people the Investigating Officer needs to interview;
- The time taken to conduct interviews with key people which can range from complaint to complaint;

- Seeking appropriate consent for obtaining information from partner agencies and awaiting the necessary information to inform the complaint investigation;
- Reading case files and records and obtaining copies of local policies and procedures;
- Consideration all available information and the drafting of a complaint investigation report;
- Carrying out factual accuracy checks on the draft report and providing feedback to the complainant before finalising and submitting the final report.

6.1.6. Complaints carried forward to 2017/18

Of the 19 complaints received, 2 complaints have been carried forward to 2017/18. These are the one complaint that remained under investigation as at 31 March 2017 as well as the one complaint where the safeguarding adult process must conclude before the complaint can be investigated.

6.1.7. Complaints considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2016/17

There was one complainant who approached the LGSCO for consideration of their complaint. The LGSCO decided that *“The Ombudsman will not investigate this complaint about the Council’s actions following allegations the complainant’s mother made about him. This is because there is no evidence of fault in the Council’s actions and we cannot achieve the complainant’s desired outcomes.”*

6.2. Children’s Social Care

6.2.1. Compliments

Compliments are generally recognised to be an indicator of good outcomes for service user and carers. They also serve to provide wider lessons regarding the quality of services.

During 2016/17, 6 compliments have been received relating to children’s social care. These range from an expression of thanks and appreciation in the form of a thank-you card to written communication. In addition to this, verbal expressions of thanks and appreciation were received from families who have participated in providing feedback about newly qualified social workers and during practice week engagement. Appendix 1 provides some examples of compliments received during the period.

6.2.2. Complaints received in 2016/17

A total of 18 complaints were received. Of these, one complainant withdrew their complaint and 2 complainants, despite contact being made to arrange to meet to discuss their complaints, failed to engage with the process leaving 15 complaints investigated. The number of complaints received has decreased by 8

from last year. Complaints that were either partly upheld or upheld are outlined in Appendix 2.

There were no complaints received from children or young persons. All complaints received in 2016/17 were received from parents or carers.

Of the 15 complaints investigated, 13 have been concluded and the 2 remaining complaints have been carried forward to 2017/18. Of these:

- 14 of the 15 complaints were responded to at Stage 1 in the first instance. Of these 14 complaints:
 - 12 complaints were resolved at Stage 1; and
 - 2 complaints progressed to Stage 2 where one remains ongoing and the other has been resolved following the conclusion of Stage 2.
- One of the 15 complaints proceeded directly to Stage 2 without being first considered at Stage 1. The Council exercised its discretion to accept for investigation outside of the 12 month statutory time limit for making a complaint. The Council has the discretion to investigate complaints outside of time limits if (a) it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and efficiently; and (b) it was unreasonable to have expected the complainant to have made the complaint earlier.

There were 2 complaints from 2015/16 that were carried forward to 2016/17. Both of these complaints concluded following consideration at Stage 2.

There was one complaint, in addition to the 18 complaints received, that the Council decided not to investigate. The Council decided that the complainant could have raised the concerns in 2013 (or in 2014 when the complainant raised other complaints) and there were no exceptional circumstances to justify investigating it outside of the statutory time limit for making a complaint. The complainant was referred to the LGO who exercised their discretion to investigate the complaint.

6.2.3. Advocacy services

Of the 15 complaints investigated, none of the complainants chose to be represented by an advocate or someone else acting on their behalf.

6.2.4. Complaints considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2016/17

There were 2 complainants who approached the LGSCO in 2016/17 for consideration of their complaint. In addition to these, the LGSCO concluded their investigation into one complaint, reported in the 2015/16 annual report, which was carried forward to 2016/17.

- In the case of the complaint that the LGSCO investigated in 2016/17, which related to a complaint received by the Council in 2014/15, the LGSCO decided that *“The Council was not at fault in the way it responded to recommendations arising from the complainant’s children’s social care complaint.”*

- In the case of the complaint where the complainant approached the LGSCO following the Council's decision that there were no exceptional circumstances to investigate the complaint outside of the statutory time limit to make a complaint, the LGSCO decided that *"There is no evidence of fault on the part of the Council. The records show the arrangement for X to live with Mrs A was a private family arrangement."*
- In the case of a complaint, where the Council first considered the complaint at Stage 1 in 2015/16 but agreement could not be reached with the complainant regarding points of complaint for investigation at Stage 2, the complainant approached the LGSCO in 2016/17. The LGSCO decided that *"The Council acted without fault as it was prepared to investigate Mr X's complaint at the second stage of the statutory complaints process for children"*.

6.2.5. Complaints carried forward to 2017/18

Of the 15 complaints investigated in 2016/17, 2 complaints remain subject to investigation at Stage 2 and will be carried forward to 2017/18.

6.3. Public Health

There were no complaints received in relation to Public Health. Statistical comparisons were made with regional Local Authorities which confirmed the number of complaints received in this area were extremely low or non-existent.

7. Lessons learned

Lessons learned are an important aspect of the complaints framework. Appendix 2 outlines the context of some improvements that have been put in place as a direct result of complaints and representations received in adult social care and children's social care.

8. Conclusions and way forward

8.1. Going forward

We continue to ensure that a person-centred approach is adopted for the handling and investigation of each complaint. We will continue to focus on ensuring that we monitor that: complainants receive appropriate and timely feedback on complaints; appropriate apologies are offered; and any service improvement recommendations are delivered.

8.2. Action plan

Actions for 2017/18 are as follows:

- Continuing to raise awareness of and promote the complaints procedure for adult social care, children's social care and public health.
- Continuing to remind and encourage the workforce to inform the Standards, Engagement and Development Team when expressions of thanks have been received. These provide an indication of satisfaction with services and should be recorded and reported.
- Continuing to raise awareness of lessons learnt from complaints and ensure they are fed into policies, procedures and practice. There is an established Continuous Improvement Group in children's social care which is used as a forum to receive complaints statistical data and any learning from complaints is used as a driver for improvements.

Appendix 1: Examples of compliments received across Adult and Children Social Care Services

Adult Social Care

"J and I wanted to say how much we appreciate all your kindness and help in providing the equipment and things that J needs to help him, and makes his daily life a little easier, safer and more comfortable. I am sure you are well aware that small differences can make a huge difference to a person's quality of life it certainly has for us.

From a service user and carer about Occupational Therapy

"S has visited me on several occasions and her practical and caring assistance has really helped me to regain my confidence and maintain my independence. She took the time to listen to my fears and encouraged me in many ways, she made me feel that my mental health was also as important as my physical well being."

From a service user about the Reablement Team

" we would like it to be recorded of the superb service we have had by Social Services this service was top class."

From a family member about Adult Social Care

"To have someone make you a cup of tea and something to eat and do little things that you are unable to do for yourself at the time is most gratifying."

From a service user about the Direct Care and Support Team

"I would like to thank everyone involved for the services they provided. It has given me my life back."

From a service user about the Reablement Team

"You have supported me so much since we met ... after mam broke her hip. The challenges we faced were always met with such resourcefulness, it seemed nothing was insurmountable. Your sense of humour made a difficult situation for me so much more bearable."

From a family member about an Adult Social Worker

"I was advised by a relative to contact HBC in regards to my hearing loss, particular in relation to watching TV. A visit was arranged by the Reablement Team ... to be honest, I only wished I'd met this lady a lot sooner, the difference in my being able to hear words instead of mumbles has made my life much better."

From a service user about the Reablement Team

"I had never heard of your organisation prior to my release from hospital. Then I found it reliable, professional and most supportive. Immediately after my release from hospital they enabled me to be at home and to gradually recover. Without the expert help I would not have achieved my recovery. I am afraid there are too many to mention all by name, but I would like to thank them all for their hugely appreciated help and support."

From a service user about the Reablement Team

Comments from feedback forms (adult social care)

"If I need her, she comes straight out and she answers questions and gets back to me when she says she will."

"She supports me well. She lets me know when she is visiting and tells me what is happening."

"She is there when I need her."

"She is a much better social worker than I thought she would be. I hope she will carry on supporting us and will make a difference going forward."

"She really has made me stronger. I can now look at myself and know when I'm going to be ill. I haven't been diagnosed with bipolar but my moods do go up and down but I am much better now at knowing when I am going to be ill. She has really helped me with that. She has also helped me with knowing what to do when I am ill."

"Everybody has been really nice and really helpful."

"Social worker was lovely, helped also when I said wheelchair was broken rang the service and they came straight away."

"Talks to me and is very kind, encourages me to do things."

"E was lovely, really helpful and followed up on things and got things in place really quickly."

"She would come straight out and sort things if I was upset - she really cares."

"S definitely helps - carers come in and because my wife gets support I am able to continue to go to work."

“Helps me with everything, reads letters for me I don’t read too good.”

“Every time I ring, she rings back”

“She always returns my calls”

“J is lovely – she was really supportive. I have only spoken to her once since he has been at Brierton which means I haven’t needed her. His is happy and so are we. I would ring J if I have any worries.”

“Her demeanour was appropriate for the situation and made it very easy and comforting for the [client] and relatives to engage with her. Her body language showed that she was focussed on the client and the clients opinions and decisions but confirmed that she was prepared to listen to contributions for the relations ... I’ve subsequently benefitted from her ongoing support over the phone, this is particularly important since I am 120 miles away.”

“I wish I had E weeks ago, as she certainly put my mind at rest.”

““She explored in-depth what i felt was needed for my personal care””

Children’s Social Care

“S done more than helped us as family feel supported. He was right on board with our worries and issues from day one. He was there for us.”

From a parent and grandparent about a Social Worker

“How do I start to say thank you to you? Since the very beginning you have been totally fab and now when things are tough, you go above and beyond what you should do, even though you are so busy.”

From a parent about a Social Worker

“To the best Social Worker in the world ... suppose you alright I might not bar you anymore!”

From a parent about a Social Worker

Comments from feedback forms (children’s social care)

‘K listens to my feelings, the children’s feelings and all other parties in great detail and does what she can to please everyone.’

‘I find working with K best out of all the social workers I have had. She listens appropriately and her actions are always explained thoroughly.’

'[S] has helped us as a family put rules, boundaries etc. in place which have worked beyond believe. Bedtimes, time outs, rewards I didn't think were manageable but worked, and still are!'

'If S had been with us over 4 years ago ... I know we wouldn't have had half of the difficult circumstances we had to deal with.'

'There is nothing as a family we can say that S could have done differently. He does his job extremely well ... [he's] been professional, he is approachable as well. He was brilliant and we will miss him!'

'It is totally clear he is 100% committed to his job, and he totally enjoys it. But he is good as it too.'

'I felt I could ask any question regarding my [foster] placement and my feelings or concerns were listened too.'

'The more I got to work with L I felt comfortable in working with her. L is warm and welcoming. I would definitely work with L again.'

'L is a credit to you's, she's the best social worker I've ever had.'

'I really liked her, she was young and I liked that because she was relatable. She gave me confidence in being a Mam.'

'She came across as so knowledgeable and confident.'

'L made things easier by being honest and not 'interviewing'.'

'L is a very pleasant lady who has helped the children a great deal during a stressful time in their lives. She has supported the children throughout every step of the process. This is evident because they think very highly of her.'

'She knew when it was important to act/ intercede in removing the children from an unsafe situation ... she is friendly and approaches the children in a child-friendly/ appropriate way.'

'Having a collection of MH dx to my name, I often feel they walk into a room before I do but I feel L has taken the time to get to know me as a person and therefore I was able to trust her and be honest about my feelings.'

'We have discussed some really painful events and L has done this sensitively and with respect. She is great with the children and they have come to look forward to her visits.'

'I can't think how someone could have done a better job.'

Feedback Form

1. Did I explain who she was and that she was a social worker?



2. What does a social worker do?

They move children to safer
house with people who look
after them.

3. Do you feel that she listened to you and your wishes and feelings?



4. Did you feel involved in the decisions being made about you?



5. Overall, how did you find working with

? Is there anything that you would like to say?

Happy

she does

her job very well.

Feedback Form

1. Did I explain who she was and that she was a social worker?



2. What does a social worker do?

she has a meeting with you
keeps you safe

3. Do you feel that she listened to you and your wishes and feelings?



4. Did you feel involved in the decisions being made about you?



5. Overall, how did you find working with I? Is there anything that you would like to say?

Happy - she is very happy.



You can draw a picture too if you would like.

Appendix 2: Partly upheld or upheld complaints and lessons learned in Adult and Children Social Care Services

Adult Social Care	
Details of complaint/Outcomes	Lessons learned and where appropriate, actions taken
<p>The complainant (the son of a service user who lacked capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005) was dissatisfied that he was not notified about his mother’s review or a forthcoming assessment about continuing healthcare, he was no longer regarded as his mother’s next of kin and the Council held inaccurate records about him being estranged from his mother.</p>	<p>There were 5 separate elements of complaint investigated.</p> <p>The independent complaint investigator concluded that following a second independent Relevant Person’s Representative (RPR) being appointed under Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to comply with the requirement of regular visiting in addition to the appointment of the complainant as RPR who was unable to fulfil the requirement of regular visiting owing to him working abroad for prolonged periods, there was no communication with the complainant about his mother’s ongoing care and support needs. An apology was provided to the complainant for this.</p> <p>The remaining elements of complaint were not upheld.</p> <p>Learning from the complaint investigation regarding the practice of appointing more than one RPR, as well as the role and inclusion of family members involved in an individual’s care, was shared with the workforce.</p>

<p>The complainant (a carer to her elderly parents) alleged that a previous complaint had not been dealt with properly and was dissatisfied that she was had not been provided with a copy of her carers assessment.</p>	<p>The complaint investigator concluded that the previous complaint was properly dealt with but found that, despite an agreement to provide the complainant with a copy of her carers assessment, there was no evidence to confirm this had been done.</p> <p>There was an apology made to the complainant in relation to the delay she encountered in the receipt of a copy of her carers assessment. Although the provision of a support plan is embedded as routine practice, it was recommended that this be extended to include the provision of the assessment. This was cascaded to the workforce.</p>
<p>The complainant (the mother of a service user who managed her son's support package on his behalf) was unhappy that she had not been provided with a copy of his support plan including relevant financial details to enable her to fulfil her obligations as an employer. The complainant also expressed disappointment that the case had been managed in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The independent complaint investigator found that it was essential the complainant should be in possession of the detailed information necessary to enable her to undertake her role in a timely manner and upheld her complaints.</p> <p>Following the response to her complaint, the complainant emailed to say, <i>"Thank you for dealing with my complaint in such a comprehensive manner. I am happy with the outcome."</i></p>
<p>The complainant (the son of a service user) was dissatisfied with aspects of his mother's hospital discharge. The complainant asserted that his mother's social care needs had not been assessed properly prior to her hospital discharge, there was no effective support plan in place upon her discharge, she was not discharged to a safe environment and the contracted care provider's calls to his mother were either late or missed altogether.</p>	<p>The independent complaint investigator found that the assessment had been carried out properly, the support plan met identified care and support needs and the complainant's mother was discharged to a safe environment.</p> <p>However, the independent investigator partly upheld one element of complaint and found that a Support Worker had made a decision to change the times of one of the complainant's mother calls which should not have happened. An apology was provided and the matter was raised with the contracted provider who implemented appropriate action to address the matter.</p>

<p>The complainant (the daughter-in-law of a service user who lacked capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005) was dissatisfied with the standard of care provided at the contracted care home as well as the behaviour and attitude of the social worker.</p>	<p>The independent complaint investigator concluded that the matters raised by the complainant in relation to the care home had been fully responded to by care home who had already implemented actions as a result. The complaint investigator endorsed the actions the care home had already put in place and did not have any further recommendations in this regard.</p> <p>The complaint investigator highlighted that terms used by the social worker were, in his view, inappropriate and unacceptable. Measures were taken to address this outside of the complaints process.</p>
<p>The complainant (a carer to her elderly father) alleged that a social worker had failed to respond to telephone calls, raised the complainant's expectations about help and support the social worker could offer to address difficulties with her son, failed to complete a service request identified in the support plan and lost bank details.</p>	<p>There were 5 elements of complaint investigated by an independent investigating officer who concluded that 2 elements were not upheld whereas the failure to respond to telephone calls and failure to complete a service request were upheld and an issue regarding loss of bank details was partly upheld. This independent complaint investigator found the complainant's bank details had not been lost but that the social worker had not followed the relevant reporting process. This was addressed outside of the complaints process.</p>
<p>The complainant (the daughter of a service user who lacked capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005) was dissatisfied with the standard and the quality of the care provided at the contracted care home as well as the failure of the provider to respond to a letter of complaint.</p>	<p>The independent complaint investigator concluded that all 4 elements of complaint were upheld.</p> <p>The care home provider apologised to the complainant. The complainant (who held power of attorney for property and affairs) was financially recompensed for the losses associated with personal items as well as the distress experienced.</p> <p>Lessons identified from this complaint were shared with care providers at a routine provider forum.</p>

<p>The complainant (the wife of a service user who lacked capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005) was upset and disappointed with the contracted care home who she believed failed to allow sufficient time to implement agreed plans to sustain her husband's residence there. The complainant was also of the view that there was a lack of skilled care to meet her husband's needs.</p>	<p>There were 7 elements of complaint investigated by an independent investigating officer who concluded that 4 elements were not upheld, 2 elements were partially upheld and one element could not be substantiated.</p> <p>The independent investigator was able to explain within the investigation report the legal framework surrounding the placement within the care home which the complainant had not fully appreciated at the time of his admission, as well as the role of the care co-ordinator who was from a partner agency.</p> <p>The complainant fed back to the independent investigator that her husband was settled in another care home in a neighbouring town.</p>
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Children's Social Care	
Details of complaint/Outcomes	Lessons learned and where appropriate, actions taken
<p>The complainant (the father of a child) was unhappy with the respite care facility his child attends. The complainant expressed dissatisfaction with communication and alleges that the respite care facility had cancelled as overnight stay on a permanent basis rather than for one week as was intended.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>The Head of Service provided an explanation to each element of the complaint and an apology was offered around miscommunication to the complainant. Bi-monthly Key Worker visits to the parents, which they had cancelled some time ago by them, were reinstated to aid improved communication between the respite care facility and the parents.</p>

<p>The complainant (the mother of a child who the subject of a protection plan) alleged that the Social Worker failed to visit frequently, missed appointments and did not share information with her in a timely manner to enable her to protect her child.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>The Team Manager found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since the child had been made subject to a protection plan, the Social Worker had visited the child in accordance with the requirement to visit every 15 days; • there was an occasion when an appointment was rearranged which had caused some confusion for which an apology was provided; • information was shared in an appropriate and timely manner and her child's safety and welfare had not been compromised in any way.
<p>The complainant (the mother of the children) expressed her unhappiness with the children's Social Worker. The complainant voiced a mistrust of the Social Worker and stated that she did not receive feedback of what she was doing right and what she was doing wrong.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>The Team Manager met with the complainant to hear her concerns and was able to identify what feedback was important to her and when. The Team Manager shared how praise is important to the mother with the Social Worker which empowered the children's mother to continue.</p>
<p>The complainant (the mother of the children) expressed that there was a lack of practical help and support provided to her which left her struggling to cope with the needs of the children.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>A Head of Service who knows the complainant well met with her to discuss her wellbeing and how this might leave her struggling to cope with the needs of her children. It was agreed that the practical help and support she had previously received should be reinstated. The complainant was happy with this outcome.</p>
<p>The complainant (the grandmother of the children who reside with her under the auspices of a Residence Order) alleged that no one contacted her to advise of the outcome of the telephone call she made to the Department and consequently the Residence Order allowance has not been fully explored.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>The Manager looking into the complaint found that someone had tried to reach the complainant to explain the outcome of the contact made and had left a voice mail message but it was confirmed it would have been good practice for the outcome to have been sent in writing.</p>

<p>The complainant (the father of a child) alleged that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information was not shared with him and his partner in a timely way; • social workers were wearing ID badges and making telephone calls in a public place; • the respite care facility would not apply the child's prescribed cream. <p>Concluded at Stage 1</p>	<p>The Head of Service provided an explanation to each element of complaint. It was found that information had been shared with the complainant and his partner in a timely way, it was appropriate for the social workers to be wearing ID badges and social workers did not disclose personal, identifiable information in a public setting. The complainant was reminded that the administration of cream or medications can only happen if these are clearly marked with a pharmacy label that in line with Ofsted and NICE guidelines.</p>
<p>The complainant (the mother of a child) expressed her dissatisfaction with comments made to her by social workers.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 2</p>	<p>An Investigating Officer and independent Person conducted an investigation at Stage 2. Although there was no evidence to support the allegation made, the Investigating Officer recommended that staff be reminded to consider their approach in situations where a parent may feel oppressed. This was shared with social workers and raised at a staff briefing session.</p>
<p>The complainants (the carers of a child) alleged that their complaint was not looked at properly at stage 1, their child had contact with previous foster carers despite stating they did not wish this to happen, the mother's role was overlooked and the father was afforded more favourable treatment by the workers concerned.</p> <p>Concluded at Stage 2</p>	<p>Following an investigation into the allegations made, it was concluded that there was a lack of effective communication between parties and an apology was provided to the complainant for this element of the complaint.</p> <p>It was recommended that Social Workers and Foster Carers are reminded that they should adhere to good practice standards for looked after children. This learning point was shared with senior managers for cascading within their teams.</p> <p>Additionally, those allocated a complaint to look into at stage 1, will be routinely reminded to meet the complainant initially to discuss their complaint where this is both feasible and practical to do so.</p>