

Adult Social Services
Summary of complaints received across service areas 2014-15

1. Older People – Localities
 - 1.1 There were 5 complaints received at Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure (compared to last year's 11). They included:
 - i. dissatisfaction with care arrangements
 - ii. an appeal against respite nights
 - iii. of being wrongly accused of a safeguarding issue
 - 1.2 These were resolved by:
 - i. providing support to an individual in their own home with a package of support.
 - ii. revised respite allocation.
 - iii. explaining our duty to investigate safeguarding allegations.
2. Older People - Intake and Reablement
 - 2.1 3 complaints were received at Stage 1 (compared to last year's 7), including:
 - i. being discharged from a rehab unit too early
 - ii. lack of clarity and detail about the care arrangements of a case.
 - iii. a lack of action taken following a fall at a Council home.
 - 2.2 These were resolved by:
 - i. apologising for any distress caused on day of discharge and an undertaking to do a further assessment at home.
 - ii. explaining who all members of care staff were, their times of visits and how rota visits were drawn up.
 - iii. improved our processes regarding handheld alarms.
3. Privately Registered Homes
 - 3.1 8 complaints were made during the year. 2 complaints were withdrawn but continued to be investigated by the Provider to ensure there were indeed no issues. Most complaints were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainants. The complaints included:
 - i. personal clothing being given to charity without the permission of family members.
 - ii. personal possessions going missing or clothing found on other residents.
 - iii. resident allegedly tripping on room carpet divider and the home's actions at the time.

3.2 All registered Providers responded directly to the complainant in a timely manner. Responses to complaints included:

- i. apology made for any misunderstanding as staff believed items not collected by family as unwanted. Procedures to be reviewed.
- ii. apology made and inventory processes were reviewed regarding personal possessions.

3.3 3 of the 8 complaints made included concerns about care and (potential) harm being suffered. These were subject to P.O.V.A. (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) investigations and associated action. The POVA findings were that:

- i. 1 allegation was unlikely on the balance of probability
- ii. 2 allegations were proven.

4. Privately Registered Domiciliary Providers

4.1 6 complaints made during the year, a small increase compared to the previous year's 4 complaints. All complaints were resolved. Complaints included:

- i. carers being changed all at once meaning no consistency
- ii. carers failing to attend to service users' appointments.
- iii. lack of healthy or nutritional meals.

4.2 All registered Providers responded directly to the complainant in a timely manner. Responses to complaints included:

- i. one carer reinstated with an explanation that time was needed for new carers to establish their relationship.
- ii. in terms of missed visits, an apology was made for one missed visit and weekend support reviewed. Alternative arrangements to cover missed appointments were made at the time but not taken up by family.
- iii. reassurances made that healthier and more nutritional meals would be provided in future as support had been reviewed.

5. Learning Disability

5.1 13 of the 21 complaints received were appeals against the Service's reassessment of individual circumstances leading to a reduction of respite nights.

5.2 These were all reviewed; 7 to the satisfaction of families, but 6 families challenged the decisions made. A series of independent appeal panels, chaired by a non-Council Officer and attended by independent Advocates, was convened with parents invited to present their family's case. 5 appeals have been heard to date and were not upheld as it was found the Service had correctly applied the short break toolkit. Other

ways to support families is to be explored. 1 appeal is to be heard in mid-June.

5.3 Other issues regarding the Service included:

- i. a perception that safeguarding concerns not followed up and lack of contact
- ii. lack of communication leading up to a change of work placement
- iii. lack of activities and days out from a day centre.

5.4 These were resolved by:

- i. making reassurances about safeguarding concerns that they were taken seriously and followed up, as well as confirming contact arrangements
- ii. apologising for the lack of notification leading up to a change in work placement and explaining our proposals.
- iii. reassuring that day centre staff were imaginative and make best use of existing resources, and that everyone had to take turns in going out in the minibus.

6. Mental Health and Substance Misuse

6.1 The 3 complaints received included:

- i. being denied access to the Social Links service
- ii. disagreeing with the decision for personal finances to be managed by the Department.
- iii. the lack of contact from the Community Mental Health Team.

6.2 These complaints were resolved by:

- i. explaining the criteria to access Social Links and confirming these were not met in this case.
- ii. explaining the reasons for applying to manage finances was in the person's best interests
- iii. evidencing contact and visits had indeed been carried out.

The complaint regarding personal finances progressed to Stage 2 and was not upheld.

7. Occupational Therapy

7.1 3 complaints were received at Stage 1 (the same number as last year). In general they related to a perception that staff did not understand individual needs or that they were not properly assessed.

7.2 These were resolved by explaining why some support or equipment couldn't be provided, explaining the criteria for adaptations and why these weren't met. Alternative options were offered in some cases.

8. Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment

8.1 The 4 complaints made included:

- i. direct payment overtime being declined and being told to return some monies.
- ii. lack of contact from Social Worker.
- iii. unhappy with outcome of a historical complaint.
- iv. change of homecare provision from Social Services to an independent provider.

These were resolved by:

- i. discussing the Service's concerns and reasons for its decision.
- ii. evidencing numerous contacts between individual and their Social Worker and relationship now working well.
- iii. adding the family's views and challenges to an historic complaint to the client information system.
- iv. homecare provision reviewed and concerns regarding proposed move allayed.

9. Summary of compliments received across service areas (2014-15)

9.1 Older People – Localities

9.2 27 compliments were received by the service. These included:

1. A family of an elderly lady sent a card saying: 'Many thanks for sending the care plan so quickly. It is the most accurate and professional report that we have received. We would like to thank you for the professional and compassionate way in which you managed mum's case.'
2. A grand-daughter of a service user said: 'Thank you so much. I and my mum are so glad that you are my nan's social worker because she trusts you. It's been a lot for my mum to take in and we both appreciate your help along the way.'

10. Older People - Intake and Reablement

10.1 95 compliments were received by the service. They included:

1. A daughter of a service user phoned to say she knew that often Social Services are criticised but she has nothing but praise for them. They were invaluable in helping her support her mother who had Alzheimer's but was very adamant she wanted to remain living at home. She said they were a lifeline to her and she is feeling very supported.'
2. Chief Officer, Neil Ayling, received a complimentary letter from a family whose mother had been looked after by the Homecare team. It said: 'We cannot speak too highly of, or praise this team too much. The carers were very sensitive and responsive to my mother's needs and displayed a

great deal of initiative. They would often contact us with relevant information and were always readily accessible by telephone. This team displayed the highest order of care and gave my wife and I complete confidence knowing that my mother was well looked after.'

11. Learning Disability

11.1 4 compliments were received by service users and families:

1. A young gentleman, a member of LD football group wrote a letter 'Just wanted to say thanks to you, really. We all know you need to stick to requirements but you have always helped me out and I appreciate it. You are a boss-manager to 'Flintshire Flyers' and a good mate to each one of us.'
2. A family of a service user said: 'Whenever we contacted you, you responded rapidly and always took action. This has meant an awful lot to us over the years and we cannot thank you enough. We still have a long way to go but thanks for the expert care and support our son is now receiving, we can now see light at the end of the tunnel.'

12. Mental Health and Substance Misuse

12.1 The 31 compliments received included by the service:

1. A service user sent a text saying: 'Thank you so much for being one of the biggest parts in who I have become and who I want to be. The opportunities you put my way have given me confidence I thought was lost forever. Your job description should read 'hero' because to me, and no doubt others, that's what you really are.'
2. A touching letter from a service user said: 'From our very first meeting you were so accepting of me and I felt so comfortable talking to you even though it takes weeks for me to feel comfortable with someone. There is no way, without your help, that I would be where I am now and I wouldn't have made it back to work so quickly. You made me realise that there is so much I can do.'

13. Occupational Therapy

13.1 16 compliments were received by the service:

1. A lady who had moved away from Flintshire wrote: 'I wish to say a big thank-you for helping me through some of the worst years of my life. You helped me through some very dark times, supporting me, not only when I lost my sight and all my independence, but also encouraging me to start, very slowly, to begin to regain my independence and confidence again. Nothing was ever too much trouble and you made my move to Cheshire much less stressful than I ever imagined.'

2. The team was complimented for supporting a young lady for nearly a year to attend University. By engaging the help of an architect, they helped design an adapted room at Edgehill University to enable her to attend the course.

14. Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment

14.1 2 compliments were received thanking staff for their tireless support:

1. An outreach worker received a compliment from a service user who wanted to thank her for the support she has given him. He gave her a wooden pen which he made at a social group as a sign of his gratitude.

15. Others

15.1 17 compliments were received by other teams such as Deputyship, Financial Assessment and Workforce Development team:

1. A son of a service user sent an email saying Financial Management team made such a difference by arranging all the benefits for his mother. It gave her a peace of mind as well as his own because she lived on her own. He felt the public should be made aware of all the positive work that the Team does.