

Adult Social Services

Summary of complaints received across service areas 2015-16.

Older People – Localities

11 complaints were received during the year, an increase compared to previous years. Broadly their themes were about care, funding and overall case management They included:

A family member complained about the impact the Department's alleged concerns was having on them and how this was impacting on their visits to their mother at her home. We reassured the complainant there was no ongoing investigation, but their mother had asked that her Advocate be present when such visits took place.

The length of time taken to discharge an individual from hospital. We explained we were waiting for confirmation of C.H.C. funding but we agreed interim funding and support arrangements.

A family feeling pressured into moving their mother into an EMI residential placement. We explained their mother needed such a placement as quickly as possible as her needs could no longer be met by her current home. There were no places available in the family's preferred choice of home.

Older People – Provider

4 complaints were received during the year, a slight increase compared to last year's 3 complaints. They included:

No staff at the home responding to an alarm when pressed by a service user and her visiting son. We apologised for any distress caused and reviewed how alarms are responded to during busy periods, e.g. lunchtimes.

A range of issues at a home including the frequency of calls, issues about laundry and a lack of communication following a hospital admission. We explained and sought to reassure about our arrangements with planned and unplanned calls and we apologised clothing had been shrunk in the laundry. The non-emergency admission to hospital had been late in the evening, but we apologised if the family did not get a call so late in the evening.

A complaint that care staff were not recording sufficient detail about her physical state and that no nutritional meals were being provided. We reviewed staff records and satisfied ourselves there was sufficient detail contained within them. We explained making hot meals was not the ethos of Reablement and the complainant had previously agreed to sandwiches. There was good evidence to

suggest a thorough assessment had been completed and work was nearing completion for her to remain as independent as possible.

Privately Registered Homes

5 complaints were received during the year, a fall compared to last year's 8. They included:

An individual complained his father's previous care home had not handled allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour appropriately, and their staff were not skilled in meeting his needs. The home responded to the concerns about the experience and skills of staff. The Safeguarding Unit confirmed the home had acted appropriately about the three allegations made.

An individual complained about a range of issues about the standard of care before and after her friend's death, including: their body being left in an inappropriate state and their concerns for other residents at the home. The home described what happened on the day their friend passed away and they made reassurances about the health and safety concerns raised at the home. Social Services nor CSSIW have concerns about the home.

A family complained about a range of issues including: bed alarms turned off at night, family being refused access to certain records, not being informed of a fall and family not being allowed to visit the home within the first week of admission. The home apologised for their failings and explained changes had recently been made with Manager concerned and staff. The home is to review its policy about not allowing family members to visit the week of admission. They also apologised that records were not shared at the time by the Manager and reassured the bed alarms were on but that staff will be retrained about this as well as retrained re. reporting falls.

Privately Registered Domiciliary Providers

11 complaints were received during the year, an increase compared to previous years. Broadly they related to the timings of such visits and complaints made after a breakdown in relationship between family members and the provider. They included:

Family complaining about the standard of their mother's personal care following her admittance to hospital, raising possible neglect issues. This matter did not meet the threshold for the Safeguarding Unit's involvement and no concerns were raised or a referral made by hospital. The provider responded by reassuring family that personal care was provided when their mother asked for help; other times their mother was able to attend to herself. The provider acknowledged carer diary notes did not reflect this so improvements are required in terms of recording when an individual accepts or turns down personal care. Mother and other family members were content with the care provided at the last review.

Family raised the following issues which had culminated in the support package being cancelled: i) professionalism of care staff, ii) no choice being given to the service user if they wished to be observed by a new carers whilst he received personal care and iii) a lack of communication within the agency.

The agency investigated the matter and found no evidence of staff making such comments or acting unprofessionally. No family member raised any objection at the time the personal care was being observed by a new carer. The agency accepted a carer had turned up on one occasion for a previously cancelled appointment, but could find no further evidence of miscommunication.

A family complained about a range of issues including: lack of communication or notice re. rota changes, and lack of care staff professionalism. The provider explained the reasons behind rota changes adding that the Manager herself had offered to cover at the time, though family had turned this offer down. A carer was late one day due to complexities with an earlier visit. Again the Manager offered to cover which was turned down again by the family. No evidence found of staff unprofessionalism.

Learning Disability Service

58 complaints were made about the Service during the year, a clear increase compared to last year's 21. 43 of the 58 complaints made about the Learning Disability Service related to the planned changes to the allocation of respite care nights (2), supported living arrangements (7) and the cessation of the £3 Day Opportunities payment (34). The other 15 complaints made included:

A parent complained that Estuary Crafts is too short staffed and voiced her health and safety concerns that staff would not be able to cope if there was an accident or if an emergency arose. We acknowledged there is sometimes only one member of staff on duty, but reassured the parent that we believe this is manageable. We explained there are other staff on site, albeit providing 1-2-1 support to others, and Glanrafon staff close by can be called upon in an emergency.

A family complained about a range of issues regarding support provided by provider staff including timeliness, irregular 1:1 support, disruption to routines, and their belief that staff do not have appropriate skills. A meeting was held with the family. The provider confirmed support team arrangements and expectations etc. They reassured staff are skilled and experienced, and apologised for 2 shifts missed - matter addressed with staff. Other reassurances made re. JS personal care.

A parent complained about the respite she received at Arosfa and the lack of arrangements in place should an emergency arise. We explained the respite would continue to be provided by Arosfa. We apologised for cancelling respite on one occasion but explained that every effort was made to cover staff absence at the time. However, owing to daughter's challenging behaviour at the time and her autism, using someone unfamiliar was not appropriate for her. An additional overnight stay added to the next month instead.

Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment

7 complaints were received during the year, a small increase compared to previous years. They included:

A service user complained about the conduct of a member of staff during a visit, a lack of communication from the Department about his purpose built bungalow, including the need for two bathrooms: one for him and one for his carer. We explained the member of staff concerned does talk and gesture a lot with his hands when talking. This may have been perceived as intimidating, however, they were trying get across to the service user that he was turning down a huge opportunity for a purpose built property just because he was only getting the one bathroom. No evidence found we had offered 2 bathrooms previously.

A carer complained that we would not provide direct payments so she could care for her sister immediately following her move to the area. We explained we did not receive a referral from her former county of residence until after she had moved. However, we made arrangements for Liverpool to fund the initial few weeks so we had time to assess. A care agency was identified but the carer chose to provide informal care to her sister herself. No reference in our records that we agreed we would pay her as her sister's P.A.

A carer complained they had not been offered a carer's needs assessment. We explained they had been provided with the opportunity for a carer's needs assessment to be completed by N.E.W.C.I.S., but the carer had postponed two carer's assessments during the year. The opportunity remained open to them.

Business Support Services

3 complaints were made about the Financial Assessment and Charging Team as to how they had applied the Council's "Fairer Charging Policy". They included:

A family complained their late father's home had charged them the incorrect rate due to Social Services not paying the home the correct top up fee. We apologised for our role in this matter. We explained our interpretation of W.G. guidance was correct but because his father was in a home in England, there was a funding shortfall which the home applied to the family. The situation around such funding is now clearer and we agreed to meet the financial shortfall. Contracts with service providers have been amended stating we will now pay the host Local Authority rate, including cross border placements.

Two families parents complained about charges applied to them. Both appeals were reassessed and turned down by an appeal panel. One of these complaints progressed to a Stage 2 investigation, which concurred with the Department's assessment and did not uphold the complaint.