

**Summary of the outcomes of complaints considered independently at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure**

Adult Social Services

13 complaints were considered at Stage 2 during the year:

**2 families complained about the Department's decision to reduce the number of respite nights they were now entitled to.**

The independently chaired appeal panel upheld the Department's original decision with both appeals, though it was agreed one family's respite allocation would continue as planned as they had recently moved into Flintshire.

**7 families complained about the Department's decision to outsource supported living homes currently managed by the Council.** A series of independently chaired appeal panel meetings concurred the appropriate processes had been followed and did not uphold their overall complaint. The outsourcing work therefore continues. However, some recommendations were made at an individual level which the Department has implemented. The consultation process with families, service users and staff remains ongoing. The Ombudsman did consider 2 complaints

**A family complained via their Solicitor re. their adult son's direct payments ending at point of discharge from hospital and no assessments being undertaken.**

We apologised for the confusion in relation to the direct payments being ended after his discharge from hospital. However, we explained the decision to discharge was taken quickly, resulting in little opportunity for a full discussion to take place with them. The Social Worker did what she could with the little time she had and she discussed with the family the possible impact of a return home and the support that might be available.

**A family complained we had not applied our eligibility criteria properly in relation to financial charges applied to their son.** An independent review completed by a neighbouring Local Authority using Flintshire's criteria found it had been applied correctly and fairly. The complaint was not upheld and the charges remain.

**A family raised a number of issues re. the standard of care provided to their mother whilst she was staying in a Council home.** This was an emotive matter. An independent investigation interviewed staff and reviewed records, but did not uphold the complaint overall. It found their mother was inappropriately placed at the home following concerns she may contract an infection in the hospital, hence the quick discharge. Indeed the home had attempted to manage the situation bearing in mind the family's own difficulties at the time.

**A carer complained about the process underpinning her carer's assessment.** An independent investigation did not uphold the complaint and found processes had been appropriately followed.

### Children's Social Services

4 complaints were investigated independently at Stage 2 during the year:

**A parent raised 48 separate issues about the Department's management of her daughter's case.** This was a complex complaint and social work staff, Managers and Senior Managers have sought to address and resolve these ongoing issues in a number of ways with the parent. 3 complaints were upheld and one complaint upheld partially, but the complaint was not upheld overall. The Department has agreed to take the three recommendations made forward.

**Parents raised 50+ separate issues about the Department's management of their children's case.** Again, this was a complex complaint which also involved the Youth Justice Service. Seven complaints were upheld in part. We accepted parts of the independent investigation's findings but explained our own perspective with the parts we did not necessarily agree with. We agreed to take forward 8 recommendations as part of our lessons learned process.

A prospective adoptive couple complained about the Department's handling of their adoption matching and decision making case. **This was an emotive matter. An independent investigation did not uphold their complaint overall and we apologised for the length of time taken to formally notify them of our decision not to consider them for adoption. We agreed to take forward a recommendation about improving communication between ourselves and the North Wales Adoption Service.**

**A parent complained about the Department's management of his children's case following an acrimonious separation.** The complaint was not upheld overall, but we apologised that the schedule of expectations between the separating parents was not formally put in place.