

Walsall Council

Adult Social Care and Inclusion Annual Statutory Complaints Report

1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform the public, members of the council and staff about the numbers and types of representations relating to Adult Social care made to the council between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012. Information on how these representations were resolved is also included in this report, along with details of comments and compliments made.

Summary

1. Main facts of report

- The number of statutory complaint received is very similar to last year. 146 compared to 144 last year.
- Mediation continues to be a useful method of addressing customer dissatisfaction and has been used successfully to avoid escalation of 6 complains in this period.
- A specific training course has been designed and delivered in conjunction with the HR section entitled- Effective complaints handling.
- The number of compliments received has been less than this period last year, 110 compared to 183 last year.

2. **General information**

2.1. **Staffing**

The Customer Care Team (CCT) has 3 members of staff. This is made up of a full time lead specialist Principal Customer Liaison Officer, and a full time and part time Customer Liaison Officer. The team deal with all statutory representations received relating to social care for both adults and children. It also provides advice and guidance on representations relating to the corporate council complaints system.

2.2 **Reporting and monitoring systems**

All statistical information within this report has been obtained solely from the bespoke data base system Respond.
This data base provides a robust reporting and monitoring system to ensure a timely response to complaints and compliance with the guidance. Information is reported each quarter to the Senior Management Team in order to monitor customer feedback and respond to negative customer experience.

2.3 **Training and briefings**

A number of training sessions have been planned and delivered in order to inform staff on how to handle and respond to complaints. Take up of these sessions has been low, but the feedback from those who have attended has been positive. Further sessions are planned for next year.

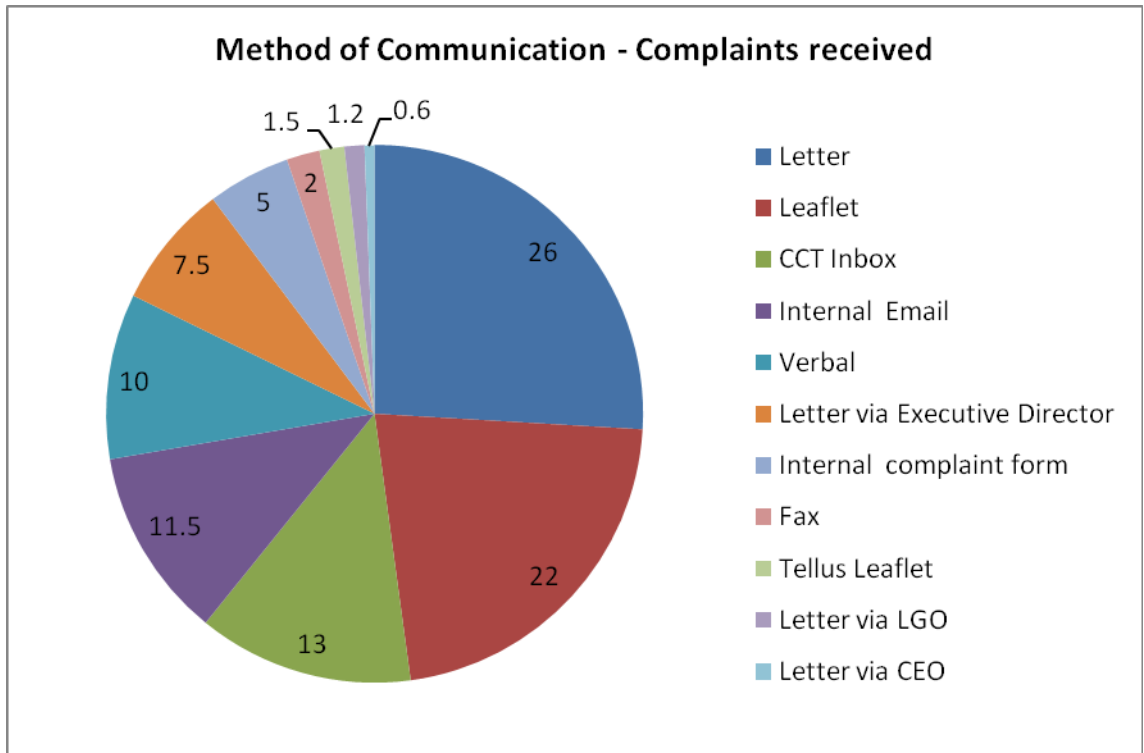
2.4	<p>West Midlands Complaints Managers Group</p> <p>The lead specialist is a member of the regional complaints managers group. The group meets quarterly and provides a forum for complaints managers to discuss regional and national issues, learn from each other and develop practise from across the region.</p>
2.5	<p>Publicity and Information</p> <p>Complaints leaflet and fliers are provided routinely to adults using the service to enable them to provide feedback on services received. The new flier has been well received and details the methods available to submit a representation to the Customer Care Team. There has been an increase in the use of the Customer care email box to submit complaints since distributing the new flier. This information can be provided through interpreters and signers where necessary. Complaint information is also available on the Walsall Council web site.</p>
2.6	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>The Customer Care Team will put people in touch with an advocate where necessary to support the making of a representation. Ageuk provide support to people who wish to make a representation. Over the last year they have supported a number of people to make representation.</p>
3.	<p>Representation received in 2011-2012</p>
3.1	<p>Overview of representations received</p> <p>The total number of representations received by CCT in the last year is 278. The breakdown is as follows-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory complaints 146 • Statutory compliments 110 • Corporate social care complaints 5 • Corporate social care compliments 3 • Comments 29 • LGO enquiries 9
4.	<p>Comments</p> <p>In the period 2011-2012 a total of 29 comments were received. Examples of these are-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for report on Father’s care. • Concerned about decision made by support worker. • Unhappy with transport provision for mother who has dementia. • Unhappy that day service has closed. <p>Comments do not have statutory guidance but we encourage managers to respond to these in a timely fashion in order to provide a quality service to Walsall residents. On occasions comments do become complaints. but we encourage managers to respond promptly to any comments to avoid progression to complaints.</p>
5.	<p>Statutory complaints</p>
	<p>Statutory adult social care complaints are processed and monitored by the Customer Care Team in line with the Local Authority Social Service Regulations 2009. The Customer Care Team sits within the resource directorate as part of the Corporate Performance Team.</p> <p>The procedure for handling complaints involves-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing with each complainant the issues that they have raised and the outcomes they are requesting. • Determining in discussion with complainant and managers a realistic time scale to

	<p>investigate respond to complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the issues raised by the complainant in a complaint handling plan. • Risk assessing the complaint in relation to the service user, community and council. • Advising managers on what is required to be investigated. • Quality assuring the response letter in conjunction with the issues raised. • Obtaining Head of Service sign off for all response letters before they are sent out to customers. • Recording any learning identified for the council. <p>The focus of the complaints handling process through which outcomes are delivered is to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make complaints person focused. • Handle all complaints according to their individual nature. • Focus on swift resolution through working towards the complainants desired outcomes. <p>Since the introduction of the 2009 legislation the process for handling complaints provides 2 stages for formal adult social care complaints which are-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAGE 1-Local resolution • STAGE 2- Local Government Ombudsman • <p><u>Local resolution</u></p> <p>Complaints are acknowledged by the Customer Care Team. Discussion is held with the complainant to determine the issues and desired outcomes. A relevant manager is identified to investigate the complaint who has knowledge of the service the complaint relates to. The complaint handling plan is completed and sent to the relevant manager. Once the response letter is completed CCT staff ensures all the issues have been addressed to meet the desired outcomes through quality assurance checking. Head of service approval is obtained before the response is sent to the complainant. A 20 day departmental target has been agreed. This can be altered whenever necessary to focus on resolving the complaint. Discussion is held with each complainant and the time to respond may be adjusted depending on the complexity of the complaint and the individual circumstances.</p> <p>If the council's final response has not served to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, then they are entitled to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. The LGO will then review the way the complaint has been handled, and may investigate further. Mediation is always offered to customers as a method of conflict resolution. A member of the Customer Care Team is a qualified mediator.</p> <p><u>Local Government Ombudsman</u></p> <p>The LGO provides a single point of contact for all enquiries. The ombudsman does not normally consider a complaint until the council has first had an opportunity to consider the complaint. The Customer Care Team support managers to produce a robust response with the aim of satisfying the customer and avoid them referring the complaint to the LGO.</p>
5.1	<p>Who made the statutory complaints?</p> <p>The majority of complaints were made by relatives of service users. Only a quarter of the complaint came directly from service users themselves. Some service users ask family, friends, staff or an advocate to assist them in submitting their complaints.</p>

5.2 **Demographics of service users making complaints**
 The chart below shows the ethnicity of services users who have made the complaint' or the complaint is made on their behalf. Information about the complaints process is provided in a number of languages, and interpreters are used to enable people from all background to provide customer feedback. This is an area we will continue to work on in order to encourage the demographics of complainants to fully represent the people of Walsall.

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Bangladeshi	1	1%
Black	2	1%
Indian	3	2%
Pakistani	4	3%
White UK	124	85%
Not known/provided	12	8%

5.3 **How were the statutory complaints received?**
 Letters and leaflets continue to be the most popular method of submitting complaints, but a larger number of complaints are now being sent using email as shown in the chart below. Customers are encouraged to use which ever method of submitting complaint best suits them.



5.4 **Which service areas did the complaint relate to?**
 The nature of the type of service delivered can predict where complaints are going to be more common. This chart shows that more complaints relate to The Access and Care Management Team than to the other service areas. This area has been used by a larger number of service users than other areas which may explain the larger volume of complaints.

SERVICE AREA	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Assessment and care management	73	50%
Adult commissioned Services	37	26%
Other	20	14%
Provision	15	9%
Joint commissioning	1	1%

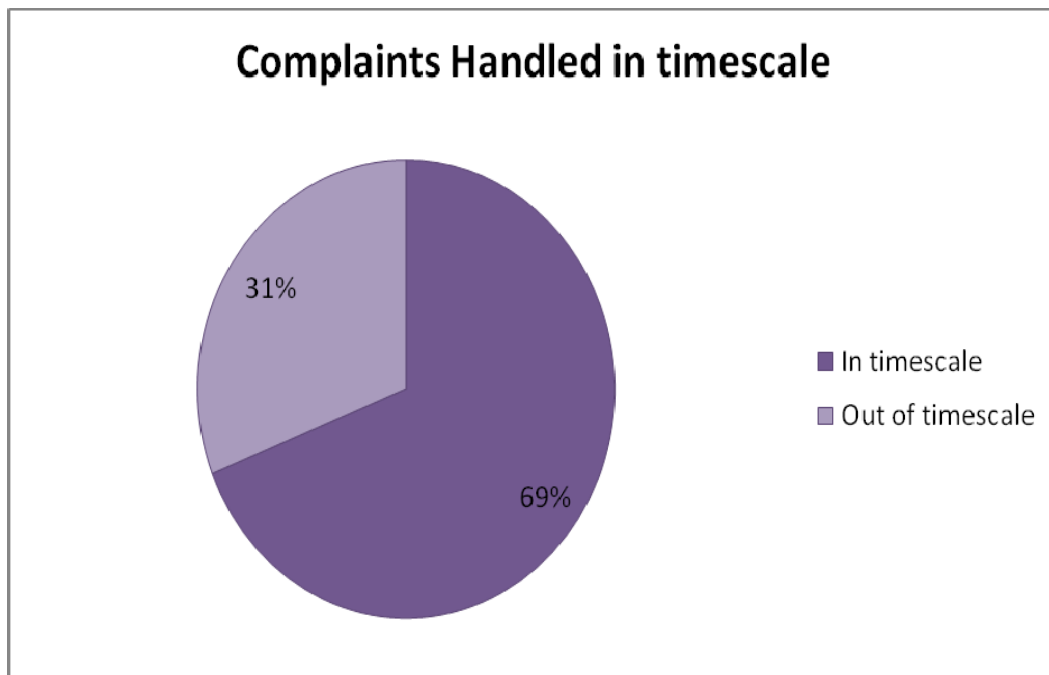
5.5 **What types of issues were complained about?**

Complaints made were varied in nature. There was one common theme where 19 complaints related to a change in charging policy.

COMPLAINT ISSUE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
finance	41	28%
Service issues	29	20%
communication	27	19%
Lack of support	25	17%
Staff conduct	6	4%
other	18	12%

5.6 **How long did the complaints take to resolve?**

From the 113 complaints that went through the statutory process 70% were investigated and responded to within the agreed time scale. Delays were due to issues being more complex than originally thought and staff absence impacting on the time required to complete the investigation.



5.7 **What was the outcome of the complaints?**
 From the 146 complaints made a total of 203 different issues were raised. The chart below shows the outcome of these issues raised.

NOT UPHELD	53	26%
PARTLY UPHELD	55	27%
UPHELD	64	31%
INCOMNCLUSIVE	3	2%
WITHDRAWN	18	9%
OTHER PROCEEDURES	10	5%

Where complaints have been upheld and partially upheld managers will reflect on any learning and put procedures in place to avoid any similar customer dissatisfaction.

5.8 **How did the service learn from complaints?**
 As part of the investigation and response all managers are requested to identify learning for the service. Where possible and appropriate learning is explained to the customer in the complaint response. All learning is reported to senior managers to ensure it is embedded into the related service to improve service quality and avoid further complaints. It is estimated that 15% of the complaints resulted in significant learning for social care and inclusion. Examples of this are-

- We will ensure all customers are written to explaining changes and providing adequate notice regarding reassessment.
- We will ensure clear evidence is recorded when a case is to be closed to avoid any delays for customers.
- To avoid wrong equipment being delivered duty staff consult with individual workers who have the specialised knowledge, before final decisions are made.
- To avoid missed home care calls more detail of the customer needs will be included which must be checked by senior staff. Electronic rota system must be used.
- To avoid confusion about decisions all worker must feed back panel decisions clearly to service users.

6 compliments

6.1 In this period there have been a total of 110 compliments. The service areas this relates to can be seen in the chart below.

SERVICE AREA	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Provider Services	75	68%
Access and care management	35	32%

It is encouraging that customers have communicated positive comments about the service they have received. Examples of compliments made are-

- My social worker has been very supportive and helpful at all times. I cannot fault her professionalism.
- All the staff that have looked after me have been kind, helpful and polite. I praise them for all their help.
- I have had really good treatment from all the team. I could not have had better treatment anywhere else.
- The worker has given my Dad excellent service. She is an angel helping him through a difficult illness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A big thank you for the very efficient way I was helped to use equipment and complete forms following my hip replacement.
7	Mediation Mediation continues to be an important part of addressing complaints. This method has been used successfully to resolve 6 complaints in the last year, avoiding these progressing to the LGO. We will continue to encourage this method of resolution where customers are willing to engage.

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