

Report to Scrutiny Panel

Name of Scrutiny Panel	Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board	
Meeting Date	21 October 2021	
Subject	Adult Services and Wellbeing Complaints and Compliments	
Wards Affected	All	
Report of	Director for Adult Services and Wellbeing	
Type of Item (please tick✓)	Review existing policy	
	Development of new policy	
	Performance management (inc. financial)	✓
	Briefing (inc. potential areas for scrutiny)	
	Statutory consultation	
	Council request	
	Cabinet request	
	Member request for scrutiny (CCFA)	

Why is it coming here?

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding complaints and compliments received by Adult Services and Wellbeing Directorate. The reporting period covered by the report is from the 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

What are the key points?

During this reporting period The Adult Services and Wellbeing Directorate received a total of 53 representations including 22 compliments.

The following report provides an outline and analysis of the nature and type of complaints and compliments received.

The Directorate responds to all complaints by following the statutory procedures and seeks to learn and improve services as a result of complaints received.

Details of complaints received by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will be documented in a separate report.

Possible courses of action

Members are asked to consider and comment on this report.

Contact Officer

Richard Noble, Complaints and Compliments Officer

Should this report be exempt?

No

Background

The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 requires Local Authorities to set procedures for dealing with Adult Social Care Services representations from service users or people advocating on their behalf. The Act requires systems to be in place to provide feedback on complaints to the management of services provided.

These representations will be used to identify trends or patterns within the service and, where appropriate, will be used to inform service improvements or developments going forward.

In Calderdale, Members receive Annual reports monitoring complaints and compliments received.

Main Issues for Scrutiny

1. Overview – AHSC

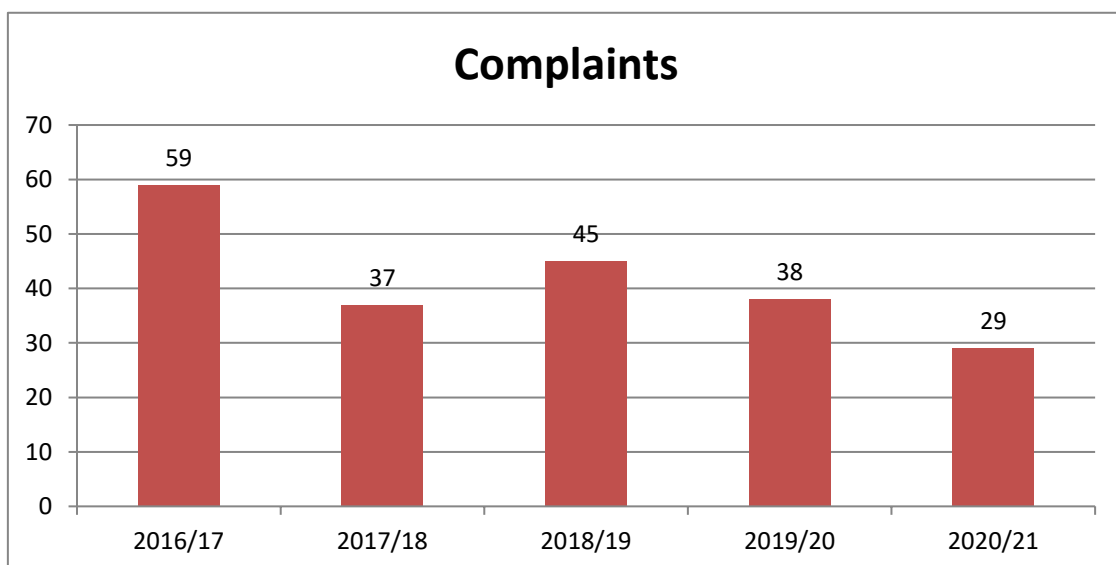
During this period, a total of 53 representations were received. These were categorised in the following way:

- 29 Complaints (feedback requiring investigation and response)
- 2 Local Government Ombudsman complaints
- 22 Compliments

The Complaints and Compliments Officer provides regular updates to the performance board and works closely with the service to ensure complaints are dealt with in a timely and professional manner and that the team are customer focussed. There is an emphasis on continuous improvement and when required changes have been agreed and implemented by the service.

Year on year comparison for 2019/20 saw a reduction of 9 complaints compared with the previous period.

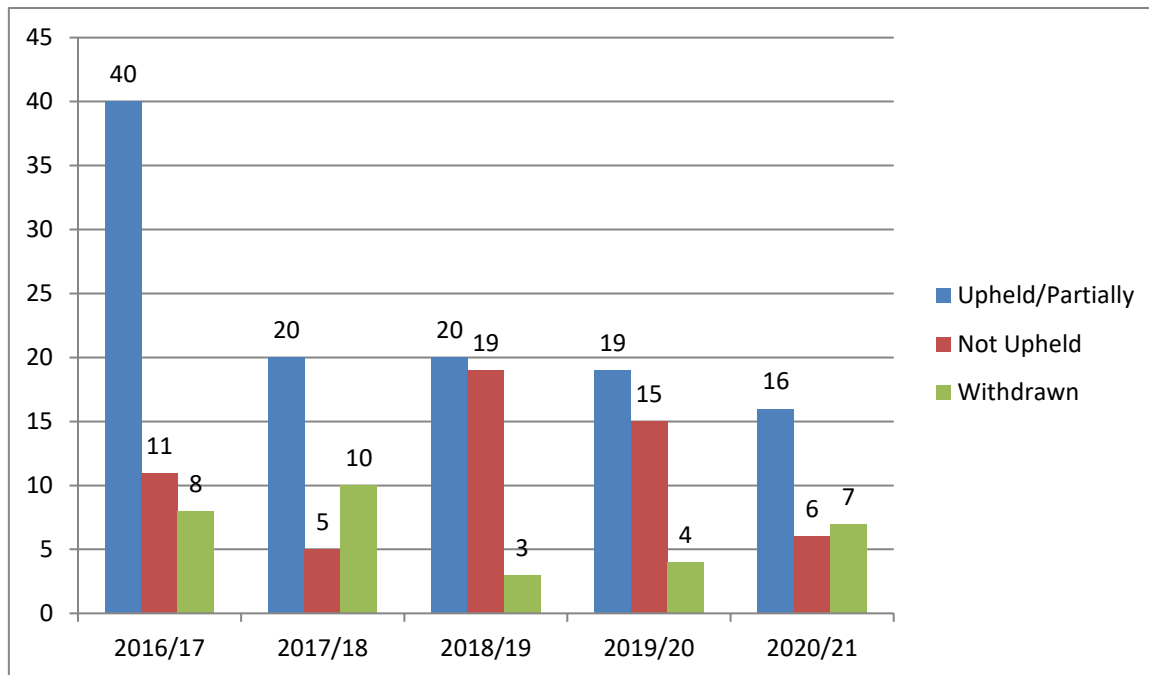
Year on Year Comparisons of complaints received over the last 5 years.



2. Complaints Outcomes

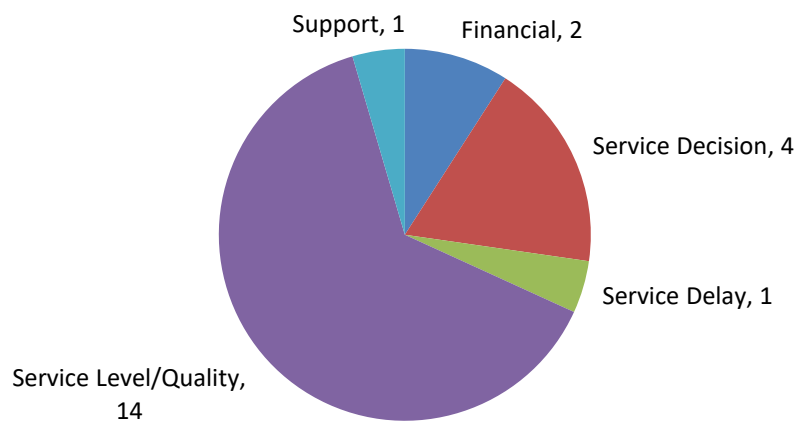
Of the 29 complaints that were received:

- 6 were upheld
- 10 were partially upheld
- 6 were not upheld
- 7 were withdrawn by the complainant



3. Type of Complaint

The chart below shows the categories of complaints that were investigated (not inclusive of the 7 which were withdrawn).



The greatest number of complaints received were in respect of service level/quality. In comparison to 2019/20 the same number of complaints were received; however, this has significantly reduced given the challenges faced by services this year from those received in 2018/19 (22). The Complaints and Compliments Officer continues to work closely with the Improvement Support Officer to ensure that training and continual improvement and learning is implemented to improve this service area. They will ensure the Complaints and Compliments Training highlights examples of where service improvements can be made.

Most complaints focus on the level and standard of care received by the service users.

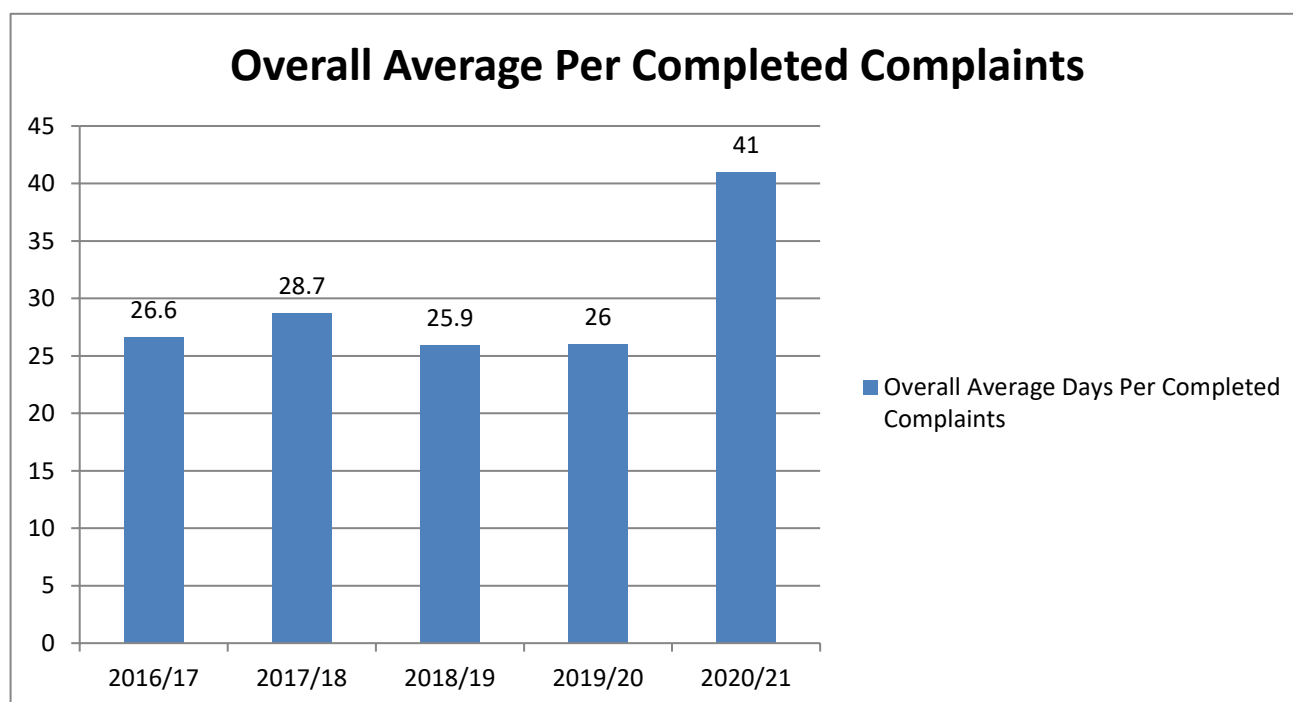
Other areas of concern were 4 complaints regarding decisions made by the service; however, this is a significant reduction compared to 13 complaints received during the previous period 2019/20.

The remainder of complaints received concerned matters such as:

- Care placements and fees.
- Conduct of Social Workers towards the service users and family members.
- Issues surrounding discharge from hospital.

4. Response Times

The table below details the overall average response times for completed complaints across the service and provides comparisons over the last 5 years.

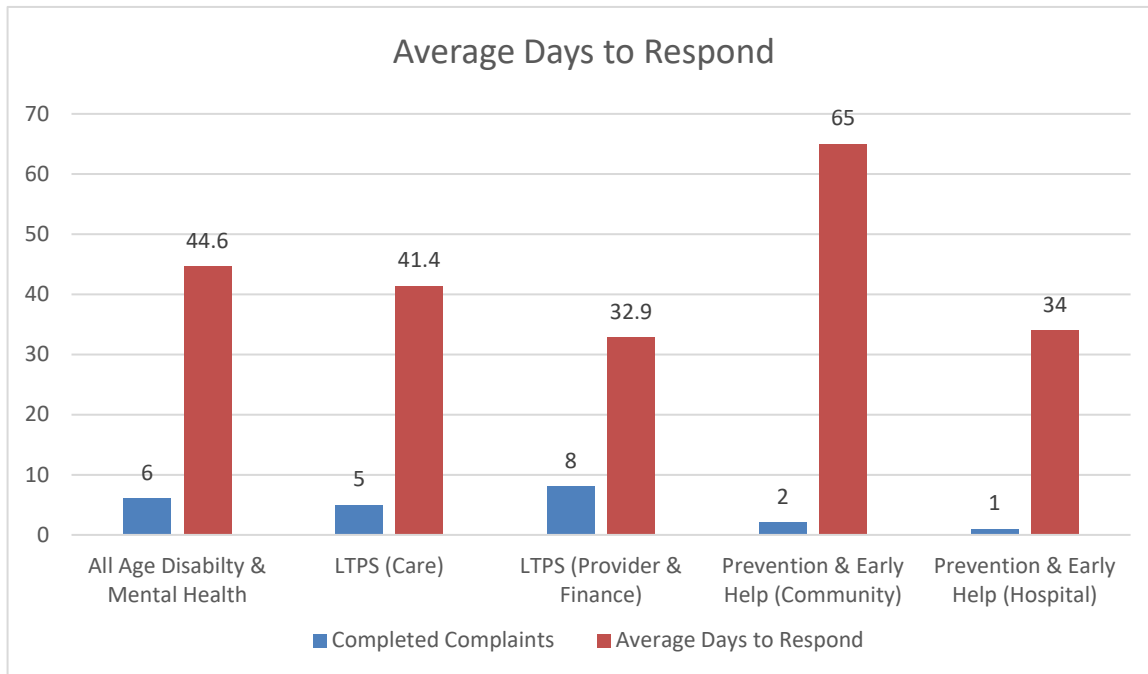


It is noted that the average response time increased significantly during the reporting period compared to previous years. It should be noted that complaints received during the start of the pandemic, were prioritised, and investigated however due to the increased demands on the service during the pandemic leniency on response times for non-priority matters was agreed.

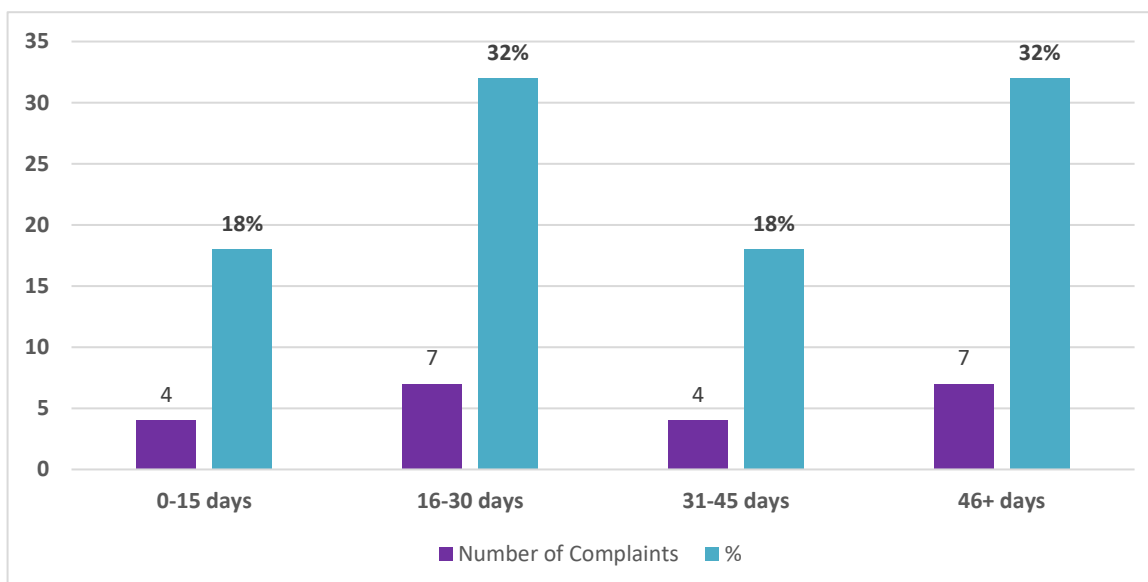
It is expected that these averages will reflect a positive change in the next reporting period.

During this reporting period, team structures were changed, and it was agreed that the Complaints and Compliments Officer would report on the services rather than individual teams. The graph below compares response times per service area. Due to these changes, it isn't possible to compare with the previous reporting year, however, comparisons will be included from the next reporting year.

Of the 22 completed investigations, the average response times were as follows:



There is no statutory timescale for responding to individual complaints, however we apply 15 working days to measure performance. The graph below details how many complaints were completed at different stages, whilst also providing as a percentage, over given timescales.



Eleven complaints exceeded 30 days to be resolved. It should be noted that due to the complexity of complaints this often demands input from multiple stakeholders and service areas, e.g., external providers and the service user's family members. When this occurs, the time taken for a full investigation is inflated.

The Complaints Team have liaised closely with the Service Improvement Officer for Adults & Wellbeing, meeting regularly to review complaints and develop suitable action plans.

To help improve performance and response times a new service complaints procedure has been devised, with clear processes to follow, revised timescales for chasing responses and where necessary, escalation path to Service Managers. From July, a new monthly performance chart will be produced, detailing the percentage of complaints that have been completed within set timescales and will include a rolling 12month period.

The Complaints and Compliments Officer has redesigned the complaints training and has had very positive feedback and uptake from Adults & Wellbeing.

5. Learning from complaints

The Complaints and Compliments Team promote an open and accountable approach, focus on lessons learned identified from complaints and harnessing this insight to make recommendations for improvements to processes and systems.

Examples of positive outcomes to be applied to learning below:

Complaint:

- A social worker, who was responsible for organising a homecare package, which was not implemented due to a lack of communication, left the complainant with no confidence in the social worker.

Outcome/response

The service will ensure that the importance of timely and appropriate contact, together with effective communication is prioritised with families and service users. There is also a focus on ensuring avoidable delays in support planning which can have an adverse effect on an individual's outcomes and in this instance, affected returning home from a care home.

Complaint:

- Concerns were raised by a service users' family who was in receipt of a home care package, due to the unprofessional attitude of the registered manager and meetings being cancelled at short notice.

Outcome/response

The provider is to ensure their staff and management contact the Social Work Team to work through any issues, undertake further training on investigating complaints, concerns, and communication through leadership. Spot checks on staff to monitor improved communication with families and improve general recording of time records.

Complaint:

- Failure to provide appropriate support and care to a service user which led to a safeguarding concern being raised by the Community Matron.

Outcome/response

The investigation highlighted a requirement to focus on Care Act principles, quality assurance and risk assessments. There was also a need to ensure cases are escalated to management, so that discussions can be held that may involve different teams to pick up cases at different times.

6. Compliments

Adult Services and Wellbeing received 22 compliments during the reporting period. All compliments are logged on the Complaints and Compliments system and sent to Service Managers to share with their teams.

Some extracts of compliments Received:

- When I needed help with my mum, at a very sensitive time, you came to my rescue. You are professional, caring, and compassionate. Such an ideal combination to be a social worker.
- Just to let you know the fire has been fitted and it's beautiful. The whole house is so lovely and warm now as I have 2 chimneys and the heat warms the upstairs as well through those.

I am so grateful for all your help and will never forget the kindness that both you and the Council have given me. It's such a pleasure now being in the living room and not shivering. Thank you again so much. Thank you doesn't seem enough as I have never been so grateful for someone's help.

- I am writing to express my appreciation of the support that has been given (and continues to be given) to my 93-year-old father, since his decline in health before Christmas. Every single person with whom we have had contact has been courteous, kind, caring and efficient, and as a team have provided him with the support he needed to continue to live at home. Additionally, as I live in Sheffield and am the nearest relative, the relevant departments have enabled me to feel reassured that he is safe and able to maintain his independence - and therefore by extension have supported me as well.

I particularly want to single out the lady who arranged my father's stair lift. This was done at a time when he was particularly vulnerable and of all the many aids and practical support measures that he has received, this has been the most life-changing for him. Considering that this all happened over a busy Christmas period, and in the middle of difficult pandemic-related circumstances, the speed and efficiency with which it was organised is particularly impressive. Sadly, I never took the lady's name, but I hope you will be able to track her down from my father's case notes and pass on our gratitude.

My father is still in receipt of much support from various agencies and will continue to need that support for the rest of the time he has left. It will make that time as comfortable as it can be, and once again, I wish to put on record the gratitude of the whole family.

- I know from my personal experience care charges can be a very emotive area, that along with the complex laws that are applied to the charges. You and your team definitely go above working to Calderdale Council's values of everyone different, everyone matters.

This pandemic has shown that we still have some absolutely amazing people helping and supporting so many people, often behind the scenes and more often than not overlooked despite being crucial to ensure vital care services continue. Thank you again for all you and your teams help

- I have had to learn so much about the elderly suffering with dementia and I would say 99% of the advice has come from gateway to Care. I do not know how I'd survive if it wasn't for your help. Sometimes I feel at a loss, but you are my saving grace. You and your team are all there for me and the help is invaluable. I never feel rushed, and you make me feel that my call is important.

I have not made notes of all your names, however, you will be recorded on my mum's records, so thank you.

7. Ongoing Training & Development

The Complaints and Compliments Team provide training and support for all colleagues who are required to investigate complaints. The aim is to provide training that specifically relates to their individual area and working practices and identifies how to define a complaint, how to complete a robust investigation and how to respond fairly and proportionately.

The sessions have been redesigned with a new PowerPoint presentation and are currently being delivered remotely; there has been a positive uptake for the training from Adult Social Care.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT CONTACT:

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