

Report to Scrutiny Board

Name of Scrutiny Board	Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board
Meeting Date	7 December 2023
Subject	Adult Services and Wellbeing Complaints and Compliments
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Director for Adult Services and Wellbeing

Why is it coming here?

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding complaints and compliments received for the Adult Services and Wellbeing Directorate. The reporting period covered by the report is from the 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and supplements the data provided on the Council's website. [Council complaints \(calderdale.gov.uk\)](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council-complaints)

What are the key points?

During this reporting period The Adult Services and Wellbeing Directorate received a total of one hundred and thirty-two representations. Including fifty-nine complaints, which are inclusive of the Local Government Ombudsman complaints and seventy-three compliments.

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

The Directorate diligently adheres to all statutory procedures in addressing complaints and actively endeavours to derive valuable insights and enhance services through the feedback it receives.

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

Possible courses of action (Recommendations)

Members are asked to consider and comment on this report.

Contact Officer

Faye Hamer, Customer First Operational Lead

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.

Good complaint handling requires effective procedures and well-trained staff alongside a positive complaints culture that enables those procedures to achieve maximum impact.

Calderdale must embrace complaints through increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance.

The Council produces a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation's complaint handling performance and compares it with previous years.

Main Issues for Scrutiny

1. OVERVIEW

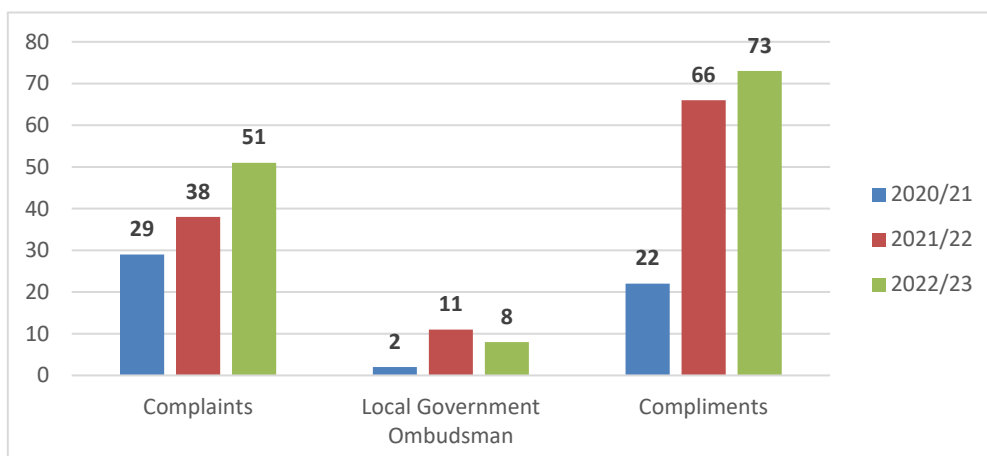
During this period, a total of one hundred and thirty-two representations were received. These have been categorised in the following way:

- Fifty-one Complaints.
- Eight Local Government Ombudsman complaints.
- Seventy-three Compliments.

The Complaints and Compliments Officer, consistently provides periodic updates to the performance board and maintains a close collaborative rapport with the service. This proactive approach aims to manage complaints promptly, and adeptly in adherence to high professional standards, while also promoting a customer-centric approach within the team.

Central to this process is a dedication to continuous improvement, underscored by a commitment to identifying and addressing areas for refinement within the complaint handling process. Upon identification, any proposed changes are subsequently integrated into the service.

The following graph provides a comparison of the representations received over the last three years.

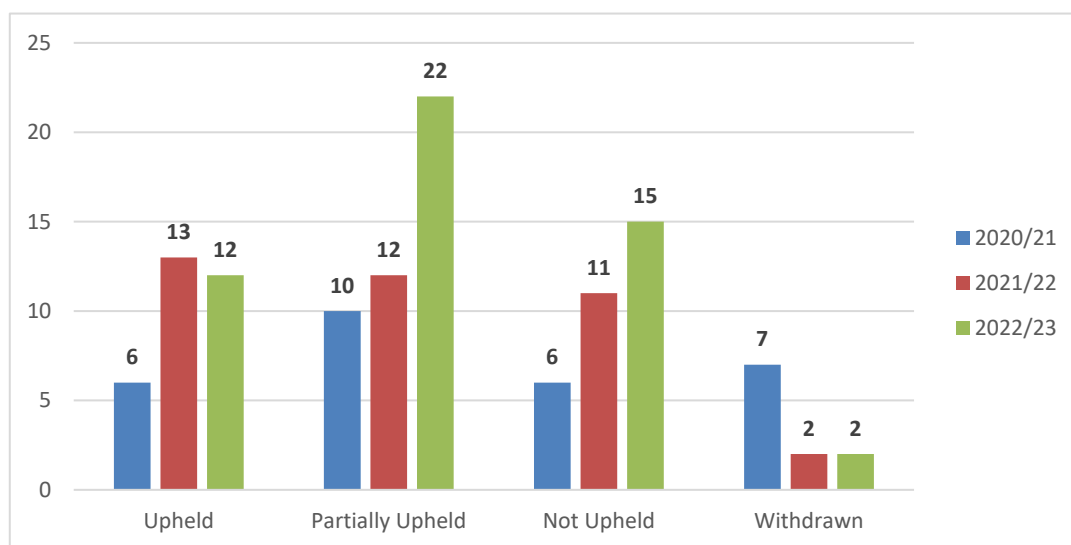


2. COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

Of the fifty-one complaints that were received:

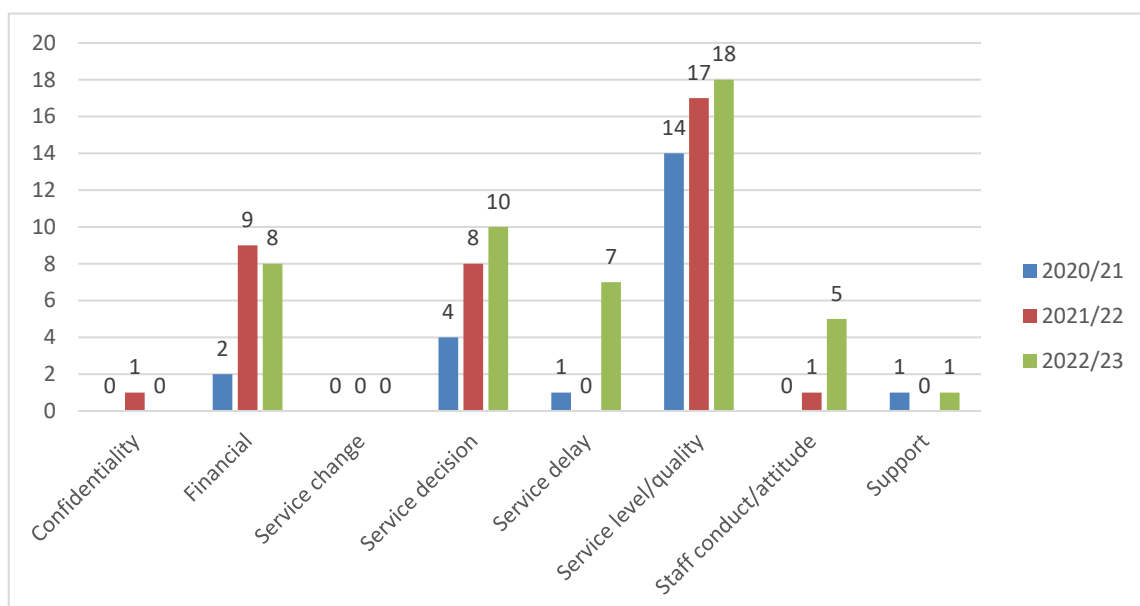
- Twelve were upheld.
- Twenty-two were partially upheld.
- Fifteen were not upheld.
- Two were withdrawn by the complainant.

The following graph displays the outcomes for complaints received over the last three years.



3. TYPE OF COMPLAINT

The chart below shows the categories of complaints that were investigated (not inclusive of the two which were withdrawn) and compares against the previous three years.



The category of service level/quality accounted for the most significant number of complaints, totalling eighteen, a slight increase compared to the previous year.

Among these eighteen complaints, one stemmed from the quality of home improvements within the Accessible Homes Agency. The remaining complaints exclusively pertained to the level and quality of care received, either in relation to social workers or care providers. Eleven of these complaints were either upheld or partially upheld.

The aspect of service delay experienced the most notable year-on-year escalation, with seven complaints recorded, marking a significant rise compared to the absence of such complaints in the previous year.

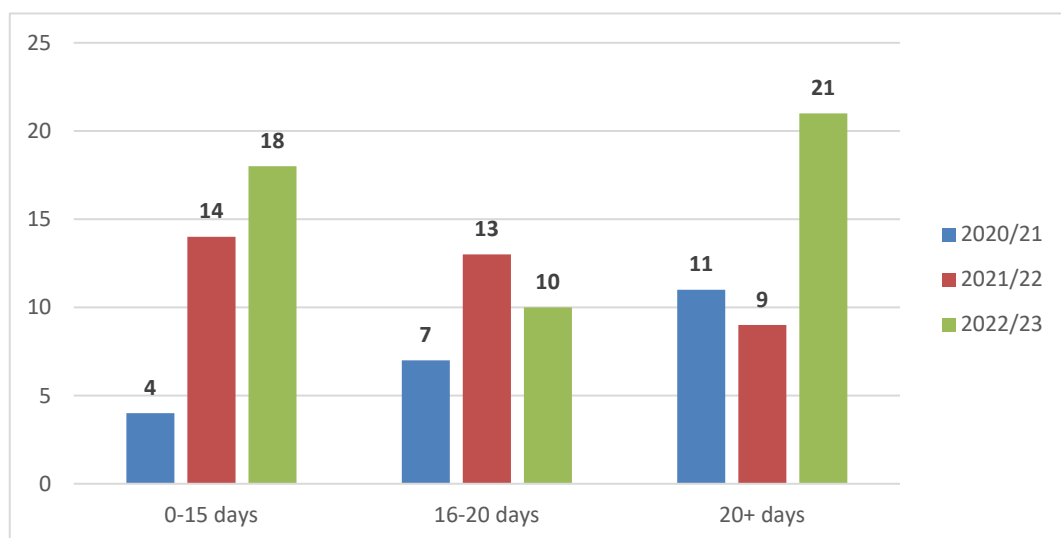
The Complaints and Compliments Officer closely collaborates with the service's Improvement Support Officer to ensure the effective implementation of training initiatives and a culture of continuous improvement and learning. Moreover, the Complaints and Compliments Officer actively participates in regular Performance Board meetings, delivering updates to the service concerning complaint themes, performance metrics, and identified areas of concern.

The Complaints and Compliments Training sessions also serve as a platform to demonstrate instances where service enhancements are attainable.

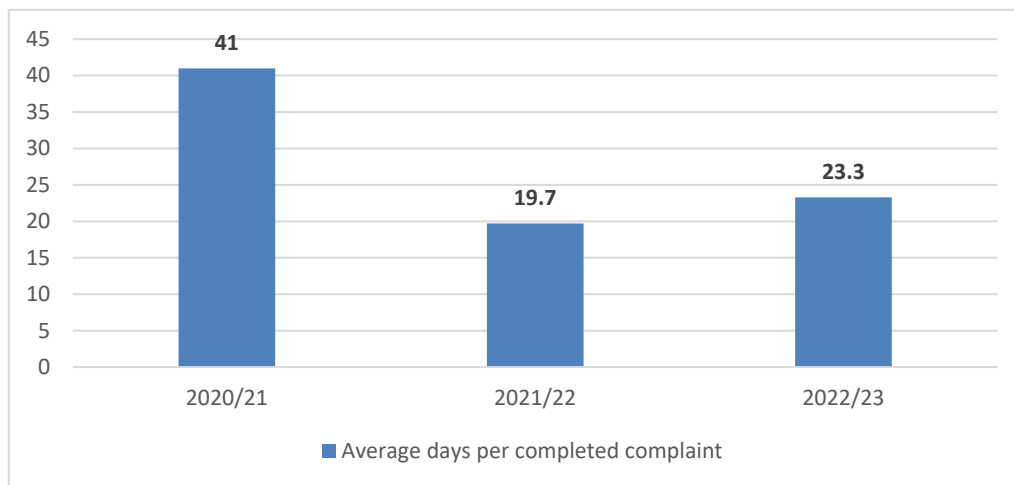
4. RESPONSE TIMES

There is no statutory framework mandating specific response times for individual complaints, however our performance measurement for 22/23 is based on a 15-working day timeframe.

The graph below shows the number of complaints concluded at 0-15 days, 16-20 days and over 20 days for the last three years investigations.



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



Throughout the designated reporting period, the average response times exhibited a general increase when compared to the preceding year, although they remained below the levels observed in 2020/21.

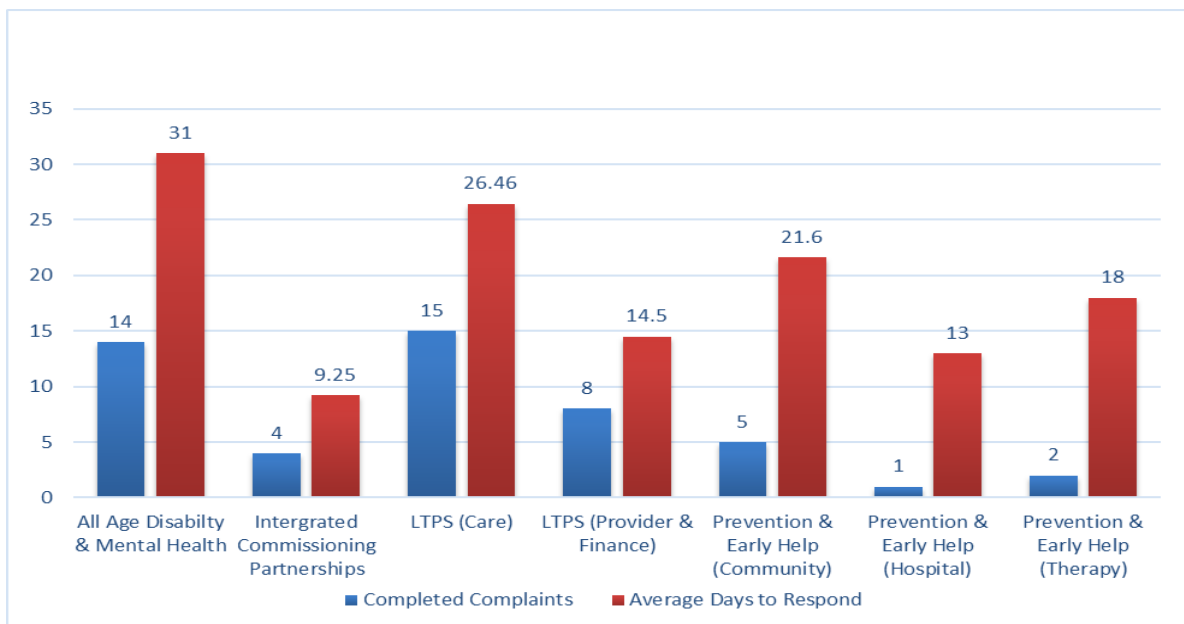
Examination of the data for the 2022/23 period, for the forty-nine investigated complaints, reveals the following breakdown:

- Eighteen cases were concluded by the 15th day (36.73%)
- Ten cases were finalized between the 16th and 20th day (20.41%)
- Twenty-one cases required more than 20 days for resolution (42.86%)

The cumulative percentage of complaints addressed within 20 days stood at 57.14%.

In line with our commitment to meeting customer expectations, a 20-working day target for responding to complaints has been implemented, effective from the 2023/24 period. Moreover, the introduction of a new complaints database, which became operational in April 2023, incorporates automated email alerts designed to expedite the process of receiving complaint responses. It is anticipated that the system enhancements will be reflected in next year's report.

Of the forty-nine completed investigations; the average response times by teams are displayed in the following graph:



The analysis reveals that the sector of All Age Disability exhibited the longest average response times, followed by Long Term Personalised Support (Care).

These observed timeframes have been subject to comprehensive discussions with the respective services. It is worth noting that these extended periods can be attributed, to a significant extent, to the operational pressures they currently face. In response, more officers will be supported with complaints handling, thereby enhancing their proficiency, and getting them engaged in the complaint resolution process.

On a positive note, Prevention & Early Help (Hospital) and Long-Term Personalised Support (Provider & Finance) were notable exceptions, demonstrating response times falling beneath the established 15-day benchmark. The remaining services reported positive overall average response times.

Robust monitoring and addressing of these response times remain pivotal. One forum this is the monthly participation of the Complaints and Compliments Officer in the Adults Performance Board meetings, where emerging trends and performance nuances are scrutinised and managed.

5. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

The Complaints and Compliments Team promote an open and accountable approach, focussing on lessons learned from the complaints they receive. This insight is used to make recommendations to improve processes and systems.

Below are examples of where positive outcomes have been applied from the identified learnings.

- Lack of communication from the Lower Valley team, which resulted in an over payment of care fees being paid to a care home, leaving the family frustrated with the process.

Outcome/response

Improve the communication within the team, ensure that when staff leave the team, a named person is allocated to a case so there is a direct person to call for help and support. Also, ensure care homes take responsibility when taking payments from individuals who have dropped under the threshold.

- Family disputed care chargers, due to the care log record at father's house, showing that staff visited but only did very short calls and did not appear too much whilst there.

Outcome/response

Contracts team informed and alerted to monitor the quality assurance that the provider should be doing around care logs and records. Staff at Local Care Services, to have refresher training on recording to help them improve what is documented and training on effective communication.

- Inadequate support to meet the service user's needs.

Outcome/response

Reflective learning session to be had with staff regarding the importance of timely and effective communication with family members if consent is obtained.

- Communication from Commissioning Manager and conduct of All Age Disability (AAD) worker.

Outcome/response

Clear communication as to who is responsible for responding when contacted by a family member, with an enquiry about supported living when several agencies are involved.

6. COMPLIMENTS

Adult Services and Wellbeing received seventy-three compliments during this 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:

- A huge thank you for your help and support today. I thought it went well, if they can follow the plan, hopefully it will be less to worry about. I did email gateway to care with my concerns this morning. I have been very impressed with your professional attention and attitude and exceptional advice with dealing with my concerns. I would be happy for you to pass this email on to your superior as I think you should be rewarded for your admirable work. It has been a trying time for me, and I appreciate everything you have done.
- I'm writing to thank you for everything Calderdale Council Social Services have done for my dad and me – most notably in the last week - and to let you know what brilliant staff you have, if you didn't already know. Ever since I wrote in January 2021, to ask what support might be possible to support my dad with his dementia, and you instantly took things forward. I have had nothing but praise and thanks for everything they and many others have done.
- I first wanted to thank you for your patience and kind encouragement when I was struggling with the Pension Credit Agency. It was your insistence that they had got it wrong that made me persevere. And it was especially helpful to have a friendly human being to help and guide me through a host of new terms and bewildering information in the early days of Mum's move. So, a great big thank you from me.
- I wanted to thank you, especially for your lovely manner, support and genuine kindness during phone contact and felt you were doing your very best for me and my mum.
- I just want to thank you for the timely support you provided, to ensure we could progress urgent discharge home. We were made aware at lunch time and his condition had deteriorated rapidly, the family were very anxious that he would not wish to remain in hospital and would want to be at home with his wife, daughters & family at the end of his life. Thank you so much for your support at such short notice, I'm aware on Duty you can be so busy, but you were amazing, excellent communication and kept contact with me until discharge could go ahead. This relayed to family with a reassurance we were progressing discharge as soon as possible was helpful.
- Social worker teams face hard work, and you will never be forgotten. My dad appreciated everything you did for him and sadly he cannot thank you in person.

7. BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking from the Yorkshire and Humber region is generally collated twice per year.

The data received from the past twelve months can be found on the following attachment. Please note, not all regions supplied their information at the time of writing this report.



Copy of Adults
Benchmarking ASC 2

Eight from the fifteen regional authorities provided information, and from these eight, Calderdale had the joint third lowest number of complaints received (fifty-one), however, had the second highest upheld/partially upheld (sixty-nine).

Comparing the Ombudsman figures, Calderdale received the third lowest number of enquiries received (eight) and investigations (four).

8. ONGOING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Complaints and Compliments Team provide training and support for all colleagues who are responsible for investigating complaints. The future aim is to provide training that specifically relates to individual area's and working practices. The main topics are how to identify and define a complaint, how to complete a robust investigation and how to respond fairly and proportionately.

The latest sessions have been redesigned with an updated PowerPoint presentation and are delivered remotely; sessions are currently arranged either when requested, or when identified by the Complaints and Compliments Officer.

It is important to highlight that these training sessions undergo continuous assessment to ensure their relevance and that they follow current guidelines. These sessions are conducted through remote PowerPoint presentations. Encouragingly, there has been a positive response to the training, particularly within the Adult Social Care department.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT CONTACT:

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