

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 AUGUST 2016

ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT April 2015 to March 2016

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Summary

The report provides information on the number, type and other information on adult social care complaints received during the period April 2015 - March 2016. It also highlights some examples of the many positive things people have said about the provision of adult social care in Medway over the same period and the service improvements that the Council has made as a result of lessons learnt from complaints.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, requires local authorities to have in place procedures for dealing with complaints relating to Adult Social Care.
- 1.2 There is a further statutory requirement to produce and publish an annual report specifying the number of complaints received, the number of complaints which the Council decided were well-founded, and the number of complaints that the Council has been informed have been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).
- 1.3 In accordance with the council's constitution, paragraph 21.2 (c)(iii) of the Overview and Scrutiny rules, this committee is responsible for the review and scrutiny of all the functions and duties of the council under relevant legislation in force from time to time and relating to residential and day care, domiciliary care, respite care and social work for older people, adults with physical disabilities, adults with mental health problems and learning disabilities, homecare services and hospital social work.

2. Background

- 2.1 The aim of adult social care is to make sure that local people get the best possible care during the times in their lives when they need help. There may be occasions when things go wrong or when people are unhappy with the service they receive. When this happens people should and have a right to complain. The Council's complaints arrangements focus on dealing with problems quickly and effectively, putting things right and learning from complaints received, to further improve services. This report explains how the Council is doing in this respect, providing information on the number, type and other information on adult social care complaints.
- 2.2 It is also important to reflect on the compliments and thanks received, frequently remarking on the professionalism and commitment of staff, which can provide an equally valuable insight into the provision of adult social care services. This report therefore also highlights some examples of the positive things people have said about the provision of adult social care services.
- 2.3 The Council uses complaints and compliments as important learning opportunities. We use the information from complaints to make changes and improvements to our services.

3. Complaints Process

- 3.1 The Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 introduced a single, more customer focused approach to complaint handling across health and social care. This consists of a single local resolution stage, intended to help resolve cases quickly, in a manner that best meets the needs of the complainant and then, if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome, referral to either the Local Government Ombudsman or the Health Service Ombudsman.
- 3.2 Medway Council's complaint arrangements focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for those making a complaint. The aim is to give the service user answers or an explanation to help them to understand what happened and, where appropriate, an apology and a commitment to change the way things are done. The objective is to provide reassurance that when a complaint is upheld the errors made will not be replicated either to them, or to anyone else, and that the Council will take action to ensure this.

4. Managing Complaints

- 4.1 Complaints that are made verbally and are solved within 24 hours are not recorded as a formal complaint. An example is where a service user contacts their care manager because they have not received minutes of a meeting and the care manager sends the minutes the next day, this is not a formal complaint.
- 4.2 A complaint can be made verbally to any staff member, by telephone, by e-mail or in writing. The complaint must be sent to the Social Care Complaints

Manager (SCCM) who will assess the complaint and the seriousness of the issues raised to establish the risk and actions needed to reduce that risk. Complaints are acknowledged within three working days. The social care complaints manager will determine the most appropriate course of action for resolving the complaint which, in line with good practice, will be that staff at the point of delivery should discuss and address the complaint with the complainant as quickly as possible and respond in writing or by e-mail within 20 working days.

- 4.3 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Medway complaints process and an acceptable resolution cannot be offered, the complainant is informed about their right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The link to the Local Government Ombudsman website is included in the response to the complaint. In addition, leaflets about the LGO, providing information on how to complain, are available for complainants from the social care complaints manager. In dealing with any complaint, the LGO will consider how the Council has dealt with the complaint, including the reasonableness and appropriateness of the Council's decisions.
- 4.4 During the course of making a complaint, a service user may require assistance from an advocate or an interpreter. Advocacy and interpreting services can be arranged by the social care complaints manager. These services will then help service users to make a complaint, to understand the process or speak for them if they wish and support them throughout the complaints process.
- 4.5 In managing complaints we are guided by the following principles of good complaint handling:
- Getting it right first time
 - Providing clear information about how to complain
 - Providing support to the complainant
 - Being customer focused
 - Listening to customers
 - Being open and accountable
 - Acting fairly and proportionately
 - Recording complaints
 - Responding in a timely way
 - Putting things right if a mistake was made
 - Learning from complaints and seeking continuous improvement
- 4.6 Quarterly reports are presented through the year to the Children and Adults Directorate Management Team, as well as to the Adults senior management team, providing information on the number and type of complaints and learning from complaints as well as recommendations to improve services if this was appropriate.

5. Role of the Local Government Ombudsman

- 5.1 The role of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) is to provide redress in cases of service failure, which has caused injustice to the public and seeks to resolve cases informally where it can, determining the reasonableness of decisions of bodies being complained about.
- 5.2 The Local Government Ombudsman's recommendations aim to put complainants back in the position that they were in before the maladministration occurred. It is a free service to complainants.
- 5.3 The LGO will consider complaints from people whose social care is funded or partly funded by the Council and from people who 'self-fund' from their own resources. The LGO will ensure that everyone has access to the same independent Ombudsman Service, regardless of how the care service is funded.

6 Complaint Analysis: 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

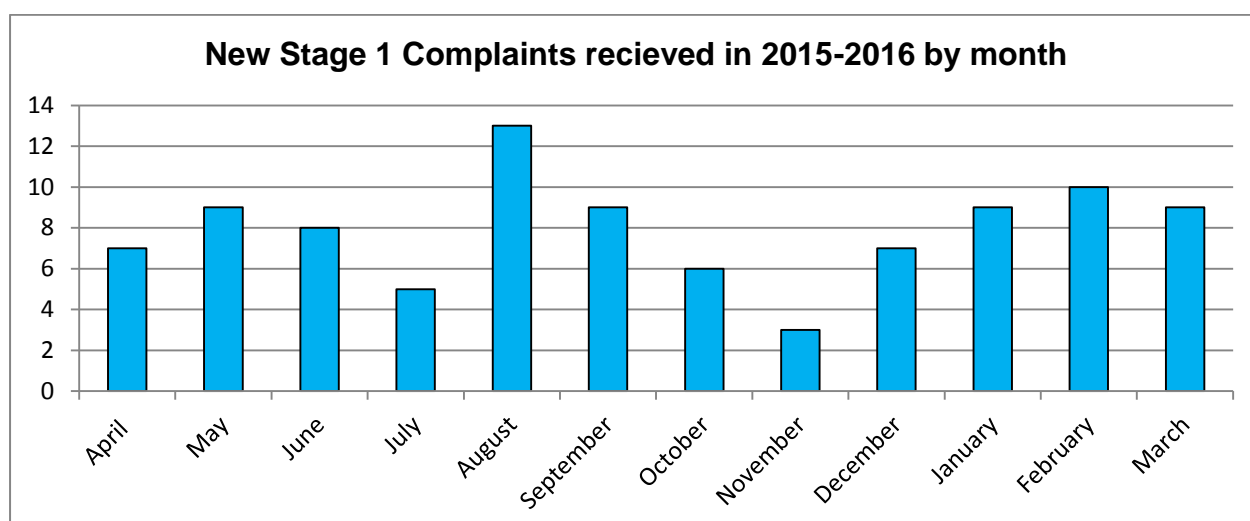
6.1 Complaints handled in 2015-2016

Brought forward from 2014-2015	20
New complaints received between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016	95
Complaints handled between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016	115
Complaints dealt with under safeguarding procedures	0
Complaints withdrawn	9
Complaints responded to between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016	92
Open complaints still waiting for a response at year-end	14

6.2 Breakdown of Stage 1 complaints, received between 1/4/15 to 31/03/16

	April	May	June	Q.1	July	Aug	Sep	Q.2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q.3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4	Total
Complaints carried over from 2014-2015	20				18				14				10				
Total complaints received	7	9	8	24	5	13	9	27	6	3	7	16	9	10	9	28	95
Total complaints closed	5	6	13	24	14	4	10	28	10	3	3	16	5	14	5	24	92
Total number of complaints withdrawn	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	3	3	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	9
Total number of complaints responded to in 20 days.	2	3	5	10	6	3	5	14	3	2	3	8	3	8	3	14	46
% of complaints dealt with within 20 days*	40%	50%	38%	42%	43%	75%	50%	50%	30%	67%	100%	50%	60%	57%	60%	58%	50%
% of complaints acknowledged within 3 days	86%	100%	100%	95%	100%	85%	90%	92%	83%	100%	100%	94%	33%	70%	100%	68%	88%
Total number of complaints not responded to at end of each quarter				18				14				10				14	

6.3 New Stage 1 complaints received in 2015–2016, by month



6.4 Comparison of number of complaints received, by year

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
91	98	95

6.5 Number of complaints carried over into next financial year

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
14	20	14

6.6 Two complainants made more than one complaint; one made three complaints, the other made two complaints. In 2014-2015, three complainants complained more than once. In 2013-14 six complainants made more than one complaint.

6.7 Eleven complainants (11%) were not satisfied with the initial response to their complaint, compared with 11(11%) in 2014-2015 and 16 (19%) in 2013-2014.

6.8 Quarterly breakdown of Stage 1 complaints, 2015-16

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	TOTAL
Total new complaints handled	24	27	16	28	95
Total cases closed	24	28	16	24	92
Total cases responded to within 20 days	10	14	8	14	46
% cases responded to within 20 working days.	42%	50%	50%	59%	50%
% cases acknowledged within 3 days	95%	92%	94%	68%	88%
Total cases waiting for a response as at 31.3.16					14

6.9 Stage 1 complaints by team compared to previous years.

Service	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Physical Disability plus 25		8	12	18	9
Physical Disability, under 25		0			
Learning disability, under 25		10			
Learning Disability, over 25		4	19	13	18
Occupational Therapy	2	2	2	2	1
Disability plus 25	37				
Disability under 25	0	4	19	13	18
Mental Health	3	5	5	4	0
Older People	23	25	14	57	32
Hospital/Integrated discharge	4	9	2		
Commissioning & Partnership	15	19	6	6	
Client Financial Services	13	3			
Customer Contact	12	17	9	14	6
Exchequer Services	14	19	33		1
Total	124*	125*	102 *	114	67

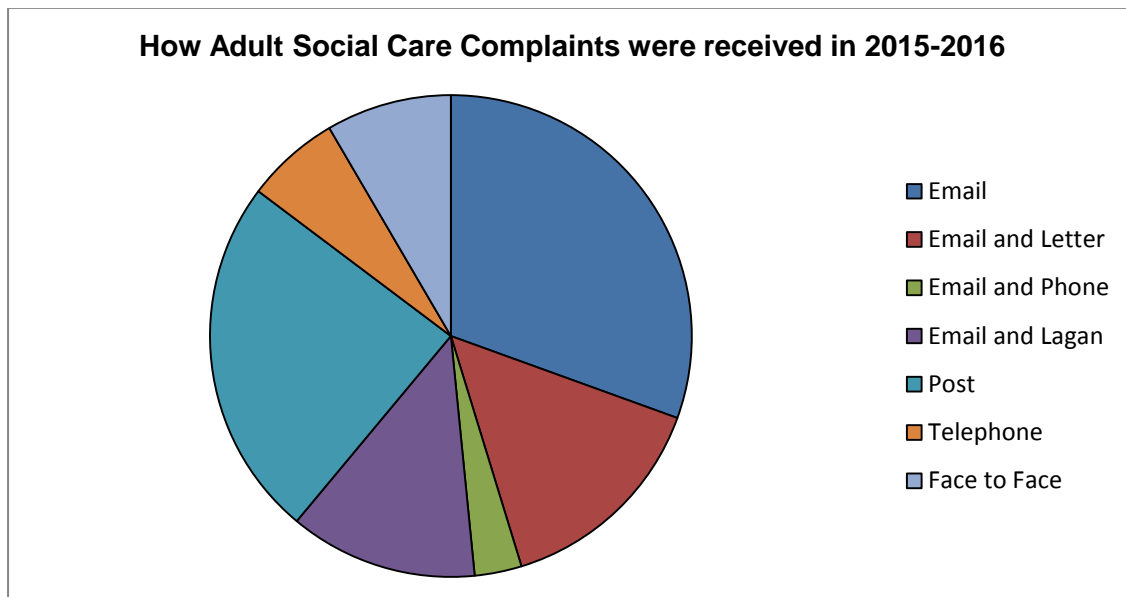
* This number is greater than the number of complaints received as some complaints involved more than one team.

6.10 The number of complaints about the frontline teams in Adult Social Care (not including Partnership Commissioning Team and Client Financial Services) has increased from 54 in 2013-2014 to 63 in 2014-2015, to 69 in 2015-2016.

6.11 How complaints were received in 2015/16

Service users and their relatives can make their complaints through a variety of methods, with e-mail and hard copy post being the dominant channels that are used:

Channel	Number
All contacts involving E-mail	58
	E-mail - 29
	E-mail & letter - 14
	E-mail & phone - 3
	E-mail & Lagan- 12
Post	23
Telephone	6
Face to face at Gun Wharf to the Social Care Complaints Manager	8
Total	95



6.12 Complainant's ethnicity

The information on ethnicity was taken from Framework-I, the electronic information system.

- 63% of complainants were White British.
- 1% were Asian.
- 1% were Asian/British Indian.
- 35% of complainants had no information regarding ethnicity recorded on Framework-i.

7. Timeliness of Responses

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee made a recommendation, in June 2015, that the timescale for adult social care complaints to be responded to should be changed to 20 working days. Medway Council accepted this recommendation, commencing on 1 August 2015. The Council now aims to reply to all complaints within 20 working days, although this may vary depending on the complexity of the case and how many issues are raised. Some complaints can involve several teams and services, for example, customer services, client financial services and older people services.

7.1 Time taken to respond to complaints in 2015-2016.

	Within 10 days	11-20	21-25	26-64	65+	Total
Number of responses	18	28	9	21	16	92
% of complaints answered	20%	30%	10%	23%	17%	100%

7.2 In 2015-2016 forty-six (50%) complaints were answered within the 20 day timescale. This is an improvement on performance in 2014-2015 when 46% of responses were sent out within 20 working days. Fifty-five (58%) complaints were answered in 25 days. Sixteen of the responses that were out of timescale were complaints carried over from 2014-2015.

8. Complaint Types and Outcomes

8.1 Types of issues raised and outcomes for complaints responded to between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016

Complaint type	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	TOTAL
Behaviour or attitude of staff	1	1		2
Lack of support	5		1	6
Standard of service provided	7		3	10
Financial	23	2	7	32
Delays in providing a service	3		3	6
Disagreeing with a decision re service provided	7	1	1	9
Lack of communication	8		7	15
Lack of information	3	1	1	5
Standard of residential care	3		3	6
Standard of home care	6	1	3	10
Standard of respite care	3		1	4
Standard day care				
Total	69	6	30	105

*The total number of issues complained about is greater than the total number of 92 responses sent out in 2015/2016 as one complaint can be about several issues.

8.2 29% percent of the complaints issues answered in 2015/2016 were upheld.

9. Decisions made by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

9.1 The Local Government Ombudsman received eleven complaints about adult social care between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. Eight complaints were investigated and concluded in 2015-2016, including a complaint referred in 2014-2015. Three complaints are still being investigated and one was deemed to be a premature referral and sent back to Medway Council to investigate.

9.2 The Local Ombudsman found that Medway Council was at fault in four cases. In one case the service provider was at fault. In one case Medway Council had rectified the situation; however the Local Ombudsman still deemed Medway Council to be at fault as the remedy only happened because the

complainant went to the LGO. In two cases Medway Council was not found to be at fault.

9.3 The outcomes of the eight concluded investigations are set out below:

- i. Mr D complained to the Local Ombudsman that his mother's property should have been disregarded for 12 weeks when her placement in a residential care home became permanent. He complained that Medway Council and Council B failed to take responsibility for applying the 12 week property disregard. Mr D said his mother had no money to pay her care fees so he had to use his own funds. He said that he was not provided with written information about funding options such as deferred payments. Mr B complained that the two councils were arguing about who was responsible for funding his mother's care when her capital fell below the capital threshold. The Local Ombudsman found that Mrs E was an ordinary resident in Medway after she voluntarily moved into a residential placement in Medway. Initially she funded her own care placement. When her funds fell below the threshold, Medway Council should have completed a financial assessment when she first requested help with funding. The Local Ombudsman also found Medway Council to be at fault for not providing written information about deferred payments. Medway Council refunded the care fees which should have been covered by the Council after her funds fell below the threshold.
- ii. Ms X complained to the Local Ombudsman that Medway Council:
 - Reduced her son's respite care.
 - Failed to make agreed direct payments between May and December 2014.
 - Refused to pay the cost of transporting her son to his day care provision.
 - Failed to carry out a carer's assessment.
 - Failed to identify a suitable respite placement.
 - Failed to investigate her complaint.

The Local Ombudsman's decision was that Medway Council was at fault for delaying an investigation into a complaint made by a solicitor. The Council had apologised for this delay. There was no fault that caused injustice in relation to the other parts of Ms X's complaints.

- iii. Mr F complained to the Local Ombudsman that Medway Council had unfairly charged his son for contributions towards his care. During the Local Ombudsman's investigation, Medway Council accepted that the decision was wrong and told Mr F that his son did not need to contribute towards his care. Medway Council offered the son £500 for the injustice caused to him and apologised to him. Mr F was happy with this outcome and no longer wanted to pursue his complaint. The Local Ombudsman ended the investigation.

- iv. Mr Y, acting on behalf of his mother, complained to the Local Ombudsman that the care provider was late in providing a service on several occasions, that there was a delay in concluding a safeguarding investigation and that a complaint made to Medway Council was not investigated. The Local Ombudsman found that Medway Council was not at fault in the delay regarding the safeguarding investigation, that the complaint was correctly put on hold until the safeguarding investigation was completed. However, the Local Ombudsman found the care provider to be at fault and to have caused injustice for delaying responding to Mr Y's complaints and that the care provider had been late in providing a service on occasions and had not adhered to the care plan. Medway Council agreed to apologise for the provider's failure to adhere to the care plan and agreed to make a payment to Mrs Y for the distress this caused her.
- v. Mr Z complained that his father was not informed that he would have to pay for respite care. Mr Z said that he would have cared for his father at home if he had known that he had to pay for respite care. The Local Ombudsman could not find any evidence that Mr Z or his father was told about the charges for respite care and recommended that Medway Council refunded his father £447.06, which is the difference between the money he would have paid for day care if he had stayed at home and the amount he paid for respite care. Medway Council agreed with this recommendation and apologised to Mr Z that he was not told about the respite care charges. Lessons have been learnt from this complaint and staff are aware that they need to confirm all charges for services in writing.
- vi. Mrs N complained that Medway Council failed to assess her needs properly and withdrew her home care service. The Local Ombudsman found that Medway Council had appropriately assessed her needs and there was no evidence of fault in the council's decision to withdraw Mrs N's home care.
- vii. Mr P complained that he had not been told he had to pay for residential care when he left hospital. The Local Ombudsman did not find Medway Council at fault as this was a private arrangement and Mr P refused to provide details of his finances.
- viii. Mr S complained to the Local Ombudsman that two Councils were arguing about who should pay for his step-mother, Mrs C's care, when her money fell below the capital threshold. She lived in Council B until her needs could not be met at home and her family arranged for her to move to a specialist care home in Medway. The Local Ombudsman found that Mrs C was an ordinary resident in Medway and that Medway Council should have completed a financial assessment as soon as her funds fell below the capital threshold of £23,250. As a result Mrs C continued to pay for her own care when her capital fell below the threshold.

The Local Ombudsman recommended the following actions:

- Medway Council should complete a financial assessment and refund Mrs C's care fees, minus her assessed contribution, which she had paid from May 2014.
- An Apology to be provided to the family and payment of £250.00 to acknowledge their time and trouble in trying to resolve the matter.
- Provision of staff training to relevant staff explaining how ordinary residence is determined and the Council's responsibilities in this regard. An updated policy has been written regarding ordinary residence and discussed at team meetings.

10. Learning from Complaints

10.1 Complaints about financial issues

There were 32 complaints about financial issues in 2015-2016; seven of these complaints were upheld compared with 10 in 2014-2015. The majority of these complaints were about not being informed they would have to pay for services or how much they would have to contribute towards a service. This is an improvement; however the Council needs to continue to ensure that service users are clear about what they have to contribute towards the cost of their care. The examples below illustrate some of the themes in the financial complaints.

- A daughter complained that her mother was not informed that she had to pay for day care. There was a lack of communication about the direct charges payable on the day, such as lunch and the assessed contribution which clients may have to pay directly to Medway Council.
- Another daughter also complained that her mother had not been told the cost of day care. She received an apology for the lack of communication.
- A wife complained that an invoice for outstanding debts was sent to "The Late Mr D". She was upset about the way the letter was addressed and she had been told that the debt would be written off. She received an apology about the way the letter was addressed.
- One complainant could not understand why the number of hours for a carer to provide care in his home had reduced, yet his contribution was still the same. The response to the complaint explained how his contribution had been worked out; this should have been explained at the time of the financial assessment.
- A daughter complained that her mother was charged for day care when she was in hospital and after she died. This complaint was upheld and the invoices were adjusted. There have been previous complaints about charges being made for services that were not provided. While the number of complaints has dropped, the Council still needs to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated.
- A daughter-in-law complained that her mother-in-law was told by staff at the hospital that she would receive free home care for six weeks following her

discharge from hospital. This was not the case and it was explained to the relatives that they had been given incorrect information by the hospital staff.

- A mother complained that she had not been told about having to pay for residential care for her daughter. There was a substantial delay in the referral for a financial assessment to the relevant team. This resulted in the complainant receiving notification of how much she would have to contribute towards her care seven months after the service had commenced. As a remedy, the charges for the seven months were waived.
- There were two complaints about the attitude of the staff member undertaking the financial assessment. Discussions have taken place with staff regarding the sensitive nature of some of the enquiries they have to make, such as noticing a large sum of money had been taken out of an elderly couple's bank account. This could have been a safeguarding issue and the staff member was correct to ask what this money was spent on; however she should have explained why she was questioning how this money was spent.
- There were two complaints about being overcharged for services provided; both these complaints were resolved by crediting their accounts with the money that had been overpaid.
- A mother complained about the way Medway Council managed her disabled son's finances when she asked for money for non essential items for the house. The mother was dissatisfied with the response she received and went to court over the issues of her son's finances. The case was dismissed by the court as Medway Council was not at fault.

10.2 Examples of complaints about services are outlined below:

- A son complained that the care offered to his mother was not good enough, that staff changed his mother's medication without consulting her relatives, his mother did not have her flu jab and that there was poor practice and care. The CQC inspected the care home, a safeguarding referral was made and weekly visits were undertaken by commissioning and partnership officers to ensure that good care was provided.
- A daughter complained about the care provided to her mother by a residential care home. When her mother fell the duty manager and next of kin had not been contacted. The care home took appropriate action and initiated disciplinary procedures and suspended the staff member. They also made sure that all their staff were aware of the organisation's procedures.
- A wife complained that there was no support for her husband when he was discharged from hospital. The discharge from hospital was managed well by a duty worker; however there was a delay in transferring the case over from the integrated discharge team to the community team. As a result of this complaint, all transfers from out of area will have a named worker.
- The mother of a learning disabled young man complained that she was excluded from a professionals meeting to discuss her son's inappropriate

behaviour. The social worker did visit her to inform her about the actions agreed at the meeting. This complaint was not upheld.

- A service user complained that he had not been offered a service following an assessment. He asked to be assessed again and following this assessment he was offered some support to assist him with his housing issues.
- A daughter complained about the delay in arranging respite care for her father. The complainant received an apology for the lack of communication and the delay in providing a service.
- A daughter complained that a carer was two hours late for a call to her father. She and her father received an apology and they were reassured that the Partnership Commissioning Team would be monitoring the performance of the provider to ensure that this does not happen again.

11. Compliments

11.1 Compliments provide valuable information about the quality of Adult Social Care services and identify where they are working well. Ten compliments were sent to the social care complaints manager for logging (it is likely that more were received locally by front line service areas). Quotes from compliments are listed below.

- A daughter, who had complained about the inaccuracy in the invoices she had received in respect of her mother's domiciliary care, wrote to say she was very grateful when the amount was corrected and wrote a letter thanking the complaints officer for sorting the matter out.
- A service user sent a thank you card to thank a staff member from the Community Support Outreach Team "for promoting his independence and helping me develop my confidence. I would not be where I am now without your support. God Bless you".
- An aunt wrote in to say "I value the fact that the care he received was responsive. At each stage, as problems arose the care managers responded appropriately. I valued the good communication. I have been kept in the loop and I feel that my contributions have been acknowledged. I value the fact that his safety was held paramount. I value the consistency of the overview of his care. I value the determination to find ways to support him and provide social contact even when he stubbornly refused offers to join lunch clubs. I value the patience with me as much as him. Overall I know that great efforts were expanded to support him and that these efforts were diligently expanded as his condition deteriorated. Impressively done Medway."
- A daughter e-mailed the care manager to thank her for the care, concern and case management she provided in assessing her father and placing him in dementia residential care. He has settled well and is more mobile and in a better frame of mind. "We are leaving England knowing he is in the best place, with the best care and we are so grateful you were his care manager."

- A daughter wrote in to thank the occupational therapist for all the equipment provided to her mother and for the Blue Badge. She stated that as a result of all this support her mother is looking forward to her 90th birthday. “On Mum’s behalf thank you and your colleagues at Medway Council for your help, advice and practical support enabling Mum to be in her own home during the coming months and years.”
- A wife sent a thank you card to the occupational therapist and the OT team. “On behalf of myself and my husband I would like to thank you all for the care and attention afforded my husband and myself during his illness. Without your help I would not have been able to keep him at home where he passed away in his sleep. Thank you so much.”
- An occupational therapist was thanked for her assistance in obtaining a Blue Badge.
- The following compliment was received by e-mail. “I am a carer for my husband. Caring for him has taken its toll on my health resulting in high blood pressure & anxiety. My GP referred me to 'Tipping the Balance' who helped with diet advice. I have had 8 sessions with a counsellor who proved invaluable. Jeremy Vine on Radio 2 was doing a segment on mental health and how Councils around the UK fail residents due to lack of funds. I emailed the show and told them how excellently I have been looked after, courtesy of my Council, Medway.”
- This compliment was sent by e-mail to the team manager of the occupational therapy team. “I would like to thank you for your telephone call and email in which addresses the shortfall in the DFG for funding the adaptations for M's room. You can only imagine how much stress this has relieved, not just for M's future but also for us as a family unit.”
- A compliment was paid to staff from the Community Support Outreach Team, Medway Mental Health Service, thanking staff for their support over the past four weeks and for the consistency of support. The team said that the service user did not think he would have come so far in his recovery if it had not been for the help given to him.

12. Risk management

- 12.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Not handling complaints properly and importantly, not learning from complaints could put an adult at risk.
Description	Good complaint handling, including the identification of improvement opportunities from complaints received, helps ensure that services are provided in a complete and timely way, minimising the possibility of a vulnerable adult being put at risk.
Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Improved management and control of complaint procedures, learning from complaint analysis, helps to identify and minimise potential risk or impact of risk to adults.

13. Equalities Data

- 13.1 The Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for all, through the delivery and commissioning of high-quality services that are accessible and fair and mainstreaming equality and diversity across all service delivery activities. All new services commissioned are subject to a diversity impact assessment that compels service providers to think carefully about its target audience and to demonstrate how it intends to serve their needs. This gives the Council a better measure of the impact the services are having on the community.
- 13.2 Service users come from many different ethnic backgrounds and many have disabilities. Vulnerable adults are referred to an advocacy service if they need assistance in making a complaint. For example, a complainant who was visually impaired was provided letters in large print. If a complainant is not able to send in a written complaint, staff will see the complainant at a venue that is convenient and assessable for them. Where appropriate, a translator will also be arranged. The service will continue to look at ways to make the complaints process more accessible to adults with disabilities by ensuring that information about how to complain is published in an easy to read format.

14. Financial and Legal Issues

- 14.1 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, requires local authorities to have in place procedures for dealing with complaints relating to Adult Social Care. There is a further statutory requirement to produce and publish an annual report specifying the number of complaints received, the number of complaints which the Council decided were well founded, and the number of complaints that the Council has been informed have been referred to the LGO. The Council must also summarise the subject matter of complaints received, any matters of general importance arising out of those complaints, or the way in which the complaints were handled and any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints.

14.2 There are no financial issues arising directly from this report. However, good practice is always more cost effective than poor performance.

15. Recommendations

15.1 This report is presented for Members' information and comment.

Appendices

None.

Background reports:

None.

Contact:

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