

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 OCTOBER 2021

ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

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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 2020 - March 2021. It also highlights some examples of the positive things people have said about the provision of adult social care in Medway over the same period and the service improvements Medway Council has made because 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 and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
 - 1.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, paragraph 22.2 (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, 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, learning disabilities and homecare services.

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 to improve services.
- 2.2 It is important to reflect on the compliments and thanks received, which provide a valuable insight into the provision of adult social care services. This report highlights some examples of the positive things people have said about the provision of adult social care services, and the professionalism and commitment of staff.
- 2.3 The Council uses complaints and compliments as important learning opportunities 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. There is a single local resolution stage, in which Medway Council must be investigate and resolve the complaint as speedily as possible and in a manner that best meets the needs of the complainant. The legislation stipulates those complaints should be completed six months from the date the complaint was received. If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can make a referral to the Local Government and Social Care 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 that complaints that are solved within 24 hours are not recorded as a formal complaint. An example is if a service user contacts her social worker because she has not received minutes of a meeting and the social worker sends the minutes the next day, this is not a formal complaint.
- 3.3 A complainant can make a complaint verbally to any staff member, by telephone, by e-mail or in writing. The Social Care Complaints Manager (SCCM) assesses the complaint and the seriousness of the issues raised to establish the risk and actions needed to reduce that risk. The Social Care Complaints Manager acknowledges the receipt of the complaint within three working days. The social care complaints manager will determine the most appropriate course of action for resolving the complaint, which will usually be by staff at the point of delivery. Staff 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. In cases that are more complex the response may take longer.

- 3.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Medway complaints process and the complainant feels that the complaint has not been resolved, the Social Care Complaints Manager will inform the complainant of their right to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and provide the complainant with information on how to complain to the LGSCO. In dealing with any complaint, the LGSCO will consider how the Council has dealt with the complaint, including the reasonableness and appropriateness of the Council's decisions.
- 3.5 A service user may require assistance from an advocate or an interpreter. The social care complaints team will arrange an interpreter and provide a list of organisations who can provide an advocacy service. 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.
- 3.6 Quarterly reports provide information on the number and type of complaints and learning from complaints as well as recommendations to improve services if this was appropriate. The Manager for Social Care Complaints presents the quarterly reports to the Adult Social Care Management Team Meeting.

4. Role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 4.1 The role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) 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.
- 4.2 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's recommendations aim to put complainants back in the position they were in before the maladministration occurred.
- 4.3 The LGSCO 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 LGSCO will ensure that everyone has access to the same independent Ombudsman Service, regardless of how the care service is funded.

5. Complaint analysis: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

5.1 Complaints handled in 2020-2021

Brought forward from 2019-2020	10
New complaints received between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	99
Complaints handled between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	109
Complaints responded to between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	96
Complaints withdrawn	5
Open complaints still waiting for a response on 31 March 2020.	8

5.2 Breakdown of Stage 1 complaints, received from 01/04/20 to 31/03/21

	April	May	June	Q.1	July	Aug	Sep	Q.2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q.3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4	Total
Complaints carried over from previous month	10				10				17				3				
Total complaints received	4	7	10	21	6	10	20	36	7	4	4	15	6	14	7	27	99
Total complaints responded to	9	5	5	19	8	6	12	26	17	7	5	29	4	6	12	22	96
Total number of complaints withdrawn	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Total number of complaints responded to in 20 days.	6	4	5	15	6	4	11	21	13	6	5	24	4	6	10	20	80
% of complaints dealt with within 20 days	66%	80%	100%	79%	75%	67%	92%	81%	76%	86%	100%	83%	100%	100%	83%	91%	83%
% of complaints acknowledged within 3 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total number of complaints not responded to at end of each quarter				10				17				3				8	

5.3 Comparison of number of complaints received, by year

2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
99	117	112	83

5.4 Number of complaints, received in 2020-2021, by team.

Team	
Locality 1	23
Locality 2	13
Locality 3	23
Disability under 25	1
Integrated Discharge Team	6
Occupational Therapy	2
AMPH+DOLS	1
Shared Lives Team	0
Commissioning and Partnership	9
Financial Assessment	6
SDS	1
Client Financial Services	22
Client Financial Affairs	1
Total	108*

*This is more than the 99 complaints received as several complaints involved more than one team.

5.5 Comparison of numbers of complaints about the frontline teams in Adult Social Care (not including Partnership Commissioning Team and Client Financial Services).

2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
68	83	79	66

5.6 Complainants accessed the complaints procedure in the following ways:

- Fifty-eight complainants e-mailed the social care complaints manager.
- Thirteen complainants telephoned the social care complaints manager.
- Eleven complainants sent a letter
- Ten complainants sent an email followed by a letter.
- Five complainants contacted the social care complaints manager via Jadu.
- Two complaints were referred by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as premature complaints.

5.7 Complainant's ethnicity

White/British	96
White/Any Other White Background	1
Asian/British Indian	1
Asian/Bangladeshi	0
Black/ Black British/Caribbean	0
Black/ African	0
Other Ethnic group	0
Total	99

6. Timeliness of responses

6.1 Medway Council now aims to reply to social care complaints within 20 working days, although this may vary depending on the complexity of the case and the number of issues complained about. Some complaints can involve several teams and services, for example, client financial services, locality teams, commissioning, service providers and health services.

6.2 Time taken to respond to complaints between 01/04/1/20 to 31/03/21.

	0-20 days	21-25 days	26-64 days	Total
Number of responses	80	7	9	96
% of complaints responded to	84%	7%	9%	100%

6.3 In 2020-2021 70% of the responses were answered in 20 days compared with:

- 70% in 2019-2020,
- 82% in 2018-2019,
- 43% in 2017-2018
- 45 % in 2016-17.

Types of issues raised and outcomes for complaints responded to between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Complaint type	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	TOTAL
Financial	12	0	16	28
Lack of/ poor communication	4	2	17	23
Behaviour or attitude of staff	6	0	1	7
Service provided	6	2	4	12
Standard of home care	1	0	8	9
Disagreeing with a decision re service provided	1	0	0	1
Lack of support	1	0	1	2
Inaccuracies in an assessment	2	0	3	5
Disagreeing with an assessment	0	0	2	2
Standard of respite care	0	0	0	0
Delays in providing a service	6	1	2	9
Discharge from hospital	2	1	1	4
Disagreeing with a decision	2	0	0	2
Standard of residential care	1	0	1	2
Delay in reviewing a care plan	0	0	1	1
Delays in allocating a social worker	0	0	1	1
Relevant Person Representative not invited to a meeting	0	0	1	1
Breach of confidentiality	1	0	1	2
Total	45	6	61	112*

***The total number of issues complained about is greater the 96 responses sent in 2020-2021 as one complaint can be about several issues.**

6.4 Analysis of issues complained about.

- The number of upheld complaints about lack of communication decreased to 17 compared with 28 in 2019-2020 and 25 in 2018-2019.
- The Integrated Discharge Team has sustained the reduction of complaints about the discharge from hospital process for three years with only one upheld complaint in 2020-2021.
- The number of upheld financial complaints decreased to 16 compared with 17 in 2019-2020 and 19 in 2017-2018 but increased when compared with 13 in 2018-2019.
- In 2020-2021 there was one upheld complaint about the behaviour and attitude of staff compared with 6 in 2019-2020 and 13 in 2018-2019.

6.5 13 (13.5%) complainants were not satisfied with the initial response to their complaint compared with:

26 (23%) complainants in 2019-2020

26 (29%) complainants in 2018-2019

11 (15%) complainants in 2017-2018

7 (9.5%) complainants in 2016-2017

11 (11%) complainants in 2015-2016

6.6 The outcomes for the thirteen complainants who were dissatisfied with their initial response to their complaint were as follows:

- One complainant was satisfied following a meeting with a senior manager and the social care complaints manager. The meeting was followed up with a letter and an apology.
- One complainant was still unhappy about the financial assessment. She received a further response detailing how her mother's contribution was worked out.
- One complainant was unhappy that Medway Council did not exhaust all avenues in trying to trace her before they applied for Deputyship in respect of her mother. She received an apology.
- One complainant was still unhappy that she was not consulted about the charges for her mother's care. The daughter received a further response acknowledging that pre COVID her mother may have qualified for enablement and Medway Council agreed to waive the charges.

- A mother was unhappy with the services provided to her daughter. A further response was sent to the mother agreeing that the request for extra hours for activities could have gone to panel during the lockdown, which would have prevented a delay when the restrictions were lifted. An apology was given for the delay in receiving the care plan for her daughter. A new social worker was allocated to her daughter.
- One complainant was still unhappy, as she had not received a corrected invoice for her husband's care despite making a complaint and many phone calls. This was finally resolved.
- Following the further response one complainant referred her complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- One complainant was unhappy that his son's benefits were not sorted out. He received a further response explaining who to contact regarding benefits.
- One complainant was very unhappy about the attitude of the social worker and the inaccuracies in the DOLS report. The Manager for Social Care Complaints arranged a meeting between the complainant, the Operational Manager, the Team Manager, and the Social Care Complaints Manager. The complaint was resolved with an apology and the decision to allocate another social worker to complete a new DOLS document.
- A complainant was unhappy with the initial response as it did not answer all her complaints. A further response addressed the issues related to K's placement and the DOLs process.
- A husband was unhappy that Medway Council could not source a care package when his wife was ill with Covid. He received a further response apologising for the lack of a service and explaining the difficulties in finding a service provider who could provide a care package during the pandemic.
- A daughter was unhappy with the result of the financial assessment and provided evidence that she had sent Medway Council a trust document. As a result, her mother's financial assessment was revised.
- A daughter did not accept that she was not informed that her father had to pay for his care package. Her mother was funded by CHC. A further response reiterated that she was told that her father would have to contribute to his care and gave her an explanation how his contribution was worked out. A debt plan was agreed.

7. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

7.1 Five complainants referred their complaint to the LGSCO.

7.2 The LGSCO deemed two complaints to be premature and referred the complainants to Medway Council to investigate their complaint.

7.3 The LGSCO completed three investigations in 2020 -2021.

7.3.1 A relative complained about the outcome of her parent's financial assessment, The Ombudsman's final decision was no fault by Medway Council in its financial assessment or in the information it gave about benefits and charging. The decision was Not upheld – No Maladministration.

7.3.2 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman concluded their investigation into a complaint about Medway Council's refusal to make an exception to the rule preventing her mother from using direct payments to pay for care from her daughter. There is some fault in the way the council considered the request. Medway Council agreed to apologise and consider the daughter's request on the basis that Mrs Y will not accept care from non-family members. The LGSCO found that the documents provided by Medway Council did not show how it considered and weighed Mrs Y's objection to receiving care from non-family members. The decision letter, exceptional circumstances form, and case records did not address this. While the LGSCO cannot say whether the Council should have accepted Mrs Y's request for her daughter to be her personal assistant Mrs X had a reasonable expectation that the Council would consider her request properly, taking account of all the information provided. Failure to do that is fault. The Council should therefore review the case with the original information provided by Mrs X, that Mrs Y will not receive care from non-family members. The Council should seek further information from Mrs X and Mrs Y, as deemed necessary. The Council should record its decision and communicate that decision in writing to Mrs X. The complaint was upheld his outcome was Upheld - Maladministration and Injustice.

7.3.3 The LGSCO recommended that Medway Council

- i. Apologise to Mrs Y and Mrs X for the faults identified in the investigation.
- ii. Consider Mrs Y's objection to receiving care from non-family members and review her request for her daughter to be her personal assistant
- iii. The Council should record the reasons for any decision reached and then communicate that decision and its reasoning to Mrs Y.

7.3.4 Medway Council completed all the recommendations.

7.3.5 The LGSCO concluded an investigation into a complaint carried over from 2019-2020. A daughter complained that her father fell twice while in a care home. Her father was admitted to hospital with head injuries. He died a few days later. The daughter complained about the long delay in concluding the

safeguarding investigation and the lack of communication from Medway Council. The LGSCO found fault with the way the safeguarding investigation was undertaken and the long delays. The initial safeguarding meeting was convened three months after the daughter raised safeguarding concerns. The investigation concluded thirteen months after the daughter raised concerns. The records were poor and there was inadequate communication with the daughter. The LGSCO upheld the complaint under the categories of maladministration and injustice. The LGSCO agreed the following actions:

- a) Apologise, in writing, setting out the faults identified above and confirming the action it has taken, or will take, to ensure similar problems do not arise in future.
- b) Pay Ms X £550 in recognition of the injustice it caused her.
- c) Consider whether the guidance it has in place around safeguarding is adequate considering the faults identified above.
- d) Refer to the local Safeguarding Adults Board to determine how learning from this case can best be used to improve safeguarding practice.

7.3.6 The LGSCO was pleased to note that Medway Council recognised, acknowledged, and regrets the failings in this case. The Council apologised for not adhering to the correct safeguarding procedures and for the lack of effective communication throughout. The Council also submitted details of the significant changes it has made to safeguarding since these events. This involved the local Safeguarding Adults Board and included restructuring the service, also new management, and oversight arrangements. It also made changes to the electronic system, increased performance management, and delivered training in safeguarding to all staff in Medway.

8. Learning from complaints

8.1 Financial complaints

- ❖ There were delays in sending out financial forms, which resulted in delays in completing financial assessments and in providing a service. The delays were most likely due to COVID-19; however, all staff need to be aware of completing an assessment in a timely way and making a referral to the Financial Assessment Team as soon as possible.
- ❖ A son complained about the delay in sending him the final settlement figure after his mother died.
- ❖ Most upheld financial complaints were about incorrect invoices, for example charging for care when a client was in hospital, for cancelled visits and sent an invoice after a service user died. One person was billed twice for the same week of residential care. The invoices were corrected, and complainants received an apology for the errors.
- ❖ However, complainants stated that what they were most frustrated about was the lack communication and good customer care. All the complainants had initially tried to sort out the errors in their invoices. When they made a

complaint, the invoices were corrected but they did not receive an apology for the difficulties in contacting staff or for the messages that were not responded to. Complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible and always receive an apology for incorrect invoices and for the delay in solving their complaint.

8.2 Complaints about services

- ❖ There were complaints about missed home calls, carers arriving late and only one carer arriving when the care plan stated two carers for double lifting.
- ❖ A daughter complained about a service provider. The carers missed appointments as a result her mother's catheter was not emptied for 16 hours. Dirty incontinent pads were left lying around. The service provider did not respond to the daughter's complaint. Commissioning and partnership investigated this complaint.

The following actions were undertaken:

- i. The service provider reviewed their missed calls policy stating that carer's must notify management and give a red flag warning if the service user has a catheter.
 - ii. Carers have downloaded an app *Help to Care* which provides training on the correct processes on incontinent pads and catheter bags disposal.
 - iii. Quality Assurance Team will undertake regular quality assurance visits.
- ❖ A complainant complained about the delay in sending her copy of an assessment which she needed so that she could organise care for her grandmother. She received the report and an apology for the delay.
 - ❖ A son complained that his father was not given his medication when the care package started as the medication was not uploaded to the service provider's information system. This should happen within five days of the service provider accepting the care package.
 - ❖ A daughter complained about the number of early morning calls missed by the carers: this was when her mother needed her medication, that the carers change frequently and that some carers do not wear masks. This was dealt with by the service provider.

8.3 Lack of communication

- ❖ One complaint was about the information provided on Medway Council's website. This information needs to be updated regularly.
- ❖ Two complaints were from relatives who were not informed about the hospital discharge plan for their parents.
- ❖ Two complainants complained about the delays in finding appropriate residential placements for relatives. While it is recognised that this can be a lengthy process the family should receive regular feedback.

- ❖ A son was not told that his mother would have to self-isolate in her room for nine days when she came to Platters Farm Lodge for respite care. The mother refused to stay for respite care.
- ❖ A daughter had difficulty getting through to anyone in Adult Services about her mother's financial assessment. Her mother was paying privately for a care home in Kent. Her funds had depleted so she needed a financial assessment. The daughter finally got through to duty worker who said she would call back. The daughter never received a call so made a complaint.
- ❖ Other complaints that there was no explanation about when reviews take place, why a person was not eligible for a service, and no explanation regarding how their money is spent when Medway Council are managing their finances.

8.4 Lack of support

- A husband complained about the lack of support for his disabled wife. She needed a large wheelchair, a strong chair to sit in and adaptations to their house. He also complained that the carer's turn up late and do not clean up afterwards. Following this complaint, the social worker agreed to try to find appropriate respite care, the GP was asked to make a referral to the wheelchair service, the OT will undertake another assessment of their needs. The social worker will review his wife's needs and plan as well as reviewing his needs as a carer. The social worker helped them to change service providers.
- A wife complained that no one phoned back after she phoned to ask for extra support as her husband was ill with COVID and she had just had an operation. She felt that no one was listening to her. She received an apology, and the case was allocated for a review of her needs and her husband's care package.
- A granddaughter complained that her mother was not receiving any help following her discharge from hospital after her fourth fall, despite a telephone assessment. Following another need assessment, the grandmother was offered a care package. A referral was made for an occupational assessment.
- A service user complained that she did not receive a copy of her carer's assessment. Carer's First gave her a copy. When she received a copy of the review, she found there were many factual mistakes in the assessment. She could not understand why she was not eligible for support as a carer. As resolutions to this complaint, another carer's assessment resulted in the complainant receiving direct payments to fund a sitting service. The inaccuracies in the assessment were corrected. The complainant received an apology that it was not explained to her why she was not eligible for support as a carer.
- A service user complained about the delay in receiving an occupational therapy assessment. A therapist was allocated to undertake the assessment.

- A brother complained about the delay in transferring his sister to a more appropriate care home. The delay was due to completing the forms for joint funding with the Clinical Commissioning Group. Unfortunately, due to the delay his sister missed out on the opportunity to move although she will be the priority when there is a vacancy. Medway Council apologised for the delay.
- A complainant complained that she was “*sent around the houses*” trying to get information about who should service her stairlift. The contractor finally checked the stair lift and said it was in good working order.

8.5 Inaccuracies in assessments

- A mother complained about the errors in a DOLS document. The social worker moved to another team and a new social worker rewrote the document with consultation with the mother.
- A service user complained about the incorrect factual details in her carer’s assessment. These errors were corrected.
- A son complained about the inaccuracies in his mother’s assessment. A new assessment was undertaken.

8.6 Behaviour and attitude of staff

- One complainant was very unhappy about the way the social worker behaved during a review of her son’s care package. She complained that the social worker was sarcastic, did not know her son’s needs and was rude, saying that the mother was unhelpful as she could not had come up with any ideas about how to reduce the cost of her son’s care package. This highlighted the importance of knowing the service user’s needs and of developing respectful relationships with the parents and offering an appropriate apology.

8.7 Learning from complaints

- Social workers and managers need to check they have all the necessary information for an assessment and that important documents are quality assured by a manager.
- Service users should have a copy of their assessments and plans.
- The importance of explaining why a person is not eligible for services and when they can ask for another assessment.
- Short leaflets could explain the Covid rules in care homes, i.e., if someone was going into respite care they would have to self-isolate in one room for nine days.

- Good communication is essential for good service delivery. It is important that there is easy access to information on Medway Council's website and access to a telephonic system ensuring easy access for people needing assessments and a service. All staff should give clear explanations about financial assessments and enablement.

9. Compliments

9.1 Compliments provide valuable information about the quality of our services and identify what is working well. Medway Council received 20 compliments about Adult Social Care compared with 14 in 2019-2020. Quotes from compliments are listed below.

- A wife phoned the Occupational Therapist to inform her that her husband had died and to thank her for helping them and, more specifically, for listening to her when she wasn't coping very well.
- A daughter complimented two occupational therapists for their intervention in seamlessly arranging care for her mother with other professionals, this resulted in the mother being looked after properly.
- A daughter emailed to say how fantastic the occupational therapist was when undertaking an assessment with her on the telephone.

"The occupational therapist was very caring and reassuring. This has been a challenge due to recent Covid-19 circumstances changing the assessment method to be completed by phone instead of a face-to-face visit with the benefit of seeing my mother in her own home. My mother was supported by her granddaughter throughout the assessment and was able to ask relevant questions and then cross reference the responses by holding a further conversation with her granddaughter at the end of the assessment. The OT showed professional curiosity and triangulated responses with narratives that other members of the family had put forward and was able to determine my mother's day to day perception of her abilities and her limitations due to dementia. The OT was sensitive in her approach and did not detract from my mother's notion of self but was able to offer support in a manner that my mother perceived to enhance her quality of life as opposed to highlighting her limitations. Both myself and my grandchild found the OT to have been professional, courteous, and timely in her communications; adapting as necessary to reflect the current situation whilst continuing to meet my mother's needs. We have been able to email, phone and message as required with prompt and clear responses advising at what stage of the process we are, what to expect next and approximate time frames within which to expect these. The financial assessment process was clearly explained, and a relevant person identified to represent my mother for this purpose."

- Adult Social Care Self Directed Support Team received a compliment from a carer at a review. The carer said she was extremely grateful for their support; she could not praise the worker highly enough and that his input and work has

greatly improved her quality of life and ability to continue caring for her mum. Staff at a respite centre expressed their appreciation for the ongoing support from the Adult Partnership Commissioning Team during the last few difficult months. The staff are aware of the challenges Medway Council, and they face but they have been impressed by the Team's commitment, sensitivities and practical support.

- A Care Home Manager said *“Medway Council – Partnership Commissioning Team – have been incredibly supportive, sending us valuable information, calling us to ask how we are managing, and listening to us when we needed to vent or wanted to just talk to someone outside the bubble of the work environment. The team have been amazingly supportive – I would like to thank them and to say we are really proud to be a part of this community, working together”*.
- Parents emailed a social worker to thank her for all she did for their son. They stated that *“We are all very grateful to you. Personally, we can now enter 2021 with real hope for X’s future. I hope you can feel our excitement and celebrate the part you have played. Quite often as a Social Worker there is little thanks and too much complaining. We thank you. May this give you some job satisfaction.”*
- A daughter emailed the social worker to inform her mother had died peacefully in her own bed with people she knew around her. The daughter wrote *“I just wanted to thank you and your team for fighting for her right to stay in her flat with the wonderful carers there looking after her until she passed away. If you remember there was a push last year by the medical staff to have her moved into a home and you fought alongside us to let her stay, there. That was the right decision. After lockdown, we were able to visit her quite often and I saw her just two days before she passed away, my brother the evening before, we managed to say our goodbyes. If she had been in a care home, I am sure this would not have been possible. So, thank you again for your help - and your lovely smile that always cheered Mum up.”*
- A niece emailed the social worker *“You may have heard that my aunt has passed away. I wanted to send my sincere thanks for your kindness, understanding and patience during her time of great need. Your support was of great help to us both.”*
- A service user emailed *“I would like to say thank you for all the support and help OT staff have given me for the new bathroom I have never received any help before like this before, it’s made my life so much easier for showering. I would also like to thank the builders for the hard work they put into the bathroom, they never stopped, they worked like trojans, they respected my property as well as family members and the dog. They were very clean, tidy workers deserve any work they get well done to all of you.”*
- A service user emailed the Manager of Financial Assessment Team *“Thank you so much for all your help and support from beginning to end. Your professionalism is nothing but the best. You carried out what you said you*

would and always came back to me in a timely manner. I thank you for all you have completed for me in a very difficult time. I do hope your professionalism recognised by Medway Council.” The manager liaised with numerous departments within the organisation to understand how the issue had arisen and resolve the issue on behalf of the customer. She continuously communicated with and updated the customer regarding progress towards resolving the issue.

- Two family members emailed an OT *“You've been a great help to the family, and really progressed things for us, listening closely to our needs and wishes, and communicating well. Best OT we've dealt with. Thank you, and hope we get to deal with you in future, whenever needs may present themselves. Thank you for all your support Y, it's been great.”*
- A service user emailed *“I have just had my first shower in the new room, thanks for everything you have done for me, pushing it along, really appreciate everything everyone you have done for me, I'm over the moon, thank you.”*
- A relative emailed a Medway Community Healthcare staff member: *“Since the awful diagnosis of mum's Alzheimer's and vascular dementia I have spoken to social services who have been very helpful. As you can imagine that when a much-loved family member is admitted to hospital, especially doing these very strange times of Covid, the worry and stress becomes overwhelming. With that said I'd like to thank you for your help to get Mum back home to us safely. You are one incredible lady, the patience and understanding you have shown has been outstanding. You are a credit to your profession.”*
- The Clinical/Team Leader of Adult Learning Disability Service, Kent Community Health Foundation Trust emailed *“I just wanted to note that the practice/joint working undertaken by a social worker alongside members of my team last week re X was fabulous in keeping the gentleman well and managing very concerning safeguarding risks”*
- A daughter emailed to thank a social worker and a senior social care coordinator, *“I just wanted to say thank you so much for all your hard work in getting my Mum into residential care. You have been extremely understanding and listened the whole time to every concern I have had. I apologise when my frustration about the situation has ever got the better of me when I spoke to either of you, but I felt like yesterday was never going to come. I am less anxious now I know my Mum is the best place getting all the care she needs and that is all down to you both. We all as a family needed this as I don't think we could have gone on any longer so thank you so much for making it happen! I really hope you both get the recognition for the great work you do, please feel free to forward this onto your Head of Operations so they understand how grateful as a family we are to you both!”*
- A complainant thanked the Customer Relations Team staff member for her updates. She emailed *“Your updates have been so professional, helpful and*

so welcomed; this is all I've been seeking for the last couple of years. Please pass on to your manager that I am incredibly grateful, and I mean that sincerely."

- A daughter emailed a manager to let her know what a wonderful help the social worker was. She stated *"After Mum contracted Covid at the beginning of December I was desperate for some help with her care and the social worker was the only person at the time to listen along with help me. Between us he got help from rapid response with a hoist installed along with extra care and then finally earlier this month after Mum tested negative, he arranged for her to go into 2 weeks respite, which very much helped us both. So, in these very difficult days when we are all very much under pressure, I thought it was important for you to know how helpful your staff member was along with how much I especially appreciated his help."*

10. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Not handling complaints properly and importantly not learning from complaints could put an adult at risk.	Good complaint handling, including the identification of improvement opportunities from complaints received, helps ensure that Medway Council provides services in a complete and timely way, minimising the possibility of a vulnerable adult being put at 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.	Very low

11. Equalities data

11.1 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 how the services are for and 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.

11.2 Service users come from many different ethnic backgrounds, and many have disabilities. We will refer vulnerable adults to an advocacy service if they need

assistance in making a complaint. We have made sure that a complainant who was visually impaired received letters in large print. If a complainant is not able to send in a written complaint, we will see the complainant at a venue that is convenient and assessable for them. We will organise a translator if required. We will continue to look at ways to make the complaints process more accessible to adults with disabilities by ensuring that information to about how to complain is published, in easy read, on the website.

12. Financial and legal implications

- 12.1 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 LGSCO. 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 because of those complaints.
- 12.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, good practice is always more cost effective than poor performance.

13. Recommendation

- 13.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes and comments on the report.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None