

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2022

Report from: Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People

Author: Sandy Weaver, Complaints Manager for Social Care

Summary

The annual report provides information on the number, type and other information on adult social care complaints received during the period April 2021 - March 2022. 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 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 within 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 LGSCO.
- 3.2 A complainant can make a complaint verbally to any staff member, by telephone, by e-mail or in writing. The Customer Relations Team acknowledges receipt of the complaint within three working days. The Social Care Complaints Manager (SCCM) will determine the most appropriate course of action for resolving the complaint.
- 3.3 For Adult Social Care complaints, there is a one stage process. At any stage of this process, there is encouragement to employ alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approaches to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion and this option is increasingly used.
- 3.4 Statutory guidelines state that we must respond to Adult Social Care complaints within six months, however, for the purposes of reporting and monitoring, and to provide a satisfactory and reasonable timeline, Medway

Council opted to respond to Adults Social Care complaints within 20 working days.

- 3.5 In general, many social care complaints are complex, involving more internal, and sometimes external, liaison.
- 3.6 Timeliness performance in adults services is regularly reported to the Children's and Adults Directorate Management Team (CADMT), to the individual Assistant Director Management teams and to other forums.
- 3.7 The Customer Relations Team issue weekly open case reminders which help Service Managers and complaint handlers to be aware of and manage their cases. Additionally, monthly data reports are shared with Assistant Directors.
- 3.8 Quarterly reports are presented to senior management forums and include case study examples for learning. These reports are compiled by the Social Care Complaints Manager, a post that the council must resource.
- 3.9 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 LGSCO and provide the complainant with information on how to complain to them. 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.

4. Role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 4.1 The role of the 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 LGSCO'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 2021 to 31 March 2022

5.1 Complaints handled in 2021-2022

Brought forward from 2020-2021	8
New complaints received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	84
Complaints handled between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	92

Complaints responded to between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	77
Complaints withdrawn between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	8
Open complaints still waiting for a response on 31 March 2022.	7

5.2 Breakdown of Stage One complaints, between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

	April	May	June	Q.1	July	Aug	Sep	Q.2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q.3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q4	Total
Complaints cfwd from 2020-2021	8																
No. complaints received	7	9	10	26	6	6	10	22	3	6	6	15	7	3	11	21	84
No. complaints withdrawn	6	6	11	23	5	9	5	19	7	6	5	18	7	4	6	17	77
No. complaints withdrawn	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	8
No. complaints dealt with in 20 days	4	5	8	17	4	6	5	15	6	5	5	16	6	4	6	16	64
% complaints responded to in 20 days	67%	83%	73%	74%	80%	67%	100%	79%	86%	83%	100%	89%	86%	100%	100%	94%	83%
% of complaints acknowledged within 3 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. complaints cfwd to next quarter				8				10				5				7	

5.3 Comparison of number of complaints received, by year

2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
84	99	117	112	83

5.4 Number of complaints, received in 2021-2022, by team.

Team	Total
Locality 1	28
Locality 2	11
Locality 3	10
Disability under 25	2
Integrated Discharge Team	6
Occupational Therapy	8
AMPH and DOLS	3
Transition Team	1
Commissioning and Partnership	7
Placement Team	1

Financial Assessment	3
SDS	2
Client Financial Services	7
Client Financial Affairs	0
Total	89*

*This is more than the 84 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).

2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
68	68	83	79	66

5.6 Complainants accessed the complaints procedure in the following ways.

Method of contact	No of complaints received
Emailed to sccm@medway.gov.uk	57
Telephone call	16
Letter	6
Email followed by letter	3
Online corporate complaint form	1
Referred by the LGSCO as a premature complaint	1

5.7 The following table shows the ethnicity of the service users who made a complaint or services users who had a representative to make a complaint on their behalf.

Ethnicity	Complaints rec'd 2021-22
White/British	75
Asian/British Indian	2
White Other	1
Black/ African	1
Black British/Caribbean	1
Black other	1
Asian or Asian Background/Bangladeshi	1
Other/Arab	1
Other ethnic group	1
White/ Irish	0
Total	84

5.8 The following table shows the ethnicity of service users who accessed long term social care. In 2021-2022, 6.1% of people from ethnic minority groups were in receipt of long-term care, this is lower than the proportion recorded in the 2011 census for Medway (10.4%). This reduction is in line with the National trend. The table does not consider service users who received short term care.

Ethnic group	Medway		Neighbour Group	National
	20-21	21-22	20-21	20-21
White	92.1%	92.8%	83.3%	83.3%
Ethnic minorities groups (total):	6.8%	6.1%	8.2%	11.8%
• Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1.1%	0.6%	1.1%	1.2%
• Asian/Asian British	2.7%	2.7%	5.6%	5.1%
• Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2.0%	1.7%	1.2%	4.5%
• Other Ethnic Group	1.0%	1.1%	0.4%	1.0%
No data	1.1%	1.1%	8.5%	4.9%
2011 census Ethnic minorities		10.4%	-	14%

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 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

	0-20 days	21-25 days	26-64 days	65 days	Total
Number of responses	64	4	8	1	77
% of responses	83%	5%	11%	1%	100%

6.3 In 2021-2022, 83% of the responses were answered in 20 working days compared with

- 84% in 2020-2021
- 70% in 1920-2020
- 82% in 2018-2019
- 43% in 2017-2018

6.4 The following table describes the types of issues raised and outcomes for complaints responded to between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Complaint type	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Total
Financial	11	2	10	23
Delays in providing a service	10	2	6	18
Lack of/ poor communication	1	0	12	13
Service provided	8	0	1	9
Behaviour or attitude of staff	0	1	4	5
Standard of home care	3	0	0	3
Delay in reviewing a care plan	0	0	3	3
Disagreed with a decision re service	2	0	0	2
Standard of residential care	2	0	0	2
Lack of support	1	0	0	1
Inaccuracies in an assessment	0	0	1	1

Standard of day care	1	0	0	1
Discharge from hospital	0	0	0	0
Delay in allocating a social worker	0	0	1	1
Changes in social worker.	0	0	1	1
Family not involved in decisions	0	0	1	1
Total	39	5	40	84*

***The total number of issues complained about is greater than the 77 responses sent in 2021-2022 as one complaint can be about several issues.**

6.5 Analysis of issues complained about.

- The number of upheld complaints about lack of communication decreased to 12, compared with 17 in 2020-21, 28 in 2019-20 and 25 in 2018-19.
- The Integrated Discharge Team (IDT) has sustained the reduction of complaints about the discharge from hospital process for three years with only one upheld complaint in 2020-21 and no complaints in 2021-22.
- The number of upheld financial complaints decreased to 10 compared with 16 in 2020-21, compared with 17 in 2019-20, 13 in 2018-19 and 19 in 2017-18.
- Four complaints were upheld about the behaviour and attitude of staff compared with 1 in 2020-21, 6 in 2019-20 and 13 in 2018-19.

6.6 21 (27%) complainants were not satisfied with the initial response to their complaint compared with:

- 13 (13.5%) in 2020-21
- 26 (23.0%) in 2019-20
- 26 (29.0%) in 2018-19
- 11 (15.0%) in 2017-18
- 7 (9.5%) in 2016-17

6.7 The outcomes for the 21 complainants who were dissatisfied with their initial response to their complaint were as follows:

- Nine complainants were satisfied after receiving a further response.
- Seven complainants were satisfied following a written response or a telephone call explaining that the issues they had complained about were resolved.
- Four complainants referred their complaint to the LGSCO.
- One complainant was satisfied after a meeting with the Social Care Complaints Manager and the Group Manager for Adult Social Care. The complainant also received a written response.

7. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

7.1 12 complainants referred their complaint to the LGSCO compared with five in the previous year.

7.2 The LGSCO deemed one complaint to be premature and referred the complainant to Medway Council to investigate their complaint.

7.3 Four investigations were carried over to 2022-23.

7.4 The LGSCO assessed or investigated and closed 7 complaints in 2021-22.

- i. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint from a daughter about Medway Council's decision not to reimburse her for a stairlift she purchased for her mother. This was because there was no evidence of fault by the council.

Decision Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.

- ii. The LGSCO did not investigate a complaint about the lack of a safeguarding investigation in relation to the death of the complainant's mother. This is because there was insufficient evidence of fault in the way the Safeguarding Board made its decision,

Decision Closed after initial enquires – no further action.

- iii. Ms X complained about Medway Council's response to financial safeguarding concerns she raised in connection with her father. The LGSCO did not investigate the complaint because it was unlikely they would find evidence of fault by the council.

Decision Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.

- iv. The LGSCO did not investigate Miss X's complaint about her father's care home not acting on her request to amend his newspaper order. This is because the injustice complained about was not significant enough to justify an investigation.

Decision Closed after initial enquires – no further action.

- v. The LGSCO did not investigate a complaint about Medway Council's failure to register Mrs X, her former foster daughter, as her nearest relative. This is because this was a late complaint and there was no good reason to investigate the complaint retrospectively.

Decision Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.

- vi. Mrs X complained about the care provided to the late Mr Y. She said the care provider commissioned by Medway Council did not provide adequate care and did not alert his family to his situation. The LGSCO did not uphold Mrs X's complaints that Medway Council did not safeguard Mr Y.

The LGSCO did state that Medway Council did not deal properly with Mrs X's complaint. A staff member incorrectly decided not to accept this complaint as Mr Y was deceased and could not give his consent. Failing to accept the complaint for this reason was not acceptable and caused Mr Y and Mrs X injustice. However, fortunately, the care provider responded appropriately to Mrs X's complaint and directed her to the LGSCO. This means her complaint has been processed properly and the injustice caused by Medway Council has been remedied.

There was no need to open a safeguarding enquiry for Mr Y after he had died, as he was no longer at risk. A safeguarding review would have been appropriate if abuse had contributed to Mr Y's death. If not, Mrs X's complaint would have been a suitable way to investigate the issues. Medway Council had no evidence that Mr Y was being abused but still decided a safeguarding enquiry was appropriate.

Medway Council had already taken appropriate action by requesting that this case should be reviewed in the upcoming Local Government Association Peer Review of Safeguarding (LGSPRS).

Final decision Upheld: maladministration, no injustice.

Medway Council accepted these findings and agreed to remedy the injustice by:

- taking action to ensure that complaints on behalf of people who have died, are dealt with through its complaints process. The LGSCO was satisfied that Medway Council had already completed this through its actions with the staff member who wrongly declined to investigate the complaint.
- reviewing its safeguarding procedures to clarify how to deal with concerns about potential abuse to a person who has since died. The LGSCO was satisfied that the council's proposal to ask for this to be included in the LGAPRS was appropriate.

The LGSCO was satisfied that Medway Council completed the actions and the case was closed as **Remedy complete and satisfied.**

- vii. Mrs B complained a care provider commissioned by Medway Council unreasonably charged for travel expenses incurred by her daughter, a resident at one of its residential care homes. The LGSCO upheld the complaint, identifying flaws in the care provider's policy and Medway Council's response when alerted to it. This caused Mrs B unnecessary distress and unnecessary time and trouble to make a complaint.

Final decision Upheld: maladministration and injustice.

Medway Council accepted these findings and agreed to remedy the injustice by apologising to Mrs B and paying her compensation for her distress and ensuring she received a refund for the additional charges for the use of the car.

The LGSCO also asked Medway Council to consider:

- whether care plans for learning disabled adults are sufficiently clear in identifying what travel needs they have, and if necessary how practice in this area can be improved;
- whether existing contract and monitoring arrangements provide enough clarity on the part of residential care providers as to what the council's expectations are when it comes to the travel costs they must meet as part of the contracted care arrangements; in what circumstances might it be appropriate for a care provider to make additional charges to a resident to meet transport costs.
- whether learning disabled adults in residential care (and their representatives) are being provided with terms and conditions which set out what services care providers are meeting as part of the package of care and what further expenses providers might incur on behalf of residents which will be the residents' responsibility to fund.

8. Learning from complaints

8.1 Financial complaints

- There were several complaints relating to invoices, such as a payment not showing on an invoice, that an invoice was sent to the wrong address, that the electronic system failed to apply a correction to an invoice, a service user was charged after continuing health care was agreed, and a complainant had not received an invoice as services were not input onto the electronic system.
- One complaint was about a delayed financial assessment.
- One complainant was given incorrect information about the costs of residential care. All staff need to be informed about the financial assessment process and not provide estimates about the amount a service user would have to contribute towards their care package or residential care.
- A son complained that the financial forms were sent to the wrong address, which delayed the financial assessment. As a result of this delay charges were waived for three months. Staff must ensure that the correct address is provided on the referral form for a financial assessment.
- All the above mistakes were corrected, and an apology given.

8.2 Complaints about services

- A mother complained that she could not visit her daughter, who lived in supported accommodation. There was a delay in developing a safety plan to ensure her daughter's safety. The mother received an apology and was allowed to take her daughter out for walks and to medical appointments.
- A mother received an apology for the length of time she had to wait before she was allowed to be in her daughter's support bubble. Her daughter lived in supported accommodation.
- There were complaints about delays in reviewing relative's needs, in all cases social workers were allocated and reviews arranged. A robust system should be in place to ensure that reviews are undertaken annually.
- There was a delay in responding to a father's concern about his son who was in supported accommodation, another complaint was about a delay in reassessing her daughter's needs when she moved into her own flat.
- There were complaints about the delay in finding appropriate residential placements. In one case this was due to the relatives preferred placement closing their waiting list for two months. One relative complained about the lack of communication with the family about the progress in finding a placement. It is good practice to keep in touch with the service user and their family about the progress of sourcing home care or residential care.
- There were two complaints about the delay in completing a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

- There was a complaint about a delay in receiving an assessment by an occupational therapist and another person complained about the delay in receiving equipment.
- One daughter complained that she had not been invited to meetings even though she had Power of Attorney. This was rectified and the daughter is now recorded as having Power of Attorney. Another daughter complained that she had not been involved in their mother's Continuing Health Care (CHC) check list assessment. This was redone with the family contributing to the CHC checklist.

8.3 Lack of communication

- There were several complaints about difficulties in contacting the Locality and Financial teams and emails and messages not responded to.
- Two complainants complained that they had no feedback about the outcome of a safeguarding investigation. Staff need to ensure that, where appropriate, service users and their family are informed about the outcome of a safeguarding investigation.
- A complainant stated that new carers did not introduce themselves. Medway Council apologised and the service provider spoke to the carers about the importance of introducing themselves.
- 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. Staff should not guess what a service user may have to contribute towards their care.

8.4 Behaviour of staff

- A husband complained about the way a social worker student had asked for feedback, he felt pressurised to provide positive feedback. This was taken up with the student.
- An older person was upset at the way a staff member spoke to her on the phone about sensitive issues around toileting.

9. Compliments

9.1 Compliments provide valuable information about the quality of our services and identify what is working well. Medway Council received 30 compliments about Adult Social Care compared with 20 in 2020-21 and 14 in 2019-20. Quotes from compliments are listed below.

- A client sent an occupational therapist, the Disabled Adaptations Team and the HIA Peabody a box of chocolates and a card which said, "*Thank you for all your help, very much appreciated.*"
- A social worker complimented a brokerage officer in an email; "*This is just to say a big thank you for your support with X. You have been a lifeline to me. You were in constant contact with me, giving me update regarding finding a respite placement. You kept being positive and optimistic of finding a suitable place for X. You are very knowledgeable, and you know*

your stuff.” The panel and the Adult Social Care Brokerage Team also complimented the staff member.

- A staff member from Supported Housing, Choice Support, emailed feedback from a service user, who said, *“the staff are friendly, and I can talk to them about my personal ongoing daily issues. The service has had a massive transformation by making the service more friendly and a welcoming environment and feels very relaxed and comfortable and the atmosphere is very relaxed. The entrance to the day centre has a welcoming sign at front of the building is kept very nice with flowers and the service looks very professional. The service users say how much they like attending their planned activities and enjoy being the hub of the community. Well done to you and to your staff for making an excellent service, its gives staff at Choice Support peace of mind when our tenants are happy attending your service -this is very positive with working in partnership and joined up working.”*
- An ex-wife emailed a social care officer from the Integrated Discharge Team (IDT), *“Thank you for everything you are a shining star if only everyone was as caring as you are inspirational’*. She also telephoned the social care officer to thank her for all the support offered to her and her ex-husband said, *“The Social Services hospital team from the outset have been phenomenal and please pass this on to the team.”*
- A service user sent a thank you card to the locality social work teams and the Self-Directed Support Team.
- A father phoned a social care officer in the IDT and said, *“everyone knocks social services but I believe that the IDT have gone that extra mile to make sure my son got the right outcome and he would like to thank the entire team for all of their hard work.”* MCH and MFT have also passed on their thanks for all the work completed with this gentleman.
- A mother phoned the IDT and said that she wanted to express her deepest thanks for the support provided regarding her father’s discharge planning and said the senior social worker and the team have gone *“above and beyond”* and wanted to thank the worker and the team for all their effort. Since the referral was passed to the team, she feels she has been listened to, which has now resulted in her father being supported in the best way for his discharge, to go to rehab, rather than a PW3 bed, where he will have a much better chance at regaining his mobility and going home, rather than being *“written off.”*
- A client phoned the occupational therapist to say thank you for all the support the OT gave her and for her hard work.
- A daughter sent an email to the Finance Operations Team / Personalisation and Client Financial Affairs. *“I would like to say a sincere thank you to KT for the careful consideration and patience you extended to me. It was so very much appreciated, especially after the horrendous waiting and previous noncommunication from Social Services since my mother’s passing.”*

- Feedback about a newly qualified social worker from Lifeways: *“During our first meeting, I was initially nervous, like I am to all new people that I meet, but once we got to know each other I saw that you are a kind individual who was only doing what was best for me. Even though our time together hasn't been long, you have been a great help to me, and I do not know how I'd have been able to cope with losing my house without the weekly meetings. I hope that the visits continue after I have fully moved into the new place. You seem like a sympathetic person who was shocked by the ordeals that I had to go through at a young age, and even though you haven't been through what I have, you seem to understand exactly how I feel.”*
- A brother complimented a social care officer to express his gratitude and stated he felt that M truly listened to his sister, and it was not just a ‘tick box exercise’ and cannot thank her enough for all her support.
- A disabled young person emailed to compliment the Self-Directed Support Coordinator and the social worker in the 0-25 Disability Team. *“I would just like to highlight how supportive and helpful O and N have been to us at a particularly stressful time, transitioning to adult services. Their empathy and understanding as well as knowledge are so reassuring and so valuable. We have been lucky to have them on board and Medway are lucky to have them on their team.*
- A NHS professional from Adult Learning Disability Service emailed, *“I just wanted to note that the practice/joint working undertaken by a social worker alongside members of my team last week re M was fabulous in keeping the gentleman well and managing very concerning safeguarding risks.”*
- A Managing Director of a day centre emailed *“I just want to say, on behalf of the day centre, our staff and clients. THANK YOU so much to Medway Council for all your support during the pandemic - financial; general advice; understanding; everything. Your support has been invaluable and very, very much appreciated”.*
- A daughter emailed, *“My sincere thanks to the Medway Council for placing both my parents in their respective final residences which both they and I found to be professionally run and staffed by people with such dedication expertise and care. They all deserve a pat on the back, and a medal. I would be grateful if both care homes could be thanked officially. I hold them all in my greatest respect and will always be sincerely grateful.”*
- A staff member in the Adult Social Care Finance Operations Direct Payment Monitoring Team received a compliment from a client thanking him for his patience and professionalism when dealing with her audit.
- A husband thanked a social worker for the help he gave him in obtaining continuing health care for his wife.
- The Manager and Deputy Manager of Platters Farm Lodge stated that a Brokerage Officer was brilliant, very professional, and always kept them updated. They said she was a credit to Medway Council.
- A grandson sent an email to a Self-Directed Support Coordinator and the Self-Directed Support Team. *“I was so pleased to receive a call from you offering to support us in applying for direct payments for my grandmother to*

receive the care she required in her own home as my grandmother would have wanted. This call felt like a lifeline had been thrown to us. You will not understand how much this meant to us. You were so understanding and pulled out all the stops to help support not only me as a family member, but my grandmother to continue to live at home. We are so grateful that you approached this situation with only my grandmothers needs/wishes in mind. This made what was a stressful and difficult situation, after sleepless nights, more bearable as you put our minds at ease. We cannot thank you enough for all the time you have put in and the work that you have done to help my grandmother spend her final days in her own home surrounded by her family. I do not think that this would have been possible without you. We are so grateful to you."

- An occupational therapist received a thank you card and a small gift to say thank you for all the help she received.
- A brother emailed a social worker: *"I just wanted to say thank you for all the help you have given my brother. My wife and I are very grateful. It has been a struggle but with the help of you and S mostly we have got him to a better place than when we found him in June. The boiler was fitted this week - something on our wish list that we never thought we would get, so that is the best Christmas present we could have. Enjoy Christmas and thank you again."*
- A husband was very grateful for the service he and his wife received from an Occupational Therapist. His wife was bedbound, and they were struggling to move her in bed. The occupational therapist responded to his telephone call immediately. She visited and assessed the situation. She ordered appropriate equipment quickly. She ensured that the family members knew how to use the equipment and kept a constant check on the effectiveness of the equipment and whether they needed further assistance. He wrote *"Her enthusiasm and competence were a great comfort to us."*
- A daughter sent an email to a social worker *"Thank you so much for all your help with my mum and dad, it's made such a difference. Dad, although he was not 100% happy about going to day activities, benefited from yesterday's taster session and Mum absolutely needs the break."*
- A daughter thanked an occupational therapist for the handrails and bath board and said her mother is very happy with them. It had given her mother reassurance and her parents will be safer if they feel unsteady. She thanked the occupational therapist for her help and support which was really appreciated.
- A service user sent a card to thank an occupational therapist for all her help.
- Another service user emailed an occupational therapist to thank her for *"the efforts you have made on my behalf. I really do appreciate your professionalism and the empathy that you have shown me."*
- A service user sent a card expressing thanks to an occupational therapist for all her help and kindness.

- A relative emailed a staff member from the Self-Directed Team: *“Thank you. I really appreciate that you made us a priority. I just wanted to feedback how appreciative Mr Z was with your help the other day.”*
- A relative sent an email to the manager of the Self-Directed Team: *“I can’t thank you enough for sorting this morning for Q and I. You sent us a real gentleman who was so helpful and precise and left Q and I feeling very confident.”*
- A wife sent a card to an occupational therapist in which she wrote, *“Thank you for all your care and determination in getting my X back into the living room, we are truly grateful. Thank you for everything you have done to improve things for X. We will miss you.”*

10. Risk management

10.1 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. Using the following table this section should therefore consider any significant risks arising from your report.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
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.

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 equity 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 and will make sure that a complainant who was visually impaired receives 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 accessible 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 about how to complain is published, in easy read, on the website.

12. Financial implications

12.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

13. Legal implications

13.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

14. Recommendation

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

Lead officer contact

Sandy Weaver, Complaints Manager for Social Care.
Customer Relations Team, Customer and Business Support (CABS)

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None