

Managing complaints

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 learn from any mistakes.

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. 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.

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.

In general, many social care complaints are complex, involving more internal, and sometimes external, liaison.

Timeliness performance in adult 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.

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.

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.

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.