

Annual management information regarding Compliments, Comments, Representations, MP Enquiries and Complaints

People and Communities / Adult Social Care

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

Report Purpose:

- To provide information about compliments, comments, representations, MP enquiries, informal and formal complaints, and to comply with the Department of Health's 'Regulations on Health and Adult Social Care Complaints, 2009.
- To Identify trends and learning from complaints received during the report period.

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1.0 Context

- 1.1 This report provides information about compliments, comments, representations, M.P. enquiries and complaints made between 01 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 under the Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure and 2009 Department of Health Regulations on Adult Social Care Complaints. Cambridgeshire County Council has an open learning culture and a positive attitude to complaints, viewing them as opportunities for learning and for improved service delivery.
- 1.2 The scope of this report includes Adult Social Care services provided through Cambridgeshire County Council and those provided through a NHS Partner organisation, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT).

2.0 Executive Summary

- 230 compliments were received in 2018-2019.
- 183 formal complaints were received in 2018-19. This is a 0.9% increase in comparison to the number of people receiving services that complained the previous year.
- 80 MP enquiries were received in 2018-2019. This is an increase on the 44 MP enquiries received in the previous year. The overall increase since 2016-17 is 19% (13), suggesting this year's increase may be related to the 2017 elections.
- In 2018-19, there were 122 informal complaints received. This compares to 343 received in the previous financial year, a decrease of 221 (64%).
- 3% of people who receive adult social care services made a formal complaint in 2018-19.
- The most common reasons for complaining were categorised as: support from a social care team, communication, finances and lack of support from Independent Providers.
- 19 (10%) formal complaints, were about the care provided by Independent Providers.
- 76 (42%) complaints were partially upheld, while 35 (19%) were not upheld and 31 (17%) were upheld. 37 (20%) complaints required no further action; 3 (1.5%) complaints remain Ongoing and 1 (<1%) complaint was Withdrawn.
- There were 13 Senior Manager Reviews completed during 2018-19. This is a significant increase when compared to the 5 completed the previous year. However, only 2 reviews were upheld.
- There were 8 final views issued by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2018-19. This is an increase of 3 in comparison to 2017-18. 3 complaints were not upheld and 5 were upheld. The LGO were satisfied the Council had fully remedied all 5 upheld complaints.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 The terms: compliments, comments, representations and complaints are defined in Appendix 1 and an explanation of acronyms is provided in Appendix 2.

4.0 The complaints process and feedback

4.1 The complaints process has an emphasis on de-escalation and early resolution of complaints.

4.2 In order to ensure that the complaints process remains current, relevant and user friendly, questionnaires were sent to 62 complainants. We carry out the survey several months after the complaints were logged in order to allow time for the complaints to be fully closed.

4.3 15 responses were returned in total, which amounts to 24%. The results of this survey are included in Appendix 3.

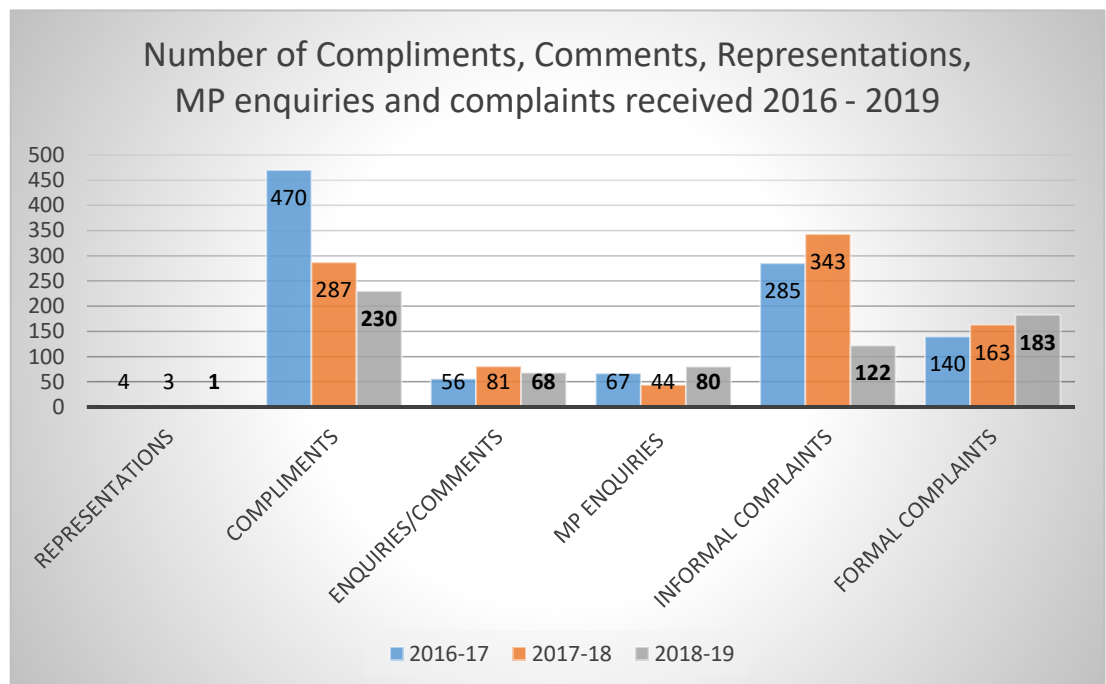
4.4 Examples of the outcome of the feedback include that 73% (11) of those who responded felt most or all of their concerns had been resolved to their satisfaction.

67% (10) of those who responded scored that they were fairly to very satisfied with the way their complaint was dealt with.

5.0 Compliments, comments, representations and complaints

5.1 The total amount of feedback received by category for the previous three financial years is shown in Figure 1. More details on each type of feedback that is received is given in the appropriate sections in this report.

5.2 *Figure 1: Compliments, comments, representations, MP enquiries, complaints*



6.0 Compliments

6.1 230 compliments were received in 2018-2019. This is a 20% decrease from the 287 compliments received in the previous year.

6.2 These compliments refer primarily to two distinct areas:

The quality of service

The helpful attitude of staff members

6.3 Compliments which show that the work of an individual staff member has been exceptional are included in the monthly communications email from Wendi Ogle-Welbourn (Executive Director, People and Communities) to all her staff.

6.4 Examples of compliments received:

“You have given me the confidence to maintain my independence. I'm more than happy with the service provided. Thank you.”
[Reablement Services]

“This seems absolutely spot on. Well done recognising the attention to small details - it will be the key to success hopefully. Thanks for listening so well.”
[Learning Disability Services]

“Her friendly manner and encouraging ways of teaching have been very helpful. Also when I was not well, she was very flexible in changing an appointment.”
[Sensory Services]

“I feel blessed for the staff we received. You gave us all a light in our dark tunnel and I now know our future looks so much better. Thank you very much.”
[Adult Early Help]

“Thank you so much for all your help with my mum”
[Discharge Planning]

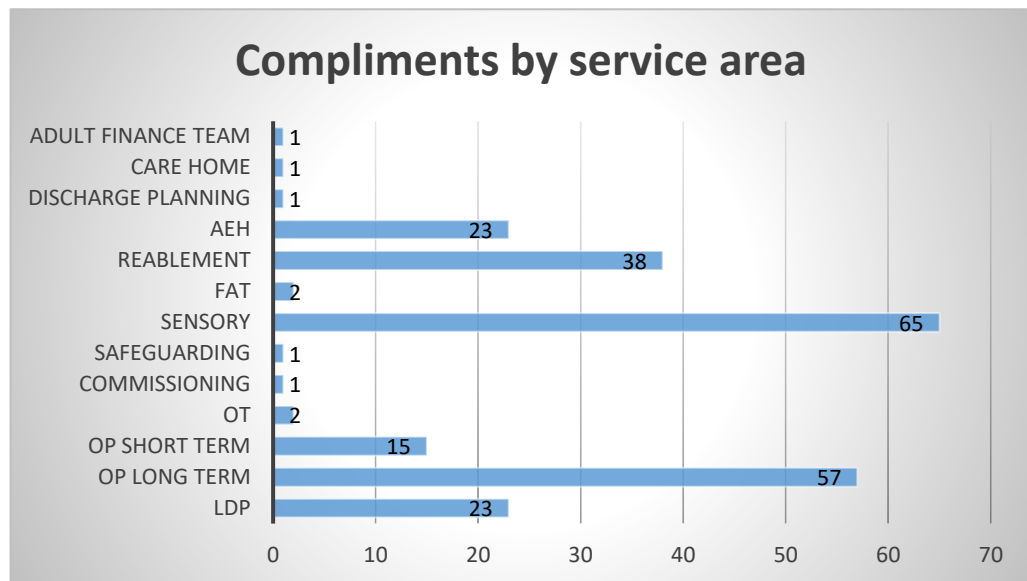
“When we met you at my mother in-laws house, I found you to be most thorough and lucid in your explanation of the role of social services. Moreover you displayed great sensitivity in the written questions you put to my mother in-law, who at that stage was almost completely deaf. To this should be added the excellent advice you gave to me”
[Older People’s Services]

6.5 The Customer Care Team are reminding staff of the importance of sharing positive feedback with the team.

6.6 Figure 2 gives details of the number of compliments received by service area.

6.7

Figure 2:



7.0 Comments and Enquiries

7.1 68 comments and enquiries were received in 2018-2019. This is a 16% decrease on the 81 comments and enquiries received in the previous year.

7.2 The comments and enquiries covered a number of issues, including:

- Requests for social care assessments
- Clarifying invoices
- Clarifying financial assessments
- Enquiries about other Local Authorities
- Raising data protection concerns
- Enquiries making a complaint about independent external organisations, including the NHS, CPFT, CCG and City Council
- Enquiries from a care provider regarding payment for commissioned services
- Concerns regarding other Council departments, including Childrens Services and Transport
- Reporting safeguarding concerns
- Raising concerns about privately funded care
- Reporting a suspicious email allegedly sent by the Council

7.3 54 comments and enquiries were passed on to the relevant team within the Council for consideration; 14 comments and enquiries were passed on to external organisations.

8.0 Representations

8.1 1 representation was received in 2018-2019. This is a reduction from the 3 received in the previous year, 2017-2018.

8.2 This representation related to the charging policy for Reablement Services.

9.0 MP Enquiries

9.1 80 MP enquiries were received in 2018-2019. This is an increase of 36 (82%) from the 44 MP enquiries received in the previous year.

9.2 When comparing the number of MP Enquiries received in 2016-2017 the overall increase is 19% (13) suggesting that this year's increase is unusual and may be related to elections.

9.3 The elections in 2017 may have resulted in a lower number of MP Enquiries in 2017-2018 and explain the increase this reporting year. The Customer Care Team will monitor this over the next reporting year.

9.4 Figure 3 gives the number of MP Enquiries in relation to the major service areas and the total number of people receiving services.

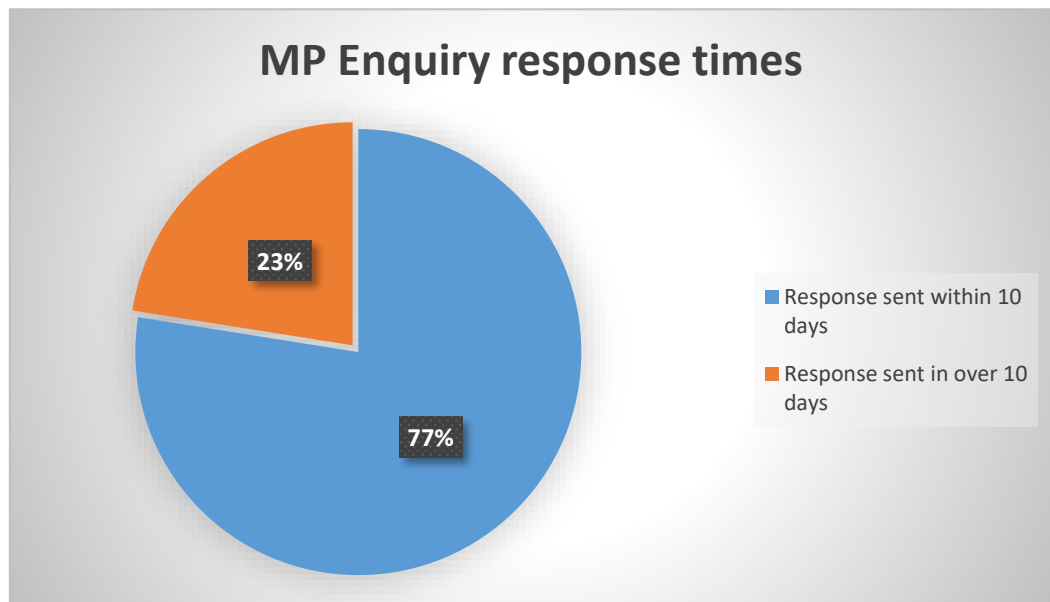
9.5 **Figure 3: MP Enquiries by Service Area**

| Service Area | Number of people receiving service | Number of Informal complaints | Percentage of complaints per population receiving services |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| LDP | 1577 | 13 | 0.8% |
| Physical Disabilities | 647 | 19 | 3% |
| Older People (includes Long term, short terms and discharge planning) | 3180 | 22 | 0.7% |
| CPFT includes Older People's Mental Health and OT | 357 | 2 | 0.6% |
| Total | 5761 | 56 | 1% |

9.6 Figure 4 gives details of the response times for MP enquiries.

9.7

Figure 4: MP Enquiry Response Times



9.8 62 of 80 (77%) MP enquiries received in 2018-2019 were responded to within timescale. This is an increase from 2017-2018, when 26 of 44 (59%) MP enquiries were responded to within timescale.

9.9 18 (23%) of responses to MP enquiries were delayed for various reasons, including:

- Complex case involving safeguarding
- Complex case involving a related complaint
- Complex case involving other organisations
- Waiting to speak to a worker on leave
- Complex case involving several internal teams
- Additional time needed for related assessments to be completed

9.10 In cases where responses have been delayed a holding letter is sent to the MP to keep them informed.

10.0 Informal complaints

10.1 During the course of the year the number of formal and informal complaints varies slightly. This is because sometimes a complaint is initially dealt with informally and then the complainant states that they wish for the complaint to be escalated and dealt with formally. Similarly some complainants wish their complaint to be dealt with formally and when initial remedial actions have been completed they state that they wish to withdraw their complaint. In cases where the type of complaint changes, the complaints records are amended accordingly.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of informal complaints

10.2 In 2018-19, there were 122 informal complaints received. This compares to 343 received in the previous financial year, a decrease of 221 (64) %.

10.3 Figure 4 shows the number of informal complaints in relation to the major service areas and the total number of people receiving services.

10.4 *Figure 4: Number of informal complaints*

| Service Area | Number of people receiving service | Number of Informal complaints | Percentage of complaints per population receiving services |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| LDP | 1577 | 47 | 3% |
| Physical Disabilities | 647 | 20 | 3% |
| Older People (includes Long term, short terms and discharge planning) | 3180 | 54 | 2% |
| CPFT includes Older People's Mental Health and OT | 357 | 1 | 0.2% |
| Total | 5761 | 122 | 2% |

10.5 2% of people receiving services complained informally in 2018-19 This compares to 2017- 18 when 4.5% of people who received services informally complained.

10.6 The decrease in the number of informal complaints could be attributed to the feedback being categorised as enquiries by some social care teams opposed to informal complaints.

10.7 The Customer Care Team are currently reviewing a practitioner factsheet which outlines the informal complaints process to ensure it is clear. The team will monitor the impact of this against the number of informal complaints being reported.

11.0 Formal Complaints

11.1 In providing these statistics, it should be noted that the volume of complaints does not in itself indicate the quality of the Council's performance. High volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems enabling the opportunity for preventative measures to be implemented.

Conversely, low complaint volumes can be a worrying sign that an organisation is not receptive to service user feedback, rather than being an indicator that all is well.

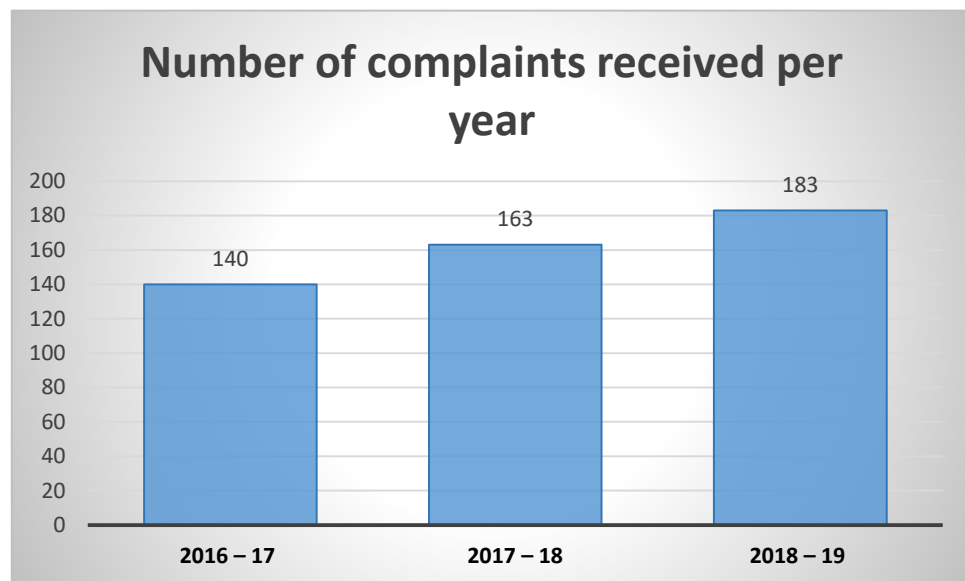
Therefore, emphasis is placed on ensuring that people wishing to make a complaint or provide feedback of any kind, can do so with ease and in a variety of ways. Guidance regarding how to provide feedback of any kind is provided on Cambridgeshire County Council's website (<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/complain>)

In addition how to make a complaint / provide feedback is explained by the Adult Support Coordinator / Social Worker during the assessment process and as part of that process the Service User is given a factsheet that explains the process.

11.2 There were 183 formal complaints received in 2018-19.

11.3 Figure 5 gives details of the number of formal complaints received in the last 3 years and the comparative percentage increase /decrease.

11.4 *Figure 5: Formal Complaints Received from 2016-2019*



11.5 183 formal complaints were received in 2018- 19. Figure 5 demonstrates that the number of formal complaints has risen year on year over the past 3 years from a 140 complaint in 2016-17 to 183 complaints in 2018-19. This is an increase of 43 (31%).

11.6 Compared to the previous financial year (2017-18) formal complaints have risen from 163 to 183 a difference of 20 (12%).

11.7 However, when comparing the ratio of complaints received against the number of people receiving adult social care, the increase between this reporting year and last only equates to 0.9%. See section 12.0.

11.8 On average 46 formal complaints were received per quarter during 2018-19. This compares to an average of 41 per quarter received in 2017-18 an increase of 5.

12.0 Service Area Complaints

12.1 To provide some perspective; Figure 6 shows the number of complaints in relation to the major service areas and the total number of people receiving services.

12.2 *Figure 6: Service Area Complaints*

| Service Area | Number of people receiving service | Number of complaints | Percentage of complaints per population receiving services |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| LDP | 1577 | 35 | 2% |
| Physical Disabilities | 647 | 18 | 3% |
| Older People (includes Long term, short terms and discharge planning) | 3180 | 121 | 4% |
| CPFT (includes Older People's Mental Health and OT) | 357 | 5 | 1% |
| Total | 5761 | 179 | 3% |

*Please note that 4 formal complaints are not included in the table above. This is because service users involved were not receiving social care services for example safeguarding complaints.

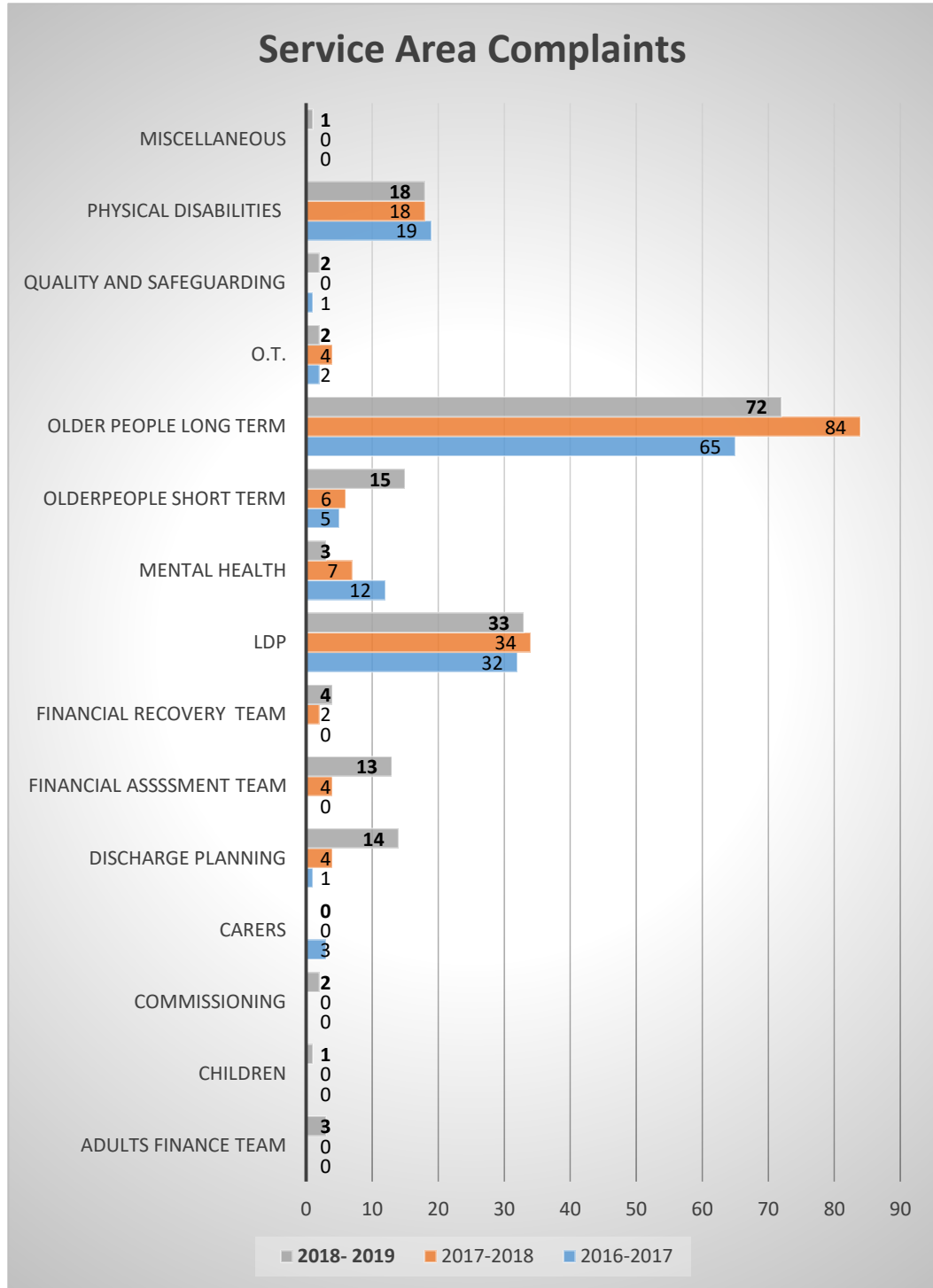
12.3 The Business Intelligence Team collect data on the number of people using services in the categories listed in Figure 6. These categories are very broad and more details about service areas is provided in Figure 7.

12.4 3% of those receiving Adult Social Care Services complained about the services they received. This is a 0.9% increase on the previous year when 2.9% of people using services complained.

12.5 Figure 7 shows the number of complaints received by each service area in the past 3 years.

12.6

Figure 7: Complaints by Service Area



12.7

The total number of complaints about Older People’s long term services was 72. This is higher than other services, although it is important to set this in the context of the number of people using Older People’s services. Figure 6 shows that 4% of older people receiving services complained. This is similar to the percentage for other service areas.

12.8

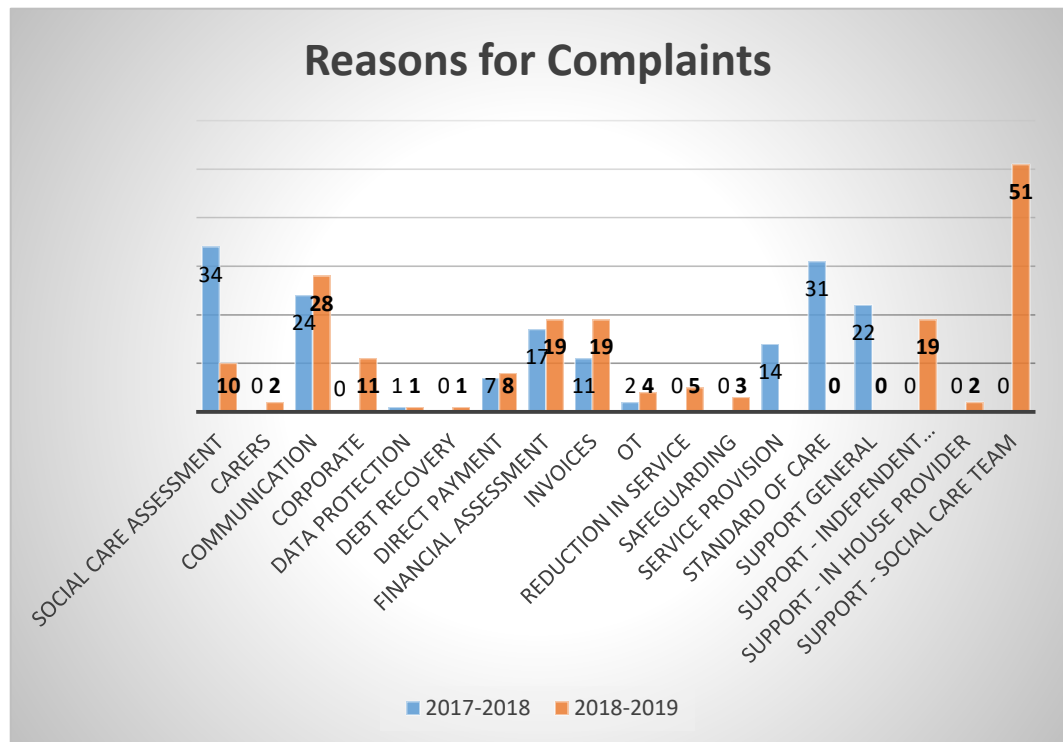
There were 12 more complaints (84) about Older People’s long term services received in the previous year a decrease of 14%.

- 12.9 The number of complaints for Older People's short term services has increased by 9 from 6 in the previous financial year to 15 this year. This increase could reflect the drive to intervene in a person's life for a short a time as possible and enable their independence as much as possible. This drive means that more people receive short term services and do not move onto long term care. Increased numbers of people using services can mean an increase in the number of complaints received.
- 12.10 Another possible reason for the increase in complaints about short term services relates to the change from Reablement carers to long term carers. The person is likely to have become accustomed to the Reablement carers and they are more likely to find it difficult to adjust to a different care agency; any difficulties of this nature could increase the likelihood of a complaint.
- 12.11 The number of complaints about discharge planning services has also increased from 4 to 13 an increase of 9. The reasons for this increase could be similar to those cited for the increase in 12.10.
- 12.12 The services provided by teams such as Reablement and Discharge Planning are very closely linked to services from other agencies and this increases the risks of communication errors, this could also account in part for the increase.
- 12.13 There were 3 complaints about Mental Health Social Care services and further 2 about financial issues for people receiving Mental Health Social Care Services. In total these 5 complaints represent a slight decrease of 2 when compared with the 7 complaints received last year.
- 12.14 The number of social care complaints (Adults) reported by CCC that relate to Mental Health and Occupational Therapy (OT) services occasionally differ slightly from the number reported by CPFT. These variations are due to the different ways in which some complaints are categorised.
- 12.15 33 complaints about Learning Disability services were received in 2018-19. This is very similar to the number (34) received in the previous year.
- 12.16 18 complaints about Physical Disability services were received in 2017-18 and 2019.
- 12.17 The number of complaints relating to the Adults Finance Team is low. This is to be expected because the team only began to operate in July 2018. In addition often an invoice issue is only part of the complaint and the majority of issues are social care. In such cases the complaint is categorised under the relevant social care team.
- 12.18 Financial Assessment complaints have increased significantly by 9 from 4 to 13. Part of the reason for this increase referred to delays which has now been addressed by the Financial Assessment Team (FAT).

In comparison to the last reporting year, there has been a 14% decrease in the number of complaints about long term Older People's services.

13.0 Reasons for Complaints

13.1 *Figure 8: The Reasons Why People Complain*

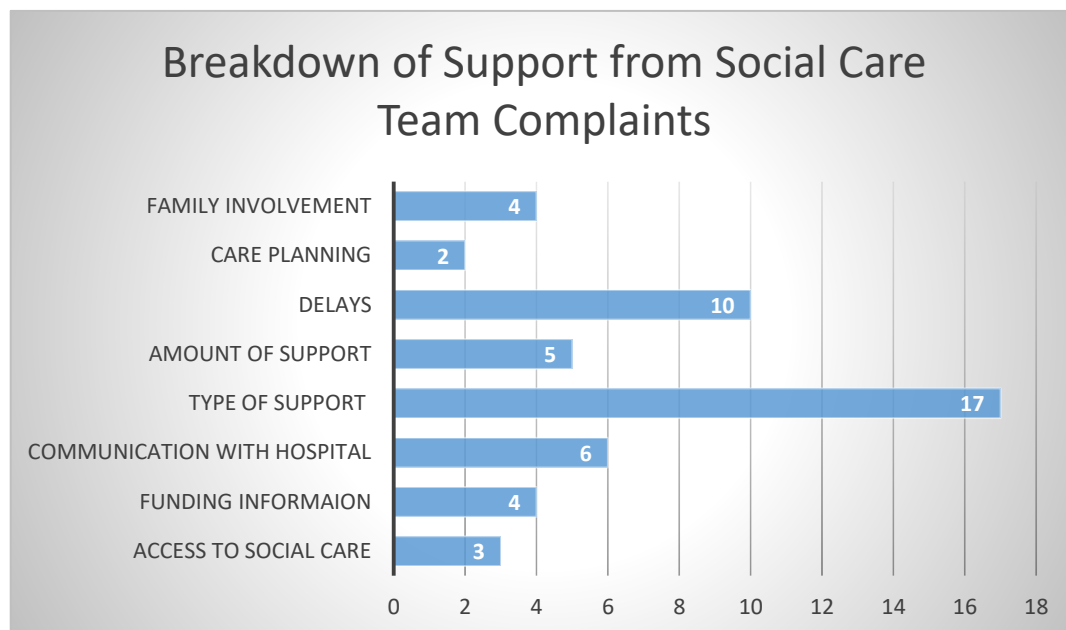


13.2 In April 2018 the way Customer Care data was categorised was revised. Categories such as general support, standard of care and service provision were removed. New categories such as support from in-house providers and support from social care teams were introduced. These categories were introduced with the aim of providing more detail about the reasons why people complain in these areas. Complaints that would have been categorised previously in one of the deleted categories have now been included in one of the new categories.

13.3 The most common reason for complaining 51 (28%) related to support from the social care team. As the categories have been changed there are no comparable figures for this category in the previous year.

13.4 The support from social care teams covers a number of different types of complaint for more detail about these complaints please see figure 9.

13.5 *Figure 9 Breakdown of Complaints about support from social care teams*



13.6 Within the category of complaints about support provided by social care teams the most common reason for complaining is about the type of support offered for example the person/family member feels that residential care is needed when they have been assessed as needing domiciliary care support.

13.7 28 complaints were about communication issues. This compares to 24 received the previous year, an increase of 4 (17%). The issues included in these complaints ranged from complaints regarding lack of or poor communication about social care and finances, to inaccurate communication about the nature of care provision. Learning has been taken from these areas, see section 19.0

13.8 In total 39 (21%) complaints were about financial issues. This is a rise of 11 (39%) when compared to the 28 received the previous year

13.9 19 (10%) complaints about financial issues referred to the outcome of the financial assessment process, such as delays in completing the process.

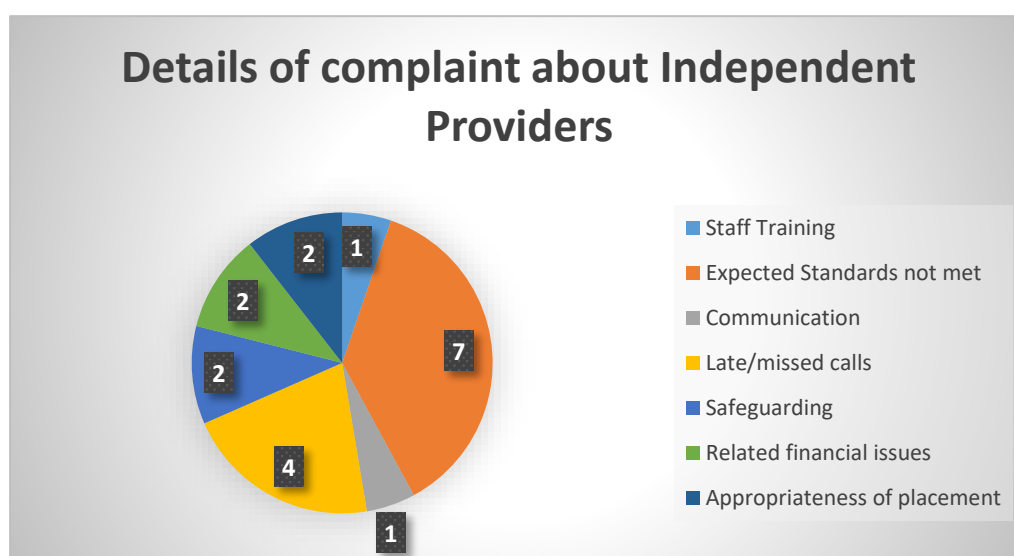
13.10 There was 1 complaint about the financial recovery process, in the previous year there were no complaints about this process. In past years complaints about the financial recovery process were something of a theme. The issues primarily related to soft reminder letters being received when the account had been settled, and the tone of recovery letters. However, following previous feedback received through complaints, changes in the process were made and the significant reduction in the number of these complaints, this year and last year indicate that the changes made have addressed the issues in the long term.

13.11 19 (10%) complaints about financial issues referred primarily to invoices. In July 2018 the Adults Finance Team were formed and the majority of the 19 complaints about invoices have been dealt with by this team.

- 13.12 The number of complaints about invoices has increased by 8 a rise of 73%. These complaints refer to disputes about the amount invoiced for and delays
- 13.13 Complaints very often contain more than one issue and for reporting purposes complaints are categorised using the primary issue in the complaint. Further to the 19 complaints that were primarily about invoices there were another 11 complaints that primarily referred to social care issues but also referred to concerns about invoices as a secondary issue. In total there were 30 (16%) complaints that referred to invoices at some point in the complaint.
- 13.14 11 (6%) complaints were received about corporate issues. Corporate complaints can refer to any issue that is not social care. An example of such a complaint would be one about a noisy neighbour. Often these complaints come to the Customer Care team in error and are referred on to the appropriate service to respond.

14.0 Complaints about Independent Providers

- 14.1 The Local Authority has responsibility for the services it commissions. A complainant can address a complaint about an independent service provider commissioned by the Local Authority either by complaining to the provider directly or by complaining to the Local Authority. In cases where the complainant has complained to both parties, the Local Authority will investigate and respond. There should also be a separate investigation carried out by the independent provider.
- 14.2 Complaints and the response to complaints involving independent care providers are copied as a matter of routine to the appropriate Contracts Monitoring Manager.
- 14.3 19 (10%) complaints referred primarily to the provision of care by independent providers.
- 14.4 Figure 10 gives details of the specific issues raised in complaints about the service provided by independent providers.
- 14.5 *Figure 10: Complaints about the standard of care delivered by independent providers*



14.6 The most common reason for complaining was the expected standards not being met. This refers to a number of different issues such as hygiene and lack of support with food.

15.0 Comparative Data

15.1 The Local Government Ombudsman have reported that the complaints and enquiries they received about Adult Social Care rose by 1% on the previous reporting year. This is in line with the 0.9% increase the Council has seen when comparing the ratio of complaints to people receiving services over 2017-18 to 2018-19.

15.1 Information about complaints received by similar Local Authorities is co-ordinated and disseminated by the Customer Relations Team, Adult Social Care, and Surrey County Council. This information is received approximately half way through the course of the following year. It is expected that the data for 2018 – 19 will be published later in 2019.

15.2 Comparing the 163 complaints received in 2017-18 by Cambridgeshire with the average number of complaints (263) received by comparator councils, Cambridgeshire's complaints are 30% (80) lower.

15.3 However, this simple comparison cannot be considered valid. There is a range of different arrangements for dealing with complaints within the Local Authority comparator group which affects how received complaints are recorded and reported. For example some Local Authorities record and report Adult and Children's social care complaints together, whilst others who deal with Adult and Children's complaints separately have provided a figure solely for Adult complaints. Other Local Authorities have included corporate complaints and/or MP enquiries in the numbers they provide.

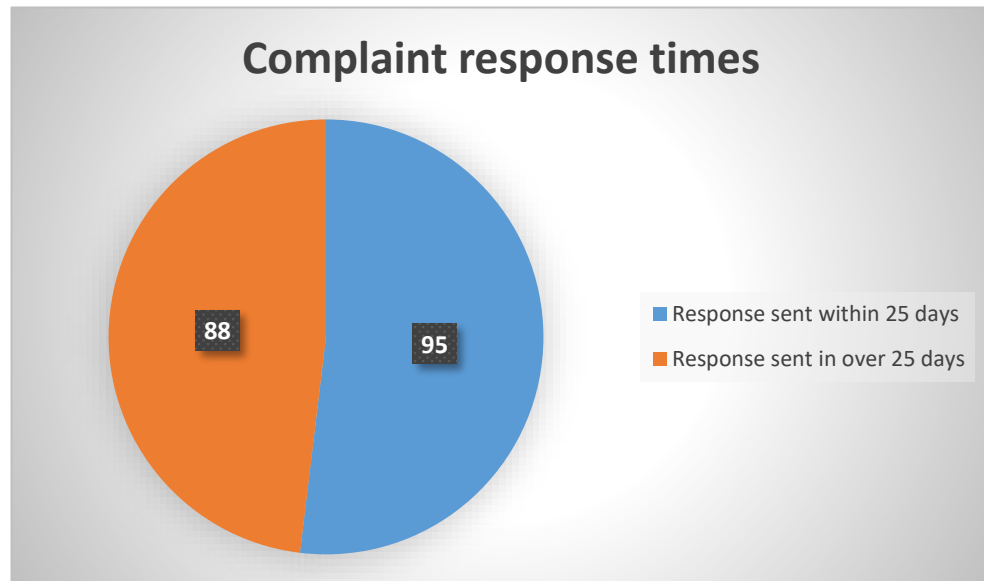
16.0 Complaint responses

16.1 The Adult Social Care complaints process specifies that complaints should be responded to within 25 working days. If there are mitigating circumstances for exceeding this time frame then a written explanation is sent to the complainant.

16.2 Figure 11 shows that 95 (52%) of formal complaints were responded to within 25 working days in 2018-2019. 88 complaints required an extension, leading to the response taking longer than 25 working days.

16.3

Figure 11: Complaint response times



16.4

Extensions were agreed for a number of reasons, including:

- Complex case involving multiple complainants
- Complaint related to ongoing legal issues
- Complaint related to an insurance claim
- Complex cases involving other organisations, or multiple teams within the Council
- Complaints involving safeguarding enquiries
- Time needed to include a meeting with the Complainant or Service User during the investigation
- Complex case involving a number of historic issues
- Delays in receiving information from external organisations
- Difficulties obtaining engagement from Complainant to clarify and confirm their concerns
- Response needed to be reviewed by the Data Protection Team for advice regarding information sharing
- Change in investigator during the course of the investigation

16.5

Complaint outcomes are recorded using the following definitions:

upheld – all issues raised in the complaint required remedial action to rectify the situation and prevent similar issues arising in the future

Partially upheld – at least 1 issue in the complaint required remedial action

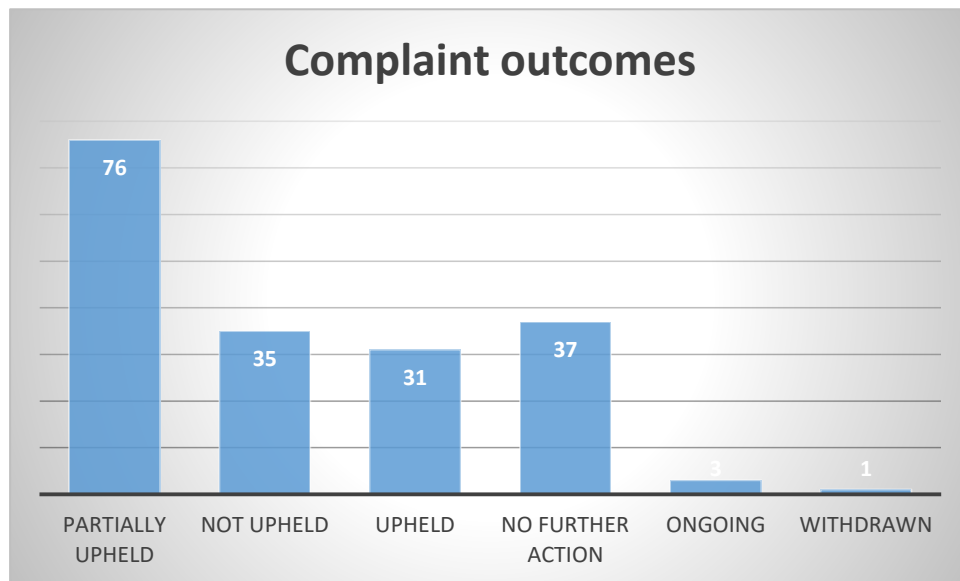
Not upheld – none of the issues raised required remedial action

There was a 21% decrease in the number of upheld complaints in 2018-19.

16.6

Figure 12 gives details of the number of complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld.

16.7 *Figure 12: Complaint outcomes*



16.8 76 (42%) complaints were partially upheld in 2018- 19 this is higher than 63 (39%) in 2017-18 an increase of 21%.

16.9 What could be seen as one of the most significant statistics in this report is the number of upheld complaints. During this reporting year, 31 (17%) complaints were upheld. This is a decrease of 8 (21%) in comparison to the 39 (24%) upheld in the previous reporting year 2017-18.

17.0 Senior Manager Review

17.1 Where complainants are not satisfied with the first response they receive from the Council, a complaint may be reviewed by a Senior Manager.

17.2 For consistency, the Customer Care Team report on completed Senior Manager Reviews rather than those requested or those that are on-going within a reporting year.

17.3 In 2018-19, 13 Senior Manager Reviews were completed. This is a significant rise in comparison to the last reporting year where 5 Senior Manager Reviews were completed.

Only 2 Senior Managers Reviews were upheld.

17.4 The increase this reporting year was offset by a decrease of 71% in 2017-2018, suggesting that this fluctuates over time.

17.5 The Senior Manager Review process offers the complainant reassurance that the complaint has been scrutinised by another officer with the authority to change things. Therefore any increase in the number of Senior Manager Reviews is not necessarily a cause for concern, what would be more of a concern would be a significant increase in the number of upheld reviews. In addition this process can prevent the escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman.

17.6 Of the 13 Senior Manager Reviews completed this reporting year, 6 were partially upheld, 2 were upheld and 5 were not upheld.

17.7 Of the two upheld reviews, one related to a significant delay in carrying out a social care assessment following a service user's discharge from hospital

into an interim care placement and a lack of evidence of clear discussion around finances. The second upheld review identified some system discrepancies in the recording of the service users' client contribution, and delays in the time taken to calculate what was owed on closing the Direct Payment. In both cases, learning was identified and shared with senior managers to disseminate further.

17.8 6 of the Senior Manager Reviews were completed within the three month allotted timeframe. The remaining 7 reviews exceeded the timeframe and apologies were issued to the complainants for this.

18.0 Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints and enquiries

18.1 Whereas Senior Managers and the Customer Care Team always strive hard to resolve a complaint there are times when the complainant chooses to go to the LGO.

18.2 Complaints that include health as well as social care issues are investigated by a joint Parliamentary Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO) and LGO investigation team. Any such complaints will be reported on in this section of the annual report.

18.3 LGO complaint investigations can span more than one reporting period. In order to provide consistency the Customer Care Team report on completed investigations only, not those that have been referred or are still in progress.

18.4 The LGO are unable to investigate every complaint that goes to them. As such the LGO will occasionally decide to carry out 'initial assessments' with the Council in the first instance to determine if they will proceed further with a full and detailed investigation. This will usually involve requesting a copy of the Council's complaint responses to date.

18.5 During this reporting year the LGO carried out 3 initial assessments which they decided not to take further.

18.6 There were 8 final decisions issued between 01 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. This is a 60% increase in comparison to the 5 that were issued in the last reporting year.

18.7 The LGO did not uphold 3 of their complaint investigations and found the Council at fault in the remaining 5 investigations.

18.8 The LGO were satisfied that the Council had fully remedied all 5 of the investigations which they had upheld.

18.9 In January representatives from Adult Social Care and Democratic Services met with the Assistant Ombudsman. This was a very constructive meeting and gave the Council the opportunity to gain more understanding about the LGO's approach to complaints. A range of topics were discussed which included:

- The LGO's 'wider jurisdiction'
- The joint Parliamentary Health Service and LGO team
- How the LGO record information relating to the Council

18.10 Learning from LGO final decisions where the Council has been found at fault is shared at Reflective Practice sessions with practitioners. These sessions give practitioners the opportunity to consider ways of ensuring that their practice reduces the risks of similar situations reoccurring.

19.0 Specific learning from complaints

19.1 The investigation outcome for a complaint about a reduction in service was that the complainant should have been informed of the purpose of the re-assessment visit and that the use of the word 'appeal' when discussing 'how to challenge the reassessment' was misleading. Both issues related to the individual learning of the staff member and have been addressed directly.

19.2 A complaint about an initial safeguarding referral not being taken forward as a safeguarding when a later referral was. The complainant was dissatisfied with the way the first enquiry was responded to. After investigation it was agreed that the safeguarding processes in the social care team would be amended to include a higher level of management scrutiny in order to ensure all appropriate actions have been taken

19.3 A complaint made by the family of an elderly couple about the lack of action taken in response to a safeguarding concern they raised about the poor standard of care in a Nursing Home highlighted some areas for improvement. The investigation showed that insufficient information was given to the family throughout the safeguarding investigation. The Service Manager has addressed each point with the staff member involved to ensure that a similar situation will not happen again.

19.4 A complaint about incorrect information being given about a client contribution resulted in training for brokerage staff to ensure that the correct information was given. Public facing factsheets have also been drafted that practitioners will be able to issue to service users and their families giving general finance information relating to social care and signposting to relevant agencies for further advice.

19.5 A complaint about carers not knowing how to work with a service user, or how to enter the property and new carers turning up without warning resulted in the care agency agreeing to the following:

- Co-ordinators to notify the family if a new carer would be attending
- Staff to be fully aware of the care plan
- Entry point to property changed and agreed

19.6 A complaint was raised about a Social Worker not acting on the outcomes of a review. The investigation showed that the Social Worker had attended the review as part of the transition of care from the Mental Health team to the Adults and Autism team (AAT). At the time of the review the responsibility for social care needs was with the Mental Health team and the AAT worker was attending the review to get to know the service user. It was not made clear to the complainant who would be responsible for carrying out any agreed actions. To prevent a similar situation happening again AAT and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust will make it

very clear which worker is responsible for ensuring that any agreed actions are implemented in situations where there is more than one worker present.

- 19.7 A complaint about care charges highlighted that a care home had been issuing misleading information to the service user and their family. The care home had issued the service user with a contract advising that their contribution towards the weekly charge was 'nil' and the Council would be paying the full weekly fees. This led the service user to believe the Council were fully funding the placement. It should have been made clearer to the service user, that as the Council had commissioned the placement on their behalf, the Council would pay the care home directly and subsequently invoice the family for the personal contribution. Learning from this was shared with the care home and the Council's brokerage and commissioning teams.
- 19.8 A complaint highlighted that communication from the social care team to the family of a service user waiting for a care provider to be sourced could have been better. It identified the need for the social care team to keep families updated, even if that is to say no care has been sourced.
- 19.9 A service user with visual impairments had received correspondence from adult social care in a format that they were unable to read. It had been noted on the service users records that they required large print, however, this had been overlooked. The Council apologised for the error and distress this caused and reminded social care staff to ensure they check that the information they are providing is in a format that is accessible to the service user.

20.0 Complaint Themes

- 20.1 Lack of support from the social care team was the most common reason for complaining. This is a relatively broad category and a breakdown of this category shows that the type of support on offer was the most commonly complained about area.
- 20.2 There has been an increase in the number of complaints about financial issues. This includes delays in the financial assessment process and invoices. As a result of this temporary resource was put into the Financial Assessment Team while permanent staff were recruited. This enabled the team to clear the back log of outstanding assessments. The team are now at fully staffed and there are currently no outstanding delays with financial assessments.
- 20.3 Although not the primary reason for complaining communication issues continue to be raised in complaints. These issues include: not returning calls and failing to provide information on progress at regular intervals. The importance of following the Council's communication charter is being shared as a reminder to all social care staff. This is being disseminated in a variety of ways to include training sessions run by the Customer Care Team, via the Leadership Forum and via work undertaken by the Quality and Practice Team.

21.0 Conclusions

- 21.1 Compliments decreased this reporting year.
- 21.2 MP enquiries have increased by 82%
- 21.3 The number of formal complaints continues to increase year on year.
- 21.4 The most common reasons for complaining during 2018-19 has been the support provided by social care teams and financial concerns.
- 21.5 Although the number of Senior Manager Reviews (13) has increased the number (2) that were upheld is low.
- 21.6 The number of Local Government Ombudsman decisions have increased, this is to be expected as the number of formal complaints have also increased. Reflective Practice sessions led by the Principal Social Worker offer the opportunity for practitioners to consider how their practice should reduce the risks of the Council being in a similar situation in the future.

22.0 Recommendations

- 22.1 Adult Committee to approve this report for publication on the external website in line with the 2009 DOH Regulations.
- 22.2 Customer Care Team to continue to work towards ensuring that the number of upheld or partially upheld LGO investigations remains low.

Appendix 1

The definitions for compliments, comments, representations and complaints are set out below.

Compliment: a formal expression of satisfaction about service delivery by a Service User or their representative.

Comment: any suggestion or remark made formally by a Service User, their representative or a member of the public.

Representation: a comment or complaint about County Council or Government resources or the nature and availability of services.

Complaint: A concern or complaint is 'any expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response'. It is how the person raising a concern/complaint would like it addressed that helps define whether the expression of dissatisfaction requires an 'informal' or 'formal response. It is therefore not always the complexity or severity of a concern/complaint that defines its formality or informality.

Informal Complaint: It is how the person making the complaint/concern would like it addressed that helps to define whether the expression of dissatisfaction requires an 'informal' or 'formal' response. It is therefore not always the complexity or severity of the complaint/concern that defines its formality or informality.

Formal Complaint: any formal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about service delivery by a Service User or their representative.

Corporate Complaints: Corporate complaints are outside the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, and refer solely to the behaviour of a named County Council employee. A corporate complaint is investigated and responded to by the line manager of the person who is being complained about.

Appendix 2

Explanation of Acronyms

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ASCMT | Adult Social Care Management Team |
| AAT | Adult and Autism Team |
| CPFT | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust |
| CCT | Customer Care Team |
| DOH | Department of Health |
| EDT | Emergency Duty Team |
| FABA | Finance and Benefits Assessor |
| G.P | General Practitioner |
| HSO | Health Services Ombudsman |
| LDP | Learning Disability Partnership |
| LGO | Local Government Ombudsman |
| MCA | Mental Capacity Assessment |
| M.P. | Member of Parliament |
| NFA | No Further Action |
| OP | Older Peoples Services |
| OT | Occupational Therapy |
| PD | Physical Disabilities |
| TECSS | Technology Enabled Care & Sensory Services |
| AEH | Adult Early Help |
| AFT | Adult's Finance Team |
| FAT | Financial Assessment Team |

Appendix 3

User Experience Survey Results (1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018)

Questionnaires were sent to 62 complainants, whose complaints were received between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2018. We carry out the survey several months after the complaints were logged in order to allow time for the complaints to be fully closed.

Not all complainants from this period were contacted, for example cases where the service user has passed away, or where the complainant still has open complaints with the department.

15 responses were returned in total, which amounts to 24%. The statistics below relate solely to the 15 returned responses. 8 were returned anonymously, and 7 provided their name.

1 Which service area was your complaint about?

| Service area | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| OP | 5 | 33 |
| LDP | 5 | 33 |
| PD | 2 | 13 |
| Other: OP and PD | 1 | 7 |
| Other: Finance | 2 | 13 |

2 Did you make the complaint as the Client, or Client's representative?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Client | 5 | 33 |
| Client's Representative | 10 | 67 |

3 Did you receive acknowledgement of your complaint?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Yes, within 3 working days. | 14 | 93 |
| No, not within 3 working days. | 1 | 7 |

4 If 'Yes' to Q3 – Was this contact helpful?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 8 | 53 |
| No | 1 | 7 |
| Not Sure | 2 | 13 |
| Not Answered | 4 | 27 |

5 Did you receive a full written response in 20-25 working days?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 7 | 47 |
| No | 3 | 20 |
| Not Sure | 5 | 33 |

6 If 'No' to Q5 – Did you receive an explanation for the delay?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Not Answered | 11 | 73 |
| Yes | 2 | 13 |
| No | 1 | 7 |
| Not Sure | 1 | 7 |

7 Was the complaint resolved to your satisfaction?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 5 | 33 |
| No | 4 | 27 |
| Some of it | 6 | 40 |

8 Were you told how to take your complaint further?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 8 | 53 |
| No | 1 | 7 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|----|
| Not Sure | 5 | 33 |
| Not Answered | 1 | 7 |

9 Overall, how satisfied were you with the way your complaint was dealt with?

| | Number of responses received | Percentage % |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Very Satisfied | 2 | 13 |
| Satisfied | 4 | 27 |
| Fairly Satisfied | 4 | 27 |
| Not Satisfied | 4 | 27 |
| Not Answered | 1 | 7 |