

# Adult Social Care Customer Care Annual Report

01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021



## 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 reporting period

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## 1.0 Context

- 1.1 This report provides information about compliments, comments, representations, MP enquiries and complaints made between 01 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 under the [Adult Social Care Complaints Policy](#) 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 an NHS Partner organisation, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT).

## 2.0 Executive Summary

- 252 [compliments](#) were received in 2020-2021. This accounts for the highest proportion of feedback (37%) received across adult social care services.
- 210 [formal complaints](#) were received in 2020-2021. This is a 2% increase in comparison to 2019-2020 when 206 formal complaints were received. The overall percentage of people receiving services who complained over the last three reporting years remains the same at 3%
- 53 [MP enquiries](#) were received in 2020-2021. This is a 27% (11) increase from the last reporting year.
- In 2020-2021, there were 97 [informal complaints](#) received. This compares to 106 received in the previous reporting year, an 8% (9) decrease.
- The most common [reasons for complaining](#) were categorised as: support from a social care team, communication and standard of care received by independent care providers.
- 23 formal complaints were about the care provided by Council commissioned [care providers](#). This is a 21% increase from last reporting year where 19 were received.
- 67 (32%) complaints were partially upheld, while 37 (18%) were not upheld and 35 (16%) were upheld, this follows the trend of [complaint outcomes](#) over the last 2 reporting years.
- There were 19 [Senior Manager Reviews](#) completed during 2020-2021. This is an increase of 8 (73%) in comparison to 2019-2020 when there were 11 Senior Manager Reviews completed. The number of reviews completed over the last 4 reporting years has fluctuated, suggesting an increase or decrease either way is not necessarily indicative of a trend.
- There were 4 final views issued by the [Local Government Social Care Ombudsman](#) (LGSCO) this reporting year. This is a 33% (2) decrease in comparison to 2019-2020 where 6 were received. 2 complaints were upheld and 2 were not upheld by the LGSCO.

## 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 Information on [how to provide feedback](#) is available on the Council's website and in an adult social care feedback leaflet which is provided to all services users. The public can also provide feedback to the Council via an online feedback form, by phone, email or in person to any member of staff and through the Council's social media channels.

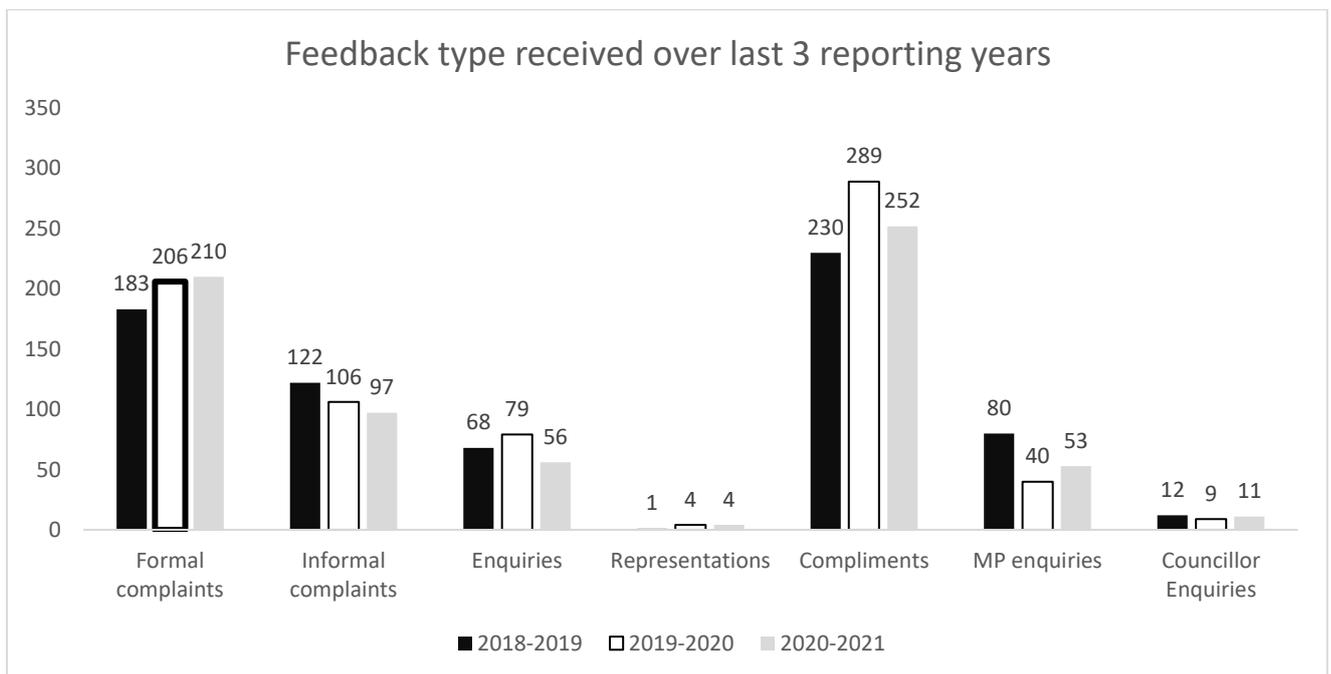
4.2 The complaints process has an emphasis on de-escalation and early resolution of complaints.

4.3 The [Adults Social Care Complaints Policy](#) is accessible on the Council's website or on request from any member of Council staff. The policy outlines the complaints process and timescales.

## 5.0 Summary of overall feedback received

5.1 The total amount of feedback received this reporting year is 683. The breakdown is shown in Figure 1 below, with comparison to the previous three reporting years is shown in Figure 1. More details on each type of feedback is given in the appropriate sections in the report.

5.2 Figure 1:



## 6.0 Learning from complaints

6.1 Whether a complaint is upheld or not, formal or informal, or whether there is a reason the Council determine not to respond to a complaint, for example if no consent is received or if the issues are historical and fall outside of the complaints timescale, the relevant service will still consider each concern, investigate where appropriate and learning is taken wherever possible to ensure the opportunity for service improvement is not missed.

- 6.2 The Council are keen that learning from complaints is shared across services. This is achieved in a variety of ways to include regular complaints meeting with Head of Services' across adult social care, Director level oversight of all LGSCO complaints and the dissemination of learning through a variety of methods led by the Practice Standards and Quality Team and the Principal Social Worker for adult social care. These can be relating to a specific case or regarding wider themes that have been identified.
- 6.3 The top three actions taken following learning from complaints were: explanations given, arranging for staff training or guidance and changes or reviewing of process and policies. Below are some specific examples of learning taken from complaints during 2020-2021.
- 6.4 When the Council made the decision to place debt recovery reminders on hold at the start of the pandemic, it was the first time the Debt Recovery Team put a blanket hold on all outstanding invoices at short notice. The Council acknowledges on review that clearer communication with service users and their representatives before releasing the hold would have alleviated some of the confusion this process resulted in. The Debt Recovery Team have now put in place processes to improve the restart of recovery should this need to be implemented again. There are also closer ongoing links between the debt recovery service and the social work teams to consider individuals current circumstances before taking debt recovery actions forward.
- 6.5 Due to several complaints being from repeat complainants the Customer Care Manager and Team Managers have been meeting to discuss if there are alternative approaches that could be implemented to support the service user or complainant to manage their concerns such as having regular meetings to discuss their concerns and if they are unable to be addressed informally then they have the opportunity to escalate these to formal complaints.
- 6.6 There have been a number of complaints that have started off being handled by the Council's legal services and the complainant has decided to raise a complaint or vice versa. It was identified that the Adult Social Care Complaints Policy did not offer clear guidance on one process needing to be followed to prevent duplication. As such the Customer Care Team will be amending the complaints policy to ensure this is covered.
- 6.7 The outcome of one complaint relating to safeguarding, upheld concerns regarding delays and poor communication with a service users' daughter while there was a safeguarding investigation taking place. As a result of this learning, a practitioner's factsheet was produced and there was a change in practice to ensure practitioners are aware of the importance of good communication with families to ensure safeguarding is made personal.
- 6.8 Practice and system changes were implemented across social care teams to ensure better management oversight of active safeguarding investigations. These changes were introduced to reduce the number of safeguarding enquiries that remained open unnecessarily and resulted in delays in families (or other relevant persons) being notified of the outcome of the enquiry in a timely manner.
- 6.9 It was identified from one complaint that a care and support plan had been issued without a social care assessment or review being issued to the service user in error. It is not usual practice for this to occur as it is the assessment which provides the supporting evidence to form the care and support plan. This resulted in Business Support Manager and the Team Manager introducing a two-stage process to ensure stand-alone documentation is not issued going forward.
- 6.10 Where the outcome of a complaint identified that a commissioned care provider's service had fallen below expected standards this was shared with the council's contract and commissioning team who carried out monitoring and review work with the respective providers to ensure the failings that had been identified were being addressed by the providers for example improving record keeping.

- 6.11 A new Care Home Support Team sitting within Adult Social Care was established in January 2021 and this team is working alongside Care Home Managers, empowering the Home Managers to find solutions to complex issues and coach them through change management.
- 6.12 A complaint about a delay in contact being made after a referral to adult social care, resulted in a change in the Duty Team's process on receiving referrals to ensure a senior social worker is working alongside the duty workers to monitor and triage referrals to ensure conversations occur in a timely manner.
- 6.13 Following a complaint about a delay in information about charging being provided it identified this was a result of miscommunication between the council's Continuing Health Care Team and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CAPCCG) and the forms that had been used. The council and CAPCCG reviewed their processes and implemented changes to ensure this error does not occur in future.
- 6.14 As outlined in section [18.3](#), although there has been a significant decrease in the number of complaints responded to outside of timescale, it has been agreed by Senior Management Team that the length of time to complete a Senior Manager Review is excessive. Amendments will be made to the Adult Social Care Complaints Policy and process to reduce this timescale.
- 6.15 Complaints regarding social care assessments have led to work with managers around the need to check for clear evidence of decision making within the assessments and the importance of clearly setting out key information. . To help teams learning, training to include 'case recording', 'report writing' and 'defensible decision making' has been planned. The Principal Social Worker will also be running workshops which will share the key learning from complaints about these issues to highlight areas where practice improvements are required.
- 6.16 Complaints relating to concluded safeguarding enquiries identified that there had been avoidable delays in the completion of some enquiries. Steps have been taken to support managers to keep better oversight of progress of actions following on from initial safeguarding strategy discussions. There is also tighter oversight of timelines of safeguarding enquiries to avoid delays in final completion. The social care teams have regular case discussions and take the opportunity to gain the perspectives of other workers and share ideas and learning.
- 6.17 Learning from complaints that fall under the category of lack of support have led to bespoke practice workshops being run and practitioner factsheets which provide specific guidance being produced or reviewed.
- 6.18 Learning from complaints can be combined with feedback from other sources, such as user surveys and the Partnership Boards. Complaints around accessibility and clarity of information and advice, have been linked to issues raised in the national service user survey and have led to focussed work being started with the Adult Social care Forum and Partnership Boards. The corporate communications team have designed a survey to be undertaken with support of partner organisations to understand better what information people are looking for and where they go to find this. The findings of this will help to better target our advice and information offer and to ensure we are providing the information that is important to people.

## 7.0 Compliments

- 7.1 A compliment is an expression of praise, commendation, thanks, congratulations, or other positive comments provided to a member of staff or to the services provided by adult social care. Compliments provided by members of Council staff are excluded from this process.
- 7.2 252 compliments were received in 2020-2021. Compliments accounted for the highest volume of feedback received by the Customer Care Team for adult social care over the last three reporting years. Compliments accounted for a third (37%) of all feedback received in 2021-2021.

### 7.3 Examples of compliments received are below:

**Learning Disability Partnership:** We would like to express our gratitude for the works of Consultant Psychiatrist of LDP with our son. She has been working for four years with our son who is autistic with severe learning disability. During that time working with our family we always found her approachable and helpful. Her knowledge on autism is very deep and practical. Lots of time when we were helpless (Psychiatrist) showed us the right direction such as referring us to music therapy, Speech and language therapy and physiotherapy and sensory assessment. All these helped our day to day living and managed his behaviour greatly. We feel reassured that help is available from her at any time of difficulty.

**Older People's Services:** 'I am very pleased and happy with the care I have received and all the people involved with me have been very kind and understanding. I am happy with the outcome'.

**Physical Disabilities Team:** 'I want to say a very big thank you for all your efforts during these difficult times. It is very much appreciated'.

**Transfer of Care:** 'As a family can I thank you again. Often Social Workers receive poor press for the work that they do, but I would like to uphold the work you have done for our family as an example of what you and so many Social Workers go into the profession for, putting people and their best interests at the heart of your work'.

**Technology Enabled Care:** 'Sincere thanks to you and 'the team' for all your help – the equipment has now on two occasions alerted (representative) to (service user) in distress and (representative) was able to assist her quickly. (service user) is so very grateful to us'.

**Sensory Services:** 'Absolutely fantastic service. Professional and supportive. Very efficient. Also helped to reprogram our key box. Thank you!'.

**Reablement:** 'Would just like to say a big thank you to all the carers that came out from Reablement Service North Fenland Team, who helped me with all my needs. The good work they do is very much appreciated'.

- 7.4 Themes in compliments relate to gratitude of staff being empathetic towards a service user, and or their families situation, the courteous and polite manner of staff and the appreciation of the service and support provided by adult social care which has helped improve the service users lifestyle.
- 7.5 Compliments about the Transfer of Care Team relate primarily to the support and information given during the transition from hospital to either going home with a new care package in place or alternatively when entering a residential care home setting for the first time and the support that has been provided to the service user and their family/representatives during that period.
- 7.6 Compliments that fall under the older people's services, not only include compliments for council staff but also include compliments for care staff and residential settings commissioned by the council
- 7.7 A high proportion of compliments relate to the Technology Enabled Care and Sensory Services where service users and their families are thanking staff for the informative information provided on resources that can offer

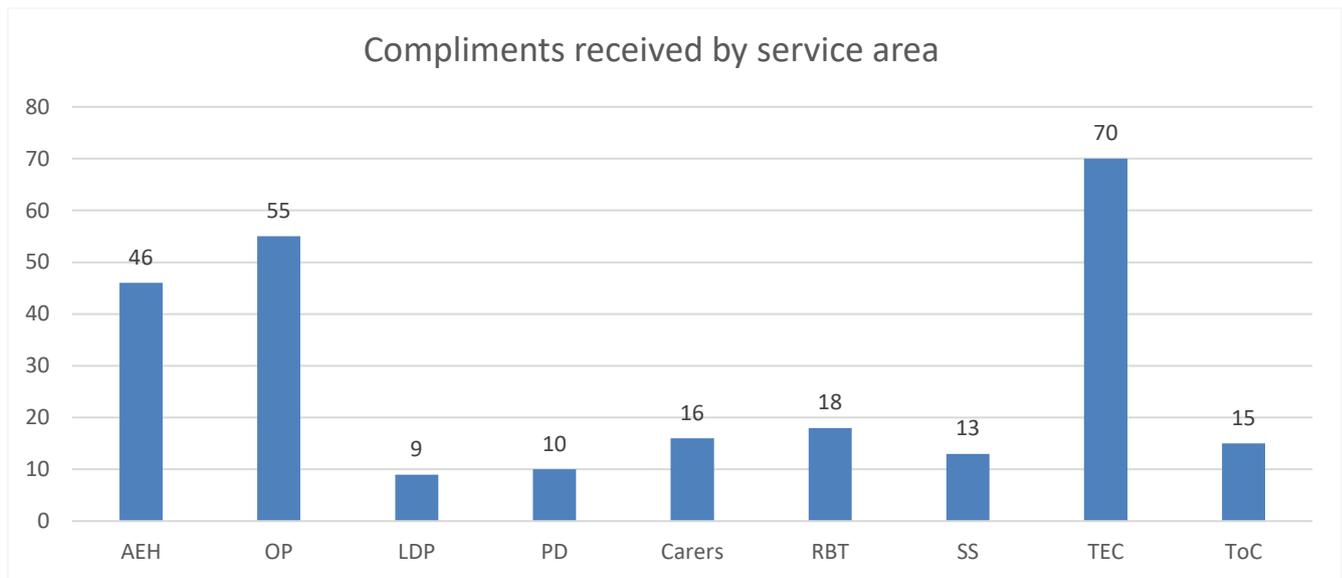
them assistance that they had not previously been aware of, for example a lifeline (personal alarm service in time of need) which offers them peace of mind.

7.8 Compliments which show that the work of an individual staff member has been exceptional are personally acknowledged by the Director of Adult Social Care and are included in the monthly communications email from the Executive Director, People and Communities to all staff.

Compliments account for the highest proportion of feedback (37%) received across adult social care.

7.9 The Customer Care Team remind staff of the importance of sharing positive feedback with the team.

7.10 Figure 2 below gives the number of compliments received by service area:



**Acronyms:**

AEH – Adult Early Help

PD – Physical Disabilities

OP – Older People’s

RBT – Reablement Services

LDP – Learning Disability Partnership

SS – Sensory Services

TEC – Technology Enabled Care

ToC – Transfer of Care

## 8.0 Enquiries

8.1 56 enquiries were received in 2020-2021. This is a 29% decrease on the 79 comments and enquiries received in the previous reporting year.

8.2 The comments and enquiries covered several issues, including:

- Requests for social care assessments
- Clarifying invoices
- Clarifying financial assessments
- Raising data protection concerns
- Enquiries about other local authorities
- Enquiries about related services, including the NHS, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT), Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the City Council.
- Concerns regarding other Council departments, including Childrens services and transport

- Reporting safeguarding concerns
- Raising concerns about privately funded care
- Requests for information relating to other Council services such as information services

8.3 53 of the enquiries were dealt with by the Customer Care Team or redirected on to the relevant team within the Council for consideration; 3 comments and enquiries were passed onto external organisations to respond to.

## 9.0 Representations

9.1 A representation is a comment or complaint about Council policy or procedure (rather than how we have applied a policy or procedure). A representation can also be made about allocation of resources or the nature or availability of services.

9.2 The Director responsible for the relevant service area will review the representation and if the Director feels that the policy, legislation, or funding decision should be changed, they can take it forward for further consideration. It is the Council's elected members who have the final decision on whether it is changed. If the Director feels that the policy, legislation, or funding decision is appropriate and should not be changed, the customer will be advised of the reason for the decision. If there are a significant number of similar representations, and it is within the Council's power and responsibilities, they will consider re-investigating the concerns again.

9.3 4 representations were received in 2020-2021. This is the same number that were received in 2019-2020. They related to:

- Council's Reablement staff being unable to administer medication
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for care staff
- The use of social media
- Content of invoices

9.4 One outcome related to a review of the income recovery payment references in acknowledgement that some banks have restrictions on the number of digits that can be entered as a payment reference. In other instances the feedback was reviewed, however, it was determined that services changes were not required and the reason for these decisions were explained to the complainants for example, it being out of the Council's remit to change how social media is used.

## 10.0 MP Enquiries

10.1 An MP enquiry can be related to a request for information, the clarification of circumstances or further information for a particular situation or constituent, or the notification of dissatisfaction with a service.

10.2 The Customer Care Team facilitates responses to MP enquiries. These are not counted as complaints, however, in some cases, a complaint may already have been received and in some cases, a complaint may be subsequently made. Every care is taken with these responses which are written in the expectation that they will be shared with the MP's constituent.

10.3 53 MP enquiries were received in 2020-2021. This is a 36% (13) increase from the number of MP enquiries received in the previous reporting year, where 40 were received. The number of MP enquiries received yearly varies considerably, for example in 2018-2019 there were 80 MP enquiries, therefore it is difficult to establish a trend.

10.4 The number of MP enquiries received per quarter fluctuated over the reporting year as can be seen in table 1 below:

2020-2021	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4
Number received:	9	17	10	17

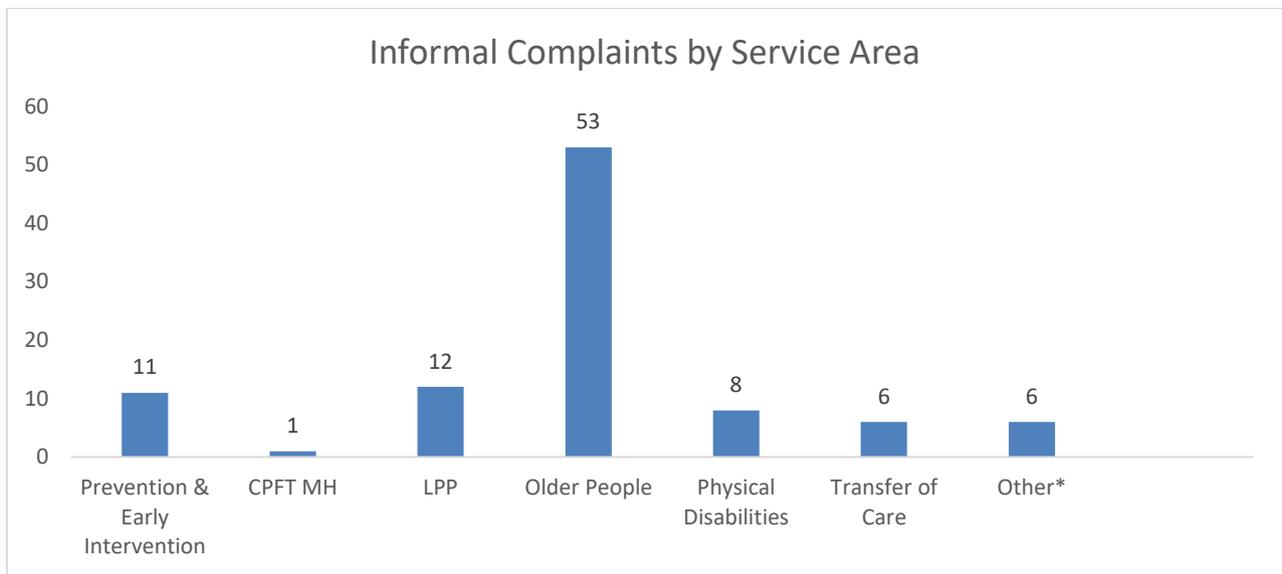
- 10.5 Although the COVID-19 Pandemic and the public's focus during the periods of 'lockdown' could account for this pattern, it is not possible with the information available to draw a conclusion as to what has caused such fluctuation between quarters.
- 10.6 0.7% (53) of people receiving adult long term services raised concerns via their MP. This is similar to the last reporting year where 0.6% (40) of people receiving long term services raised concerns with their MP.
- 10.7 43 MP enquiries related to long term adult social care services, 2 related to prevention and early intervention services; 2 related to CPFT, and 8 MP enquiries related to services outside of adult social care as follows: 3 related to adult safeguarding enquiries unconnected to cases open to adult social care; 2 related to Children's Social Care; 3 related to residential care homes.
- 10.8 13 of 53 (25%) MP enquiries received in 2020-2021 were responded to outside of the 10-working day timescale. Delays were related to the complexity of the concerns that were being responded to or the need to await the outcome of a meeting that had been scheduled outside of the 10-working day response time. The number of MP enquiries delayed this reporting year is 5% (5) more than last year.

## 11.0 Councillor Enquiries

- 11.1 As members of the Council, Councillors can contact adult social care raising concerns on a service user (or their representatives) behalf. Councillors may be responded to directly by the respective service manager or in some more complex cases the Customer Care Team will co-ordinate an investigation and respond to the Councillor. On occasion, a complaint may already be in progress and on other occasions, a complaint may be raised as a result of the enquiry to obtain more information and enable sufficient time for a thorough investigation to be carried out.
- 11.2 In this reporting year, the Customer Care Team dealt with 11 Councillor enquiries.
- 11.3 9 of the Councillor enquiries related to long term services; 1 related to a case not known to adult services and 1 was in connection to prevention and early intervention services.

## 12.0 Informal Complaints

- 12.1 During the course of the year the number of formal and informal complaints varies slightly. This can be a result of a complaint initially being 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 the initial remedial actions have been completed, they state that they wish to withdraw their complaint. In cases where the type of complaints changes, the complaint records are amended accordingly.
- 12.2 In 2020-2021 there were 97 informal complaints received. This compares with 106 informal complaints received in 2019-2020, a decrease of 8% (9).
- 12.3 When comparing the percentage of people receiving long term services who complained informally in 2020-2021 this remained the same as the number who complained informally in the last reporting period where 1.7% of people receiving services informally complained.
- 12.4 Figure 3 shows the number of informal complaints in relation to the major service areas:



- 12.5 The service areas with the highest number of informal complaints this reporting year were Older People’s services with 53 informal complaints (1.9% of service users) and Learning Disability Partnership with 12 (0.9% of service users) informal complaints.
- 12.6 The service areas with the highest number of informal complaints are the two largest service areas within adult social care, therefore it is expected that these areas would account for the largest volume of informal complaints.
- 12.7 The feedback included in the “other” category related to concerns about services that were unconnected to a service user. For example, concerns relating to services the Council commissions.

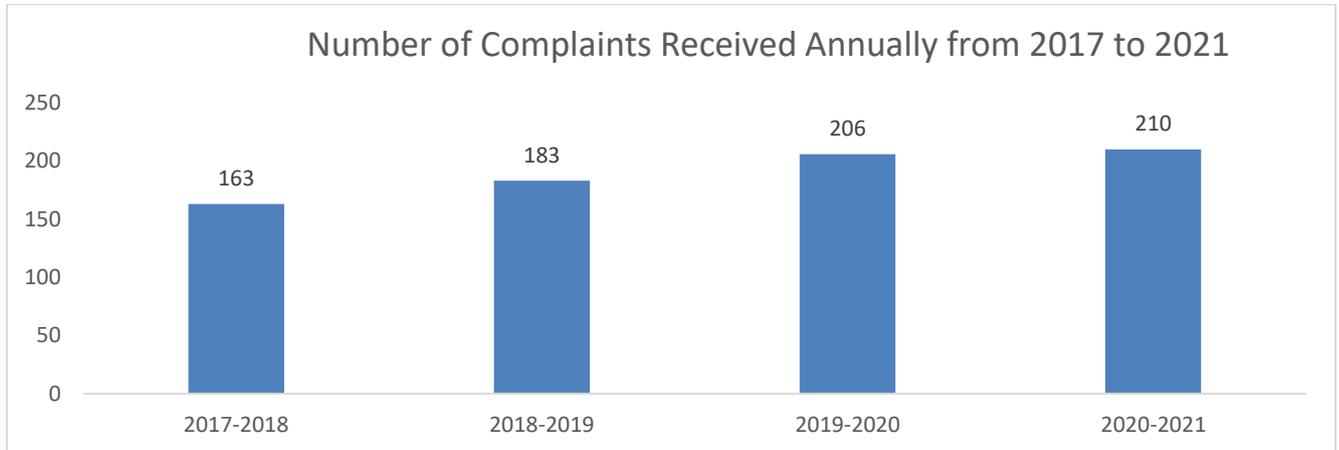
## 13.0 Formal Complaints

- 13.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the standard or the delivery of a service, the actions or lack of by the Council or its staff which affects an individual service user, their representative or a group of users.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 Therefore, emphasis is placed on ensuring that people wishing to make a complaint or provide feedback of any kind, can do so with ease in a variety of ways. Guidance regarding how to provide feedback of any kind is provided on [Cambridgeshire County Council’s website](#).
- 13.4 In addition to the website, information on how to make a complaint or provide feedback is explained by staff during the assessment process and the service user is given a factsheet that outlines the process and provides details on how to provide feedback. There are several facilities available for complaints to be made in different ways: by email, in writing, in person or by telephone.
- 13.5 The Customer Care Team are now recording how feedback is being provided for 2021-2022 to be able to obtain a summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity of complainants. This will assist us with learning and service improvement, to ensure feedback services are accessible and to review if there are any adjustments we can make to improve on accessibility.

13.6 There were 210 formal complaints received in 2020-2021. This is a 2% increase in comparison to 2019-2020 where 206 formal complaints were received.

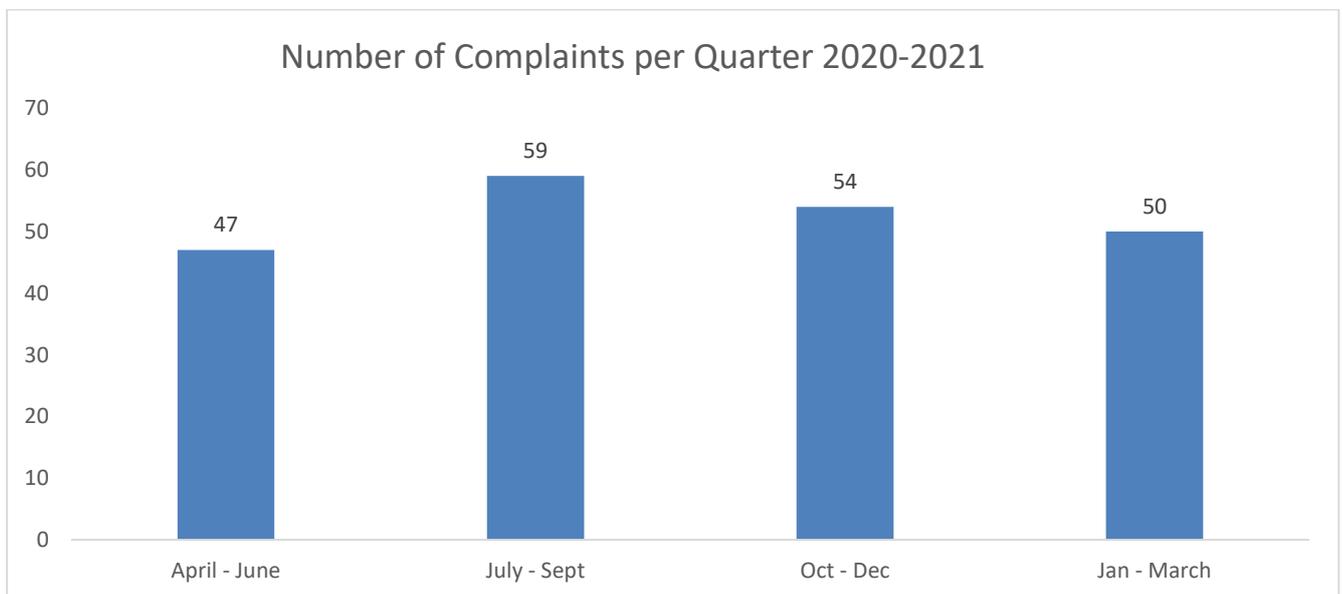
13.7 Although there is a rise in the number of complaints received, the overall percentage of people receiving services who complained over the previous three reporting years remains the same at 3%, suggesting the annual growth rate has remained consistent for 4 years.

13.8 Figure 4 gives details of the number of formal complaints received over the last 4 reporting years:



13.9 The average number of formal complaints received per quarter during 2020-2021 was 52.5 in comparison to an average of 49 in 2019-2020.

13.10 Figure 5 shows the number of complaints received per quarter during the reporting year:



13.11 The graph in figure 5 shows there was an increase of 25% (12) in the number of complaints received between the first and second quarter of 2020. Although there is no firm way of identifying what caused this peak, it is assumed the lower number of complaints in the first quarter can be attributed to the impact of COVID-19 that commenced at the start of the first quarter.

## 14.0 Service Area Complaints

14.1 To provide some perspective; table 2 below shows the number of complaints in relation to the major service areas and the total number of people receiving services. Please note that the table does not account for all complaints, only those which come under the service areas listed.

14.2 Table 2:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>No of People Receiving Services</b>	<b>Number of Complaints</b>	<b>Percentage of Complaints by Population Receiving Services.</b>
Older People	2859	95	3.3%
Physical Disabilities	833	21	2.5%
Learning Disability Partnership	1562	49	3.1%
Mental Health	555	4	0.7%
Occupational Therapy	625	3	0.5%
Prevention and Early Intervention	2759	14	0.5%
Transfer of Care	702	5	0.7%

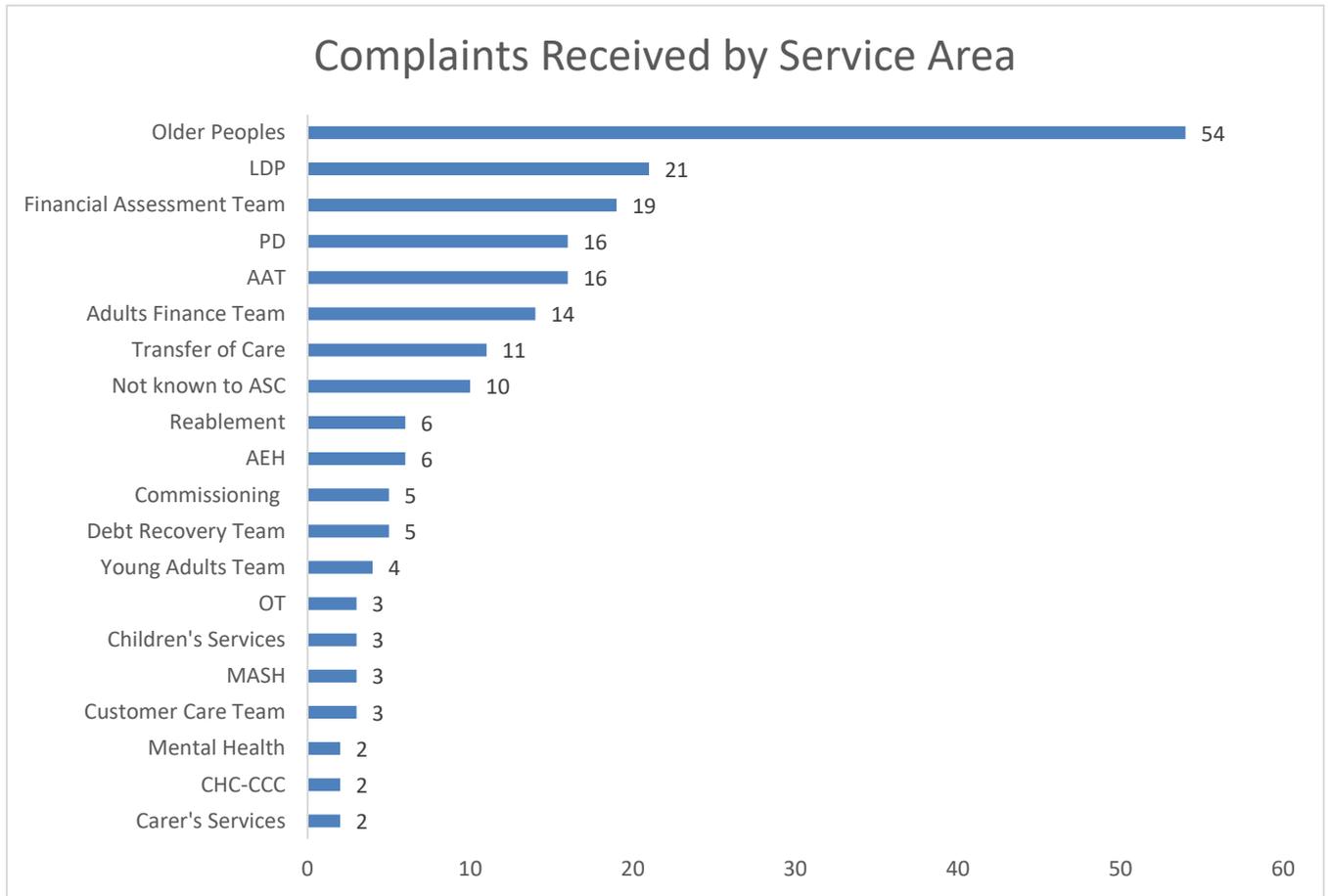
14.3 The major service areas reported by, have different services that sit within them and this reporting year there have been changes to the way the major service areas are grouped. For example, this reporting year Prevention and Early Intervention now covers most short-term adult social care services to include: Adult Early Help (AEH), Technology Enabled Care (TEC), Reablement (Rbt) and Carers Services. Transfer of Care (ToC) is now reported on as its own service area. The Adults and Autism Team (AAT) and Young Adults Team (YAT) all sit within the Learning Disability Partnership (LDP) service category. The feedback received by all service areas is provided in more detail next.

14.4 The complexities of complaints have increased and often complaints will cover more than one service area. In these instances, the Customer Care Team will assign the manager of one of the involved services to act as lead on the complaint investigation. It will be their role to co-ordinate with the other related service areas to provide one response that addresses all the concerns raised.

14.5 A complaint will be categorised under the service area that the service user is allocated to or in some circumstances under the service area where the majority of their concerns mostly relate to. Therefore, a complaint may be categorised under the major service of Older People's but investigated by Transfer of Care Team and vice versa.

14.6 Figure 6 on the next page shows the number of complaints investigated by service areas within adult social care.

14.7 Figure 6:



\*To make the above graph easier to read it only shows services where more than one complaint was received.

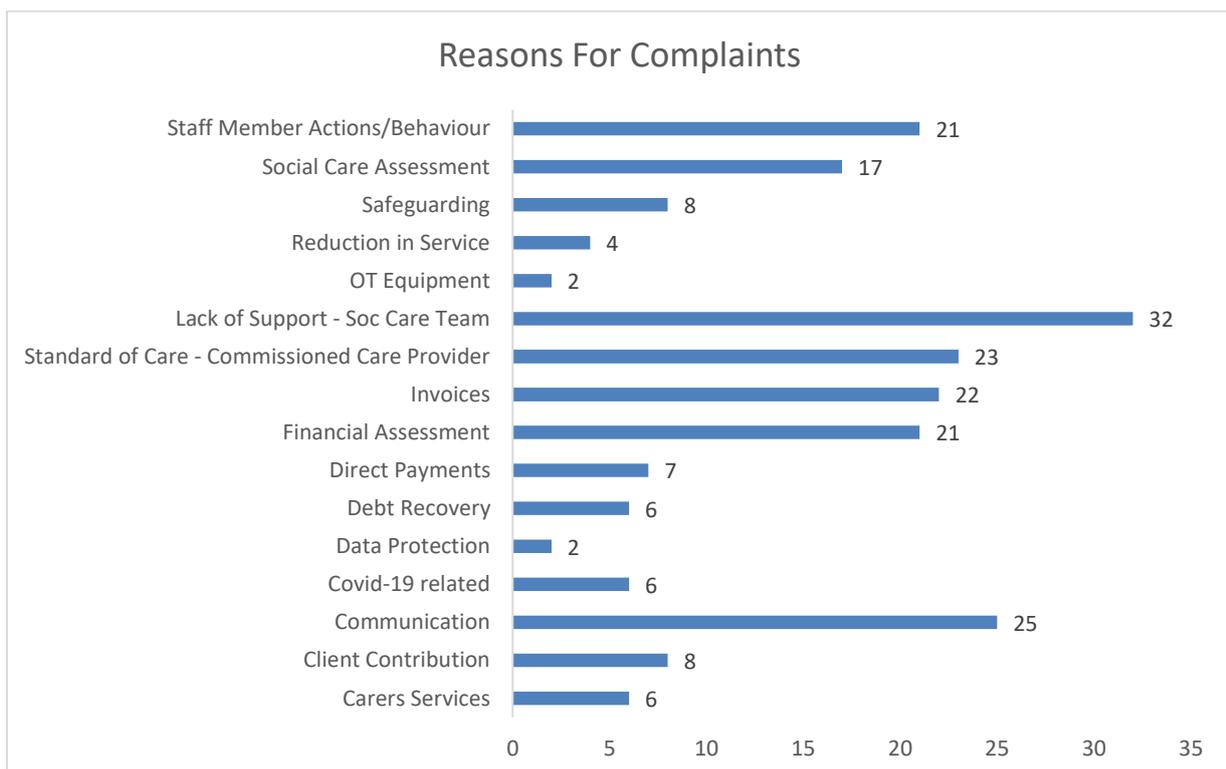
- 14.8 As shown in [table 2](#) section 13.1, Older People services and the Learning Disability Partnership are the two largest service areas and they received the highest volume of complaints. This follows the same pattern as previous reporting years when these two service areas received the highest volume of complaints.
- 14.9 The Financial Assessment Team received the next largest volume of complaints at 19 (9%) which is a slight increase from 2019-2020 when there were 12 complaints about this service.
- 14.10 The Physical Disabilities Team received 16 (8%) complaints in 2020-2021 which is a 27% decrease from the last reporting year where they received 22 complaints. The decrease brings the complaints for this service back in line with the numbers received in 2018-2019, suggesting that last year was a spike and this year the figures are commensurate with previous reporting figures for this service.
- 14.11 The Adults and Autism Team (AAT) also received 16 (8% of) complaints, which accounts for the service with the highest increase in complaints when compared to 2019-2020 when AAT received 6, an increase of nearly two thirds. This increase could be accounted for by one complainant who raised 6 complaints during this reporting year.
- 14.12 In 2019-2020 there were 14 complaints recorded under the category of Older People short term services. This year there are no complaints in this category due to a change in how services are categorised as described in section [13.3](#) above. The category most similar to this is now 'Prevention and Early Intervention', which accounts for 14 of the complaints received in 2020-2021, suggesting the categorisation of complaints have remained very similar albeit with different service names.

- 14.13 There was a significant decrease of 23% (16) in the number of complaints about Older People services this reporting year in comparison to 2019-2020. However, the re-categorisation of services will also account for this fall with complaints that would have previously been assigned to this category being moved to another, for example the 11 complaints in the new Transfer of Care category would previously have been likely to have been assigned to Older People services.
- 14.14 A process for managing complaints that are commissioned by adult social care and provided by mental health or occupational therapy (OT) are managed in line with the Section 75 agreement between the respective organisations. The number of complaints recorded by the Customer Care Team can differ slightly from the number reported by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) and these variations are due to the different ways in which complaints are categorised by the respective organisations. There was a total of 7 complaints that related to service users receiving services provided by CPFT under the Section 75 agreement.
- 14.15 There was a 22% (6) decrease in the number of complaints for Learning Disability Partnership this year.
- 14.16 There was a 3% (8) increase this reporting year in the number of complaints that were finance related when compared with 2019-2020. There may be a correlation between the increase in financial complaints and the impact of contingency arrangements that were implemented amidst the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic.. Although, it is not possible to fully conclude if this is the cause and therefore the Customer Care Team will continue to monitor finance related complaints to establish if these continue to increase in 2021-2022.
- 14.17 There were 14 complaints about services provided by the Adults Finance Team (AFT), which is similar to 2019-2020 when 15 were received.

## 15.0 Reasons for Complaints

15.1 Complaints very often contain more than one issue and for reporting purposes complaints are categorised using the primary issue in the complaint. Figure 7 on the next page shows the categories used to record the reasons why people complain and the number of formal complaints in each category.

15.2 Figure 7:

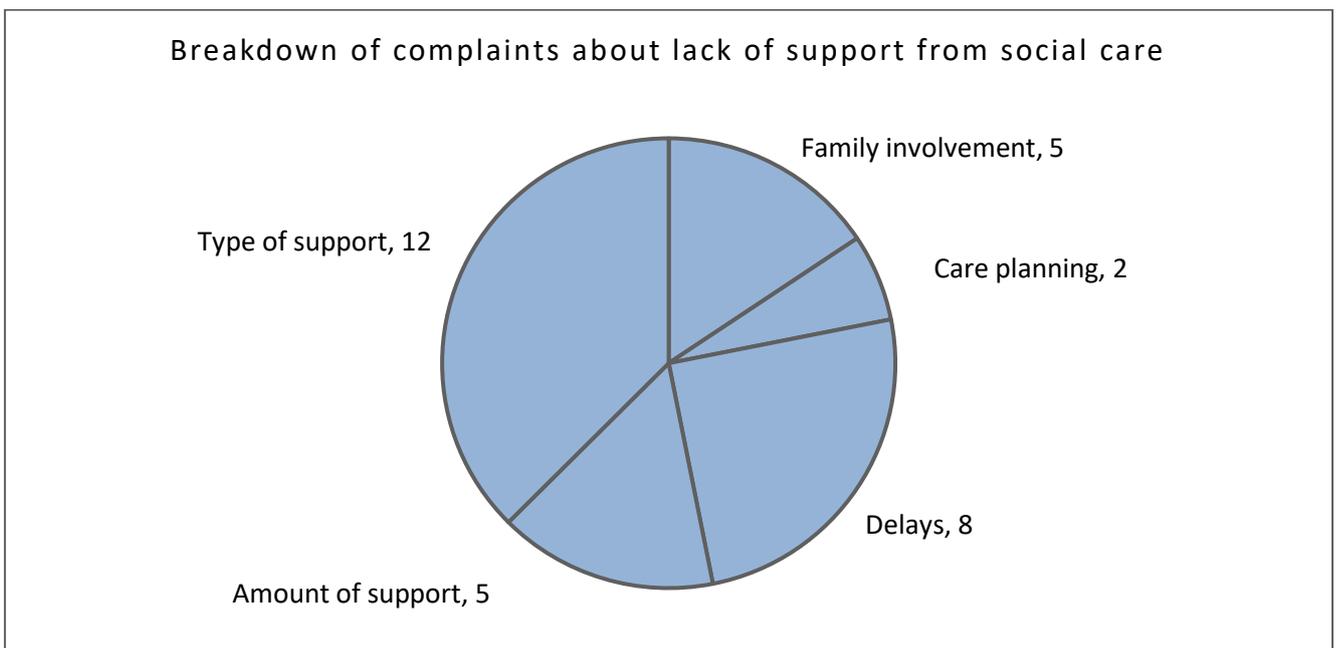


15.3 As the graph above shows, the reason for most complaints (32 / 17%) is about Lack of Support from the Social Care Team. This category has accounted for the highest volume of complaints since 2015 (when the Customer Care Team started producing annual reports specially for adult social care) and covers a range of reasons as detailed further in figure 8 on the next page.

15.4 Although lack of support from the social care team accounts for the highest volume of complaints at 32, there has been a significant decrease of 36% (17) in this category in comparison to last reporting year when there 49 complaints. This follows the trend of a decrease in the previous reporting year.

## There has been a 36% decrease in the number of complaints that related to support from social care teams.

15.5 Figure 8:



15.6 Within the category of complaints about support provided by social care teams, the most common reason for complaining was in relation to the type of support offered which accounted for 38% (12) of the complaints. Examples within this category are where the service user or their family feel that residential care is needed when they have been assessed as needing domiciliary care and support.

15.7 The second most common overall reason for complaining was about communication, where there were 25 (12%) complaints attributed to this category. This is slightly less than last reporting year where 29 were received. Communication issues ranged from delays in social care teams responding to correspondence, to complaints about lack of or inaccurate information relating to social care. Learning has been taken from these areas as shared earlier in the report.

15.8 11% (23) of complaints were about the standard of care provided by a care provider that has been commissioned by the Council. This compares to 19 complaints about this issue last reporting year, a 21% increase. The Customer Care Team will continue to monitor the number of complaints in this category to observe if this spike is related to the unprecedented pressures COVID-19 pandemic has placed on this service area and to observe any trends.

## 16.0 Complaints about Independent Providers

- 16.1 The Council has responsibility for the services it commissions. A complainant can address a complaint about an independent service provider commissioned by the Council either by complaining to the provider directly or by complaining to the Council. In cases where the complainant has complained to both parties, the Council will investigate and respond. There should also be a separate investigation carried out by the independent provider.
- 16.2 Complaints and the response to complaints involving independent care providers are copied as a matter of routine to the appropriate commissioning and contracts manager(s) within the Council.
- 16.3 23 (11%) of complaints referred primarily to the provision of care by Council commissioned care providers. This is the slightly more than 2019-2020 when 19 (9%) complaints were received.
- 16.4 The majority of complaints within this category (15, 65%) were about expected standards not being met. This is a significant increase in comparison to the 7 (37%) reported in this category the previous reporting year. It appears that the rise may be not be indicative of a trend as over half of the complaints related specifically to issues that were a result of COVID-19 for example restricted visitation amidst localised lockdowns, the COVID-19 testing of staff and patients and issues with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 16.5 The Council's Contracting and Commissioning Team, work with care providers and carry out monitoring visits and where necessary will implement Home Improvement Plans (HIP) and work alongside the CCG to review quality and compliance with care providers.

## 17.0 Comparative Data

- 17.1 Each year, in June/July, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) issues an annual review to each Council. In his letter he sets out the number of complaints about the Council that his officers have dealt with and offers a summary of statistics to accompany this.
- 17.2 The annual review statistics are publicly available, allowing Councils to compare their performance on complaints against their peers; copies of the annual review letter, as well as any published Ombudsman complaints, are issued to the leader of the Council and Democratic Services (the Ombudsman's link person within the Council) to encourage more democratic scrutiny of local complaint handling and local accountability of public services.
- 17.3 The most recent public data available from the LGSCO is for 2019-2020 and provides the number of complaints and enquiries they received for all local authorities within England (152) with a responsibility for adult social care. The data in the review shows that the level of complaints received by the LGSCO for Cambridgeshire County Council is low for the size of population in comparison to statistical neighbours, as shown in figure below.

17.4 Figure 9:



- 17.5 As the graph above shows, Cambridgeshire and Worcestershire County Council accounted for the local authorities with smallest number (11) of complaints that were received by the LGSCO during 2019-2020 in a group of 14 statistical neighbouring authorities. The highest volume of complaints dealt with by the LGSCO within this group was 79 which was for Essex County Council. It is important to note when looking at data in such reports that it is very difficult to compare like for like as there is not a consistent approach in what is covered, the structures and the taxonomy adopted by different authorities varies considerably between Councils as well as the LGSCO. As an example, the LGSCO will include blue badge and disabled facility grant complaints within their complaints reports data for adult social care, whereas Cambridgeshire and many other local authorities do not include this within their data for adult social care complaints.
- 17.6 The LGSCO reported that in 2019-2020, the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached them in 8% of cases. It is acknowledged that this is a low percentage, however, to put this into perspective it compares to an average of 9% in comparator authorities. The Council continue to take learning from the outcomes of LGSCO investigations to support improvement which includes effective complaint management in order to increase the number of satisfactory remedies the LGSCO find the Council have provided.
- 17.7 It is difficult to gauge how the LGSCO calculate this figure as there are some cases they do not take to full investigation as their Assessment Team determined that the Council have offered a satisfactory remedy and their own investigation would not add to this, however, the LGSCO do not always notify the Council of such a decision. There are also cases that the LGSCO Investigation Team will take to full investigation and conclude that a satisfactory remedy had already been provided by the Council. The data LGSCO reported that during 2019-2020 they closed 11 cases after initial enquiries for the Council.
- 17.8 The LGSCO report on two complaint outcomes: upheld or not upheld. The approach taken by most local authorities, including Cambridgeshire differs as complaint outcomes are reported in one of three categories: upheld, not upheld and partially upheld. The LGSCO may find the Council not at fault for 9 out of 10 complaint

points, however, as 1 point was upheld the overall complaint is categorised as upheld whereas the Council would report the same complaint as partially upheld. Complaint responses are discussed further in [18.5](#).

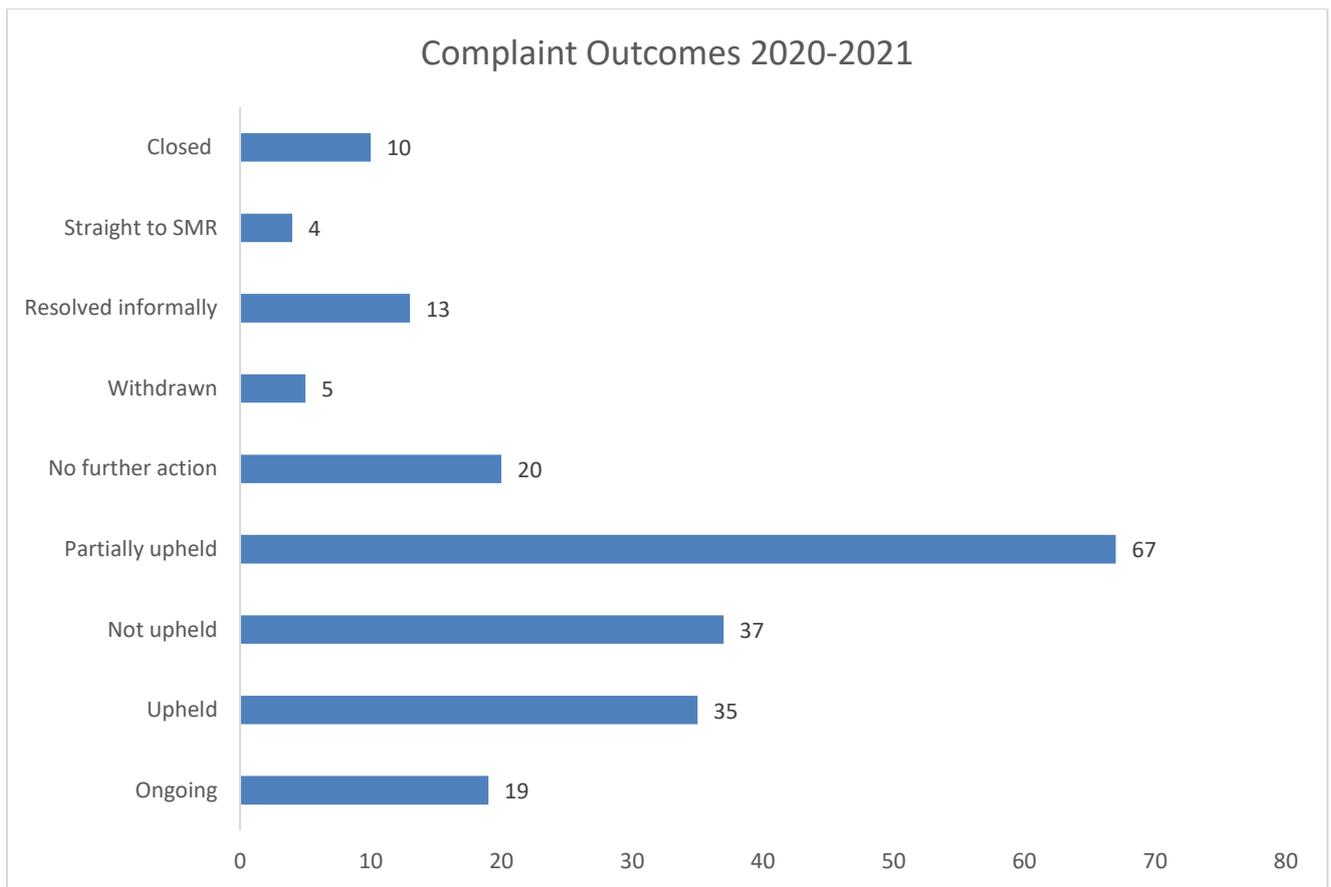
## 18.0 Complaint responses

- 18.1 The Council is committed to acknowledging any complaints received within 3 working days and to provide the customer with a response within 25 working days. If there are mitigating circumstances for exceeding these time frames then a written explanation is sent to the complainant to advise them of the delay.
- 18.2 The Customer Care Team strive to ensure complaints are responded to within timescale and following feedback from the Adults Social Care Committee a concerted effort has been made by managers across adult social care to support continuous improvement in this area. As a result, this reporting year 33% (70) of formal complaints required extensions, leading to the response taking longer than 25 working days, this is a 26% decrease (25) from last year where 95 (46%) required extensions.

### There was a 26% decrease in the number of complaints that required extensions this reporting year.

- 18.3 It is appreciated that any delay in providing a complaint response will add further frustration and dissatisfaction to a complainant and this is something the Council want to mitigate. The Care Customer Care Team and Adult Social Care Management Team will continue to support improvement in response timescales and will be implementing some changes in the administrative practices to promote more timelier responses.
- 18.4 Extensions were agreed for a number of reasons:
- Complex cases involving multiple complainants
  - Related to ongoing legal issues
  - Related to active safeguarding investigations
  - Complex cases involving other organisations, or multiple teams within the Council
  - Awaiting consent from the service user or for a Mental Capacity Assessment to be completed
  - Time needed to include a meeting with the complainant or service user during the investigation
  - Change in investigator during the course of the investigation
  - Impact of redeployment of staff amidst COVID-19 pandemic
  - Awaiting the completion of a workflow before the complaint can be concluded, for example a social care assessment or a financial assessment
- 18.5 There are several complaint decision categories, the three outcome categories 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 one issue in the complaint was upheld and required remedial action
  - Not upheld – none of the issues raised required remedial action

18.6 Figure 10 below gives details of the number of complaints upheld, partially upheld, and not upheld this reporting year.



18.7 Partially upheld complaints accounted for the highest proportion of outcomes with 67 (32%) complaints being partially upheld in 2020-2021. This is 7% (5) less than last reporting year where 72 (35%) of complaints were partially upheld.

18.8 37 (18%) complaints were not upheld which is in line with the previous two reporting years where 20% (42) and 19% (35) respectively were not upheld.

18.9 35 (16%) complaints were upheld in 2020-2021. This is a 3% decrease in comparison to 2019-2020 where 19% (39) were upheld.

18.10 The three major complaint outcome categories (upheld, not upheld and partially upheld) continue to follow the trend of previous years where there has been little change in the percentages of each respective category.

18.11 In 2019-2020, 37 (18%) complaint outcomes were categorised as no further action being required which followed the trend of previous reporting years. However, as this category accounted for a significant proportion of complaints yet provided little detail it was decided to create subcategories to glean more information and gain themes where possible. Therefore, there is a significant decrease of 46% (17) this reporting year as some complaints that would have previously fallen into this category have been placed in one of the following three new categories; resolved informally, straight to Senior Manager Review (SMR) and closed.

18.12 As above, there were three new categories added to complaint outcomes this reporting year and these accounted for 27 complaints overall. 13 began as formal complaints but were resolved informally, 10 were closed which means that the concerns being raised related to complaints that had previously been concluded by the Council's complaint process and were closed. Therefore, complaints raised about historical complaints were not reinvestigated. 4 complaints went straight to the second and concluding part of the adult social care

complaints process where they were reviewed by a Senior Manager. A decision to skip the first stage of the complaints process will be taken where it is apparent that the complaint is complex and will likely take some time to investigate.

## 19.0 Senior Manager Review

- 19.1 Where complainants are not satisfied with the first response to their complaint a number of options may be pursued such as offering a meeting, providing further information or a Senior Manager carrying out a review of the complaint.
- 19.2 For consistency, the Customer Care Team report on completed Senior Manager Reviews rather than those requested or those that are ongoing within a reporting year.
- 19.3 In 2020-2021 there were 19 Senior Manager Reviews completed. This is an increase of 73% (8) in comparison to 2019-2020 where 11 Senior Manager Reviews were completed.
- 19.4 The number of Senior Manager Reviews over the last 4 reporting years has fluctuated, suggesting an increase this reporting year is not necessarily indicative of a trend. The mean number of Senior Manager Reviews since 2016 to present is 15.
- 19.5 The Senior Manager Review process offers the complainant reassurance that the complaint has been scrutinised by another officer with the authority to change things where deemed necessary. 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 LGSCO, or where they have been escalated to the LGSCO a higher proportion than the LGO have found the complaint to have been remedied effectively by the Council in the first instance ([see details in 17.6](#))
- 19.6 Of the 19 Senior Manager Reviews completed this reporting year; 7 were not upheld, 4 were upheld and 8 were partially upheld.
- 19.7 Of the 8 partially upheld Senior Manager Reviews, 1 related to a safeguarding issue and subsequent records that were kept on the service users social care files. A Solicitor complained on behalf of the family that this information should be removed from the service users records and for numerous other alleged failings in practice to be acknowledged. Although the Council felt that this was not appropriate to remove information from the social care records and the majority of the solicitors complaint was not upheld, it was acknowledged that there was a failing in the lack of involvement of the service user when their social care assessment had been updated. An apology was offered for this failing. This complaint was subsequently escalated to the LGSCO who carried out [initial investigations](#) and determined they would not investigate further as they found it unlikely that they could add to the Council's own investigation.
- 19.8 A second partially upheld Senior Manager Review was also related to a concluded safeguarding enquiry and although the Council did not find fault in the way the safeguarding was conducted the Council apologised that the complainant felt that they had not been included significantly enough in the safeguarding investigation. The Council agreed to meet with the complainant to discuss this further to gain learning about how they felt the Council could improve in this area and to take any possible learning that could lead to service improvements. This complainant also escalated their concerns to the LGSCO who carried out an [initial investigation](#) and concluded there was no fault in how the Council managed the investigation. More information on LGSCO investigations is provided in [section 19.0](#) below.

- 19.9 Of the 4 upheld Senior Manager Reviews: 1 related to delays in support being arranged as well as delays with the completion of a financial assessment; 1 related to failings in the standard of care provided by a Council commissioned care provider and 2 related to delays with invoicing.
- 19.10 9 (47%) Senior Manager Reviews were completed within timescale. Last reporting year, 64% (7) of Senior Manager reviews were completed within the three-month allotted timeframe.
- 19.11 The impact of exceptional operational challenges that Councils and care providers faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, accounted for some of the delays in completing Senior Manager Reviews. The decision was taken to place a pause on these investigations to enable senior managers to fully focus on the provision of care and the delivery of crucial services in unprecedented times. This decision was taken in line with LGSCO guidance to local authorities issued at the start of the pandemic and discussed further in [section 20.5](#) below.
- 19.12 The length of time taken to complete a review is of concern to the Senior Management Team, as a result of this, the Customer Care Manager and Senior Management Team are working towards shortening the timescale for completion of reviews to be in line with the first complaint response timescales i.e. 25 working days. The Senior Management Team are working with managers investigating complaints across adult social care to ensure there is sufficient resource to prioritise complaint investigations being completed within timescales. The Council hope to make the relevant changes to the [Adult Social Care Complaints Policy](#) by the first quarter of the new reporting year to reflect the new timescales and for this to implemented.

## 20.0 Local Government Social Care Ombudsman complaints and enquiries

- 20.1 For adult social care, the LGSCO are the one-stop shop for complaints about publicly and privately funded services, and they see the issues that have not been resolved locally; the real-life experiences of people who use services and the challenges faced by Councils and care providers.
- 20.2 Although the Council always strive hard to resolve a complaint, there are cases where a customer is unhappy with the responses received about their complaint from the Council and they can exercise their right to involve the LGSCO. The Ombudsman will investigate cases where a customer has exhausted the Council's own complaints process and feel that their case has not been appropriately heard or resolved.
- 20.3 Complaints that include health as well as social care issues are investigated by the joint Parliamentary Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO) and the LGSCO investigation team. In this reporting year there were no joint investigations.
- 20.4 As discussed in [section 17](#) above, each year, in June/July, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) issue an annual review to each Council. In his letter he sets out the number of complaints about the Council that his officers have dealt with and offers a summary of statistics to accompany this. The annual review statistics are publicly available [here](#).
- 20.5 It may be helpful to explain that when reviewing the performance statistics published by the LGSCO for Cambridgeshire County Council there may appear to be discrepancies between the LGSCO figures and the figures mentioned in this report. There are several explanations that account for these variances, for example the LGSCO report on the total number of 'upheld' decisions for all of the Council's services, which will include complaints that fall outside Adult Social Care, for example Highway's complaints. The LGSCO also group service areas within their 'Adult Services' categories that this report does not, for example Blue Badge complaints.
- 20.6 In addition to the above variances with complaint outcomes, the LGSCO report on two complaint outcomes: upheld or not upheld. The approach taken by local authorities, including Cambridgeshire, differs as complaint outcomes are typically reported in one of three categories: upheld, not upheld and partially upheld. By way of

example, the LGSCO may find the Council not at fault for 9 out of 10 complaint points, however, as 1 point was upheld the overall complaint is categorised as upheld. However, the Council would report the same complaint as partially upheld. Complaint responses are discussed further in [18.5](#).

- 20.7 The LGSCO do not proceed to what they refer to as a 'detailed' investigation with all complaints they receive and will occasionally carry out initial assessments with a local authority and complainant in the first instance in order to determine if they will proceed with a full and detailed investigation. This will usually involve the LGSCO's Assessment Team requesting the Council's views, copies of the Council's complaints correspondence and social care records. The LGSCO Assessment Team carry out the initial investigations, which from the Council's perspective, are usually similar in style and process to a full investigation. In this report we will cover both detailed LGSCO investigation decisions as well as initial LGSCO assessment decisions.
- 20.8 LGSCO complaint investigations can span more than one reporting period. To provide consistency, the Customer Care Team report on completed detailed investigations only and not those that have been referred or are still in progress.
- 20.9 During 2020-2021 there were 4 final decision statements issued by the LGSCO for the Council following detailed LGSCO investigations. This is 2 less (33%) than issued in 2019-2020 when 6 final decisions were issued. The number of LGSCO final decisions issued within a reporting year can fluctuate considerably. At the start of this reporting year, the LGSCO had just paused their services in response to the exceptional operational challenges Councils and care providers faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and only resumed their services in July 2020. This could account towards the decrease and is likely to lead to an increase in complaints they investigate next reporting year, due to the backlog of complaints that have accrued. However, at this stage it is not possible to establish the impact or any trend as this has never occurred before.
- 20.10 Of the 4 final decisions issued, the LGSCO upheld 2 (50%) of the complaint investigations and did not uphold the other 2 (50%) this reporting year.
- 20.11 One of the upheld complaints was in relation to the Council wrongly advising a service user's son, that funding his mother's care would cease as she had capital over the financial threshold. The complainant says that this statement, which the Council accepts was incorrect, prompted him to give up his job to care for his mother. The complainant was requesting compensation for loss of earnings, which concluded following a thorough investigation, with the Council advising that it was not an outcome that could be achieved through the complaints process and therefore signposted the complainant to the Council's insurances services. The LGSCO agreed with the Council's complaint investigation and findings that there was fault in providing misinformation which they re-affirmed was not able to be confirmed as correct until a financial assessment had been completed and that the complaints route was not the appropriate route to consider a compensation claim. However, the LGSCO found the Council at fault for not offering the complainant a financial remedy for the distress caused by the misinformation given that morning as an alternative to compensation. The Council accepted the LGSCO's decision and recommendations.
- 20.12 The second upheld LGSCO complaint found the Council was not at fault for the information it gave a service user about potential social care charges before she moved into a care home. They also found the Council not at fault for discussing the charges with the service user without her daughter present as the service user had capacity to make decisions about her own care. The LGSCO found the Council was at fault for a delay in completing the service user's financial assessment. As the Council had already accepted and apologised for this delay no further action or remedy was required by the LGSCO.
- 20.13 As outlined above, where fault had been found the LGSCO were satisfied that the Council had fully complied with their recommendations.

- 20.14 The LGSCO share the issues and themes they see in their investigations on their website and with other Councils to help all Councils learn and to avoid the same mistakes occurring again. They do this through reports and other resources they publish. The Council adopts a positive attitude towards complaints and works constructively with the LGSCO to remedy injustices and implement the learning from other adult social care cases they have investigated. Learning from other local authority cases is also shared at Senior Manager Team meetings and on a wider scale by workshops run by the Principal Social Worker and the Quality and Practice Standards Team in order to improve services.
- 20.15 During this reporting year the LGSCO Assessment Team reviewed 6 Adult Social Care complaints to determine if they should go onto a full and detailed investigation. 2 examples of these complaints are discussed in sections [19.7](#) and [19.8](#) above where the LGSCO determined there was nothing they could add to the Council's own investigation and outcomes, 2 were premature enquiries that came back to the Council to complete our complaints process and two decisions are yet to be determined at the time of writing this report. This is 3 more complaints than the Customer Care Team noted that the LGSCO assessment team considered in 2019-2020.
- 20.16 Again, it is worthwhile pointing out that the LGSCO figures on assessment stage decisions can differ from the figures mentioned in this report. This is most likely to be down to LGSCO figures reporting on all Council services rather than just those covered in this report. In addition to this, there are some cases which the LGSCO Assessment Team have considered and 'closed after initial enquiries' but not necessarily had to contact the Council directly about the complaints, as they have already been provided with sufficient information from the complainant to conclude that the council have provided a satisfactory remedy. In such instances the Customer Care Team are not always notified.

## 21.0 Complaint Themes

- 21.1 Lack of support from the social care team remains [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. Examples within this category are where the service user or their family feel that residential care is needed when they have been assessed as needing domiciliary care and support.
- 21.2 Complaints about the conduct of a member of staff were dealt with in line with the Council's corporate (standard) complaint process. The adult social care complaints policy does not cover issues specifically relating to a member of staff's conduct and these would be dealt with in line with Human Resources (HR) regulations and guidance as appropriate. Examples of these complaint issues might be the manner in which they spoke or the way in which they delivered a message.
- 21.3 Complaints regarding financial issues mainly relate to delays with financial assessments, lack of detail or incorrect information within invoices and income recovery notices.
- 21.4 Although not the primary issue for complaining, communication continues to be a theme in complaints. These issues include: not returning calls in a timely manner; failing to provide information on progress at regular intervals; not providing sufficient, timely or clear information; and concerns about the lack of communication between services both within the Council and with organisations outside of the Council. The importance of following the Council's communication charter is shared as a reminder to all social care staff.
- 21.5 Standard of care provision by a commissioned care provider remains a theme in complaints. The types of complaints that fall within this category include complaints about the timeliness of care calls, concerns around the way in which tasks in the care plan are, or are not, being carried out for example the type of meal prepared and insufficient time allocated for tasks to be completed within. In addition to these themes, there were new issues that fell into this category as a result of the impact of Covid-19 which included concerns around the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and visiting restrictions which are also discussed in sections [16.0](#). Each

complaint about adult social care commissioned services is shared with the Head of Service for Contracts as well as with the care provider directly, in order that they are both aware of the concerns and where appropriate take action to address the concerns in a timely manner.

- 21.6 As discussed in [section 15](#) there were several complaints raised about social care assessments. The majority of these related to the content within the assessment, which was felt to be insufficient, inaccurate or not completed in a timely manner. Learning has been taken from this as discussed below.

## 22.0 Themes resulting from the impact of Covid-19

- 22.1 The next set of themes to be discussed relate specifically to feedback received as a result of the impact that Covid-19 pandemic had on services during 2020 - 2021.
- 22.2 In order to conform with government guidance at the time, it was not always possible to carry out social care assessments and reviews face to face during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Several dissatisfactions were raised about this approach as it was felt that telephone assessments were not sufficient to gain a full oversight of the person's physical wellbeing. Dependent on the service users' access to technology, wherever possible the council carried out virtual assessments. Once the government guidance eased restrictions on social distancing, face to face assessments resumed, where the service user and their representatives agreed to meeting in person. Positive feedback was also received in relation to telephone reviews as some service users and their families found it easier to arrange convenient times to undertake the assessments remotely.
- 22.3 During the course of the pandemic the government introduced new legislation to facilitate the timelier discharge of people who were medically fit for discharge from hospital and did not require an acute hospital bed but may still require care services. Those people were provided with short term, government funded support to be discharged by the hospital discharge planning team to their own home (where appropriate) or another community setting. Assessment for longer-term care and support needs were then undertaken post discharge in the most appropriate setting and at the right time for the person by adult social care. This process is referred to as Discharge to Assess (D2A) and further information about this can be found [here](#). The change in hospital discharge process led to concerns being raised in relation to the period of government funded care; the timeliness of social care assessments being completed once discharged; the lack of involvement of choice for the service users as to when and where the hospital were discharging the service user to; and subsequently difficulties which entailed as a result of some settings becoming longer term due to unforeseen circumstances, for example covid-19 outbreaks and the impact this had on availability of residential care settings.
- 22.4 As discussed in section [14.5](#), there was an increase in the number of complaints about finance this year. One reason that accounts for this increase is the impact of contingency arrangements put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in order to alleviate some pressures around finances for people at a time of great uncertainty, the Debt Recovery Team suspended recovery of all adult social care invoices in early 2020 at short notice, this hold was in place until August 2020. Once the debt recovery process was reinstated, the Council's database system automatically sent out reminder letters for all outstanding invoices. This contingency arrangement triggered feedback due to confusion around the notices of outstanding charges being unexpected and learning has been taken.
- 22.5 Information about the 6-week government funded Discharge to Assess (D2A) pathway, led to an increase in complaints and enquiries about invoicing due to a lack of clarity being issued by the government about how long this period was for and what circumstances constituted for extended periods of funding.
- 22.6 To conform with Government guidance on social distancing, the Financial Assessment Team began working from home at the start of the pandemic. The telephone system they had in place was not equipped for accepting external calls while home working, which resulted in calls not being able to be taken while remote working. As a

temporary measure calls to this team were received by the council's contact centre and transferred via internal telephone systems to the Financial Assessment Teams triaged from Help Desk.

- 22.7 The closure of Council offices and re-direction of post resulted in some essential documentation being received late resulting in delays in the completion of some financial and social care assessments. The redirection of mail was worked upon as a matter of priority by the council to ensure all service areas could access mail while offices remained closed and restriction on travel remained in place. Each service area introduced their own charter to ensure mail was collected and processed in a timely way.
- 22.8 A further impact of Covid-19 resulted in all day services being cancelled to comply with the Government's guidance on social distancing in place at that time. As a result of this, the Adult's Finance Team had to cancel charges for days services with differing timescales by providers which resulted in some invoicing errors and confusion in how the invoices had shown the credits and debits on some accounts.

## 23.0 Conclusions

- 23.1 More compliments were received than any other type of feedback this reporting year
- 23.2 There has been a 27% increase in MP enquiries this reporting year
- 23.3 There has been a 2% increase in the number of formal complaints
- 23.4 The most common reason for complaining was support from a social care team, communication and standard of care received by independent care providers.
- 23.5 There was a 26% decrease in the number of complaints that required extensions this reporting year.

## 24.0 Recommendations

- 24.1 Adult Committee to approve this report for publication on the external website in line with the 2009 Department of Health (DOH) regulations.
- 24.2 Customer Care Team to continue to work towards ensuring that the number of upheld or partially upheld LGSCO investigations remains low.
- 24.3 For the Adult Social Care Policy to be reviewed and amended in light of the feedback received during the reporting year.

**Please contact the Customer Care Team [CustomerCare@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:CustomerCare@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or telephone: 01223 703535 if you require this information in a different format.**

## 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.

**Enquiry:** 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

AAT	Adult and Autism Team
AEH	Adult Early Help
AFT	Adults Finance Team
ASCMT	Adult Social Care Management Team
CCT	Customer Care Team
CPFT	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust
DOH	Department of Health
EDT	Emergency Duty Team
FAT	Financial Assessment Team
PHSCO	Parliamentary & Health Services Ombudsman
LDP	Learning Disability Partnership
LGSCO	Local Government Social Care Ombudsman
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MCA	Mental Capacity Assessment
MP	Member of Parliament
NFA	No Further Action
OP	Older People's Services
OT	Occupational Therapy
PD	Physical Disabilities Team
RBT	Reablement Services
SS	Sensory Services
TEC	Technology Enabled Care
ToC	Transfer of Care