

## Customer Care Annual Report 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

To: Adults and Health Committee

Meeting Date: 22 September 2021

From: Charlotte Black, Director of Adult Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Outcome: To present the Adult Social Care Customer Care Annual Report 2020-2021 providing information about the complaints, compliments, representations and MP enquiries received for adult social care and the learning from this feedback and actions taken to improve services.

Recommendation: The Adults and Health Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note and comment on the information in the Annual Adults Social Care Customer Care Report 2020-2021.
- b) Agree to the publication of Annual Adults Social Care Customer Care Report 2020-2021 on the Council's website.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 The 'Local Authority Social Services National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009' state that each Council has responsibility to publish an Annual Report containing information about the number of complaints received and the number of complaints upheld.
- 1.2 Cambridgeshire County Council collects and collates information on the compliments, comments, representations, MP enquiries and complaints received for Adult Social Care services annually. This information is provided in the Adult Social Care Customer Care Report 2020– 2021, attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The Adult Social Care Customer Care Report 2020 – 2021 identifies themes to inform learning from complaints and sets out the actions taken to address these issues and improve practice.

# 2. Customer Care Annual Report

- 2.1 The Annual Adult Social Care Customer Care Report 2020 - 2021 (Appendix 1) brings together the information on complaints, representations, MP enquiries and compliments received by the Council in respect of Adult Social Care services. This allows learning from complaints across all service areas to be identified and actions agreed to make improvements in services. The report also provides a comparison with previous financial years so that any changes in patterns can be highlighted and any actions to be taken considered.
- 2.2 The annual report includes an Executive Summary that provides an overview of the content of the full report. Information on complaints from the summary has been used in the section below.
- 2.3 Emphasis is placed on learning from complaints. The response to a complaint will identify the actions to be taken to prevent a similar situation occurring again and any areas where the service provided could be improved. The Annual Report (Section 21) details learning from complaints received during the last year.
- 2.4 The learning from each complaint is collated and where there are similar issues raised in a number of other complaints, a theme is identified. Section 20 of the annual report provides details.
- 2.5 The ways in which the learning from complaints and the themes is shared by the Customer Care team includes:
  - Attendance at directorate management team meetings
  - Attendance at Practice Governance Board
  - Meetings with Heads of Service and Principal Social Worker
  - Sharing feedback about commissioned services with the Commissioning Team
  - Emails to Heads of Service for cascading to their teams
  - The learning gained from specific complaints is shared at complaint training sessions for Adult Social Care Managers and staff

Specific case studies which include learning from complaints investigated by the LGSCO are considered at practice learning sessions run by the Principal Social Worker.

- 2.6 53 MP enquiries were received in 2020-2021. This is a 27% (11) increase from the last reporting year. 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.
- 2.7 In 2020-2021, there were 97 informal complaints received. This compares to 106 received in the previous reporting year, an 8% (9) decrease. Informal complaints relate to concerns which are raised which can be and are resolved quickly and without the need to go through the full complaints process.
- 2.8 252 compliments were received in 2020-2021. Compliments continue to account for the highest proportion of feedback (37%) received across adult social care services year on year.
- 2.9 210 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%.
- 2.10 The three most common reasons for complaining were categorised as: support from a social care team; communication and standard of care received from independent providers.
- 2.11 Lack of support from social care teams accounted for 32 (17%) complaints. This is a very broad category and the themes within this category are: communication with other organisations; family involvement; delays; amount or type of support; care planning and access to social care. Specific examples are where the wishes of the family differ to those of the service user's or family members who are dissatisfied that they have not been included in decision making.
- 2.12 Although the category accounts for the highest volume of complaints, there has been a significant decrease of 36% (17) in this category in comparison to last reporting year. Learning from complaints that fall under the category of lack of support have led to bespoke practice workshops being run and practitioner factsheets providing specific guidance being produced or reviewed.
- 2.13 Communication issues accounted for 25 (12%) complaints. 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.
- 2.14 Learning from complaints relating to communications are dealt with on a case by case basis with the individual staff member or team involved to ensure improvement with future communication for example by providing training in this area. Where there is a more general theme or issue highlighted with communication, learning has been shared on a wider platform at the Adults Leadership Forum or in Practitioner Workshops run by the Principal Social Worker. Such feedback has also led to the

improvement of the Council's website and amendments made to letter templates and system process improvements.

- 2.15 Finance issues accounted for 28 (13%) complaints. Finance complaints fall under three different service areas: Adults Finance Team (14) the Income Recovery Team (5) and the Financial Assessments Team (19). The Financial Assessment Team accounted for the highest number of complaints in this category and the main theme related to delays. The Financial Assessment Team are increasing the resource within the team to address this issue.
- 2.16 Feedback relating to financial matters has also led to improvements in the invoicing process, the layout and content of invoices and to software system developments to improve the service individuals receive.
- 2.17 23 (11%) of complaints referred primarily to the provision of care by Council commissioned care providers or were connected to safeguarding issues where the Council was the responsible local authority required to investigate the concerns. These complaints are shared with Contracts and Commissioning Team who monitor the standards of provision.
- 2.18 Of the 210 formal complaints received in 2020-2021 there were 11 (5%) that were reviewed by a Senior Manager as the complainants were dissatisfied with the first response. This is a 15% decrease when compared to 2018 – 2019.
- 2.19 During 2020-2021 there were 4 final decision statements issued by the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for the Council following full 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.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do:  
The effective management of complaints identifies learning, promotes service improvements which supports people to live healthy and independent lives.
- 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us  
The effective management of complaints identifies learning, promotes service improvements which supports people to live as independently and safely as possible.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Complaints that raises concerns about independent providers are shared with the Contracts and Commissioning team.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The investigation of complaints can help to recognise areas where there has been poor practice and provides opportunities to improve the services provided by Adult Social Care.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

All feedback is welcomed and offers opportunities for learning and action to be taken that can contribute towards service improvements and is seen as an important part of engagement with Service Users and their families/representatives.

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

### 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

There are no significant implications within this category

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?

Name of Financial Officer: N/A

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement?

Name of Officer: N/A

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer?

Name of Legal Officer: N/A

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Name of Officer: N/A

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Name of Officer: N/A

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?

Name of Officer: N/A

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Name of Officer: N/A

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Name of Officer: N/A

## 5. Source documents guidance

5.1 LGO Cambridgeshire County Council Annual Review letter 2020

[Councils' performance - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

5.2 LGO Data Sheet – Councils 2019-2020

[Adult social care complaint reviews - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)