

Date: 12 September 2017

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report on Adults Services Complaints and Representations, April 2016 – March 2017.

REPORT OF: Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing & Learning.

Summary

Cabinet considered the attached report on 20 June 2017.

Cabinet approved the referral of the report to a meeting of the Care, Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in line with procedure.

It is a statutory requirement that the report is considered by a formal committee to ensure the Council has an effective complaints procedure that follows the legislation set out in The Local Authorities Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Background

1. The Health & Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 requires that Councils with Social Services responsibilities produce an annual report of their Statutory Adults Services Complaints Procedure. This annual report sets out details of the complaints and representations made during the period April 2016 – March 2017, (Appendix 2).
2. Information contained in the report provides a summary of the statistical information of all representations received, together with a review of the effectiveness of the procedure. Some examples of service improvement are also included.

Annual Report Complaints and Representations

3. The report is consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy – Vision 2030 and the Council's Corporate Plan. In particular the report supports the Corporate Priority for serving our customers by continuously improving services and targeting areas of under achievement.
4. The report covers the period from 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

The complaints procedure derives from The Health and Social Care (Community Health & Standards Act) 2003 and The Local Authorities Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. These acts set down the procedures that councils and social services have a legal responsibility to follow when a complaint is made.

5. The report focuses primarily on statutory complaints for Adults Social Care Services, with information on complaint related queries and compliments that are received about staff or services.

Operation of the Procedure

6. The Adults Care Complaints Process procedure has two stages:
- Local Resolution by a Team or Service Manager
 - External Consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Statistical Analysis

7. In 2016/17 the number of complaints dealt with was as follows:
- 53 statutory complaints, which is a 15% decrease on the number of complaints received last year, (62);
 - 7 of the complaints received were graded as green complaints - low level issues, small risk either to the service user or the Council;
 - 45 complaints were graded as amber complaints - moderate issues with medium risk to the service user or the Council;
 - 1 complaint was graded as a red complaint - serious issues which are high risk for either the service user or the Council;
 - The number of low level issues received decreased by 47%, (23 from 43).

Points of Interest

8. The following points may be of interest:
- 41%, (22) of complaints were around the quality of services received and remains the greatest cause for complaint;
 - Quality of service involves alleged failure of service delivery, for example;
 - Non return of telephone calls;
 - Lack of or poor communication from services or individual workers;
 - Late or missed social work visits;
 - Lack of timely response after a request for service.
 - 52% (25) of complaints were not upheld after investigation.
 - 19% (9) of complaints were partially upheld.
 - 29% (14) were fully upheld after investigation.
 - There has been a 27% decrease in formal all recorded contacts since 2015/16.

Learning from representations: Examples of Service Improvements

9. Learning from complaints is critical to prevent recurrence of the cause(s) of the original complaint. It is important that we make sure that people's experiences help us to improve services where we can. Changes can include policy, procedure or employee development.

Some examples of improvements identified during 2016/17:

- The Shared Lives Service now ensure that all service user's or their representatives are formally advised that in the event that a service or Shared Lives session needs to be cancelled, that they must inform the Council as soon as possible as failure to do this may mean a charge is still imposed.
- Bereavement training sessions have been arranged for the Adult Social Care Direct Team so that staff are better prepared and more able to understand and consider the wider needs of the family in times of crisis. Part of the session will focus on communication skills to ensure the ASCD Team provide a high level customer service.

- To ensure that service users' case files are up to date, all Adult Social Care workers should ensure that all significant events, incidents or difficult conversations are recorded on service user's case files as soon as possible.
 - Team Managers have improved the handover procedure for when agency workers leave the Council. This will ensure that Care and Support Plans are not returned to workers who may have since left. The Care and Support Plan can then be allocated to another worker in a timely manner.
 - The PIC Standard Operational Procedures has been updated to reflect the requirement to identify an appropriate professional within discharge planning meetings. The identified professional will then be required to facilitate a coordinated discharge.
 - That minutes from multidisciplinary planning meetings will be sent to all attendees as soon as possible. This will help to clarify any individual actions that may be required or agreed.
 - All PIC staff have been instructed to ensure that they always use up to date agreements and documentation.
 - A review of residency agreements has been undertaken. This review has ensured that the documents for both intermediate care and assessments clearly state the current charging rates. The admitting officer must also verbally explain fees and charges to service users and/or their carers.
 - A medication risk assessment is now completed for all service users of START who require support with their medication, irrespective of whether there are identified concerns at the point of referral.
10. Compliments continue to be received about the quality of the Adult Care Services provided by Gateshead Council. Some compliments are about individual members of staff or about whole teams and services. Compliments reflect the high regard in which our customers have for employees and the services provided to them. Information is always fed into operational services, including the Commissioning Team, to highlight good practice and possible improvements to services.

During 2016/17, Adult Social Care received 720 compliments, which accounted for 78% of all representations received.

- 42% (305), of compliments were regarding the Assessment & Personalisation Team;
- 10%, (31) of the Assessment & Personalisation compliments were regarding the Adult Social Care Direct Team;
- 27%, (172) were about the Physical Disabilities Team.
- 53%, (384) of compliments were about Provider Services;
- 61%, (235) of these compliments were about Council provided home care;
- 39%, (149) of Provider Service compliments were about the care provided by the Councils Promoting Independence Centres.

Recommendation

11. The committee is asked to consider and comment on the effectiveness of the Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments Procedures and the details of all complaints and representations received during 2016/17.