

TITLE OF REPORT: Adult Social Care and Public Health - Annual Report on Services Complaints, Compliments and Representations - April 2018 to March 2019.

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neil, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing & Learning.

Summary

Cabinet considered the attached report on 25 June 2019.

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 and the The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

Background

1. The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints, (England) Regulations 2009 and The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012 set down the procedures that Adult Social Care Services, National Health Services, (NHS) and Public Health Services must follow when complaints or representations are made. As part of the responsibilities set out in the acts, local authorities must produce an annual report on all complaints and representations received. This report fulfils Gateshead Council's obligations and provides information on all representations received about the Council's Adult Social Care Services and Public Health Services between 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.
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 procedures. 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. The report supports the Corporate Priority for serving our customers by continuously improving services and targeting areas of under achievement.
4. The report focuses primarily on statutory complaints for Adults Social Care Services and Public Health, with information on complaint related queries, (low level issues), and compliments that are received about staff or services. The report covers the period from 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Operation of the Procedure

5. 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

6. In 2018/19 the number of complaints and representations dealt with was as follows:

- 105 statutory complaints were received during 2018/19. This is a 62% increase on the number of complaints received during 2017/18, (65);
- Amber complaints, which are medium risk to the Council or the service user, accounted for almost 90% (94) of all complaints received.
- There were no Red complaints received during 2018/19. Red complaints are assessed as high risk to either the Council or the service user and are often extremely complex and generally contain cross service / agency issues.
- The number of complaint related queries (Crqs) have also risen. 2018/19 saw a 106% increase on the number received during 2017/18, (35 from 17).
- Complaint related queries are low-level representations that must be resolved within one working day after receipt.
- 11 complaints received were in respect of attitude or behaviour of staff, of which 10 of the complaints received were about Assessment & Personalisation.
- 73% of representations made during 2018/19 were compliments and only 27% were concerns or formal complaints.
- 23 working days was the average time to investigate complaints during 2018/19.
- This is a 36% improvement on the response times during 2017/18, (36 working days).

Points of Interest

7. The following points may be of interest:

- 38%, (40), 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.
- During 2018/19, delays accounted for 34% (36) of complaints received.
- From this, 58% (21) were regarding delays in social work / assessing officer allocation to an individual's case.
- After investigation, 60% (12) of complaints about allocation delays were found to be justified.
- Almost 34%, (34), of all complaints were not upheld after investigation;
- 32% (32) of complaints were found to be partially justified;
- 33% (33) of complaints were found to be fully justified;
- All improvements identified a result of complaints that were either partially or fully justified are included within this report.
- During 2018/19, Adult Social Care received 560 compliments, which accounted for 73% of all representations received.

- 47% (261), of compliments were regarding Assessment & Personalisation;
- 48%, (269) of compliments were about Provider Services;
- 2.5% (14) of compliments were about the Care Call Service;
- 2.8% (16) of compliments were about the Health & Social Care Commissioning & Quality Assurance. Four of which were about the support offered by the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Learning from complaints and representations:

8. 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.

Examples of improvements identified during 2018/19:

- To ensure clarity around the hospital discharge process, Adult Social Care have developed a suite of standard documents which can be given to the patient or their representative. This documentation gives clear information on what care and support can be offered once the patient is fit for discharge along with options on how this care can be provided.
- When workers request financial assessments, they should always identify beforehand whether a service user has someone who acts as their financial representative. This will then ensure that the financial assessment forms are sent to the person responsible for managing the service user's financial affairs.
- All adult social care workers have been reminded that during the Assessment period, they must always offer the service user, (or their representative), a Direct Payment as soon as care needs have been identified.
- The Care Call service will actively work with the Council's Customer Services team and Adult Social Care to establish a link with the Council's 'Tell us once' scheme. This will ensure that any necessary action is taken should a service user pass away.
- The Care Call service will ensure that they continually explore the latest technological developments, to secure the specific technology which would serve to notify the service when a service user (who may be disorientated and confused) disconnects their Lifeline equipment.
- All line managers have been instructed that it is a mandatory requirement of the Service to inform a service user's next of kin of any unplanned hospital admissions or of any sudden changes in the service users health or wellbeing (where appropriate). This will result in improved customer care and better communication.

Future Objectives

9. Objectives for 2019/20 are to:
 - a. Continue to meet regularly with Managers from Adult Services and Public Health to consider what further action needs to be taken to;
 - i. Resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and within local timescales.
 - ii. Improve the number of complaints being investigated and resolved to the complainant's satisfaction;
 - iii. Ensure that the number of complaints progressing to the Local Government Ombudsman remain low.

- iv. Ensure that Adult Social Care and Public Health continue to use the outcomes from complaints to drive service improvement.
- b. Ensure that staff members who receive compliments continue to pass the details on to Social Care Customer Services so that they or their team receive the recognition they deserve.

Recommendation

- 10. Committee is requested to:
 - I. Consider and comment on the annual report;
 - II. Indicate whether it is satisfied with the performance of Care, Wellbeing and Learning in responding to complaints and ensuring that this results in continuous service improvement.