

TITLE: Adult Social Care Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints - April 2023 to March 2024

REPORT OF: Steph Downey, Strategic Director Integrated Adults and Social Care Services

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Annual Report for April 2023 - March 2024, which relate to the Adults Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure 2009.

Background

2. The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints, (England) Regulations 2009, set down the procedures that Adult Social Care must follow when complaints or representations are made. As part of the responsibilities set out in the act, local authorities must produce an annual report on all complaints and representations received about its Adult Social Care services. This report fulfils Gateshead Council's obligations and provides information on all representations received about the Council's Adult Social Care Services between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.
3. Information contained in the reports provides a summary of the statistical information together with a review of the effectiveness of the procedure. Some examples of service improvement are also included within the report along with examples of compliments received about Adult Social Care.

Proposal

4. Cabinet is requested to endorse the annual report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Endorses the Annual Report on Complaints and Representations
- ii. Refers this report to the Care, Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

For the following reasons:

- a) It is a statutory requirement that the report is considered by a formal committee.
- b) To ensure member involvement in the statutory complaints procedure.

1.0 The Statutory Complaints Process

Gateshead Adult Social Care uses a two-stage complaint procedure to ensure that complaints are handled effectively and in line with regulations. There are two steps to the Statutory Complaints Process:

- Step 1 - Informal (Local) resolution by the Council.
- Step 2 - Independent consideration by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, (LG & SCO).

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their Stage 1 complaint, they have the right to appeal, and the matter will be considered under a stage 2 complaint. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response to the Stage 2 complaint, they can take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). Although complainants can refer their complaints to the LGO from the outset, the LGO will not normally investigate until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response.

Once received, all complaints are assessed and graded. Categories of complaint are:

- Green, which are low-level or minimal risk for either the service user or the Council.
- Amber, which are assessed as a moderate or medium risk.
- Red, a serious complaint which are assessed as high risk.

Complaints must be responded to within a timely and efficient manner, whilst there are no prescribed timescales for the resolution of Adult Social Care complaints, it is recommended that the relevant period is within 6 months commencing on the day the complaint was received.

When the investigation of a complaint is complete, the investigating manager will write a letter explaining what they have found and what they will do to put things right. Sometimes, our findings do not fully support the complainant's view of their complaints. However, we always try to give clear reasons for our decisions, explain any misunderstandings and agree a way forward. All written responses, irrespective of the type of representation, are subject to organisational sign off by the Adult Social Care Service Director.

2.0 Publicity and Information

We use compliments, comments and complaints to find out what is and is not working well, whether any of our processes need to be reviewed and to help us plan the way in which services could be delivered in future.

We want to make sure that the care services we provide are always of a high quality and provide publicly available information on how on how to complain and we like to know what has happened, how the complainant or their family has been affected and what the complainant would like us to do to put it right.

We're always looking for innovative ways to improve our services, respond to change and work with and listen to the residents of Gateshead and work in partnership with other organisations to deliver the best possible results. We encourage our service users and their families to share experiences with us and, tell us about their ideas for how we can do things differently.

Information is provided in several formats, encouraging, and facilitating easy access to the complaints process;

- New service users receive a complaints leaflet in their information pack.
- A leaflet is also provided when a service user receives the outcome to an assessment / reassessment of need.
- Adult Social Care feedback forms are also provided to service users and their carers after an assessment or review of social care needs so they can share their experiences of Adult Social Care.

2.1 Advocacy and Special Needs

Vulnerable people receiving an Adult Social Care service are encouraged and supported to express their views and to access the complaints procedure if they wish. An easy read complaints leaflet is also available for people with a learning disability / difficulty. In all cases advocacy is offered if it is felt that the complainant would benefit from this service.

2.2 Independent Element

The Council operates an internal investigation procedure. Therefore, it is important that complaints administration is fully independent of any form of Adult Social Care service delivery to ensure fairness and impartiality and to prevent any conflicts of interest.

2.3 Equalities Monitoring

Gateshead Council recognises that equality monitoring of service delivery is crucial for effective planning and scrutiny of the services that it provides. This monitoring can identify which groups are using services and gauge their level of satisfaction. The information can then be used to highlight possible inequalities, investigate their underlying causes, and address any unfairness or disadvantage. However, as complainants tend to be from relatives, it is not possible to collect this information with any accuracy as diversity forms sent out were not routinely returned despite the forms being made simpler to complete in 2023/24.

During 2023/2024, there were 2 complaints where it was able to be identified that the complainant was a member of the BAME community.

Information about the complaints process can be made available in key languages and formats. Information for customers with sight, hearing or learning difficulties can also be provided

3.0 Training and Employee Development

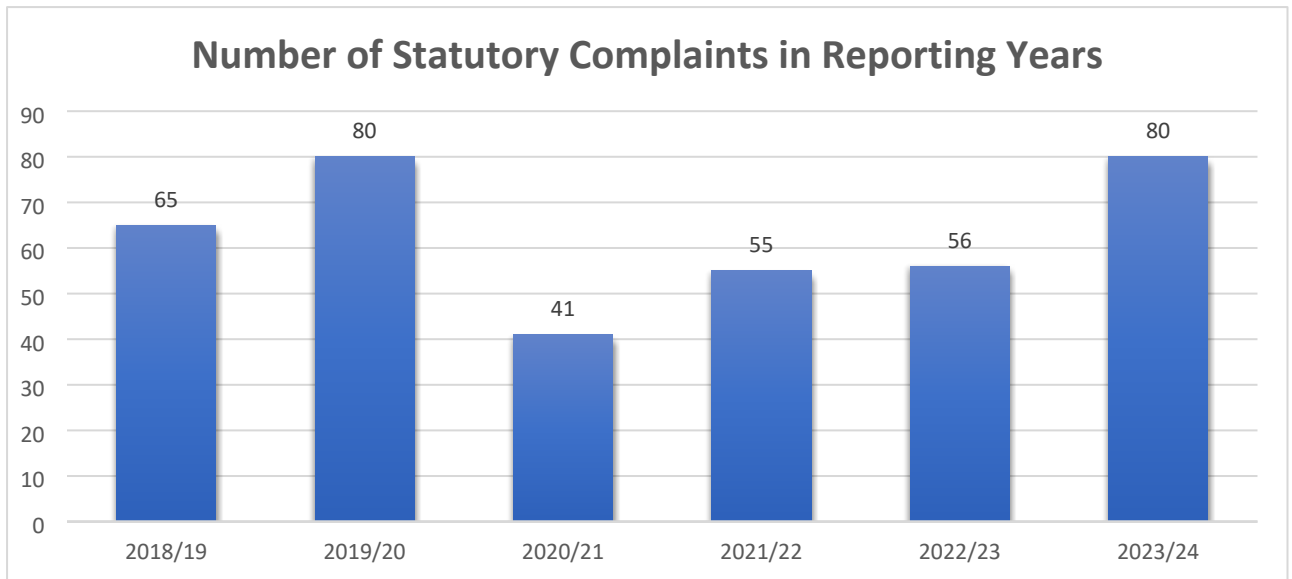
Training for Investigating Officers is provided on a regular basis. All Adult Social Care Team Managers / Service Managers are expected to have undergone investigating skills training.

The Investigating Skills Training Course is facilitated by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, (LG&SCO). The training concentrates on defining, investigating, and resolving complex complaints. It also emphasises the need to identify any improvements that may be necessary as a direct result of individual complaints.

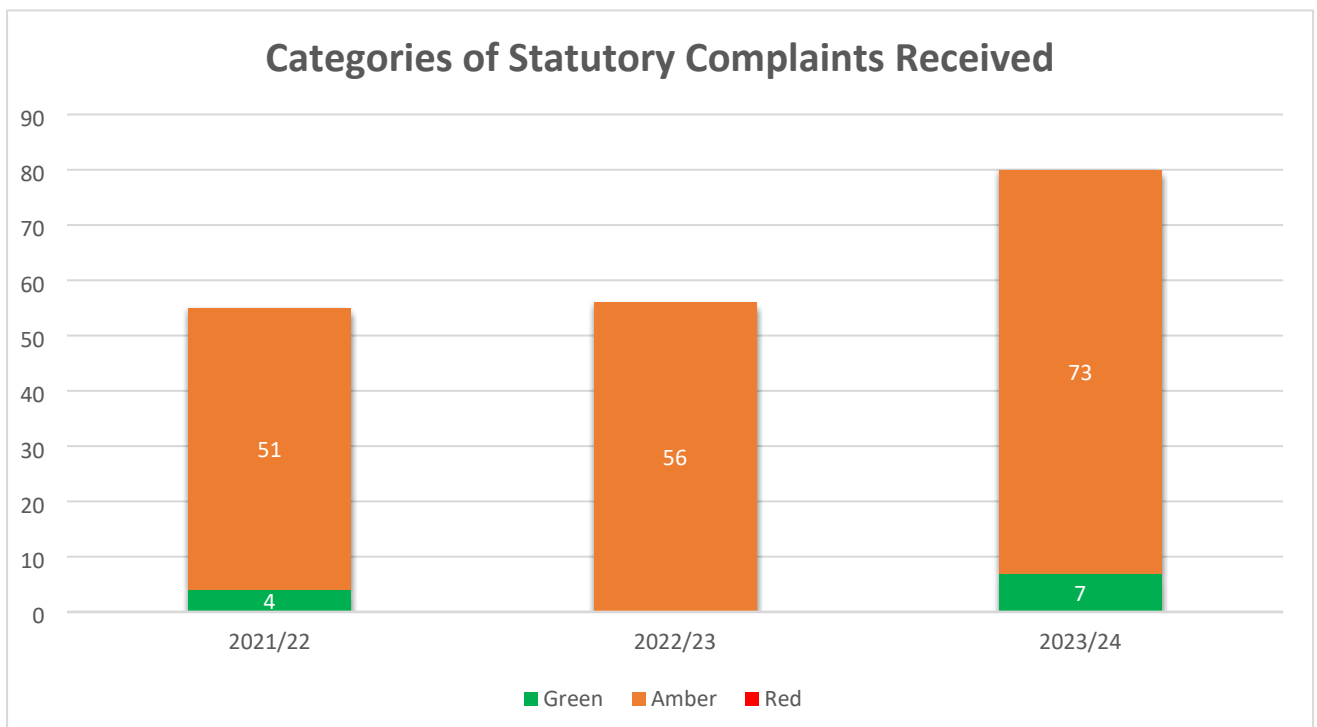
Managers are also provided with internal training on Gateshead's complaint processes, which is undertaken by the Complaints Team. Also, all managers appointed to investigate complaints are offered one to one support when required and advice is routinely given throughout the investigation process.

4.0 All Adults Services Representations Received (2021 – 2024)

All Formal Contacts	2021	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024
Statutory Adult Services Complaints	57.14 %	55	54.21%	56	49.08%	80
ASC Comments	1.02%	1	0.00%	0	0.61%	1
Complaint Related Queries	16.33 %	16	20.56%	22	36.81%	60
Commissioned Service Response	8.16%	8	7.48%	8	1.84%	3
Data Issue	1.02%	1	0.00%	0	1.84%	3
Insurance Claim	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Inter-Agency Concerns	2.04%	2	1.87%	2	2.45%	4
Joint Health & Social Care Complaints	3.06%	3	8.41%	9	0.61%	1
LG&SCO Referrals	4.08%	4	6.54%	7	3.68%	6
MP / Councillor Responses	7.14%	7	0.93%	1	2.45%	4
Whistle Blow	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.61%	1
All Dissatisfaction		97		105		163
Trend				8.25%		55.23 %
Compliments		274		363		390
Total of All Representations		371		468		553
Trend				26.15%		18.16 %



4.1 Categories of all Statutory Complaints Received over the Past Three Years



5. Overview of Complaints 2023-2024

5.1 Key Points of Interest

- During 2023/24, 80 complaints were received regarding Adult Social Care Services. This is almost a 43% increase on complaints received during 2022/23, (56).

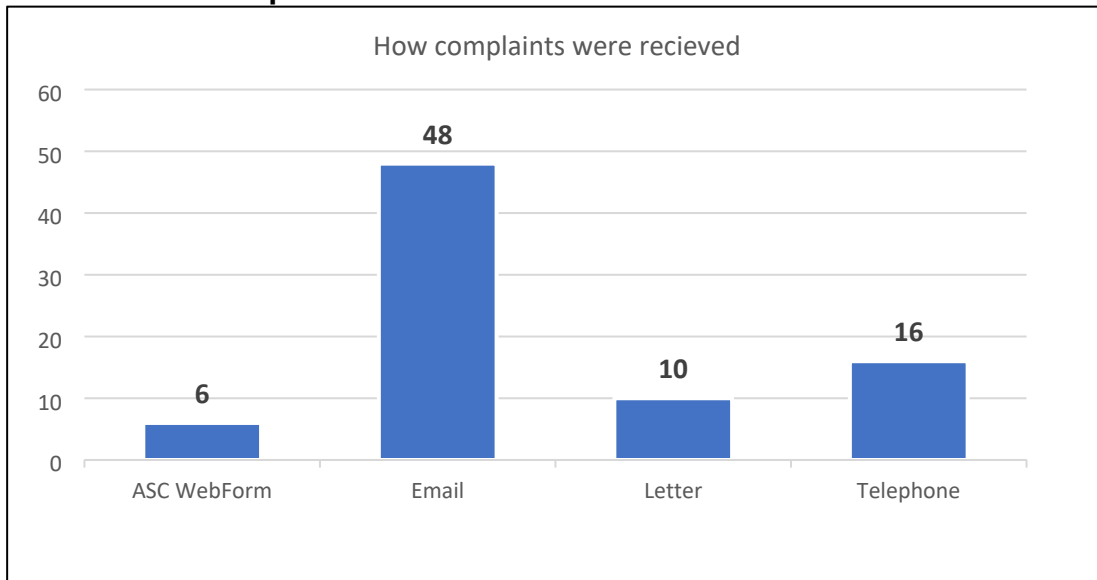
- The upward trend in complaints (and can be seen with compliments too) is partly due to 2023/24 being the first full year without some impact linked to Covid, during which time all areas saw a decline in complaints, and similar activity such as safeguarding enquiries.
- During 2023 / 24, Adult Social Care dealt with 8218 referrals, including all types of assessments and reviews. This means that only 2% (163) of contacts to Adult Social Care resulted in dissatisfaction.
- The number of complaint related queries (CRQs) has also increased compared to the number of low-level issues received during 2022/23, (60 from 22).
- Complaint related queries are low-level representations that must be resolved within one working day after receipt. However, the increase does evidence that the services are actively resolving potential complaints at source.
- Amber complaints, which are medium risk to the Council or the service user, accounted for 95.25% (73) of complaints received.
- Amber complaints often include several issues which are deemed as moderate risk to either the service user or the Council.
- Almost 43% (34) of all complaints received involved disputes to care charges levied for care and support.
- Compared with the number of formal complaints received (80), 83% of representations during 2023/24 were compliments.

5.2 Complaint Related Queries – Low Level Issues

Complaint related queries (CRQs) are low level issues and, are often early indicators of emerging dissatisfaction regarding service delivery or performance. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March, 2024, 60 CRQs were received about Adult Social Care Services.

47% (28) of CRQs received were regarding charging for care. Other CRQs received related to various area within Adult Social Care. 13% (8) related to missed or late Prime visits. However, all of these were resolved informally, and the service ensured that action was taken to update their systems when allocating carers for an individual's care package.

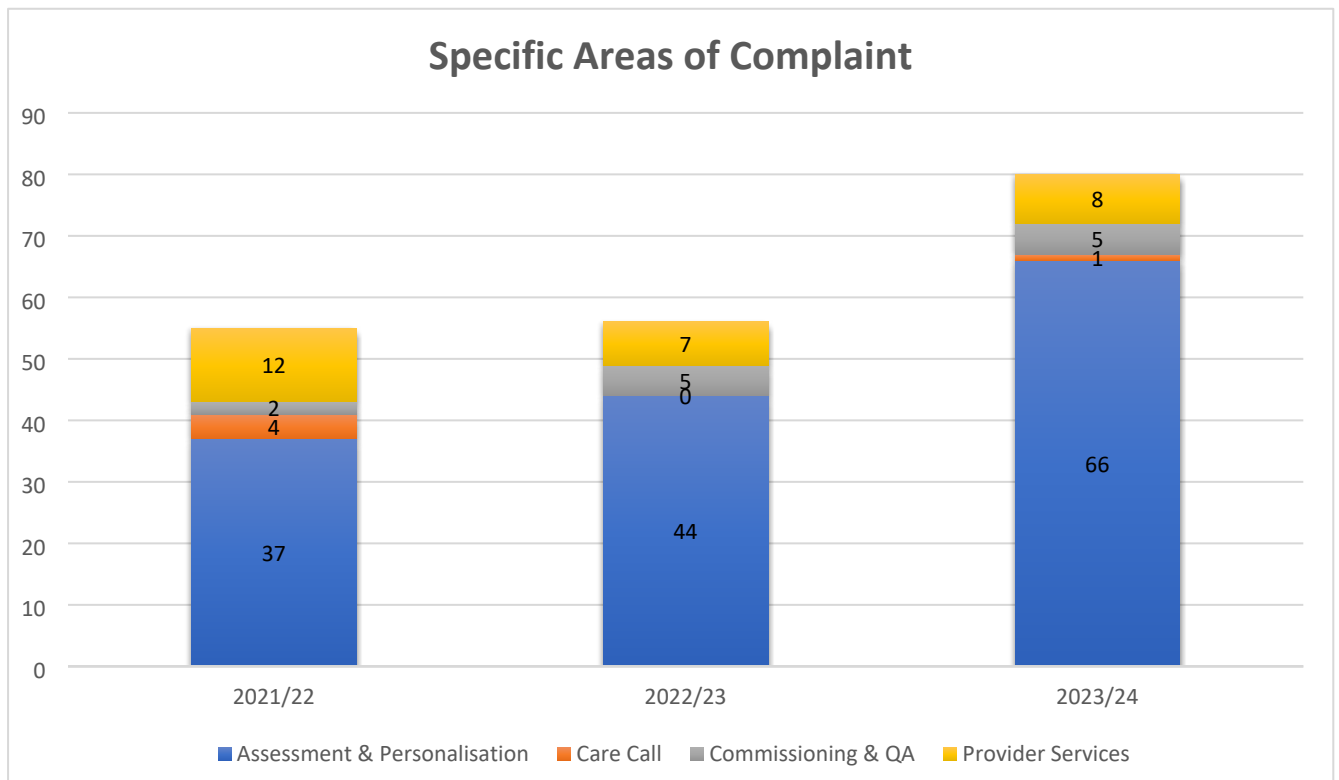
5.3. How complaints were received.



- In January 2024, Adult Social Care introduced two new feedback methods for service users and their representatives. An online feedback form, which is simple and easy to complete, along with an Adult Social Care Recent Experience Form, which is given to all users of Adult Social Care undergoing reviews, assessments, or other interventions. Both methods are proving to be very successful.
- Email is still the main method of referral accounting for 60%, (48), of all complaints received.
- Email is popular as it is accessible and allows the complainant to retain a copy of the complaint that has been submitted.
- Letters accounted for almost 13% (10) of complaint referrals. Of these, 4 were letters sent to another service and then shared with Adult Social Care.
- 20% (16) complaints were received via telephone.

- Complaints received by telephone are generally in response to immediate issues, such as missed care visits or disputes regarding invoices for care.
- Relatives continue to make the most representations, and accounted for 64%, (51) of complaints made.
- 16% (13) complaints were received direct from service users.
- 20% (14) complaints were referred to the complaints procedure by others acting on behalf of the service user, such as carers, advocates, or external agencies or by other areas within the Council.

5.4 Specific Areas of Statutory Complaint

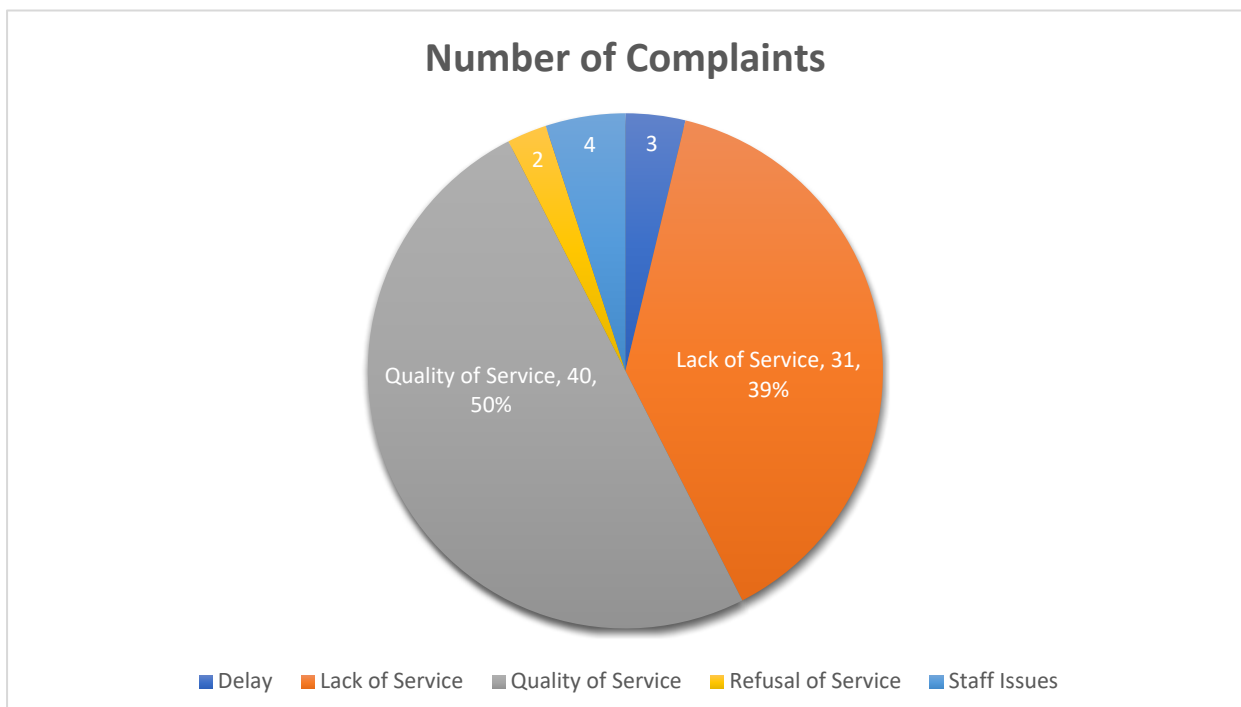


- During 2023/24, 82% (66) of complaints were about the Assessment & Personalisation service, (A&P).
- This is an increase of 22 complaints on the number received during 2022/23, (44).
- A&P is often the first service to become involved with those requesting support from Adult Social Care, so dissatisfaction can often be anticipated due to disputes about decisions made following assessments and the provision of chargeable services.
- 32 complaints about A&P were regarding charging for care issues. The complaints were around areas such as poor or unclear information about care charges, that complainants advised that they had been told that the first 6

weeks of care would be free or that the service user wouldn't have to pay for care at all.

- After investigation, 26% (7) of A&P complaints about charging were fully upheld. 33% (9) were partially upheld and 29% (8) were not upheld. 7% (2) were resolved informally.
- In addition to this, 29% (14) of all complaints about A&P were found to be unjustified. 27% (13) were found to be partially justified and 19% (9) were fully justified. 14% (7) complaints were informally resolved by the managers within the service.
- 10% (8) complaints were received by the Council's Enablement and Independence Services. These relate to services provided within a Promoting Independence Centre and the PRIME services, which include timing of visits and the quality of support from staff.
- After investigation, 66% (4) of complaints about Enablement and Independence Services were partially justified. Only 1 complaint was found to be fully justified.

5.5 Issues linked to the complaint.



- During 2023/24, quality of service accounted for 50% (40) of all complaints received.
- Quality of service can include straightforward issues, such as,
 - Missed or delayed social work visits / appointments.
 - Non-return of telephone calls.
 - Poor communication.

- Poor or no response after a request for service.
- The quality of care provided by either in-house or commissioned care services.

Quality of service can also include service failure issues, for example, failure to safeguard the welfare or safety of a vulnerable adult.

- After investigation, 35% (11) of complaints that had been responded to about quality were not upheld, 26% (10) were partially upheld, 23% (7) were fully upheld and 16% (5) were withdrawn or informally resolved by the service.
- Recommendations from upheld / partially upheld complaints are detailed within this report.
- 39% (31) of all complaints were regarding lack of service. Complaints about lack of service may often be linked to high expectations about what Adult Services can offer to a client / service user or their families. However, it was found that 20 of the complaints received about lack of service, were about lack of information about care charges.
- 5% (4) of complaints received were regarding the conduct of individual workers. This is a 50% decrease on the number received during 2022/23 (8).
- Following investigation, 33% (1) of all complaints about staff behaviour were partially upheld, 33% (1) was not upheld and 1 was informally resolved. One complaint remains under investigation. No complaint about staff conduct was found to be fully justified.
- In all cases, should there be repeated complaints regarding an individual worker, the Council will always undertake an internal review to ensure that any unmet professional development needs are addressed where appropriate. Any serious issues will be dealt with via employment procedures.

5.5 Timescales

- When a complaint is passed to an Investigating Officer, the Investigating Officer is requested to consider the detail of the complaint along with the issues raised and to identify an achievable timescale for response. This timescale should then be discussed with the complainant and their agreement sought.
- This negotiation then ensures that investigations and timescales for response are proportionate to the issues raised.
- Adult Social Care complaints often include several areas of concern, some may also include issues about other agencies, such as health or housing. Any liaison with outside agencies that may be necessary to fully investigate the complaint should always be factored into any negotiated timescale for response.

- In all cases, the Investigating Officer is requested to keep the complainant updated on the progress of the investigation and to advise them of any delays that may be anticipated.
- Adult Social Care have an internal timescale of 20 working days to respond to complaints. However, this timescale does not consider the complexity of some complaints. Therefore, the investigation timescale should always be negotiated with the complainant.
- During 2023/24, 41 working days was the average time to investigate and respond to a complaint. This is an increase of 32% from average response times during 2022/23, (31).

6.0 Themes of Complaints Received

- The main theme from complaints received during 2023/2024 related to finance and charging for care. 34 complaints received were in respect of this issue. Early analysis of those LA's inspected by CQC indicate that this is the main reason for complaint across many LA Adult Social Care departments
- In January 2024, a corporate decision was taken to issue invoice reminders for charges for care that had been provided during the covid pandemic. This had subsequently resulted in several concerns, queries and complaints being received about the charges, some of which included allegations that the service user or their representative had not been informed that the care would be subject to charges. Between 1 January and 31 March 2024, 8 formal complaints were received that cited issues about historic invoices. All stated that they had not been informed that charges would apply.
- After investigation, 5 of the 8 complaints received about historic invoices were either fully or partially upheld and charges either part or fully waived. Only 1 complaint was found to be unjustified with 2 complaints still under investigation.

6.1 Lack of information about Care Charges

- 20 of the complaints received about charging for care were regarding a lack of information about care charges. There were instances within complaints where the service user or their representatives state that they were not informed that any care charges would be levied for care. In two cases, complainants had advised that they had not been informed at all that a 4 hour's background charge for Extra Care Housing would be applied by the Council in addition to the tenancy charges.

- Complaints also included issues where service users or their representatives had been advised that discharge to assess funding would be applied, but not about when the funding would cease and assessed charges would commence. Other complaints received varied, such as charges for kennels when a service user was admitted into hospital or about lack of information about the Financial Assessment process.
- Complaints also related to the lack of information about when discharge funding would end. These complaints were regarding the lack of advice that discharge funding would cease once a service user's long-term needs had been identified.
- There were also instances where charges were disputed as complaints had alleged that there was a lack of service by commissioned care providers. That they were not undertaking the tasks as set out in the care plan. In these cases, commissioning colleagues liaise with the relevant commissioned service to identify whether full tasks on the care plan had been delivered. If found that this was not the case, the charges would be amended, and the care provider would then be subject to additional monitoring.
- In all cases where it was found that no or insufficient information had been shared with either the service user or their representative, the Council will either uphold or partially uphold the complaint and will consider cancelling either some or all the care fee's owing. Any recommendations from the complaints are also taken forward in respect of communication by workers about the advice that is given about potential care charges.
- An information leaflet on charging for care is also available. This leaflet will be amended to include information about the background charge for extra care housing.
- After investigation of complaints relating to a lack of information about care charges, 27% (4) complaints were not upheld, which evidences that advice around care charges had been provided. 47% (7) of complaints were partially upheld, and 27% (4) were fully upheld.

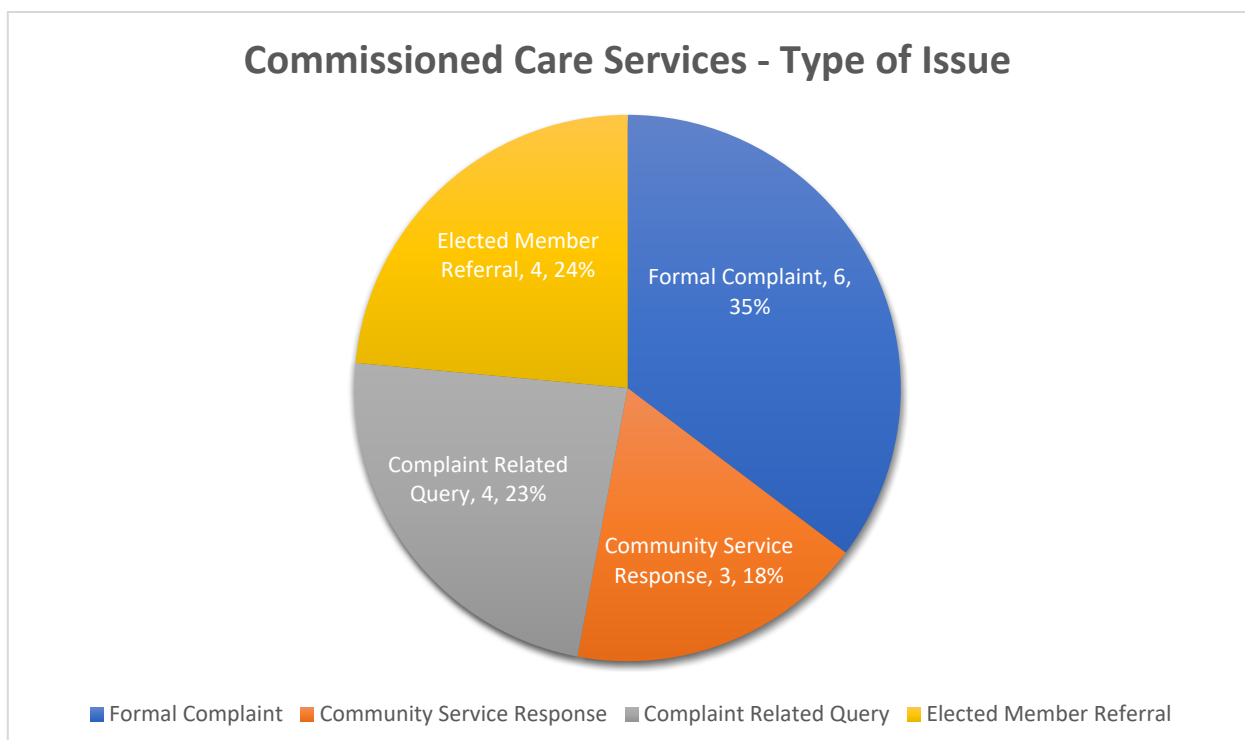
6.2 Quality of Information Shared regarding charges for care.

- Between 1 April and 31 March 2024, 14 complaints were received which cited the quality of service regarding the sharing of information about charging for care.
- Issues raised within complaints varied from the quality of information given, such as families or service users had been told that charges would apply, but

that they had been informed that these would only apply after the 6 weeks free funding ended. There were examples where families had been informed that there would be no charge for any care provided, or that the family had been told by hospital staff that there would be no charge for the duration of the assessment period. Complaints were also received about stays in the Council's Promoting Independence Centres where it was alleged that conflicting information had been given about when charges would apply.

- In cases where delays to procuring a care package to enable a service user to be discharged were identified, these complaints are either partially or fully upheld and charges either part or fully cancelled.
- After investigation, 29% (4) complaints about the quality of the information shared about care charges were not upheld. 29% (4) were fully upheld and 21% (3) were partially upheld.

7.0 Commissioned Care Services – All issues received.

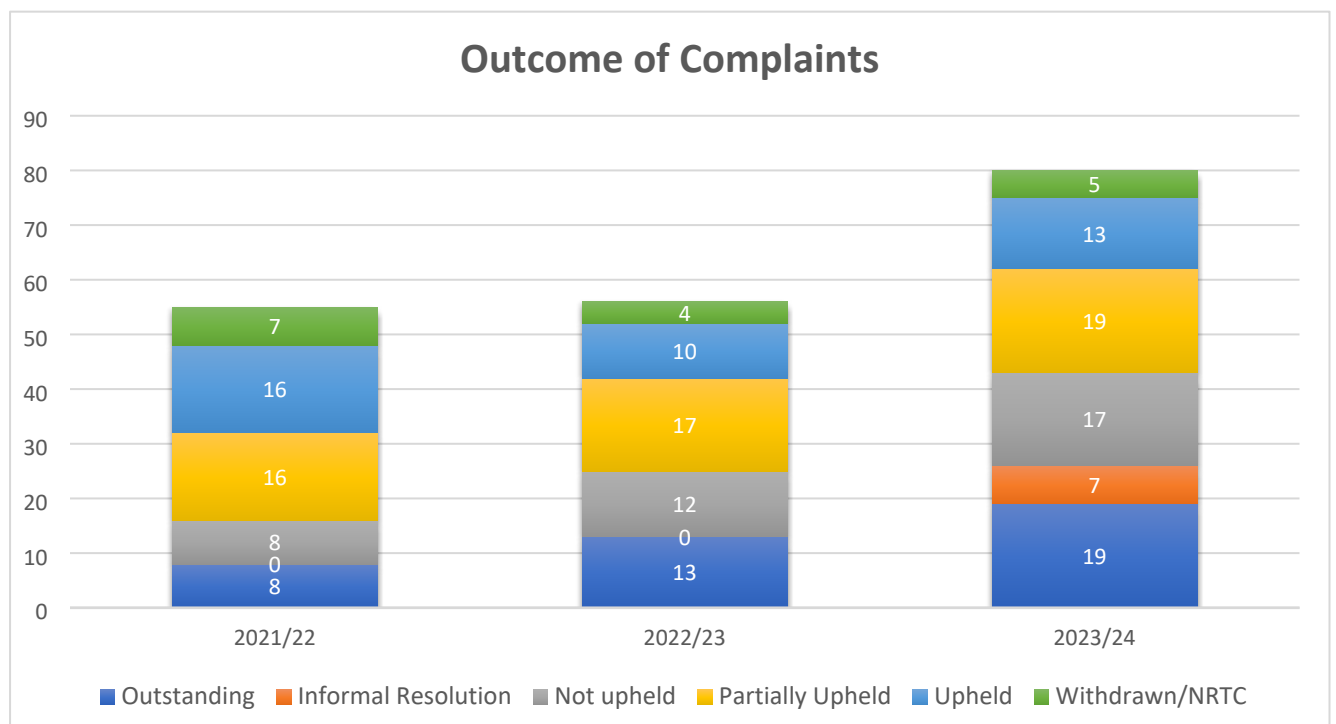


- During 2023/24, 17 representations were received highlighting dissatisfaction about commissioned services.
- However, it must be noted that within complaints regarding services provided by Adult Social Care, there were some issues raised about commissioned care providers. As the main body of complaint, were regarding Adult Social Care, the Investigating Officer was required to liaise with the Council's

Commissioning Team to ensure a full and complete response to all issues raised.

- From the complaints received, 6 were considered by the Council. One of the complaints was regarding the quality of service by a taxi firm commissioned to provide transport for a vulnerable adult. The issues were fully investigated and partially upheld. Recommendations from this complaint were taken forward and fully implemented by the Travel Care Team Manager.
- Of the 5 complaints about care, 1 was regarding the support provided by a care home and 4 were regarding commissioned home care.
- The complaint regarding a care home was suspended by the Council to allow a full investigation to take place by the senior managers responsible for the care home. Once completed, the council will consider whether any further resolution is possible.
- Issues about home care providers were regarding missed / late or short calls where resolution wasn't possible by the provider themselves. Commissioning officers then looked into these issues and following this, 2 complaints were found to be partially upheld, and invoices adjusted and 2 were found to be unjustified.
- 4 CRQ's (Complaint related queries, which are low level issues) about commissioned services were received during 2023/24. All were in relation to commissioned home care service and related to missed / late or short calls. Commissioning officers were able to resolve all 4 informally to the complainant's satisfaction.
- Again, low level issues about Adult Social Care also include elements relating to Commissioned Care Providers where joint resolution is required by working with Commissioning colleagues.
- There were no LG&SCO referrals received about commissioned care providers during 2023/ 24.
- Following any referral highlighting dissatisfaction, Contract Management or Commissioning Officers always ensure that any improvements to service are taken forward with the care service concerned and monitored in line with the service's contractual obligations.

8.0 Outcomes to Complaints 2023 / 2024



- 28%, (17) of all complaints were found to be unjustified after investigation.
- 31% (19) of complaints were found to be partially justified.
- 21% (13) of complaints were found to be fully justified.
- 12% (7) of complaints were informally resolved by the service concerned
- 8% (5) were withdrawn or closed due to no response to contact.
- 19 complaints remain under investigation.
- All improvements identified a result of complaints that were either partially or fully justified are included within this report.

9.0 Health & Social Care Joint Investigations

- The statutory complaints process covers NHS and Social Care Services. All complaints that are received which are about services provided by both Health and Social Care are co-ordinated by either the Council's Complaints

Manager or the Complaints Manager responsible for the Health Service subject to the complaint. The organisation responsible for the largest area of the complaint will take the lead in the investigation and will ensure that a combined response letter is sent to the complainant within the agreed timescales.

- During 2023/24, only 1 complaint was jointly investigated by a manager within the Enablement and Independence Service and required liaison with care managers at the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The complaint was regarding support provided by staff accompanying a service user to a day service. The complaint was found to be unjustified.

10.0 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

- During 2023/24, 6 complaints were considered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, (LG&SCO). Of these, 5 had been investigated and responded to via the complaint's procedure. One of the complaints was referred directly to the LG&SCO by the complainant.
- This means that 94% (75) of the complaints responded to during 2023/24 were successfully resolved by the Council.
- All 6 LG&SCO referrals were about the Assessment & Personalisation Service.
- After consideration by the LG&SCO, 5 of the referrals were closed as the LG&SCO were satisfied that no further action was necessary.
- Two of the referrals related to the same complaint. However, the LG&SCO had decided to split the issues into two areas. One area was considered to require no further action.
- One area of the complaint was judged to have caused injustice. This decision was in respect of a delay in sourcing a new service when the original care provider stopped providing support at short notice. The council agreed to the LG&SCO's recommendations and to provide time and trouble payments to the family.

11.0 Learning from Complaints

- 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 the Council to improve services where possible. Changes can include policy, procedure, or employee development.

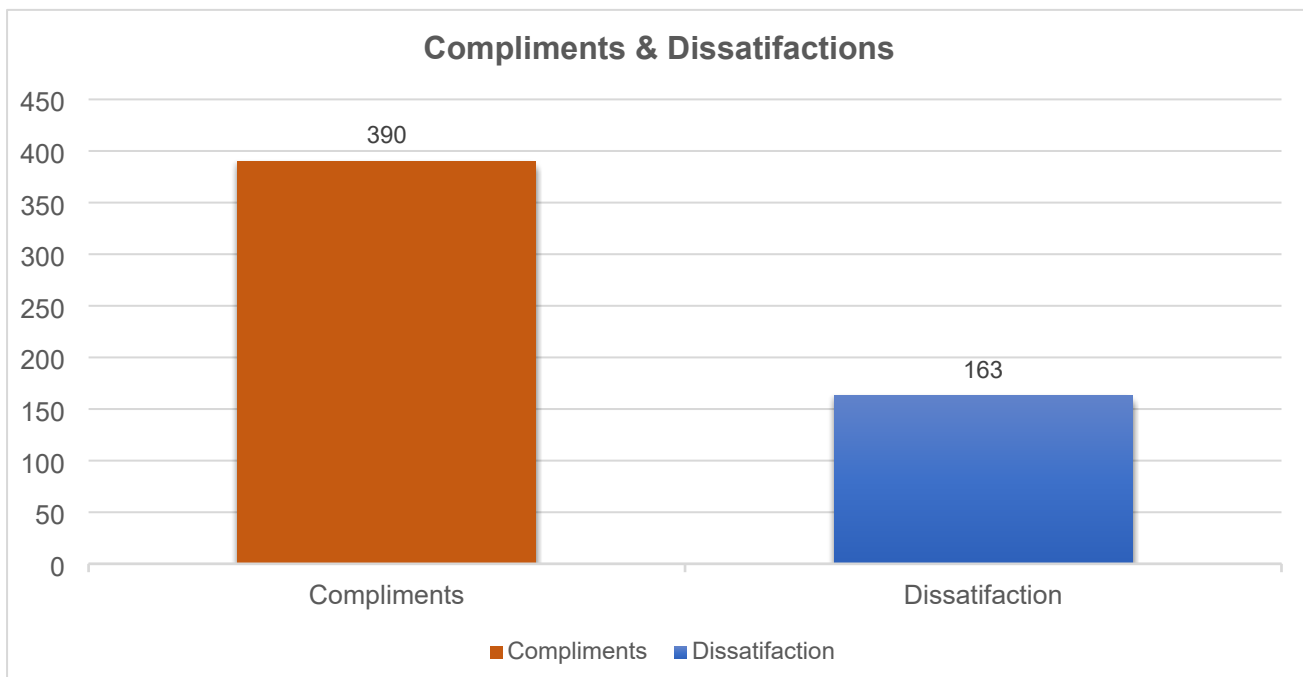
- Complaints about individual practice or failure to follow procedures are dealt with by reinforcement of processes and reiterating customer care standards through service / team meetings or individual supervision sessions.
- In all cases, any justified issues regarding attitude or conduct of staff are dealt with in line with the Council's internal employment procedures.

Examples of some of the learning points and improvements made as a result of complaints during 2023/24 include:

- All improvements are now monitored via the monthly team managers meeting to ensure speedy implementation and to monitor any similar complaints being received that can evidence that the implemented recommendations may not be working effectively.
- A Quality Assurance Working Group has been established to ensure that improvements from Complaints are routinely monitored and measured to ensure that the service area comply and the improvement provides a benefit to the service and service users.
- Ensuring continuity in communication for ongoing complaints and keeping the complainant informed on updates.
- Improving feedback loops, speaking with complainants about any potential delays in dealing with their request, whatever the reason might be and, ensuring that all relevant parties are kept informed of progress on planning applications.
- Supporting staff to raise awareness of how to handle sensitive and confidential matters, including development of refresher training sessions and raising awareness
- Case management system recording refresher training, reminding staff of importance of data accuracy and the Data Protection Policy.
- Roll out across teams of mandatory bitesize data protection course which is designed to help Officers recognise data breaches and their causes, and what to do in the event they discover a data breach.
- Financial process review is being undertaken to strengthen and improve the processes relating to financial payments, including financial assessment and billings collection services is in progress.
- Dedicated complaints manager within adult social care to support the co-ordination and response of complaints, including sharing of recommendations and lessons learnt across the service

12.0 Compliments

- 12.1 Information about compliments is always fed into all Adult Social Care Services to highlight good practice and to identify opportunities for improvements to services. Details of compliments are shared with senior management on a regular basis.



12.2 During 2023/24, Adult Social Care received 390 compliments, which accounted for 82% of all representations received, (553).

- 40%, (156), of compliments were regarding Assessment & Personalisation.
- 53%, (205) of compliments were about the Enablement & Independence Service.
- 6% (25) of compliments were about the Care Call Service.
- 27%, (105) of all compliments were about the Single Point of Access Team.
- 4% (17) were about the Council's Shared Lives Service.
- 27% (104) were regarding the Council's PRIME Service.
- 13% (50) of compliments were about day services.
- 6%, (22) were about the Promoting Independence Centres.
- 3% (11) of compliments were about the Council's Locality Teams.

12.3 Examples of compliments received.

ACT Plus Team

"To J, sending a big thank you to you just to let you know I appreciate everything you have done for me these past few months. This includes assisting me with sorting my problems and getting me into my new flat. I feel a lot happier. Love from R."

Adult Social Care Direct

“Good morning, Jasmine. Thank you very much for your help and assistance you provided regarding the outstanding issues following my mams move to Rosewood House. Your prompt efficient service was greatly appreciated at this rather stressful time for our family. Once again, we can't thank you enough. Kind regards.”

Business Support and Improvement & Rapid Response

“I am writing to thank you for the care and support you have shown my mam when our family needed vital support. First of all, I would like to thank DB, for his support and direction who without, would have caused utmost distress. Secondly the wonderful support and care from all staff at Rapid Response. My mam has asked me to pass on her thanks, she thoroughly enjoyed having the girls come round. They showed great empathy and dignity when dealing with her. They also made her laugh so much. They were very professional and respectful in my mam's hour of need. Once again pass on our thanks to all the staff that attended. They were all amazing. Mam still talks about them every day. Yours sincerely the M... Family.”

Day Services

“E. attends Teams Day Centre 4 days a week and loves it, she likes going out on the bus to Marquis Way and taking part in Boccia and walking music. She enjoys going to Greenside for lunch and taking part in the pop quiz and bingo. She absolutely loves going fishing on Fridays. E.. really likes cooking, she has brought home pasta, cheese scones and many more things to share. E.. has also mentioned going to the gym. She also talks about staff and students who attend by name, keeping us updated with who is absent, ill, and leaving. E.. really looks forward to attending every week.

Mrs W.. (E.. Mam).”

“Mrs A.. called in to thank staff for caring for her husband N. N. has recently passed away. Mrs A was given photographs by a staff member of N. while he attended Blaydon Resource Centre which Mrs A.. was delighted with. Mrs A. passed on her thanks for all the care that N. received while attending Blaydon Resource Centre”.

Council Domiciliary Care / PRIME

“T/C from daughter L... saying she cannot thank L and G enough for what they had done for her father saying they were very professional And that Linda done so well with the CPR she performed on F.”

“I have been very happy with the service. Every single member of staff has been amazing, very professional and caring and have made me feel at ease and very comfortable with them in my home. I will be very sad to move on from the service.”

“They, the family, could not praise the staff enough; they (carers) speak to their mam with dignity and respect. All the carers that come have a lovely manner with their mam and they could not speak more highly of the service”.

Care Call

“On the 20/07/2023 the client came through on her pendant to ask for help as she was stuck in the bath. A mobile was dispatched. We also had to call for an ambulance as the mobile was unable to move her. The mobile stayed with her and helped keep her warm and supported her till the paramedic's arrived. She was very grateful for the support and help we provided.”

Day Services

“S. attends Blaydon Day Service - Her daughter A. was very emotional over the phone when speaking about her mother. A. was finding it hard to see her mother's health deteriorating and was currently looking for respite. She thanked me, (S) for listening and being patient regarding her mum's health and support needs. She commented that both her and her brother SM have been extremely grateful to all the staff at Blaydon for providing excellent care to their mum, especially D and S who assisted mum with travel back on the bus which they were finding very difficult to manage. So, adding her to bus list really helped them and they would like to thank all staff at Blaydon as everyone plays a key role in supporting their mum.”

Hospital Discharge Team

“I just wanted to thank you for all your help & guidance you gave us when J. went into Aspen Court. We never expected J. would deteriorate so quickly & pass away on 13th Feb. Your caring & compassionate manner helped us greatly & we did very much appreciate your assistance. Our kindest regards and best wishes to you and your family. S., L. & K.T.”

Independent Supported Living

“Mr R. explained how happy he was with the progress J. had made since living at Fell close, He stated his independence and confidence has significantly improved and himself and M. (J's Mother) were relaxed and happy that J.'s is completely settled. He said staff really care and are there for all the right reasons.”

Locality Teams

“C is worth her weight in gold. She was just so understanding and empathetic of a very difficult home situation and was somehow able to still make everything so straightforward and understandable to people who are not privy to the social care system. C was able to explain the different types of help that were available and within a very short space of time was able to complete paperwork and have approval for the services that were agreed. She was an absolute star.”

“I would like to make you aware of how grateful we are for all the hard work, support, and effort that M M has put into my mother's case. We found ourselves in an extremely stressful situation, which M guided us through in such a professional, caring, and supportive way. She has kept us informed throughout the process. She

has always been kind, considerate and patient when dealing with my mother, S S. M is a very compassionate person and a credit to your service. I don't know how we would have managed without her help and support. M, we as a family, want you to know how grateful we are for everything you have done for us. Kind regards Mr and Mrs S."

Mental Health Team

"Hi L, I just wanted to say thank you so much for assisting me on the visit to SH this morning. You were very knowledgeable about the mental health side of things, where I was uncertain. You were very patient and professional and yet friendly, with both SH and myself. Thank you so much and hope to work with you in the future. L."

Occupational Therapy Team

"Thank you very much J. for organising the shower we truly appreciate it very much, and thanks to P. who showed us everything what was going on from Mrs T N."

"Hello there. I would just like to take a moment and tell you how amazing this woman is. I suffer from paranoia schizophrenia, and I have an anxiety disorder which they both prevent me from leaving my property as I don't mix well with strangers. This young lady showed nothing but professionalism and the way she made me feel was quite amazing. I was honest with her about the way I am, and she never judged me or looked down at me like most people do. The length she went to actually listen to what I need and help me was nothing short of a someone who takes pride in what they do and very professional that she really cares about the needs of her clients. I hope this reaches the right person and they appreciate how A. made me feel. I can't thank her enough. Thank you for taking the time out your day to read this I just think people like A. need more recognition. T. M."

Promoting Independence Centres

"Thank you for your condolences and for everything you were trying to do to support my mam it means a lot. She passed away with my son next to her bed last night and whilst we are heartbroken, we are also reassured as she didn't suffer in pain, got to be given her blessing from the priest and held on long enough to see her grandson. I am also comforted by the fact that she will no longer have to suffer like she did in life. Could you also pass on our thanks to the others involved in helping her. Kindest regards V x"

"To all at Eastwood, the front of this Card says it all. There are not enough words to express how grateful we are for the care you have given A... You were all so kind, affectionate, gentle and understanding while she was in your care. With many grateful thanks R. and D. S."

Shared Lives Service

"M advised she would not be able to cope without J. and the support she receives from Shared Lives. J. is nice and so is her family."

“R. advised he enjoys spending time with both of his Shared Lives Carers as they are great company, and they make him laugh. R. advised he would be lost without them.”

Safeguarding Adults Team

“Hi, I have just had a telephone call with SK (Care Manager) S. said she wanted to pass on how well she thought the current safeguarding procedure is working, she receives an outcome for all concerns which are submitted and finds the communication very well which supports her to be able to keep her documents up to date.”

Short Breaks

“My son really loves his respite stays at Blaydon Lodge. He does lots of activities while he has his stay, these have included planned trips to a zoo and the cinema. All the staff are friendly and helpful. The respite is extremely good. I would highly recommend.”

“Blaydon Lodge staff have been wonderful with J., giving him great fun and splendid new experiences taking him to Edinburgh Zoo this weekend as well as taking him swimming, brilliant.”

Single Point of Access Team

“I have received a telephone call from LG, she wanted to phone to say she was very happy with the service she has received. L. said she requested a handrail on the side of her house as she was struggling to walk, L. said it has made a massive difference and it is the perfect length and height.”

“Thank you so much for the equipment I received on Tuesday 7th November 2023. Mr G. was so good at explaining everything for me. Social Care Service is a 100% Excellent. Once again, many thanks for the help I received. M S.”

“I am absolutely over the moon with hearing equipment that S. brought to make things easier for me. He was friendly and explained how things worked and i am forever grateful to S. and the rest of the team and the service you provide. Thank you.”

“The young lad who came out was very polite and helpful. He told me what he was going to do and stuck to his work. Hope he keeps up what he's doing very good service. Not very often you get someone like that.”

1. Policy Context

The Statutory Adults Complaints and Compliments Procedure supports the Council's objective of delivering services that continually improve, ensuring that customers are satisfied with the services they receive.

2. Background

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 came into force on 1 April 2009. This legislation sets down the procedures that Adult Social Care Services and National Health Services, (NHS), must follow when complaints or representations are made. As part of the responsibilities set out in the Act, 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 Gateshead's Adults Social Care complaints and compliments, covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Information contained in the reports provides a summary of the statistical information together with a review of the effectiveness of the procedure. Some examples of service improvement are also included within the report along with examples of compliments received about Adult Social Care.

3. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the Portfolio Holders for Adult Social Care and Health.

4. Alternative Options

The report is a legislative requirement

5. Implications of Recommended Option

- a) Financial Implications The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- b) Human Resources Implications It is possible that complaints made against social care employees could lead to disciplinary action in a small number of cases.
- c) Property Implications There are no property implications arising from this report.

6. Risk Management Implication

The potential failure to act on complaints received is minimised by regular monitoring.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

The Complaints Procedure contributes to the implementation of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy through identified service improvements. All Complaints literature is available in different languages and formats.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications

There is a possibility that complaints can identify issues relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and it may be the case that a criminal act may have occurred. These concerns will be considered and shared with the relevant organisation to ensure that an investigation can take place through the most appropriate procedure.

9. Health Implications

There are no health implications arising from this report.

10. Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications

There are no climate and sustainability implications arising from this report.

11. Human Rights Implications

There may be human rights implications in a number of complaints made to the Council; therefore, having the Complaints Procedures will assist the Council in carrying out its duties under the Human Rights Act, 1998.

12. Ward Implications

The Annual Report is applicable to all wards. Background Information Quarterly Complaints Monitoring Reports. Social Care Complaint Tracking & Monitoring System.

13. Background Information

Quarterly Complaints Monitoring Reports.

Social Care Complaint Tracking & Monitoring System