



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ADULT SERVICES

APRIL 2014 – MARCH 2015

July 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Representation and complaints procedures in Social Services departments are a statutory requirement. They were introduced under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 and the Children Act 1989.
- 1.2 New complaints regulations came into force on 1 August 2014 – The Social Services Complaints Procedures (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 1.2 All local authority social services are required to produce an annual report on its performance in the handling and investigation of complaints and representations.
- 1.3 This report presents information relating to comments, compliments and complaints received during 2014/2015 for Adult social care.

2 Listening to our Service Users

- 2.1 Everyone who makes a complaint about social services has a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively.
- 2.2 Despite our best intentions, things can go wrong. We recognise this and the representation and complaints procedure provides the opportunity for people to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied so that the issue can be sorted to their satisfaction wherever possible; make compliments and suggest improvements.

3 Social Services Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 The complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 1 Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage is to resolve the complaint locally wherever possible by means of discussion and problem solving.

This approach should allow for the quick and successful resolution of most complaints, to the satisfaction of the complainant. The emphasis is on achieving service user satisfaction rather than avoiding a formal investigation.

Stage 2 Formal Investigation - Where initial discussions have not achieved a resolution, complainants have the right to make a formal complaint. Investigations are undertaken and are subject to statutory time limits for completion of the investigation (25 working days). The

complainant receives a full response detailing findings, conclusions and recommendations.

If the complaint or representation is not resolved

If the complaint or representation is not resolved at the Formal Investigation stage, the complainant has the right to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

3.2 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman provides an external independent service to consider complaints about all local authority services including social services. The Ombudsman is concerned with maladministration causing injustice and will normally require complainants to have used their local council's procedures before accepting a complaint for investigation.

4 Making a complaint

General advice about the procedure can be found in our complaints leaflet "How to be heard". Alternatively, people can contact the Customer Relations team for help and advice about how to make a complaint.

Translations of the representation and complaints procedure can be provided on request and we can also arrange interpretation services where required.

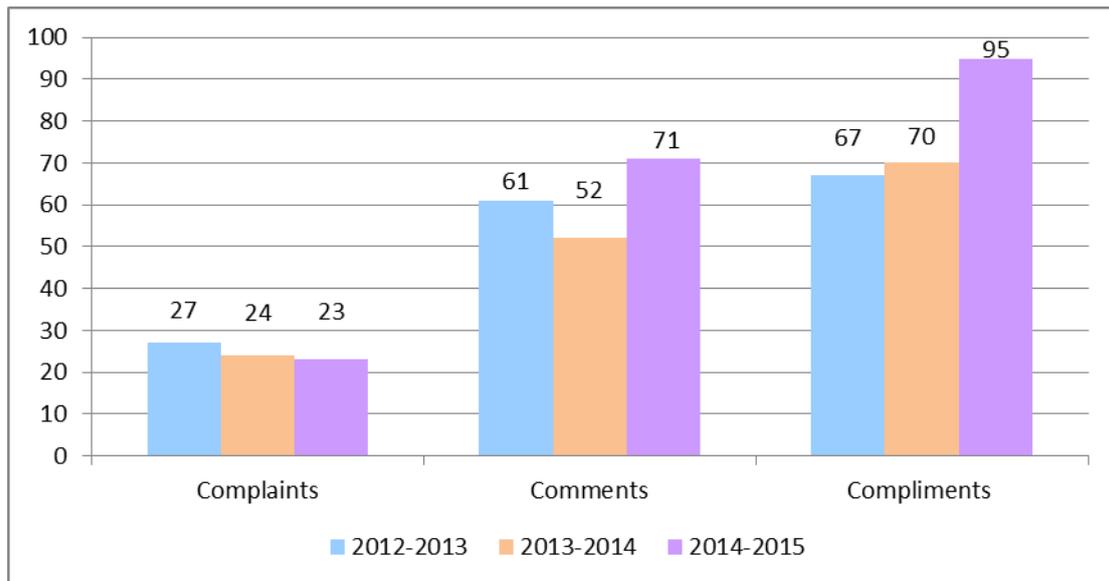
We can arrange for advocacy services to be provided for complainants in some cases.

Our aim is to secure a better service for people and we are:

- Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs
- Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest possible time
- Operate without prejudice or discrimination

5 How many complaints / comments / compliments were made

Period 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015



6 Complaints

6.1 Stage 1 complaints

23 complaints were registered at Stage 1 and were resolved or no further contact made.

Below are examples of services complained about:

- Social worker arrived at service user's house 1 ½ hours late and that he had not read any notes relating to X. Social worker talked over X who felt he was not interested in what X had to say. X's mum did not think the s/w had the skills to communicate with individuals who had communication needs.
- Treatment relative received, lack of communication between social services, care agencies and the relative. A lack of understanding shown by carers in how to manage people with dementia. Issues with food and fluid intake.
- Lack of consultation with service user or carer about change in care provider.
- Issues concerning a resident who has dementia leaving the building, risk assessment involved.
- Issues about support provided for relative who had fall and was hospitalised. Issues about provision of care at home versus move to residential care, balancing service user's wishes and taking account of family wishes.
- Alleged attitude and behaviour of staff.

- Incident at a day centre, issue about the matter not being reported and policies not being followed.
- Lack of communication, felt staff were unhelpful in assisting. Requested allocation of new worker / occupational therapist and review of care plan.
- Lack of communication regarding informing relatives when service user admitted to hospital.
- Frustration with inconsistencies in the service caused by insufficient staff availability and poor customer care provided by external provider.
- Carers not following the care plan, not reporting issues, not staying full length of allocated call time.
- Occupational therapy issues – perceived inaction in adaptation work. Poor preparation for discharge planning involving multiple agencies and inadequate communication.
- Issues concerning outstanding payments for package of care.
- Incident involving two residents where one had pushed another and risks involved.
- Carer's concern that service user needs were not covered in the integrated assessment.
- Issues about hospital discharge arrangements.
- Concerns about the reablement staff team not knowing how to work with people with dementia. Felt that their attitude and approach displayed a lack of compassion.
- Concerns with the capability and training of staff supporting service user. Repeated errors and poor communication in relation to the administration of medication.
- Issues about comments made by carers in log book about risks.
- Concerns about no staff escort when resident required emergency hospital treatment.

6. 2 Stage 2 Complaints

1 complaint proceeded to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

The issues concerned an external provider's view that a social worker was allegedly expressing an opinion on the way his business was run and prejudicing potential service users.

There were 10 elements to the complaint, 3 were not upheld, 3 came to no finding, 3 were upheld and one was outside the scope of the investigation and therefore not investigated.

Recommendations were made and acted upon.

- That an apology be made to the Proprietors of the Home in respect of those complaints that were upheld.
- Social workers and other staff who place service users in Care homes are reminded of the importance of sending the Contract to the Home in a timely manner.
- Where potential placements are being discussed or considered involving another local authority such matters should be confirmed by email or letter so as to avoid misunderstandings.

7 Comments

7.1 71 comments were received. This includes comments received from the Community Care questionnaire that is sent to regular and new users of social care and comments made to our Commissioning team.

Below are a selection of comments made:

“That a review of X care plan was conducted last week without her being informed or involved.”

‘My carers are marvellous. I usually have the same one, but when she is off the carers provided are also good. The problems arise with the office staff not informing me when my regular carer is off and not informing me of any change in time.’

“I have a regular yearly visit from a social worker, but had not had anyone call for two years prior to three months ago, and I feel that the social worker had very little or no understanding at all of how my illness affects me, and was expecting me to be able to do things I have not been able to do for over ten years and never will be able to do. She did not seem to know anything about my illness and the effects of it or the symptoms.”

“No correct assessment carried out. CHC meeting took place in March. No one has been in touch for updating with us.”

‘I do not like the meals very much. The vegetables are not cooked enough. I like the pudding.’

‘No complaints regarding social services. My only fault is with the care company that looks after me. They come too late in the morning and at night team.’

'The carers are excellent, but there are too many involved in X's care. We originally agreed to a maximum of three. At present there are five or six. This is too many and X gets confused and anxious especially when he does not know who is coming. This information is not always available even if the carers ask for it.'

'The situation with too many carers is difficult for X to cope with. He was in a regular routine and quite happy with the situation. At the moment he is rather confused and uneasy about the situation. The matter of knowing who is coming on what day needs to be resolved.'

'Since changing to the X daily service there has been a marked improvement in care and admin staff. The two previous agencies were lacking in many respects.'

'The girls that come are usually very young. They are usually very nice but quite a lot are untrained and don't know what to do. Every time I have someone new, which is quite often, I have to tell them what to do. It would be better for me and for them, if they have been told in advance what their duties are here and how to do them.'

'Lack of communication and who to contact for what is a major concern. No one discusses financial implications, eg. carers increased from once per day to four times per day, still unable to find out if this will mean an increase of costs and by how much.'

'Yes, communication, eg. not knowing who social worker is and who to contact. Recently 10 weeks of payment collected at one time with no warning or explanation causing anxiety.'

'I have asked several times to have a person allocated to me regularly. Whenever there is a change in that person, it takes a long time for another person to be allocated. The rota seems to be badly organised which causes stress for everyone.'

"The OT services meet some of my needs. The other needs re aids and equipment seem to be down to me to provide. Again I feel disabled by not having a clearer picture of possible support, eligibility etc."

'Evening call happens too early. Normally 4pm when they should be 6pm. All staff are superb'

'Meals on wheels often delivered very late and sometimes can be overcooked.'

'Had a lot of different home carers when I came out of hospital but I now have the same carers so I am happy.'

'I do feel that occupational services is very slow. I am still waiting for a wheelchair and it is three months since they came out to measure me for one. Very poor service.'

"The social worker and CPN are very professional considering their heavy case load and cut backs. Always had a good support from them, the bottom line is that the service is resource led, not needs led."

"Reviews have been timely and appropriate. It is good to now have a named social worker. It is difficult to know my mother's mental capacity to make appropriate decisions about her care."

"We have good respite services in Caldicot, but wish there was a place like this in Abergavenny."

"Carers are not always on time. Social worker changes are not informed."

'As a young adult with severe learning difficulties I have been frustrated at the lack of services that are available to me. There are very little facilities, groups, play schemes in the Monmouthshire area, which has been the case since I was diagnosed at the age of three years old. All the other councils (ie Torfaen, Caerphilly and Newport) have more to offer people like myself, but not Monmouthshire - social services (social workers) have been unable to offer me anything to help my development as there are no specific facilities available in my area. My mum wrote this for me as I can't write or read.'

All the comments received are considered carefully and where appropriate, necessary action taken.

8 Compliments

8.1 95 compliments were received about Adult services.

A range of compliments about the whole of the directorate was received with so many individual staff named for their kindness, help and professionalism. All staff were informed of the compliments received about them and their efforts commended.

People said things like:

"The service provided was amazing in this day and age. R was the ultimate professional. We were privileged to have such a wonderful service'. Well done R. Clearly a job very well done."

"After N's visit I felt that there were people who care, people you can get in touch with if need be (gives you much more confidence)."

"Very professional and compassionate."

"My social worker, one who certainly looks after me and helps in every way, plus for 6 weeks. I had carers coming in and doing all that was needed regarding my husband, catheter and personal care. I can't thank the team enough or my social worker S."

“R, M & P have been wonderful.”

“T is one of the loveliest, most efficient people I have ever met and that the DP works well because of her support.”

“Thank you all for your wonderful care and encouragement. All your help made a tough time more bearable. Keep up the good work.”

There were so many compliments made about the service as a whole that said similar things to the examples below:

“our grateful thanks to all the home carers who provided such loving and concerned care to X over the last couple of years. She is now in X and responding well to the full time care, company and activity. We are sure she would love to say thank you herself and recognise you all with heartfelt affection.”

“The word thank you is not enough to describe the care, dedication and patience that my mother received over many years from Homecare, in mother’s words “the girls”. Your names are many, however, we would like to pass on our sincere gratitude for all that you did for my mother whilst she was at home.”

“Thanking every one of you who looked after mum. You have all helped us over the past couple of years with your love and care for mum. We couldn't have done it without you. Be proud of yourselves for the fantastic job you do. You were our angels who helped us through difficult times.”

“After X’s visit I felt that there were people who care, people you can get in touch with if need be (gives you much more confidence). The equipment I received is great especially the books as my books are what I miss most. Thank you so much for everything.”

“X taught me how to focus and gain more vision area. She gave me confidence to use the cane correctly and pointed out the hazards and aids on pathways and roads. I now walk upright using the stick to guide me instead of always looking down.”

“Having received the use of a perching stool, 3 grab handles and a hand rail in the garden to climb to the steps. These have all benefited me enormously, Thank you.”

“Just to thank you for your prompt and efficient manner in dealing with my problems. There is always advice on what to do if you wish to complain but never advice on saying well done. Thank you.”

“Christmas always seems to be the appropriate time to express appreciation, however that does not mean that I do not appreciate all you and the team have done for X during the year. This has been an extremely difficult year for

me emotionally and health wise, but knowing that you and the team have been there to look after X best interest has been a great help and I cannot thank you enough.”

“Very pleased with the help X gets to enable him to live independently and it gives us a chance to have respite.”

“X visits Maindiff Court on Friday 10-3 and the staff are excellent and he enjoys the company and what they do.”

“A big thank you to all the staff at Mardy Park for both the Day Centre and recent respite care provided for X. It was a great reassurance to us that she was able to come to a place and people who were familiar and where she has been happy, following her recent setbacks. We have really appreciated the integrated care she has benefited from over the last couple of years.’

“I wanted to send a note to praise your staff. The team at Mardy Park both in Reablement and Respite care strive to provide far more than the basics of compassion, comfort and cleanliness. The expert care that they provide helps individuals enjoy a rich and rewarding life. As a Unit for those who need ongoing rehabilitation and supervision, Mardy Park has exceptional standards of care and support not only for their clients but their relatives as well. My Uncle was very fortunate to be placed in your care where he was treated with the utmost respect and dignity everyone was professional and respectful and I thank you for that. I cannot think of any more adjectives to describe the wonderful staff that you have and would be grateful if you could relay this message to all.’

“To all the staff, just a small thank you for all your kindness towards me. I know I was probably difficult at times, but I know that comes with age. Once again, thank you I am trying to get settled in X, another big struggle, hopefully I will get there.”

“If it was not for the help my Mum receives, she could not live in her own home.”

“I have never had a reason to complain about the care that my mother receives at Severn View. The staff are kind, caring and make every effort to keep residents happy and contented. The food is very good and is varied.”

“The Raglan project is service user centred and empathic, very pleased with this approach - very flexible.”

9 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Complaints

9.1 No complaints proceeded to or were investigated by the Ombudsman.

10 Analysis of Complaints

- 10.1 Stage 1 complaints have remained the same as the previous year, although stage 2 complaints decreased significantly on the previous year's figure.

Year	Stage 1 complaints		Stage 2 complaints	Stage 3 complaints
		External Providers		
2014-15	23	3	1	0
2013-14	23	0	6	0
2012-13	27	2	0	0

10.2 Response Timescales

There are statutory requirements established in respect of the timescales for responding to complaints. A full response should be provided in 10 working days for stage 1 complaints and for stage 2 complaints, a full response is required within 25 working days. Where we need to exceed these limits, we will get the service user/carer's agreement.

From August 2014, the timescale for stage 1 complaints is now 17 working days. Complaints should be acknowledged within 2 working days, 10 days allowed for investigation and 5 working days for responding in writing to the complainant.

This table shows the length of time it has taken to respond to complaints:

Social Services Timescales	2013/14		2014-31/07/2015*	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	12		3	
11 – 25 working days	4	2	1	
25+ working days	7	4	2	1
Total	23	6	6	1
			01/08/2014-31/03/2015*	
			Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days			14	
18 - 25 working days			1	
26+ working days			2	
Total			17	

***please note new statutory process and timescales started 1st August 2014**

Where complaints go over 25 working days, this is often due to the complexity of the matter under investigation and the need to consult with others (who may not be available) before concluding matters.

11 Learning from and responding to complaints and comments made

- 11.1 There were a range of improvements made as a result of listening and responding to customers complaints.

We recognise that some people do not always want to complain but they may wish to make comments about the service they receive. We ensure that comments are also noted and responded to.

- 11.2 The following are some examples of appropriate action taken on issues raised as a result of a complaint.

- Apologies / explanations given where appropriate
- Intensive training in dementia care; Supervisors carry out support visits to monitor and support staff
- Key worker appointed
- Review assessment made
- Risk assessment undertaken
- Move exit switch at reception area
- Provide refresher training on recording notes
- Review practice to ensure next of kin details (NOK) are essential part of each care package
- Care adjusted to meet current assessed needs

The most commonly mentioned reasons for making a complaint are that:

- A genuine grievance is recognised and acknowledged
- An apology is provided
- Practical action to remedy an injustice is undertaken
- Where it has been identified as having failed, departmental policy, procedure and practice is reviewed
- Through their complaints other people are spared similar experiences
- Action is pursued against staff and managers

12 Commentary

- 12.1 The Welsh Government has issued new guidance and regulations to underpin a new social services complaints and representation process. The new regulations came into force on 1 August 2014.

The focus on the new complaints and representations process is on early local resolution stage and on tackling issues quickly and effectively. If they are not, there is a formal stage and if issues are still not resolved there is recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

- 12.2 Every effort is made to resolve complainants' dissatisfaction about our services and address any identified shortcomings. We try to ensure early intervention is made in dealing with complaints so that the majority of them are resolved at stage 1.

- 12.3 We continue to produce action plans to ensure that recommendations arising from complaints investigations are acted upon and lessons learned where appropriate.
- 12.4 Meetings are held with staff in order to raise awareness of their role in responding to and resolving complaints.

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