



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

**APPENDIX 2**

**SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH  
CUSTOMER RELATIONS  
ANNUAL REPORT  
REPRESENTATION AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE  
APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022**

**2022**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have in place a Representation and complaints procedure for Social Services under 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 the operation of handling and investigation of complaints and representations.
- 1.3 This report presents information relating to comments, compliments and complaints received during 2021-2022 for social services.

## **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 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:

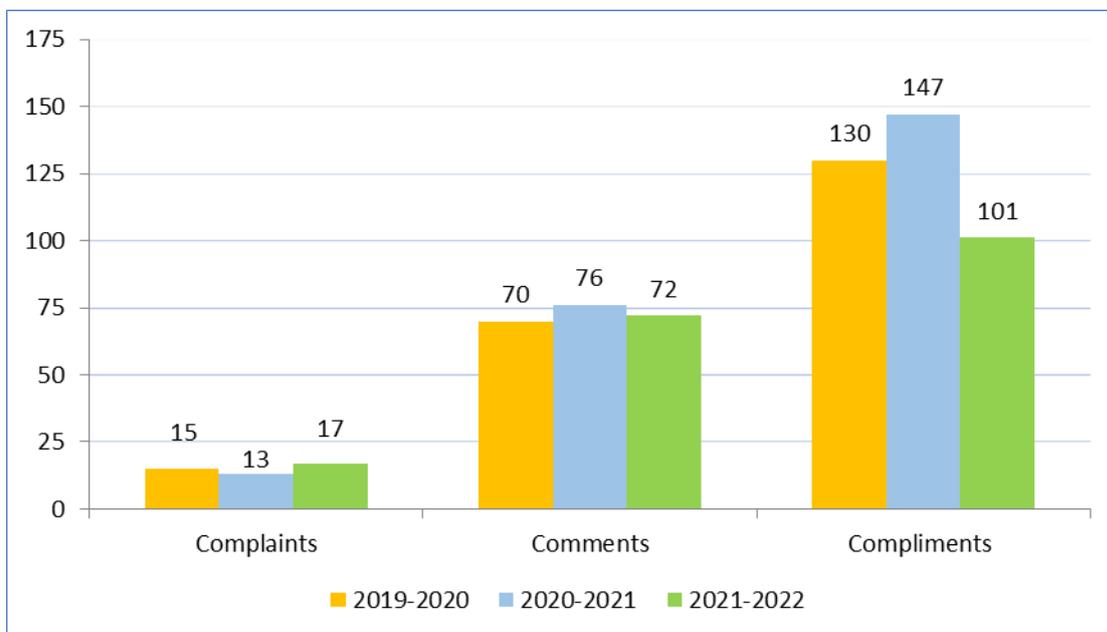
- Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs
- Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest possible time
- Operate without prejudice or discrimination

#### 5 How many complaints / comments / compliments were made

The following table shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2022 concerning **Adult Services**.

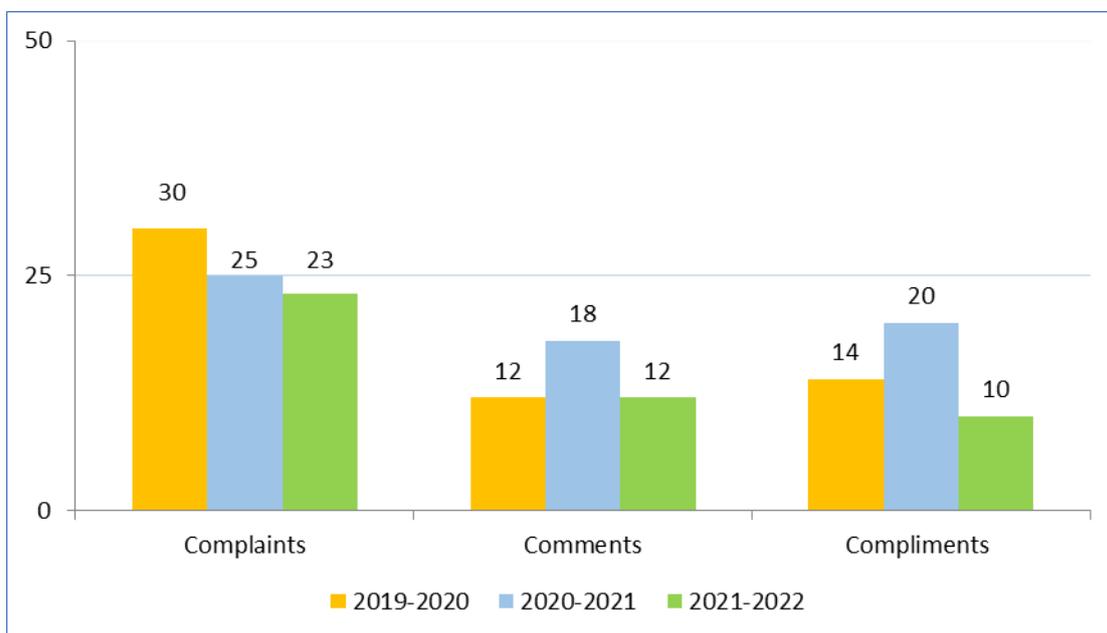
17 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022.

This is slightly higher than 2019-2021 when 15 complaints were made.



The chart below covers the last three years up to March 2022 concerning **Children’s Services**.

23 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022. This is lower than 2019-20 when 30 complaints were made.



## 6 Adult Services Complaints

6.1 17 complaints have been received about Adult's Services for this set period.

13 complaints were registered at Stage 1.

11 complaints were either resolved or no further contact made at Stage 1 the local resolution stage.

Below are examples of complaints about services:

- Communication issues
- Concerns regarding decision making
- Staff conduct
- Issues concerning respite care
- Handling of safeguarding issues
- Case handling
- Lack of service and support
- Concerns regarding financial assessment
- Quality of care received

A breakdown of Adult Services complaints by each section is shown in the table below.

## Distribution YTD

	Informal					Formal				
	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Abergavenny Integrated Services	2	1		1		1	1			
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services	3	2	1							
External Provider	1	1								
Finance	1				1					
MH Team North Over 65						2			2	
MH Team North Under 65	1		1							
MH Team South Over 65	2		1		1	2		1		1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1	1								
My Day My Life						1				1
Safeguarding	1		1							
Severn View Respite	1	1								
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

## 7. Children Services Complaints

7.1 23 complaints have been received about Children's Services for this set period.

22 stage 1 complaints were started.

20 complaints were either resolved or no further contact made at Stage 1 the local resolution stage.

Some examples of the most common aspects of services complained about were:

- Concern with decisions made
- Staff conduct
- Lack of communication
- Alleged failure to adhere to process
- Alleged poor level of support
- Issues with contact arrangements
- Concerns regarding the actions taken
- Alleged inaccuracies in case recordings

A breakdown of Children's Social Services complaints by each section is shown in the table below.

**Distribution YTD**

	Informal					Formal				
	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Children with disabilities	6	2	2	1	1	1		1		
Early Help and Assessment Team	8	3	2	1	2	1	1			
Families Together Team	1	1								
Family Support and Protection Team	6	1	1	3	1	1				1
Long Term Support Team	1		1							
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>

## 8. Stage 2 Complaints relating to Adult Services

8.1 6 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

Two complaints escalated from stage 1 and there were 4 complaints that proceeded directly to Stage 2.

- One complaint was raised regarding due process not being followed before appropriate hospital discharge arrangements were achieved and the lack of safeguards when a capacity and Best Interests assessment could not be undertaken. The complaint was upheld.
- One complaint was withdrawn by the complainant.
- One complaint concerned the prolonged delay in a copy of the needs assessment and care plan for their relative. Issues relating to the capital sale of relative's property for funding residential care. One element of the complaint was upheld and one element of the complaint was not upheld.
- One complaint concerned a complainant who had additional learning needs being excluded from the service. There were a number of elements to this complaint and they were not upheld.
- One complaint concerned barely existent communication, financial and contractual arrangements; not informed of best interest assessment and no carer's assessment. Two elements of the complaint were partially upheld and one element was upheld.
- One complaint concerned redressing omissions in the stage 1 report. Issues concerning the alleged lack of person-centred care. Issues concerning alternative care options and the quality of the mental health act assessment. The complaints were upheld.

## 9. Stage 2 Complaints relating to Children's Services

9.1 3 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

- One complaint proceeded straight to stage 2

Social Services failed to adhere to process when conducting their safeguarding investigations. Complainant felt that the Child Protection report prepared by the Social Worker contained inaccuracies and bias.

There were many elements to the complaint, 6 points were not upheld, 9 points were partially upheld and 4 points were upheld.

- Two complaints progressed from stage 1 to stage 2

One related to the complainant who considered that the social worker's practice was unprofessional, and that the social worker had defamed the complainant's character by wilfully wrongly accusing her of being a safety risk to her grandson. The complainant considered that the team manager, had not provided the complainant with formal explanation as to why the complainant was deemed a risk to her grandchild's safety.

There were 22 elements to the complaint and they were not upheld.

Another complaint related to the complainant's concern that the outcome and recommendations made in a report were dismissed by the social worker. The complainant said his daughter was not informed by the social worker that she was entitled to a re-assessment with regard to the longer-term care of his granddaughter. The complainant felt that the practice and performance of staff has fallen below the standard expected.

4 elements of the complaint were not upheld and three were upheld.

## 9.2 Complaints made by children and young people

Most complaints concerning Children's Services are from parents/carers. There were no complaints received from children and young people.

## 10 Comments relating to Adult Services

- 10.1 72 comments were received in 2021-22, 2 more than in 2019-20. These include 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.

The higher numbers of comments received related to Independent Domiciliary care providers which highlighted the continued pressure on those providers as a result of COVID and staff shortages.

Below are a selection of comments made:

- Need more access to the local Mencap Centre.
- I would like fewer changes in personnel and for them to come more often. I need more time to get time to get things done and to think about what I need. My eyesight

and hearing have gotten worse. I have lost most other visitors to my home so very reliant on the carer visit.

- Due to lack of staff when support worker is on leave provision can be challenging
- Some of the care is with a private provider. Most of the time it is the same people, but occasionally the care rota is changed without notice or any reason given.
- I need care during nights and at times during the day. No OT has visited to assess me
- Due to the pandemic has not attended day services and not received any information about when it is starting up again
- I was given set times for morning and evening care. Then without prior notice those times have now been changed. It is not too much of a problem but it would have been nice to be told of the changes.
- In respect of carers, I think local councils should issue them with some form of parking exemption, as I feel their jobs are demanding enough without the extra stress of trying to park near to clients without worry of being given a tickets.
- Uncertainty over my financial situation affects the level of care I would like to have.
- We stopped care as never knew when or if they would come which is not good enough as we were charged.
- Meals on Wheels are quite often delayed and not what I ordered giving me food I do not eat e.g. Vegetarian.
- I would like to be communicated with a little bit better.
- No care available on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. I have to rely on family.
- My Father is getting good support but sometimes care has not been available and short notice given. If he was totally on his own this would not be acceptable
- I am unable to do the things that are important to me, because support from social care has limited my options.
- Staff changes affect me, I am better with familiar staff, carers.

The breakdown of comments received for each Adult Services team is below.

<b>Distribution YTD</b>	<b>Comments</b>				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Abergavenny Integrated Services		2		2	4
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services		3			3
CLDT		2	2		4
Community Meals		1	2		3
Direct Payments		1			1
Domiciliary Care Central	1	1		1	3
Domiciliary Care External	5	8	9	4	26
Domiciliary Care North	1	1			2
Domiciliary Care South	1	1	1		3
External Provider	3		3	3	9
General		3	1	2	6
Individual Support Service				1	1
MH Team North Over 65		2			2
MH Team North Under 65	1				1

MH Team South Over 65		1			1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1			2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>72</b>

## 11. Comments relating to Children Services

11.1 12 comments were received about Children's Services in 2021-2022, 6 less than in 2020-2021 and the same number for 2019-20.

Some examples of Comments made:

- Anti social behaviour of young people
- Issues regarding contact arrangements with family
- Concerns regarding independent social worker
- Attitude of staff
- Disagreement with decisions made
- Issues with casework
- Lack of information / communication

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

The breakdown of comments received for Children's Services team are below.

<b>Distribution YTD</b>	<b>Comments</b>				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children with disabilities	1				1
Early Help and Assessment Team	1	1		3	5
Long Term Support Team	1	2		1	4
External Provider		1			1
Multi section		1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>

## 12. Compliments for Adult Services

12.1 101 compliments were received about Adult services for 2021-2022. This is 31% lower than in the previous year.

A range of compliments about the whole of the service 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:

- To the Lavender Team, Thanks for all of your help and support these past few months! You're the kindest, funniest, loveliest bunch of ladies I've ever had the fortune to work with!
- 'A little card for a big THANK YOU for the kindness, care and attention you all, as a team, gave X when he most needed it
- I want to thank everyone involved in X's care. The care she received was excellent and so thankful that she was able to die at home. So thank you to everyone.
- I just want to tell you how fantastic my reablement package was. The staff were so encouraging and I have made incredible progress. There were times when I felt I would never walk again, which was hard for me as I have lead such an active life. I miss their friendly calls and you are lucky to have such a good staff group. Many thanks
- So impressed with the quality of care we are giving her, that he's over the moon with us and so happy that we actually sit and talk with her
- Daughter said as a team you are doing an amazing job and really appreciates everything you do for her mum and encourage her mum to do things for herself
- Had a lovely comment off X this morning. She said she loves hearing the key in door when we arrive and that we brighten her day. And what a lovely team we all are.
- Thank you so much for your help it means so much and your support has been wonderful and touching. Being listened to.
- I just wanted to say thank you with all my heart for making Mum's life better. You made what was the most heart wrenching, scary, difficult time ever better, and there are no words for the way that impacts someone's life - not just mum's but mine. I'll always be eternally grateful and I hope you know what a difference you made
- X wishes us all well, and said the service we provide is fantastic.
- X said truly thankful for all what your team have done for her she thinks you are all amazing and very professional.
- All the staff are amazing.
- All the carers are very kind and understanding and always ready to help if they can.
- I am writing to thank all the members of your team who have supported me recently. The care I have had has been exceptional. Every single member of the team has been so kind as well as professional. The service has made such a difference to both myself and my husband as I rehabilitate after my operation
- X wanted to pass on her thanks to your team for the 'excellent service' she has received since her discharge from hospital and wanted you all to know how much she feels she has benefited from her time with reablement.
- I just wanted to say what a fantastic team you have. We've had a few minor teething problems at the start, but the ladies who have come in the last week or so have been amazing! Even I am getting used to it and leaving them to do what they do best lol
- The care I've received has been exceptional.
- The DP thing is going well. We are so lucky to be able to provide this level of care for our parents. So glad they live in Wales where the support from you and other people in the system is SO much better and much more caring. The thing you do so well is making it personal. I always feel I can reach out and you will help us out. And you talk to each other. It makes it all work so well and means we all feel very supported. So between us all we are making a real difference to the lives of two elderly people Thank you
- Thank you and the team so much for fitting a front door threshold step and rail so quickly. Most impressed with the efficient service and cannot praise you enough, it's most useful.

The breakdown of compliments for Adult Services teams are below.

<b>Distribution YTD</b>	<b>Compliments</b>				
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Abergavenny Integrated Services			1		1
Chepstow and Caldicot Integrated Services	2	4	3	2	11
CLDT			1		1
Community Meals			1		1
Direct Payments		1			1
Domiciliary Care Central	6	6	2		14
Domiciliary Care External	1	6	3	3	13
Domiciliary Care North	11		2	1	14
Domiciliary Care South	10	4	3	2	19
External Provider	1	2	4	1	8
Individual Support Service			1		1
MH Team North Over 65		1	2		3
MH Team North Under 65			1		1
MH Team South Over 65		1	1	1	3
Monmouth Day Services				1	1
Monmouth Integrated Service	1	1	2	2	6
Severn View Residential Services				3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>101</b>

### 13. Compliments for Children’s Services

13.1 10 compliments were received that related to Children’s Services in 2021-22. This is half compared with those received in the previous year.

Compliments about staff in Children’s services were received with individual staff named for their support, help and professionalism. All staff were informed of the compliments received about them.

Some examples of compliments received:

- “I don’t think we would be where we are if not for T! I would like to be more like T, she is calm and amazing. She took our situation and looked at it from the outside. She helped us concentrate on how to move forward. She has worked so hard to get us all to the situation where we are. She got us to build bridges. We are moving forward. She is an amazing social worker!”
- “The amount of work that L has done to ensure that everything has been covered and that court has every single piece of information that they could need to inform the decision making. L has left no stone unturned and I can’t think of anything else that could possibly be requested, L has provided it all”.
- “I honestly wanna say thank u for everything u have done for me and my kids I know u said it's down to me but it is also down to u for understanding my issues understanding

that I have health problems and working along side me and getting me to where I wanted to be in life.”

- “I feel that every bit of my heart trusts my social worker.”
- “Thank you for all your help and encouragement through the whole 8 week course. I appreciate the time and effort you took explaining CoS to me in a friendly, caring and professional manner. “The one thing I can say now is " happy child, happy parent ".”
- “Wanted it put into a court order how well J worked the case and the quality of the work. He was insistent on this being in the order to ensure that good practise is recognised.”

The breakdown of compliments received for Children’s services teams are below.

<b>Distribution YTD</b>	<b>Compliments</b>				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children with disabilities		1			1
Family Support and Protection Team	2	2	1	2	7
Long Term Support Team	1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

#### 14 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Complaints

- 14.1 Regarding Adult Services - Of the 6 formal complaints received, one complainant contacted the Ombudsman and their decision was not to investigate.
- 14.2 Regarding Children’s Services - One complainant contacted the Ombudsman concerning their complaint. They did not investigate the complaint.

#### 15 Analysis of Complaints

##### 15.1 Adult Services

The numbers of Stage 1 complaints have stayed more or less the same as last year. However, stage 2 complaints have doubled. There’s no particular trend of complaint, apart from issues with communication and quality of services.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>		<b>Stage 2</b>	
		<b>External Providers</b>		<b>External Providers</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
2020-21	13	0	3	0
2019-20	14	1	0	0
2018-19	14	1	4	0
2017-18	25	0	7	1

##### 15.2 Children Services

The number of stage 1 complaints are generally the same as last year with 3 complaints dealt with at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. The trend running through the complaints relates to staffing and communication issues which features in most of the complaints. Again this remains consistent with previous years.

It is often the case that complaints in relation to lack of information are resolved following a discussion and an explanation of the situation/process. Advocacy services can assist to help parents work through and understand statutory interventions.

Year	Number of complaints	Number of Stage 2's
<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>
2020-2021	25	1
2019-2020	30	3
2018-2019	35	10
2017-2018	31	7

## 16 Response Timescales

There are statutory requirements established in respect of the timescales for responding to complaints. A full response should be provided in 17 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 obtain the service user/carer's agreement.

These tables shows the length of time it has taken to respond to complaints:

### 16.1 Adult Services

Social Services Timescales	2020-21		2021-22	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	8		8	1
18 - 25 working days	1		1	
26+ working days	4	3	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>

### 16.2 Children Services

Social Services Timescales	2020-2021		2021-2022	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	18		12	
18 - 25 working days			4	
26+ working days	6	1	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>

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.

## 17 Service Improvements

17.1 Our approach is based on getting it right first time, and if not, then putting it right as soon as possible. We always listen to what people say and ensure we make improvements where services have fallen short of our high standards.

When formal investigations have taken place we produce action plans to improve practice where required and always apologise when things have gone wrong. They are monitored to ensure that all actions are completed. Lessons learned from complaints can then be implemented across all teams where applicable to improve standards for service users.

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 noted and responded to.

Some examples below of improvements made resulting from complaints investigations.

- Apologies provided where complaints have been upheld.
- Independent advocacy services offered
- Improving the quality of complaint response at Stage 1 of the process.
- Service users Care plans are reviewed annually
- Review staff guidance on financial charges
- A spot sample of assessments are reviewed by the Team Manager to assist with on-going professional development.
- A peer review rota has been introduced where two Approved Mental Health Professionals will quality assure a selection of assessments each month

17.2 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
- Action is pursued against staff and managers

17.3 It's important to acknowledge that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided. An increase may indicate the positive view that is taken towards complaints, and that people are more well informed about how to make a complaint.

17.4 The Ombudsman's Complaints Standards Authority has provided free online training and extended this into the coming year on investigation skills. This training will help services to respond more consistently to complaints and in line with best practice recognised by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Author: Annette Evans Customer Relations Manager  
Email address: [Annetteevans@Monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:Annetteevans@Monmouthshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01633 644647