



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT

REPRESENTATION AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025

1 Introduction

This report presents information relating to comments, compliments and complaints received during 2024-2025 for social services.

Everyone who makes a complaint about social services has a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively.

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.

2 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

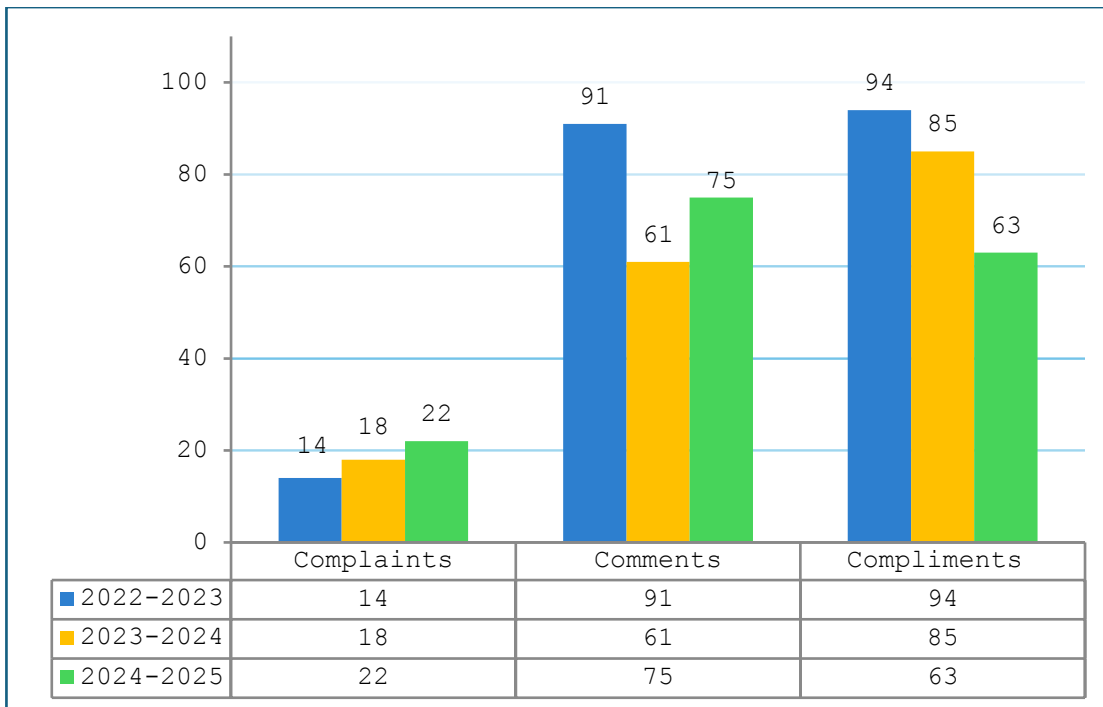
Llais Advocacy service assists people who wish to raise a complaint about a NHS or social care service, they help support individuals to make a complaint about a service, care or treatment provided by NHS or the local authority.

3 How many complaints / comments / compliments were made

The following chart shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2025 concerning **Adult Services**.

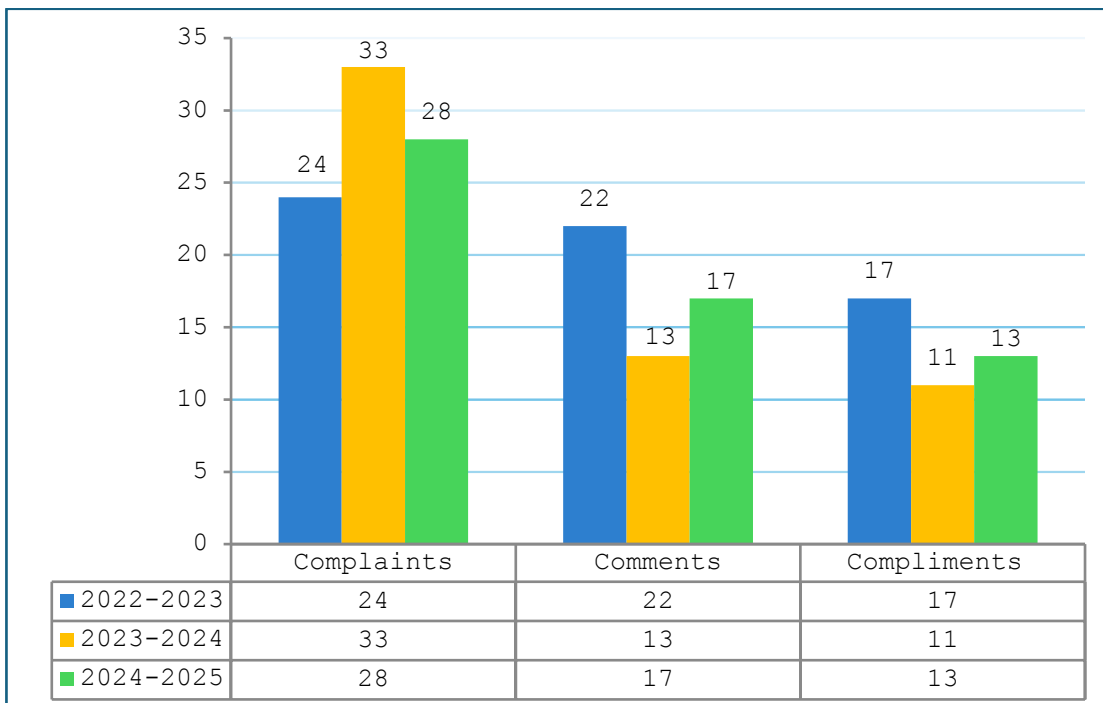
22 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2025.

This is a 57% higher than the figure in 2022-23 when 14 complaints were made.



The chart below covers the last three years up to March 2025 concerning **Children's Services**.

28 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2025. This is 16% higher than 2022-2023 when 24 complaints were made.



4 Adult Services Complaints

22 complaints have been received about Adult's Services for this set period. Llais Advocacy service assisted 3 people to raise their complaints about Adult Services.

Llais Advocacy is an independent body and it's a free Advocacy service and can provide information, advice and support to members of the public who may wish to raise a concern.

19 complaints were registered at Stage 1.

1 Stage 1 complaint from 2023-2024 was also started in this period.

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

Below are examples of complaints about services:

- Alleged failure of processes
- Decision to withdraw support
- Staff conduct
- Reduction in services
- Communication issues
- Hospital discharge issues
- Concerns over care and support package
- Concerns regarding process for Continuing NHS Health Care
- Issues concerning deprivation of assets
- Decision making regarding direct payments
- Issues with allocation of social worker
- Issues with transfer of care
- Financial issues
- Care home placement and funding

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
Care at Home Central	1	1								
Community Learning Disability Team	2	1		1						
Domiciliary Care External	1			1						
Finance	3		1		2					
Integrated Services Central (Monmouth, Usk, Raglan)	3	1		1	1	2	1			1
Integrated Services North (Abergavenny)	4	1	1	2						
Integrated Services South (Chepstow and Caldicot)	2	1	1							
Mental Health Service	3	1		2		3	2	1		
Safeguarding	1				1					
Total	20	6	3	7	4	5	3	1		1

5 Children Services Complaints

28 complaints have been received about Children's Services for this set period. Llais Advocacy service assisted 3 people to raise a complaint about Children's Services.

23 stage 1 complaints were started.

17 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:

- Staff conduct
- Communication issues
- Concerns regarding action taken
- Standard of service/care received
- Issues concerning Court direction being followed
- Decision making
- Quality of service received
- Lack of support
- Issues regarding safeguarding process
- Issues regarding financial payment plan

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
Building Stronger Families	1				1	1				1
Children with Disabilities	1				1					
Early Help and Assessment Team	9	3	1	3	2	4		1	2	1
Family Support and Protection Team – North	3		1		2	3	2			1
Family Support and Protection Team – South	4		1	2	1	1			1	
Long Term Support Team	4	1	1		2	1		1		
Safeguarding	1		1							
Total	23	4	5	5	9	10	2	2	3	3

6 Stage 2 Complaints relating to Adult Services

5 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

- 2 complaints escalated from stage 1 and there were 3 complaints that proceeded directly to Stage 2.

One complaint concerned the lack of communication / failure to take action / inaccurate information. Two elements of the complaint were upheld, and one element was not upheld.

One complaint concerned the reduction of direct payments / issues concerning the assessment. Both elements of the complaint were upheld.

One complaint concerned issues regarding a financial assessment and deprivation of assets. Both elements of the complaint were not upheld.

One complaint concerned the disagreement with the decision made regarding their relatives financial assessment and their financial assets. One element of the complaint was upheld; four elements of the complaint were not upheld, and one element of the complaint was partially upheld.

One complaint was in regard to no annual review of need being undertaken and the inadequate support of their care and treatment plan. Both elements of the complaint were not upheld.

7 Stage 2 Complaints relating to Children's Services

10 complaints were dealt with at the formal investigation stage.

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

One complainant felt staff involved in their lives lacked compassion, understanding and errors were made throughout the process. There were also issues regarding miscommunication, misrepresentation and inaccuracies in documents.

There were 25 elements to this complaint, 19 of them were not upheld; 4 were partially upheld and 2 were upheld.

Two complaints were withdrawn.

One complainant said that the assessment was inaccurate and incomplete and there were issues concerning not following procedures.

Six complaints were upheld; 1 was not upheld and 1 deemed inconclusive.

One complaint concerned not being informed when they were subject to a safeguarding referral; not spoken with during the investigation of the allegation; no information provided on timeframes; a lack of communication and staff conduct.

There were numerous elements to the complaint, 8 were upheld, 5 not upheld and 2 partially upheld.

One complaint concerned misinformation, alleged statements made at conference were based on assumptions and not on evidence; issues with contact arrangements; poor communication with the department.

All the elements of the complaint were not upheld.

One complaint concerned the poor handling of a Section 47 investigation; failure to inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation; not offered with any care or support; the report submitted to Court was allegedly flawed.

Three elements of the complaint were upheld; 8 elements were partially upheld; 4 were deemed inconclusive and 6 elements were not upheld.

One complaint concerned not providing evidence that statutory duties were followed; poor communication; incorrect reports; repeated delays in support provision.

Four elements of the complaint were not upheld. One element was partially upheld.

One complaint concerned staff conduct; lack of continuity of support, failure to conduct statutory visits; receiving correspondence late; issues with contact sessions; lack of communication.

There were 6 elements of the complaint upheld; 3 were partially upheld; 8 were not upheld.

One complaint concerned issues with the social worker's visits to their child; lack of responses; issues regarding Child Looked After reviews and staff conduct.

Two elements of the complaint were upheld and 8 were not upheld.

8 Complaints made by children and young people

Most complaints concerning Children's Services are from parents/carers. For this reporting period, we did not receive any complaints directly from young people. However, we received two from NYAS Advocacy service who advocated on behalf of two young people

9 Comments relating to Adult Services

75 comments were received in 2024-25, 16 (21%) less than in 2022-23.

- These include comments received from the Community Care questionnaire that is sent to users of social care and comments made to our Commissioning team.
- The highest numbers of comments received related to Independent Domiciliary care providers.

Below are a selection of comments made:

- Inconsistency of domiciliary carers
- Timings of carers visits not favourable / not communicated with service user
- Not happy with change of care provider
- Days for showering changed
- Contact is impersonal, no named contact
- Would welcome more social opportunities
- Long waiting time for care provider

- Reduction of care package
- Meals on wheels changed delivery time without notice
- Better contact details for new Severn View care home

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

Distribution YTD	Comments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Adults' Services	15	13	19	14	61
Care at Home Central	2		1		3
Care at Home North				3	3
Care at Home South				2	2
Community Learning Disabilities Team		2	1	1	4
Community Meals			1		1
Domiciliary Care External	3	7	5	3	18
Integrated Services Central (Monmouth, Usk, Raglan)	2	1	1	1	5
Integrated Services North (Abergavenny)	4	2	3		9
Integrated Services South (Chepstow and Caldicot)	3		3	1	7
Mental Health Service	1	1	3	2	7
Safeguarding			1		1
Severn View Residential Services				1	1
Other	6	3	4	1	14
General	2	1	2		5
External Provider	4	1	2	1	8
No particular section		1			1
Total	21	6	23	15	75

10 Comments relating to Children Services

17 comments were received about Children's Services in 2024-2025, 5 less than in 2022-2023 but 4 more than in 2023-2024.

Some examples of Comments made:

- Concerns regarding allegations made about them
- Concerns regarding alleged defamation of character
- Alleged breach of confidentiality
- Issues raised regarding safeguarding concerns
- Issues raised regarding support
- Concerns raised about statements made by social worker
- Concerns regarding Rights of parent
- Issues with contact arrangements
- Issues regarding staff late for meetings with complainants

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:

Distribution YTD	Comments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children's Services					
Children with Disabilities				1	1
Early Help and Assessment Team	3	1	1	3	8
Family Support and Protection Team – North		1		1	2
Family Support and Protection Team – South	1			3	4
Long Term Support Team		1			1
Safeguarding	1				1
Total	5	3	1	8	17

11 Compliments for Adult Services

63 compliments were received regarding Adult services for 2024-25, 31 (48%) less than in 2022-2023.

A range of compliments about the whole of the service was received recognising the care and compassion of Social Services teams with so many individual staff named for their kindness, help and professionalism. Their messages reflect their appreciation for support and highlight the valuable role staff play in building trust and improving lives. All staff were informed of the compliments received about them and their efforts commended.

People said things like:

- *"Mardy Park day centre who have been excellent and a tremendous help for 4 hours a week"*
- *"The wonderful carers from Mon Home Care, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks not only for the care you have taken with my mother, but all the times you looked after my Dad before he passed. You are such kind and loving people and to do what you do, under a lot of stress and for little reward, makes you all heroes in our eyes."*
- *"Moving to Lavendar Gardens has been the best thing for me"*
- *"Your meals on wheels service is excellent"*
- *'I am very happy with the flexibility that direct payments give and that I chose my own PA to completely match my needs each week'*
- *'Thank you for the support and care, it is invaluable and keeps me independent '*
- *"The whole service at Monnow Vale was good, quick and efficient. Monnow Vale did very well"*
- *"The carers I had were very kind and caring, and made me feel special"*

- *“Thank you for all your effort and the care team to give *** the happiness in the later year of his life with excellent care and consideration. He was sometimes difficult and trying at times but I know he did really appreciate all your help.”*
- *“Thank you to Staff at Severn View Park Care Home for the absolutely first-class service that they provide. The new home is fantastic; a very modern, state-of-the-art facility and my mother was lucky enough to be placed there. Of course, the wonderful new home and facilities are nothing without the people you employ. It is the staff that make the service. All staff at the home are such friendly, courteous, kind, and efficient individuals, who genuinely care about all the residents they look after. Nothing is too much trouble for them and they go about their daily duties with great professionalism and enthusiasm.”*
- *“To Monmouth care team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for taking the time and effort to care for my mother. The support you provided to enable her to continue to live at home as independently as possible over the past few years was greatly appreciated and without you it would not have been possible.”*
- *“The reablement team were kind, respectful and caring at all times. They took great care of Mum.”*
- *“The reablement and therapy support - how fabulous the wrap around was from hospital to home and therapy to reablement and a smooth transition of support.”*
- *“The direct payments are very efficient and provides essential support so that living at home independently in familiar surroundings provides immense security and peace of mind.”*

The breakdown of compliments for Adult Services teams are below.

Distribution YTD	Compliments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Adults' Services	18	11	13	17	59
Care at Home Central		2	2	1	5
Care at Home North	3			2	5
Care at Home South	3	3	4	3	13
Community Meals	1		1		2
Direct Payments	1	1	1		3
Domiciliary Care External	2	2	3	5	12
Integrated Services Central (Monmouth, Usk, Raglan)				3	3
Integrated Services North (Abergavenny)	1			1	2
Integrated Services South (Chepstow and Caldicot)	3	2	1	2	8
Mardy Park Day Services	1				1
Mental Health Service	1				1
Monmouth Resource Centre	1				1
Severn View Residential Services	1	1	1		3
Other	2		1	1	4
External Provider	2		1	1	4
Total	20	11	14	18	63

12 Compliments for Children's Services

13 compliments were received that related to Children's Services in 2024-2025, 4 less than in 2022-2023.

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 have been impressed with the social worker's approach to this case and mother has found her approach particularly kind. This has, no doubt, assisted mother to take ownership of her difficulties and make child-focussed decisions, feeling supported whilst doing so".*
- *"You've gone absolutely above and beyond what's expected of your role and helped out with anything and everything asked of you and been so approachable and easy to work with it's brilliant! What you've done has been amazing! Since your involvement *** has gone from having almost no hopes of passing any exams and not even being entered to sit many to passing 10 GCSE exams. Your work has been absolutely life changing for *** and without you none of this would have been possible and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart."*
- *"Thank you for supporting both me and the girls in that process, with kindness, compassion and confidence. In turn your approach has both empowered me and re-built my confidence in my parenting and decision making."*
- *"It's been great working with you, you've helped things move along so much for which I'm grateful for. I'm actually no longer doing engineering any more and have decided to pursue a-level business and law along with ICT and welsh bacc is required in sixth form. Thanks again for all the hard work"*
- *"The support she has been proactive in putting in place from other agencies has been exceptional and has "kept her going" and played a huge part in the placement being maintained through some very difficult times."*
- *"I just wanted to see if you r good, I am and kids This is the truth, if it wasn't for u I think my relationships would b disaster....I'm too old to deal with that but without the freedom class, I doubt I would of recognised the sign or I doubt I would b strong enough, So thank you and if u ever wanted me to speak to other women as YOUR SUCCESSFUL STORY lol then I'm more than willingthankyou'*

The breakdown of compliments received for Children's services teams are below:

Distribution YTD	Compliments				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children's Services					
Children with disabilities				1	1
Early Help and Assessment Team		1			1
Family Support & Therapy Services				1	1
Family Support and Protection Team – North			1	2	5

Family Support and Protection Team – South	1	1		3	5
Long Term Support Team			1	1	2
Total	1	2	2	8	13

13 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Complaints

Complaints data is also collated for the PSOW's Complaints Standards Authority on a quarterly basis and available on their website :

<https://www.ombudsman.wales/complaints-standards-authority>

14 Analysis of Complaints

Adult Services

The numbers of Stage 1 complaints have increased from 2022-23 and stage 2 complaints have slightly increased from those of previous years. There's no particular trend of complaint, apart from complainants' views regarding the quality of service received.

Year	Stage 1		Stage 2	
		External Providers		External Providers
2024-25	19	1	5	0
2023-24	14	0	5	0
2022-23	12	0	3	0

Children Services

The number of stage 1 complaints are less than last year, however formal complaints have increased by 50% with 10 complaints being dealt with at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. The trend running through the complaints relates to communication issues and quality of service issues which features in most of the complaints. Communication issues remains consistent with previous years.

Year	Stage 1	Stage 2
2024-25	23	10
2023-24	30	5
2022-23	21	4

15 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 after the complaints have been agreed by the complainant and the local authority. 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:

Adult Services

Social Services Timescales	2023-2024		2024-2025	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	9 (64%)	0	13 (65%)	0
18 - 25 working days	1 (7%)	0	3 (15%)	0
26+ working days	4 (28%)	5 (100%)	4 (20%)	5 (100%)
Total	14	5	20	5

Children Services

Social Services Timescales	2023-2024		2024-2025	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	14 (46%)	1 (20%)	15 (65%)	2 (20%)
18 - 25 working days	4 (13%)	0	4 (17%)	0
26+ working days	12 (40%)	4 (20%)	4 (17%)	8 (80%)
Total	30	5	23	10

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.

16 Actions for Improvements

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 prescribed standards.

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 actions for improvements made resulting from complaints investigations.

- Ensure that apologies are provided where complaints have been upheld.
- Practitioners reminded of the importance of completing lateral checks with all relevant professionals to inform assessments and reports.
- Children's Social Care to review the practice guidance produced by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) on Harmful Conflict and Domestic Abuse to consider whether there are aspects of this guidance that could be usefully adopted to improve practice within the service.
- Practitioners working within Children's Social Care should attend training on domestic abuse in accordance with The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

- Reflective learning event to be held with practitioners to consider
 - ❖ The role of fathers and their importance to children
 - ❖ The role of Children's Services in promoting relationships of children with fathers up to date assessment of their care and support needs.
- Review of care needs be undertaken, with a focus on current need and how best to meet those needs.
- Advocacy services be offered to support individuals participating in review meetings.
- Adult Services develop straightforward public facing information that sets out the assessment, care and treatment planning, and review processes.
- Clear, open, honest and transparent communication between the service and families to facilitate building constructive and positive relationships.
- Staff should ensure that all individuals and their carers engaged in the assessment for Continuing Health Care are provided with all the relevant information required to enable them to understand the process and who is responsible for the process.
- Workers to ensure that even when all the information is provided orally and in writing there is clear and necessary role for them in regularly reinforcing the information given and checking that the individual understands what they are being told.

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

While some complaints may raise concerns, many reflect individual perceptions rather than necessarily systemic issues. The expression of dissatisfaction does not inherently indicate the presence of a wider issue, however individuals are encouraged to raise concerns. These are treated with respect, even when they may not indicate broader service failings.

There are always lessons to be learned from complaints and customer feedback. Key lessons include:

- Communication – feedback consistently highlights the importance of clear and timely communication. Customers expressed frustration with delays and lack of updates.
- Early resolution – most complaints are resolved at stage 1. Comments can flag issues early, before they escalate into complaints

Author: Annette Evans Customer Relations Manager

Email address: Annetteevans@Monmouthshire.gov.uk Tel: 01633 644647