



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

**SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH
CUSTOMER RELATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR ADULT SERVICES
APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016**

July 2016

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Representation and complaints procedures in Social Services departments are a statutory requirement. 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 2015/2016 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.

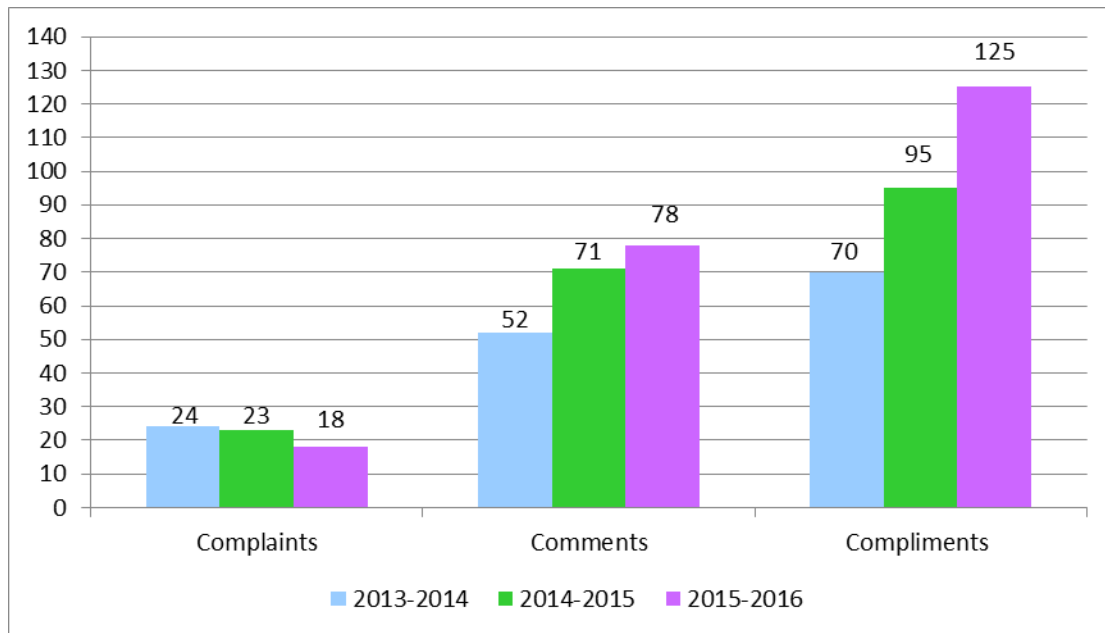
We can arrange for advocacy services to be provided for complainants in some cases.

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 2015 – 31 March 2016



6 Complaints

6.1 Stage 1 complaints

15 complaints were registered at Stage 1. 13 of them were resolved or no further contact made and 2 escalated their complaint to Stage 2.

Below are examples of services complained about:

- Alleged attitude and behaviour of staff.
- Requested change of social worker
- Dissatisfaction with service
- Issues about a resident's missing clothing
- Alleged issues with medication
- Unhappy with support given to relative
- Unhappy with standard of care relative received
- Unhappy with care plan, requested a new assessment
- Unhappy staff did not arrive for scheduled meeting
- Access arrangements for visiting relative in hospital
- Issues about hospital discharge planning
- Lack of support from social worker

6.2 Stage 2 Complaints

- 5 stage 2 complaints received
- 3 proceeded straight to stage 2
- 2 escalated from stage 1 to formal investigation

6.2.1 The first complaint concerned:

The department demonstrated an offensive and negative attitude towards a Care Provider. That the overall effect of the issues has been to impact negatively upon the relationship between the provider and department, leaving the care owners feeling isolated and with nowhere to turn for support.

Two elements of the complaint were partially upheld, two were upheld and one was not upheld.

Recommendations were made to apologise for any offence caused. For care home providers, to co-operate with a validation process in relation to the responses which have been provided to the Commissioner as part of the 'A Place to Call Home?' review.

6.2.2 The second complaint regarded:

Relatives unhappy that a report indicated a family member was well and ready to leave a Rehabilitation unit. That there was no care package in place.

4 elements of the complaint were not upheld. One element of the complaint was upheld. There were no recommendations made about this complaint.

6.2.3 The third complaint regarded:

That a service user was not provided with any of her clothing while an in-patient in Hospital. This was in spite of the fact that the local authority were Appointees and also were protecting her property and therefore had the means to obtain clothing for her. That the service user's dignity was affected, her comfort compromised and her physical health potentially put at risk as a result of her not being provided with clothes. That a safeguarding referral was made but no action or feedback resulted.

Three elements of the complaint were not upheld. No investigation occurred regarding the safeguarding referral as this was a matter for the Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

It was recommended that (a) Monmouthshire County Council should liaise with health colleagues to put a protocol in place so that ward staff are briefed about the meaning of appointeeship/deputyship/protection of property and also to ensure that when people in these categories are admitted to hospital, ward staff are made aware and are informed of who to contact in order to deal with practicalities such as laundry requirements.

(b) That staff of the Integrated Service Team are provided with appropriate training, support and guidance to enable them to deal appropriately with mental health issues amongst their client group.

These Recommendations have been acted upon.

6.2.4 The fourth complaint regarded:

No response to the contact made with a number of Managers. Issues about the quality and accuracy of Minute Taking at the POVA Meetings. Concerns about the quality of care at a Care Home and the response to complaints over this matter.

6 elements of the complaint were not upheld and 4 elements were upheld with no findings made on three parts of the complaint.

The recommendation was to apologise for the complaints which were upheld and this was done.

6.2.5 The fifth complaint regarded:

An unannounced Review was conducted in respect of complainant's Mother's care at a Care Home without any prior reference to her son. This Review was undertaken by a social worker who had not previously met his Mother. His Mother was asleep in bed at the time and was awoken solely for the Review. Expenditure from his Mother's funds was incurred by a member of the Care staff for shoes and clothes. This was not in accord with the agreed arrangement whereby he would pre-authorise such expenditure.

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

The recommendation was that an apology be given to the complainant for the failure to advise him of the unannounced Review in respect of his Mother. This was done.

7 Comments

7.1 78 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:

"We have received meals on wheels services for a number of years and they allow us to remain living in our own home together."

"When we needed to speak to my social worker I couldn't get hold of her as she finished working for the social services, very difficult to find out who was the new social worker, I think we should have been informed of new contact still do not have a contact number. Need someone to come and see me."

"Some staff had not received training to use rotaturn aid to transfer other staff used it well."

“Staff change every week. Staff demands always take priority over H. Issues over phone bills, shopping spending, overuse of heating etc. etc. constantly arise. Lack of training and experience of Alzheimer's. Lack of communication (by writing as H is profoundly deaf). Nails, clothing unkempt etc. etc. . . . More recently, care has been a little more consistent.”

“I have found social services evasive. I have no plan. The O.T. was very helpful and has provided me with help getting in and out of the bath. I do not have a named person to contact.”

“My daughter isn't doing enough and needs an extra day - (which she had before) now has 2 and a half days per week. Could do with more leisure time activities i.e. holidays of interest.”

“Although the caring services have improved over the recent months, there is still no consistency in the carers that call. Also times can be rearranged without notice. Not all carry out the duties that are laid down in the care plan.”

“Direct payments for many reason is a far better service than agencies etc. Unsure who to contact as social worker change frequently”

“Meals are very small and am unsure whether larger portions are available.”

“I had been home from hospital 5 weeks before any aids where offered. I have not seen a care and support plan. So far a waste of time.”

“Initially I was told of an eight week delay but my neighbour expressed concern about the handrail on my steps and was contacted fairly quickly after that. I was not aware of ongoing plan. What was arranged with social services visitor was carried out quickly and effectively and final.”

“I used to get help when I came out of hospital with bathing, dressing. I can't afford a carer so battle on my own. I am becoming less mobile and find cleaning my home, bathing, getting dressed and going to the toilet difficult. I pay for some of the care for my disabled husband. He does not work so only my income.”

“The care team are always very good when they come to take care of my husband. It's the office staff I would like to complain about. Quite a number of times I have to ring them because the carers are too late or to change the time that I want them to come. On the occasions the person on the phone is always polite and says she will attend to the matter but nothing is ever done. A bit of honesty would not go amiss.”

“Should have updated accurate timesheets, staff should have better training on basic values. More time in-between calls. Not being phoned whilst dealing with a client. Better training regarding medical conditions such as C.O.P.D and dementia. Should have regular reviews every sixth months to see if the care package is being adhered and meets the needs of the individual.”

“It is frustrating that care staff cannot give medicines without a M.A.R.S sheet. The local doctors surgery and pharmacy will not supply these M.A.R.S sheets

and so the prescriptions have to go to a chemist in Monmouth, which can delay receipt of any medicines by up to a week.”. Local GP's are part of the system and should be obliged to produce a M.A.R.S sheet with prescriptions if required!”

“Mother has a carer (one night a week only by my request) but in the last six months nobody has contacted me about welfare or our wellbeing etc. Don't know what services are available”

“Some carers have been new to the job and not well trained.”

“My husband's vascular dementia is progressing quite quickly now and I do not feel that the care provided is quite keeping up. I am kept awake every night and catch up on the days that he goes to day centres, but there are two days when he does not. I wish there was some help available at night, or more on the other two days.”

“Although the carers are very nice and helpful, they cannot always be relied upon to throw away out of date food and drink in the fridge.”

“I think a regular review should be happening so that we are up to date with what we can expect from carers, what they can do and can't.”

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

8 Compliments

8.1 **125** 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:

Mrs C is new to the area and was very nervous about the slope to the rear of her new home and steps to the front, due to her limited mobility. Grab rails by front door and handrails fitted to front and rear. A very big thank you for all the things you have given me to make life easier and they certainly do. I am most grateful. We are very lucky to have people to help us. Again, thank you.

“We write to commend the outstanding care given to our mother, in the last weeks of her life at Severn View Care Home. The staff impressed us with their ability to understand and respond to M's needs. The calm atmosphere, caring staff and small family style unit meant that despite her dementia M very

quickly felt at home. We recognise that had M stayed at home she would have ended her days in hospital where it would not have been possible for all of us, including her, to have been so well supported in her last days. The ability of the staff to encompass palliative care within their remit meant that we all feel she had a 'good' death."

"I would like to thank all the enablers who attended me, who encouraged me and supported me so well. My recovery is such a slow process, I shall miss their visits very much. I appreciate my recovery has been quicker than if I had, had to stay in hospital and feel lucky that the team started before I was able to return home. Please thank them all."

"It was very easy to contact a social worker and the help was amazing and sorting a lot of issues out."

"I thought their prompt response to my needs really good. They were very helpful providing equipment promptly and free with advice and contact phone number."

"The carers have been fantastic and have helped B enormously in his recuperation and moving forward from his hospital stay."

"Good service and staff, always looking for new things that can help me. Like it here a lot. Do not want move go. See my care plan and meets my needs well staff understand me."

"Conducted a very professional meeting. Pleased with the outcome as it highlighted things not being right at the home."

"Just wanted to pass on my thanks for the difference you have made to the lives of my neighbour. It isn't just about the practical help it's also about how listened to they felt by the different visitors they had and how supported they now feel and believe that help is at hand if asked for."

"Shared lives worker visit every 3 months and is always on the end of a phone. Mr D has just set up accounts with financial services who have been most helpful and respectful to Mr D situation."

"A simple, but huge thanks for the help, support and guidance during the last traumatic weeks. Your empathy, understanding and professionalism was enormously important to both L and I. Mum seems to have settled in well. I have not been yet on advice from the home, giving her time to adjust."

"This letter to you is to express my gratitude for the care which you all have given me over the last few weeks. You all, without exception showed me kindness, understanding and practicality and at the same time managed to restore my self esteem and courage which had somehow disappeared. My thanks to you all."

“I have recently had services from care and repair, OT and Social Workers. All have been excellent and well co-ordinated. I initiated a review this year and it has been handled very well.”

“I wish to record my thanks to your occupational dept. As a cancer sufferer I've reached the point where I need more help with bathing etc. and nothing has been too much trouble, with bathing aids and advice and has fixed up someone to help me. I know that you may have your fair share of complainers but I can only say thank you for your service.”

“Very pleased - all staff from Day Centre who provide a varied exciting programme to excellent care staff, district nurses, doctors, dentists people first, drive etc. Able to speak to helpful social workers if needed and housing association.”

I live in another area. I have always been helped in a polite and understanding way regarding my mum’s care. Staff are lovely and always very helpful. People have been accommodating and particularly understanding because of my mums condition. My mother’s needs are changing and everybody has been so helpful in trying to meet these changing needs.”

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 gone down, although there has been an increase in stage 2 complaints on the previous year’s figure.

Year	Stage 1		Stage 2	Stage 3
		External Providers		
2015-16	13	2	5	-
2014-15	23	3	1	0
2013-14	23	0	6	0
2012-13	27	2	0	0

10.2 Response Timescales

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. 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.

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

Social Services Timescales	2014-31/07/2015*			
	Stage 1	Stage 2		
Up to 10 working days	3			
11 – 25 working days	1			
25+ working days	2	1		
Total	6	1		
	01/08/2014-31/03/2015*		2015-2016	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 17 working days	14		9	
18 - 25 working days	1		3	1
26+ working days	2		3	4
Total	17		15	5

***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
- Additional training and support given re medication procedures
- Alternative social worker allocated to case
- More regular communication
- Fuller progress notes in person's Home file
- New assessment/reviews

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 I work closely with managers, the head of Adult services and the Chief Officer for Social Care and Health to ensure that complaints are addressed in the most appropriate manner. Every effort is made to resolve complainants' dissatisfaction about our services and address any identified shortcomings.
- 12.2 Overall Adult Social Care continues to manage complaints proactively. The actual stage 1 complaints have decreased but stage 2 complaints have increased as people have decided to progress their complaint at the formal investigation stage. Comments have increased and as mentioned previously these are dealt with in the same way as informal complaints, the matter looked into and a reply given.
- 12.3 Action plans are monitored and audited 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.
- 12.4 Regular sessions are held with staff teams to ensure they are up to speed with the requirements of the complaints procedure and aware of their role in responding to and resolving complaints, emphasising the importance of viewing complaints as a positive tool in service improvement.
- 12.5 Where there has been a complex case, after the formal complaints investigation, a debriefing session is held with the relevant managers to review the case and take forward lessons learnt.
- 12.5 The department continues to receive more compliments, highlighting the good work undertaken throughout the year and how service users and their families have acknowledged this.

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