

Adult Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2023-24



Adult Social Care 2023/24 Complaints & Representations key facts & figures

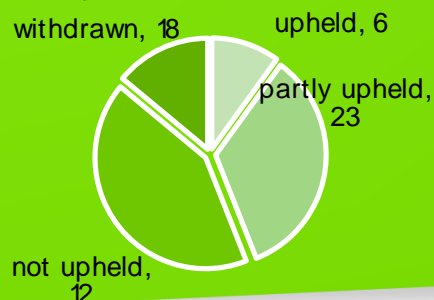


There were 3650 adults in long-term support as of 31 March 2024



In 2023/24, the Council received **59** complaints about Adult Social Care, compared to 66 in 2022/23

Of the 59 complaints, just under half were at least partially upheld:



The Council aims to resolve complaints within 20 working days. In 2023/24, **46%** were resolved within 20 working days, 65 % in 2022/23 and 64% in 2021/22

The most common things people complained about were...



In 2023/24, we received **173** compliments; down by 80 compared to last year. These were all about the standard of care provided at care homes for older people.

If a complainant remains unhappy after completing the Council's complaints process, they may take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). In 2023/24, the LGSCO received **10** Adult Social Care cases. A total of **2** cases were upheld

Listening to service users' complaints helps services improve by helping Managers identify changes that are required. Key learning points from 2023/24 include: Ensuring regular meetings are held to learn from complaints, centralised database to capture practice learning, quality assurance visits to be carried out,.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints about Adult Social Care

You have the right to receive a good level of service. Listening to your views helps Adult Social Care Services to put things right and improve things for the future, so your comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions are important and always welcome. You can contact the Adult Social Care Complaints Officer by phone to **08085 834 333** or online at www.coventry.gov.uk/form_speakup/ or by email to AdultSocialCareCustomerRelations@coventry.gov.uk.



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Welcome

Welcome to the 2023/24 complaints and representations annual report. As part of the Council’s commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory procedures in relation to Adult Social Care provided by or commissioned by Coventry City Council for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Background

Local Authorities are required to have a system for receiving representations by or on behalf of people in need of adult social care support who have a range of support needs due to a disability or frailty (Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.) Services cover assessment and case management, direct service provision or the arrangement of a range of services, including support at home, day opportunities, supported housing, intermediate, residential and nursing care or provision of equipment.

Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

Local Authorities are required by law to appoint a complaints officer to oversee all aspects of the procedure. Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. When this is the case, these are registered under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints.

The Local Authority has a nominated officer assigned to the management of representations for Adult Social Care.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use services are heard.
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and acknowledge good practice.
- Things that have gone wrong are put right.
- The organisation learns from both positive and negative feedback; and the organisation sustains its focus on service users / customers / citizens.

Within this report reference is made to the range of representations received and responses to them and specific trends and issues that emerged in the reporting period.

Summary

In 2023/24 the service received a total of 73 complaints and of these 59 were **statutory complaints**, compared to 66 in 2022/23. 33% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld, compared to 45% in 2022/23. Whilst there has been an overall increase in complaints received there was a reduction in Statutory complaints.

The main themes of complaints received over this period were as follows:

- Method/Quality of communication
- Standard of Service
- Standard of work

In addition to the statutory complaints above, the service received 8 informal complaints during 2023/24, a reduction from 14 Informal complaints in 2022/23 along with 6 Stage 1 Corporate complaints. These are complaints resolved/handled at the point of delivery. In line with our complaints policy and with best practice, most concerns are dealt with on an informal basis, for example, by social care providers; and may not be reflected in the figures in this report.

Description of Complaint Types

Coventry City Council's complaints policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council handles compliments, comments and complaints. A complaint can be made to an employee either by telephone, social media, e-mail or in writing.

Informal

Where possible, complaints should be resolved informally and for a number of complaints this is what we try to do in the first instance. If this is not possible, complainants can formally complain to the Council. Informal matters can also be related to concerns that require resolution or follow up investigation outside of the formal process.

Statutory

Complaints about Adult Services including care homes and other providers commissioned by the Council follow the statutory process for representations made by or on behalf of an adult using social care services provided by / commissioned by the Council arising from the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

All other complaints relating to Council services are dealt with by the corporate complaints policy.

Corporate

A Corporate complaint example would be as follows: When a member of the public who is not a service user or a holder of parental responsibility for a young person, requests that their concerns are investigated formally.

An example of a corporate complaint could be a member of the public who has raised concerns regarding a service that they are not personally involved with such as, seeing a social worker act in a way they do not deem appropriate or witnessing a poor level of service.

Feedback

Promoting feedback

Representations from people who came into contact with Adult Social Care and their families provide a useful source of information about quality-of-service delivery, professional practice and the outcome of decisions we make that affect their care and support. A key part of the complaints process is how the Council learns from negative experiences and use this to improve what we do. Adult Social Care always welcomes feedback, whether this is positive or negative and there are a number of ways in which people can make their views known and these include:

- During the assessment process we will engage with individuals and their carers about what is important to them and incorporate this into their support plans
- At the conclusion of the assessment and/or review we will invite individuals and their families to use our 'real time survey' so that we have immediate feedback on their experience
- We use surveys for individuals and for carers to obtain wider feedback.
- We listen to experts by experience and our Stakeholder Group in respect of strategic or service changes.

Providing feedback

Where possible, issues/complaints should be handled at the point of delivery. When a person feels that they are still not satisfied, then it is recorded as a formal complaint and investigated as such. The length of time to investigate and resolve complaints depends on their complexity. Where there are particular complexities that will require an elongated period of investigation, a timescale is agreed with the complainant.

People can provide feedback directly to the service or team; to customer services; or to the Complaints Officer. Further information about how to make a complaint, access advocacy or support, and the complaints process is available on the Council's website at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/.

It is vitally important that the comments, complaints and compliments system is easily accessible. This maximises the opportunities for individuals to make their views known. Complaints can be accepted through the contact centre via a visit to the centre, by letter, by an online form or by telephone. Complaints may also be made directly to the team that is providing them with a service. Sometimes, complaints are also made via elected members (Councillors), the Chief Executive, or directly to senior managers. Complaints can also be referred to the Council from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Complainants who contact the complaints team directly are encouraged to use the contact centre to ensure that their complaint can be processed efficiently.

In 2023/24, the majority of complainants chose to make a complaint via email or through the Council's contact centre.

Complaints

The number of statutory complaints has decreased to 59 in 2023/24 from 66 in 2022/23.

The number of complaints and their outcomes are detailed below.

Complaints 2023/24 vs 2022/23

| Outcome | 2023/24 | | 2022/23 | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Upheld | 6 | 10% | 10 | 15% |
| Partly Upheld | 23 | 39% | 20 | 30% |
| Not upheld | 12 | 20% | 15 | 23% |
| Complaint withdrawn | 18 | 31% | 19 | 29% |
| Open | 0 | 0% | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 59 | 100 | 66 | 100 |

How people complained

| Method | 2023/24 | 2022/23 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Email | 41 | 42 |
| Contact Center/Form | 18 | 22 |
| Letter | 0 | 2 |
| Phone | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 59 | 66 |

Complaints by service area

The below table shows a breakdown of complaints received and investigated by each service area team

| Service Area | 2023/24 | 2022/23 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| All Age Disability (Assessment & Case Management) | 13 | 14 |
| Adult Commissioning | 3 | 8 |
| Assessment & Case Management OP | 14 | 20 |
| Adult Safeguarding | 1 | 3 |
| ASC Enablement & Therapy Services | 4 | 5 |
| Mental Health | 7 | 3 |
| Community Discharge Team | 1 | 2 |
| Finance | 1 | 3 |
| Hospital Team | 3 | 2 |
| Telecare Service | 3 | 1 |
| Internal Provider Services | 2 | 0 |
| Promoting Independence/intake | 7 | 5 |
| Total | 59 | 66 |
| | | |

Complaints regarding external providers

Providers of residential and domiciliary care services must have a complaints procedure that complies with the Care Homes Regulations 2001, the Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards stipulated by the Care Quality Commission. There is an expectation that the individual pursues a complaint with provider organisations through the provider's own complaints procedures in the first instance. However, if the individual is dissatisfied with the response of the provider or, if they wish to pursue the complaint through the Statutory Adult Social Care Complaints Process, they have the right to do so. Where possible, we encourage complainants to utilise the providers' complaints procedures in the first instance as this enables the complaint to be dealt with at source as opposed to through the Council.

Complaints regarding external providers are monitored through contract monitoring and, where required, providers are expected to make immediate improvements and/or to produce action plans to deliver service improvements with delivery monitored through contractual mechanisms.

Timescales

There are no externally prescribed timescales for the resolution of complaints. The only stipulation within the regulations is that timescales should be reasonable, and that the complaints process should be concluded within six months. It is acceptable to extend this deadline with the agreement of the complainant.

As there is no specific requirement, the approach taken is to agree a timescale with the complainant. It is normal practice to inform complainants should an extension be required. Most often, extensions are sought due to the complexity of complaints, including where the complainant supplies additional information/evidence part way through an investigation. In these instances, the complainant is contacted with an explanation for the delay and the likely revised timescale.

As a benchmark for monitoring the timescale for completion of complaints, Adult Social Care applies an internal guideline that complaints should be completed within 20 working days. Performance on this standard is monitored by the Adult Social Care Management Team. This year's performance against the target is shown in the table below:

| Complaint Stage | Timescales | 2023/24 | 2022/23 |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Stage 1 | Within 20 working days | 27 (46%) | 43 (65%) |
| | Over 20 working days | 32 (54%) | 23 (35%) |
| | Still Open | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | | 59 | 66 |

Where the 20-working day response timescale has been exceeded, this can be due to the requirement to involve other professionals, including health care professionals in other organisations and is relevant to Mental Health complaints. The responses received from other organisations are at times outside of the 20-working daytime-frame. This can then impact on the investigation period which occasionally can be out of the direct control of the Local Authority.

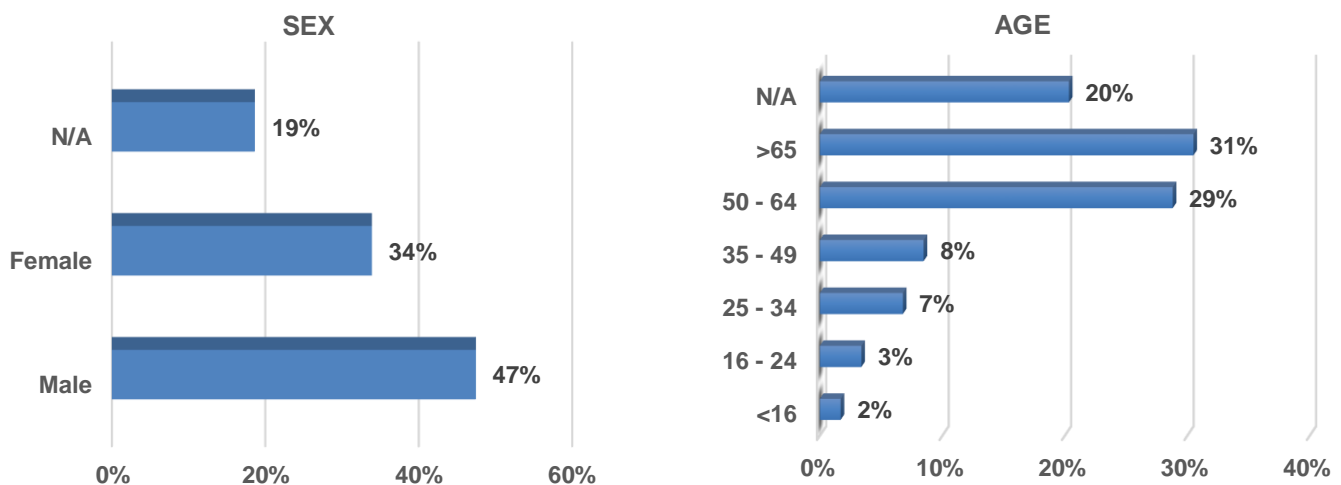
The overall percentage on complaints being resolved within the 20 Working Day timescale has shown a marginal improvement given the increased number of complaints but more have been processed within the 20 days). The improvements could be a result of Team Managers being more involved in the case management and with potential complaints at an earlier stage, allowing them to discuss with the complainants to provide explanation and support. This enables them to provide the formal responses more easily and within timeframe.

Services do not operate in isolation and the provision of support requires coordination across a range of areas, This, along with the complexity of situations means that complaints inevitably cut across a number of service areas impacting on the timeliness within which the complaint can be investigated. For example: All Age Disability and Commissioning may well have had input to a specific situation. Although 65% of complaints received have been responded to within 20 working days, 35% (23 complaints) have gone over timescale. Monitoring of the reasons for the delay is something that is now being developed.

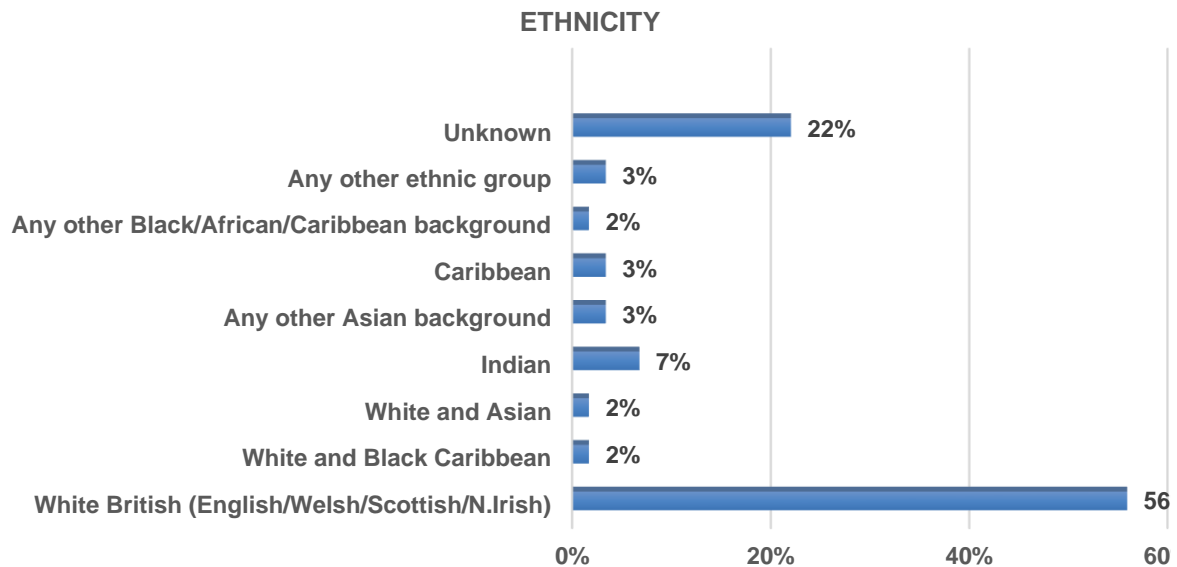
Equality

The Local Authority has a system in place to capture the equality data required to support the complaints process. Information is only ever recorded in relation to who the service user is. The below graphs illustrate the data captured but this does not include complaints submitted for the Ombudsman. Data was obtained from Adult Social Care case recording systems, and, on that basis, it has not been possible to capture information pertaining to every complainant, only those with an existing case record. These are recorded as 'not available' (N/A).

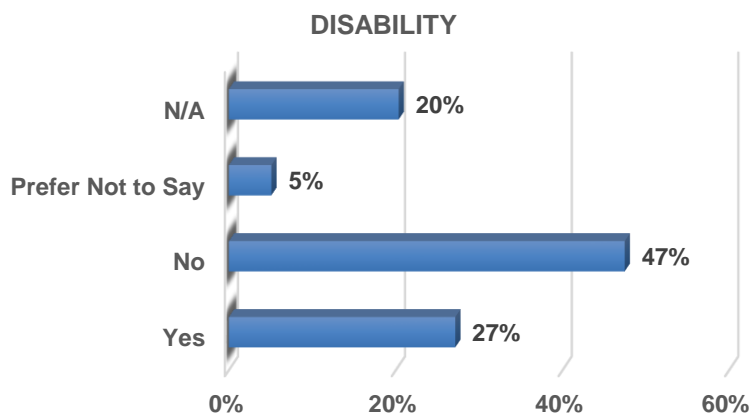
The below graph shows out of the 59 complaints received in 2023-24 (excluding Ombudsman), 28 complaints (47%) were from male complainants/service users, 20 complaints (34%) were from female complainants/service users and 11 (19%) were not available (N/A).



The above graph also shows the age range of the complainant or service user. 2 complaints (3%) of the complaints received during 2023- 24 (excluding Ombudsman) were from or submitted on behalf of service users aged 16-24. 4 complaint (7%) was also received or submitted on behalf of service users aged 25-34. 5 complaints (8%) were received/submitted from service users aged 35-49. 17 complaints (29%) were received/submitted from service users aged 50-64. 18 complaints (31%) were received/submitted from service users aged 65+. 1 (2%) complaint received related to a service user under 16, this complaint received by parents regarding home adaptations and this service sits within Adult Services but for equality information we capture the service user details. The information was not available (N/A) for 12 (20%).



The majority of complainant's/service users in 2023-24 (excluding Ombudsman) were White British with a total of 33 (56%), followed by 4 (7%) with Indian background. 2 (3%) with any other Asian background, Caribbean background and any other ethnic group each. 1 (2%) with a White & Black Caribbean background, White and Asian background and any other Black/African/Caribbean background each. 13 (22%) of the complaints received were N/A.



Out of the 59 complaints received, 16 (27%) had a disability and 28 (47%) did not, with 12 (20%) logged as (N/A).

Ombudsman

In 2023/24 Adult Social Care received 10 new cases, while 9 cases were decided, the outcomes of which were as follows:

- 2 Cases Upheld
- 1 Case Incomplete/Invalid
- 3 Cases closed after initial enquiry.
- 3 Case was decided as premature and referred for local resolution
- 1 Case is currently still open

This compared to 2022/23 which had 8 new cases, while 9 cases were decided, the outcome of which were

- 4 Cases Upheld,
- 1 Case was Not Upheld.
- 2 Cases were Closed after initial enquiry,
- 1 Case advise was given, and
- 1 Case was decided as premature and referred for local resolution.

Out of the 9 cases decided in 2023/24, 1 Upheld case, received financial remedy or reimbursement.

A summary of the 9 cases decided by the Ombudsman in 2023/24 are as follows -

Case 1 -

Mr. B said the Council ignored their concerns, does not care, and had abused Mr. B and Ms. C. The family had tried all avenues to try and improve Mrs. C's care support, and Mr. B wants a public apology and substantial compensation. The LGO concluded that they would not investigate the complaint since they were satisfied the Council had thoroughly investigated and responded to Mr. B's complaint. The Council had accepted any failure in service, apologised, and taken action to improve service and communication, therefore no further action was needed.

Case 2 -

Ms. B complained that the Council failed to arrange for her care, did not ensure that the care provided met her needs, and did not investigate her complaints about poor care, including that the carer took a video call while she was undressed. In addition, the Council failed to complete a financial assessment and wrongly invoiced her for over £1,000. Ms. B says that the Council's shortcomings left her distressed and her care needs unmet. The LGO found fault because the Council took too long to assess Ms. B's care needs and arrange care. The LGO recommended a £750 remedial action for loss of service and for distress and frustration caused to Ms. B.

Case 3 -

Mr. X complained that a Care Provider (commissioned by the Council), wrongly gave medication to Ms. Y, to make her compliant, and falsified records to obtain the prescription. Mr. X says this contributed to her death. The LGO did not investigate this complaint, as the medication was prescribed by a GP. They found no fault with the Council, as they could not conclude that any fault by the care provider caused the injustice Mr. X claimed.

Case 4 -

Ms. C complained about the Council's failure to provide suitable accommodation, care and support to Mr. B. She said she had discovered Mr. B unkempt and in extreme filthy living conditions and called an ambulance for him. Mr. B was taken to hospital where he died a few days later. Ms. C says the hospital doctor said Mr. B died of neglect and Ms. C blamed the Council for failure to provide Mr. B with care. The LGO did not investigate Ms. C's complaint because they found there was no good reason to investigate.

Case 5 -

Mr X complained the Council has unfairly prevented him from seeing his mother, Ms Y. He said this situation has caused him significant upset. The LGO did not investigate Mr X's complaint about the Council's decision to restrict

contact between Mr X and his mother. This is because the LGO considered that it would be unlikely to find fault with the Council's decision.

Case 6 -

Ms. X complained about neglect for over 18 months. She said the Council incorrectly described her condition. Ms. X wanted the Council to provide her with care and treat her with some dignity. The LGO explained it will not pursue the complaint because it appears the Council had not been given a reasonable opportunity to investigate and reply.

Cases received in 2022/23, but remedy completed in 2023/24

There was one case which was decided in 2022/23, but which remedy was reported in the Ombudsman 2023/24 annual report.

Case 1:

The Council was at fault for not providing Mrs. X with information about the care process and explaining how the care assessment would work when she asked for care for her mother, Mrs Y. As a result, her mother paid for private care and did not realise she could have received help towards the costs of care. The Council agreed to apologise, make a payment, (backdated amount of Mrs. Y's Direct Payments from 1 November 2021 to 27 May 2022) and ensure it has procedures in place to give people information about the care system when they initially approach the Council for assistance.

Cases received in 2023/24 but decided in 2024/25

The reporting of these cases will be in the Ombudsman 2024/25 annual report.

Case 1:

Ms. X, a representative, complained that the Council failed to carry out a social care assessment for Ms. Y on two occasions, the second when Ms. Y requested care and support as she was struggling to look after herself and her child when she was receiving treatment. Ms. X said the assessment completed by adult social care was a contact assessment (not a full needs assessment) and did not consider Ms. Y's caring responsibilities. The Ombudsman upheld this complaint stating that the Council failed to act when Ms. X asked for assistance with childcare and other support. The Council agreed to apologise and pay £250 for avoidable distress caused.

Case 2:

Ms. X complained the Council failed to deal properly with safeguarding concerns about her adult son. The LGO concluded that the Council was not at fault over its handling of the safeguarding concerns.

Case 3: (Still Open)

Complaint from Ms. B concerning care for Ms. C in the months before her death. This complaint is still being investigated and the details will be reported once the case has closed.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publish an annual report regarding Adult Social Care each year, this year's can be found at- <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/adult-social-care-reviews>

Cases escalated to the Ombudsman – Regional comparison

The table below shows the number of complaints that were escalated to the Ombudsman in the West Midlands region in 2023-2024. Coventry has a relatively low number of complaints escalated, given the size of the city. This data is newly added, and it is difficult to speculate on response satisfaction levels on this data alone. It would be useful to know how many of these complaints were upheld before escalating. We will continue to draw on this data where useful and look to expand the narrative on future reports.

| Authority Name | Adult Social Care |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Birmingham City Council | 38 |
| City of Wolverhampton Council | 10 |
| Coventry City Council | 10 |
| Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council | 10 |
| Herefordshire Council | 6 |
| Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council | 18 |
| Shropshire Council | 17 |
| Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council | 7 |
| Staffordshire County Council | 46 |
| Stoke-on-Trent City Council | 8 |
| Telford & Wrekin Council | 5 |
| Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council | 9 |
| Warwickshire County Council | 19 |
| Worcestershire County Council | 20 |
| Totals | 223 |

Compliments

Feedback from compliments provides an equally valuable message, clearly affirming when services make a difference, and personal qualities have added value to the outcome for users and carers. We have as much to learn from what works well as when it goes wrong, and the service actively considers compliments made. **173** compliments were received in **2023/24** compared to **253** in **2022/23**. These were all related to the quality and standard of care provided to older people. Compliments came from service users and their family members, thanking individual members of staff and teams for the ongoing support and care provided by social workers, care teams and departments. Compliments are received by forms, thank you cards, letters and emails.

The below tables show the % of compliments compared to Statutory Stage 1 complaints received during 2023-24

| Month | No. Complaints | No. Compliments | % Of Compliments compared to Complaints received |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| April | 5 | 16 | 220% |
| May | 4 | 10 | 150% |
| June | 1 | 14 | 1300% |

| Month | No. Complaints | No. Compliments | % Of Compliments compared to Complaints received |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| July | 9 | 02 | -78% |
| August | 5 | 15 | 200% |
| Sept | 6 | 08 | 60% |

| Month | No. Complaints | No. Compliments | % Of Compliments compared to Complaints received |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| October | 4 | 22 | 450% |
| November | 5 | 22 | 340% |
| December | 2 | 17 | 750% |

| Month | No. Complaints | No. Compliments | % Of Compliments compared to Complaints received |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| January | 8 | 11 | 37.5% |
| February | 6 | 20 | 233% |
| March | 5 | 16 | 220% |

Below are examples of compliments received during 2023-24.

*Excellent feedback (Name), many thanks for your ongoing hard work, support & commitment
Kind Regards”
(Name)*

(Name) came into the Opal to be assessed using the Stair lift. She said that she has been so worried and nervous about coming into the Opal, and that you provided her with lots of reassurance and support. She said that you have been so patient, and kind and she wasn't worried at all when she used the stair lift with you They both said that you worked at their pace and that you didn't make them feel rushed”.

*”
A very good afternoon, (Name)
I would just like to thank you in the part you've played in myself getting the wet room. Today is the last day of it being fitted and completed. This will seriously change my life.
Huge thanks and gratitude,”*

Name) called to say a huge thank you for the fast service and how quick her commode request was completed this afternoon.”

Thank you to you both for all the help and support you have given to (Name). I do believe that it all depends on the people that come into the life of a person who makes a difference, you guys have understood that Shafee is a very complex young man and you have always respected our family values at the same time. We really appreciate all the help and support.”

Thank you (Name). I appreciate how you took your time to explain everything to my parents, they were very impressed by your kindness and consideration.

Thank you again for your help and support.”

“He has reassured me. (Name) has been very professional and approachable.

Many thanks

(Name) “

The staff who attended last night to help my wife were caring and very helpful. We are glad that we have the system in place, and it is worth the money.

Thank you 😊

Kind Regards

(Name)

Hi, bathroom job finished just been inspected. Need seat installing. Thanks for all the work and help. Workmen were all good, on time and helpful. (Name)

The work carried out was first class, the chap who did the work could not be faulted in his attention to detail, the site was left clean and tidy. He should be getting a 'pat on the back' for his professionalism. I hope this will be conveyed to him.”

Service improvements and learning points

Adult Social Care is committed to learning from service user and customer feedback. Where complaints highlight that matters have gone wrong, managers must identify any remedial and development action required to improve service delivery.

Most common areas of feedback

When complaints are received, they are recorded on a database and each concern raised within the complaint is logged under a 'reason of complaint code'. These codes include main categories and subcategory subjects. An example of this would be Standard of Service which has the subcategory reason codes *service level/care plan dispute lack of/access to/eligibility for service and delay in receiving service*. It is not unusual for a complainant to raise more than one concern in the same complaint. For example, a complainant may submit a complaint about communication and finance issues experienced during the same incident, and both concerns along with any additional subcategories within the complaint codes would be recorded accordingly under that complaint.

The table below highlights the different types of concerns raised within the complaints received in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 under the main category. This does not show the actual number of complaints received but only the main reasons of complaints data. Currently our system does not capture an individual complaint code breakdown of the outcome of each concern – so the figures below reflect the alleged complaint, rather than whether a complaint was upheld or not within those specific categories.

| Category | 2023/24 | | 2022/23 | |
|----------------------|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| Standard of Service | 87 | 62% | 60 | 52% |
| Communication | 43 | 30% | 48 | 42% |
| Protection | 2 | 1% | 2 | 2% |
| Environment/property | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% |
| Financial issues | 8 | 6% | 4 | 3% |

The 2 main categories of concerns raised are, Standard of Service and Communication.

Communication

30% of complaints received in 2023/24 were related to communication. This is a reduction on the previous year. When service users and their families are referred for support, they require information on subjects they may have not encountered before. They also need to be kept informed of progress and decisions in processes that are complex and often appear confusing. These may be services directly provided by the Council or those delivered through independent sector provision and can include care and support delivered in care homes, housing with care support and a range of other community support services. Representations of this nature are categorised in terms of the provision, quality, method and timelessness of information as well as accuracy.

Communication themes seen during 2023/24 were as follows: Information not being shared in its entirety, meaning that service users were making decisions without all of the information available, particularly in relation to direct payments and financial assessments; Social workers allegedly talking in an unprofessional manner during phone calls and face-to-face meetings; family members views not being recorded in assessments leading to them feeling undervalued and referrers not being made aware of allocation timescales when making a referral into the service.

The service takes this feedback seriously and in each case, individuals involved will have been made aware of the feedback in relation to their practice.

Learning from complaints is discussed at the regular Quality Meetings held by the service and cascaded via team briefings. The Service Recovery Team and the Ombudsman Liaison Officer attend to offer guidance and support the learning to be taken forward.

Standard of Service

62% of complaints received in 2023/24, compared to 52% in 2022/23, were related to standard of service. Standard of Services includes service delivery, assessment of eligibility for services and timeliness in receiving services. Not all adults will be eligible for services from Adult Social Care following assessment. This can inevitably result in challenge and disagreement on how individual needs can be met. These are often emotive and challenging situations which can stimulate complaints where people do not agree with the practitioner's views or level of service received. Delays may also be incurred due to sourcing the right support, again leading to a complaint.

The Standard of Service themes seen during 2023/24 continue to be similar of that in 2022/2023. Concerns were raised regarding the delay in receiving assessment and services across all of Adult Social Care. The quality of care received by service users through contracted providers was also raised across multiple complaints.

It is inevitable that with the increasing number of people accessing our services, waits for the completion of assessments or review alongside practical support exist. Adult Social Care continue to recruit staff to support with the Intake/Contact assessment process to support the wait for assessment and to identify urgent needs.

Compliments

The improvement initiative is continuing whereby compliments are captured by the complaints team and sent on a monthly basis to the Adults Principal Social Worker which are then published in the Adult Social Care internal news bulletin. In 2023/24 compliments have slightly decreased by 32% compared to the previous year. This still reflects positively on the service provided by Adults Services.

Compliments to date reflect well on Adult Services. In 2023/24 Adult Commissioning received the highest number of compliments, these were mostly from care homes regarding the excellent service and level of care provided. Service areas need to ensure compliments are shared with the complaints team, so these are logged and recorded accordingly going forward.

Responding to and learning from complaints

The learning elements from complaints are captured in service areas on a regular basis as part of the business management process and further evaluation of complaint data is reviewed for ongoing learning and improvements. Across Adult Social Care various processes to address learning and outcomes of quality and assurance are in place, and the learning from complaints is regularly discussed on an on-going basis with management teams and social care staff. Compliments and Complaints, along with Ombudsman enquiries are discussed at the quarterly Quality and Experience review meeting which is chaired by the Principal Social Worker. This is an opportunity to identify practice alerts that arise from complaints. There needs to be a consideration of an achievable and deliverable timescale for responses to complaints. We do monitor achievements against this, with the continuation of the RAG reporting process and quarterly data capturing. Upon completion of the complaint investigations, service improvements can be identified to change practice. Examples of these changes are:

- Adult Social Care is as keen to learn from what works well as we do from what goes wrong. We continue to collate the compliments as well as complaints and look at themes, learning and where good practice exists, we share this via our internal Let's Talk meetings and briefings with colleagues across the services as well as with individuals on a one-to-one basis.
- In addition to this, an internal centralized database has been developed to capture our practice learning and areas of improvement and we hold quarterly meetings to review all our learning from quality and experience.
- Management oversight of complaints into the service is now embedded, with regular meetings with the Adults Principal Social Worker and regular updates from colleagues in the Customer Relations Team into the Adult Social Care Management Team enabling greater oversight of how the process is managed and any delays.

- The Commissioning Team have developed protocols and processes for the quality management of contracted services.
- All concerns in relation to communication, especially where this can improve, are taken seriously and dealt with at an individual level to ensure all workers uphold professionalism and reflect on their actions to ensure reflections and learning from complaints informs future practice.
- Prior to a full quality assurance visit being carried out Contracts Officers and Clinical Support Nurses review the previous six months concerns and complaints to identify any trends in order to focus their quality visit and focus our support around the trend identified.

Adult Services Complaint Literature

In 2024/25, the Communications Team, with support of Adult Services, are creating complaint leaflets which will be easy-to-read and available in multiple languages.

Service Recovery Team

The current complaints team has been re-launched as the Service Recovery team and has expanded and taken on a Service Recovery Manager, two additional Officers alongside additional Administration support. This will help ensure more timely responses to internal & external queries and to provide a more robust case management support to service areas.

Internal Complaints Investigation Form

This form is for investigating officers to capture additional learning and understanding of complaint concerns to ensure service areas and teams consistently improve their services and implement any learning necessary. This is achieved by sharing the internal investigation forms are shared with Heads of Service on a quarterly basis.

Complaints Training Module

Over 2024/25, training will be provided to all Managers/Officers in Adult Services on the complaints and Ombudsman process to ensure continuation of effective complaint handling.

Specific service area improvements/learning which have been identified

Adult Commissioning

Three complaints were investigated by the adult commissioning team during the year. One was resolved informally. Two complaints had elements that were upheld. One complaint centered around Personal Assistant payment rates and duration of calls delivered by a commissioned home support provider. The learning from this was that a reminder to all practitioners would support greater understanding of the difference between personal assistant rates and those of commissioned home support due the latter having greater overhead costs. This has been done. Call duration was being monitored going forward. A lesson was that basic expectations of home support providers may on occasion not be delivered. The commissioning team have worked with the provider to try and ensure future contractual compliance. The second upheld complaint was in relation to a home support provider not offering to support with regular showers and carers not attending at allocated times to enable the service users to meet medical and religious needs. The provider was required to address these matters. Learning was in relation to ensuring that agencies are staffing appropriately for time critical calls and respecting peoples wishes regarding maintaining good personal hygiene.

Community Social Care (65+) and All Age Disability

There have been a small number of complaints upheld with most issues relating to communication, charging for services and clarity regarding processes. Due to the complex nature of people's needs, there are occasions where multiple professionals are involved which although very positive for service users, can sometimes lead to confusion and lack of clarity in relation to processes and roles and responsibility of different organisations. Adult Social Care continue to work in an integrated way with partners and ensure that

communication is as clear as possible. Where there has been a miscommunication with regards to charging, remedial actions have been taken.

We continue to identify areas for improvement and feedback supports improvements in service delivery.

Hospital, Therapy, and Intake Teams

There have been a small number of formal complaints which mainly relate to communication, expectations and charging for services. There have been occasions where communication hasn't been as clear as it could have been, and this also includes being explicit in our communication about service delivery.

All concerns in relation to communication, especially where this can improve, are taken seriously and dealt with at an individual level to ensure all workers uphold professionalism and reflect on their actions to ensure reflections and learning from complaints informs future practice.

Where improvements have been identified, managers ensure immediate improvements and actions are taken. Any issues raised about a lack of communication between a staff member and service user have been raised on an individual level and staff reminded of our Adult Social Care standards

Financial Assessment Team

As a result of our learning, from the complaint received, there was a delay between the initial contact from the financial assessment officer of 5 months following the FA referral. The Financial Assessments team will seek to undertake the Financial Assessment following the FA referral as quickly as resources allow.

Mental Health

Formal complaints in relation to Mental Health Services for ASC remain low receiving 4 in the last period. Our interventions are often at a time of great distress to individuals and their families and communicating the finer elements of statutory responsibility can be difficult and this is apparent in each complaint received again this year. Complaints reflect the complexity of situations individuals are experiencing and no particular themes are evident from the outcome of our investigations with 1 not upheld and 3 partially upheld.

Complaints are also influenced by differing perceptions of mental capacity and managing the need to consider people's personal and sensitive data. Investigating Officers continue to provide direct feedback into the service to enable greater consideration of the impact of our interventions.

Adult Social Care 2023/24

Complaints and representations key facts and figures



Adult Social Care (ASC) has always taken complaints very seriously and it is a

priority that we learn from them, improving individual practices but also practice throughout the whole of the Adult Social Care Directorate

Complaints themes such as Communication around standard of service has decreased from 72% in 2022/23 to 30% in 2022/24

There has been a slight **increase of people** supported but Adult Services, from 3595 in 2022/23 compared to 3650 in 2023/24 however the number of Statutory complaints received in 2023/24 **has reduced** to 59 compared to 66 in 2022/23



The learning of complaints is regularly reported throughout the year to ASCMT by providing quarterly complaints and compliments reports and conducting regular learning meetings throughout the year. It is important that we all know the areas where we can improve, and this is supported by Senior Managers and learning in implements throughout the service



100%

0%

15%

10%

The percentage of complaints upheld has fallen to **10%** in 2023/24 from **15%** in 2022/23

The Internal Investigation Form continues to provide service areas with more insight into service improvement and delivery



Further information

Further information about complaints and representations and a copy of the Council's complaints policy and complaints handling guidance is available at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/.

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Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/