

Annual Complaints Report - Solihull's Adult Social Care Services

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

Executive Summary

- During the 2021/22 financial year, Solihull's Adult Social Care Services received 33 new complaints. This is a continued decrease when compared to the 35 new complaints received in 2020/21 and the 58 new complaints received in 2019/20.
- During 2020/21, Solihull Council's Adult Social Care Services provided a service to 8245 service users (including carers) and hence complaints were received in relation to 33 (0.4%) of these.
- This reporting period covers the end of the lockdown period associated with the COVID19 pandemic. As in 2019/20, there were no significant concerns raised to the Complaints Team regarding shortfalls in service, nor any formal complaints made which were directly attributable to a change in service due to the pandemic.
- 20 of the new complaints received in 2021/22 were in relation to the Council's Adult Social Work teams (this is a slight increase from 17 in 2020/21), however the number of complaints concerning commissioned providers (which include residential and nursing homes and those providing care in the home) decreased from 12 in 2020/21 to 10 in 2021/22. 3 complaints were in relation to Solihull's Adults Social Care Finance Team (a decrease from 6 in 2020/21).
- The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, state in 14(3), that the Local Authority should respond to an Adult Social Services complaint within a period of six months.

In 2021/22, 83% (19/23) investigations carried out by the Council's internal Adult Social Work teams have been completed within the Council's self-imposed and much shorter, 30 working day timescale. Four of the complaint responses fell outside of the 30 working day timescale, taking longer to respond to, as they were particularly complex; however these were all resolved well within the 6 month statutory response timescale.

The number of commissioned provider complaints responded to within 30 working days has significantly increased from 15% in 2020/21, to 67% in 2021/22.

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- The quality of the complaint responses has remained high in all areas and the number of complaints that have proceeded to an Ombudsman investigation is low.
- During 2021/22 there were 7 new complaints referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for Solihull Adults Social Care Services and there were no live complaints brought forward into 2021/22 from 2020/21.

Of these 7 complaints:

- the LGSCO declined to investigate 2,
- 2 were classed as premature complaints (a complaint which has not already been investigated by the Council),
- 1 complaint was received in Qtr 2 and closed in Qtr 4 (the outcome of which was fault found, an apology to be provided and payment of £200 to the complainant) and
- 2 complaints were still being investigated by the LGO at the end of 2021/22 and were carried forward to 2022/23.

The quality of complaint responses in Solihull is good and investigation is thorough which appears to correlate with the low number of cases which are referred to the LGSCO where fault is then found.

All responses to the LGSCO's requests are completed within the timescales agreed with the Ombudsman.

Learning from complaints

Learning from complaints has continued to be taken seriously and again, an exceptionally high proportion of learning forms sent to investigating managers have been returned to the Complaints Team. There were only 5 forms outstanding at the end of the year and all 5 learning forms have since been received in 2022/23.

All learning is tracked through to implementation, ensuring that complaints make a difference to practice where necessary. This has been evidenced by the reducing number of issues being raised in what were common areas of complaint.

Compliments

- 205 compliments were received in 2021/22. These included some for commissioned providers.

Areas of good practice highlighted through compliments can also be used by social work managers as learning opportunities for all staff.

Examples of the compliments received are as follows:

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All Age Disability Team

A text message sent to the allocated social worker stated "Thank you for everything. You were very inspirational in my niece's case. We truly appreciated your input. Take care"

Chelmunds Court

" I just wanted to say thank you so much for helping our family through this change of lifestyle for our mom. The efforts you all went to in celebrating my mums birthday were overwhelming and I know she was secretly thrilled. Chelmunds Court and everyone it has given us all our lives back. Once again, a big thank you for looking after our family. Bless you all"

First Point of Contact and DoLS Team

"Mrs X contacted the team to say that her brother had sadly passed away but she wanted to thank a specific member of staff for trying to help him and for being so kind and patient with him. She said she "cannot thank him enough... "

Hospital SW Team

" I would like to thank a member of staff for her hard work and professionalism. My mother left hospital after breaking her hip and was very distressed from her experience there. My sister rang X and she explained how we needed help. X did her very best and organised the very best care for my mother. She was very understanding, sensitive and assertive. She was organised and communicated so well with me and my sister, who was desperate for help at the time. My mum is now back on her feet all thanks to X."

Older Adults Community Team, Dols, Hospital SW Team

"Unfortunately, Mum passed away on Friday afternoon in Hospital. I would like to thank you for everything that you personally did to support Mum and advise us. Please also pass on my thanks to the teams involved for the professional way in which they handled mum's hospital discharge. I would also be grateful if you would pass on my gratitude to the member of staff within the DoLs Team, for the way they dealt with the various DoLS applications."

Older Adults Community Team

" Please pass on our heartfelt thanks to X who answered our telephone call this morning and to the Team Manager, for all their help and support today. We feel that their Line Managers, should be aware of how outstanding their care and attention has been."

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Occupational Therapy

Mr X contacted the team to inform them that his rise/recliner chair which he requested previously has now arrived. He said *"it's brilliant and I'm really pleased. I can get up from the chair so much easier now, thank you"*. He said that he was really impressed with Solihull Council and how much help he received.

Nationwide (commissioned provider)

"I just want to thank you very much indeed in supporting and looking out for my mum this last year. Everyone was kind and mum really took a liking to them. It was tough time for her and you really made a difference and helped her carry on as independently as possible. This gave me immense peace, as I live a long way from her. I would also like to praise the office staff. Every time I had a query you were fast to resolve it. I never had to wait to get through on the phone. You responded to my queries by looking at the information instantly and I valued the efficiency massively. Everyone I spoke to, without exception, was so nice. I would not hesitate in recommending your services to anyone. Thanks again"

9 Downing Close (care home)

"I would like to thank everyone at no. 9, for their dedication and thoughtfulness to all the residents through what has been a most difficult of times. We have entrusted the most precious things in our lives to them and are confident the good work will continue. My friend is happy to come back on Mondays and I am sure if she could talk, she would echo our sentiments."

Tanworth Court (commissioned provider)

"Although mum has been with yourselves for a short time, I wanted to express our appreciation for the support you provided to me, my sister and our mother. It has been very difficult in many ways but we are extremely grateful for what you have been able to facilitate us being with our mother. The staff who look after mum have been great and very respectful. You have supported us to get through this. Thank you"

Equipment and Wheelchair Service

Mrs x complimented the members of staff on the service they provided. She said they were very professional and gave her plenty of time to get to the door and they spoke to her regarding where she wanted each piece of equipment left. Mrs x stated, *"they are a credit to your service."*

Equipment and Wheelchair Service

"Please can I thank you and your team for your swift work today with delivering a hoist and slings out to my rapid response patient. Through this provision we were able to prevent an unnecessary admission into hospital and it allowed our patient to remain safely at home with his family. Thank you again".

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Reablement Team

"I just wanted to say that I recently had support from a member of staff with setting up reablement for a client. This was the first referral I have made to the service X was very helpful and made the process simple, I was very pleased with the quick response and set up of the reablement package from the time of referral. Communication and updates from the team and X were very good. I found that the support from the reablement service met the needs of the client. Thank you."

Mental Health and Autism Team

"Thank you for the very professional and efficient way that you have dealt with X's case. After years of stress for him, which you bore the brunt of at times, but was no fault of yours, we have a positive outcome which is primarily because of your excellent input. Keep up the good work"

Universal Home Care

"I have always been able to communicate with the office. I have never had to wait for a return call. I always have spoken with a member of staff and she has always been attentive and been able to direct my call to the appropriate persons (i.e., care co-ordinators). She has always called back if she has said she needs to make more enquiries and she has always been able to provide information and input to reviews.

I have not had any concerns raised re the provision of care when I have undertaken a review. It has always been positive. I have often been feedback that the relationship between carer and the cared for person has been positive."

Reporting on complaints

- The performance reporting process to senior management has continued to work well. Detailed reports for heads of service and the Directorate Leadership Team are produced on time and at regular intervals, including monthly reports to Heads of Service and the Assistant Director and detailed quarterly reports to DLT. Ombudsman activity / responses are also reported to DLT and CLT on a monthly basis.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

During 2022/23, the Performance and Complaints Team will continue to work closely with all staff involved in investigating complaints; aiming to ensure that as many complaints as possible are responded to within the Council's internal 30 working day response timescale and where possible that concerns are resolved outside of this process.

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The Performance and Complaints Team will continue to provide high quality support to staff investigating complaints and responding to any Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman investigations, as requested.

The Performance and Complaints Team will be working with a Head of Service in Adults Social Care to collate data and also consider learning arising from informal complaints, so that opportunities to improve practice are taken at all levels.