
Select Committee on Health and Social Care 1st July 2008

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

The Directorate of Adult Community and Housing, Statutory Adults Social Care Complaints Procedures - Annual Report 2007 - 2008

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the Select Committee on Health and Social Care, the Directorate of Adult Community and Housing Annual Report on Social Care Complaints and Compliments for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. [Attached as Appendix 1]
2. To provide Members with information about the nature, number and outcomes of complaints and compliments received during the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.
3. To meet the requirements of the "Local Authorities' Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations, 2006 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 with regard to reporting on complaints and representations.
4. To assist Members in reviewing the learning about service delivery, which is available from the monitoring of complaints and representations and the quality of the Directorates response.

Background

5. The "Local Authorities' Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations, 2006 requires each Local Authority to appoint a Complaints Manager to ensure the provision of a robust social care complaints and representations procedure to eligible service users, and to provide an Annual Report on the procedures to Members. The Complaint Manager for Dudley is based within the Policy, Performance & Resources Division within the Directorate of Adult Community & Housing Services. The Complaints Team is available for any member of the public to contact regarding a social care complaint, compliment or comment.
6. In Dudley, all service users and people who request a service are provided with information on how to complain, or make a compliment.
7. A complaint, or compliment can be made by
 - Letter/Card
 - Leaflet
 - Telephone
 - Email
 - In person to any reception area
 - To any member of staff

8. Up to 10,000 Complaint and Compliment leaflets were distributed during the year either directly to service users or made available in public areas for people to use. They are the most used method for the public in raising issues of complaint, concern or praise.
9. All Social Care complaints and compliments are registered, monitored and reported on to senior managers, by the Quality and Complaints team. The information reported includes details of the number and nature of complaints, gender and ethnicity of complainants, trends in the nature and location of complaints and compliments, and performance information about timescales for resolution, outcome and redress

Summary of Complaints relating to services provided to Adults

10. During 2007/08 the Directorate of Adult Community and Housing Services, provided a service to 12,669 adult service users. The number of complaints received was **224**. This is an increase on the previous years figure where we received a total of **139** complaints. The annual report for the previous year 2006/07 put forward a projection that there would be an increase in the numbers of complaints received for 2007/08, and indeed that has been the case.

The increase was predicted due to factors such as:-

- The reduced role of the Commission for Social Care and Inspection [CSCI] in complaint handling,
 - Increased details in contracts requesting external providers of services to advise the Directorate of complaints.
 - Revised Complaint procedure:- the Department of Health published new Social Care complaint regulations & guidance in September 2006. The new legislation and guidance widened the scope of the procedures in terms of who can complain and the matters which can be complained about.
 - A continued plan to raise awareness of the complaint process with the public, managers and staff.
11. Whilst the numbers of complaints has increased, it should also be noted that the vast majority of people receiving a service appear to be satisfied with the service received, with just over 1% of all those provided with a service raising a complaint.
 12. Despite the increase in complaints there exists a highly satisfactory position In that **99%** of all complaints were resolved satisfactorily, at the earliest stage. A considerable amount of work goes into resolving complaints speedily and effectively and we can report that only **4** out of the **224** complaints registered during this year, needed to proceed to the formal complaint investigation stage.
 13. A training programme is offered to all social care staff, at all levels to understand their role in responding to complaints, and a key factor in resolving complaints this year and in previous years has been the quality of the response to complaints provided by the Managers of the service concerned.
 14. **80%** of all complaints were dealt with within the required 20 working days. The reason for complaints taking longer than 20 days to be resolved is largely due to the emphasis placed on resolving complaints at the first stage of the complaint process; acceptable with the knowledge and approval of the complainant.

15. There were **236** registered compliments for 2007/08 compared to **232** for 2006/07. The compliments received provide evidence of the quality services, high standards and performance delivered by members of staff throughout the service.
16. Local Government Ombudsman:- There have been **no** findings of Maladministration by the Ombudsman concerning Adult Social Care Services for 2007/08. This maintains an excellent record for Adult Social Care Services.

Finance

17. There are no direct financial implications concerning this report.

Law

18. The Social Care complaints procedures are determined by legislation, predominantly involving the:-
 - The "Local Authorities' Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations, 2006
 - NHS & Community Care Act 1990 (section 50)
 - Health & Social Care Bill 2000
 - Local Government Act 2000

Equality Impact

19. Equality & Diversity: All complaints are registered by the Quality & Complaints Team who gather details relating to a person's ethnicity, disability, age, and gender; this is done in order to evidence that the process is accessible and responsive to any person wishing to raise a complaint, comment or compliment and to assist in continually developing services to local people.

Recommendations

20. That the Select Committee note and comment on the information contained in the Directorate of Adult Community and Housing annual report on Social Care Complaints and Compliments for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.
21. Subject to the Annual Report being accepted; the Select Committee are asked to approve that this report is made available as a public document as required by legislation and guidance.



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List of Background Papers

Appendix 1:- **Annual Report April 2007 – 31st March 2008 Compliments & Complaints, Adult Services.**