



INDIVIDUALS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 1 NOVEMBER 2016

Subject Heading:

Adult Social Care Annual Complaints
Report 2015/16

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

Quality and high customer satisfaction

SUMMARY

The Adult Social Care Annual Complaints Report 2015-16 attached as Appendix 1 is for consideration and outlines the complaints, enquiries, compliments and Members correspondence received during the period April 2015 – March 2016.

Adult Social Care Annual Complaints fall within the remit of the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations with a requirement to publish the annual report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members note the contents of the report and the continued work in resolving and learning from complaints and the future challenges faced by the service.
2. That Members note the actions identified to improve services and the continued monitoring to ensure actions are implemented to evidence service improvements.
3. That Members note the positive feedback to services by way of compliments received.

REPORT DETAIL

4. Adult Social Care has experienced increased demand with 3707 clients coming into the service in 2015/16. This has been reflected in the number of formal complaints which has increased by 17%. Informal complaints, mainly involving external provider agencies i.e. home care and residential/nursing homes, have decreased by 18%.
5. Ombudsman complaints have remained at the same level in 2015/16 as in 2014/15, with three decisions of 'maladministration (no injustice) and one decision of 'maladministration with injustice'.
6. External home care complaints although remain the highest number of complaints, has dropped by 6% in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15, which has been a continuing trend. There have been increases across Adult Community Team North (ACT North), Financial Assessment & Benefits Team (FAB), Joint Assessment & Discharge Team (JAD).
7. 'Level of service' and 'dispute decision' was the main reasons for complaint in 2015/16, and showed an increase of 21% and 16% respectively from 2014/15. There has been a continuing trend in complaints relating to charges, which was also linked to level of service provided and incorrect information being given. 'Behaviour/attitude of staff' which has increased by 53% from 2014/15 was also quite high for 2015/16, however these related to the actions/decision of the social worker, rather than the behaviour, for example lack of communication with family or incorrect information.
8. The main outcome from complaints is either an 'explanation and apology given' or 'explanation and information provided'.
9. Complaint response times have improved in 2015/16 for formal complaints, although there remains the need to work much hard at ensuring timely responses. However it should be noted that complaints have become more complex and challenging, and may involve a number of agencies.
10. There has been an increase in complaints across 18-24; 55-64 and 65-74 age ranges. The total number of clients coming into the service (3,707) for 2015/16 showed 13% of those were between ages 18-64 and 87% aged over 65. Complaints involving people with learning disabilities have increased by 44% in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 and those with hearing/sensory or vision impairment have been evident in 2015/16, compared to none in 2014/15. There has been little movement across all ethnic minorities, with a small increase in those that are 'White British'.
11. Complainants continue to prefer to contact by letter, email or telephone. It should be noted that complaints leaflets are also received, however due to reporting this is included within letter category.

12. Expenditure was incurred in 2015/16 with a refund payment and time and trouble payment amounting to £12,300.
13. Compliments have decreased overall in 2015/16 by 32% in 2015/16 (51) compared to 2014/15 (75), although within JAD and Learning Disabilities teams there has been an increase, with also some of the new external provider agencies also receiving compliments.
14. Member enquiries have dropped by 34% in 2015/16 (56) compared to 2014/15 (85), with 73% responded to within timescale, compared to 80% in 2014/15.
15. Complaints continue to play an important role in providing management with useful information to help shape the service. It is noted that complaints are continuing a trend of complexity and therefore response times suffer as a result, but this will need to be addressed by looking at improving the processes within the Complaints Team.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There are no specific financial implications to this report, which is for information only. Costs incurred through complaints will be contained within Adult Social Care allocated budgets. However, the increased volumes of complaints highlighted in the report also increases the risks of consequential compensation payments, which is being managed in the service by ensuring lessons are learned and procedures reviewed to minimise the risk of future complaints that may result in compensation.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no apparent direct legal implications arising from noting of this report

Human Resources implications and risks:

Adult Social Care continues to support a personalised approach to customer needs in the Havering community. Training and development opportunities for staff will focus on the skills that are essential for effectively undertaking this responsibility. It is of vital importance that existing, and potential, customers receive the highest quality of service delivery possible. The needs of Adult Social Care staff in relation to implementation of the Care Act, with greater integrated working with health services, have been captured within the new Workforce Development Strategy and Plan.

The Council uses monitoring data from the complaints process as an indicator of how well Adult Social Care is delivering its services to the community. To ensure that there is significant continuity, and consistency in advice, along with other areas of delivery, frontline and support staff across the service teams need to be part of a stabilised workforce that is able to meet service and quality standards. Relevant

outcomes from the complaints process have been incorporated into the new Plan in order to aid learning and improve staff performance.

Equalities implications and risks:

We are regularly monitoring the equalities profile of our customers and it is encouraging that disclosure is improving year on year.

The most recent monitoring information has evidenced that the number of ethnic minorities accessing the complaints process is reflective of the population within Havering and therefore accessing information about our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedure or the facilities available to make a complaint/compliment is available to these groups. Monitoring data shows that there has been a significant increase in complaints made by service users with physical disabilities and this has been linked to the increase in disabled freedom pass complaints, however this will need continued monitoring.

We will continue to ensure that our communication is clear, accessible and written in Plain English, and that translation and interpreting services or reasonable adjustments are provided upon request or where appropriate. We will need to ensure accurate and comprehensive monitoring data is maintained to cross-tabulate complaints data against protected characteristics. This will provide us with more detailed information on gaps/issues in service provision and barriers facing people with different protected characteristics, and will enable us to take targeted actions and make informed decisions on service improvement and future service provision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None