

People Services

ANNUAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEEDBACK REPORT 2011/ 2012

Report Author: Statutory Complaints Manager

Accountable Head of Service:

Head of Strategic Commissioning and Resources

Head of Adult Social Care

Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, People Services

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to:

- **Report complaints statistics for 2011/ 2012**
- **Report on trend analysis**
- **Report on learning from complaints**
- **Report on development of the complaints management**

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1 Introduction

Feedback received by service users is a valuable source of information, welcomed by Thurrock Council. All types of feedback, including areas where we have achieved well, suggestions for improvement and complaints, are considered to drive improvement. This report will highlight and analyse key statistics related to adult social care feedback.

- 1.1 All complaints received are reviewed and categorised before they are investigated to ensure they are dealt with by an appropriate person. Complaints are usually investigated by an area outside of the one being complained about to ensure impartiality, unless the complaint is about a staff member, when the complaint is usually investigated by their line manager.
- 1.2 Complaints are categorised by the level of intervention required. Appendix 3 shows a table of categorisation and provides some examples.
- 1.3 People Services is committed to managing feedback received in a positive way and ensure that services are improved as a result of the learning outcomes. All complaints are logged, monitored and reviewed using a system called Respond. The system used has been specially designed to manage complaints and is only accessible by the Complaints Team to ensure confidentiality.
- 1.4 The importance of raising the profile of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults has continued to be addressed within the complaints process and information booklets given to service users. In addition the complaints training also included a section on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.
- 1.4 Each complaint which is received is reviewed by the safeguarding team to ensure that all issues are identified immediately, this arrangement is working well. Within this reporting year 13 investigations have been taken on by the safeguarding team as a result of this management process, there were 7 the previous reporting year.
- 1.5 Complaints received by Thurrock Council for commissioned providers are also logged and consent forms are sent to the complainants to ask if they are happy for us to share the complaint with the provider. If they are not happy for the complaint to be shared and wish to remain anonymous or request that Thurrock Council investigate instead of the provider Thurrock Council facilitate this request. If the investigation is carried out by the commissioned provider Thurrock council monitor the complaint response, through the Contracts and Compliance Team and the Statutory Complaints Manager.
- 1.6 Processes and procedures are continuously reviewed within the Essex Complaints Managers Network Group, which is co-chaired by the Statutory Complaints Manager. The group discuss and share best practice in complaints management and related issues. In addition they also review changes in statutory legislation relating to these areas.

2. Complaints Statistics

- 2.1 The number of complaints received by Adult Social Care Services has slightly decreased during this reporting year in comparison to the previous year.
- 2.2 A total of 44 complaints were received during the reporting year for Thurrock Council, there were 58 the previous year. Of these 9 were withdrawn and 8 were cancelled. This left 27 complaints which were investigated; there were 45 the previous year. Of those investigated 1 was classed as on the spot, 6 as low level, 19 medium level, 1 high level and no top level. In addition to these complaints, 3 Customer finance complaints were monitored, however these were processed through the corporate complaints procedures.
- 2.3 We have also received 13 concerns for Thurrock Council – these were not previously recorded, however to ensure that trends are identified, Adult Social Care has started to track these.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 also shows the nature of complaints received for Thurrock Council, 22 related to service, 9 related to staff and 5 related to policy/ procedure. There has been a large decrease in staff complaints received from the previous year where there were 26. This has been a result of continuous emphasis on staff training, in particular within customer service.

Of those complaint closed, there has been an ongoing decrease in upheld and partially upheld complaints over the past 3 years. This shows that although complaints are being raised more are unjustified. This also demonstrates that within a climate of increased demand of service, the quality of service has continued to improve and perform well. The following table shows these figures compared to last two years:

	2009-2010		2010 - 2011		2011 - 2012	
	Closed outcomes	%	Closed outcomes	%	Closed Outcomes	%
Not upheld	8	13%	12	23%	12	24%
Upheld	21	35%	10	20%	11	22%
Partially upheld	24	39%	17	32%	11	22%
Withdrawn	8	13%	7	13%	9	18%
Cancelled	0	NIL	6	12%	7	14%

- 2.5 There has also been an increase in cancelled complaints; this is normally due to the council taking the decision not to investigate certain complaints as there is lack of information for the investigation to progress. Alternatively it could be because the safeguarding team are going to progress the matter through their procedures. Adult Social Care review all complaints received to see if the issues can be investigated and if the issues raised warrant investigation, rather than automatically instigating an investigation.

In addition there has also been an increase in withdrawn complaints, this is due to staff dealing with issues raised proactively as they arise and therefore complainants are withdrawing their complaints as they are being resolved effectively.

- 2.6 A total of 47 complaints were received by Thurrock Council for commissioned providers, there were 43 the previous year. Of these 2 were withdrawn and 10 were cancelled. Of the remaining complaints, 2 were classed as on the spot, 17 was low level, 12 medium level and 4 were high level. Of the 35 complaints managed, 13 were investigated by Thurrock Council due to complexity, content or at the complainant's request
- 2.7 In addition, we have also received 56 concerns for commissioned providers – these were not previously recorded, however to ensure that trends are identified, the council has started to track these. The largest issue continuously raised was that visits from careers were either not made or where at the incorrect time.
- 2.8 From the 49 Commissioned provider complaints closed, 4 were not upheld, 14 were upheld, 19 were partially upheld 2 were withdrawn and 10 were cancelled.

The following table shows these figures compared to last year:

	2009-2010		2010 - 2011		2011 - 2012	
	Closed Outcomes	%	Closed outcomes	%	Closed outcomes	%
Not upheld	12	22%	8	19%	4	8.2%
Upheld	28	52%	11	26%	14	28.5%
Partially upheld	13	24%	21	50%	19	38.7%
Withdrawn	1	2%	2	5%	2	4%
Cancelled					10	20.4%

Please note that the majority of cancelled complaints were progressed as safeguarding investigations.

- 2.9 The number of complaints investigations managed by safeguarding has increased, there were 14 this reporting year and 7 during the last year. This reporting years figure reflects figures prior to 2009, as last year we experienced a decrease. Of the 14, 12 were complaints against commissioned providers.
- 2.10 A total of 219 compliments were recorded during the reporting year, there were 160 the previous year, 61 of these were internal and 158 were external. This number shows an increase of 59 compliments this reporting year. Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of the compliments received.
- In addition to the compliments highlighted above, 10 were also received for commissioned Providers.
- 2.11 The number of MP Enquiries received, 10, mirrors the figures from the previous reporting year, 11.
- 2.12 The number of Cllr Enquiries recorded has slightly decreased from the previous reporting year from 38 to 30 this reporting year.

- 2.13 The Statutory Complaints Manager has shared the feedback statistics with the Eastern Region Complaints Managers Group. As each of the authorities is very different in set up, size and geographical area covered, it was felt that it was inappropriate to benchmark against each other.
- 2.14 5 complaints were escalated to the LGO during the reporting year. Of these 3 were discontinued, 1 concluded no maladministration and 1 concluded local settlement. 5 LGO enquiries were received last year, all of which concluded no maladministration.
- 2.13 Complaints statistics for commissioned providers are also shared with the co Contracts Compliance team on a quarterly basis. The information is added to issues already logged by the team. Further analysis is then carried out to identify any trends and to ensure these are picked up on during contacts compliance visits.
- 2.14 Approximately 12% of satisfaction questionnaires were returned, the majority of these were positive; this figure was 16% the last reporting year. The return rate of these questionnaires continues to be higher than other authorities.

3. Learning from Complaints

- 3.1 The Learning from Complaints form includes a complaints log, which highlights what was investigated, what the findings were, and the conclusions and recommendations following the investigation.

All of the complaints are monitored by the Statutory Complaints Manager and final closure letters are sent from the Head of Adult Social Care. Learning actions have been logged and monitored to ensure that all promised action has been taken forward. Learning from complaints is discussed on a monthly basis by the Head of Strategic Commissioning and Resources and the Statutory Complaints Manager.

- 3.2 Appendix 2 provides some examples of case studies which demonstrate the actions/ service improvements which have taken place following complaints received.

Many more learning actions have been raised, in addition, learning logs are also completed for complaints received regarding commissioned providers; again recommendations are logged and monitored until they are complete.

4. Response Timeframes

4.1 Complaints

The Adult Social Care procedures highlight that each complaint needs to be dealt with flexibly, simply and with the intention to improve the service, therefore the timeframes are set by the investigating officers further to consultation with the complainants. No complaint should be open after six months. All of the investigations were concluded well within this timeframe.

When a complaint is initially responded to, the complainants are given a period of 2 weeks to respond to the investigating officers with any further queries or concerns. If no further correspondence is received the complaint is closed and a final closure letter is sent by the Head of Adult Services.

Each investigation and response letter and is checked by the line manager of the investigating officer to ensure that all issues have been answered clearly.

Each letter of response is also quality checked and if needed, advice is given to the investigating officer and their manager on areas which can be improved in future investigations.

4.2 Enquiries

The timeframes for Cllr Enquiries and MP Enquiries is 10 working days, the table below shows the impressive response timeframes achieved within the reporting year.

Type of Enquiry	Number of enquiries		% within timeframe	
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2010/2011	2011/2012
MP Enquiry	10	9	100%	100%
Cllr Enquiry	38	29	95%	90%
LGO Enquiry	5	5	100%	100%*

* The LGO enquiry timeframe is 28 days; however the council has an internal timeframe of 21 days.

All five of the LGO enquiries were responded to less than 21 days, the average response timeframe of the 5 responses issued was 15 days.

5. Development of complaints management

5.1 The training for investigating officers has continued and complaints are only allocated to officers who have attended the training. In addition one to one follow up support has been given to investigating officers of Thurrock Council and commissioned providers. Training delivered has received positive feedback.

In addition a LGO guidance document, aimed at commissioned providers was circulated and discussed at meetings with the providers.

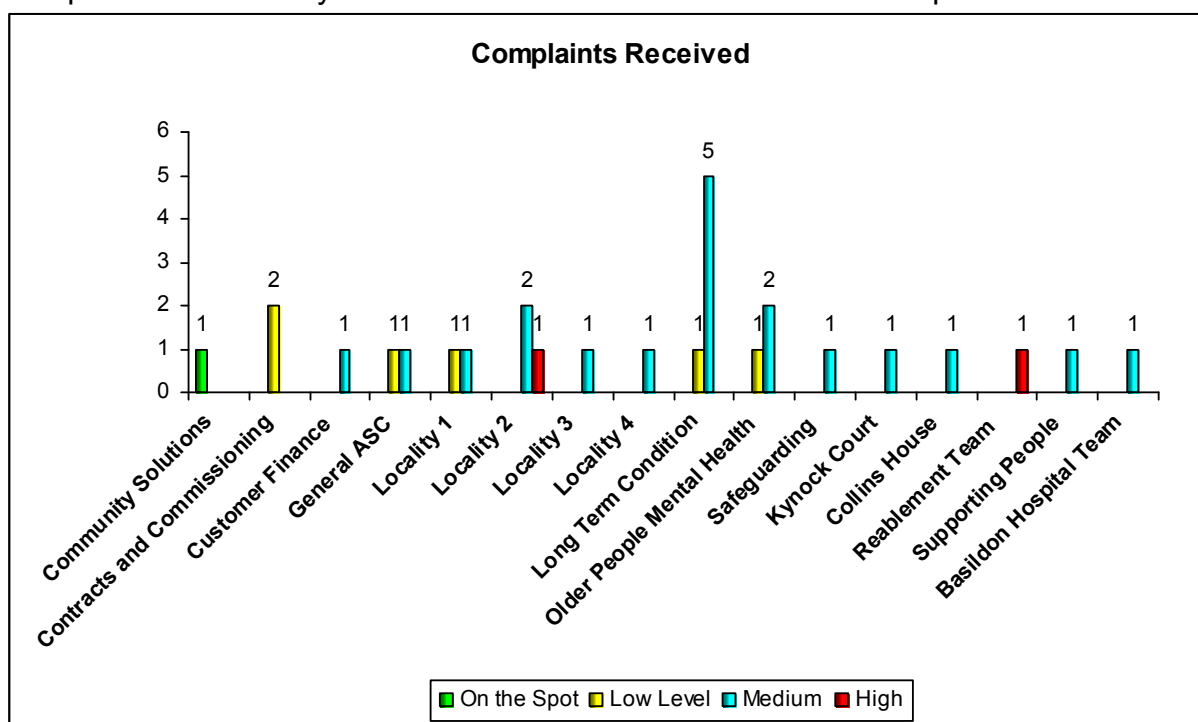
5.2 Training for front line staff and how to deal with dissatisfied customers is now available via relearning. The course aims to develop officers to deal with issues and problems as they arise – rather than sending them down the complaints route unnecessarily. Adult Social Care has already seen the benefit of this course as the number of complaints being cancelled has increased – this is due to officers resolving problems without delay.

5.4 The booklet entitled “How you can feedback” is given to all new service users. This booklet has been changed to highlight feedback rather than complaints in the title.

- 5.5 A joint working protocol is also in place between the Essex Region Complaints Managers (NHS, Ambulance Service and Social Care), this ensures that joint complaints are managed the same regardless of where they are received.
- 5.6 An agreement regarding sharing Mediation Services amongst the Essex Region Complaints Managers is close to being finalised. This will ensure that a free service of mediation will be available to all those within the agreement and resource will be shared between the organisations, and when such need arises, they will not need to commission services externally.

Appendix 1

Complaints received by each area and the level of intervention required.



Issue Nature of complaints received in the past two years:

Service Area	Policy/Procedure		Service		Staff	
	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12	10/11	11/12
Basildon Hospital Team			1	1	1	
Collins House			2	2		
Community Solutions Team			2	1		
Contracts and Commissioning		1	3	1	1	
Customer Finance	1		6	1		1
Disability provider Services					1	
General ASC	2	3	2			
Reablement Team				1	2	1
Locality 1			7	2	2	
Locality 2		1	1	3	1	
Locality 3			1	1	1	
Locality 4			1	1	1	1
Long Term Conditions			3	4	6	3
Older Peoples Mental Health			2	1	4	2
Piggs Corner					3	
Quality Development Team					1	
Safeguarding					2	1
Transition			1			
Workforce Planning			1			
Kynock Court				1		
Supporting People				1		
Occupational Therapy				1		
Total	3	5	32	22	26	9

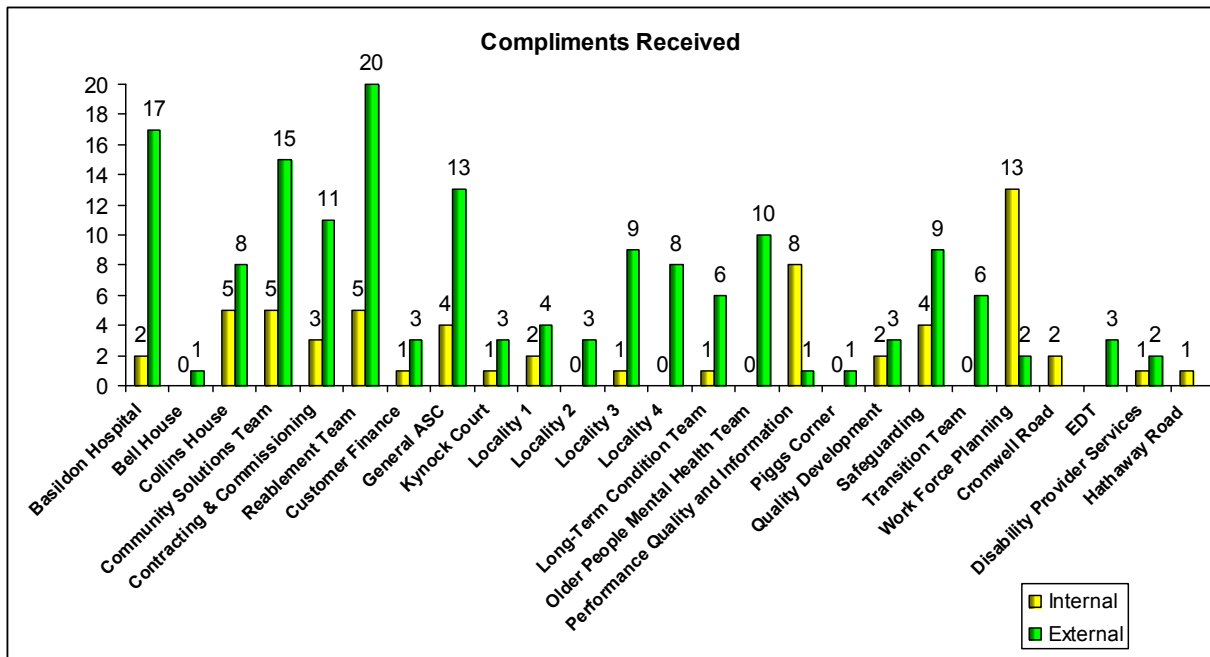
Report Name: Annual Feedback Report 2012

Author: Bali Nahal

Position: Statutory Complaints Manager, People Services

Please note that withdrawn and cancelled complaints have not been included in the figures above

Compliments Received during 2011 – 2012



In addition to the compliments highlighted above, 10 were also received for commissioned Providers.

Appendix 2

Learning from Complaints - Thurrock Council Examples

1. All assessments are now checked by line managers for accuracy and the use of factual terminology.
2. Staff have been reminded about the Council's policy regarding placements in care homes outside the borough and the process to follow to ensure accurate and consistent information is given to service users and their families.
3. The format of assessments has been reviewed and amended to ensure they are customer friendly and easy to understand.
4. Staff to ensure that any form of communication which contains sensitive and confidential information is only sent to the relevant people. This message has been circulated with staff during their appraisals and through team meetings.

Learning from complaints – Commissioned Provider Examples

1. A particular care home has been reminded that staffing levels are not compromised at any time.
2. An alarm has also been installed on the door of one care home to prevent service users from leaving the premises unsupervised as there were concerns over security.
3. Medication sheets have been amended to capture relevant information. In addition staff have been asked to ensure that they check dossett boxes before signing that they have been finished.
4. The quality of food delivered by a provider has been investigated, as a result, packaging has been changed, menus' have been amended and the portion sizes have been adjusted.

There are more cases where complaints have been learnt from on the "you said we did" page of the Thurrock Council website.

Appendix 3

Category Intervention	Description	Example Complaints
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Report Name: Annual Feedback Report 2012

Author: Bali Nahal

Position: Statutory Complaints Manager, People Services

On the Spot (Instant Resolution)	It is difficult to encourage staff to log these types of complaints as they are sometimes embarrassed by them and feel they reflect badly on their professionalism. Staff should be encouraged to log these as it shows that staff are able to resolve complaints instantly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complainant is not given enough information over the phone and complains to the member of staff. They apologise over the phone and give the information, which is requested.
Low Level	No/ Minimal impact and risk to the provision of care or service. No lasting detriment. No risk of litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed or cancelled appointments Event resulting in minor harm (eg cut, strain) Lack of cleanliness Single failure to meet care needs (eg missed call back)
Medium Level	Impact of service provision/ delivery. Legitimate service user concern but no lasting detriment. Potential risk of litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event resulting in moderate harm (eg fracture) Failure to meet care needs Miscommunication or misinformation Incorrect treatment Staff attitude or communication or misinformation
High level	Significant issues of standards, quality of care, or denial of rights. Complaints with clear quality assurance or risk management implications. Issues causing lasting detriment. Possibility of litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event resulting in serious harm (significant levels of bruising or bleeding) Multiple issues relating to a longer period of care, often involving more than one organisation or individual (see medium level list)
Top Level	Serious adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events resulting in serious harm or death Gross professional misconduct Abuse or neglect Criminal offence (assault)