

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on Monday, 5 December 2016

Report of the Complaints Manager

Electoral Division affected: (All Divisions);
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Annual Statutory Report for Social Care Complaints and Customer Feedback

Appendix 'A' refers

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The production of the Annual Complaints and Customer Feedback Report is a longstanding statutory requirement. It contains statistical information, analysis and learning for the organisation in relation to statutory social care complaints and compliments received from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is recommended to receive the Complaints and Customer Feedback Annual Report 2015/16 and acknowledge the associated learning from customer feedback for the past year.

Background and Advice

The County Council has a legal obligation to publish a complaints and customer feedback report on social care statutory complaints on an annual basis. There are two statutory procedures, both different: one for CYP social care complaints and one for adult social care complaints.

Last year for the first time ever, a combined County Council complaints report was produced and cleared through Management Team and then presented to Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement. This year a single social care statutory report has been produced.

It should be noted that there is an established pathway for sharing intelligence from complaints. Every quarter, performance information from customer complaints and feedback is published by the complaints and appeals team and is shared with all County Council heads of service and directors. This information is also used by the Business Intelligence Team and is incorporated into their quarterly Quality of Service Reports under Start Well, Live Well and Age Well along with the two Highlight

Reports. In addition, a summary of the number of complaints for each quarter, along with comparisons to previous quarters is included in the quarterly Corporate Performance Overview report. These reports are also discussed at respective management team meetings across the County Council. Because complaints are an important tool to access customer satisfaction, the complaints team regularly attends management team meetings and links in with principal social workers to ensure that complaints which are upheld, result in continuous improvements for the County Council. It is of course vital to learn the lessons from complaints and spot early trends if service delivery is going wrong. This is particularly important in order to embed learning if new County Council processes are being implemented which impact negatively on the public.

Complaints represented around one percent of active adult social care and children's social care cases with an open referral in 2015/16. Statutory complaint totals have however increased overall by 54% (480 in 2014/15 to 735 in 2015/16). The rise in complaints can be attributed to:

- a rise in overall activity levels
- increased expectations by the public and reduced budgets;
- ongoing financial complaints which have increased year on year as a proportion of complaints since 2013/14;
- it now being 'easier' to complain using the complaints portal on the Lancashire County Council internet; and
- a single complaints team now logs, tracks and supports complaints through to resolution which means that complaints are no longer 'hidden' in different parts of the council.

Complaints in adult social care (ASC) have risen by almost 25% (from 334 complaints in 2014/15 to 417 in 2015/16). There were 21 complex joint complaints with the NHS, which is the same number as in 2014/15.

Children's complaints across all services have increased from 171 to 321 in 2015/16: a rise of 88%. Statutory children's social care complaints increased by 44% (from 146 complaints in 2014/15 to 211 in 2015/16). Complaints about the assessment process formed the subject of just less than half of all statutory complaints.

During 2015/16 the main themes and areas of concern in statutory social care complaints were about:

- Financial issues and services
- Assessments across CYP and adult services
- Internal working and with partners
- Safeguarding and child protection services

Learning from complaints has resulted in improvements being made to:

- Recording
- Policies and procedures
- Assessment processes

- Staff awareness through training
- Support from professionals dealing with cases.
- Contract monitoring of providers
- Embedding themes and learning back to senior managers via senior management teams.

The details are outlined in the appropriate sections of the report.

Consultations

Consultation has taken place with The Senior Management Team, Heads of Service who are Designated Complaints Officers.

Implications:

There are no financial, personnel, Human Rights or data protection issues or legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

The contents of the report may be of interest to the press, and the Communications Team should be made aware of its contents.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/	Tel
The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009	2009	Angela Esslinger/ 01772 533950	
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk-si/2006/1738/introduction/made	2006	As above	
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-getting-the-best-from-complaints	2006		