

**Report to the Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 1 December 2022

**Report of the Director of Corporate Services**

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Caring for the vulnerable;

**Statutory Social Care Annual Report on Complaints and Customer Feedback  
2021-2022**

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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**Brief Summary**

Lancashire 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 children and young people's social care complaints and one for adult social care complaints.

The Statutory Social Care Annual Report on Complaints and Customer Feedback is set out at Appendix 'A'. The report is divided into separate sections for both adult and children and young people's services.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to note and comment on the Statutory Social Care Complaints Annual Report on Complaints and Customer Feedback for children and young people and adult services for 2021/22, acknowledging the associated learning, so that the county council can meet its legal obligations.



## **Detail**

Complaints are used by the county council as an opportunity to learn and improve. As a direct result of complaints made in 2021-2022, the county council has learnt lessons and improved services as detailed within the annual reports.

Because complaints are an important tool to access customer satisfaction, the complaints team regularly reports on statistics and trends, attends management team meetings and also links in with managers 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 council processes are being implemented which impact negatively on the public.

Received complaints represented just over 1% of all active adult social care and children's social care cases throughout Lancashire in 2021/22. Following the disruption and a reduction in complaints caused by the pandemic during 2020, staff have been working in often challenging circumstances to provide social care to individuals. The good news is that, following a reduction in complaints due to the pandemic in 2020/21, complaints had continued to reduce by 15% across children's services. In adult social care, complaints had increased slightly but overall totals were still less than in pre-pandemic years.

Most complaints were found to be justified, and lessons learnt mainly centred around making improvements to the way the county council communicates with complainants and are detailed in Appendix 'A'.

The adult social care section is covered on pages 7 to 15. Just over a third of complaints (37%) had no aspect of their complaint upheld. It should be noted that people were more likely to compliment adult social care services rather than to complain. Compliments had increased by 7% from 616 in 2020/21 to 659 in 2021/22.

The children's section is covered on pages 16 to 23. Almost all complaints were justified. Only 9% of complaints had no aspect of their complaint upheld. Compliments were running at similar levels to 2020/21.

The overall numbers of statutory complaints received by the Ombudsman decreased by 11% from 99 in 2020/21 to 89 in 2021/22, although more complaints had proceeded to investigation. This reflected the Ombudsman's increased capacity, as additional investigators had been appointed.

The statutory report is made publicly available on the council website and shared with other interested agencies such as Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch Lancashire.

## **Consultations**

Operational social care teams, managers and directors have been consulted on the annual report and the learning from complaints that has been identified.



## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

If an annual report on social care complaints and customer feedback is not published, the county council would be in breach of its statutory duties.

### **Equality and Cohesion and Human Rights**

The extensive lessons learnt sections in Appendix 'A' outline improvements made to services, as a direct result of upheld complaints and listening to feedback from the county council's most vulnerable customers and their representatives. This has contributed positively to the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty particularly in relation to advancing equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics. In terms of social care related issues, people are often from the age (both younger and older people) and disability protected characteristics groups.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

