

**DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES RESPONSE TO THE
ANNUAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS AND
COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2016-17**

- 1 The Adults and Communities Department acknowledges the Annual Report and thanks Simon Parsons for his work on this. We welcome the opportunity to improve services. The service notes the slight increase in compliments recorded during 2016-17.
- 2 In response to the feedback detailed in the Annual Report, the department's aims for the forthcoming year include:
 - Continuing to embed a process for learning from complaints throughout the department, implementing corrective actions arising from the complaints upheld by the Ombudsman in 2016-17;
 - Focusing on improving the accuracy of the recording of individual packages of commissioned support, known in the department as 'Care Package Line Items' (CPLI). This will help to ensure improved delivery of timely care and provide more accountable customer billing;
 - Work with domiciliary care providers to continue to improve service quality and provide better outcomes for service users.
- 3 Key actions identified for 2016-17 are as follows:
 - A renewed focus on ensuring that workers and Service Managers continue to be aware and take responsibility for data quality through the provision of additional training;
 - Ensuring that policy and practice guidance is regularly updated to support the workforce;
 - Enabling the Quality Improvement Team to work closely with providers to increase standards and ensure safety;
 - Focusing 'Making Safeguarding Personal' training is part of ensuring that robust procedures underpin decision-making;
 - Re-establishing quarterly meetings to oversee and drive forward improvements in dealing with joint health and social care complaints.
- 4 The above actions will be taken forward and monitored by the department's Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- 5 The Ombudsman made decisions on 14 cases during the year with seven cases being upheld. In four cases the Ombudsman decided not to investigate, either because there was no evidence of any fault, or the complaint concerned matters outside of their jurisdiction. In three cases, the Ombudsman, after detailed investigation, was happy with the actions the Council had taken.
- 6 The details of the seven upheld cases are detailed in the annual report. In summary they are:
 - A complaint regarding charges levied for a period in residential care and where concerns had been raised as to the level of care received;

- A wide-ranging complaint regarding charging, safeguarding and Personal Assistant support;
 - A complaint regarding how the Council dealt with a safeguarding referral;
 - A complaint regarding the Council's consideration of a fuel allowance claim where the ombudsman found administrative fault with how the Council had assessed this;
 - A complaint that the Council unfairly changed its charging policy and that the implications were not fully explained;
 - A complaint that the Council's advice left an individual without Personal Assistant support for a period of three months and failed to properly assess a request for mileage payments;
 - A complaint that the Council failed to properly consider the complainant's transport costs and needs.
- 7 These cases did not incur large financial penalties and were mainly settled through waiving fees and apologies to the affected claimants. The department is committed to reducing the impact of complaints upheld by taking preventative steps to stop issues arising and/or escalating.
- 8 The upheld cases mainly concern policies and procedures that have not been followed satisfactorily by staff in the department. The department has appointed as part of its restructure four Lead Practitioners to cover Safeguarding, Older Persons, Mental Health and Disability. These Lead Practitioners have a key role in updating and generating policies and procedures that are accurate, timely and useful to staff. This is managed by the Policy Oversight Group. The guidance is checked and where necessary updated upon analysis of any complaints received.
- 9 In addition, the Lead Practitioners are working with the Learning and Development Team and other services to generate a comprehensive and new mandatory training package for operational staff to be rolled out following the care pathway restructure in October 2017. This training will include key business areas such as ensuring robust procedures underpin decision making; asset based commissioning and will be supported by a mandatory refresher of our case management IT system.
- 10 Operational staff will also receive an assessment and support planning handbook following the training. It is hoped that these actions will continue to raise the quality of practice in the department and support standards that can be monitored through case audits. The aspiration is that we reduce complaints and the impact of complaints through achieving and striving for excellent practice.

Jon Wilson
Director of Adults and Communities