

## Appendix D: Case Studies from complaints received in 2017-18

Research shows that a primary driver for making complaints is so that lessons can be learned and processes improved. It is also a key part of an effective complaints procedure to demonstrate this organisational learning so that in turn the public can feel confident that complaints do make a difference.

Case studies can be a powerful way of promoting this and to illustrate some of the positive action taken this year from complaints, three examples are set out below:

### A's Story – Requesting a Carers Assessment (Adult Social Care)

A contacted the Council experiencing significant carers strain due to the complex health needs of his daughter. He requested an assessment in his own right.

After making a number of unsuccessful attempts to progress this matter he contacted our Complaints team.

#### Actions taken

The Council's investigations found a number of issues with the way these requests were being handled which did not support timely processing of the applications. This was further exacerbated by a 30% increase in requests for carers' assessments.

In response the following actions were taken:

- Immediate recruitment of a temporary resource within the Customer Service Centre to help load assessments.
- Significant process re-design including simplifying the form and automated uploading (removing the need for re-keying data).
- Recruitment of permanent resource to focus specifically on a range of enquiries from carers and to ensure they are supported in a timely and efficient manner.

### B's story – Lack of clear information regarding charges (Adult Social Care)

B contacted the Council on behalf of his father seeking assistance with understanding how his father would have to contribute to care costs.

B felt bewildered by the lack of clear information as to how this would work and contacted the Complaints section out of frustration with this.

#### Actions taken

B's experience is not uncommon. We recognise that charging for social care is a complex area and we needed to do more to make information easier to understand and more readily available.

In response, the Council has put significant effort into improving the information on our web-site around paying for care. The paying for care pages are now much clearer about most people having to contribute towards their care and support needs.

We have also seen a clear reduction in complaints where the Council could not evidence discussions had been held about care costs.

### **C's Story – Frustration over lack of timely action (Children's Social Care)**

C contacted the Council experiencing significant frustration with an apparent lack of progress in actions agreed across core groups and child protection conferences.

After making a number of unsuccessful attempts to discuss the case with the Team Manager she contacted our Complaints team.

#### **Actions taken**

The Council's investigations found a number of issues with the way this case had been handled. There was evidence of a number of calls not being returned and patchy case-recording.

There was also significant "drift" on the trajectory planning for this case and 4 different Team Managers had been involved over a relatively short period. This contributed to a lack of continuity and heightened frustrations.

During the year a number of positive steps have been taken to help avoid others suffering a similar experience. This includes:

- Launch of new practice standards which clearly set out the expectations for all social care workers
- Instated Case Decision Meetings (CDM) which provide a senior forum for cases that are suffering potential drift to be discussed and help define clear and timely trajectories
- Launched our Growing Excellence team which focuses work on trajectory planning
- Recruitment of a Principal Social worker who provides targeted support for complex cases