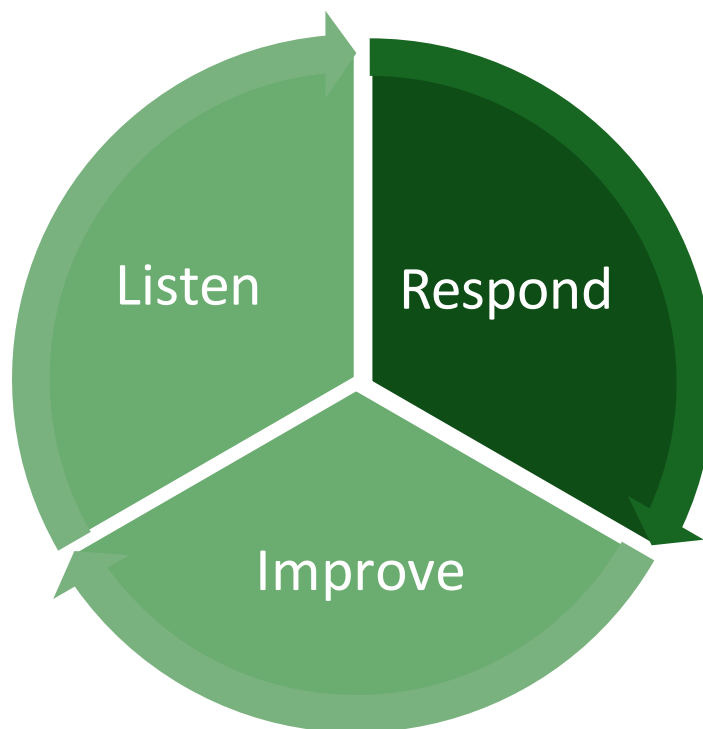


Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report

2024 – 2025



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report April 2024 – March 2025 | 1 |
| 1. Purpose and Context of Report..... | 2 |
| 1.1. Purpose & Scope | 2 |
| 1.2. Background Context..... | 3 |
| 2. Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure | 3 |
| 3. Complaints and compliments recorded in 2024-25..... | 5 |
| 3.1 Complaint Volumes | 5 |
| 3.2 Complaints by Theme | 5 |
| 3.3 Primary cause of complaints. | 6 |
| 3.4 Joint Complaints | 7 |
| 3.5 Compliments received 2024-25..... | 7 |
| 4. Complaints resolved 2024-25 | 8 |
| 4.1 Responsiveness to complaints | 8 |
| 4.2 Complaint Outcomes | 9 |
| 5. Learning from Complaints | 10 |
| 5.1 Corrective action taken..... | 10 |
| 6. Local Government Ombudsman | 11 |
| 6.1 New complaints received by the Ombudsman 2024-25..... | 11 |
| 6.2 Complaints resolved by the Ombudsman 2024-25 | 11 |
| 7. Monitoring the Process | 12 |
| 8. Final Comments | 12 |
| Appendix A: Sample of compliments received 2024-25 | 13 |

1. Purpose and Context of Report

1.1. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this report is –

- To report on Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) adult social care complaints and compliments activity from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- To set out future developments and planned improvements.
- To meet the Council's statutory duty requiring the production of an annual report each year.¹

Annual reports

(1) Each responsible body must prepare an annual report for each year which must—

(a) specify the number of complaints which the responsible body received;

(b) specify the number of complaints which the responsible body decided were well-founded;

(c) specify the number of complaints which the responsible body has been informed have been referred to—

(i) the Health Service Commissioner to consider under the 1993 Act; or

(ii) the Local Commissioner to consider under the Local Government Act 1974; and

(d) summarise—

(i) the subject matter of complaints that the responsible body received;

(ii) any matters of general importance arising out of those complaints, or the way in which the complaints were handled;

(iii) any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints.

This report provides analysis and comment for Adult Social Care Services on all complaints managed under the statutory complaints process. Those complainants not qualifying under the statutory process have been considered under the County Council's Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report presented to the Scrutiny Commission.

¹ [Statutory Instrument 2009 no.309 \(18\)](#)

1.2. Background Context

The Adult Social Care Service sits within the Adults and Communities Department, the Department arranges and supports the provision of a wide variety of services.

This includes helping people to remain living independently in their own homes, with increasing levels of choice and control over the support they receive. When this is no longer possible, the department supports residential care as well as having lead responsibility for safeguarding adults at risk of harm.

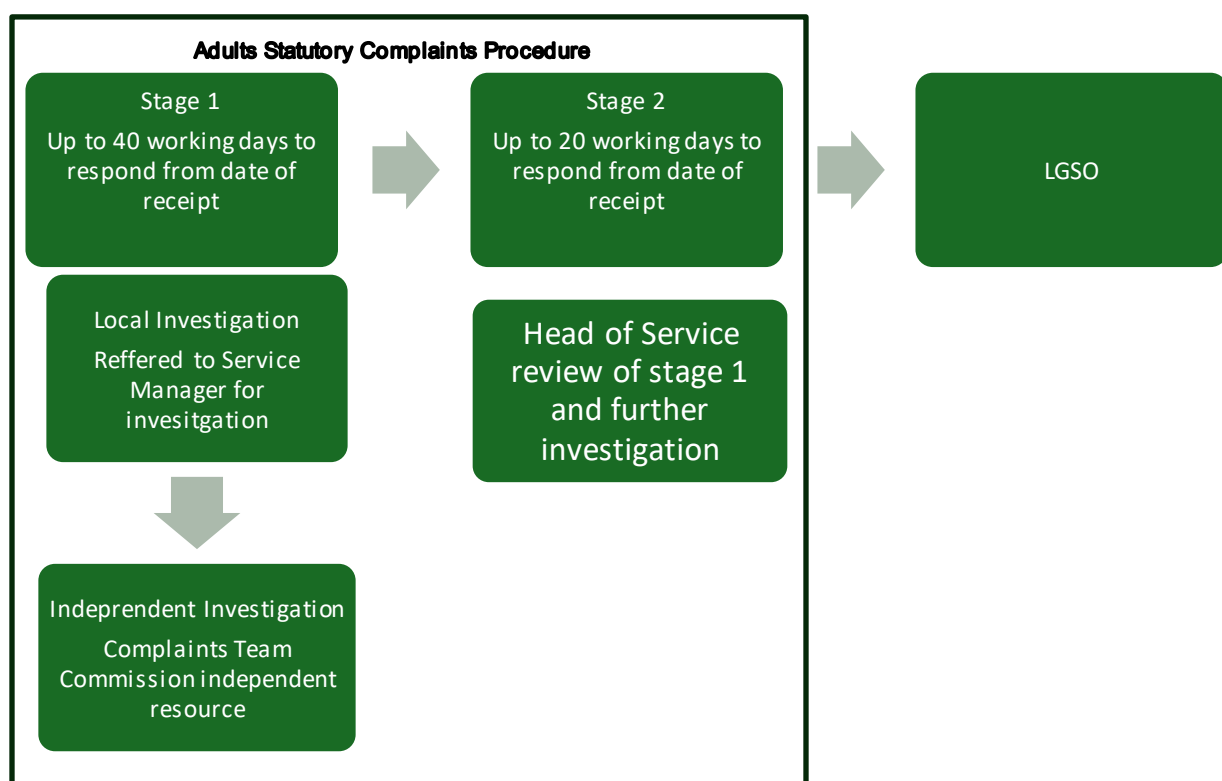
The department always aims to provide high quality services that meet the needs and circumstances of individuals and their families. The department actively promotes involving clients and carers in shaping services; using their skills and experiences to help ensure they meet customer needs. However, given the personal and complex nature of some adult social care services, sometimes things do go wrong.

The complaints process is a mechanism to identify problems and resolve issues. If things go wrong or fall below expectation, the County Council will try to sort things out quickly and fairly. Learning from our mistakes and concerns that are raised is used to make changes and improve services.

Analysis of information about complaints received during 2024 -25 gives Adult Social Care an opportunity to reflect on the quality of the services it provides and consider how well it listens and responds to service users.

2. Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 outlines the statutory responsibilities of the County Council. This is broadly set out below:



Local policy refers to one stage, with up to 65 working days to respond to the complainant, in line with legislation. Some councils, including Leicestershire, offer an internal review. Therefore, the schematic shows two stages, one for investigation and an escalation stage of review should the complainant remain dissatisfied. Both should occur within the 65 working day timeframe. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the council's handling, they may escalate the complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

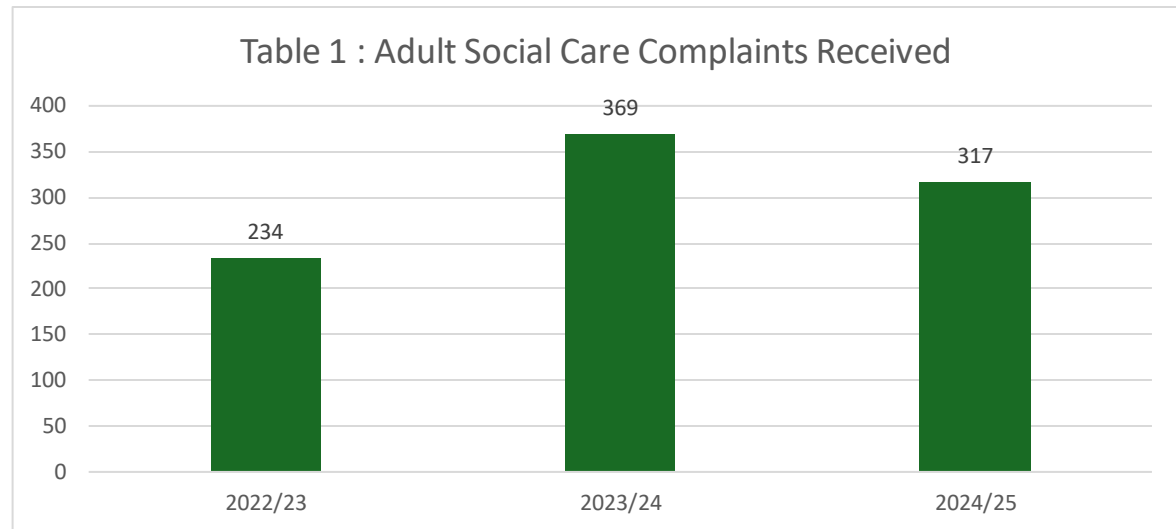
The Local Authority must advise all complainants of their right to approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman should an agreed resolution not be found.

During 2024-25, no independent investigations were commissioned.

3. Complaints and compliments recorded in 2024-25

3.1 Complaint Volumes

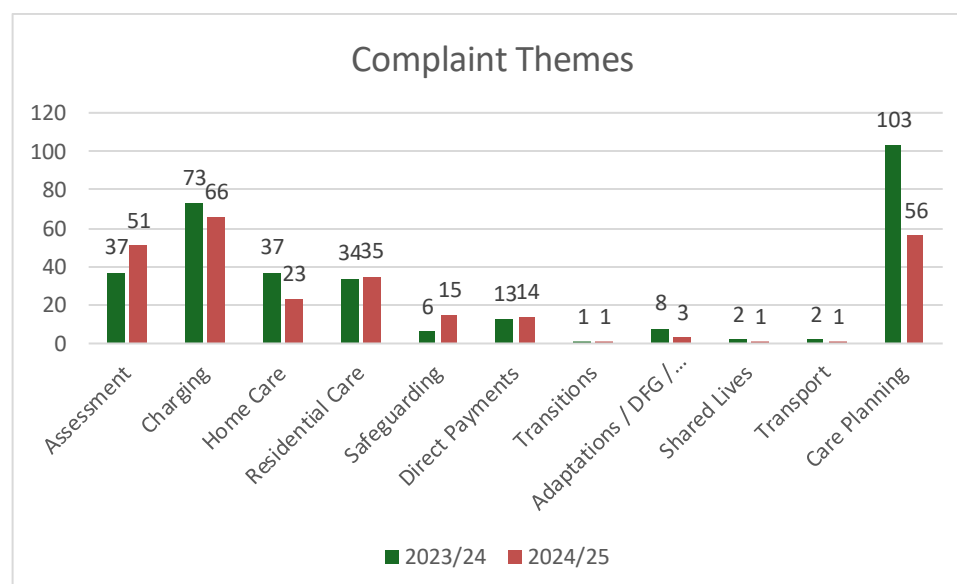
Graph 1: Adult Social Care Complaints recorded over last 3 years



As illustrated above, the total number of social care complaints responded to this year decreased (14%). This slight decrease shows the continued demand for the service, however, is also reflective of the continued work completed by the service to manage demand.

3.2 Complaints by Theme

Graph 2: adult social care complaints by theme



Complaint themes mirror the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman classifications and can provide helpful insight as to the underlying topics that are generating complaints.

For 2024/25 the largest segment of complaints is also the broadest category around Charging. This equates to 25% of the overall volume.

Complaints were mostly about poor communication, disputing invoices and charges & delays in completing financial assessments. This is reflected in the uphold rate as complaints about delay are always more likely to be upheld.

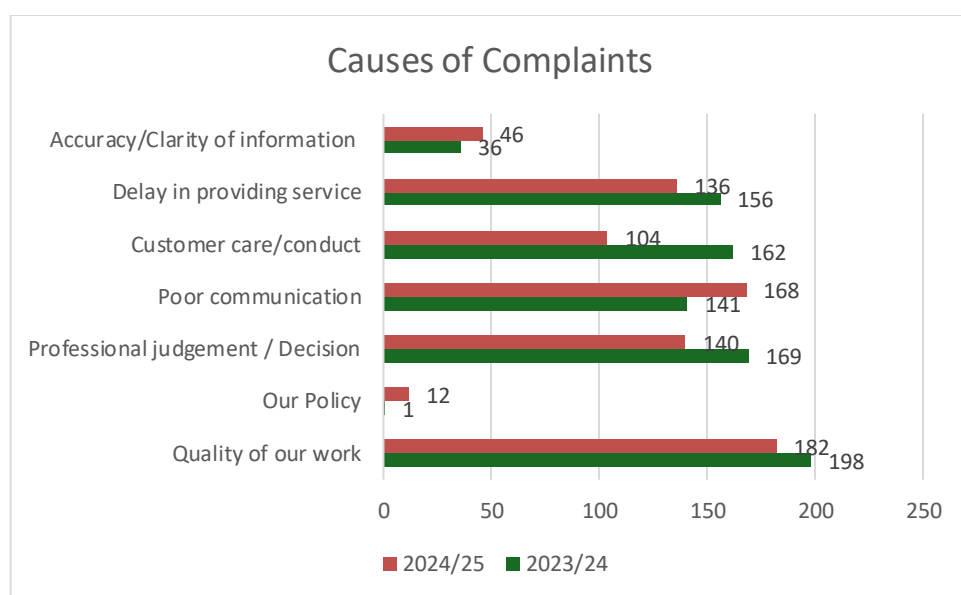
Complaints regarding Assessment increased throughout the year (19% of the overall volume). The main theme to these complaints were again delays and communication.

Positively, there has been a significant decrease in care planning complaints (46%). This again is reflective of the continued good work completed by the service to improve service offering and shows learning from previous complaints to reduce volumes in this category.

3.3 Primary cause of complaints.

The Complaints team also undertake analysis of each complaint to try to understand any significant factors. This can help prioritise areas for the department to focus on improving.

Graph 3: Complaint causes for Complaints resolved last 2 years.



Recording allows for multiple causes to be selected. So, if a complaint features “delay” as well as “Customer Care” then both will be selected. It follows that the data above will not match the overall number of complaints resolved.

Quality of Work remains the most frequently identified topic within complaints. This category includes quality of home and residential care.

There has been a reduction in the number of complaints related to customer care/conduct (35%). This supports above comments regarding the service learning from previous complaints and improving the service offering.

3.4 Joint Complaints

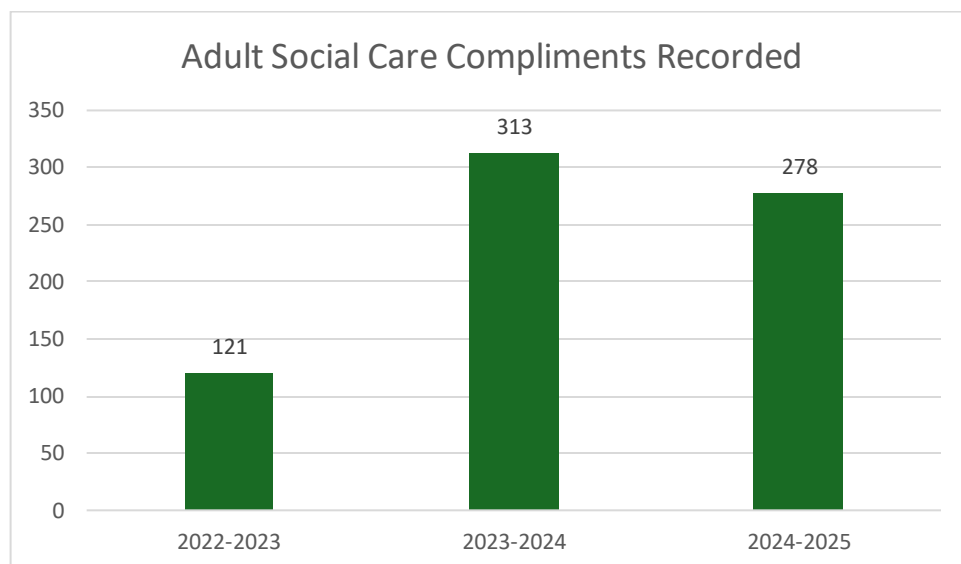
The Health and Social Care complaints regulations place a duty on Local Authorities to work together with health partners in responding jointly to complaints². Leicestershire County Council accordingly has a joint complaint handling protocol, supported by a multi-agency group, which sets out common guidelines and approaches to this.

Members include Leicester City Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), University Hospitals Leicester (UHL) and the Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT).

During the year 2024-25, one complaint was considered using the Joint Complaints protocol. No difficulties were experienced this year with partnership working.

3.5 Compliments received 2023-24

Graph 4 below shows the long-term trend in compliments recorded.



There has been a decrease in compliments recorded during 2024-25. The Complaints Team can only record compliments which are received directly via our online compliments form, or shared when received directly into the service. As many compliments are received directly by the service, the above data may not be truly reflective of the overall amount received.

It is always important to recognise the good work that is being delivered by the department and to provide balance within the complaints annual report. The complaints' team encourages the service to ensure any positive feedback is shared for central recording to improve the accuracy of this data.

A small selection of the compliments received can be found in Appendix A.

² [Statutory Instrument 2009 no. 309 \(9\)](#)

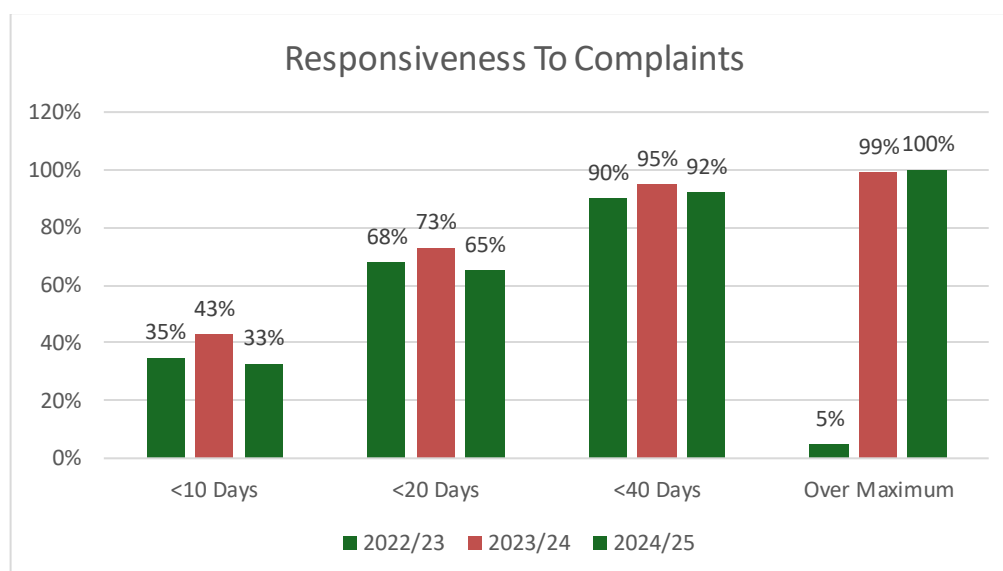
4. Complaints resolved 2024-25

The key performance indicators for speed of response, outcomes, causes and identified learning are linked to complaints that have been *resolved* within any given reporting period rather than received.

This is important as it ensures that full data sets can be presented, both to departments on a quarterly basis, and at year end. It also avoids the scenario whereby Ombudsman findings of maladministration might not appear in annual reports.

4.1 Responsiveness to complaints

Graph 5: Adult Social Care Performance at Stage 1



The above graph shows a slight decrease in response timescales at stage 1. 65% of all complaints were responded to within 20 working days and 92% within the statutory timescale of 65 working days.

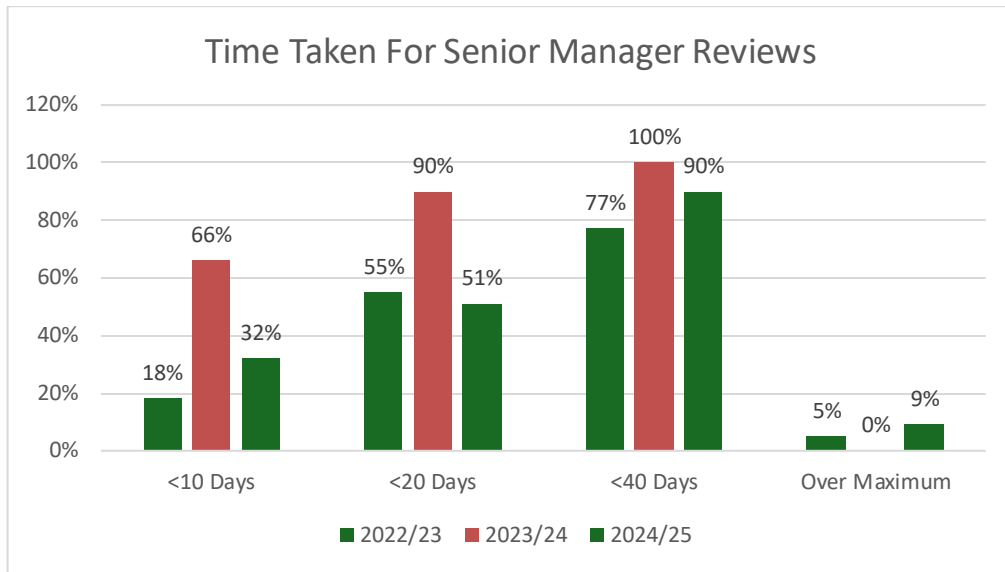
Whilst the statutory regulations give wide flexibility in terms of response times and allow up to 65 working days for complaints to be resolved, a key expectation of the public is that their concerns are dealt with promptly and this report provides good assurance of the department's commitment to this despite the challenges seen this year.

Adult Social Care Performance at Review Stage

38 complaints requested escalation to the Council during the year and were reviewed by a senior manager. This is a slight increase from 2023/24 (29).

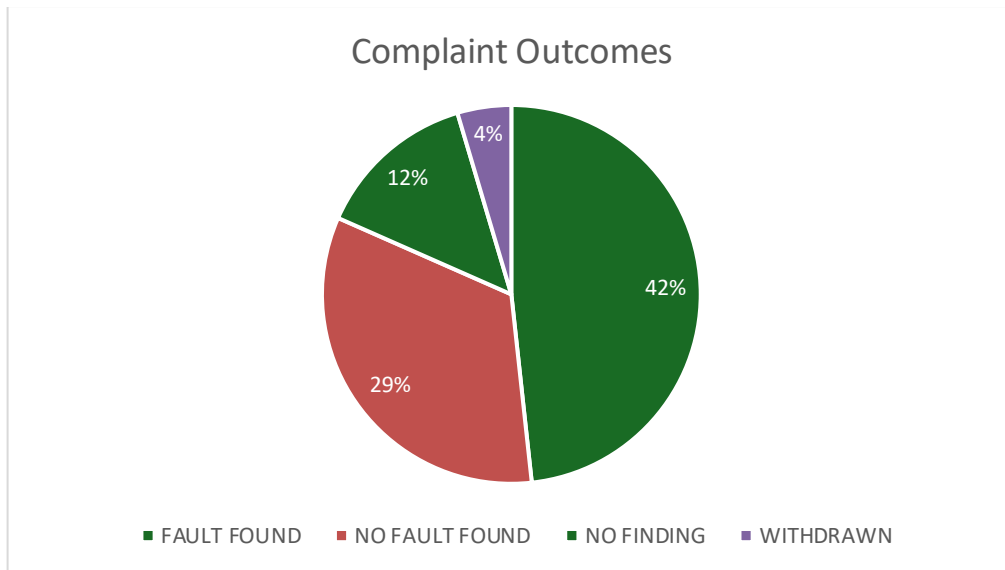
The increase in the number of escalations requested is reflected in the response timescales. Whilst 90% of complaints at review stage were responded to with the statutory timescales, we did see a decrease in the number of complaints responded to within 20 working days.

Graph 6: Adult Social Care complaints reviewed by Senior Managers



4.2 Complaint Outcomes

Graph 7: Adult Social Care complaints recorded by outcome.



Graph 6 above shows that 42% (143) complaints were upheld. This is a slight decrease on the previous year (50%). Prompt acceptance and ownership of any mistakes can help prevent costly complaint escalation including to Senior Managers and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

5. Learning from Complaints

Complaints are a valuable source of information which can help to identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements. We know that numbers alone do not tell everything about the attitude towards complaints and how they are responded to locally. Arguably of more importance is to understand the impact those complaints have on people and to learn the lessons from complaints to improve the experience for others.

Lessons can usually be learned from complaints that were upheld but also in some instances where no fault was found but the Authority recognises that improvements to services can be made.

Occasionally during an investigation, issues will be identified that need to be addressed over and above the original complaint. The Complaints Team will always try to look at the “bigger picture” to ensure that residents receive the best possible service from the Council.

5.1 Corrective action taken.

All the 143 complaints where fault has been found have been reviewed by the Complaints Team to ascertain what action the relevant department has taken, both in remedying the fault, and any wider learning to avoid such issues occurring in the future.

Remedial action typically consists of both individual redress (e.g., apology, carrying out overdue work) and wider actions that may affect many. 42% of complaints upheld resulted in clear actions that should improve service for other residents.

The most common action taken was staff training. There are lots of good examples of this taking place both at individual and team level. These included:

- Refresher training on processes regarding financial assessments
- Refresher training on safeguarding procedures
- Complaints training delivered to the service

Financial redress was also arranged on several occasions this year to ensure that the complainant was put back in the position they would have been in had the fault not occurred. This is usually re-imbursement of care costs where these had either been calculated wrongly or there was evidence that clear explanations were not given.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman expects Councils to consider such financial redress as appropriate and has introduced new reporting this year highlighting those occasions where Councils have already put things right before consideration by the Ombudsman.

6. Local Government Ombudsman

6.1 New complaints received by the Ombudsman 2024-25

Should a complainant remain dissatisfied following internal consideration of their complaint, they can take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to seek independent investigation.

The Ombudsman will usually check with the Authority whether the complaint has exhausted the Local Authority's complaints procedure. Where this has not been done, the Ombudsman will usually refer the complaint back to the Authority, to give us an opportunity to attempt to resolve the complainant's concerns through our internal complaints processes first.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman opened enquiries on 25 complaints during the year. This represents approximately 7% of the overall complaints.

5.1 Complaints resolved by the Ombudsman 2024-25

The Ombudsman made decisions on twenty cases during the year with fault being found in 12 cases. In cases where fault had been found, these mainly related to delays in completing financial assessments, or failure to meet care needs.

There were no decisions issued as Public Reports.

For the remaining thirteen complaints

- In five cases the Ombudsman decided not to investigate, either because there was no evidence of any fault, or the matter had already been appropriately addressed by the Council.
- In eight cases, the Ombudsman, after detailed investigation, was satisfied with the actions the Council had taken.

The Ombudsman also monitors remedies being carried out by the Council where fault has been found and remedial actions proposed. Failure to carry out remedies within agreed timeframes is recorded as non-compliance and can lead to public reports being issued. All of the above cases were recorded as compliant (100%).

6. Monitoring the Process

The Complaints Team continues to support Adult Social Care Services to manage and learn from complaints. The key services offered are -

1. Complaints advice and support
2. Production of Performance Reports
3. Liaison with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
4. Quality assurance of complaint responses
5. Complaint handling training for operational managers
6. Scrutiny and challenge to complaint responses

Assistance continues to be routinely provided to Service Managers and other associated managers in drafting responses to complaint investigations. This helps ensure a consistency of response and that due process is followed.

Quarterly performance reports are produced and delivered at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and on-going work is being completed with Lead Practitioners to improve the quality of complaints data available for a wider understanding of causes of complaints and improved learning.

8. Final Comments

There has been a slight decrease in complaint volumes this year following a significant increase last year.

It is clear that a significant factor is keeping up with demand. There are specific issues noted with timeliness of completing financial assessments but also clear that these are known issues and service improvement work is already taking place.

Some of the complaints concerned delivery of care by providers and in these instances, complaints data is routinely shared with our Quality and Improvement team who work closely with providers in making improvements as required.

It is vital that service users are provided with a complaints process that is easy to access and fair. This year's Annual Report shows that Adult Social Care does listen and provides a number of examples of how complaints intelligence directly drives and improves service delivery.

Appendix A: Sample of compliments received 2023-24

- Thank you for all your recent help and support in organising the move to supported accommodation.
- Thank you to the team of girls that helped my husband following his discharge from hospital.
- Thank you, J, for being helpful, supportive, and easy to talk to. I appreciate your recent guidance.
- Thank you, H, for all your support, compassion and professionalism which made a difficult time much easier for the family.
- Thank you to the OT Lightbulb Team for the ramp instillation, you can't believe how much it has changed my life. Thank you very much.
- Had great fun at Oadby library and lovely activities as well as very helpful and friendly staff, thank you.
- Thank you, H, for always being extremely polite, patient and efficient. Your explanations and letters have always been clear and concise
- Great service from CSW Home First
- Thank you to S and G for the high level of support they both provided during a particularly stressful time for me personally
- Thank you to J for being very efficient, effective and patient when dealing with us during a difficult time.
- S has helped us with our debts but also supporting us through stressful event by helping us to report to right the people and as well as helping us
- Thank you, C, for all your support, care and kindness in how you have dealt with the assessment.
- Thank you to S for being helpful easy to talk to, very caring and understanding of the situation regarding my dad.