



**Report for: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SUB-
COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 18 July 2023

Subject: Adult Social Care Services
Complaints & Feedback Annual
Report 2022/23

Responsible Officer: Senel Arkut, Corporate Director
People Services

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Adult Social Care Services Annual
Complaints & Feedback Report
2022/23

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides an overview of the Council's performance on Adult Social Care Services complaints and feedback activity between the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Recommendations:

The Sub-Committee is requested to note the report. The report is for information purposes only.

Section 2 – Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of complaints and feedback for Harrow Adult Social Care Services from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Adults social care complaints are investigated in line with the complaints process set out in the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

1. Background

1.1. This report provides a summary of the complaints and feedback from the Adult Social Care Services Annual Complaints and Feedback report covering the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, included in Appendix 1.

1.2. Adult social care complaints are investigated under the Council's Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints procedure, which is a two-stage process for handling social care complaints. There is a statutory duty to produce an annual report on the complaints received, issues raised, and actions taken.

2. Summary of Key Findings

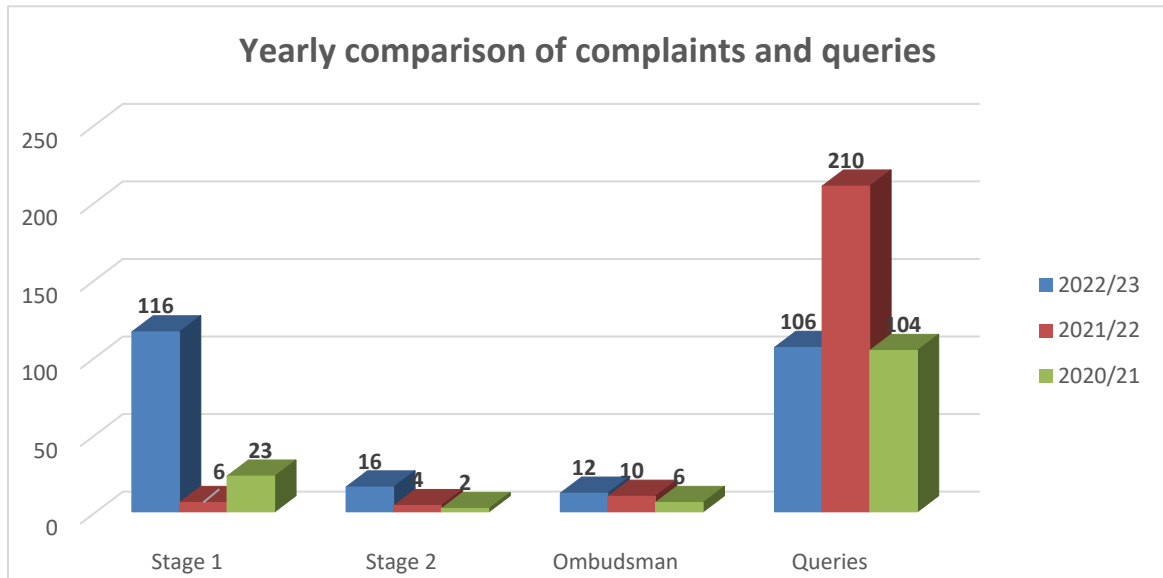
2.1. During 2022/23, the number of adult social care complaints recorded increased significantly, from six stage 1 complaints in 2021/22 to 116 complaints. This was due to an internal refresh of the complaints handling procedures.

2.2. Two thirds (66%) of stage 1 complaints were responded on time in 2022/23, which shows an improvement on the previous year (55%).

2.3. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023:

- The complaints service recorded a total of 510 representations
- There were 116 stage 1 complaints and 106 queries
- Sixteen complaints progressed to stage 2 review
- The Ombudsman made investigation decisions on four complaints
- Additionally, there were 196 Member and MP enquiries
- The service recorded 64 compliments
- There were 106 queries addressed outside the formal complaint process

2.4. There was an increase of 23% of total representations in 2022/23, with 510 total representations, compared to 414 total representations received in 2021/22.



2.5. As detailed on page 9 of the annual complaints report, the highest volume of complaints was received by the Financial Assessment and Monitoring team, Localities and Early Intervention teams. These service teams generally receive the most feedback due to the nature of their work, regarding care charges and paying for care, assessments and/or assessment decisions and issues related to the care provision or availability of service.

2.6. Adult social care support is means tested, as required under the Care Act 2014 and a significant number of people receiving care support will be making a client contribution towards their care costs.

2.7. Some of the complaints challenged the outcome of financial assessments, which are calculated in line with Harrow's Charging policy under the Care Act 2014. Other complaints queried the quality of financial advice and information received, delays in receiving the relevant financial paperwork, queries regarding the care costs and related fees, the invoicing and payment reminder letters.

2.8. A total of 82 stage 1 complaint responses were completed during 2022/23. Of those, 54 complaints were responded on time (66%). Complaint response times are closely monitored by the complaints team and there is an ongoing focus to keep improving on response times. Regarding the 28 out of time complaints, the issues are often complex, and the investigation required more time.

2.9. Just over half (52%) of stage 1 complaints were not upheld, 28% were partially upheld and 20% were upheld. Complaints that were either upheld or partially upheld were due to delays in service delivery, staff not returning calls/emails in a timely way, errors in the administrative process or incorrect/unclear information/advice provided.

2.10. Sixteen complaints escalated to stage 2 review during 2022/23. Of those, 12 complaint reviews were completed with four complaints being in progress at the close of the reporting period.

2.11. Three quarters (75%) of the stage 2 reviews were responded on time.

2.12. Almost six in ten (58%) of stage 2 reviews were not upheld, 25% were upheld and 17% were partially upheld.

2.13. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman completed four investigations during 2022/23. The Ombudsman found no fault in two complaints and upheld two complaints, as summarised:

Summary complaint	Decision	Remedy
1.Council delayed arranging a capacity and needs assessment.	Upheld	Apology Council agreed to arrange the assessment and remind staff of the importance of timely assessments. Learning was implemented as detailed in learning section.
2.Council did not clearly explain the client contributions and top up fees when resident placed in care home, resulting in care charges	Upheld	Apology Resident's care chargers were adjusted, and compensation was paid each to both family members Information on care charges was reviewed, as detailed in learning section

2.14. Learning from complaints is as a key driver for service improvement across the directorate. The key learning themes were:

2.15.

- **Effective Communication** and providing **timely responses**
- **Clearer information** regarding care charges such as cost of a care package and assessment process
- **Avoiding delays** in arranging care package (previously as a result of staff shortages and recruitment issues)
- Ensuring the **case recording system is accurate and updated** such as to avoid incorrect billing and to ensure case details are up to date on where to send billing and whether person is a self-funder.

2.16. Adult Social Care staff reported 64 compliments during 2022/23. Positive feedback is important as it shows what is working well and the good work that staff do. Some examples are:

2.17. I would like to say B is a real treasure for helping my brother. He feels comfortable and so do I knowing that B is helping. B is kind, considerate, professional and compassionate. B is powerful in getting good things done. Beth helped save my brother's life two years ago and I will never forget it. **Locality Team**

2.18. Thank you for guiding us throughout this matter. You have been very helpful and I'm very glad to have this resolved now. Thanks to your help! **Billing Team**

2.19. I just don't know how you do it, you are literally AMAZING!!!
You surprise me every time getting the care arranged so quickly and you keep us updated at every point. You're a true star!!! **Northwick Park Hospital Team**

2.20. Going forward in 2023/24, the complaints team remains committed to improving performance activity across all areas of our complaint processes in responding to complaints and enquiries.

2.21. Adult social care teams will continue to resolve complaints and queries at the earliest stage.

2.22. The complaints team will remain focused on robust monitoring of response times and quality responses.

2.23. Adult social care services will continue using the learning from complaints to inform practice development and have set up a working group to implement the learning from complaints for practice development which meets on a monthly basis.

2.24. Response times have improved, and this will remain a priority in the new reporting period. The service target has been set to ensure 75% of complaints are responded on time.

2.25. Training on effective complaints handling will be provided to Managers throughout 2023/23, to ensure high quality responses to complainants

2.26. The complaints team will continue to work closely with the senior management team to identify and address areas for improvement from the complaints.

Legal Implications

There are no specific budget issues associated with this report

Financial Implications

There are no specific budget issues associated with this report. All compensation payments are agreed by Service Managers and are funded within existing budgets.

Risk Management Implications

Risks included on directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Council Priorities

1. **A council that puts residents first**
2. A borough that is clean and safe
3. **A place where those in need are supported**

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

The report did not require Financial or Legal clearance.

Chief Officer:

Signed by the Corporate Director

Date:

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Report Author: Harminder Dhillon, Complaints & Information Requests Services Manager, People Services

Background Papers:

Appendix A – Adult Social Care Annual Complaints & Feedback Report 2022-23

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

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|-----------------|----|
| 1. Consultation | NO |
| 2. Priorities | NO |