



**People Directorate**

**Compliments and Complaints**

**Adult Social Care**

**Annual Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Alison Keeling, Complaints Manager**

## Contents

<b>Part</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Background and context</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Adult Social Care Compliments</b>	<b>4-6</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Adult Social Care Complaints</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Analysis of Complaints</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Cost of Complaint Investigations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Learning from Complaints</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>10</b>

## **1. Background and Context**

This report sets out information regarding compliments and complaints made by, or on behalf of, people who receive support or services from the Local Authority's Adult Social Care teams.

It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report which will be published on the Council's website.

The current legislation requires local authorities to appoint a 'responsible person' with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the following arrangements:

- Managing, developing, and administering the complaints procedure
- Giving assistance and advice to those who wish to complain
- Liaising with services regarding the investigation of complaints where appropriate
- Supporting and training existing and new members of staff
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity

Staff will always try to resolve problems or concerns before they escalate into complaints and this ensures that investigations are kept to a minimum.

Bracknell Forest Council has set procedures for resolving complaints to ensure that: -

- The views and experiences of people who use the services are heard
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and highlight good practice
- We continually learn as an organisation and resolve matters/issues
- We can sustain a quality focus on our customers

Our aims are to:

- Resolve complaints quickly and where possible using informal measures
- Offer early resolution of complaints
- Learn lessons from complaints

## **2. Statutory Adults Social Care Complaints Procedure**

The complaints process aims to be as accessible as possible. Complaints can be made by telephone, in writing, by email or using our online complaints form on the Bracknell Forest Council website.

All complaints received are acknowledged within 3 working days and we aim respond within 10 working days. This timescale was established within Adult Social Care during 2020 and has worked well. More complex complaints may be responded to within 20 working days, with the complainant being kept informed during the process.

- Our principles for responding to complaints in adult social care are that all complaints are dealt with efficiently.
- Complaints are properly investigated.
- Complainants receive a timely and appropriate response.
- Complainants are told the outcome regarding the investigation of the complaint.
- An apology is given if required.
- Appropriate response is taken where necessary.

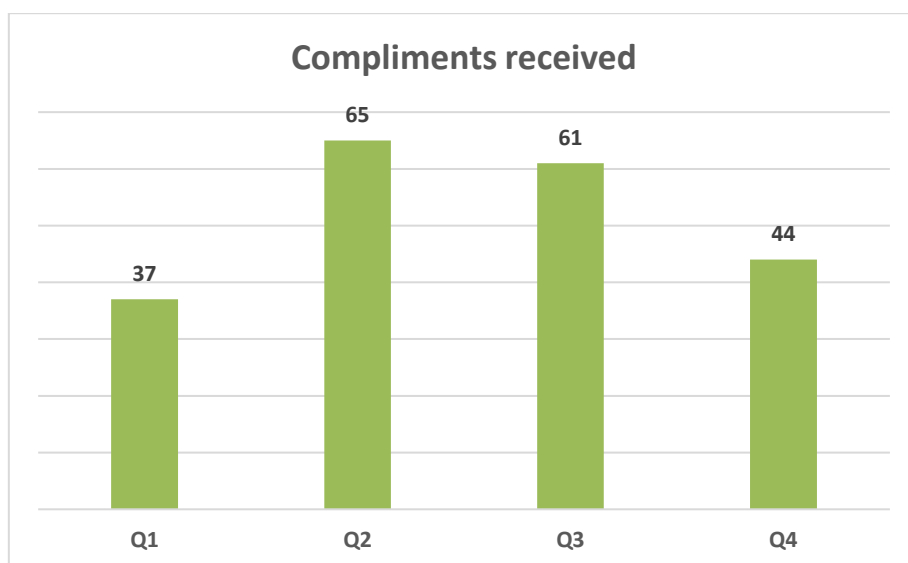
The Adults Statutory procedure starts with an internal investigation. A response will be sent from the manager within the Service area. If no resolution is achieved a further investigation will be carried out, this can sometimes involve an external investigator being appointed and a report will be sent to the complainant of the findings.

In the majority of cases, if a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, an apology will be offered and information will be given to the complainant outlining actions the service will take to ensure the situation does not arise again for the complainant or individuals in the future. The apology would be given by the manager on behalf of the service area complained about.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they can refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for consideration. Representations may be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) at any time and any member of the public is able to complain to the Ombudsman if they feel there has been maladministration or injustice, however, the LGSCO will not normally accept the complaint until the Council has had a chance to complete the investigation internally first.

### **3. Adult Social Care Compliments**

Compliments are received from a wide range of sources via surveys, feedback forms and directly to the staff involved. All compliments received are sent to the individual's line manager to support the appraisal process and personal development of employees.



Year	Number of compliments
2018/19	73
2019/20	197
2020/21	207

During 2020/21 there were 207 compliments received across Adult Social Care service areas, compared to 197 received during 2019/2020. This is an increase of 5%. 73 compliments were received in 2018/19. This reflects a year on year increase.

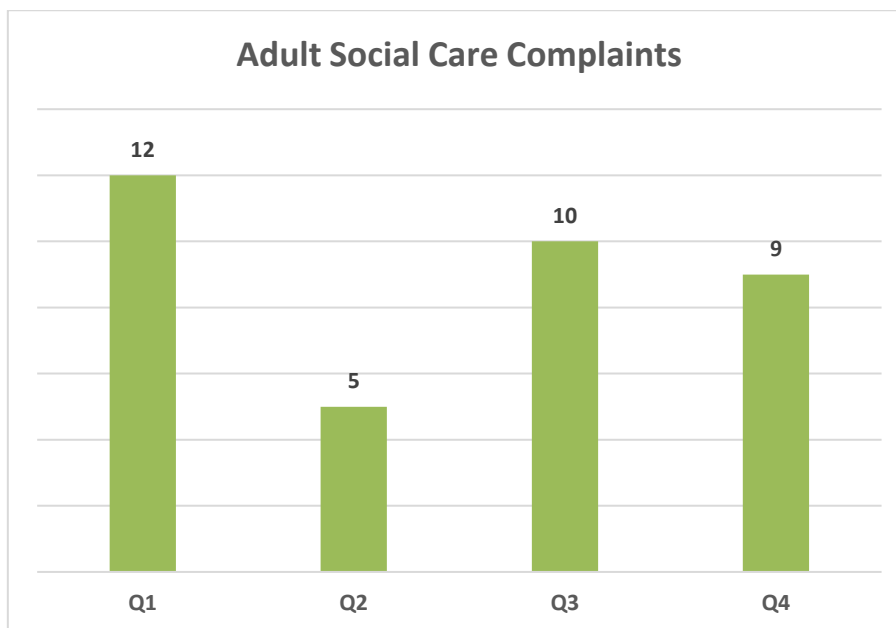


### What are compliments saying?

- **Family members** – “We did appreciate your kind, helpful attendance to dad's and previously mum's needs. You're all wonderful, caring and very compassionate people. I cannot thank you enough. Stay safe and a great big thank you”
- **Family members** – “Thank you letter for looking after the family’s mother following discharge from hospital”
- **Individual** – “Just want you to know that we appreciate all the help given by your staff member in providing the help and support to make life easier. We found her very caring and understanding in our needs”
- **Other professional** – “I’m delighted to see you’re working with your usual energetic capability and supporting our local patients, carers and services”
- **Individual** – “Their help and understanding at the start when the pain made me feel very low. The encouragement I received was wonderful. My Thursday clap is especially for you”
- **Family members** – “Thank you for all your help over the years with both my mum and dad. Could not have cared for them without you all. Hope your all safe”
- **Individual** – “Good service to have, needed confidence to get back on my feet. Thank you. The staff were all very helpful & polite”

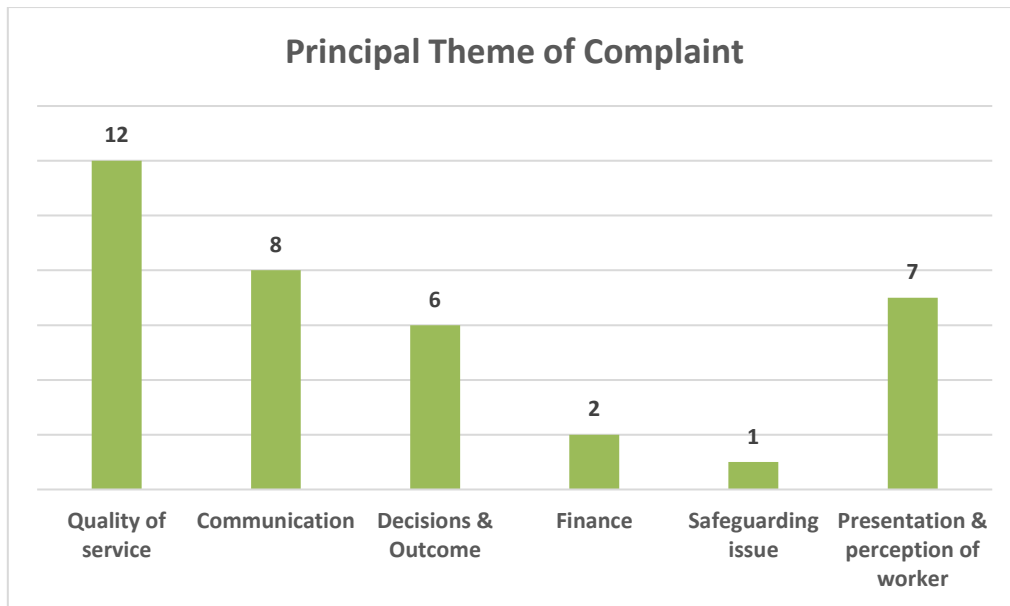
- **Family member** – “I just wanted to say a big thank-you. A gentleman paid a visit to see mum yesterday & it did her a world of good. He was very knowledgeable and gave mum the confidence to walk without any aids & she is feeling much better, she is looking forward to doing more things”
- **Individual** – “If it wasn’t for the LD & ASD team I wouldn’t be here now! They did a lot for me and gave me a second chance.”
- **Parent** – “The professional bond that has accumulated between them has been fantastic. My son does not take to people very well, so meeting someone new was very daunting. Well I shouldn't have worried, as your department are very lucky to have such a dedicated lady in their employment”

#### **4. Complaints Received for Adults Social Care**

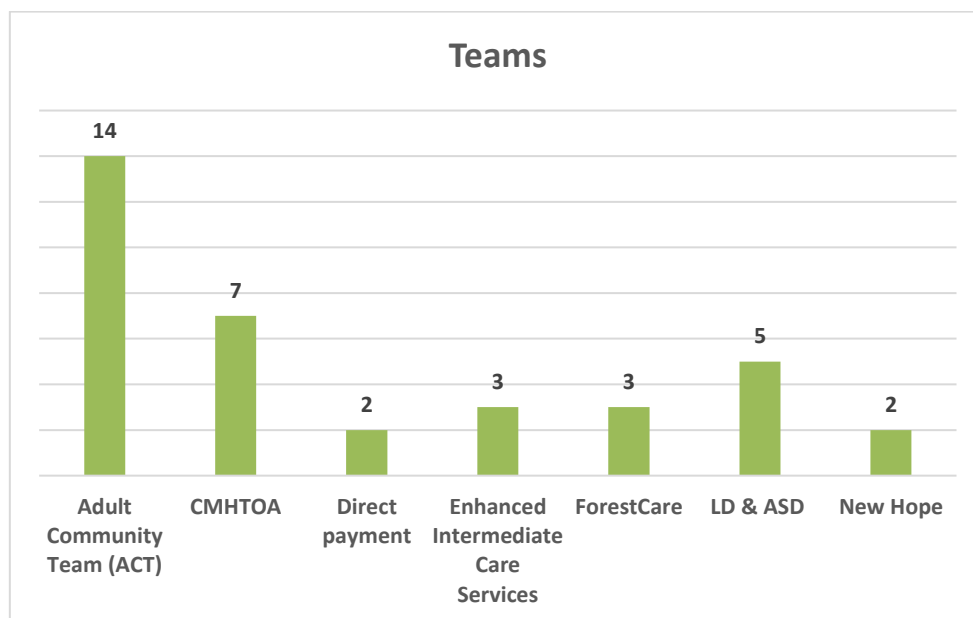


Year	Number of complaints
2018/19	41
2019/20	47
2020/21	36

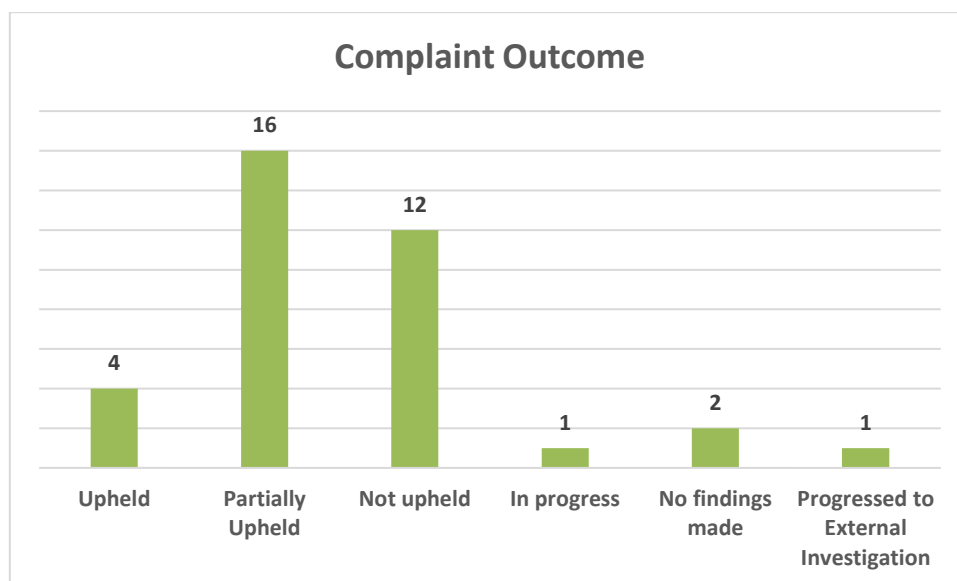
During 2020/21 there were 36 complaints received across all Adult Social Care service areas, compared to 47 received during 2019/2020. This is a decrease of 19.1%. In 2018/19 there were 41 complaints. The number of complaints received in the current reporting year is the lowest in the past three years.



In 2019/20 “Decisions & Outcome” had the most complaints, in this reporting year most complaints related more to the “Quality of Service and Communication”. This report covers a period of time in which there was a global pandemic which impacted significantly on the way that adult social care was delivered. This included the need to change the way that services operated at short notice, and meant that teams and services were operating beyond their normal capacity. In this context it is very positive that the number of complaints reduced overall.



## 5. Analysis of Complaints

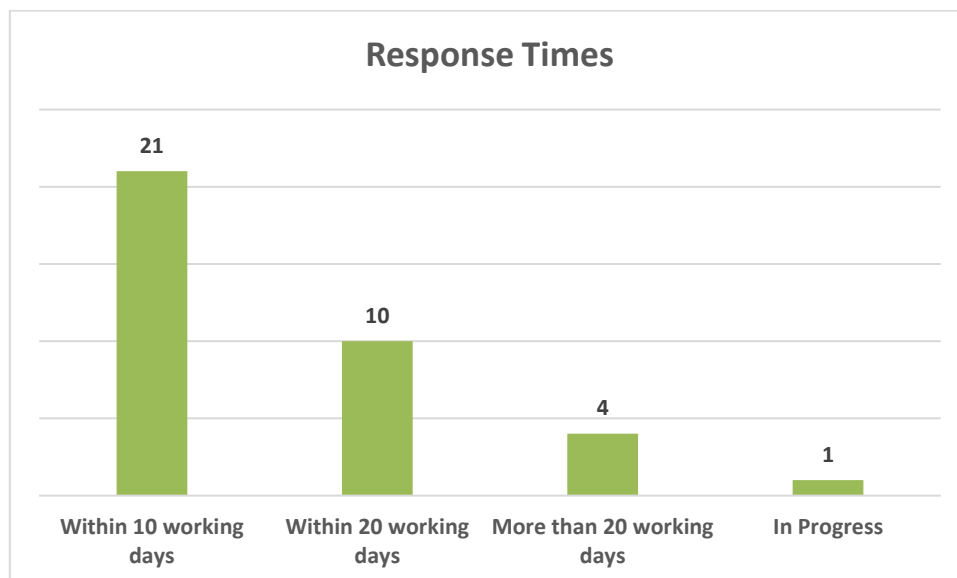


In total 11% of complaints during 2020/21 were upheld which mirrors the 11% during 2019/20. A further 46% of complaints were partially upheld compared to 45% during 2019/20. 32% of complaints received were not upheld compared to the 34% in 2019/20.

These outcomes are in a very similar proportion to the outcomes achieved during the previous year. Given that the number of complaints was lower overall this suggests a positive trend for the service.

During 2020/21, 2 complaints had no findings made and 2 progressed for further investigation, one of which was from 2019/20. These were commissioned to an external investigator.

### Timeliness of Complaints





Whilst it is the aim to respond to most complaints within 10 working days, 20 working days are allowed for more complex complaints. Sometimes the response can go over 20 working days if this involves meeting with complainants or further investigations are required.



The online form is a popular avenue for complainants to submit their complaints, it is easy to use and comes directly into the [ASC.Complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.Complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) mailbox.

## **6. Cost of Complaints Service & Investigations**

Most investigations within Adult's Social Care are dealt with internally. There were 2 complainants who preferred the complaint to be dealt with by an external investigator at an average cost of £716.00 each.

## **7. Learning from Complaints**

During the past year we have improved our processes for learning from complaints, and these continue to develop within Adults Social Care.

We have recently introduced learning events that will be held every 6 months, in which themes and outcomes from complaints are shared with the teams and reflection of the learning is discussed. The Complaints and Compliments Manager is working with our Adults Principal Social Worker to ensure that this learning contributes to training plans and development of best practice and quality throughout Adults Social Care.

It is our intention to continue to develop in the coming year, with the introduction of Reflective Practice meetings in which key staff involved with complaints that progress further meet to consider learning and future actions.

The Complaints Manager is also on hand to offer advice and guidance when required and is regularly accessed by staff in Adult Social Care.

## **8. Recommendations**

1. To learn from complaints and to continue improving the services the council offer to support Bracknell residents and families
2. Reflective/learning sessions to take place with the relevant team involved to capture and agree a specific learning plan
3. Complaints manager will work closely with the Adults Principal Social Worker to capture the learning points to support workforce improvements
4. Complaints manager to attend team meetings to discuss compliments and complaints received for individual teams
4. Provide quarterly reports to Assistant Director, Head of Service and Team Managers during the year ahead
5. Update complaints policy for Adults Social Care
6. Ensure responses to all complaints are within the timescales