TO: The Executive Member
MAY 2026

ANNUAL REPORT – ADULTS SOCIAL CARE COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the Annual report of the Statutory Complaints function for Adults Social Care for approval by the Executive Member.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That the Executive Member, notes the report and endorses any recommendations

3 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009 (as amended) state that Complaints Services should produce an annual report for consideration.

3.2 The Complaints Service performs an important role in assuring the quality of response to vulnerable adults and families and Bracknell residents who make complaints. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the service and learning from complaints.

3.3 The Annual Report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Adults and the Local Safeguarding Board following the approval of the Executive Member

4 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 None considered

5 Supporting Information

5.1 The reports provide an overview of the work of the Complaints Manager and identifies some of the key issues arising in terms of complaints during 2025/26. In addition to complaints, the report outlines compliments received.

5.2 We have continued to improve the consistency and approach with which we learn from complaints. In the year ahead we will work to improve this further including our ability to understand the impact of learning.

5.4 Overall, there were **23** complaints received during the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, this is fewer than the total of 45 across Adults Social Care in 2024/25.

5.5 There were **655** compliments recorded during the year which is an increase from 627 in the previous year.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

6.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the body of this report.

Financial Advice

6.2 The Executive Director: Resources is satisfied that no significant financial implications are anticipated from this report on 2025/26 activity.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 The Complaints Procedure is available to all those who meet the specified criteria for making a complaint using the Statutory or the Local Authority Procedure.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None identified in connection with the annual report. It should be noted that complex complaints are carefully managed with support from the Borough Solicitor where relevant, to address and minimise risks with individual cases.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 None identified

Climate Change Implications

6.6 This is in line with the council's impact assessment

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

6.7 None outside the remit of this report

Background Papers

- Adults Social Care Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2025/26

Contact for further information
Kogie Perumall
Head of Service

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Bracknell Forest Council

People Directorate

Compliments and Complaints

Adult Social Care

Annual Report

1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

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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. Monitoring and preparing an annual report are set out in *the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009* (as amended).

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, or using our online complaints form on the Bracknell Forest Council website.

All complaints received are acknowledged within 3 working days and we aim to respond within 20 working days.

- 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 most 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 is made by the manager on behalf of the service area complained about.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for consideration. Representations may be made to the 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.

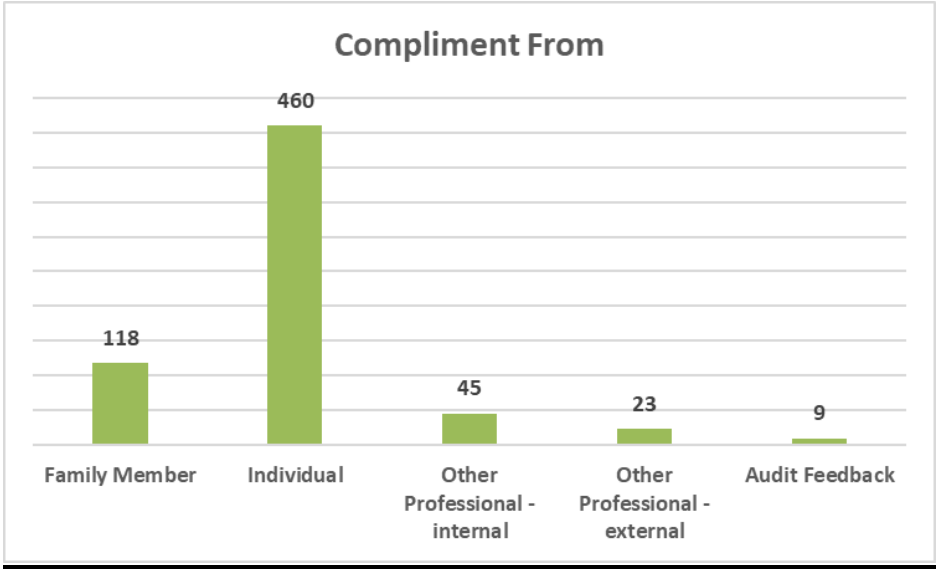
All compliments received are sent to the individual's line manager to support the appraisal process and personal development of employees.

During 2025/2026 there were **655** compliments received across Adult Social Care service areas, compared to **627** received during 2024/2025. This is an increase of 4.3%.

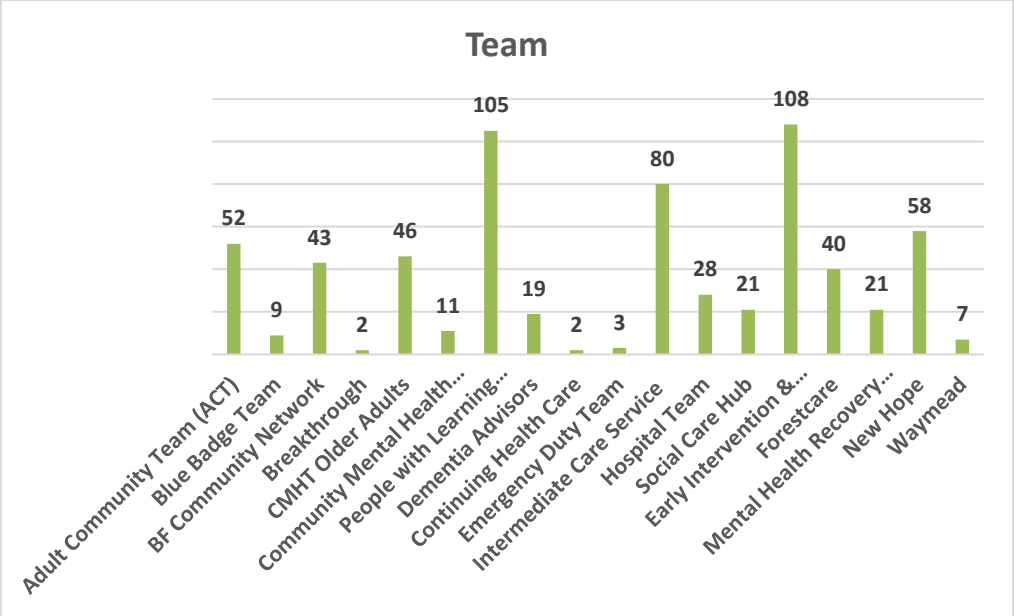
The feedback form within all emails from staff to individuals has generated some positive comments.

	Number of compliments
2018/19	73
2019/20	197
2020/21	207
2021/22	261
2022/23	201
2023/24	337
2024/25	627
2025/26	655

This table shows who the compliments have been received from.



The below table is a breakdown of the individual teams receiving the compliment.

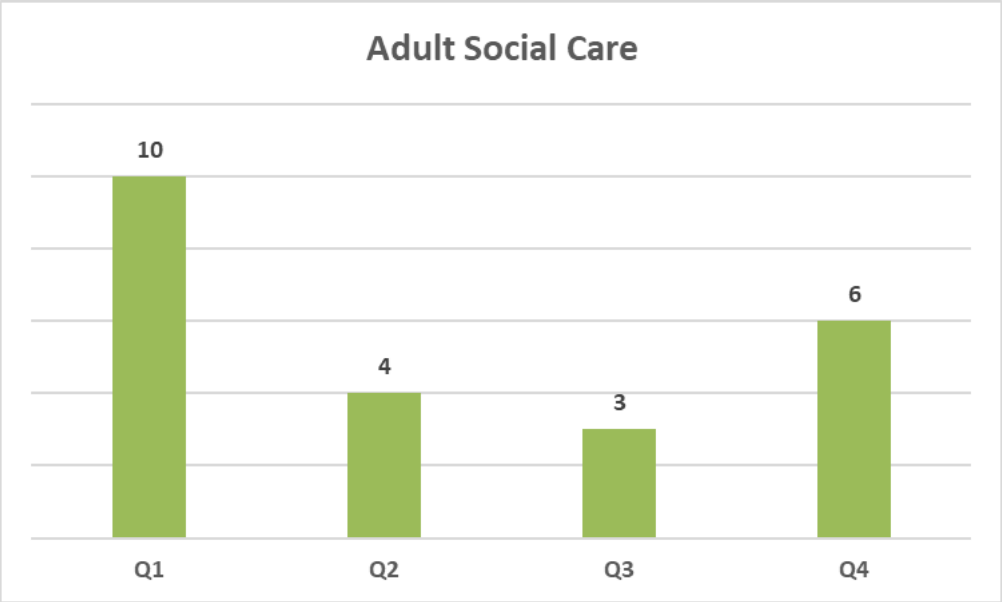


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Some examples of the 655 compliments received

- ***Blue Badge Team*** *– I just wanted to let you know that my Blue Badge has arrived today. I am very grateful for you having arranged for a fast-track delivery, very many thanks. It will make a big difference for me tomorrow, with my hospital appointments. Once again, very many thanks.*
- ***Community Team People with Learning Disabilities/Autism*** *- I wanted to thank you so very much for all the help and support you continue to give. This is a tough transition time for us as a family and just want our lovely son to be as safe and happy as possible, we are very thankful to have your help.*
- ***Dementia Advisors*** *- The session on young onset dementia and treatment gave a clear medical overview and helped me understand the condition better. The nutrition session highlighted the role of diet in supporting cognitive health. The legal planning session was very important and clarified issues around power of attorney and decision making.*
- ***Early Intervention & Prevention Team*** *- My family really appreciated the support from worker. We were given sound professional advice and kept well informed constantly. Her actions ensured my mother's recovery was well organised and a permanent solution for her long-term care was secured. Her work ethic, kindness, and understanding put my mother, me, and family members at ease throughout. Please pass on our gratitude for her personable help with handling my mother's care.*
- ***Adult Community Team (ACT)*** *– Having someone me and mum could talk to about our situation and having the care put in that we needed at that time. There was no fuss or bother about anything.*
- ***Community Mental Health Team Older Adults*** *- Once mum had an episode, we had full support from CMHTOA. You were on hand to answer you were on hand to answer questions when I didn't know how to handle mum through the medication and support and ensuring my father was safe.*
- ***Social Care Hub*** *- This lady contacted me to inform me that she was running late and told me she would here at a certain time and she was she then seemed very professional but also very friendly and informed me of what was happening along the way and said that she would get back to me within the week and she has also emailed me just to see if I received it overall I was extremely satisfied with this lady.*
- ***Hospital Team*** *- Big thanks to everyone for your amazing teamwork during the MADE event—great job supporting safe and timely discharges! Special shout-out to the managers for their strong leadership and being such a steady presence onsite. You really helped keep things moving—brilliant work!*
- ***Waymead*** *- Parents would like to say a massive thank you to everyone at Waymead for the support given. They say that he is very happy here and they are very happy with the support and friendliness of the team.*
- ***Intermediate Care Services*** *- All very welcoming and supportive. All people are so sweet and helpful.*
- ***Forestcare*** *– Daughter called this morning and they wanted to pass on their thanks and commented how kind and caring you were on the call over the weekend; they were very impressed that your help gave their mum the confidence she needed to raise the alarm through her watch.*
- ***New Hope*** *- Mum called to thank me for all the help and support I had given her son, and they were all very happy he was in rehab.*

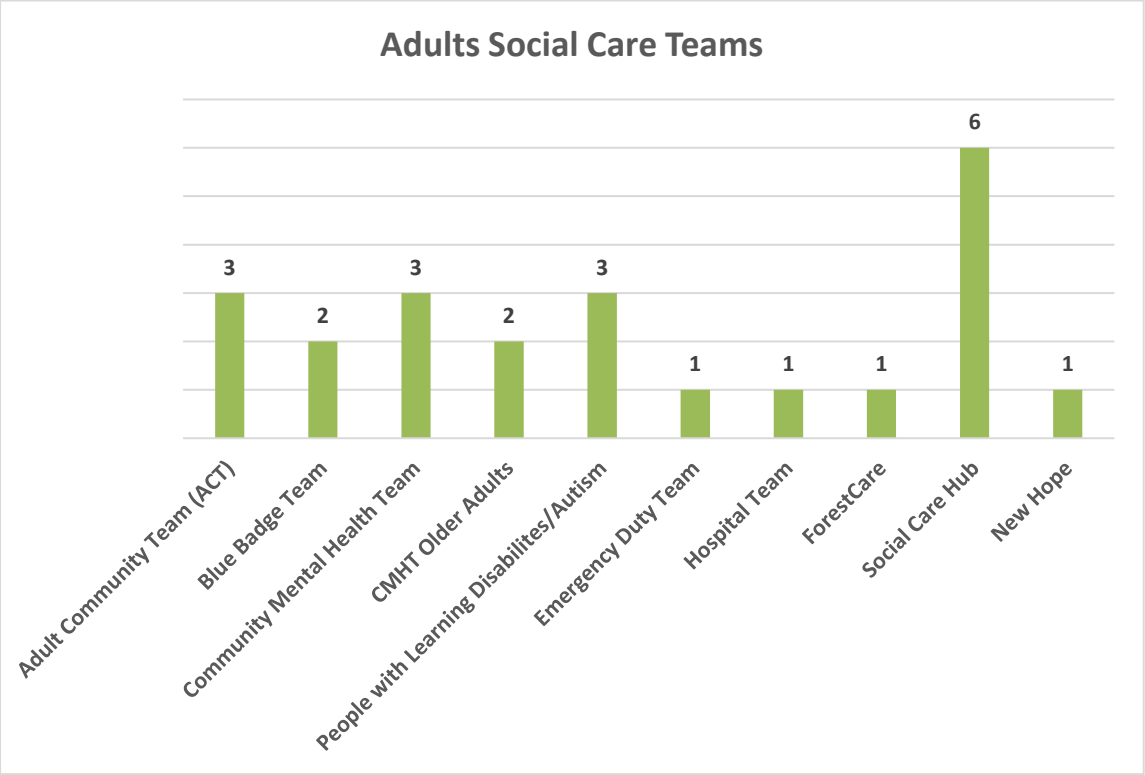
4. Complaints Received for Adults Social Care



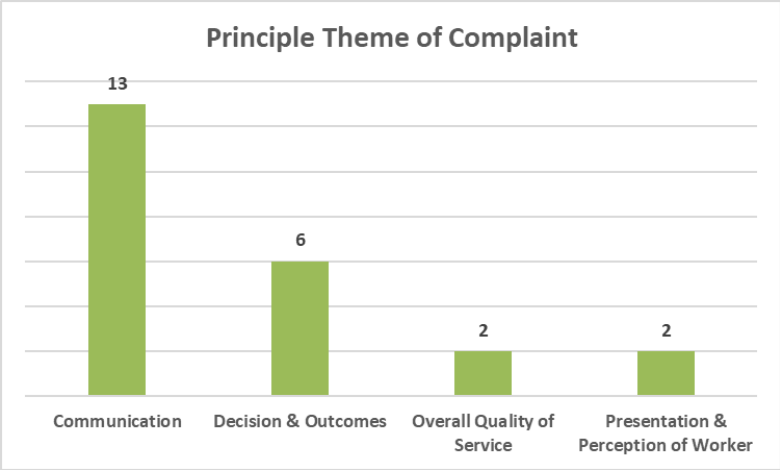
During 2025/26 there were **23** complaints received across Adult Social Care service areas, this is significantly lower to the **45** received during 2024/25. This is a decrease of 48%.

	Number of complaints
2018/19	41
2019/20	47
2020/21	36
2021/22	49
2022/23	39
2023/24	45
2024/25	45
2025/26	23

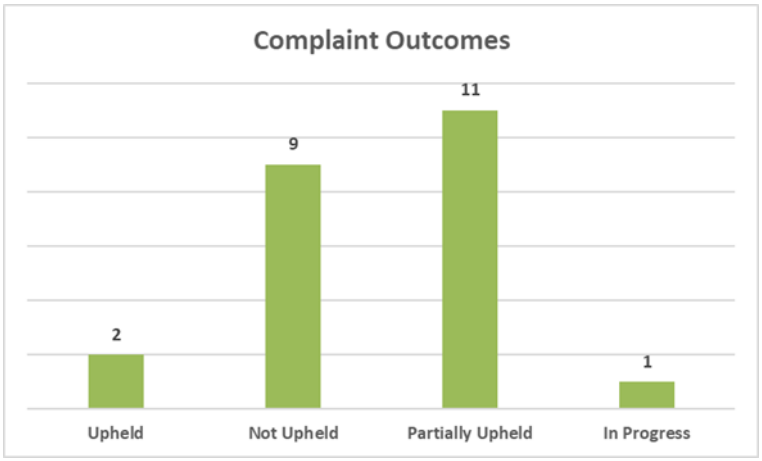
This table shows the numbers of complaints for individual services within Adults Social Care.



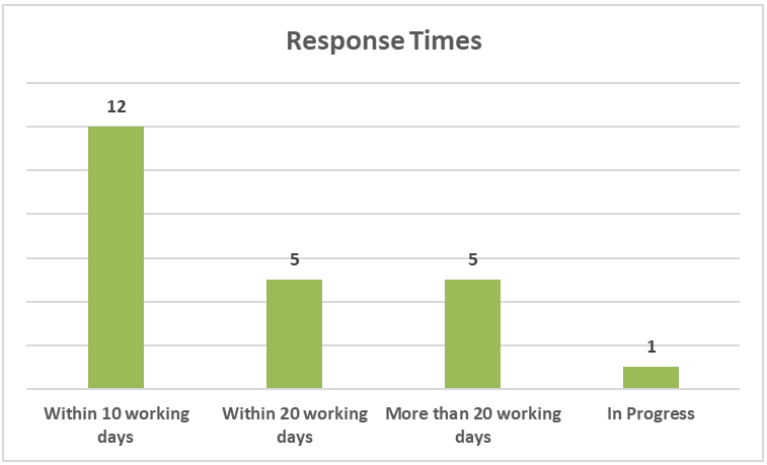
5. Analysis of Complaints



The theme of ‘Communication’ & ‘Decisions & Outcome’ had the most complaints, in this reporting year.

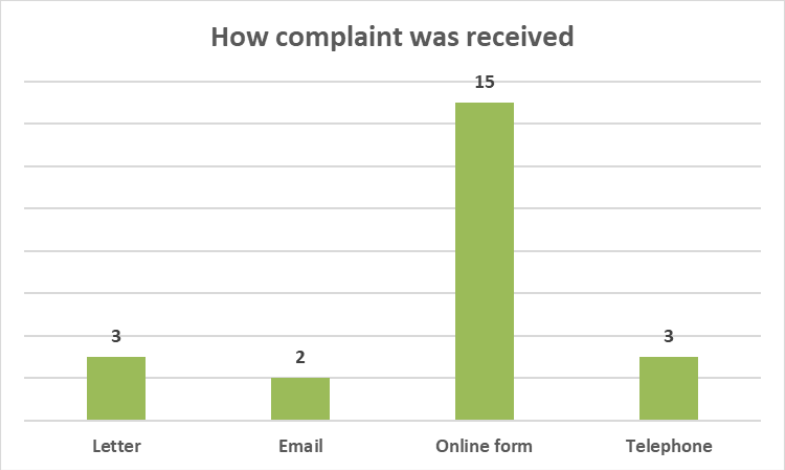


In total 2 complaints were upheld compared to 4 in 2024/25. A further 9 complaints were not upheld compared to 24 in 2024/25. There were 11 complaints partially upheld compared to 16 during 2024/25.



The standard timescale for responding to complaints for Adult Social Care is 20 working days. There were 52% of complaints responded to within 10 working days. There were 22% of complaints responded to within 20 working days and 22% of complaints were responded to over 20 working days, this is due to meeting with complainants, further investigation/ information being required.

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On 5 March 2025 we launched our new Liberty complaints handling system which allows complainants to complain directly using the online form and communicating with us through their own online portal. There have been 65% of complaints received using the online form. Complainants can still complain by telephone, in person or by writing to us.

6. Learning from Complaints

Across the year, complaints have provided valuable insight into how we can improve the quality, safety, and consistency of services. The primary themes relate to:

Communication, ensuring clarity, timeliness, personalisation and cross-agency coordination.

- Assessment Practice, reinforcing decision-making and clear explanations to residents.
- Internal Coordination, strengthening handover processes and cover arrangements.
- Service Transparency, improving information around technological limitations and safety monitoring.

These learnings have informed both immediate actions and longer-term service improvements, supporting our commitment to delivering high-quality, resident-centred services.

Actions from complaints: Focus on strengthening communication, responsiveness, and coordination across services. Staff have been supported through supervision and team discussions to improve timely responses and adopt a person-centred approach, recognising that communication must be tailored to individual needs.

Policies have been updated in line with Orange Book guidance and shared with staff, alongside plans for targeted training in managing difficult conversations and setting clear expectations with service users and families.

Improvements to communication processes include introducing clearer timelines, providing consistent points of contact, and exploring a named worker approach for complex cases. A stronger emphasis has been placed on keeping customers informed of changes and ensuring information flows effectively between teams and partner agencies.

System and process enhancements include introducing triggers for reviewing repeated non-activation events, reinforcing escalation procedures, and supporting staff to communicate service limitations clearly and consistently.

Together, these actions aim to improve service experience, accountability, and overall quality of care.

The complaints manager is working with our Adults Social Care teams to ensure complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and that learning from complaints is taken forward across all of Adults Social Care. Complaint's themes and learning from them are presented at the Adults Social Care Learning Events which takes place three times a year.

The complaints manager is on hand to offer procedural advice and guidance when required and is regularly accessed by staff in Adult Social Care.

LGSCO complaints

During 2025/26 we received 9 LGSCO complaint enquiries. Of which 3 are still being investigated by the LGSCO.

- Of these 4 were closed after initial enquiries with no further action.
- There was 1 not upheld and no fault found with the LA's complaint investigation.
- There was 1 upheld. Apology, financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, provide training and/or guidance
- We received 1 outcome during 2025/26 for a complaint made during the last reporting period 2024/25, which was upheld. Apology, financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, to provide services to person affected

7. Update on forward plan from 2025/26

Learning from complaints	Reflective/learning sessions to take place with the relevant team involved to capture and agree a specific learning plan	After each upheld complaint	*Completed*
	Work closely with the Adults Principal Social Worker to capture the learning points to support workforce improvements	Through the year	*Completed during ASLT meetings*
	Attend team meetings to discuss compliments and complaints received for individual teams	1 team meeting per team for 2025/26	*Completed*
	Complaints Manager to meet with Assistant Director to discuss how the learning from complaints will be actioned and disseminated to the service	Through the year	*Completed during ASLT meetings*
Governance	Provide quarterly reports to Senior Leadership team during the year	Every quarter	*Completed*
Policy update	Update complaints policy for Adults Social Care		*Completed*
Timeliness	Ensure responses to all complaints are within the required timescales	Within 20 days of receipt of complaint	*Completed within the targeted timescales*

8. Forward plan for 2026/27

Learning from complaints	Reflective/learning sessions to take place with the relevant team involved to capture and agree a specific learning plan.	After each upheld complaint, within team meetings and 1:1
	Work closely with the adult's principal social worker to capture the learning points to support workforce improvements	Through the year
	Attend team meetings to discuss compliments and complaints received for individual teams	1 team meeting per team for 2026/27
	Complaints manager to continue meeting with the head of service for the social care hub, early intervention & prevention and adult community team twice weekly to discuss incoming complaints and learning from complaint	Twice weekly
Governance	Provide quarterly reports to Assistant Director, Head of Services and Team Managers during the year	Every quarter
Timeliness	To take steps to address challenges to completing complaint responses within timescale, ensuring that if there are any delays they are purposeful	Within 20 working days