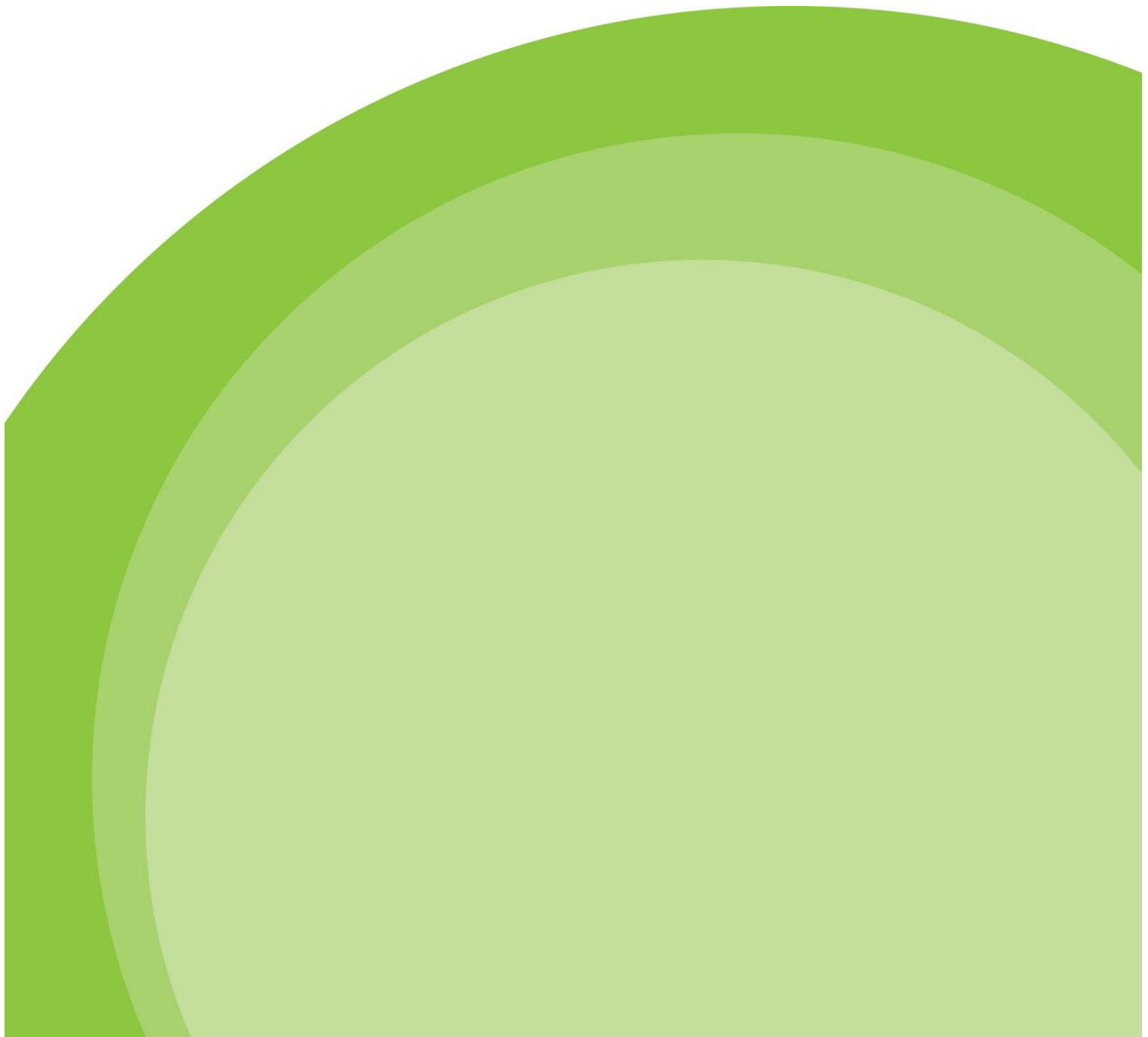




Adult Social Care & Public Health Services

Customer Feedback – Compliments/Complaints
Annual Report (1st April 2016 – 31 March 2017)
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Introduction

This report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for Adult Social Care and Public Health Complaints.

This report provides statistics for 2016/17 on the number of compliments and complaints received; a summary of complaint causes; the number of complaints that were well founded (upheld fully or in part); performance; the actions taken to improve services because of complaints; complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.

The report will be presented to the relevant local authority committee and will be made available on the Council's website.

The Complaints Procedure

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 require us to investigate complaints about social care functions in a manner appropriate to resolve it speedily and efficiently, whilst keeping the complainant informed. This gives us flexibility on the approach to take in responding. However, the next stage if we are unsuccessful at resolution is the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

Managers are expected to assess a complaint to determine its seriousness and any potential risks to the individual or the organisation. Each complaint should have a clear action plan on how the complaint will be handled. The level of seriousness determines the appropriate method for handling the complaint. There are a number of options to address complaints. Timescales can be flexible and negotiated with the complainant although as a Council we have set minimum standard timescales as best practice. Options include:

- Local Resolution by Service Manager – 10 working days, 20 for complex cases
- Formal Investigation – 25 up to 65 working days
- Conciliation/Mediation – 10 working days/25 working days

All complaints are triaged to ensure they are suitable for the process. This ensures matters are managed through the correct procedures, should an alternative process be in place. Any matters which are not suitable for the complaints process are filtered out and passed to the appropriate channel.

Executive Summary

Adult Social Care

49 compliments were received in 2016/17 for Adult Social Care services with instances of customers telling us that services were getting it right and having a positive impact on their lives.

There were 53 new complaints received, 47 of which were managed through the complaints procedure. The remaining issues related to internal management processes; alternative review processes; lack of consent for a representative to act on the service user's behalf; and matters which the Local Authority were not responsible for. These cases were filtered out and where appropriate passed to alternative channels already in place to manage those issues.

46 complaints were concluded. Complaints were seen as important feedback for services and a means of considering how to improve. Managers listened to customers' views with 85% of complaints either upheld fully or in part. The main reason for complaints in 2016/17 related to customer care/communication issues and quality of care provision.

Performance in complaints handling was similar to the previous year in that 82% of cases had an action plan to determine how the complaint would be managed. 67% of those cases complied with the plan. Individual cases had specific remedies put in place and the majority of wider service improvements resulted in a review of processes currently in place to improve and inform practice going forward.

Two complaint cases escalated to Assistant Director Review. In the first case the Assistant Director concluded that the complaint had been fully addressed and the complainant was advised of their right to refer to the Local Government Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied. The second case was pending the conclusion of the Assistant Director Review at the end of period.

The LGO considered two complaints about Adult Social Care Services during the period and found fault in relation to the Council's actions. In the first case the LGO concluded that there was no significant injustice to the complainant and that the Council had already provided sufficient remedy. In the second case the LGO recommended an apology and payment of £500 to acknowledge uncertainty and avoidable distress.

Public Health

The Public Health Service in Central Bedfordshire delivers the majority of its services by commissioning from external providers who manage their own complaints. The Stop Smoking Service is delivered directly by Central Bedfordshire Council. There were 21 compliments registered about the quality and helpfulness of the Stop Smoking Service. No complaints were registered.

Effectiveness

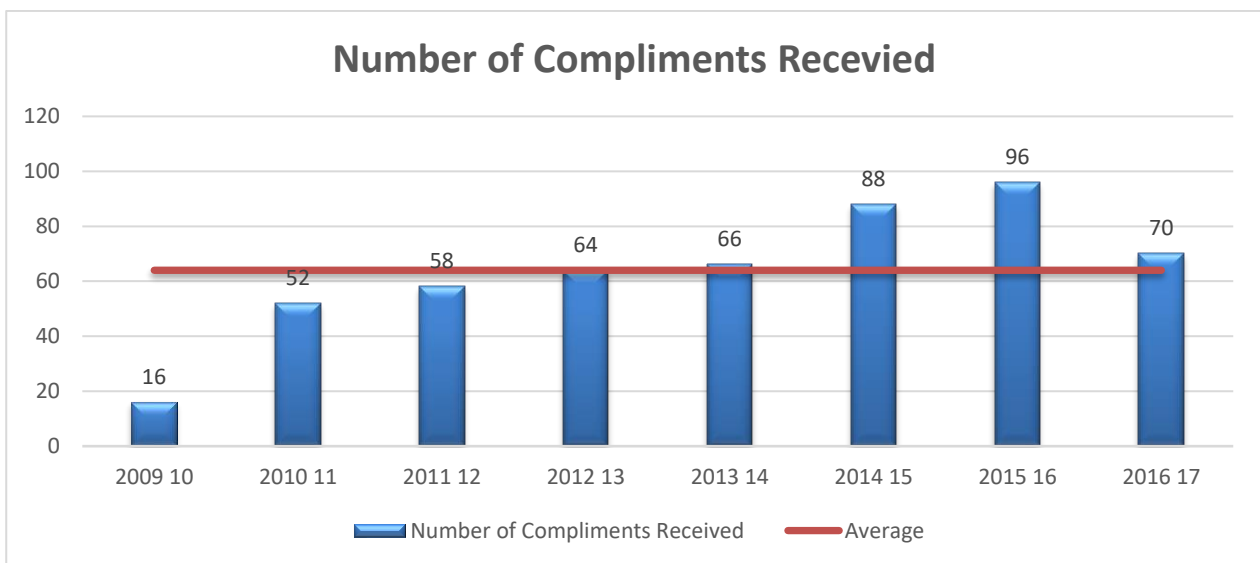
The activity for this reporting period shows the complaints procedure has been effective at resolving customer complaints at a local level. In Adult Social Care learning from the customer experience through complaints has led to improvements to practices. There is some room for improvement in managing complaints to agreed timescales and to establish root-cause of complaints to identify further learning for services.

1. Representations Made to Central Bedfordshire Council

1.1 Compliments Received

Compliments from service users and/or their representatives about service delivery are recorded under the Customer Feedback Procedure. Whilst Adult Social Care and Public Health Services may seek and receive positive feedback from families and professionals via other mechanisms, the Customer Feedback Procedure captures compliments where the service user and/or representative has gone out of their way to provide praise and appreciation for the service provided to them.

70 compliments were recorded across Adult Social Care and Public Health Services relating to good customer care and the quality of support to service users and their families.

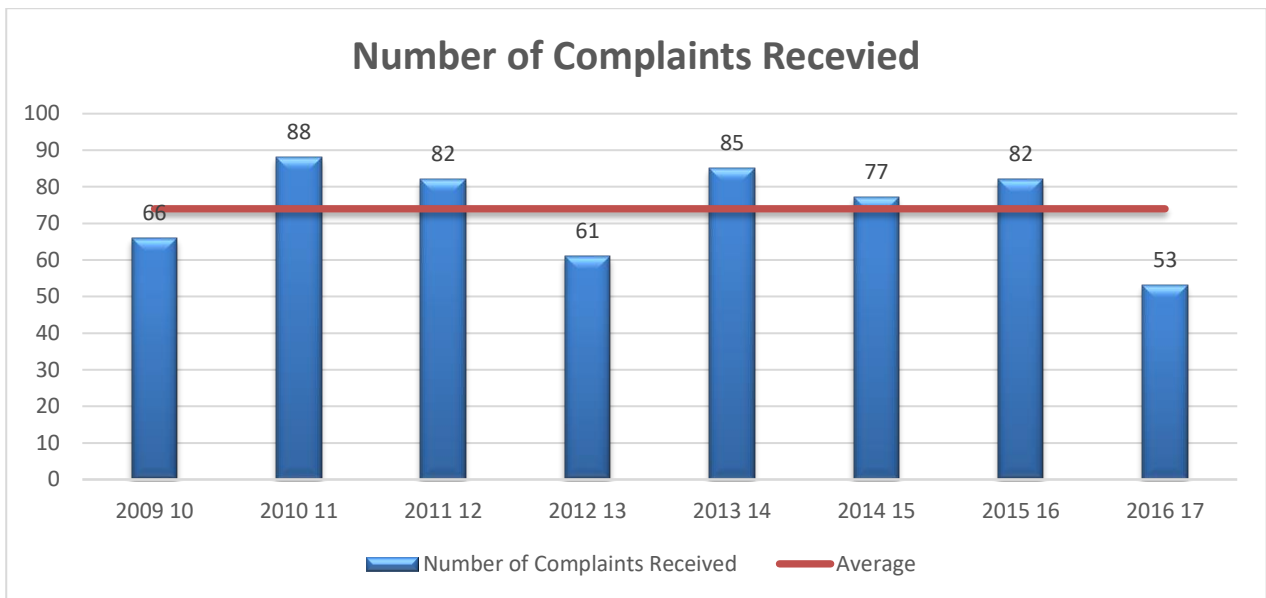


The number of compliments received in 2016/17 reduced from the number received in 2015/16 (by 33%). However, the number received in this period was above the average number of compliments received across Adult Social Care and Public Health Services in previous years.

1.2 Complaints Received

A complaint may be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual, which requires a response.

53 new complaints were received across Adult Social Care Services in 2016/17. There were no complaints received for Public Health Services in 2016/17.



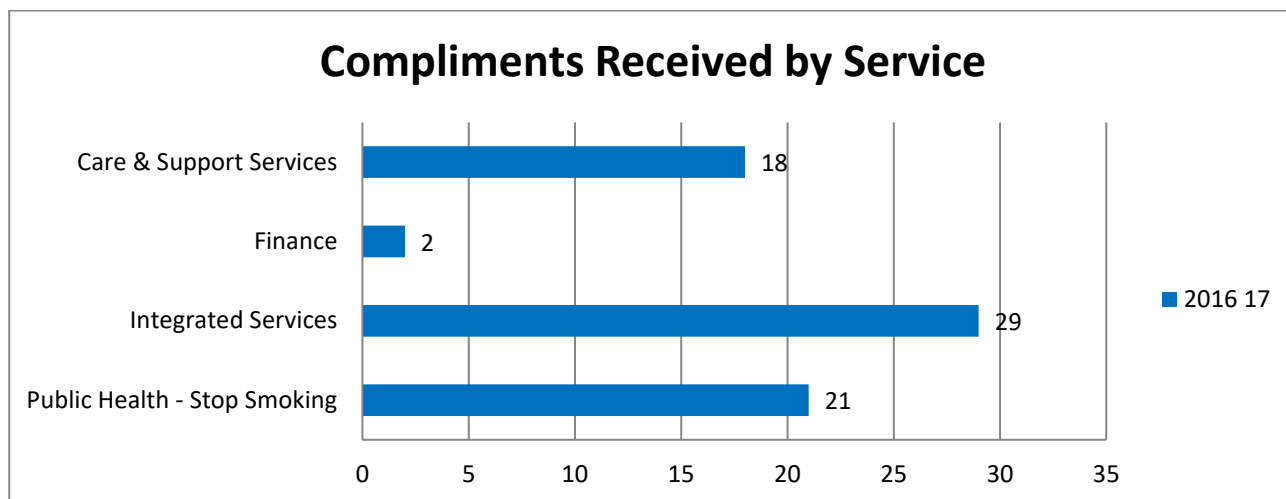
The number of new complaints received in 2016/17 reduced from the number received in 2015/16 (by 35%). The number of new complaints received in 2016/17 was below the average number of complaints received in previous years.

Of the 53 new complaints received, 47 were managed through the complaints procedure. The remaining issues related to internal management processes; alternative review processes; lack of consent for a representative to act on the service user's behalf; and matters which the Local Authority were not responsible for. These cases were filtered out and where appropriate they were passed to alternative channels already in place to manage those issues.

2. Compliments Received Analysis

2.1 Compliments by Service Area

The below chart shows how the 70 compliments received across Adult Social Care and Public Health during 2016/17 were distributed by service area:



A breakdown of compliments received by service is detailed below along with a table which provides a general overview of the work each area undertakes:

Service Name	Description
Care & Support Services (18 compliments received)	Central Bedfordshire Council run residential homes; day centres; care at home to support independence
Finance (2 compliments received)	Invoicing for care and management of direct payments for care
Integrated Services (29 compliments received)	Assessment of eligibility for care and support; development and management of care plans; managing care provision by providers
Public Health-Stop Smoking (21 compliments received)	Offers support and advice to residents wanting to stop smoking

Care & Support

Good relationships built leading to positive outcomes; thanks for help and support (7); service user has been looked after so well; visits were helpful; thanks for help since returning home from hospital (2); service provided has given service user a new lease of life; appreciation for care and friendship; support provided is invaluable; thanks for patience; thanks for kindness; thanks for flexible attitude to providing respite care;

Finance

Thanks to blue badge team for resolving issues with blue badge application and being helpful (2)

Integrated Services

Thanks for compassion and empathy; thanks for help and support (13); initiative and efficiency of agency care workers; respect for service user's routine; professional approach (2); kind and supportive social worker; praise for joint working; thanks for listening; thanks for hard work and long hours; thanks for keeping customer well informed; thanks for provision of stair lift/equipment (2); caring and approachable staff; staff going over and above their duties (2); warm and helpful staff

Public Health – Stop Smoking

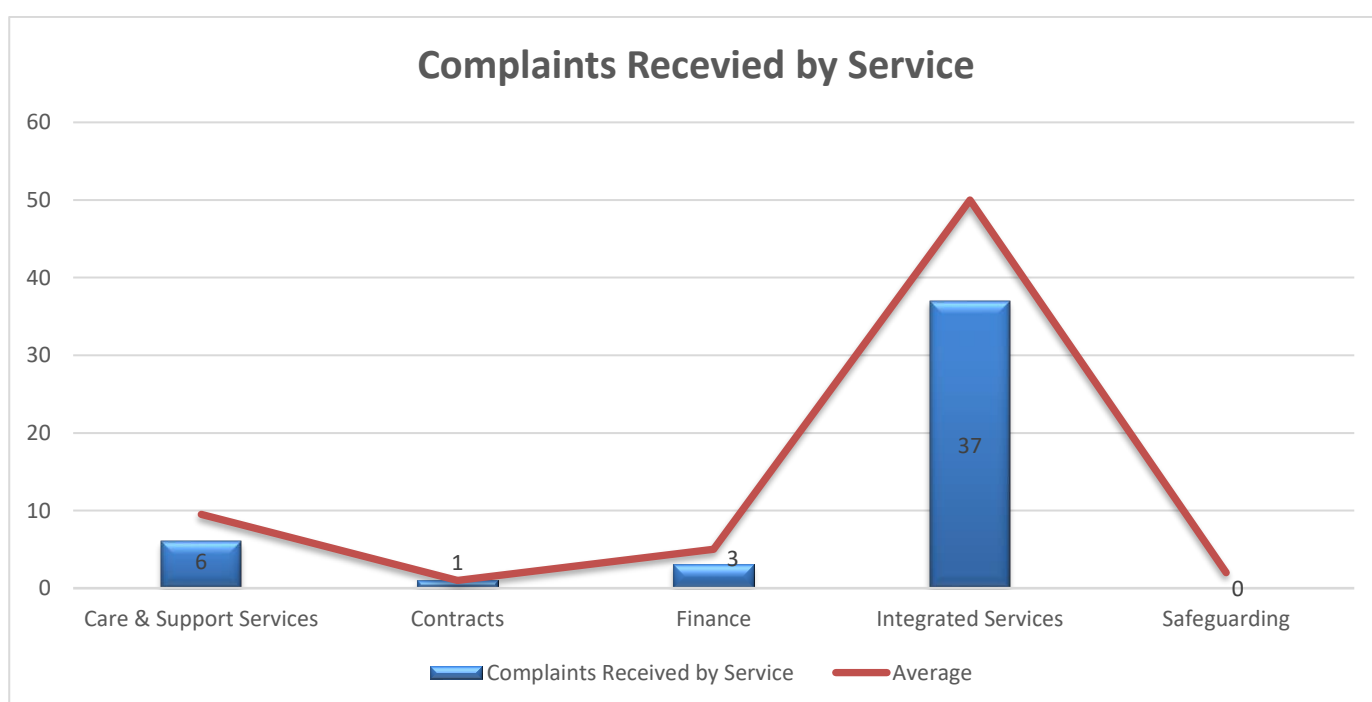
Thanks for help (6); motivational; personable; supporting and encouraging (3); flexible availability; understanding (5); great advice; informative; relaxed; high level support

3. Complaints Received Analysis

3.1 Complaints by Service Area

The Customer Relations Team undertook a project in 2015 to pull all complaints data recorded by the team into a single system. The team were previously working on two databases. From 1st December 2015, all complaints data received by the team has been recorded onto a single database to ensure consistency when capturing complaints and to enhance reporting functions. The improvements made in this area will enable us to undertake further analysis in relation to complaint trends in future reports.

The below analysis on complaints received is based upon the 47 complaints accepted into the complaints process about Adult Social Care services during 2016/17. The below chart shows complaints accepted into the process by service area.



Over the year the majority of complaints were received by Integrated Services (37). The teams which form this part of the service are responsible for the care management of cases. The nature of this team’s work is likely to give rise to more complaints as they tend to be the front-line services that engage with our service users.

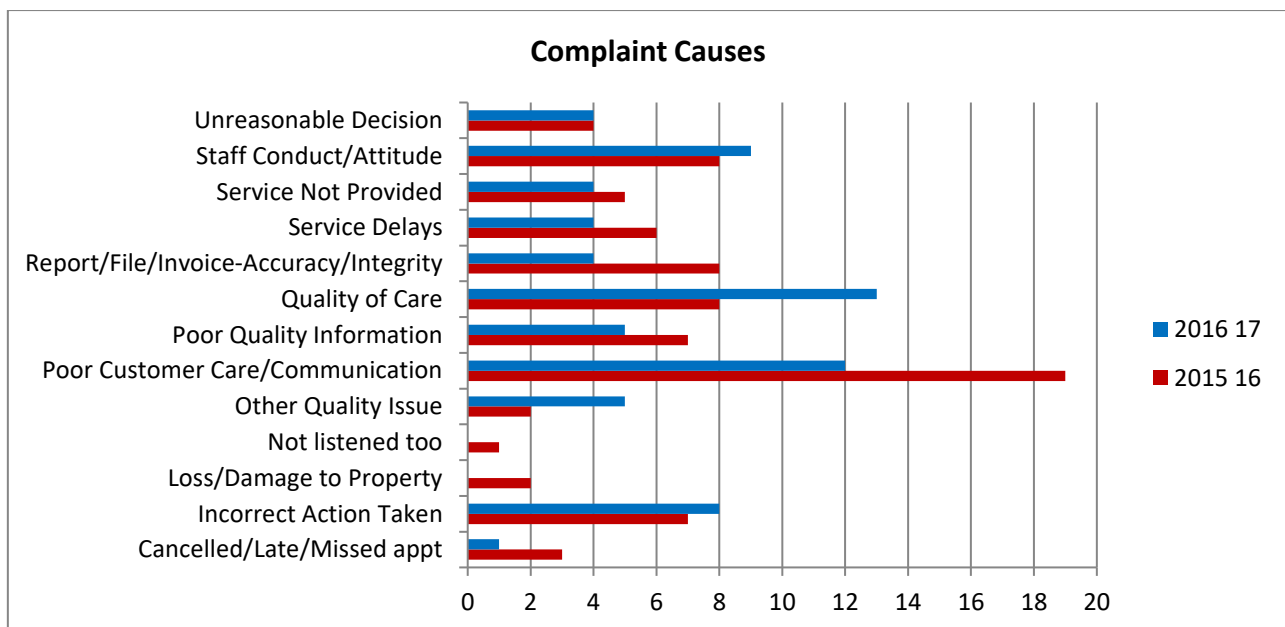
The number of complaints managed through the complaints procedure by service area were either below or in line with the average number of complaints accepted into the process in previous years. The below table provides a general overview of the work each service area undertakes.

Service Name	Description
Care & Support Services	Central Bedfordshire Council run residential homes; day centres; care at home to support independence
Contracts	Monitoring of quality standards where Central Bedfordshire Council commissions

	or provides residential or home care for residents
Finance	Invoicing for care and management of direct payments for care
Integrated Services	Assessment of eligibility for care and support; development and management of care plans; managing care provision by providers
Safeguarding	Protecting adult's rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect

3.2 Complaint Issues

The below chart indicates the types of complaint issues received during 2016/17, in comparison to the previous year. Each complaint received can have several aspects, so one complaint may cover a number of the types of complaint issues set out in the chart below.



The main cause for complaint in 2016/17 related to quality of care followed closely by poor customer care and communication. Poor customer care and communication was also the top complaint issue in 2015/16.

A breakdown of complaints received overall during 2016/17 is detailed in the below table:

Complaint Causes	Breakdown of issues raised
Unreasonable Decision	Unsuitable accommodation; changes to provision of direct payments; cancellation of agreement for care home to host a wake
Staff Conduct/Attitude	Lack of support; lack of action in relation to poor care standards; rudeness, bossy, unkind, aggressive; lack of consultation on care changes; accepting gifts/taking service

	users possessions; unprofessional behaviour
Service Not Provided	Lack of respite provision for young adults with learning disabilities; failure to carry out carer's assessment; lack of support and assessment for Asperger's; agreed contact from service not honoured
Service Delays	Delay in providing respite; delay in transition from direct payments to managed account; delay in providing home equipment
Report/File/Invoice/Integrity	Overcharging for respite care/day centre attendance; poor quality of assessment; records not reflecting services user's personal information;
Quality of Care	Residential: Hazardous living conditions; poor monitoring following a safeguarding investigation; lack of personal care/inconsistent; poor stimulation; lack of carers; failure to follow care plan; failure to respond to calls for assistance; unskilled in moving service users; lack of access to drinks; poor quality food; no support to mobilise; no bed-sides Home Care: Carers not attending for correct length of time; running out of time to complete tasks; home visits suited to agency timetable rather than service user's needs; incorrect level of support provided;
Poor Quality Information	Misleading information about paying for care; misinformed about care costs/assessment process; misleading information provided about availability of residential placement;
Poor Customer Care/Communication	Failure to provide meeting minutes/feedback/actions/assessment; calls & messages not returned; poor transition arrangements; lack of condolences; lack of notice around home visit; purpose of visit not made clear; lack of respect for service user's views; lack of compassion following death; failure to respond to enquiries; not provided with full details of available services; poor handover following change of care provider
Other Quality Issue	Poor quality safeguarding investigation
Incorrect Action Taken	Vulnerable person left alone; eviction from care home without notice; complaint not recorded or responded too; concerns over role at professionals meeting; financial assessment process not being followed;

	shortfall of monies paid into direct payment account; respite not arranged;
Cancelled/Late/Missed Appt	Not arriving for arranged meetings;

4. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

The purpose of capturing equalities data is to monitor access to the complaints procedure; to ensure services are appropriate for all service user groups; and to check whether any issues relating to discrimination have been raised. Data relates to the service user affected by the complaint or a person who has been affected by the actions taken by the service.

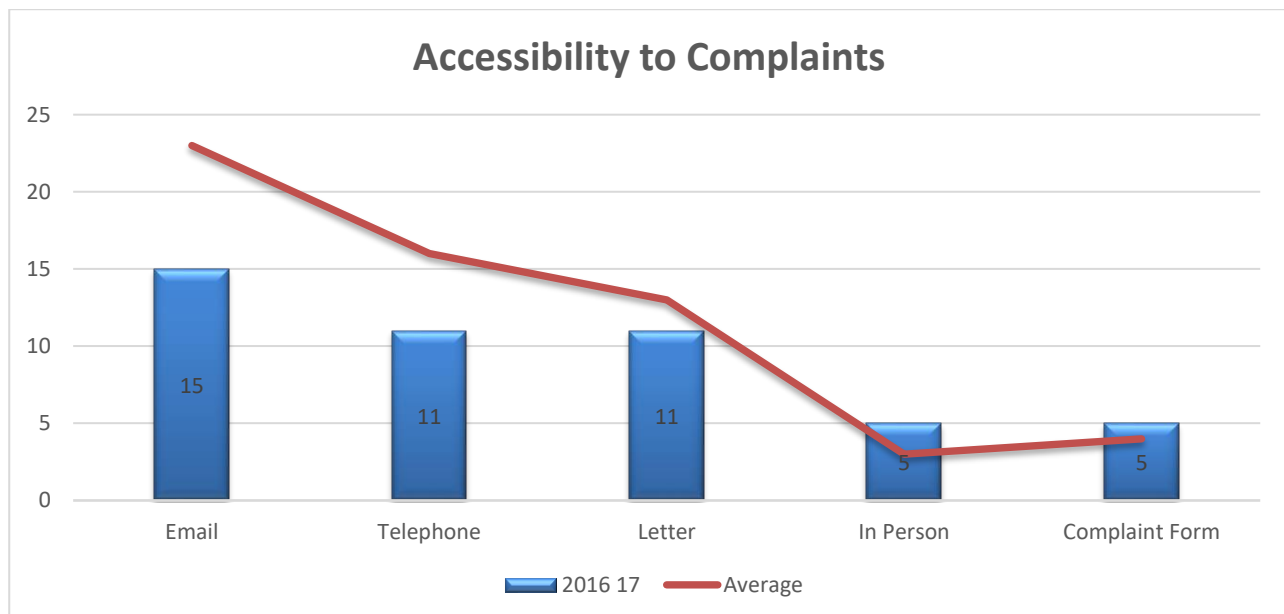
Whilst information is not always provided by a complainant the system used for complaints has the facility to capture the service user's gender, ethnicity, age group and whether the service user describes themselves as having a disability or not.

Customer Relations has undertaken work over the last year to ensure the system is meeting the current needs of equality and diversity monitoring and linking in with information that may already be held in this respect about our service users. The improvements made in this area will enable us to undertake further analysis in relation to complaint trends and accessibility in future reports.

4.1 Accessibility to Complaints

By having a range of contact options for complainants to make their complaints the Council aims to meet the needs of its service users in accessing the complaints procedure. People can make complaints in person; face to face; or via telephone (including a direct line to Customer Relations); in writing; via email; letter; or complaint form. Complaints can be made by a representative of the service user or an advocate.

The below chart shows which method of communication the 47 complainants used to contact the Council in 2016/17.



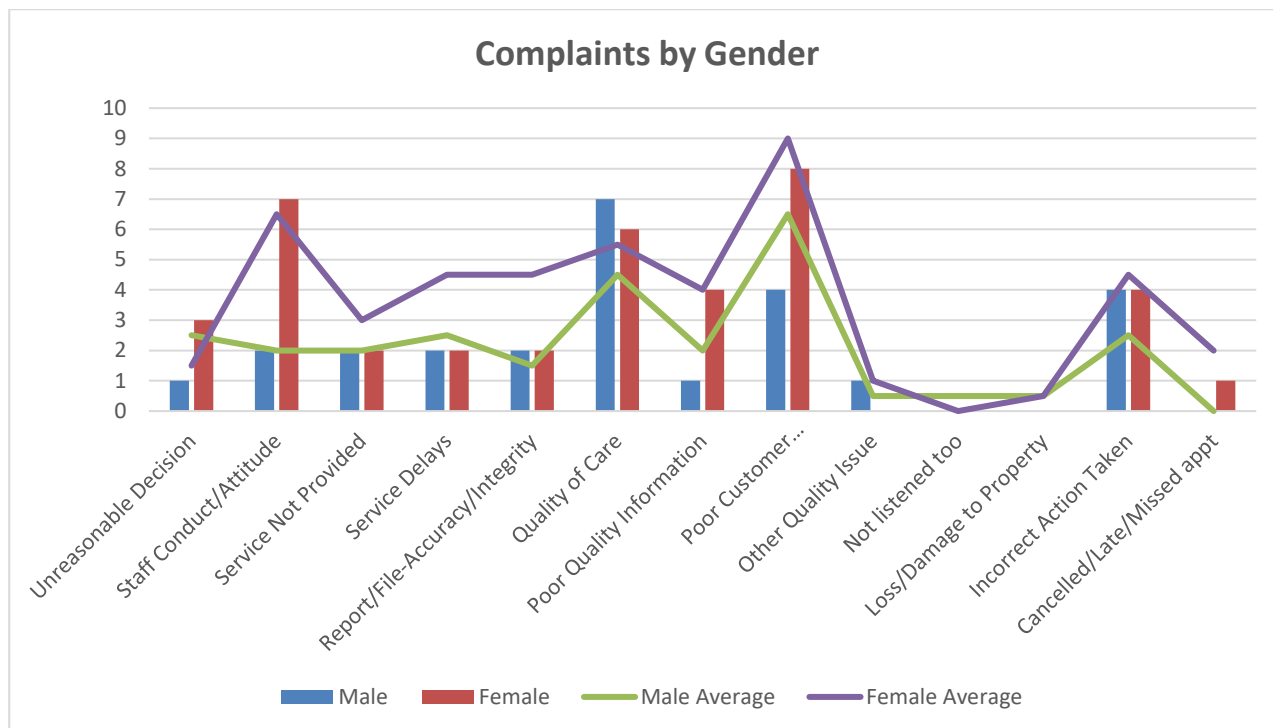
Email was the preferred choice for customers to contact the Council in 2016/17 in relation to making complaints. The averages detailed in the above chart show that email has consistently been the preferred option over previous years.

4.2 Social Care Complaints – Gender

In 2016/17 there were 3811 records of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care Services. Of those records 59% of service users were female and 41% were male.

Of the 47 new complaints managed through the complaints procedure in 2016/17, 60% affected female service users and 40% affected males.

The below chart shows that the top area of complaint for females in 2016/17 was poor customer care/communication; for males, it was the quality of residential or home care.



Poor customer care/communication has consistently been the top cause for complaint for both males and females over previous years.

4.3 Social Care Complaints – Ethnicity

The last census on population by ethnic origin (2011) showed 89.7% of the population in Central Bedfordshire were 'White British' and 10.3% were classified as 'Other'

Of the 3811 records of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care in 2016/17, 91% of service users were described as 'White British'.

The below table provides a breakdown of how ethnicity groups were represented in the 47 new complaints received during 2016/17.

White British	Black or Black British	Not Known
39 (83%)	3 (6%)	5 (11%)

Most of the complaints received in 2016/17 were raised by those who were of White ethnicity. This is to be expected as the population of Central Bedfordshire and the number

of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care are predominantly represented by those of White ethnicity.

Whilst the Customer Relations Team has undertaken work over the last year to improve the data we collect in this respect we do not have comparative data from the previous periods. Further analysis will be possible in future reports.

4.4 Social Care Complaints – Age

Of the 3811 records of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care in 2016/17, 70% of service users were described as being over 65 years of age.

The below table provides a breakdown of how age groups were represented in the 47 new complaints accepted into the process in 2016/17:

Under 18	19-64	65+	Not Known
1 (2%)	23 (49%)	21 (45%)	2 (4%)

The majority of service users receiving support from Adult Social Care are reported to be over 65 years of age however complaints were closely split between the 19-64 and 65+ age brackets.

Whilst the Customer Relations Team has undertaken work over the last year to improve the data we collect in this respect we do not have comparative data from the previous periods. Further analysis will be possible in future reports.

4.5 Social Care Complaints – Disability

Of the 3811 records of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care in 2016/17, 58% of service users were described as having a physical disability.

The below table provides a breakdown of how disability groups were represented in the 47 new complaints accepted into the process in 2016/17:

None	Learning	Physical	Mental Health	Multiple	Sensory
2 (4%)	9 (19%)	23 (49%)	5 (11%)	5 (11%)	3 (6%)

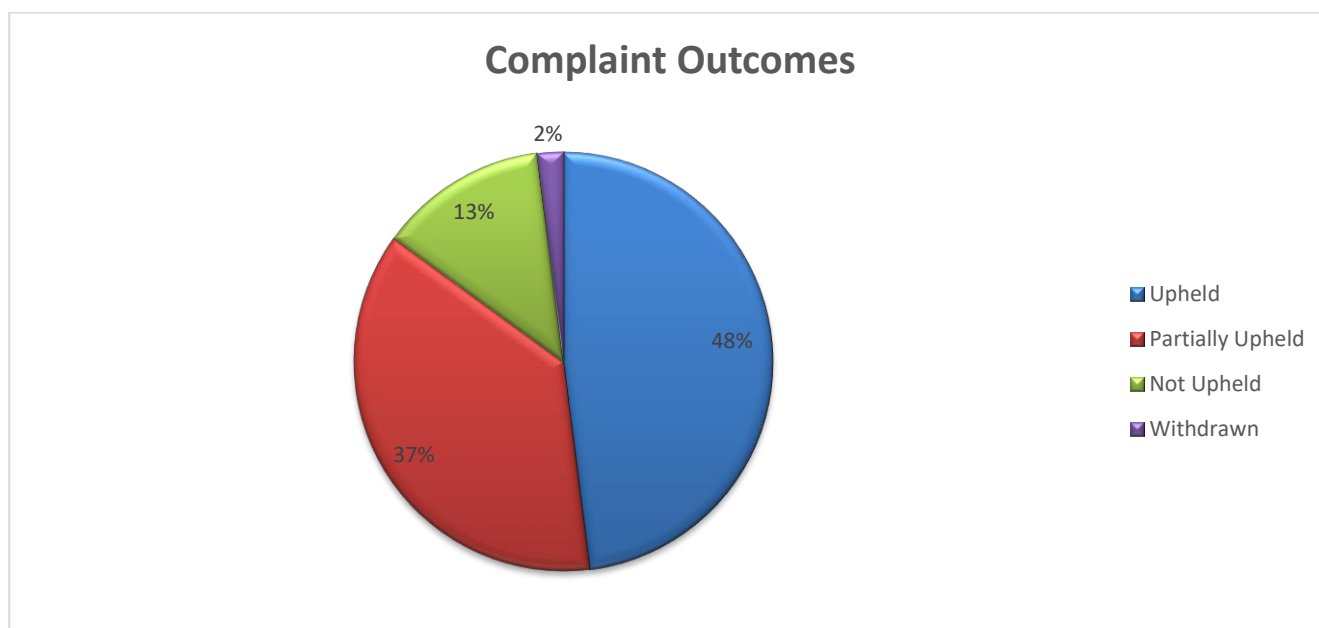
The majority of complaints received were from those services users with a physical disability. This is comparable in respect of the number of adults receiving support from Adult Social Care who are described as having a physical disability.

Whilst the Customer Relations Team has undertaken work over the last year to improve the data we collect in this respect we do not have comparative data from the previous periods. Further analysis will be possible in future reports.

5. Outcomes from Concluded Complaints

There were 46 complaints concluded in the period, all relating to Adult Social Care Services. One complaint was withdrawn; 5 were managed using the conciliation method and 40 were managed using the local resolution method.

The below chart indicates the outcomes from complaints in 2016/17. 48% of complaints were upheld in full and 37% were upheld in part. In total 85% of complaints were well founded either in full or in part.



The below table indicates that the upheld rates in 2016/17 were impacted predominantly by customer care and communication issues alongside the quality of care provided to service users.

In 2015/16 poor customer care/communication was also the top area for upheld rates. Quality of care was also the second highest area for upheld rates but this was equal to poor quality of information which has proven to be less of a concern in 2016/17.

Types of Complaint	Upheld rates in 2016/17	Upheld rates in 2015/16
Poor Customer Care/Communication	21.3%	24.5%
Quality of Care	21.3%	12.3%
Staff Conduct/Attitude	12.8%	7%
Service Delays	8.5%	10.5%
Report/File/Invoice-Accuracy/Integrity	8.5%	7%
Poor Quality Information	6.4%	12.3%
Service Not Provided	6.4%	8.8%
Unreasonable Decision	6.4%	1.8%
Incorrect Action Taken	4.2%	7%
Other Quality Issue	2.1%	3.5%
Cancelled/Late/Missed Appointment	2.1%	3.5%
Loss/Damage to Property	N/A	1.8%

6. Performance in Complaint Handling

6.1 Action Plan Compliance

46 complaints were concluded through the complaints procedure in 2016/17.

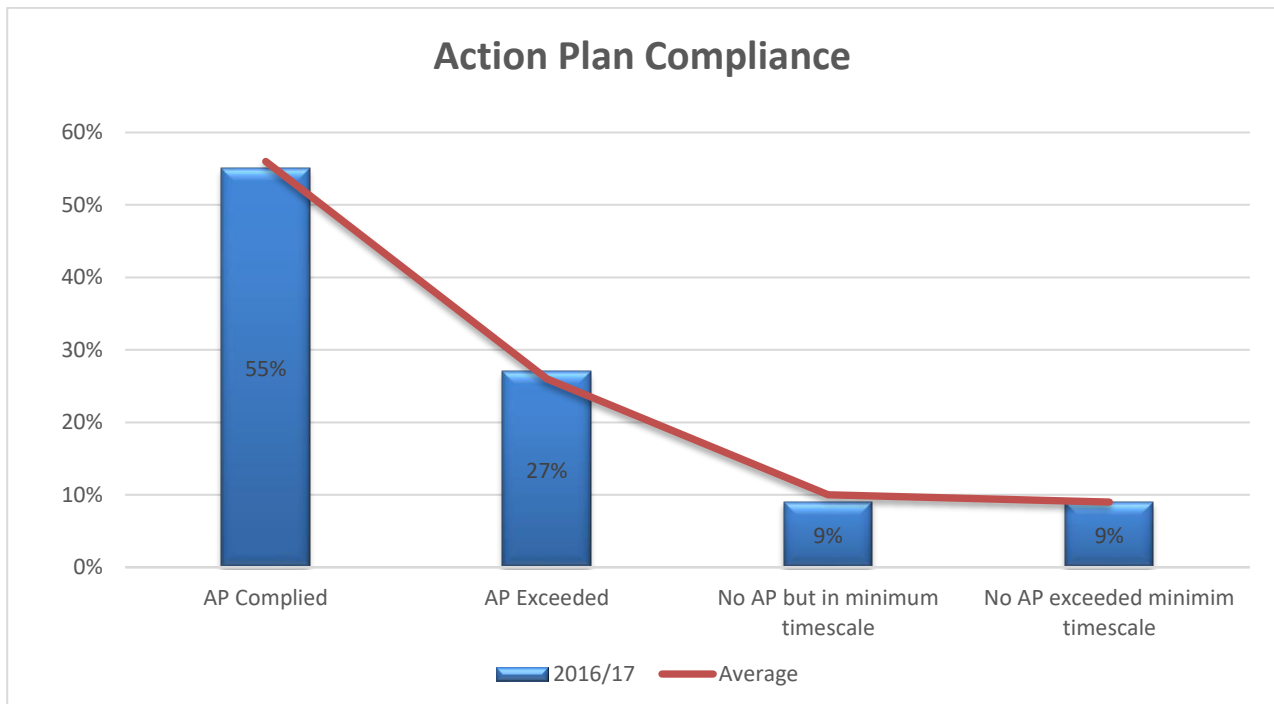
There is no timescale set out in regulations in which to resolve complaints for Adult Social Care services. The emphasis is on assessing the complaint at the outset to fully understand the issues, and then planning a clear method of handling the complaint in a reasonable timescale. Timescales can be re-negotiated with the complainant if appropriate. Managers are encouraged to set out an action plan for the complaint detailing how it will be dealt with.

Performance is therefore monitored on whether an action plan was in place and whether this was complied with. If an action plan is not in place then performance is measured on whether the complaint was concluded within the minimum timescales set out in the procedure as best practice.

Of the 46 complaints concluded in 2016/17, one was withdrawn. Of the remaining 45 complaints:

- 25 complied with an action plan
- 12 exceeded an action plan
- 4 had no action plan but were completed within minimum timescales
- 4 had no action plan and exceeded minimum timescales.

The below chart indicates the performance in handling complaints during 2016/17 in comparison to the average performance in handling complaints in previous years.



Complaint performance in 2016/17 was consistent with the average performance over previous years. Of the 16 cases that exceeded the action plan/timescale 14 were down to delays by the service; 1 was down to establishing whether the issues were eligible for the complaints procedure; and the remaining case was down to the complainant adding to the complaints being investigated.

6.2 Complaint Escalations

Regulations require the Council to investigate a complaint about Adult Social Care in a manner appropriate to resolve it speedily and efficiently. This gives us flexibility on the approach to take in responding. If a complainant asks for further action on a completed complaint it will be reviewed by the Assistant Director. If the Assistant Director decides the complaint has been fully addressed, it will be signed off and the complainant advised of their right to refer to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Two complaints were escalated to Assistant Director Review in the period.

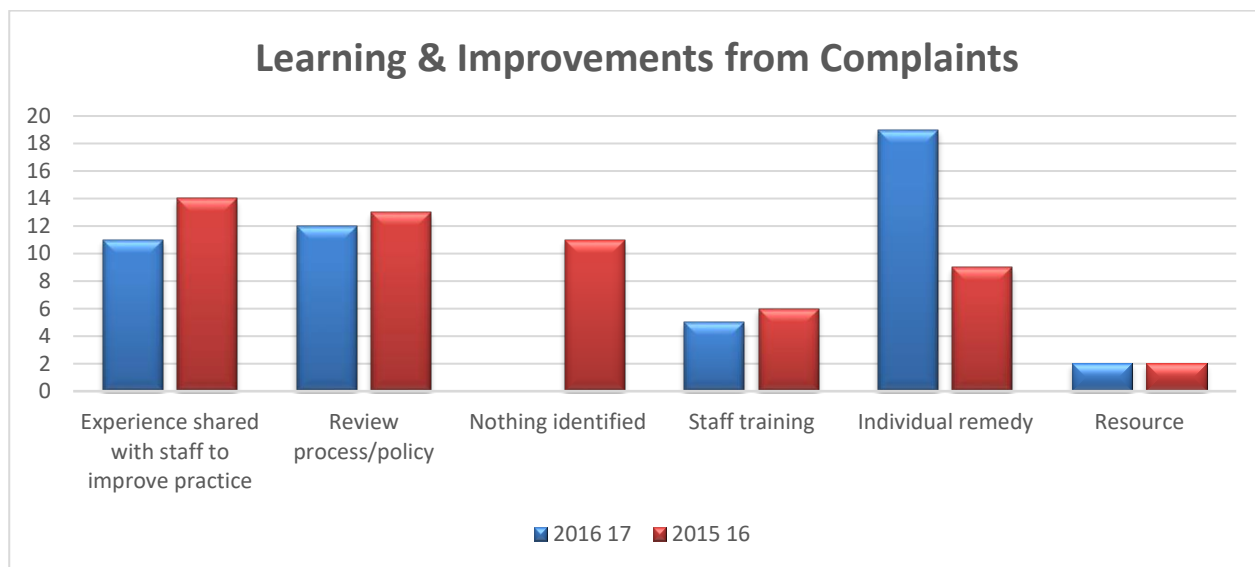
In one case the Assistant Director was of the view that the complaint had been fully addressed and agreed with the outcome. The complainant was advised of their right to refer to the Local Government Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied.

The other case was pending the conclusion of the Assistant Director Review at the end of the period.

7. Learning and Improvements from Complaints

Where complaints are upheld either fully or in part complainants will receive an apology. However, service areas are also expected to put in place a remedy which may be for the individual complainant or undertake wider learning across the service to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

The below chart shows the types of learning identified from complaints in 2016/17 compared to those identified in 2015/16.



The above chart shows that the majority of improvements identified in 2016/17 resulted in individual remedies for the complainant. In comparison, the majority of improvements in 2015/16 resulted in the complainant's experience being shared with staff to improve practice.

Key improvements to Council services included:

- Training for staff in Finance and Integrated Services to ensure an understanding of the end to end process of financial assessments including how reimbursements are made.
- Continued work on the lack of respite provision in Central Bedfordshire to understand the types and amount needed to respond to the range of complex needs of the individuals the Council supports
- Safeguarding Team to attend social work team meetings to discuss procedures and expectations of practitioners.
- Quality standards for communication with families to be distributed to workers
- Any changes to a support package should be provided in writing
- Team Manager to audit colleagues work to ensure that assessments and reviews are comprehensive and clearly identify needs along with how these should be met
- Changes of staff and temporary replacements in the Finance Team Administrator role may have contributed to delays in completion of financial assessments. A new member of staff has been recruited to this post.

- Guidelines to be drafted in relation to the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the referral/assessment process. A simple flow chart will also be developed to give prospective residents and families a clear understanding of the process.

Key improvements for care provision that the Council commissions included:

- A review of resident property inventories on a regular basis
- Training for staff in implementing policy and procedure following the death of a resident
- Training for staff to cover diabetes, hypo management and the importance of a healthy diet.
- Improve tracking of activities for residents through a communication book
- A dedicated member of staff to deliver and record all meals/drinks provided to residents
- Fall mats will not be removed unless a consent form has been signed
- A system to be put in place to measure the length of time taken to answer call bells
- A buddy scheme has been introduced to support transition into the care environment
- More comprehensive and robust pre-assessments for respite and permanent residents to ensure that care plans are effective; this will include the level of observation required. Families will be asked to read and sign the pre-assessment once complete to ensure nothing is missed
- Carers to complete further training in regard to professional boundaries
- Information regarding orders or quotes for equipment should be communicated to all interested parties to prevent delays in provision
- During initial assessments, the service user's wishes around frequency of personal care tasks will be clarified
- Management Team to audit on a daily basis that residents are offered drinks regularly and whether they wish for food and drink to remain or be cleared away.
- Staff will physically offer a choice of fresh clothes to residents each day giving the opportunity to make a choice

8. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints

8.1 Complaints Received and Decision Notices

The LGO annual statistics show that they received 16,863 complaints and enquiries about local authorities in 2016/17. In comparison, the LGO considered two complaints about Central Bedfordshire Council's Adult Social Care services during this period. The table below sets out the complaints received and any Ombudsman decisions reached:

Complaint	Ombudsman Decision
<p>The complainant says a social worker was rude to her and the service user at a debt advice meeting in September 2015; that the Council delayed in organising the application for and direct payment funding of carers services; that the Council in April 2015 failed to backdate a carer's direct payment to March 2015; and made false allegations about the service user in an assessment which was sent to his psychiatrist.</p>	<p>The complainant complains on her own behalf and that of her son. The evidence does not enable the Ombudsman to make a finding on events if a September 2015 meeting between the complainant, her son and a social worker. The Council delayed setting up and paying the complainant's carers payments. The injustice caused by the fault has been remedied by the Council. There was miscommunication between the Council and the complainant which led to inaccurate information about her son being passed to his psychiatrist. However, this caused no significant injustice and the Council has remedied it.</p>
<p>The complainant is unhappy with the Council's safeguarding investigation into her allegations that her grandfather was neglected in a care home.</p>	<p>The Council was at fault in the way it carried out a review into the complainant's concerns that her grandfather was being neglected in a care home. There was also fault leading to injustice in the care home's record-keeping. This led to uncertainty for the service user's family over the care he received. The Ombudsman recommends the Council apologises to the complainant and her mother and pays them each £250 for this avoidable distress. The care home should also apologise to the complainant and her mother for the uncertainty caused due to the home's failure to keep accurate records.</p>

9. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

9.1 Effectiveness of Complaints Handling

Service users, their representatives and people affected by the actions of Adult Social Care services can access the Council's complaints procedure and the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Customer Relations Team monitors the operation and effectiveness of the complaints procedure as well as how information about complaints is being used to improve services and delivery.

Local Resolution has generally been an effective means of dealing with complaints with only two being escalated to Assistant Director level and two complaints being investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2016/17.

Complaints were seen as important feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. The customer experience in complaints has led to some improvements to practice. In 2015/16, we reported that there was room for improvement to ensure all complaints had an individual action plan when 81% of cases had plans. This has improved slightly in 2016/17, with 82% of cases having action plans. 67% of those cases were managed in line with the action plan which is a slight drop on last year (70%). There is still room for improvement in this area but in the cases where there was no action plan the service area were meeting the minimum standards in line with best practice in half of those complaints (50%).

9.2 Financial Implications

There are a number of ways in which the local authority can incur costs as part of the statutory complaints process for Adult Social Care Services.

Formal Investigation is normally achieved by appointing an investigating officer. The investigating officer may be employed by the local authority or be externally commissioned. The investigating officer however cannot be in direct line management of the service complained about. Due to the nature of the complaints that tend to be suitable for formal investigation the usual practice is to externally commission an investigating officer specifically for that piece of work.

In addition, there may be rare occasions where financial redress is offered through the complaints procedure. Financial redress can be provided to acknowledge avoidable distress; harm; risk; or other unfair impact. As injustice of this nature cannot generally be remedied by a payment the amount is usually symbolic to acknowledge the impact of fault on the complainant. The amount will depend on the circumstances of the case and this can be paid through local settlement following investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman but can also be recommended during the local authority complaints process.

Any financial costs incurred are the responsibility of Adult Social Care Services. To assist in minimising the risk of costs the Customer Relations Team is actively involved in assessing the seriousness of complaints, whether complainants are eligible to use the

statutory complaints procedure and ensuring appropriate and reasonable remedies are recommended.

The below table details the total costs incurred during 2016/17:

Reasons for Cost	2016/17 Spend
Formal Investigation	£0.00
Financial Redress (LGO Recommendation)	£500.00
TOTAL	£500.00

10. Customer Relations Team – Supporting Adult Social Care

The Customer Relations Team supports Adult Social Care Services by:

- ✓ Providing guidance, advice and support to staff on the management of complaints
- ✓ Supporting staff involved in the complaints procedure
- ✓ Quality assurance of complaint responses
- ✓ Managing challenges to complaint handling and responses
- ✓ Liaison with the Local Government Ombudsman
- ✓ Overseeing the arrangements for communicating and publicising the complaints procedure
- ✓ Evaluating and reporting on the numbers, types, outcomes and trends of complaints to inform practice, development and service planning
- ✓ Providing a means to capture the learning from complaints to contribute to practice development, commissioning and service planning

During 2017/18 the Customer Relations Team will focus on a number of initiatives:

- Continue to ensure the complaints procedure is accessible
- Continue to promote the Customer Relations root-cause analysis tool to help managers with identifying systemic improvements
- Continue to promote the Customer Relations toolkit for handling persistent customers consistently and fairly
- Continue to ensure complaints are handled responsively and in a flexible way
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve a reduction in levels of complaints upheld
- Maintain the low levels of complaint investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman and where the LGO finds fault
- Improve capture of equality and diversity information
- Undertake a project to move the admin function of the Customer Relations Team into the Customer Service Centre. This will provide the Customer Relations Team with some much-needed capacity to focus on promoting good complaints handling across the Council



A great place to live and work

Contact us...

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