



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

Complaints Annual Report 2020/2021 - Adult social care, children's social care, and continuing health care services

Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Cabinet Members: Councillor Wendy Pattison, Adults' Wellbeing

Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, Children and Young People

Purpose of report

To inform members of the Committee of:

- The activities of the and Adult Services and Children's Social Care complaints service, including work on behalf of the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group;
- How customer experiences are sought and to provide an overview of what people have said about our services;
- How complaints are handled and statistical information from 2020/21;
- Matters of general note arising out of those complaints including some examples where action has been or is to be taken in order to improve services;
- Decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Health Service Ombudsman in respect of complaints they received about children's and adult services; and
- Other feedback from people who use our services.

Recommendations

1. **The Committee is recommended to note the content of the report and identify any additional areas for scrutiny.**

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the "Living" priority in the Corporate Plan.

Key issues

1. Over 2020/21 the number of adult social care complaints reported is lower than last year, however, compliments have increased, particularly those reported by independent providers. The number of Children's Services complaints has remained about the same although proportionally more are being dealt with via the corporate process as

they are received from adults claiming injustice, rather than from the children being cared for. The focus remains on lessons learned and improving service provision.

2. Every complaint is handled in a person-centred way, taking into account risk, seriousness, complexity or sensitivity of events.
3. When it is appropriate we are using findings to improve services and people's experience.

Customer Experience: Joint Children's and Adult Services Customer Experience: Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2016/2017

BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Adult and Children's Services want local people who use social services to have a strong voice in helping to monitor, develop and improve the way we work. Customer experience information helps us understand how our services affect the lives of people who use our services, their carers and families and in turn this helps inform our service development. Complaints handling is a statutory function governed by the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 for Adult Services; and The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 for Children's Services.
- 1.2 In respect of adult social services, the complaints procedure is for a person who receives or has received services from us; or for a person who is affected, or likely to be affected, by any of our actions, omissions or decisions. In respect of children's social services, the complaints procedure is for a child or young person to make representations, including complaints, about the actions, decisions or apparent failings of a local authority's children's social services provision; and for any other appropriate person to act on behalf of the child or young person concerned or to make a complaint in their own right.
- 1.3 People who use our services are encouraged to give feedback about their experiences and many choose to compliment our staff and/or the services they use. Overall, we receive many more compliments than complaints.

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Policy	Complaints contribute to monitoring the impact of the Council's policies and the effectiveness with which they are being implemented.
Finance and value for money	There are no direct implications.

Legal	There are no direct legal implications although arrangements are in place to ensure that if complaints suggest that someone is being abused, or a crime may have been committed, there is an appropriate response.
Procurement	There are no direct implications.
Human Resources	There are no direct implications.
Property	There are no direct implications.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A X	There are no direct implications.
Risk Assessment	Individual complaints are risk-assessed on receipt, and appropriate actions are taken if someone is at immediate risk of harm.
Crime & Disorder	Arrangements are in place to ensure that if complaints suggest that someone is being abused, or a crime may have been committed, there is an appropriate response.
Customer Considerations	Complaints are one of a range of methods by which we receive feedback on the quality and consistency of our services. They are also invaluable for learning lessons and quality improvement.
Carbon reduction	There are no direct carbon reduction implications.
Wards	All

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background documents for this report within the meaning of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report.

	Initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Executive Director	CM

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Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	GRT

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