



Dumfries and Galloway
IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee

11th November 2021

This Report relates to
Item 5 on the Agenda

Adult Social Work Complaints

Paper presented by Name(s)

For Discussion

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List of Background Papers:	https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/complaintsprocedure
Appendices:	Not Applicable

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Adult Social Work Services welcomes, comments, compliments and complaints as they provide important information about services which are working well and identify areas for improvement.
- 1.2 Complaints that are handled well provide an opportunity to improve our service and reputation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **The IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee is asked to:**
- **Note the content of the Adult Social Work Complaints Report**

3. Background and Main Report

- 3.1 Social Work Services are committed to delivering a complaints handling procedure which focuses on adding value to the services we provide and implementing learning to facilitate continuous improvement.
- 3.2 The fundamental principles that underpin our complaints procedure are:
- Ensuring complaints are managed effectively at all stages of the procedure by having clear and straightforward systems in place; and
 - Ensuring decisions are taken as quickly as possible and, where appropriate, lessons are learned which are then fed back into service improvements.
- 3.3 The Service works to manage complaints proactively and our compliance with timescales for responding to complaints continues to improve as we make every effort towards meeting the standards expected of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure.
- 3.4 In January 2020, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) published its revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP). This revised model saw the previously separate MCHPs for Local Authorities and Social Work Services merged into a single MCHP, in response to stakeholder views expressed through the SPSO's consultation work carried out in early 2019. The revised MCHP was fully implemented by the Council on the 1st April 2019.
- 3.5 During 2020/21 a total of 14 complaints were received for Adult Services. This is reported as follows:
- Stage 1 Complaints – 7
 - Direct to Stage 2 Complaints – 5
 - Escalated to Stage 2 from Stage 1 – 2
- 3.6 Social Work Services continues to deal with the majority of complaints at Stage 1. This demonstrates a positive commitment to resolving matters at the earliest stage possible.
- 3.7 We continue to work jointly with our colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure that where complaints involve services provided by more than one agency, they are dealt with seamlessly, promptly and clearly through a single coordinated process with one response being issued to the complainant.

3.8 An important aspect of the Complaints Handling Procedure is to learn from the feedback we receive from service users. The revised MCHP sets out the requirement to have a clear system in place to act on issues identified as complaints.

3.9 Learning may be identified from individual complaints (regardless of whether it is upheld or not) and from analysis of complaints data. Social Work Services considers outcomes from complaints as valuable lessons and staff responding to complaints are required to identify any areas for improvements within the Service and to inform the complainant of actions which will be taken to prevent recurrence of the event which led to the complaint.

3.10 Examples of identified learning that have led to improvements within the Service include:

At times, we have not communicated as well as we could have with the individuals and their families, staff were reminded of the importance of timely and responsive communication with individuals and their families, where appropriate. A practice Note for staff was developed and managers shared this with their teams.

As a result of a complaint, new guidance was issued to staff to offer a consistent approach when working with adults accessing respite provision, where transport needs require to be given further consideration.

We have worked with our colleagues in the HSCP to improve multiagency discharge planning where an individual's needs are more complex.

3.11 The Service continues to deliver a programme of training to its staff. This training is focussed on Complaints Handling and Investigation Skills. We also concentrate on aspects of good customer service, promoting a confident workforce who have the support and guidance available to respond effectively to any matters of complaint.

3.12 During this reporting period, Adult Care Services received a total of 10 compliments. We recognise that many compliments received by staff are delivered verbally and not easily captured and we are working on developing a single process for centrally acknowledging, recording and communicating compliments across the service to raise morale, recognise good practice and aid service improvement, where appropriate.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Based on the information provided on complaints and compliments to Adult Social Work Services, the Committee is asked to note the report and the work to be undertaken to improve the recording of compliments.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 Dealing with complaints is met within the existing budget.

6. Impact on Integration Joint Board Outcomes, Priorities and Policy

6.1 The content of this report meets with the following National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes for Health and Social Care:

- Outcome 3 – People who use health and social care services have positive

- experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected
- Outcome 7 People who use health and social care services are safe from harm

7. Legal and Risk Implications

7.1 There are no legal or risk implications as a result of this report.

8. Consultation

8.1 The content of this report has been shared with the Chief Social Work Officer.

9. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

9.1 As the content of this report does not propose a change to service a policy an EQIA is not required at this time.

10. Glossary

10.1 All acronyms must be set out in full the first time they appear in a paper with the acronym following in brackets.

EQIA	Equalities Impact Assessment
MCHP	Model Complaints Handling Procedure
SPSO	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

