

Barnet Council

Adult Social Care

Annual Complaints Report

2023-2024

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1. Introduction

Barnet Council's adult social care service, part of the Communities, Adults and Health directorate, provides statutory social care services including individual care and support; safeguarding; information and advice; preventative services; assessments under the Mental Health Act (MHA 1983, amended 2007) and the Mental Capacity Act (MCA 2005). Social Care Direct acts as the front door for adult social care enquiries.

Comments, complaints and compliments are welcomed by the Service and are seen as a tool to help improve and develop services and practice. They provide the opportunity to learn from mistakes and to put things right for an individual when they have gone wrong.

Barnet Council is required, under statutory regulations, to report annually to the relevant Council Committee on adult social care complaints.

This report provides information about complaints for Barnet's Adult Social Care Service for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The report considers complaints dealt with through both the Statutory Adult Social Care and Corporate Complaints Procedures where these relate to Adult Social Care.

2. Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure

The Council is required to operate a separate Statutory Complaints and Representations procedure for adult social care, in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. Any complaint which does not fall under these requirements is considered under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

All complainants who have exhausted the Council's Statutory and local complaints procedure retain the right to approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO is impartial and independent and act as the final stage for complaints about the Council, Social Care Providers, Care Homes and Home Care Agencies.

3. Accessing the complaints procedure

The service continually seeks to encourage people who use social care and their carers, to provide feedback (positive or negative) on the services and customer care that they have received.

The process is publicised through the following means:

- Comments, Compliments and Complaints booklets are widely distributed to public offices in the Borough.
 - The Easy Read version of the booklet 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints' is also widely distributed. This is aimed at people with Learning Disabilities and others who would find a simplified version easier to understand.
 - Information about making a comment, compliment or complaint in relation to Adult Social Care is published on the council website www.barnet.gov.uk/comments-and-complaints-adult-social-care.
 - Individual staff and managers, advise people who draw on social care support, their family, carers and relevant organisations of the procedures during their interactions with them, as appropriate.
 - Managers are asked to feature compliments and complaints as a standing item in their team meetings and briefing sessions.
 - Historic complaints reports are published on Open Barnet the council's data portal, a
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valuable tool in pushing forward Barnet's Transparency Agenda.

- Compliments are shared with staff and promoted internally through the staff newsletter, senior manager briefings and staff awards.
- Information about complaints and the learning from them is shared with the Management Team and with staff, to improve practice.

The council has commissioned Barnet Citizens' Advice Bureau as the local lead provider for specialist information, advice and advocacy support. This ensures that the Council has a dedicated support service in place for people who require access to independent information, advice and advocacy. Staff are trained in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and staff understand their statutory duties in relation to advocacy.

4. Overview

The following complaints and compliments were received into Adult Social Care in 2023/24 from individuals, carers and/or their representatives. To give these figures context, there were 5,957 new requests for services in 2023/24 (2,160 resulting from a hospital discharge). 5,711 people were receiving a long-term service. Of these, 4,508 were receiving a community service & 1,203 were receiving residential/nursing services. In addition, the council responded to 1,764 safeguarding concerns and carried out 768 safeguarding enquires. 2,288 people received reablement services. 419 statutory carers assessments were carried out (some of these by Barnet Carers Centre on the council's behalf).

- 142 compliments
- 101 statutory complaints
- 5 corporate complaints
- 4 Local Government Ombudsman enquiries

Of the 101 statutory complaints, 90 resulted in an outcome, 11 were withdrawn. Of the 90:

- 41 were not upheld
- 25 were upheld
- 24 were partially upheld

The main themes of complaints were:

- **Decision** – disagreement with the outcome of a care assessment; or with the outcome of a financial assessment under the charging policy; or a decision made as a result of a statutory duty or national policy.
- **Conduct** – behaviour, communication or conduct of staff employed by care providers or by the council.
- **Quality** - relates to the quality of service from care homes, home care agencies or care assessments

Common improvement themes were:

- **Staff** – formal reflection and training
 - **Procedures** – updates and amendments to, or staff reiteration of procedures
 - **Provider** - provider to review working practices, procedures, policies and contract compliance.
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5. Compliments

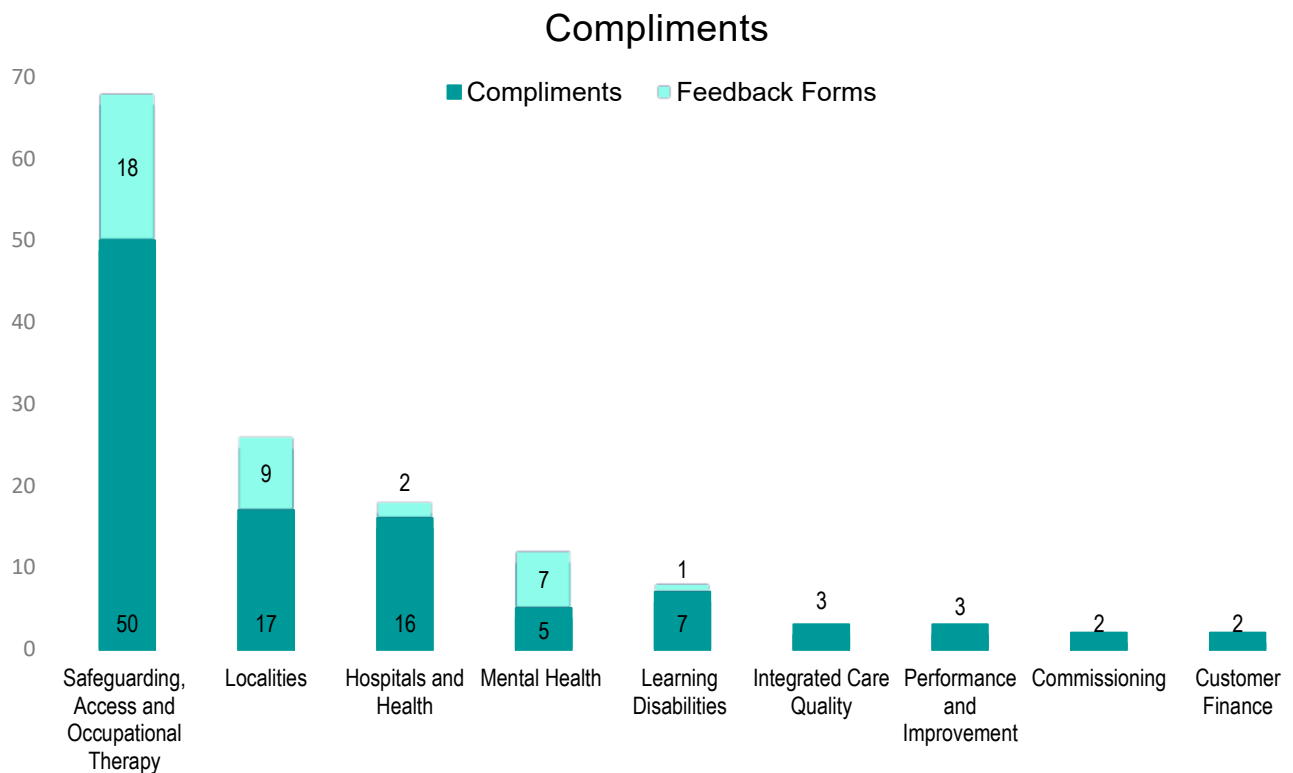
Compliments are just as useful as complaints in helping to improve service. By having people tell the Council when things are done well, the Council can make sure that it continues to recognise and build on its strengths. It is also important to recognise the excellent work that is being delivered and provides balance within the complaints annual report.

Many individuals who compliment staff and teams provide verbal feedback directly to individuals via face-to-face conversations or by phone; we do not reflect these in our annual figures. Formal written compliments received in the period were varied and ranged from individual messages of gratitude to team praise.

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, Adult Social Care received a total of 142 compliments. This is an increase on the 128 compliments received in 2022/23.

Of the 142 compliments, 37 were received via resident feedback forms. Chart 1 provides an overview of compliments and provides a breakdown of the feedback forms by service area:

Chart 1





Examples of compliments received in 2023-2024

"I want to extend my gratitude to X for an outstanding, friendly and caring service. X was patient, took time to explain the purpose of her visit and how she can help. Very thorough in her work making sure everything was covered during the session and after, X made me feel in control of my situation by including me in every step of the way. X restored my faith in the existence of people with integrity and kind hearts. If more people had her qualities, the world would be a better place." [Compliment regarding a member of the Occupational Therapy service.](#)

"I am writing to say a huge thank you for everything you've done for my mum. Since you walked into our lives, you've been nothing other than super helpful, charming, friendly, approachable, understanding, caring and empathetic. In addition, you have been patient and tenacious. You are a wonderful social worker and we, as a family, have been so grateful for your support. I really appreciated knowing there was a kind voice at the end of the phone." [Compliment regarding a member of Localities.](#)

"Thank you so much for your support, you listened to me, I wish everybody was as good as you! You did everything to try and help me and understood my frustrations." [Compliment for the Complaints and Information Manager - Business Intelligence, Performance & Systems](#)

"Over the nine years that we've worked together I've greatly valued the support you've given me; I've enjoyed our open and positive working relationship and the difference that we've been able to make to the quality of care in Barnet. " [Compliment regarding a member of the Care Quality Service](#)

"We are beyond grateful to X for the empathetic, professional and caring support she provides to our daughter and more widely to our family. Thanks to X we do not feel alone. We feel heard and supported at this vulnerable time because, simply put, X is a shining light. Genuine in her approach, she takes time to explain processes and next steps to our daughter and to us, continually allaying fears, ready to answer questions - no matter how great or small - with prompt and open lines of communication. Despite the pressure and responsibility of her role, which she combines with her studies, she always manages to be kind, thoughtful and find time; this is quite an achievement, one that we do not take for granted." [Compliment regarding a member of the Mental Health Team](#)

"Thanks for all your help with everything, mum wanted me to pass along her thanks too, you've always been so responsive and you have provided us a lot of support during a really challenging couple of years." [Compliment regarding a member of the Learning Disabilities Service](#)

"Would just like to thank-you for all of your hard work in placing my brother in the care home very close to his family and for all of your support along the way. You've been absolutely incredible. I just wanted my brother to be safe and with his loved ones and you did this all for us. You truly worked really hard and was so thorough and worked beyond and above. I thank you from the bottom of my heart!" [Compliment regarding the Hospitals & Health Team](#)

"I recent made a complaint about the direct payments team and X. I would like to apologise for this and ask that it be put on record that X is not only great at her job, but very kind and understanding towards disabled people like myself. X has been knowledgeable and supportive. I wanted this email to go to Y also as X's manager. I really appreciate X's support as I am finding the direct payments process difficult. I spoke to Y as well, who was also very kind, understanding and professional. I appreciate all of the help X has given me; I would like X to be recognised for this." [Compliment regarding a member of the Customer Finance Service](#)

“What can I say the door is done, it’s perfect! Thank you for getting it arranged so soon, no need to drag myself and the trolley out and in. You have no idea how good this is. Again, a very big thank you, I hope to see you soon.” [Compliment for the Grant Team -Commissioning](#)

6. Complaints

6.1 Overview of performance

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, Adult Social Care received a total of 106 complaints, 101 were considered under the statutory procedure and five were managed through the corporate complaints’ procedure. The number of statutory complaints received into the service increased by 23 cases compared to 2022/23; corporate complaints numbers remained consistent with previous years.

Less than 1% of people who draw on social care support through the council (or someone acting on their behalf) raised a complaint in 2023-24. This percentage reduces further if we take into consideration all contacts and interactions with the service.

It should also be noted that the service received 16 complaints which were resolved within 24 hours to the resident/person’s satisfaction and 42 potential complaints that were resolved outside of the formal procedure. In line with the statutory procedure, these were not formally recorded but do highlight the services ambition to resolve immediate concerns (where guidance permits) as swiftly as possible.

The service is one of only two departments within the council that currently publishes a telephone number and direct e-mail address. A change where the rest of the council has moved to webforms only has led to a substantial increase in the number of complaints that do not relate to adult social care, being received into the team. Over 100 complaints in the period required re direction to the correct council department.

6.2 Complaints received by category.

Of the 101 Statutory Complaints received:

- 9 were considered as straightforward complaints
- 81 were considered as serious and/or complex complaints
- 11 were withdrawn

6.3 Statutory Complaint outcomes

Of the 90 complaints with an outcome:

- 41 were not upheld
 - 24 were partially upheld
 - 25 were upheld
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6.4 Complaints by category

The table below identifies complaints by root cause and the investigation outcome.

	Category	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Total
Decision (25)	Care Assessment - Assessment disagreement (including unhappy with decision)	2	7	10	19
	Finance - Assessment disagreement (including unhappy with decision)	3	1	2	6
	Total	5	8	12	25
Conduct (14)	Staff Conduct - Conduct of council employed staff (attitude/ behaviour)	2	3	4	9
	Care Agency - Conduct of staff (attitude/behaviour)	0	1	2	3
	Care Home - Conduct of staff(attitude/behaviour)	1	1	0	2
	Total	3	5	6	14
Quality (27)	Care Agency - Quality of service	3	2	2	7
	Care Assessment - Quality of service	2	2	2	6
	Care Home - Quality of service	1	1	1	3
	Finance - Quality of service	0	0	3	3
	Hospitals - Discharge Process	3	1	2	6
	Care Assessment - Request (process)	0	1	1	2
	Total	9	7	11	27
Timeliness & Delays (9)	Care Assessment - Assessment delay (including delay in making a decision)	1	2	2	5
	Hospitals - Delay (including delay in making a decision)	1	2	0	3
	Finance – Timeliness	1	0	0	1
	Total	3	4	2	9
Communication (11)	Care Assessment - Lack of communication	2	0	1	3
	Hospitals - Lack of communication	1	0	1	2
	Finance - Lack of communication	2	0	2	4
	Care Assessment - Data Protection (including breach of confidentiality)	0	0	2	2
	Total	5	0	6	11
Other (4)		0	0	4	4
	Total	25	24	41	90

Decision:

The largest percentage increase in complaints in 2023/24 relate to a disagreement with a care or financial decision. In 2022/23 15 percent of all cases related to dissatisfaction with a decision reached by the Council, this has increased to 28 percent in 2023/24. Even though we have witnessed a significant increase, the percentage rates of these type of complaints which were upheld remains consistent with previous years.

The 12 complaints that were not upheld, related to a statutory duty concerning either financial charging, national care legislation, regulations or policy, where the council or provider cannot influence the outcome. Where complainants are unhappy with the outcome of an assessment, the council can offer a reassessment or take into consideration changes of circumstance where relevant.

Conduct:

The percentage of complaints received that relate to conduct has remained consistent with 2022/23 figures. Fourteen complaints were received in relation to staff conduct. Nine of these complaints were raised against council employed members of staff and five related to staff members employed by a care agency or care home. Eight complaints in total were either upheld or partially upheld. Training, formal reflection and staff reminders are used to address complaints concerning the behaviour or conduct of staff.

Quality:

The quality of service provided directly from Barnet or its providers remains the highest area of discontent, however, the percentage of these compared to last year has decreased slightly. Five complaints regarding Barnet's services were upheld and four were partially upheld. Complaints relating to quality were addressed through further training, learning events, the implementation of additional auditing and procedural amendments. The substantiated cases concerning care provider services were addressed through contract management procedures, with lessons learned fed into the work of the Integrated Care Quality team to shape the work it does with providers, thus improving the quality of provision across the social care market.

Delays & Timeliness:

This category relates to the time taken to conduct an assessment or provide a service. Waiting times for care assessments and financial reviews are the main cause of complaints in this category. Adult Social Care always seeks to avoid delays in assessing or reviewing clients and targets resources to ensure the most urgent cases and people with the highest levels of need are prioritised. There has been a slight improvement in this category; only 10 percent of complaints compared to 13% of all cases in 2022/23.

Communication:

Eleven complaints relating to poor communication were received in the period, five of these were upheld and addressed in formal reflection with the staff members concerned.

6.5 Statutory Complaints by Service Area

The table below provides a breakdown of statutory complaints figures for complaints with an outcome:

Service Area	2022-23	2023-24	No of complaints DOT	No. of cases upheld (2022-23)	No. of cases upheld (2023-24)	No. of cases partially upheld (2023-23)	No. of cases partially upheld (2023-24)
Localities (Older People & Physical Disabilities)	11	14	▲	6 (55%)	1 (7%)	1 (9%)	4 (29%)
Safeguarding, Access and Occupational Therapy	4	9	▲	2 (50%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)
Integrated Learning Disabilities	15	17	▲	2 (13%)	7 (41%)	4 (27%)	5 (29%)
Mental Health	9	8	▼	1 (11%)	1 (13%)	2 (22%)	1 (13%)
Customer Financial Affairs	8	9	▲	3 (38%)	3 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Integrated Care Quality	7	7	↔	2 (29%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	5 (71%)
Hospitals & Health Partnerships	13	24	▲	7 (54%)	10 (42%)	4 (31%)	5 (21%)
Commissioning	-	2	-	-	0 (0%)	-	1 (50%)
Total	61	90	▲	23	25	12	24

Complaints by Service Area:

Localities

2023/24 witnessed an increase in the number of complaints received, but a reduction in the number upheld. Of the five substantiated complaints, three related to care assessment disagreements of complex physical or other disabilities and two were associated to the quality of service provided. The service work with older people and adults 18+ with physical or other disabilities who may not meet the threshold for other service areas. The work is mainly long term and involves assessing and reviewing the care and support needs working with individuals to achieve their identified outcomes in a strengths-based way.

Safeguarding, Access and Occupational Therapy

This service provides; a first point of contact for Adult Social Care, urgent response to people at high risk of physical injuries to themselves,, occupational therapy assessments and safeguarding.. Over the last three years the number of complaints into the service were in decline, however, this year figures have risen back to previous levels. Complaints fell into various categories and were upheld in relation to care assessment; disagreements, communication and the care assessment process.

Integrated Learning Disabilities

The Learning Disabilities Team is an integrated health and social care team comprised of psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists & nurses. They support people with severe learning disabilities who are unable to access mainstream services. Due to the complex nature of the work undertaken complaints were received across twelve different categories, the three most common themes with substantiated complaints related to Financial assessment disagreements and the conduct and quality of provider services.

Mental Health Services

The service supports adults with a range of mental health issues ranging from people in crisis, early intervention, long term support, care and day services, recovery, community integration and short-term support. Complaint figures continue to decline and only 2 cases were substantiated; unhappy with a care assessment decision and the quality of services related to a care assessment.

Customer Finance

The service carries out financial assessments for clients who receive care in the community and residential services and manage Direct Payments and deferred payment arrangements. The three upheld complaints in the period all related to financial assessment disagreements.

Integrated Care Quality

Over 70 percent of cases received into the Integrated Care Quality Service related to residential or domiciliary care providers. As these relate to the service provided by an external organisation, these are passed to providers for initial investigation. If the outcome of their investigation is not satisfactory to the complainant or to the Care Quality Service, Adult Social Care may take further action. The two internal complaints related to a financial assessment disagreement and a delay in making a decision.

Hospitals and Health Partnership

The Hospitals and health team received the highest number of complaints in the year, these fell into numerous categories with the most predominant area of discontent continuing to relate to the hospital discharge process. The team oversees all discharges for Barnet residents from any hospital and also supports with out of borough discharges for patients in Barnet. Demand and complexities of cases and working alongside colleagues in the Central London Community Healthcare NHS trust and North Central London Integrated Care Board lead to a high number of cases being substantiated.

Commissioning

In December 2023 the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) team joined the Commissioning Service. The team specialise in awarding grants for people to adapt their homes to enable them to continue living safely and independently and so their home better suit their needs. Two complaints were received in the period. One case was not substantiated and one case was partially upheld.

6.5 Timeliness of responses to statutory complaints

It is important to note that the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 Statutory Complaints guidance allows six months (commencing on the day on which the complaint was received) for the resolution of Social Care statutory complaints.

Adult Social Care are committed to help resolve as many complaints as speedily and efficiently as possible. The process is intended to be resolution focused and offer complainants the option of discussing their concerns in face-to-face meetings, family meetings and mediation where appropriate.

Our internal deadline sets an ambitious target of 20 working days for straightforward complaints and

25 working days for more complex or serious complaints (or within an extended period of up to 65 working days).

In 2023/24, 90 percent of cases were classified as being complex and or serious.

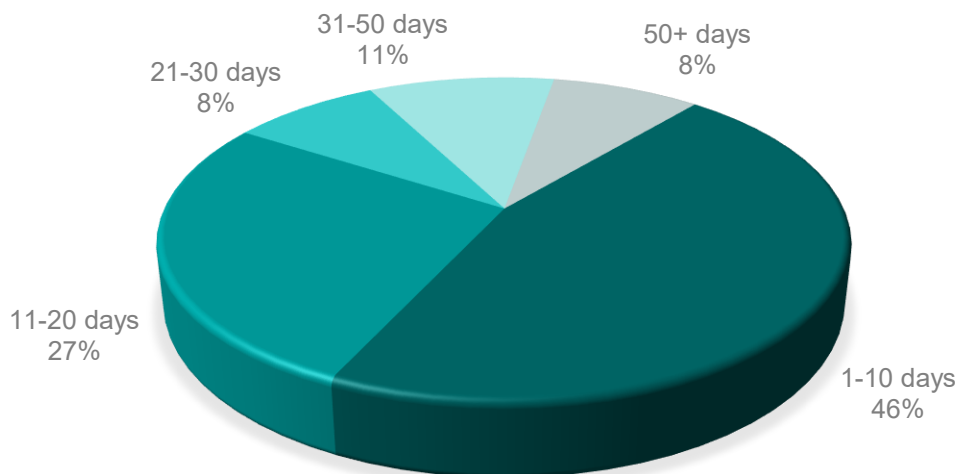
It is also important to note that statutory complaints are managed through a single stage process. If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response to their complaint, they can request further information or a further investigation which may prolong the overall outcome of a complaint. When a complaint was likely to exceed our initial target response date, we endeavoured to keep complainants informed of the case progress.

2023/24 witnessed an increase in the number of complaints escalated to the next stage of our procedure for further consideration by a member of the senior management team. We actively try to resolve problems and concerns however, 27 of our cases were escalated, in two cases the complainant withdrew their escalation, four were substantiated, the remaining 21 cases agreed with the original conclusion and the complainants were signposted to the LGSCO.

In 2023/24, all cases were completed within the statutory timescale. 47 percent of cases were closed within our 20 or 25 day internal deadline, which is a small improvement on 2022/23 performance.

Chart 2 provides a breakdown of Response times..

Chart 2 – For those complaints that missed the internal deadline how many days over statutory timescale were they



Cases longer than internal response time

54 cases were responded to out of our internally set time frame. There are multiple reasons why we may have been unable to meet our target which have included:

- multifaceted investigations, where the depth of the investigation and the time needed to investigate were proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint; examples include where legal advice on a case was required, changes in circumstances/ongoing developments, waiting for the outcome of a safeguarding enquiry
- Joint responses with the NHS may require the Council to work to the Statutory Social Care and National Health Service timescales, which allows a six-month timeframe for complaints to be investigated and responded to.
- Complaints about providers received directly into the department are either signposted to the provider's internal complaints process or managed through our internal procedures on behalf of the complainant. If complainants remain dissatisfied with the response from the provider

the care quality team will carry out further investigations to mediate a resolution. We do ask partner organisations to work within our timeframes, however this is a request and is not enforceable and response times can be impacted if we feel that intervention is required.

6. Learning from Complaints

Learning from our complaints provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what is not working so well and ensures opportunities for improvement are realised and that future instances can be prevented, where possible.

In some cases, outcomes to complaints are case specific and there are no general learning points that would influence policy or procedure. Individual issues and staff/team specific learning is addressed through training, reflection, supervision and team meetings.

The table below categorises the learning themes and the number of lessons learnt that fell into each category. The table identifies the types of actions Adult Social Care's management team and our providers and partners have taken to try and mitigate any further complaints of a similar nature. These are broad themes that enable us to monitor trends, however different actions will result from a theme.

Theme	No of lessons identified	Action
People Issues relating to the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff	46	Formal reflection Training Staff reminder
Policy Review or amendment of a formal policy to reflect the need for change	4	Reflection Audit Amend policy
Systems Preventative updates /amendments to system/s, staff training on systems or applications	2	Amend system Change working practice
Procedure Changes to current procedures and working practice as a preventative measure	16	Change working practice Amend procedure Cultural change
Provider Work with a provider to review working practices, procedures, policies and contract compliance	8	Report findings (to provider) Review contract Suspend provider

The below chart (chart 3) provides an overview of the actions taken as a result of learning from our complaints. In a number of cases there were several actions identified that were addressed to mitigate further complaints of a similar nature.

Chart 3

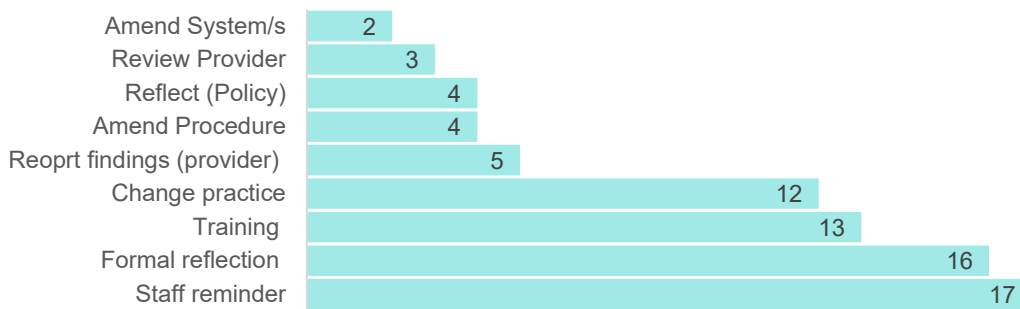
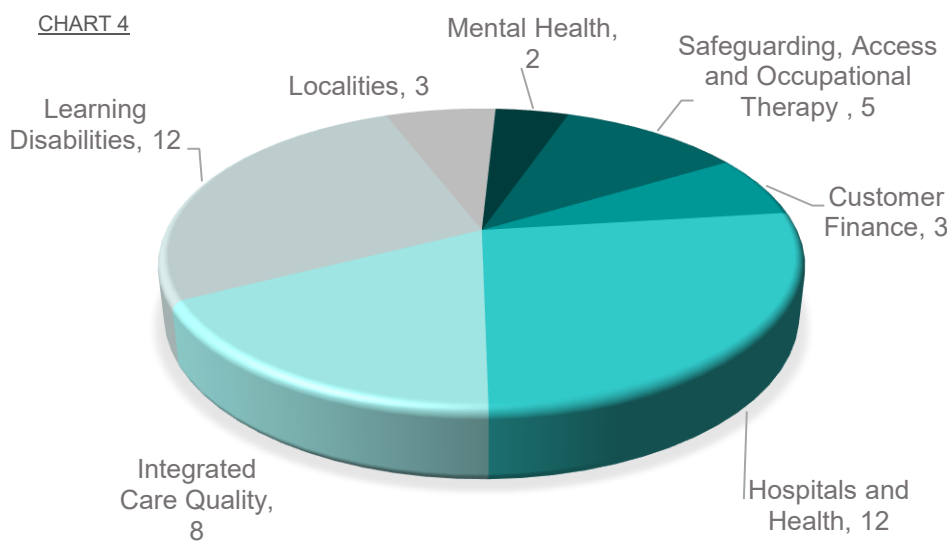


Chart 4 highlights the number of identified learnings by service area



Examples of some of the learning from our complaint investigations:

Lesson Identified	Outcome
Complainant was unclear of the hospital discharge process and confused by some of the terminology used.	Reflective practice session held with the team to discuss the ways in which they communicate with our service users and their family members. This included ensuring practitioners clearly communicate any terminology or processes in a timely manner and to work to address and allay any concerns that service users or their family members may have.
Complainant felt that their e-mail to Social Care Direct (SCD) was not acted upon as promptly as the situation required.	The auto response for SCD mailbox has been updated to request people call SCD if urgent (due to volume of emails)
The practitioner lacked knowledge on how to respond appropriately to a carers assessment which led to delay.	The team manager arranged formal training for the team on how to respond appropriately to a carers assessment, which included updates in relation to one-off resources from the local authority.

<p>Provider complaint</p> <p>Complaint focused on poor communication by some home carers, incompleteness of some domestic tasks and reporting of missing items from the property</p>	<p>The Council has instructed the provider that they must review their quality assurance process and ensure that they are proactively identifying and resolving issues and concerns raised by service users. In addition to this, to ensure they are maintaining regular checks to monitor the quality of care provided by all new and existing care staff and that any issues are addressed and in a timely manner. The Council will also recommend that the provider attends the Council's safeguarding training</p> <p>As part of the lessons learned the Council's Care Quality Team will work with the provider to ensure the necessary improvements are made within the service and actions are implemented to mitigate reoccurrence.</p>
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7. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is an external body that looks at complaints relating to councils and Adult Social Care providers. The LGSCO investigates matters where there is an alleged or apparent maladministration or service failure.

8.1 Complaints and enquiries dealt with by the LGSCO 2023/24

A complainant has the right to raise a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. However, the Ombudsman will usually refer a complaint back to the council if it has not previously been considered under the council's procedures. Such complaints are described as premature.

The table below (Table 1) presents the total number of new LGSCO enquiries received by Adult Social Care, for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This identifies that the number of enquiries continues to reduce when compared to previous years.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Enquiries	17	12	8

Of the eight enquiries received by the LGSCO in 2023/24:

- 1 case was upheld - Upheld: Fault and Injustice
- 4 cases were closed by the ombudsman after initial enquiries
- 3 cases are currently under investigation

In 100% of cases the Ombudsman were satisfied that Adult Social Care had successfully implemented their recommendations about what we needed to do to put things right.

8. Responding to complaints and concerns about quality relating to external service providers

The Service is responsible for ensuring its contracted providers meet the quality and performance standards they have been set.

Adult Social Care requires all external providers of care and support services to operate a complaints procedure. For services regulated by the Care Quality Commission under the Care

Standards Act 2000 (Homecare, Residential Care and Supported Living and Extra Care), this is a statutory requirement. For services that are not regulated, there is no statutory requirement but all contracts for services commissioned by the council include a requirement to have a complaints procedure. This is also examined during the procurement process.

Where a person who used social care services or their representatives raises a concern about the quality of an external provider with the council, the Care Quality Service logs the matter and passes it to the provider to investigate, in line with their complaint's procedure. If the outcome of their investigation is not satisfactory to the complainant or to the Care Quality Service, Adult Social Care may take further action, through the complaints process if this is the most appropriate route.

The Service takes complaints about providers very seriously, both to ensure individuals and their carers receive high quality services and to learn lessons and make improvements more widely where necessary.

If it is found that a provider regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) does not meet the CQC's fundamental standards, the Service will inform the CQC, acting primarily to ensure the safety of individuals and, once this is established, working with the provider to improve their standards.

9. Monitoring Care Quality

The quality of care and support services is monitored by the Care Quality Service through a range of contract compliance mechanisms. These include:

- Contract compliance and Quality Assurance visits, which include a review of complaints management by the provider.
- Quality alerts, which are written / telephone / electronic communications alerting us to a shortcoming in the delivery of a service.
- Working with the Care Quality Commission as appropriate when services do not meet the fundamental standards below which the provision of regulated activities and the care people receive must never fall.
- Responding to any other events, including safeguarding incidents and recommendations which indicate that the provider is not fully complying with contractual requirements.

The table below provides a breakdown of concerns about quality that were passed to providers to investigate

	2022-23	2023-24
Complaints and quality alerts	Care Homes & Extra Care - 9 Homecare - 79 Supported Living - 15	Care Homes & Extra Care - 45 Homecare - 70 Supported Living - 20

Care Homes and Extra Care

For the Care Homes and Extra Care services, these numbers have increased in 23/24 due to the previous Covid-19 restrictions on visiting being lifted in Care Homes, enabling Care Quality advisors, residents' families and friend and other professionals' access.

The main emerging themes included:

- Lack of Dignity and Respect
- Leadership and Management
- Medication incident and errors
- Lack of meaningful activities

The Care Quality Team have addressed this by facilitating a number of workshop and training events, including the registered managers network meetings and Activity forums. We have also continued to work closely with Skills for Care, Community Pharmacists in Care Homes Team, the One Care Home Team, and the NCL training hub in an effort to support providers in these key areas.

Homecare

The main emerging themes included:

- Missed/late calls
- Poor communication
- Staff not always following the care and support plan

Supported Living

The main emerging themes included:

- Medication management
- Managing finances
- Leadership and management

The Care Quality team have also been working closely with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health teams to explain the role of the team and through regular engagement and communication we are now receiving feedback about services we work with. Hence, we are now receiving more alerts than before across supported living.

Based on the emerging themes the Care Quality Team have facilitated a number of workshop and training events, to support providers in improving their services.

10. Demographic Information

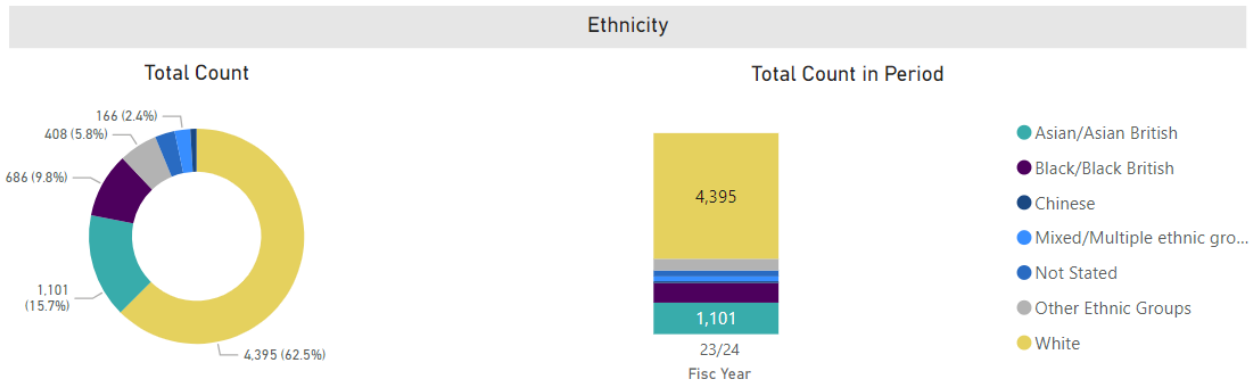
Ethnicity

Individuals drawing on care and support with a complaint against ASC in 2023/24 are relatively proportionate when compared to our user base (illustrated below). 69% of complainants who identified as white compared to 62.5% of all ASC individuals in receipt of a service, Asian/Asian British 13% compared with 15.7%, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 11% compared with 9.8% service and Mixed/multiple ethnic groups 1% compared with 2.4%.

Complaints from Other ethnic groups made up 2% of complaints, compared with 5.8% of all individuals in receipt of a service, this suggests that this group may be slightly under represented.

3% of ethnicities were unknown.

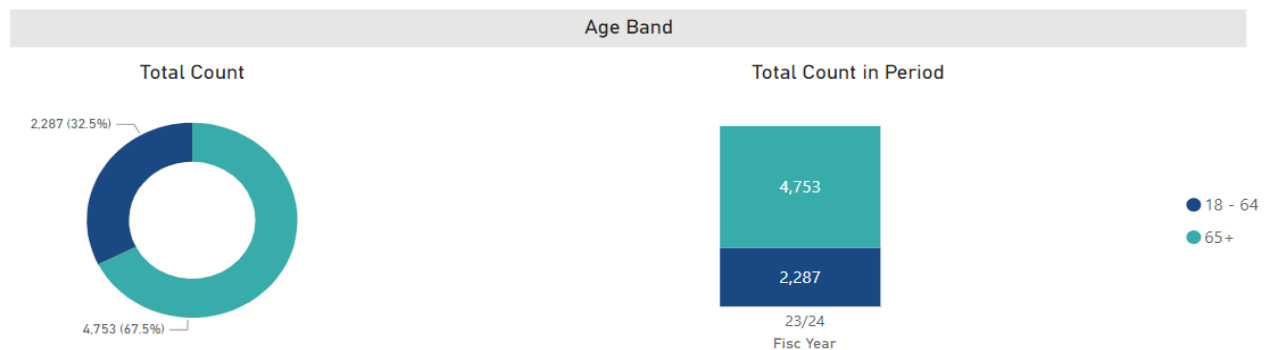
Numbers and % of all individuals in receipt of a service from the council by ethnicity



Age range

In 2023/24, 44% of complaints related to service users in the age range 18-64. Complaints received from this group predominantly related to the Learning Disabilities Service (50%) and then Mental Health and Safeguarding, Access and Occupational Therapy. This compares with a total user group of 18-64 in receipt of a service of 32.5% so we are receiving a higher proportion of complaints from this user cohort.

Numbers and % of all individuals in receipt of a service from the council by age band



Primary Support Group

Complaint distribution from the six primary support groups align with the percentage (81.3%) of individuals who draw on care and support who are accessing long term physical care and support. Physical support is the national reporting category which most often relates to care & support for older people, followed by working age adults with physical impairments.

Numbers and % of all individuals in receipt of a service from the council by age band

