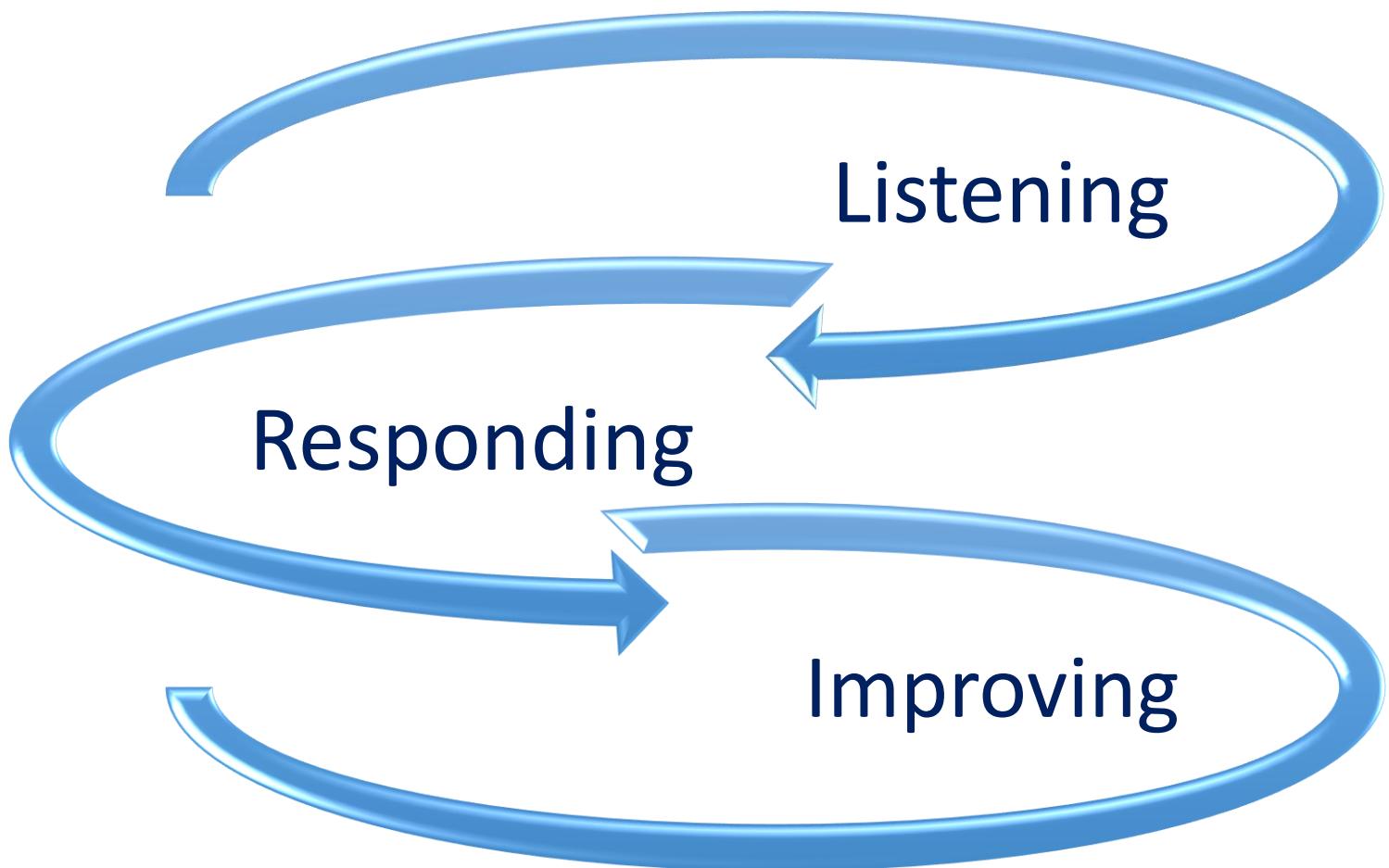


Social Services Compliments & Complaints Annual Report 2018-19



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 requires each local authority to prepare an annual report, which must include details of the records kept in accordance with regulation 20, on its performance in the handling and investigation of complaints for the purposes of:
 - a) Monitoring compliance with the Regulations; and
 - b) Improving the handling and consideration of complaints.
- 1.2 The Social Services Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2018-19 provides a summary of the volume of complaints received in relation to Social Services for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. It includes information regarding the complaints procedure, summary of complaints, compliments and compliance with statutory timescales for complaints handling, and a summary of improvement and planned actions for 2019-20.

2.0 Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 There are 2 Social Services Complaints Officers (1.8 full-time equivalent) who are based within the Audit, Risk & Information Service. Complaints and Compliments are recorded centrally on the MK Insight System via the Audit, Risk & Information Service.
- 2.2 There are 2 stages to the Council's Complaints Procedure:
 - Local Resolution: there are statutory timeframes to comply with but the aim is to resolve the complaint promptly and informally through a discussion with the appropriate service manager.
 - Formal Investigation: if the complaint has been considered at Local Resolution stage and the complainant remains dissatisfied they can request a formal investigation. The Council will appoint an independent investigator to undertake the investigation.
- 2.3 In some cases advocacy support may be required. The Council commissions the services of Tros Gynnal Plan Wales to provide advocacy support for children and young people. No services were required during 2018-19. The Council sign-posts customers that require advocacy support for complaints relating to Adult Care services. During 2018-19, 5 complainants were supported by advocates in relation to Adult Care services complaints.
- 2.4 If complaints are not successfully resolved following the Council's Complaints Procedure, the complainant may make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and is advised of the process to follow.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 Complaints received in relation to Social Services has increased from 58 in 2017-18 to 90 in 2018-19, while there has been a decrease in the number of compliments received. Complaints have increased in relation to both Adult and Child Care Services. Less capacity with service providers has been a contributing factor to the increased level of complaints in relation to Adult Care.
- 3.2 However, there has been a reduction in the number of complaints that progress to formal investigation from 9 in 2017-18 to 3 in 2018-19. Similarly, the number of complaints received by the PSOW has decreased from 13 in 2017-18 to 7 in 2018-19. Whilst overall the level of complaints has increased, no PSOW investigations were undertaken during 2018-19.

4.0 Listening

4.1 Social Services received 81 compliments and 90 complaints during 2018-19. The table below provides a breakdown of the compliments and complaints (at local resolution stage and formal investigation) received during 2018-19 by division and team within Social Services:

Division	Service area	Local Resolution	Formal Investigation	Compliments
Children Services	Assessment Team	8	0	3
	Child in Need Team	11	0	8
	Children with Disabilities	3	0	0
	Team Around the Family	1	0	10
	Corporate Parenting Team	5	0	3
	Family Intervention Team & Integrated Family Support Team	1	0	8
	Family Placement Team	2	1	2
	Adoptions Service	0	0	1
	Youth Offending Team	0	0	1
	Holly House	0	0	1
	Child Protection Conference & Managing Allegations	0	0	4
	Independent Reviewing Officer Team	0	0	1
Children's Services Total		31	1	42
Adult Care	Review Team	3	0	1
	Adult Safeguarding Team	5	0	3
	Managed Care North & South Teams	16	2	3
	Hospital Discharge Team	5	0	8
	Learning Disabilities and Transitions	5	0	0
	First Contact Team	5	0	4
	Mental Health & Substance Misuse Team	2	0	1
	Occupational Therapy Team	2	0	1
	Performance & Business Support Team	4	0	1
	Service Providers	9	0	1
	SHAPES Equipment stores	1	0	2
	Telecare/Community Alarms Service	1	0	0
	Wintern Day Centre -Hillside	0	0	3
	Day Services Havenhurst	1	0	0
	Havenhurst Care Home	0	0	7
	Sensory Team	0	0	3
Adult Care Total		59	2	38
Directorate Management Team		0	0	1
DIRECTORATE TOTAL		90	3	81

4.2 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) received 7 complaints in relation to Pembrokeshire County Council Social Services Directorate during 2018-19, this is a decrease from 13 in 2017-18. There was a significant decrease in the number of complaints received by the PSOW in relation to Adult Care from 11 in 2017-18 to 2 in 2018-19, however, there was a slight increase in complaints in relation to Child Care from 3 in 2017-18 to 5 in 2018-19. The 6 complaints received by the PSOW resulted in the following outcomes:

- 2 were rejected as premature and the client was advised to pursue the Council's Complaints Process;
- 1 was a recommendation for an apology to the client;
- 2 were dealt with as an early resolution;
- 1 was dismissed as no action was required; and
- 1 is ongoing.

The Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter was received on the 7 August 2019, see Appendix B. The PSOW report states that 8 complaints were received in respect of Social Services, however, 1 complaint was considered twice and given a different reference number. The PSOW annual letter states that in general there has been an increase in complaints relating to Local Authorities, however, the majority are resolved at an early stage without the need for investigation.

4.3 During 2018-19 Social Services received 81 compliments, which is a decrease from 107 received during 2017-18. The following are examples of the compliments that services received during 2018-19:

Example of a Compliment to Child Care:

"I am writing this to just let you know how grateful we were to have SW guide us through our first adoption placement! It was a rollercoaster of emotions, and we felt very much supported by SW throughout. We have worked with her through 2 baby placements and with both of them she is always on hand to answer any queries we may have and takes the time to sit down and explain processes to us. She is such a genuine, down to earth, caring and lovely person. Nothing is too much trouble for her. We have thanked her ourselves but the reply is always "I am just doing my job" but she does much more than that, so I wanted to send our thanks higher up! Looking forward to working with her again. Thank you."

Example of a Compliment to Adult Care:

"Just a short note to wish you season's greetings and to let you know that mum is very well, and just to thank you again for your thoughtfulness that has transformed my life and enabled mum to stay in her own home. Best Wishes for 2019."

5.0 Responding

5.1 The Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 defines the statutory timescales for managing and investigating complaints. In accordance with the Regulations:

- Complaints must be acknowledged within 2 working days;
- Offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant in an attempt to informally resolve the complaint within 10 working days of acknowledgement of the complaints (this can be extended in exception circumstances by agreement with the complainant)

- When a Local Resolution is achieved, a written response to the complainant must be issued within 5 working days of the date upon which the complaint was resolved;
- Within 25 working days of the start date (defined as the date that the Local Authority produces the final written record of the complaint), send the complainant written response to the formal investigation. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended to six months, but the complainant must be provided with an explanation as soon as practicable to advise of reasons for the delay.

5.2 The table below provides a summary of performance against the statutory timescales:

Division	Receiving Complaints		Local Resolution		Formal Investigation	
	Acknowledgement	Discussion	Response	Extension	Response	Extension
Children's Services	91%	83%	84%	75%	0%	100%
Adult Care	84%	100%	92%	100%	0%	100%

5.3 Of the 90 complaints received during 2018-19, 11 were not acknowledged within the statutory 2 day limit due to a delay in the complaint being referred to the Social Services Complaints Officers.

6.0 Improving

6.1 In order to improve the complaints process, manage complaints promptly within statutory timescales and to ensure a swift resolution to a customer complaint, the following activities have been undertaken during 2018-19:

- Monthly monitoring meetings are held with the Director and Heads of Service to discuss cases, advise of any Ombudsman referrals and to monitor progress against agreed action plans;
- Continued attendance at the Quality Assurance Group meetings, to share practice information regarding providers;
- Centrally recording and monitoring complaints and compliments via the MKInsight system;
- Greater emphasis on early resolution and close working with service managers to address issues;
- Easy read format of the complaints leaflet developed;
- Continued networking with the Local Complaints Working Group (Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion) to share best practice, ideas and training opportunities;
- Attendance at the All Wales Complaints Officer Group;
- Attendance at the Social Care whole service event;
- Working with divisions to feed through service improvements from action plan to ensure ownership and effective monitoring.

6.2 The focus for 2019-20 is to continue to build on improvements through the following:

- Continue to develop close working relationships with Social Services teams;
- Understanding that increased demand for services with reduced resources will result in increased complaints, but developing management information to assist services with planning and evaluating impacts;
- Continuing to coordinate action plans from investigation reports to assist service improvement;
- Improved response times;
- Continued involvement in the All Wales Complaints Officers Group and the Local Complaints Working Group;

- Improving feedback to staff by contributing to the monthly Social Care newsletter;
- Delivering training on the complaints and investigation process;
- Reviewing policies and procedures and file management arrangements;
- Develop a complaints information pack that can be used by internal managers and external independent investigators.