

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 3 October 2016

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Social Work Complaints and Feedback Annual Report
2015-2016

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Social Work Complaints Procedure in 2015/16.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To consider and note this report and, where appropriate, highlight areas for further consideration.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 52 of the NHS Community Care Act 1990 and the Social Work (Representations Procedure) (Scotland) Directions 1996 requires each Local Authority to develop and implement a complaints procedure for social work complaints. The Council is also required to consider an annual report on the use made of this procedure and the outcome of complaints.
- 3.2 Feedback consisting of comments, complaints and compliments about social work services is recorded in the Council's Customer Relationship Management System (CRM), which allows for the recording, monitoring and reporting of feedback.
- 3.3 In line with its statutory requirements, the Council operates a 3 stage Social Work Complaints procedure:

Stage 1 – Complaint dealt with directly at point of service

Stage 2 – Complaint requires formal investigation and response

Stage 3 – Referral to independent Social Work Complaints Review Committee (SWCRC)

Thereafter, there is also a legal right of referral to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

3.4 BREAKDOWN OF FEEDBACK

3.5 Stage 1 complaints are dealt with directly at point of service. **23** Stage 1 social work complaints were recorded for the year 2015/2016 broadly in line with the previous year (24).

These were straightforward complaints either resolved at first point of contact or referred to the relevant social worker or manager for swift resolution. Examples of Stage 1 complaints include messages not being returned, requested information not being provided, or delays or failures in providing an agreed service such as a missed home care visit or failure to keep a scheduled appointment.

3.6 This year the Council received **46** Stage 2 complaints about its social work services, a 19% decrease on 2014/15 (**56**)

Broken-down by service:

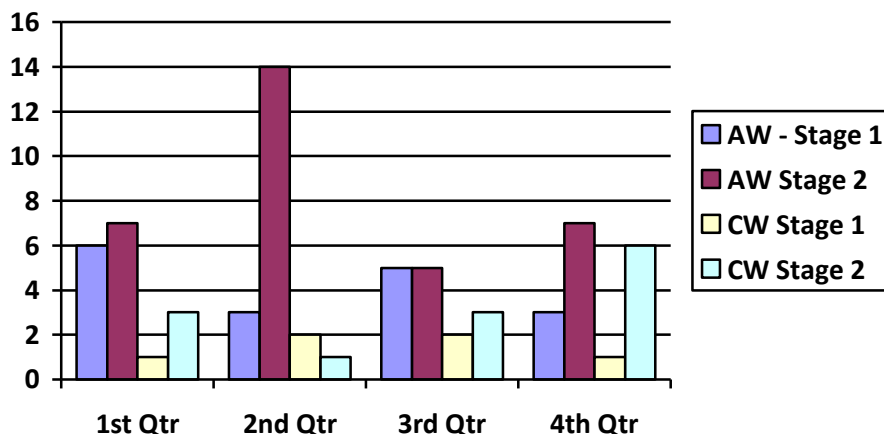
Adult Wellbeing (AW): Stage 1:**18**; Stage 2: **33**

Children’s Wellbeing (CW): Stage 1: **5**; Stage 2: **13**

Criminal Justice (CJ): Stage 1: **0**; Stage 2: **0**

The chart shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints for each social work service received per quarter for the year 2015/16:

Social work complaints per quarter 2015/2016



There is a peak for Adult Wellbeing in Q2 but this aside the volume of complaints received is steady through the year. There is no particular reason evident for this peak.

3.7 The subjects of Stage 2 complaints for Adult Wellbeing in 2015/2016 include:

- Unhappiness of service users over the assessed level of care provided through the allocated package of care provided for care at home
- Care at home package not being in place or provided when it was meant to commence
- Unhappiness at changes to package of care after reassessment
- Unhappiness at outcomes from Occupational Therapy assessments in relation to equipment or household adaptation requests

3.8 Stage 2 complaints for Children's Wellbeing were predominantly about the conduct of or decision making by social workers about children under the supervision of the service.

- Unhappiness over decisions taken in relation to the amount of contact parents are allowed to have with children in Looked After Care
- Unhappy with the way they are generally being treated by the social workers involved in their family's case

3.9 Social work services also receive comments and positive feedback about the services they provide, as well as about individual social workers. It is important to provide a balanced view of services and so members of staff are actively encouraged to report any compliments they receive. There was a slight decrease in the total number of compliments received in 2015/16. **98** compliments were received as compared to **109** in 2014/15.

The majority of compliments received were for the Adult Wellbeing service (**85**) which reflects the nature of some of the personal care which the service delivers. Of these 33% were for the standard of care provided as the council's owned and operated care homes, and 25% were about the quality of care being delivered by care at home staff.

A few extracts of compliments are included in Appendix 1.

3.10 As in 2014/15 there was a very low level of general comments received about services. 4 were received in 2015/2016 and 3 in the previous year

3.11 All complaints should be acknowledged within 3 working days and responded to within 28 days. The average acknowledgement and response times for the year 2014/15 were as follows:

91% acknowledged within 3 working days (2013/14: 89%).

74% responded to, or an update provided, within the statutory timescale of 28 days.

Often, due to the complex nature of Stage 2 social work complaints, there can be difficulties in providing a full response within the statutory timescale. However, updates are be provided wherever possible and extensions agreed with the complainant. Holding more face-to-face meetings and increasing telephone contact to try and resolve complaints at an earlier stage is being encouraged. Meetings with clients and/or their representatives is often necessary at Stage 2 and is seen as good practice.

The proportion of Stage 2 complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld was as follows

	2013/14	2014/2015	2015/2016
Upheld	21%	11%	9%
Partially upheld	21%	39%	39%
Not upheld	58%	41%	52%

It should be noted that the percentage of complaints being completely upheld has been declining since 2013/2014 to reach 9% in 2015/2016

Wherever a complaint was partially or fully upheld an appropriate apology was given and learning actions were undertaken. This included, for example, updating and improving information to clients, reviewing procedures and reminding staff of customer care standards.

For the complaints closed at Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the complaints process, resolutions included:

- Providing additional information / clearly explaining policies and procedures e.g. eligibility criteria for services
- Giving an apology, where appropriate
- Acknowledging mistakes and taking action to correct any errors
- Providing required service
- Arranging meetings with social worker or social work manager to explain decisions taken

3.12 Only three complainants asked for their complaints to be referred to a Social Work Complaints Review Committee (SWCRC).

3.13 **DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2015/16**

3.14 SWCRCs remain a statutory requirement for 2016/2017 although they are soon to be abolished. The SPSO is currently engaging with stakeholders to review the management of social work complaints in local authorities across Scotland.

3.15 At time of writing East Lothian Council through its participation in the Social Work Scotland Complaints Sub Group is working with other councils to agree a view on the preferred model for complaint handling including the replacement of the Complaint Review Committee process as proposed by the SPSO.

3.16 Autumn 2016 will see further consultations between the SPSO and interested parties before planned guidance is expected to be issued in **December 2016** with an implementation date for the new model complaint handling procedure for social work to be in place for **April 2017**.

3.17 The planned commencement of the Named Person provision in the Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014 has been delayed to allow for further consultation after the decisions of the Supreme Court on 28 July 2016. ELC will continue to prepare and to ensure that a complaints procedure is planned and in place for the eventual commencement of the provisions.

3.18 The Council will continue to work with its partners in the East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership and the Integrated Joint Board to ensure that complaints received are correctly recorded and investigated in line with local procedures.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None.

6.2 Personnel - None.

6.3 Other - None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

AUTHOR'S NAME	Gary Gunn
DESIGNATION	Customer Feedback Officer John Muir House
CONTACT INFO	01620824290 ggunn@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	30 August 2016

Social Work Compliments April – June 2015

Compliment for Social Worker.

Compliment for the manager the staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for Social Worker.

Compliment for the manager and staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for Strategy Officer, Adult Wellbeing and the rest of the team.

Compliment for Community Care assessment and physiotherapy service.

Compliment for the Abbey Care Home.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for manager of Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for Manager of Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for the staff of Eskgreen Home for Older People.

Compliment for ELC carers, Prestonpans.

Compliment for Social Worker.

Compliment about mother's care package.

Letter notifying ELC of the date when Haddington OAP club will be closing down and thanking the council for providing a donation to the club each year.

Compliment for Student Social Worker.

Compliment for client's Social Worker.

Compliment about the support which the client receives including the carers who come in to provide her with personal care.

Social Work Compliments July - September 2015

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for Senior Practitioner Social Worker and for the Staff and facilities at Crookson Care Home.

Compliment for Social Worker for securing appropriate Care Package.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for Social Worker.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Thanks to carers who looked after client when she had a fall and was housebound for three months and to the Occupational Therapist.

Compliment for carers.

Compliment about ELC care staff.

Compliment for care staff.

Compliment from a MacMillan nurse - phoning to thank our speedy and professional response from Emergency Care Service.

Letter of thanks for the input of an Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist.

Thank you from a family member for the care her mother received at the Crookston care home.

Compliment for the staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for the staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for Eskgreen care home.

Compliment for Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for the Emergency Care Service.

Compliment for Family Support Worker.

Social Work Compliments October - December 2015

Compliment to the manager and Staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for home care service.

Compliment from a gentleman for his wife's Community Care Worker, and to all in Adult Wellbeing who have assisted with his wife's wellbeing.

Compliment for staff at Eskgreen Care Home.

Compliment for the Telecare team.

Compliment for client's Social Worker and for the staff of Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for Adult Wellbeing.

Compliment for Social Work Team and client's Social Worker

Compliment for the Manager and staff at the Abbey Care Home.

Compliment for the Adult Wellbeing Community Response Team.

Compliment the client's Community Care Worker.

Compliment for a Community Carer.

Compliment for Adult Wellbeing.

Compliment for client's Community Care Worker and for carers.

Compliment for the staff at Cockenzie House, Greenfield Park and the Crookston Care Facility.

Compliment for the Abbey Care Home.

Compliment for the Abbey Care Home.

Compliment for Adult Wellbeing and client's Occupational Therapist.

Compliment for the staff at Crookston Care Home.

Compliment for client's Community Care Worker.

Compliment for all the staff at Abbey Care Home.

Compliment for Adult Wellbeing.

Social Work Compliments January - March 2016

Compliment for Home Care Services.

Compliment for carers who looked after client's mother.

Compliment for the Area Manager, Adult Wellbeing

Compliment for Locum Social Worker.

Compliment for the staff at Crookston care home.

Compliment for the staff at Eskgreen Care Home.

Compliment for Occupational Therapy and Adult Wellbeing B teams and thank you for arranging visits from At Home in East Lothian.

Compliment for Occupational Therapist.

Compliment for Home Care Support Team

Compliment for Occupational Therapist.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for carers and the back-up organisation behind them who helped to care for the client.

Compliment for client's Social Worker.

Compliment for Community Care Worker.

Compliment for Home Care Support Organiser and her team of Community Carers.

Compliment for the Abbey Care Home and a donation to its Welfare Fund.

Very happy with the service provided.

Mother passed away - would like to pass on thanks to everyone involved in her care.

Compliment for Crookston Care Home.

Gratitude to the Occupational Therapist.

Very happy with carers.

Very happy with service mother received while in care