

	<p align="center">Adults and Safeguarding Committee 31 July 2014</p>
<p align="center">Title</p>	<p align="center">Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report</p>
<p align="center">Report of</p>	<p>Dawn Wakeling – Director of Adults and Communities</p>
<p align="center">Wards</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p align="center">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2013/2014</p>
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Summary

An annual complaints report is a statutory requirement for Adults Social Care. The statutory report provides details about complaints and compliments received. It also provides analysis of those complaints and what issues have been identified through the collation of the data. It provides some insight as to why the complaints have been received and how to improve services moving forward.

The key points to note from the report are that:

- The number of complaints received in 2013-2014 continues to be in line with the numbers received in previous recent years.
- As well as providing a meaningful response to all complainants the outcomes of investigations are used to inform improvement actions, as part of the Adults and Communities Quality Assurance Framework.
- The number of compliments received is equivalent to the number of complaints received.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the information contained within the Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2013 – 2014 (the Complaints Report) and the arrangements for the Report's publication and post-decision implementation identified in paragraph 4 below.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Complaints Report provides valuable information about the quality of the work of Adults and Communities and the improvement actions taken in response to feedback. It informs the Quality Assurance Work Programme which monitors all actions relating to the quality and improvement of Adults and Communities.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The publication of the Complaints Report and the post-decision implementation noted in paragraph 4 will enable Adults and Communities to continue to learn from complaints in order to continually improve the satisfaction of people who use Adult Social Care services.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 It is a statutory requirement to publish the Complaints Report.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2013-2014 is a public document which will be made available through the Council website.
- 4.2 The Complaints Report includes a number of "learning points", which are actions for improvement. These actions will be implemented and monitored through the Adults and Communities Quality Assurance Framework:
 - In response to the relatively high proportion of complaints regarding communication, Adults and Communities will:
 - commission training to develop staff communication skills, as part of the Adults and Communities Workforce and Organisational Development Programme
 - revise the Adults and Communities case file audit tool to ensure that auditors' scrutiny of case records identifies communication issues, so that appropriate remedial action can be taken.

- During 2013-2014 there was a particularly high rate of complaints and other concerns about external service providers, many of which related to two particular Homecare providers who were failing. Of these, one subsequently made improvements and one has had their contract terminated. Homecare provision has been a continued concern over recent years, accounting for the majority of complaints about external providers. One of the actions that Adults and Communities has taken in response to this situation is the development of a mechanism to collate all evidence relating to the quality of contracted service – including complaints, Quality Alerts, CQC Inspection Reports, reports of Healthwatch Enter and View visits, safeguarding incidents, other critical incidents, and feedback from service users, carers and representatives. This tool will ensure that every time new intelligence about quality is received it is looked at alongside all previous information so that patterns and trends can be identified and robust and sustainable improvement action taken.
- 4.3 Through the Quality Assurance Framework Adults and Communities will conduct a series of detailed quality audits of key areas of work during 2014-2015. These will include findings from complaints investigations.
- 4.4 Adults and Communities will carry out benchmarking analysis to review how the volume and outcomes of complaints in Barnet compares to similar local councils. At the time of writing this report full data had not yet been made available. Historical benchmarking has shown that the Council receives a relatively low number of complaints compared to other councils. National data available for the rate of complaints and enquiries received by the Local Government Ombudsman regarding local authority Adult Social Care shows that in 2013 – 2014, the 15 complaints and enquiries received by the LGO for Barnet is the second lowest of the group of six “nearest neighbour group” of councils, Barnet, Hillingdon, Ealing, Harrow, Hounslow and Brent. The average for the group was 19. Benchmarking can provide valuable indicators of the accessibility and effectiveness of the complaints process, and the quality of Adult Social Care provision.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 Corporate Plan 2013 - 2016

The Report supports the following Corporate Plan Priority Outcomes:

- To promote a healthy, active, independent and informed over 55 population in the borough to encourage and support residents to age well. In particular, effective complaints management supports the achievement of the following 2014-2015 performance measures:
 - Increasing overall satisfaction of people who use adult social care services with their care and support to 90 per cent
 - Increasing the percentage of adult social care service users who say their services have made them feel safe and secure to 65 per cent

- To promote family and community wellbeing and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities.

5.1.2 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Effective complaints management supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy's priority of "Care when Needed - providing appropriate care and support to facilitate good outcomes and improve the customer experience".

5.2. Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

As Adult Social Care continues to make changes to how services are managed and delivered in line with the current financial climate for the public sector and the requirements of the Care Act, it is possible that more complaints could be received from Adult Social Care customers. It is anticipated that any work carried out in responding to these complaints will be contained within the current staffing establishment and budget.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 The Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2013 – 2014 complies with the statutory requirement to produce an annual report of Adult Social Care complaints 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 (the Regulations).

5.3.2 The Regulations identified in 5.3.1 above also require the Council to operate a statutory complaints procedure which complies with the provisions.

5.3.3 The Council Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A states that the Adults and Safeguarding Committee is responsible for those powers, duties and functions of the Council in relation to Adults and Communities including the following specific functions:

- Promoting the best possible Adult Social Care services
- To ensure that the Council's safeguarding responsibilities are taken into account.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 Because the publication of the report is a statutory requirement, the impact of not publishing it would be a breach of the Regulations.

5.4.2 Complaints are an essential means by which the Council assures the quality of Adult Social Care provision, and compliance with statutory duties. By listening to complaints and taking improvement action the Council minimises the risk of non-compliance, and ensures improved customer satisfaction.

5.4.3 Where complaints are received and highlight any safeguarding issues, they are dealt with under the agreed Pan-London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

5.4.4 Adult Social Care does not work in isolation. As with all other aspects of work the complaints process operates in conjunction with partners in the NHS, the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch, the Police and other Public services. This ensures that issues raised by complainants are dealt with effectively, with minimal risk.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The Complaints Report supports the Council's strategic Equalities Objective which states that "Our commitment is that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect; have equal opportunity with other citizens; and receive quality services provided to Best Value principles".

5.5.2 The Complaints Report includes data on the number of complaints received by Adults and Communities from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 by ethnicity. The data does not indicate any equality gaps or issues.

5.5.3 Adults and Communities enables people who are not able to make representations and complaints in their own right to do so through the use of advocacy services such as Disability Action Barnet (DabB), Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability Law Service, and Mind in Barnet.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 The report will assist the Council in identifying any improvements that need to be made to the service or to policy and procedure. Any changes will be subject to appropriate consultation with relevant groups.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.