

	<p>Adults and Safeguarding Committee 10 July 2017</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Community and Wellbeing</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix: Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2016-2017</p>
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<p>Summary</p>
<p>The production of an annual complaints report is a statutory requirement for adult social care, providing an overview of the management and performance in responding to complaints.</p> <p>The number of complaints received in 2016-17 is on a par with the numbers received in previous years.</p> <p>Effective complaints management is an important element in maintaining the Council’s reputation. Complaints are also a valuable tool in helping to understand resident and customer expectations of the services they receive, and learning from complaints is an essential part of service improvement.</p> <p>As well as providing a meaningful response to all complainants the outcomes of investigations are used to generate lessons learnt, so that the services the Council provides are continuously improving and will result in a better customer experience.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>
<p>That the Adults and Safeguarding Committee note the information contained within the Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2016-2017 and approves the report for publication.</p>

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report is produced in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. Under those regulations, Barnet Council is required under to report annually to the relevant Council committee on adult social care complaints.
- 1.2 Information about complaints is also a valuable tool in helping to understand residents' and customers' expectations of service delivery, and will play a key part in identifying service improvements in Adults and Communities and across the Council.
- 1.3 The report provides information on complaints and compliments for Barnet Council's Adults and Communities Delivery Unit for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The report considers complaints dealt with through both the statutory adult social care and corporate complaints procedures.
- 1.4 The Council is required to operate a separate statutory complaints and representations procedure, 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 (hereby referred to as 'the Regulations'). Any complaint which does not fall under these requirements is considered under the Council's corporate complaints procedure.
- 1.5 Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 the Council's Social Care Direct Team received 54,224 requests. Of these:
 - 33% resulted in information and advice being provided
 - 85% were resolved by Social Care Direct and did not need a social care service
 - 7% were signposted to another organisation for advice and support
 - 15% were referred for assessment by our social work teams.
- 1.6 In the same period the following complaints and compliments were received from service users, carers and/or their representatives:
 - 428 Compliments
 - 96 Complaints
 - 9 Local Government Ombudsman complaints (Provisional data; final data for 2016-17 not yet available).
- 1.7 Common themes which can be seen across multiple complaints include:
 - Issues with the quality of service in relation to a particular provider
 - Timeliness – delays in commencing or changing a service
 - Communication issues.
- 1.8 Of the 96 complaints, 83 resulted in an outcome, and 13 were withdrawn.
 - 21 (25%) were not upheld

- 28 (34%) were upheld
- 34 (41%) were partially upheld.

1.9 Customers expect their interaction with the department to be professional and positive, and in the vast majority of instances this is the case. When things go wrong they expect swift action to be taken to resolve the matters causing concern. Lessons have been learnt from the complaints received throughout 2016-2017 and this learning is fed back into the ongoing service improvement, ensuring high standards of customer care are sustained by the Delivery Unit and Barnet's care providers.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The publication of this report is a statutory duty.

2.2 In addition, reviewing and reflecting on complaints is a useful process for identifying areas for service improvement.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 None. It is a statutory requirement to publish a Complaints Report for adult social care.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The Adults and Communities Annual Complaints Report 2016-2017 is a public document and will be made available through the Council website and the staff intranet.

4.2 The Complaints Annual Report includes examples of 'lessons learnt'. These are actions for improvement identified for the Delivery Unit as the result of complaints. Implementation of these actions will continue during 2017/18.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 Corporate Plan 2015 - 2020

Publication of this report will help to deliver the Corporate Plan 2015-2020, supporting the principles that:

"The Council, working with local, regional and national partners, will strive to ensure that Barnet is a place:

- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
- where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- where responsibility is shared, fairly
- where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer."

5.1.2 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Effective complaints management supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, helping to improve services so that everyone is helped 'to keep well and to promote independence, and delivering the principle 'Care when Needed – Providing care and support to facilitate good outcomes and improve user experience'.

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

As Adults and Communities continues to make changes to how services are managed and delivered at time of financial austerity it is possible that more complaints could be received from our 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 2016-2017 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, these 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 Adults and Communities helps 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 Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability Law Service, and Mind in Barnet.

Learning from complaints also assists the Council in fulfilling its statutory duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

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.