

# Customer Feedback Annual Report

## Adult Services

April 2015 – March 2016

Blackpool Council



# Customer Feedback Annual Report – Adult Services

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## 1. Annual Overview

Adult Services received 80 complaints over the year – a decrease of 11 on last year’s annual figures. However, the complexity of complaint elements has increased. Of the 80 complaints received 19 were upheld in their entirety with a further 28 partially upheld. Therefore, overall 47 complaints were upheld in some element (59 %). To put this into perspective 4629 individuals were in receipt of adult social care services at some point in the year, 2015/16; the population of over 18s in Blackpool (taken from Mid-Year Estimates (Office of National Statistics)) is 112,673.

Thirty-eight of the 80 complaints were dealt with inside the allocated timescale (48%), which is defined as 15 working days or within the allocated timescale dependent on complexity. This is a slight decrease in performance but still comparative with the two previous years reporting of timescales being achieved: 52.75% for 2014/15 and 51% for 2013/14 respectively. The complexity emerging from complaints has compounded the slight drop in achievement. All Adult Social Care complaints were responded to within the statutory timescale of six months.

This year 556 compliments were received, a major increase to the two previous year’s figures: 367 during 2014/15 and 360 in 2013/14. It must be acknowledged that specific criteria for accepting compliments has been applied and therefore these are genuine statements of thanks for duties carried out, above and beyond the expected level of service.

Over the year, Adult Services has received 42 MP enquiries (a reduction of 10 from 2014/15) and 17 Councillor Enquiries (a minimal increase of 3 on the previous year) and these were spread evenly over the year.

This report will provide further breakdowns of these highlights with potential explanations for some of the statistics.

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## 2. Adult Services Customer Feedback

The following table shows the total numbers of Complaints, Compliments, Comments, MP/Councillor Enquiries and Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) cases for the year.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	56	55	53	43	<b>207</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	94	93	88	45	<b>320</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	5	11	5	4	<b>25</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	35	88	17	15	<b>155</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>707</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	143	182	121	140	586
Comparison for 2014/2015	166	135	137	139	577

The table highlights that front line services are in receipt of the highest level of enquiries and compliments, which is to be expected due to the nature of their business. Feedback can be extremely valuable, as it enables the department to monitor services and to seek to improve services where necessary.

The breakdown of this feedback can be seen in the following sections of the report.

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## 3. Complaints

Statutory legislation dictates that all Adult Social Care complaints should be addressed and concluded within a 6 month timeframe. Adult Services feel all complaints should be addressed quickly and efficiently. Therefore, in the first instance, 15 working days has been allocated for a response to be completed. Where complex cases are concerned it is sometimes more appropriate to allocate a longer timeframe for a thorough response to be achieved. Each case is individual and is viewed on its own merits. The allocated timescale is always communicated to the complainant so they know when to expect a response.

The breakdown of the complaints by service area for the year is shown in the following table:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	9 [2PU]	9 [1U 2PU]	10 [1U 3PU]	6 [1U 2PU]	<b>34</b> <b>[3U 9PU]</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	1 [1PU]	NIL	2 [1PU]	NIL	<b>3</b> <b>[2PU]</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	2 [1U]	2 [1U]	NIL	NIL	<b>4</b> <b>[2U]</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	8 [5U 3PU]	11 [3U 5PU]	9 [2U 6PU]	11 [4U 3PU]	<b>39</b> <b>[14U 17PU]</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b> <b>[6U 6PU]</b>	<b>22</b> <b>[5U 7PU]</b>	<b>21</b> <b>[3U 10PU]</b>	<b>17</b> <b>[5U 5PU]</b>	<b>80</b> <b>[19U 28PU]</b>
<b>Comparison for 2013/2014</b>	21 2U & 4PU	31 7U & 11PU	23 6U & 8PU	33 8U & 9PU	108 23U & 32PU
<b>Comparison for 2014/2015</b>	19 5U & 4 PU	18 1U & 11PU	26 6U & 4PU	28 7U & 7PU	91 19U & 26PU

\*U – Upheld; PU – Partially Upheld

This year's figures are broadly in line with 2014/15 in Adult Social Care and Commissioning; both front line services, are carrying the most complaints. This is to be expected due to the role and amount of customer contact. Both services are representing the face of the Council and must deliver quality services at all times.

Adult Services has been under considerable economic, financial and resource pressure, whilst still dealing with vulnerable and needy service users. Thirty four complaints, in the context of the number of service users receiving a service from Adult Social Care is 0.73%, but they must still be addressed with care and diligence to ensure the service continues to improve and reduce similar complaints.

Commissioning is robust in its efforts to both work together with its internal and external providers (care at home and residential care) but also to challenge and improve services. Where care or provision has broken down or expectations are not met, it is only to be expected that complaints will be raised. Training to all Providers including forums for discussion and sharing of best practice is embedded into the commissioning systems. Learning from each other is essential for quality service across the board to flourish. Again, in the context of contracts and care provision, complaints equate to 0.84%. This must still be monitored and improved upon to ensure dignity and respect and emotional well-being is in place at all times.

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Over the year, it has been obvious that complaints in general are becoming more involved and complex with multiple aspects being listed as issues rather than in previous years where the tendency was one main issue. This has had an impact on timescales, investigation work, staff resources and outcomes. Any item being partially upheld must be accounted for. This is evidenced by the above figures.

A few of the general reasons for complaints being upheld over the year are shown below:-

- Response timescales being missed which further impedes the successful outcome being achieved and on occasion, has resulted in further complaints arising which would normally have been addressed as on-going service case management.
- Expectations of service users are high and if clear communication is not made and understanding of actual delivery of service not checked, disappointment has resulted with complaints being made about lack of action.
- Missed visits by Care Agencies, non-compliance with care plan or multiple carers rota'd to attend can result in poor service delivery and disappointing experiences for families.
- Residential Homes can also experience issues with medication, health and safety, adherence to care plans and safeguarding which can result together in intervention from CQC or the Council.
- Assessments, reviews and care plans need to be questioned and can often highlight areas of need not previously known or communicated.
- Staff attitude and perceived treatment of customer is typically higher than other Themes, which is to be expected when dealing with emotive issues such as care for self or family members.
- Communication can be misunderstood and clarity of issues must be confirmed, followed by agreed actions and support implemented efficiently and in a timely fashion.
- In all cases, poor experiences are undesirable and action must be taken to eradicate poor service delivery or non-compliance with policy and procedures.

## 4. Timescales

It is good practice to keep the complainant informed of progress at all times. Therefore, if for any reason, Adult Services is unable to meet the allocated timescale for response, contact should be made advising of the delay together with a new expected date of response and apology for inconvenience caused. It is usual to contact the complainant via their original form of contact to the Council or via their indicated preferred method for reply.

It must be noted, that wherever possible, every effort is made to achieve the realistic timescale originally provided to the complainant. However, this is not always possible. It is recognised that not meeting an anticipated timescale does not assist in complaint resolution and further frustrates the complainant. However, transparency on behalf of the Council is essential so the complainant can understand the difficulties being faced and why the delay is necessary.

It is recommended within the Customer Feedback Procedures, that the following timescales are met:-

- Complaints and Comments– 15 Working Days
- Councillor/MP Enquiries - 5 Days
- LGO – 5 Working Days as indicated by LGO

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The table below shows the percentage breakdown of timescales successfully met for complaints by service areas over the year:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End % Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	56% [5/9]	67% [6/9]	30% [3/10]	100% [6/6]	<b>59%</b> <b>[20/34]</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	100% [1/1]	NIL	50% [1/2]	NIL	<b>67%</b> <b>[2/3]</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	100% [2/2]	100% [2/2]	NIL	NIL	<b>100%</b> <b>[4/4]</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	38% [3/8]	27% [3/11]	34% [3/9]	27% [3/11]	<b>31%</b> <b>[12/39]</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55%</b> <b>[11/20]</b>	<b>50%</b> <b>[11/22]</b>	<b>33%</b> <b>[7/21]</b>	<b>53%</b> <b>[9/17]</b>	<b>48%</b> <b>[38/80]</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	38% 8/21	45% 14/31	39% 9/23	73% 24/33	51% 55/108
Comparison for 2014/2015	58% 11/19	50% 9/18	54% 14/26	50% 14/28	53% 48/91

General reasons for timescales not being met can be as follows:-

- Many issues being raised by complainant throughout the time of the complaint which impedes clear investigation and can result in partial responses rather than complete clarity being provided.
- Similar or duplicate complaints being raised constantly by many family members regarding the same subject matter hinders a clear investigation and can result in extended timescales.
- Emergencies arising such as safeguarding and Court for responding Managers or investigators which impedes the response plan.
- Key members of staff to be interviewed as part of the investigation, on jury service, on long term sick, leave or having left the employment of the Council.
- Complex multi-agency work required – sometimes across more than one area – can result in timescale issues and often double checking of information provided.
- Government cuts affecting the Council’s ability to provide resource for prioritising complaint investigation in certain areas.
- Unannounced checks by Ofsted, CQC and DfE and Peer work affecting resources of key Managers and signatories.
- Investigators/Senior Managers not allowing enough time for the Director to review, question, and approve a response especially if further work is necessary.
- Director or covering Senior Officers not available to sign off final response.
- Safeguarding of vulnerable adults will always take precedence over a complaint response.

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- Police investigations will in the main, place a complaint on hold with or without the complainants being aware of the Police investigation.

## 5. Complaint Themes

There are a set off 11 standard themes used by Adult Services to record complaints against, which were thoroughly interrogated and reviewed by the Council’s Scrutiny Committee during 2012/2013.

These themes help Adult Services to identify trends and patterns quickly and aid in the recognition of action required. To aid unity in recording and balancing the number of complaints, the main overarching or most appropriate theme is used for recording purposes.

The following table shows the breakdown of the annual complaints by theme.

Themes	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals	Upheld [U] or Partially Upheld [PU]
Assessment Undertaken	0	0	3	0	3	1U 1PU
Bully/Racist Incident	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Safeguarding	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Confidentiality	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Financial/Funding	4	1	2	2	9	4PU
Lack of Communication	2	4	3	0	9	1U 4PU
Policies & Procedures	0	0	1	0	1	N/A
Quality of Service	9	9	9	9	36	12U 13PU
Staff Conduct/Treatment of Customer	5	4	1	3	13	4U 3PU
Request for Service	0	1	0	0	1	N/A
Lack of Action	0	3	2	3	8	1U 3PU
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>19U 28PU</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	21	31	23	33	108	23U 32 PU
Comparison for 2014/2015	19	18	26	28	91	19U 26PU

[Above figures include 24 Not Upheld and 9 Withdrawn Complaints]

\*U – Upheld; PU – Partially Upheld

As previously mentioned, the complexity and amount of issues being raised within a single complaint is on the increase and this supports why Quality of Service and Staff Conduct are the overall ‘leaders’ of the above themes.

Quality of Service – is the umbrella where many items are recorded and has been consistent at 9 over each quarter. There has been a small increase in numbers (5) compared to last reporting year. This can cover overall poor service/experience, lack of completed work carried out in timescale, service user perceptions of service delivery, carers not turning up on time or at all, or many combinations of issues, all equally important. Whilst this is the highest theme and equates to 45% of the complaints lodged, only a third were upheld outright. Supervision and team meetings explore the issues and are used to improve outcomes for service users. This will continue.

Staff Conduct/Treatment of Customer – has reduced significantly from 2014/15 reporting year, from 25 to 13. This is due to the continuing hard work by staff to be clearer in their communication and to check understanding of information provided. Staff supervision has provided a forum for discussion and complaints about staff



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behaviour have also decreased as the understanding of service users has improved. Put into perspective, of the 13 complaints made over the year, this equates to 16.25% of the complaints raised, and 7 were upheld in some form.

Financial/Funding and Lack of Communication total nine each over the year.

Financial/Funding can cover care at home fees or residential fees and is a complex subject for many service users to understand, especially when care changes or is required at short notice. The Social Care Benefits Team works hard to ensure its information is clear and up to date and social workers endeavour to provide information to all parties, internal and external, in a timely manner. Training for social care staff has been delivered during the course of the year in order to improve workers' understanding of financial matters, and thereby enhance the quality of the information given to service users and their families.

Lack of Communication is underlying in many complaints and is broadly similar to last year's position within the themes table. Constant checking of understanding together with active listening must be re-emphasized to all Managers and teams to continue the positive work already being undertaken.

## 6. Lessons Learnt

As part of statutory regulations, the Council must identify lessons learnt and learn from its complaints, thereby improving service delivery. Equally recognised are the complaint themes mentioned above which will feed into the lessons learnt. It is recognised that the key areas for improvement are Quality of Service and Staff Attitude. In order to move forward, we must continue to improve in these areas and implement positive changes that will be of benefit to all service users and the Council. Where there are areas of repeat and similar complaint issues, these must be reviewed and avenues found to move forward and improve thereby achieving better service delivery. Where possible, lessons learnt are shared with complainants via the response letter in order to evidence that their concerns have been taken seriously and appropriate improvements have been implemented. These improvements could continue to take the form of a number of actions:

- Further training for individual staff
- Periods of close monitoring or supervision
- Team training
- Amendments to policies and procedures
- Cultural changes led by Senior Managers
- Monitoring of contracts with third parties

Lessons learnt can be positive as well as negative and are just as important. Good practice needs to be shared and encouraged across the Directorate as a whole.

The Customer Relations Team is responsible for recording the lessons learnt as supplied by the relevant Service Managers who are at the heart of the investigation work and can ensure meaningful changes are understood and implemented. As a minimum for all upheld or partially upheld complaints, investigators are required to provide details of actions to be taken and lessons to be learnt as a result of the complaints. Examples of lessons learnt can be found in Appendix A.

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## 7. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO is the Governing Body that reviews and investigates complaints against Councils where appropriate, usually where cases have followed procedures and the complainant feels their issues have not been addressed or resolved to their satisfaction. Under the Adult complaints process, the LGO can be contacted after a response to a complaint has been received from the Council.

However, some complainants prefer to contact the LGO in the first instance. The LGO will determine whether this is a premature complaint which must be directed back to the Council to respond to in the first instance or if they will commence an investigation based on the information provided by the complainant.

Over the year, 24 contacts have been made by the LGO which relate to 9 new named cases for this reporting year.

It must be noted that LGO complaints can be lengthy and complex in as much as service users are not satisfied with the efforts made by the Council in the first instance. Therefore, review of work already undertaken must be made along with further questions being asked by the LGO which can include and are not limited to requests for copy documents and chronologies.

Eight enquiries have originated from Adult Social Care complaints with the remaining one from Commissioning. Some of these cases covered both areas but were allocated using the majority of elements as appropriate. It is to be expected that the LGO cases develop from the front line service areas which receive the highest levels of complaints.

Nine Final Decisions have been received this year; this figure includes outcomes relating to some cases originating in the previous year of 2014/2015. Outcomes are as follows:

- 5 – Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice (2 of the upheld cases recommended a monetary payment as compensation for injustice caused – the amounts were £400 and £500)
- 3 – Not Upheld: No Maladministration
- 1 – Premature Complaint
- 1 – Closed due to lack of contact from the complainant

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## 8. Compliments

Compliments are extremely important and help to highlight the areas we are improving in or maintaining levels of high quality service. They act as a morale booster for staff and are evidence that every detail within service delivery matters. Good practice is commended and discussed at senior level to ensure it is implemented across the board where possible.

The table below demonstrates the levels of compliments received by Adult Services split by Service.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	35	35	30	21	<b>121</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	90	93	86	40	<b>309</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	2	6	5	2	<b>15</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	27	77	6	1	<b>111</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>556</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	87	116	73	74	350
Comparison for 2014/2015	107	90	81	89	367

[The figures in the table include 29 internal compliments & 527 external compliments]

This reporting year, stringent protocols have been applied and adhered to for compliments. Compliments are recorded internally and externally. Simple thank yous without the service user's identification or signature are not accepted. Each compliment is uniquely logged to ensure it is not duplicated.

Course questionnaires and feedback sheets have been closely scrutinised to see if compliments can be used and if accompanied by some form of identification to make them legitimate for counting.

The annual statutory Adult Social Care survey is also used to follow up comments and complaints and to record compliments provided without solicitation.

The spike in compliments in Q2 is down to the Annual Carer Awards additional compliments recorded. The dip in Q4 is due to not receiving any additional compliments for Dementia training or from the MH Recovery Service questionnaires; we also received fewer general compliments from Care and Support in the 4th Quarter.

In October 2016/17 the biennial carers survey will be issued and scrutinised for information in the same manner.

Examples of compliments received can be found in Appendix B.

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## 9. Comments

Comments are equally important as complaints and help to shape and improve the quality of service. If necessary, Adult Services will respond to comments based upon the same timescale as complaints. However, each comment will be judged individually as to whether a detailed response is necessary or not. Work on the comment will continue whether the customer is aware of this work or when it is inappropriate to share the outcome of the comment with the customer. This year the number of comments has halved compared to 24 in 2014/15 and reduced significantly from 43 in 2013/14.

It is believed that service users are being more direct in conversation with council representatives and action is being taken early to try and prevent a complaint being lodged.

The following table shows the levels of comments received by service area:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	1	NIL	4	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	2	NIL	NIL	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	16	12	5	10	43
Comparison for 2014/2015	12	6	4	2	24

## 10. Members of Parliament (MP) & Councillor Enquiries

Blackpool Council's Chief Executive maintains that all MP and Councillor Enquiries must be actioned and responded to within 5 working days. MP and Councillor Enquiries can be categorised as:

- requests for background information,
- reasons for decisions,
- requests for service or
- requests for review of outcomes

The following table shows the annual breakdown of MP Enquiries received by Adult Services and the percentage which met the 5 day response timescale:-

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	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	5 [0%]	9 [56%]	7 [71%]	10 [20%]	<b>31</b> <b>[29%]</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	4 [75%]	<b>4</b> <b>[75%]</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	NIL	2 [100%]	NIL	1 [100%]	<b>3</b> <b>[100%]</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	NIL	NIL	2 [0%]	2 [0%]	<b>4</b> <b>[0%]</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b> <b>[0%]</b>	<b>11</b> <b>NIL</b>	<b>9</b> <b>[56%]</b>	<b>17</b> <b>[35%]</b>	<b>42</b> <b>[43%]</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	9	13	6	9	37
Comparison for 2014/2015	15	11	13	13	52

The number of MP Enquiries, this reporting year, reduced by 10 in comparison to the previous year. An influx of enquiries was made in the 4th quarter with no apparent reason or trend in evidence. The tight 5 day timescale still remains an issue for responding Managers but MPs are aware of the effort and level of information being attained for them together with reasons for delays. Adult Social Care receives the majority of enquiries which is to be expected as a front line service.

The following table shows the annual breakdown of Councillor Enquires received by Adult Services:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	6 [67%]	2 [100%]	2 [50%]	4 [75%]	<b>14</b> <b>[71%]</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	1 [0%]	NIL	NIL	NIL	<b>1</b> <b>[0%]</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	1 [0%]	1 [100%]	NIL	NIL	<b>2</b> <b>[50%]</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	<b>NIL</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b> <b>[50%]</b>	<b>3</b> <b>[100%]</b>	<b>2</b> <b>[50%]</b>	<b>4</b> <b>[75%]</b>	<b>17</b> <b>[65%]</b>
Comparison for 2013/2014	7	7	4	9	27
Comparison for 2014/2015	2	4	5	3	14

Over the 3 recorded years, this year's Councillor Enquiries are almost an average. Adult Social Care receives the majority of Enquiries and these tend to relate to family issues, care delivery and care plans or pertinent changes within care provision.

## 11. Freedom of Information Requests

The timescale for responding to FOI requests is 20 working days as set out by the Information Commissioner's Office and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

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There are a number of circumstances where the request may be exempted in part or as a whole: included in the list are:

- Time taken to collate the response would be in excess of 18 hours (needs to be evidenced)
- Individuals could potentially be identified
- Information not held in a retrievable format or not collected at all
- Future publication is intended – date to be provided
- On-going investigations may be affected by the divulging of the requested information

The table below sets out the annual breakdown of FOI requests received by Adult Services and the percentage which met the 20 day timescale:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	9/20 [45%]	9/12 [75%]	13/18 [72.22%]	16/18 [88.88%]	<b>47/68</b> <b>[69.11%]</b>
<b>Care &amp; Support</b>	Nil	Nil	0/1 [0%]	1/1 [100%]	<b>1/2</b> <b>[50%]</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Resources</b>	Nil	1/1 [100%]	1/1 [100%]	Nil	<b>2/2</b> <b>[100%]</b>
<b>Commissioning</b>	1/8 [12.5%]	9/14 [64.28%]	15/21 [71.42%]	6/8 [75%]	<b>31/51</b> <b>[60.78%]</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10/28</b> <b>[35.74%]</b> <b>2 exemptions</b>	<b>19/27</b> <b>[70.37%]</b> <b>3 exemptions</b>	<b>29/41</b> <b>[70.73%]</b> <b>4 exemptions</b>	<b>23/27</b> <b>[85.18%]</b> <b>7 exemptions</b>	<b>81/123</b> <b>[65.85%]</b> <b>16 Exemptions</b>
<b>Comparison for 2014/2015</b>	22 59% met timescale no exemptions	43 52% met timescale 1 exemption	22 77% met timescale no exemptions	31 87% met timescale no exemptions	118 69% met timescale 1 exemption

Overall there has been a slight decrease in timescales being achieved, at 65% in 2015/16 compared to 69% in the 2014/15, and the number of FOIs received compared to last reporting year has increased marginally from 118 to 123. The majority of requests were received in Quarter 3.

Again, it is to be expected that the front line services are carrying the most requests: Adult Social Care and Commissioning. Timescales improved from Quarter 2 onwards and Quarter 3 saw the appointment of a dedicated FOI officer within the Customer Relations Team, being fully trained by Quarter 4 – again showing in improved timescales.

This reporting year has seen 16 Exemptions and evidences the complexity, cross departmental working and random requests being made.

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## 12. Staff Training

The Customer Relations Team is available to provide staff training on complaint handling to each department and will tailor the training to meet the needs of the service. Useful and practical staff guidance is currently being updated.

## 13. Conclusion

Although the number of Adult Social Care complaints has decreased over the last three years it is clear that the emphasis of complaints has become extremely complex and requires more time, resource and consideration. This has impacted on complaint handling by responding Managers and has compounded the timescale issues.

Whilst not every target is being met, the effort and emphasis is on resolving complaints thoroughly and with positive outcomes and better relationships with complainants. Open communication with complainants is imperative to ensure understanding and perspectives of all parties. Lessons learnt are being recognised and best practice continues to be embedded across the Directorate.

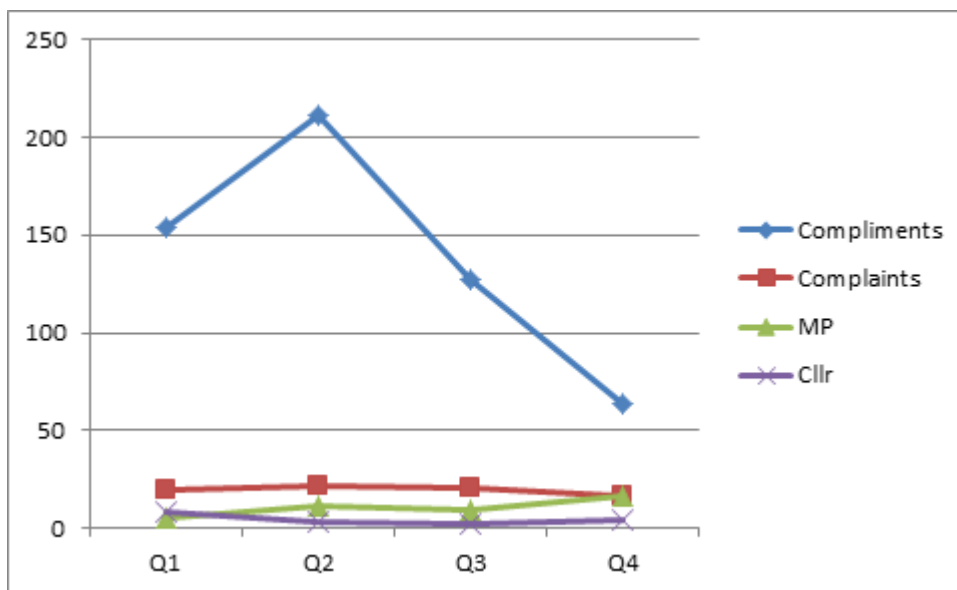
MPs and Councillors remain consistent in their enquiries and work closely to help and assist their constituents and our service users, both challenging the Council and offering support where appropriate.

All service areas need to continue to liaise with the Customer Relations Team and work towards realistic timescales being set at the outset, ensuing early communication of difficulties are made so complainants may be notified quickly and with courtesy.

Heads of Service are continuing to review trends in complaints, recognising and implementing lessons learnt as and when necessary in order to reduce similar complaints.

Staff supervisions are used to re-affirm the Council’s expectations of its employees alongside conduct and adherence to policies and procedures.

It must be recognised that not every outcome will be accepted by complainants and whilst the Council must act within statutory processes and is sometimes limited within those boundaries, every effort is made to ensure the dignity, respect and wellbeing of its service users.



The above graph puts into context the number of compliments, complaints, MP and Cllr Enquiries received this reporting year.

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## Appendix A - A Sample of Lessons Learnt for Adult Services

### Adult Social Care/Care and Support

- The Social Worker was able to reflect on the case and agreed with the outcome of the investigation. Communication skills will be discussed in supervision. A Reflective Practice session regarding the outcome of complaint will be arranged.
- Delay in contact: Service Manager to remind all staff of the importance of replying to emails and telephone messages in a timely manner. However in this case, there was an IT and telephone issue. Action: Social Worker to monitor placement.
- Service Manager reminded all staff that clear communication between professionals is essential and that agreeing and recording a clear understanding of meeting purposes is paramount, so that necessary actions can be agreed & implemented without confusion to service user's, their family or carers.
- Outcome of the complaint meeting with the family included the following actions: A review of the recent assessments to identify if these adequately meet identified needs and/or if there are short term changes. The Service Manager will explain how the respite allocation works in practice and provide family with relevant factsheets. The Service Manager will liaise with respite provider to ensure support plan is in place to reflect communication and behavioural needs; to review the respite allocation and discuss financial contribution to any additional support.
- Misleading information provided to service users and their family with regards to standard rate Council contribution. Staff to be reminded to be clear with information provided and not to quote figures that are irrelevant to service user. To be distributed to relevant staff - 'reflective learning' "The relevant information is the client contribution, not what the Council pays and this should have been the only figure quoted"
- If the pharmacist had been contacted at strategy discussion time or shortly thereafter and her comments documented, it may have stopped the complaint from proceeding this far. As a matter of good practice Adult Social Care's internal Pharmacist should be contacted and her opinion sought in any issues relating to medication in all safeguarding cases. Lessons learnt document to be emailed by Adult Safeguarding Manager to all safeguarding leads for their information.
- The service user and family received insufficient information on financial contribution. Better communication and explanation of contributions required. Since the implementation of the Care Act in April 2015, Social Worker and Social Care Benefit Team staff now record when they send out information and factsheets to service user.
- Additional Direct Payment hours used; the increase in hours has been backdated. When Social Workers are aware of changes in circumstances they should arrange a timely review to ensure that the client's needs are still being met by the current commissioned provision. Social Workers to be reminded of this by Team Managers.
- Information given at the initial assessment did not provide adequate information regarding the process of direct payment. All staff should take with them a range of information on an initial visit including Fact Sheets regarding financial implications and direct payments to leave with the service user. All staff will be informed of this decision at team meetings and they will need to demonstrate this has been done by recording on the assessment or in a case note they have given appropriate written information.

### Commissioning

- Quality Assurance & Monitoring including auditing of Care Homes' complaints processes and responses over the course of the next year, including at least one unannounced spot visit to the home. The Adult Social Care Contract Team's Quality Monitoring Officer will explore further Care Homes' emergency admission protocols



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and the need to either sign off various aspects of the admission or subsequently note and explain in as contemporaneous way as possible the lack of any signatories. The Adult Social Care Contract Team will enter into discussions with the provider regarding this matter, and view on site documentation when the unannounced spot visit is undertaken.

- Provider Manager has given reassurances that timing of visits will be adhered to, consistency will be improved and the importance of reading the care plan and completing the required tasks has been reiterated to the staff. In addition, one member of staff, has taken over the co-ordination of service user's care and she will be monitoring it closely.
- The Contracts Team Quality Monitoring Officer will be discussing this matter further with this provider in particular during the next monitoring visit; copies of logs will also be requested to ensure that appropriate recording is now taking place. The Contracts Team has also raised the matter of communication with provider and requested that they reiterate to all carers the importance of following matters through when it relates to service users' health and wellbeing.
- Provider Management to reiterate to all carers the importance of raising health and wellbeing issues with the office immediately; to reiterate the importance of providing appropriate care to all service user; carers have been reminded to ensure that used pads are disposed of correctly and to ensure they use clean towels regularly.
- All providers to review electronic call monitoring in more detail.
- All care staff attending service user have been made aware of the necessity to encourage, as far as reasonably possible, service user to have water whilst taking his medication. All care staff have been reminded of the importance of seeking medical advice immediately should they believe service user is choking, or for any other medical attention deemed necessary to maximize service user's safety. All of service user's team of carers have attended Mental Capacity Training, and have been offered the opportunity to attend again before their refresher training is due. All of service user's team of carers have attended First Aid Training, and have been offered the opportunity to attend again before their refresher training is due. The office staff involved in the management of service user's care package have met and discussed all issues that have arisen, and are continuously monitoring and reporting concerns. Provider management will keep Adult Social Care updated on all issues/ concerns raised immediately.
- Provider has amended rotas to stop the carers running late and has stressed to carers the importance of contacting families/service users if they are running late. The Contracts Team Quality Monitoring Officer has spoken to care provider and asked that they review service user's care package to ensure the visits are maintained at the agreed time, and if, for any reason, the carers are running late, that families are notified immediately. At the next monitoring visit, Contracts Team will request copies of logs to ensure that appropriate recording is now taking place.
- The provider has reiterated to staff the importance of keeping to the agreed times, especially when medication is required at specific times. The care staff have been spoken to and have confirmed that they will be more vigilant in the future.
- Provider to ensure carers and office staff notify service users as soon as possible if a carer is running late or off sick. To be discussed at the next Contract Review with all providers. Providers to remind all staff of the importance of communication with service users and their families
- Care/Respite Home will ensure all items of clothing are labelled appropriately and this will be monitored during contract review visits.
- Provider to double check training for all staff and retrain where necessary or offer support

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- All carers receive training in administering medication, including completion of the medication forms. Having reviewed the medication forms, the supervisor has noticed some gaps and this will be addressed with the appropriate carers and some retraining arranged. Medication in Care at Home setting is very complex and whilst carers all receive training, it has been highlighted that further assistance from the Council's contracted Pharmacist would give all providers some information, advice and guidance on medication.
- Provider to undertake spot checks and carers to be made aware of the seriousness of ensuring that the Keysafe is closed
- Provider has been reminded to notify service users in advance, where possible, if timings of visits need to be changed for any reason and if appropriate to also inform service user Next of Kin.
- In order to ensure that carers don't startle service user, who is blind, by letting themselves into his home and appearing behind him, the provider has reminded all staff to buzz first before letting themselves in.
- Care Home's procedures for identifying and labelling resident's possessions, and ensuring they are kept in the right place was not adequate. Care Home has purchased a new machine to tag belongings. Quality Monitoring Officer to follow up at next contract review.
- Care Home's complaints procedure was not sufficient to deal with informal complaints. Staff did not follow their procedures and failed to record actions. Care Home to amend their complaints procedure and ensure that staff are aware of it. Quality Monitoring Officer to follow up at next contract review.

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## Appendix B - A Sample of Compliments for Adult Services

### Care & Support

- I have received excellent service & fantastic care from devoted carers. I would like to thank you for all your help and kindness in the 6 weeks since leaving hospital. [Care at Home/Reablement]
- thank you letter - Hope you know how much you're appreciated - I want to thank you one and all for taking such good care of me during my recent 5 week stay at the ARC. God Bless one and all. [Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre]
- Words cannot display the gratitude I have for the help I have been given over the past 6 weeks. Every member of the team has been kind in helping me in all the ways needed. I could not have managed without them. [Care at Home/Reablement]
- Thank you so very, very much, I don't know how I would have got through the last 6 days without you; you gave me hope where there was only darkness. 'A' keeps making everyone laugh, you are a star. [Phoenix Centre – MH]
- Thank you to all the staff at Coppers Way for your smiling faces - you all gave me piece of mind when it came to looking after my brother. Thank you all. You are all very special people. [Coopers Way]
- "N was what I can only describe as an ambassador for what we as a Council are working towards, the volunteers young and old, were so committed and happy in their work it was lovely to see, I also met teachers and some pupils who are now working alongside N and the volunteers, the work that they are doing together is fantastic and the community has really come together. It was amazing to see the difference that N and his team have made to this small area of the town, and its residents. N is an absolute credit to the team". [Volunteers Service]
- From a service users daughter - she is delighted with the service provided at Keats. She said that she can see a positive difference in her father and she is enjoying the break it provides as she is not worrying about him. She said that all of the staff team are great. [Keats Day Service]
- I am the main carer for my mum and I cannot express in enough terms how fantastic the carers are that helped my mum (and me). They not only looked after my mum with all the daily needs, they treated her with great affection. They were brilliant - and I thanks God for their help when we needed it most. I miss them greatly. Thank you to everyone [Care at Home/Reablement]
- I would like to compliment Blackpool Council for providing essential respite services for the elderly and their carers at a very reasonable cost. We are always given a warm friendly welcome by staff at Hoyle House. Without your wonderful services I would be forced to give up my business and become a full time carer. The alternative would be to place my mother in a care home which would be cost-prohibitive as well as distressing. This is a situation that every family finds themselves in at some time of other having to cope with elderly relatives and maintain an income. I am in no doubt that, more caring facilities such as Hoyle House, would be of great benefit to the community as a whole. [Hoyle House]
- Thank you card: a small token with a big thank you for the care and encouragement that you have given to 'T' during his stay at the ARC. Best wishes to you all [Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre]
- The voicemail stated that she has recently had Rapid Response round and they have extended care – she is pleased with that, and said that they were all marvellous [Vitaline]
- I just wanted to say thank you for caring for my Dad. It was not easy seeing him so frail, but it meant a lot that people were kind and supportive of him during a difficult time. God Bless. [Care at Home/Reablement]

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- Thank you to all the staff at the ARC for helping me to get independent and confident; you have given me a reason to live and eat [Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre]

## Adult Social Care

- ‘No words can express my gratitude for all the help and support given to me NEVER FORGET YOU. May God bless you always; you will be every day in my heart and prayers’ [Mental Health Recovery]
- I would like to thank the "Adult Social Care Team", for all their help after my application for help. I can't thank them enough, nothing was too much trouble for them and they were all very pleasant to deal with, thanks again.
- "H showed compassion, understanding and was very supportive. I felt completely at ease with her throughout the assessment".
- Feedback form received from service user which stated that L had been extremely knowledgeable and supportive during her visit. [Direct Payments]
- I needed to put my mother into respite for a week. The home was one I had not used before so they needed a contract. I rang M and she had everything sorted for me the next day. I could not thank her enough. [Social Care Purchasing Unit]
- I also wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for everything you have done for my mum over the years. I know I haven't been the easiest person to deal with but I hope you understand it was always about my mum getting the best possible care. You have been highly professional and supportive social worker and I have nothing but positive things to say about my interaction with you and your team over the last few years. [Mental Health Recovery]
- Thank you. You all saved my life. No words can express my gratitude. Wishing you all the very best. [Mental Health Recovery]
- I trust my worker and believe what he says to me, he is always at the end of the phone. [Mental Health Recovery]

## Commissioning

- Many thanks for the wonderful event last Friday – everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves and had only very positive things to say about the day. No doubt our service users will be asking when the next Dancing with Dementia day is – please let us know!! Please can you pass on thanks to all your team – they were all incredibly helpful throughout the day. [Dementia Training]
- I visited the Dancing with Dementia event last week at Tower Ballroom and can I say what great event it was. As a professional it was great to see the effort that went into the event, the organisation was great, the cake stands full of goodies the whole look of the event even the Wurlizer coming up through the floor added to the event. Meeting colleagues from other disciplines was also beneficial to me. [Dementia Training]
- I am working with a service user who is living in a care home, I happened to be visiting him today, and he really enjoyed the Dancing with Dementia event. The staff who went to the event from the Care Home, went in their own time by the way, thought the event was great. [Dementia Training]
- What a great and joyous event. [Dementia Training]
- Excellent session that encouraged participants to engage in interactive group work to re-enforce aims and objectives [Dementia Training]
- It has refreshed my understanding to enable me to ensure that individuals with dementia are being cared for in a dementia friendly environment [Dementia Training]

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- Tutor meticulously worked through each learning point; Thought provoking at a friendly fun level [Dementia Training]
- The course was delivered in a diverse and easily understood way that could be applied to day to day situations [Dementia Training]
- Thank you for a very interesting and enlightening session, well injected with humour [Dementia Training]
- My carer looks after me so well. I have always been embarrassed with personal care but X makes me feel comfortable and is always respectful to my wishes. All her work is very thorough down to the smallest detail and she always listens to any worries and troubles that I have. As well as my carer she feels like a friend and I look forward to her visits. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She is punctual, helpful and hard working. She has a great sense of humour and always leaves me smiling. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- My carer is very caring and cheers me up as I suffer with depression and it rules my life. I need to have a laugh now and again and she does this for me. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She puts all her work and care into looking after me. She makes sure I am safe getting in and out of the bath, helps me dress, makes sure all my needs are attended to and makes me a nice cup of tea before leaving. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- The first day she introduced herself I felt safe, reassured and felt I could trust her. She has listened to me and treats me like a person, not just a service user. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She is an angel; she has a smile for everyone and a big heart. She has a magic way to make you feel safe. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- My husband has had a stroke and is blind. His carer is kind and looks after him. She tells him what she is doing so that he understands. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- He is very considerate and caring. He looks after me making sure I get lots of drinks and the food I like. He is interesting and talks to me, reminding me of the old days. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She is such a lovely lady and nothing is too much trouble for her. When I fell and injured my arm she came in her own time to make sure that I had been to the hospital and that I had everything I needed. She is there physically and emotionally – an absolute star! [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She is not only an excellent carer, but she is also aware of my needs. Her qualities make my life so much more comfortable and it is a joy to be in her company. I miss the days when she is not with me. Life would be so much better if all carers were like her. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]
- She is a very pleasant lady who enters the house with a cheerful 'hello' and a smile. My little dog adores her. She makes me a cup of tea and sits down for a little chat. As I am housebound I really value those few minutes. I couldn't have a better carer. [Commissioning - Carer Awards]

## **Business Support**

- My family and I want to express our sincere thanks to those members of your social services team who have helped us to locate my mother's friends. It was a great relief when they made contact by telephone today. We are so grateful that you could help us and thank you for "going the extra mile!" [Access to Records]
- Thank you so much for all your hard work in developing the portfolios. Your hard work and efforts are very much appreciated. [Business Intelligence & Systems]

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- "I just wanted to express my gratitude for all the hard work and dedication given by yourselves, your Officers and Staff. All your support, assistance and guidance over recent weeks has been really invaluable and is very much appreciated. Well done to everyone in your teams and beyond". [Resources]
- I just wanted to say a big thank you to D for all the help and support (and patience) he has provided in getting our report requirements sorted and we are very nearly there. This report will really assist us to understand our business and trend analysis and it is fantastic! You should have a look at this report and I am sure you will be equally impressed! R is also very helpful and responds quickly to our queries and I wouldn't want to miss her out in my 'thank you'. [Business Intelligence & Systems]

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