

Learning From Complaints

Complaints are viewed as a mechanism for ensuring that the Council remains receptive to the need to make improvements to the quality of the services that it provides.

The authority is keen to learn from complaints by evaluation and by receiving feedback from it's service users.

This information is used to build effective practice and to improve the provision and quality of services.

Examples of improvements have included:

An intended procedure to ensure consistency of provision of service until suitable alternative is available, for those children and young people who move out of the borough and are receiving Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services support .

The review and amendment of procedures for financial assessment for adult social care when one partner is taken into community care leaving another left in the community.



Compliments

The Council offers opportunities for people to make suggestions or compliments about how they have experienced services. This feedback provides an opportunity to share best practice across other service areas for organisational learning.

246 compliments were received across Adult Social Care Services from service users or their families who wished to express their satisfaction, and a further 39 relating to Community Services.

For Children and Young People much of the activity carried out by staff is of a statutory nature which can make it difficult to obtain positive feedback. Nevertheless 14 formal compliments were recorded as being received from service users and a further 67 compliments were made informally.

Some compliments made:

"We will never forget how kind you have been to our relative in prolonging her quality of life. You have gone the extra mile, over and above what we would have expected. Your patience and understanding will always be in our thoughts".

Another described a social worker as "a great social worker who supported me whilst undergoing an assessment".

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Executive Summary for the Community Directorate Annual Complaints Reports 2013-2014



Introduction

The Council Community Directorate has continued to work hard over the past year to put customer care at the forefront of its activity.

It has maintained a proactive approach to managing and responding to complaints in a timely manner, and above all has kept customers involved in the process.

In accordance with statutory legislation, each year the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager issues annual reports detailing the current position of work undertaken with regard to the Complaints Procedure for Adults and Community and for Children, Young People and Families.

This leaflet is designed to give a brief summary of the content of both reports.

The full reports can be accessed via Wolverhampton City Council's website <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/home>

Adult Social Care and Community Complaints

Pleasingly the number of compliments received during the year continues to outweigh the number of complaints made.

As at 1 April 2013 there were 3789 service users receiving care services funded by the City Council and based on this number, the number of complaints received represents less than 3 % of customers expressing dissatisfaction with the service they have received.

There is an increase in the number of formal adult social care complaints received during the year, where 99 were received compared to 87 in 2012/2013.

With an emphasis on a personalised response to each complaint, 84 % of social care formal complaints were responded to within 20 working days, of which 36 % were responded to within 10 working days.

Community Services which includes Sports and Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces and the Library Services received 13 formal complaints of which all were responded to within the 21 day corporate complaints procedure timescale.

Complaints should be resolved locally, quickly and informally wherever possible. There have been 13 informal complaints resolved for Adult Social Care and 97 for Community Services. If the complaint cannot be resolved, i.e. if it is of a complex nature, the complaint is progressed through the formal complaints procedure.

Children, Young People and Families Complaints

Children and Young People are issued with leaflets about complaints and various methods are adopted to allow them easy access to the complaints procedure, regardless of age. This includes the offer of an advocacy service if required.

The need to avoid delay in resolving issues where young people are concerned is widely recognised and acted upon by staff.

There has been an increase in the total number of formal complaints received this year, 160 compared to 149 the previous year. This has coincided with the design of a complaints leaflet specifically for parents and carers.

The average time taken to respond to a complaint was 16 days compared to 14 days the previous year, however 78 % were responded to within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

The Council is committed to continually assessing and improving the services it provides. This year 13 % of complaints related to quality of service compared to 15 % in the previous year.

There was only one complaint which could not be resolved at stage one of the complaints procedure and therefore required the appointment of an Independent Person to investigate further.

This is an indication of the effectiveness of work done to resolve complaints earlier in the process.