

Adult Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2022-23



Adult Social Care 2022/23 Complaints & Representations key facts & figures



There were **3595** adults in long-term support as of 31 March 2023



In 2022/23, the Council received **66** complaints about Adult Social Care, compared to 50 in 2021/22

Of the 66 complaints, just under half were at least partially upheld:



The Council aims to resolve complaints within 20 working days. In 2022/23, **65%** were resolved within 20 working days, 64% in 2021/22 and 55% in 2020/21

The most common things people complained about were...



In 2022/23, we received **253** compliments; down by 29 compared to last year. These were all about the standard of care provided at care homes for older people.

If a complainant remains unhappy after completing the Council's complaints process, they may take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). In 2022/23, the LGSCO received **7** Adult Social Care cases. A total of **3** cases were upheld

Listening to service users' complaints helps services improve by helping Managers identify changes that are required. Key learning points from 2022/23 include: Ensuring effective communication. Outcomes, delays/waiting times for assessment decisions. Information relating to finance to be shared with service users/family members and for information to be accurate.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints about Adult Social Care

You have the right to receive a good level of service. Listening to your views helps Adult Social Care Services to put things right and improve things for the future, so your comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions are important and always welcome. You can contact the Adult Social Care Complaints Officer by phone to **08085 834 333** or online at www.coventry.gov.uk/form_speakup/ or by email to AdultSocialCareCustomerRelations@coventry.gov.uk

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Welcome

Welcome to the 2022/23 complaints and representations annual report. As part of the Council's commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory procedures in relation to Adult Social Care provided by or commissioned by Coventry City Council for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Background

Local Authorities are required to have a system for receiving representations by or on behalf of people in need of adult social care support who have a range of support needs due to a disability or frailty (Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.) Services cover assessment and case management, direct service provision or the arrangement of a range of services, including support at home, day opportunities, supported housing, intermediate, residential and nursing care or provision of equipment.

Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

Local Authorities are required by law to appoint a complaints officer to oversee all aspects of the procedure. Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. When this is the case, these are registered under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints.

The Local Authority has a nominated officer assigned to the management of representations for Adult Social Care.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use services are heard.

- Positive feedback is used to develop services and acknowledge good practice.
- Things that have gone wrong are put right.
- The organisation learns from both positive and negative feedback; and the organisation sustains its focus on service users / customers / citizens.

Within this report reference is made to the range of representations received and responses to them and specific trends and issues that emerged in the reporting period.

Summary

In 2022/23 the service received a total of 85 complaints and of these 66 were **statutory complaints**, compared to 50 in 2021/22. 45% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld, compared to 44% in 2021/22. The increase in complaints could relate to a number of influencing factors but in the last year we have seen increasing numbers of people accessing our services.

The main themes of complaints received over this period were as follows:

- Method/Quality of communication
- Standard of Service
- Standard of work

In addition to the statutory complaints above, the service received 14 informal complaints during 2022/23, a reduction from 21 Informal complaints in 2021/22 along with 3 Stage 1 Corporate complaints and 2 Stage 2 Corporate Complaints. These are complaints resolved/handled at the point of delivery. In line with our complaints policy and in line with best practice, most concerns are dealt with on an informal basis, for example, by social care providers; and may not be reflected in the figures in this report.

Description of Complaint Types

Coventry City Council's complaints policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council handles compliments, comments and complaints. A complaint can be made to an employee either by telephone, social media, e-mail or in writing.

Informal

Where possible, complaints should be resolved informally and for a number of complaints this is what we try to do in the first instance. If this is not possible, complainants can formally complain to the Council. Informal matters can also be related to concerns that require resolution or follow up investigation outside of the formal process.

Statutory

Complaints about Adult Services including care homes and other providers commissioned by the Council follow the statutory process for representations made by or on behalf of an adult using social care services provided by / commissioned by the Council arising from the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

All other complaints relating to Council services are dealt with by the corporate complaints policy.

Corporate

A Corporate complaint example would be as follows: When a member of the public who is not a service user or a holder of parental responsibility for a young person, requests that their concerns are investigated formally. An example of a corporate complaint could be a member of the public who has raised concerns regarding a

service that they are not personally involved with such as, seeing a social worker act in a way they do not deem appropriate or witnessing a poor level of service.

Feedback

Promoting feedback

Representations from people who came into contact with Adult Social Care and their families provide a useful source of information about quality-of-service delivery, professional practice and the outcome of decisions we make that affect their care and support. A key part of the complaints process is how the Council learns from negative experiences and use this to improve what we do. Adult Social Care always welcomes feedback, whether this is positive or negative and there are a number of ways in which people can make their views known and these include:

- During the assessment process we will engage with individuals and their carers about what is important to them and incorporate this into their support plans
- At the conclusion of the assessment and/or review we will invite individuals and their families to use our 'real time survey' so that we have immediate feedback on their experience
- We use surveys for individuals and for carers to obtain wider feedback.
- We listen to experts by experience and our Stakeholder Group in respect of strategic or service changes.

Providing feedback

Where possible, issues/complaints should be handled at the point of delivery. When a person feels that they are still not satisfied, then it is recorded as a formal complaint and investigated as such. The length of time to investigate and resolve complaints depends on their complexity. Where there are particular complexities that will require an elongated period of investigation, a timescale is agreed with the complainant.

People can provide feedback directly to the service or team; to customer services; or to the Complaints Officer. Further information about how to make a complaint, access advocacy or support, and the complaints process is available on the Council's website at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/.

It is vitally important that the comments, complaints and compliments system is easily accessible. This maximises the opportunities for individuals to make their views known. Complaints can be accepted through the contact centre via a visit to the centre, by letter, by an online form or by telephone. Complaints may also be made directly to the team that is providing them with a service. Sometimes, complaints are also made via elected members (Councillors), the Chief Executive, or directly to senior managers. Complaints can also be referred to the Council from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Complainants who contact the complaints team directly are encouraged to use the contact centre to ensure that their complaint can be processed efficiently.

In 2022/23, the majority of complainants chose to make a complaint via email or through the Council's contact centre.

Complaints

The number of statutory complaints has increased from 50 in 2021/22 to 66 in 2022/23, which has resulted in an increase in complaints of 32%.

The number of complaints and their outcomes are detailed below.

Complaints 2021/22 vs 2022/23

Outcome	2021/22		2022/23	
Upheld	5	10%	10	15%
Partly Upheld	17	34%	20	30%
Not upheld	21	42%	15	23%
Complaint withdrawn	7	14%	19	29%
Open	0	0%	2	3%
Total	50		66	100

How people complained

Method	2021/22	2022/23
Email	34	42
Contact Center/Form	15	22
Letter	1	2
Phone	0	0
Total	50	66

Complaints by service area

The below table shows a breakdown of complaints received and investigated by each service area team

Service Area	2021/22	2022/23
All Age Disability (Assessment & Case Management)	9	13
Adult Commissioning	9	8
Assessment & Case Management OP	0	18
Adult Safeguarding	1	3
ASC Enablement & Therapy Services	0	3
Mental Health	5	3
The Opal/ Therapy Services	10	2
Community Discharge Team	0	2
Older Adults/Dementia	0	1
Finance	0	3
Learning Disabilities	0	1
Hospital Team	4	2
Telecare Service	0	1
Promoting Independence	0	5
Physical Impairment	1	0
Older People Team	6	1
Total	50	66

Complaints regarding external providers

Providers of residential and domiciliary care services must have a complaints procedure that complies with the Care Homes Regulations 2001, the Care Standards Act 2000 and the National Minimum Standards stipulated by the Care Quality Commission. There is an expectation that the individual pursues a complaint with provider organisations through the provider’s own complaints procedures in the first instance. However, if the individual is dissatisfied with the response of the provider or, if they wish to pursue the complaint through the Statutory Adult Social Care Complaints Process, they have the right to do so. Where possible, we encourage complainants to utilise the providers’ complaints procedures in the first instance as this enables the complaint to be dealt with at source as opposed to through the Council.

Complaints regarding external providers are monitored through contract monitoring and, where required, providers are expected to make immediate improvements and/or to produce action plans to deliver service improvements with delivery monitored through contractual mechanisms.

Timescales

There are no externally prescribed timescales for the resolution of complaints. The only stipulation within the regulations is that timescales should be reasonable, and that the complaints process should be concluded within six months. It is acceptable to extend this deadline with the agreement of the complainant.

As there is no specific requirement, the approach taken is to agree a timescale with the complainant. It is normal practice to inform complainants should an extension be required. Most often, extensions are sought due to the complexity of complaints, including where the complainant supplies additional information/evidence part way through an investigation. In these instances, the complainant is contacted with an explanation for the delay and the likely revised timescale.

As a benchmark for monitoring the timescale for completion of complaints, Adult Social Care applies an internal guideline that complaints should be completed within 20 working days. Performance on this standard is monitored by the Adult Social Care Management Team. This year’s performance against the target is shown in the table below:

Complaint Stage	Timescales	2021/22	2022/23
Stage 1	Within 20 working days	32 (64%)	43 (65%)
	Over 20 working days	18 (36%)	23 (35%)
	Still Open	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total		50	66

Where the 20-working day response timescale has been exceeded, this can be due to the requirement to involve other professionals, including health care professionals in other organisations and is relevant to Mental Health complaints. The responses received from other organisations are at times outside of the 20-working day time-frame. This can then impact on the investigation period which occasionally can be out of the direct control of the Local Authority.

The overall percentage on complaints being resolved within the 20 Working Day timescale has shown a marginal improvement given the increased number of complaints but more have been processed within the 20 days). The improvements could be a result of Team Managers being more involved in the case management and with potential complaints at an earlier stage, allowing them to discuss with the complainants to provide explanation and

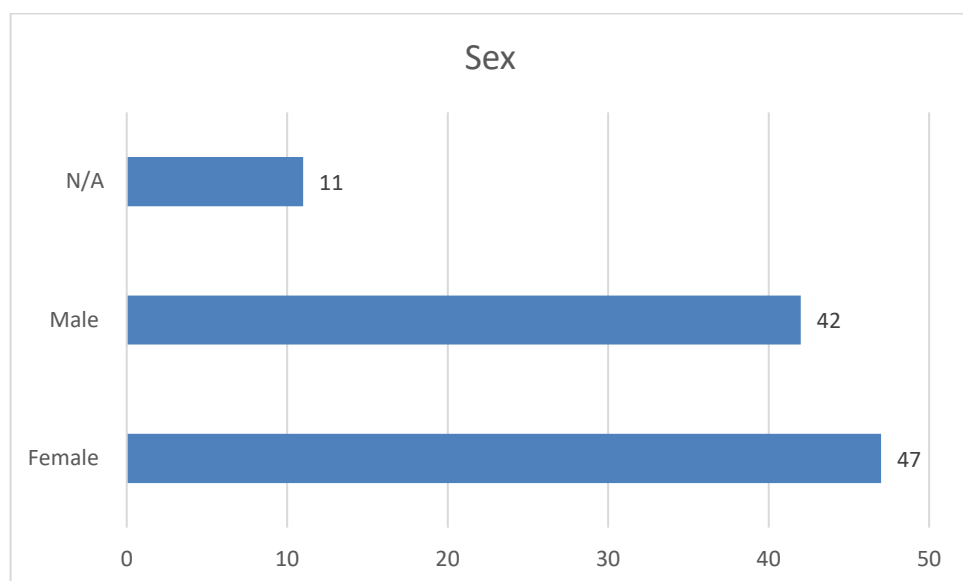
support. This enables them to provide the formal responses more easily and within timeframe.

Issues such as complaints becoming more complex with coordination required across departments for example: All Age Disability with Commissioning, impacting on investigation time frames. Although 65% of complaints received have been responded to within 20 working days, 35% (23 complaints) have gone over timescale and the reasons for this need further consideration to understand the underlying cause and trends.

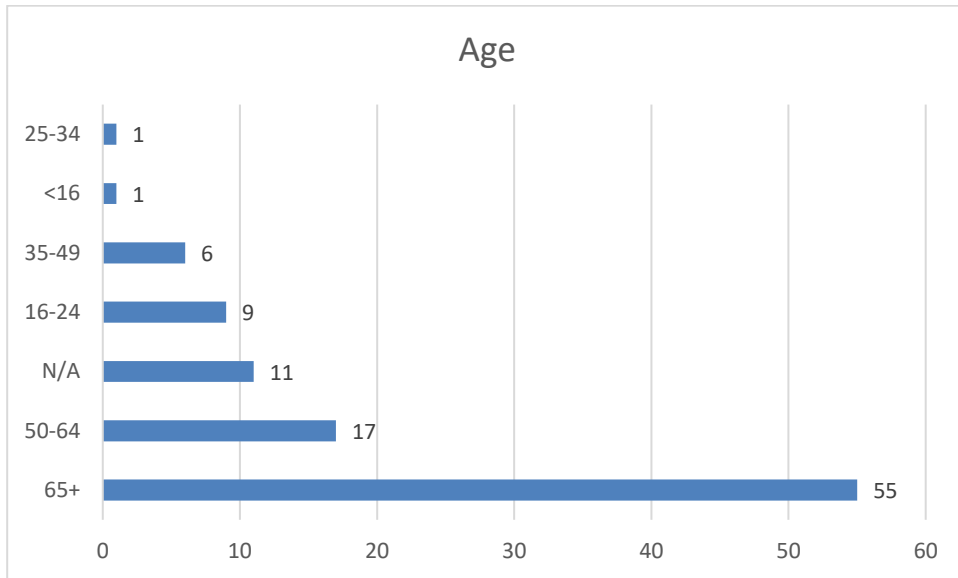
Equality

The Local Authority has a system in place to capture the equality data required to support the complaints process. Information is only ever recorded in relation to who the service user is. The below graphs illustrate the data captured but this does not include complaints submitted for the Ombudsman. Data was obtained from Adult Social Care case recording systems, and, on that basis, it has not been possible to capture information pertaining to every complainant, only those with an existing case record. These are recorded as 'not available' (N/A).

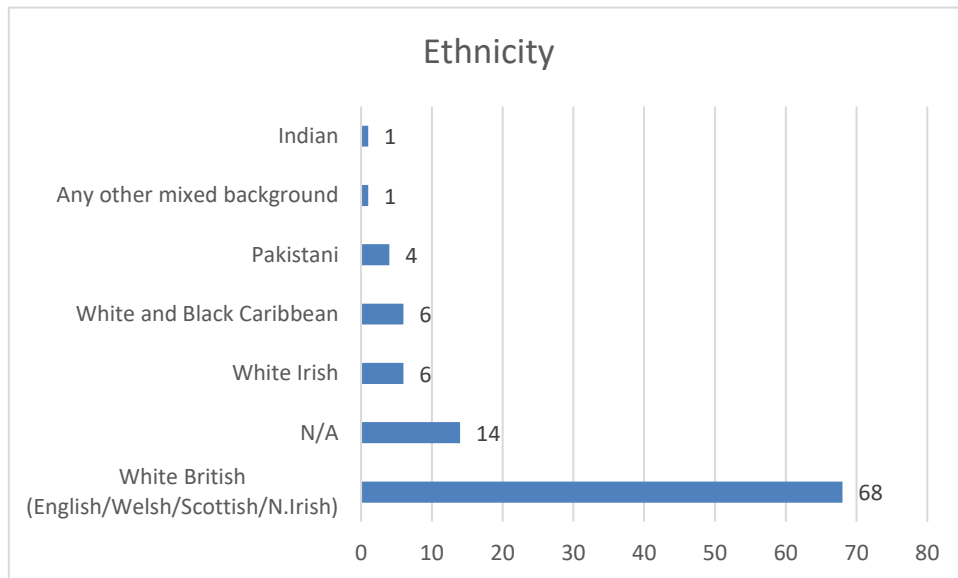
The below graph shows out of the 66 complaints received in 2022-23 (excluding Ombudsman), 28 complaints (42%) were from male complainants/service users, 31 complaints (47%) were from female complainants/service users and 7 (11%) were not available (N/A).



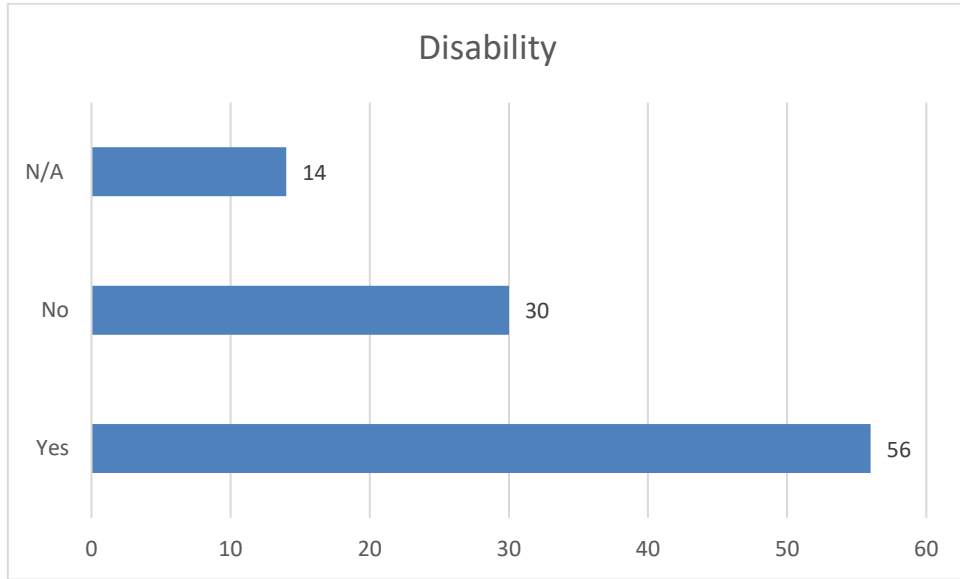
The below graph shows the age range of the complainant or service user. 6 complaints (9%) of the complaints received during 2022- 23 (excluding Ombudsman) were from or submitted on behalf of service users aged 16-24. 1 complaint (1%) was also received or submitted on behalf of service users aged 25-34. 4 complaints (6%) were received/submitted from service users aged 35-49. 11 complaints (17%) were received/submitted from service users aged 50-64. 36 complaints (54%) were received/submitted from service users aged 65+. 1 (1%) complaint received related to a service user under 16, this complaint received by parents regarding home adaptations and this service sits within Adult Services but for equality information we capture the service user details. The information was not available (N/A) for 7 (11%).



The majority of complainant's/service users in 2022-23 (excluding Ombudsman) were White British with a total of 45 (68%), followed by 4 (6%) with a White Irish background. 4 (6%) with a White and Black Caribbean background. 2 (4%) with a Pakistani background. Any other mixed background and Indian, all had 1 (1%) complaint each. 9 (14%) of the complaints received were N/A.



Out of the 66 complaints received, 37 (56%) had a disability and 20 (30%) did not, with 9 (14%) logged as (N/A).



Ombudsman

In 2022/23 Adult Social Care received 7 new cases, the outcomes of which were as follows:

- 3 Cases Upheld
- 1 Case Not Upheld
- 2 Cases required no further action.
- 1 Case was decided as premature and referred for local resolution,

This compared to 2021/22 which had 9 new cases, the outcome of which were 2 Cases Upheld, 3 Cases required no further action, 1 Case was outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, 1 Case was decided as premature and referred back for local resolution, 2 Cases were still under investigation and subsequently closed in 2022/23.

Out of the 7 Cases 3 Upheld cases received financial remedy or reimbursement.

A summary of the 7 cases received from the Ombudsman in 2022/23 are as follows-

Case 1-

Ms. C complained that Coventry City Council started charging for a service that was provided free and should have stayed so. She mentioned Coventry City Council have never been able to justify that charge and have ignored the question repeatedly. The case was referred to the Council by the ombudsman as it had not completed the complaints process and was fully investigated through the complaint's procedure. The Council issued a final response to the complainant rectifying changes and issuing a full refund.

Case 2-

Mrs D complained that Coventry City Council didn't make her aware about the possibility of receiving direct payments for her mother's care. As a result, the family paid for care privately. This was fully investigated by the Ombudsman and *Fault and Injustice* was found. The Council agreed to apologise, make a payment for the backdated amount of £12,170.69, and ensure it has procedures in place to give people information about the care system when they initially approach the Council for assistance The remedy had been deemed complete and satisfactory by the Ombudsman and this case was closed.

Case 3-

Mrs P complained about the Council taking a long time to assess Ms B's care needs and arrange care. The Council continued to invoice her for several months for care Ms B was not receiving and did not consider her dispute about the invoices. The ombudsman found there was fault by the Council causing injustice. The Council agreed to apologise, make a payment of £500 in respect of the loss of service and £250 in respect of the distress, frustration and uncertainty. A fresh care needs assessment and if she accepts, a fresh financial assessment, in writing that it has waived the outstanding amount and that it will not make any further demands for payment. The remedy was deemed complete and satisfactory by the Ombudsman and this case was closed.

Case 4-

Mr. G complained that the Council had failed to properly consider the guidance when he re-applied for a blue badge. Despite there being no change to his medical condition, Mr G said the Council declined his application and failed to provide a reason. The Ombudsman did not find fault in the Council's actions. This case was closed after initial enquires as no further action was needed.

Case 5-

Ms B complained about the care her late father, Mr C received from his Care Provider prior to his death. Ms B was concerned Mr C did not receive appropriate medical intervention or fluids. Ms B says she was not contacted or invited to end of life planning for Mr C. The ombudsman concluded they will not investigate this late complaint about care provided to Ms B's father, Mr C. The case was closed after initial enquires as it was out of jurisdiction.

Case 6-

This was a complaint from a Council employee. The ombudsman confirmed they will not be investigating the complaint and they do not disclose details of such complaints to the Body in Jurisdiction. However, we were informed by the ombudsman so that our complaint numbers match theirs.

Case 7-

Mrs C complained the Council had failed to act on safeguarding referrals that she made to the Council regarding her parents, Mr and Mrs C and the threat posed by her brother, Mr D. She mentioned the Council failed to listen to Mrs C and failed to provide Mrs C with appropriate representation. The ombudsman confirmed the Council should have tried to speak to Mrs C with an interpreter on one occasion when there were conflicting reports on whether Mrs C wanted her son to visit her home. The Council's failure to do so was at fault and the council had to remedy the injustice. The remedy was deemed complete and satisfactory by the Ombudsman and this case was closed.

Cases received 2021/22 and closed in 2022/23

Case 1:

Mr and Mrs K complained about a delay in their son Mr A's diabetes being diagnosed, and about a care provider destroying Mr A's care records. The Ombudsman found fault by the care provider in destroying Mr A's records and in how it responded to the complaint however the ombudsman did not find fault with the care provider about the timeframe of Mr A's diabetes diagnosis, or by the Council and NHS Trust also involved in Mr A's care. The care provider, in liaison with the Council, agreed to take action to improve its services, and to pay a financial remedy to Mr and Mrs K. £350 in recognition of delay and inconvenience and £250 a remittance that has been made to diabetes UK.

Case 2:

Ms C complained there was a lack of continuity in the homecare support provided to meet her partner's care needs. This meant her partner was not supported with the equipment needed for the medical condition. Ms C said as a result her partner's life could have been at risk and because she was the only person who could use the equipment, her return to work was delayed. The ombudsman found that there were failings in the care provider's communication with Ms C and in the Council's failure to provide a copy of the revised care plan. The care provider and the Council agreed they will apologise to Ms C and pay her £200 to recognise her distress and inconvenience.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publish an annual report regarding Adult Social Care each year, this year's can be found at- <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/adult-social-care-reviews>

Cases escalated to the Ombudsman – Regional comparison

The table below shows the number of complaints that were escalated to the Ombudsman in the West Midlands region in 2022-2023. Coventry has a relatively low number of complaints escalated, given the size of the city. This data is newly added, and it is difficult to speculate on response satisfaction levels on this data alone. It would be useful to know how many of these complaints were upheld before escalating. We will continue to draw on this data where useful and look to expand the narrative on future reports.

Authority Name	Adult Social Care
Birmingham City Council	37
City of Wolverhampton Council	5
Coventry City Council	8
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	10
Herefordshire Council	6
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	21
Shropshire Council	15
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	5
Staffordshire County Council	42
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	10
Telford & Wrekin Council	3
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	7
Warwickshire County Council	15
Worcestershire County Council	21
Totals	205

Compliments

Feedback from compliments provides an equally valuable message, clearly affirming when services make a difference and personal qualities have added value to the outcome for users and carers. We have as much to learn from what works well as when it goes wrong and the service actively considers compliments made.

253 compliments were received in **2022/23** compared to **282** in **2021/22**. These were all related to the quality and standard of care provided to older people. Compliments came from service users and their family members, thanking individual members of staff and teams for the ongoing support and care provided by social workers, care teams and departments. Compliments are received by forms, thank you cards, letters and emails.

The below tables show the % of compliments compared to all complaints received during 2021-22

Month	No. Complaints	No. Compliments	% Of Compliments compared to Complaints received
April	4	10	150%
May	10	29	190%
June	4	40	750%

Month	No. Complaints	No. Compliments	% Of Compliments compared to Complaints received
July	8	28	350%
August	5	12	240%
September	13	16	123%

Month	No. Complaints	No. Compliments	% Of Compliments compared to Compliments received
October	6	10	167%
November	9	16	177%
December	7	30	429%

Month	No. Complaints	No. Compliments	% Of Compliments compared to Complaints received
January	5	23	460%
February	5	27	540%
March	8	12	150%

Below are examples of compliments received during 2022-23.

Compliment to Staff Member

As always [name], fantastic support from the manager and the Team at EWH for supporting us in an emergency late yesterday evening, we as a Brokerage team are truly grateful for the continued support your team offers to us

Compliment to Quinton Lodge

Thank you for the amazing food we had at the party.

Compliment to Eric Williams House

We just wanted to say thank you to you for looking after our mum. She came on leaps and bounds because of the care that she received while staying with you. Thanks again for everything you did for her.

Compliment to ASC Enablement & Therapy Services [Name] was amazing, he listened to everything I said, he explained things in detail, he was attentive a really nice bloke. In fact it was nice just talking to him, as I've not been great lately. Please tell him how much I appreciated him. The contractor was great too.

Compliment for Eric Williams House

Please can I say a massive thank you to you and your teams/staff – great response and fabulous teamwork – please pass on my thanks to all involved

Compliment to Cottage Farm Lodge

I'd like to thank you for your professionalism during my stay

Compliment to Quinton Lodge

I cannot thank you enough for all you did for my nan. She loved it here at Quinton. The staff, especially [name] and [name] who were so good to nan. She loved you guys. You made sure her last year's/months were happy ones

Compliment to ASC Enablement and Therapy Services

I am writing to you to thank you for getting my bathroom done for me. I would like to tell you how delighted I was with the service received. It was so good. The 2 men that attended made a great job of the bathroom. They worked very hard and made a beautiful job of it. I would recommend to everyone. The boss came round every day to see how things were going, great job done. Thank you again.

Compliment for Assessment and Case Management (AAD)

I hope you don't mind me emailing you, but I just wanted to pass on some positive feedback from myself regarding [NAME]. I recently supported a complex [NAME] customer who [NAME] also supported. I worked alongside [NAME] around this challenging individual to try and support him in a multi-agency approach. [NAME] really went above and beyond in the high standard of support he offered this individual despite his unpredictable and aggressive behaviours. I just wanted to pass on my high regards of how [NAME] managed and handled the hostile situations, always remaining in calm, professional and empathetic manner. We don't praise hard work and dedication like this enough, and I'm sure you are proud to have [NAME] on your team!

Compliment to Quinton Lodge

We just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible care my mum received at Quinton Lodge thank the amazing staff for all their help and support.

Compliment for Learning Disabilities

[name] has just left my home.

I want to pass on my thoughts about my experience with her. Firstly, she is so amiable and makes me feel comfortable in her presence.

Secondly, she comes across as very competent in her knowledge of the intricacies of going through bankruptcy.

And finally, which I think is the most important, she inspires me to feel a better person.

I look forward to her visits and her positive outlook on life. You have a diamond there!

Compliment for Therapy & Comm Equipment

I just I have just taken a call from [name] who has asked me to pass on her thanks to the driver who visited her this morning. She said he was very polite, efficient, and helpful

Service improvements and learning points

Adult Social Care is committed to learning from service user and customer feedback. Where complaints highlight that matters have gone wrong, managers must identify any remedial and development action required to improve service delivery.

Most common areas of feedback

When complaints are received, they are recorded on a database and each concern raised within the complaint is logged under a 'reason of complaint code'. These codes include main categories and subcategory subjects. An example of this would be Standard of Service which has the subcategory reason codes *service level/care plan dispute lack of/access to/eligibility for service and delay in receiving service*. It is not unusual for a complainant to raise more than one concern in the same complaint. For example, a complainant may submit a complaint about communication and finance issues experienced during the same incident, and both concerns along with any additional subcategories within the complaint codes would be recorded accordingly under that complaint.

The table below highlights the different types of concerns raised within the complaints received in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22 under the main category. This does not show the actual number of complaints received but only the main reasons of complaints data. Currently our system does not capture an individual complaint code breakdown of the outcome of each concern – so the figures below reflect the alleged complaint, rather than whether a complaint was upheld or not within those specific categories.

Category	2021/22		2022/23	
Standard of Service	58	48%	60	90%
Communication	53	43%	48	72%
Protection	3	2%	2	3%
Environment/property	3	2%	1	1%
Financial issues	5	5%	4	6%

The 2 main categories of concerns raised are, Standard of Service and Communication.

Communication

72% of complaints received in 2022/23 (compared to 43% in 2021/22) were related to communication. This is a significant increase on the previous year. When service users and their families are referred for support, they require information on subjects they may have not encountered before. They also need to be kept informed of progress and decisions in processes that are complex and often appear confusing. These may be services directly provided by the Council or those delivered through independent sector provision and can include care and support delivered in care homes, housing with care support and a range of other community support services. Representations of this nature are categorised in terms of the provision, quality, method and timelessness of information as well as accuracy. The Communication themes seen during 2022/23 were as follows: Social workers not attending planned meetings, changing of meeting times without informing the customer, not being invited to meetings. The lack of communication from social workers, inaccurate assessment records and the tone in which social workers were alleged to have spoken to complainants were also highlighted. Other issues centered around the lack of communication with service user's relatives and not being kept updated with developments.

The service takes this feedback seriously and in each case individuals involved will have been made aware of the feedback in relation to their practice.

Standard of Service

90% of complaints received in 2022/23, compared to 48% in 2021/22, were related to standard of service and reflect an increase of 42%. Standard of Services includes service delivery, assessment of eligibility for services and timeliness in receiving services. Not all adults will be eligible for services from Adult Social Care following assessment. This can inevitably result in challenge and disagreement on how individual needs can be met. These are often emotive and challenging situations which can stimulate complaints where people do not agree with the practitioner's views or level of service received. Delays may also be incurred due to sourcing the right support, again leading to a complaint. The Standard of Service themes seen during 2022/23 were as follows. Concerns were raised regarding the delay in receiving assessment, the requirement to have a financial assessment/contribution, allegations of neglect in relation to the care of residents and service users being discharged from hospital without an adequate package of care. Other issues highlighted included the lack of information relating to direct payments, delays in funding panel decisions, the delay in adaptations taking place.

It is inevitable that with the increasing number of people accessing our services, waits for the completion of assessments or review alongside practical support exist. In response we have employed contact assessment workers who will be making calls to those waiting to update them on progress and determine whether their situations are changed. In addition we are actively promoting information on direct payments through videos on their benefits and information about practical application.

Compliments

The improvement initiative is continuing whereby compliments are captured by the complaints team and sent on a monthly basis to the Adults Principal Social Worker which are then published in the Adult Social Care internal news bulletin. In 2022/23 compliments have slightly decreased by 5% compared to the previous year. This still reflects positively on the service provided by Adults Services.

Compliments to date reflect well on Adult Services. In 2022/23 Adult Commissioning received the highest number of compliments, these were mostly from care homes regarding the excellent service and level of care provided. Service areas need to ensure compliments are shared with the complaints team, so these are logged and recorded accordingly going forward.

Responding to and learning from complaints

The learning elements from complaints are captured in service areas on a regular basis as part of the business management process and further evaluation of complaint data is reviewed for ongoing learning and improvements. Across Adult Social Care various processes to address learning and outcomes of quality and assurance are in place, and the learning from complaints is regularly discussed on an on-going basis with management teams and social care staff. There needs to be a consideration of an achievable and deliverable timescale for responses to complaints. We do monitor achievements against this, with the continuation of the RAG reporting process and quarterly data capturing. Upon completion of the complaint investigations, service improvements can be identified to change practice. Examples of these changes are:

- Adult Social Care is as keen to learn from what works well as we do from what goes wrong. We continue to collate the compliments as well as complaints and look at themes, learning and where good practice exists, we share this via our internal Let's Talk meetings and briefings with colleagues across the services as well as with individuals on a one-to-one basis.
- In addition to this, an internal centralized database is being developed to capture our learning, best practice and areas of improvement.
- Management oversight of complaints into the service is now embedded into regular updates from colleagues in the Customer Relations Team into the Adult Social Care Management Team enabling greater oversight of how the process is managed and any delays.
- The Commissioning Team have developed protocols and processes for the quality management of contracted services.
- All concerns in relation to communication, especially where this can improve, are taken seriously and dealt with at an individual level to ensure all workers uphold professionalism and reflect on their actions to ensure reflections and learning from complaints informs future practice.

- Prior to a full quality assurance visit being carried out Contracts Officers and Clinical Support Nurses review the previous six months concerns and complaints to identify any trends in order to focus their quality visit and focus our support around the trend identified.

Adult Services Complaint Literature

In 2023/24 we are to review Adults Services complaints literature to provide 2 new complaints leaflets, to include an easy-to-read option. The complaint leaflets are to be available in multiple languages to ensure it is accessible to all communities/background.

Service Recovery Team

The current complaints team has been re-launched as the Service Recovery team and has expanded and taken on two additional Service Recovery Officers alongside additional administration support. This will help ensure more timely responses to internal & external queries and to provide a more robust case management support to service areas.

Internal Complaints Investigation Form

An Internal Investigation Form was launched in 2020/21. This form is for investigating officers to capture additional learning and understanding of complaint concerns to ensure service areas and teams consistently improve their services and implement any learning necessary. This is achieved by sharing the internal investigation forms are shared with Heads of Service on a quarterly basis.

Investigating Officer Guidance External Web Page

A step-by-step guide for investigating officers had been in launched in 2022 on our external website. The guide is to provide support and guidance for investigating officers on statutory, corporate, and informal complaints and this will be updated and refreshed on a yearly basis.

Complaints and Ombudsman Training Module

All officers who deal with complaints attended a complaints overview training session delivered by the Ombudsman. The course focused on the complaints journey and how best to maximise the contact made with the complainant, e.g., understanding the motivators for complaints and the types of outcomes people hope to achieve by complaining. The course also looked to share best practice when responding to complaints so that we take an empathetic and supportive approach to complaint resolution. There will also be an in-house complaint training module for staff to undertake in 2024.

Specific service area improvements/learning which have been identified

Adult Commissioning

Five complaints were investigated by the adult commissioning team during the year. Only 2 of these complaints had elements that were upheld. One complaint centered around home support call duration and a particular task being missed. The learning from this is that some of the basic expectations of home support providers may on occasion not be delivered. The commissioning team have worked with the provider to try and ensure future contractual compliance. The second upheld complaint was in relation to incorrect information regarding records management. Learning points included a requirement to further encourage providers to update electronic record systems due to risks around paper records being lost.

Community Social Care (65+) and All Age Disability

Complaints remain low as the demand for support required and the complexity of people's needs increases in both of these areas. The few issues that are upheld relate to administration or data errors, where these issues have occurred individual staff members have been spoken to and reminded of our recording standards and learning has also then been shared wider with teams. A few issues highlighted linked with our Hospital Discharge teams and

Occupational Therapy Teams, in these circumstances there has been good joint working to provide a full response to the complainant. No themes have been highlighted across either area so although it is important for us all to reflect on the learning there was nothing to address regarding service improvement.

Hospital, Therapy, and Intake Teams

There have been a small number of complaints upheld which mainly relate to communication, expectations and delays.

All concerns in relation to communication, especially where this can improve, are taken seriously and dealt with at an individual level to ensure all workers uphold professionalism and reflect on their actions to ensure reflections and learning from complaints informs future practice. In some circumstances, expectations differ between a service user and worker, however we would expect workers to clearly communicate what is within their remit and role to do and ensure this is understood by all involved.

Where improvements have been identified, managers ensure immediate improvements and actions are taken. Any issues raised about a lack of communication between a staff member and service user have been raised on an individual level and staff reminded of our Adult Social Care standards

Financial Assessment Team

As a result of our learning, from two complaints received, additional checks have been implemented within the Financial Assessments Team processes to ensure the accuracy of invoices prior to authorisation and issue. Staff within the Financial Assessments Team endeavor to secure all relevant information in order to respond to, and resolve, queries from clients or their representatives satisfactorily.'

Mental Health

Formal complaints in relation to Mental Health Services for ASC remain low and decreased in the last year. Our interventions are often at a time of great distress to individuals and their families and communicating the finer elements of statutory responsibility can be difficult and this is apparent in each complaint received again this year. Complaints are also influenced by differing perceptions of mental capacity and managing the need to consider people's personal and sensitive data. Investigating Officers continue to provide direct feedback into the service to enable greater consideration of the impact of our interventions.

Practice Development & Safeguarding

The service area receives a relatively low number of complaints as we seek to ensure the process is fair and transparent to those involved. Complaints we received and investigated this year were complex in nature and reflect the impact of the various legislative frameworks we must follow. And whilst complaints might not be fully upheld there are always things for us to learn. Learning points identified included that minute takers should be present during face-to-face meetings, minutes should be shared promptly with all in attendance, to allocate sufficient time to scheduled conferences and ensure that there is no avoidable drift in safeguarding investigations.

Adult Social Care 2022/23

Complaints and representations key facts and figures



Adult Social Care (ASC) has always taken complaints very seriously

and it is a priority that we learn from them, improving individual practices but also practice throughout the whole of the Adult Social Care Directorate

There has been a slight increase in the number of complaints received in 2022/23, which may be due to an increased number of people being supported by Adult Social Care during this period and the complexity of the casework constantly increasing. However, even though we have seen an increase in number there has also been an improvement in the number of complaints responded to within timescales.



In 2022/23 Compliments have remained consistently high.

- a. Average timeframe to investigate complaints has remained high.
- b. Themes of Complaint: maintained theme of communication with no other areas of service standing out.
- c. 65% of cases were resolved within timescale, improving on performance last year.



The number of complaints responded to in timescales, and learning that can be taken forward, is regularly reported throughout the year to ASCMT. It is important that we all know the areas where we can improve and that this is supported by senior managers.



100%

0%

42%

23%

2021/22 2022/23

The percentage of complaints not upheld has fallen to 23% in 2022/23 compared to 42% in 2021/22. The percentage of complaint partially upheld has fallen to 30%



Further information

Further information about complaints and representations and a copy of the Council's complaints policy and [complaints handling guidance](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/) is available at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/.

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