

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SERVICES**

**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS &
COMPLIMENTS**

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

September 2023

1.0 PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

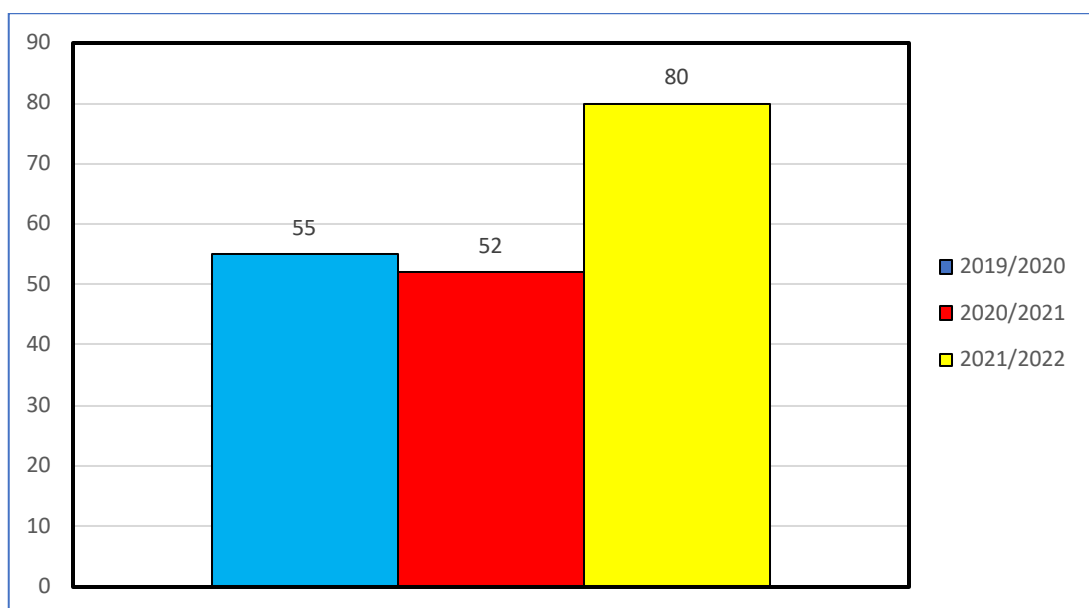
- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Complaints Report relating to Adult Social Care Complaints, received by the Corporate Core Department, Bury Council.
- 1.2 This report is to provide members of Health Scrutiny Committee with details of information relating to Adult Social Care Services.
- 1.3 The report relates to the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, and provides comparisons between previous years, as well as detailing the nature, scope and scale of some of the complaints received.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council is required to operate a separate Statutory Complaints and Representations procedure, in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 which was laid before Parliament on 27th February 2009 and came into effect on 1st April 2009. From 1st April 2009 there has been a single approach to dealing with complaints to ensure consistency in complaints handling across health and social care organisations. This procedure is based on the Department of Health's guidance, 'Listening, Responding and Improving' which supports the statutory requirements for the handling and consideration of complaints. Its intention is to allow more flexibility when responding to complaints and to encourage a culture that uses people's experiences of care to improve the services provided by Bury Adult Care Services.
- 2.2 The complaints mentioned in this report typically relate to issues where customers, their families or carers feel that the service they have received have not met their expectations. In these cases, the Council will always have endeavoured to resolve any concerns or dissatisfaction before a formal complaint has been received. Complaints, therefore, usually arise when the customer does not agree with the Council's interpretation of events or, in some cases, where policy delivers an outcome which they do not agree with.
- 2.3 Within the regulations which govern the complaints process, the Council adopts a flexible approach which prioritises local resolution. However, where complainants remain dissatisfied, they have the option to take their case to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
- 2.4 Members of Parliament cannot make a complaint on behalf of a constituent using the statutory process. However, MP's can raise a 'Concern' on behalf of a constituent with the Council and these are then managed accordingly.
- 2.5 The Complaint Procedure is not intended for dealing with allegation of serious misconduct by staff. These are covered by and dealt with through the Council's separate disciplinary procedures.

DATA ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

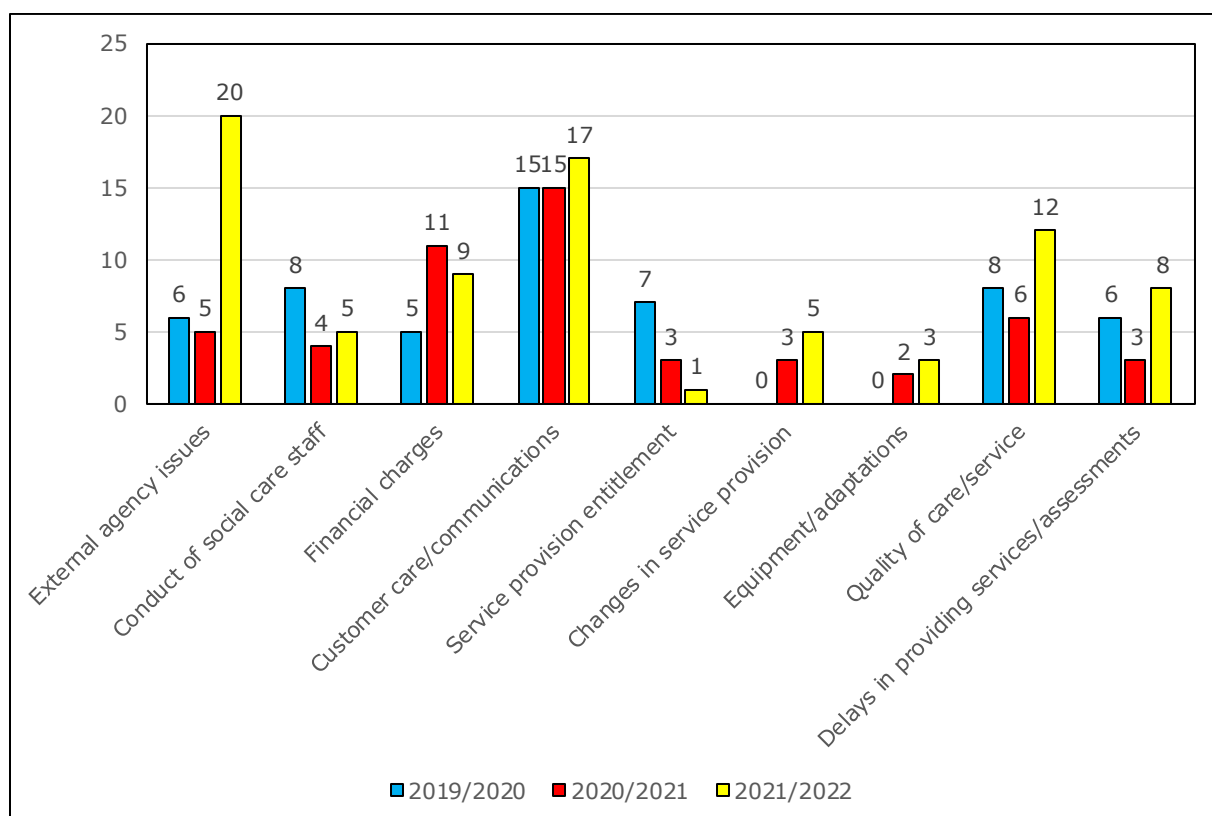
3.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS



- 3.1 The total number of complaints received in 2021/2022 has significantly increased from the previous years. This increase is partly due to the changes in processing third party organisation complaints along with an increase in demand on services.
- 3.2 The number of complaints received should also be considered in context with the number of people actually having direct contact with Adult Social Care Services (excluding their relatives, friends or carers who might make complaints on their behalf). The number of people to have direct contact with Adult Social Care Services during 2021/2022 was 7,896 which is an increase of 716 from the previous year. It is, therefore a positive that the proportion of people wanting to make a complaint about the services received from the department is still relatively low at 80.
- 3.3 As would be expected when dealing with complaints from predominantly vulnerable groups, the majority of complaints received are made by a family member, advocate or solicitor of a service user, rather than the service user themselves.

	Total Number of Complaints	Total Number of Complaints raised on behalf of a service user	%
2019/2020	55	40	73%
2020/2021	52	33	63%
2021/2022	80	64	80%

4.0 NATURE OF COMPLAINTS



4.1 On the whole, the nature of complaints has shown no real noticeable increases. There has, however, been an increase in complaints relating to 'external agency issues' (from 5 to 20), 'quality of care/service' (from 6 to 12) and 'delays in providing services/assessments' (from 3 to 8), representing 75%, 50% & 37.5% increases respectively.

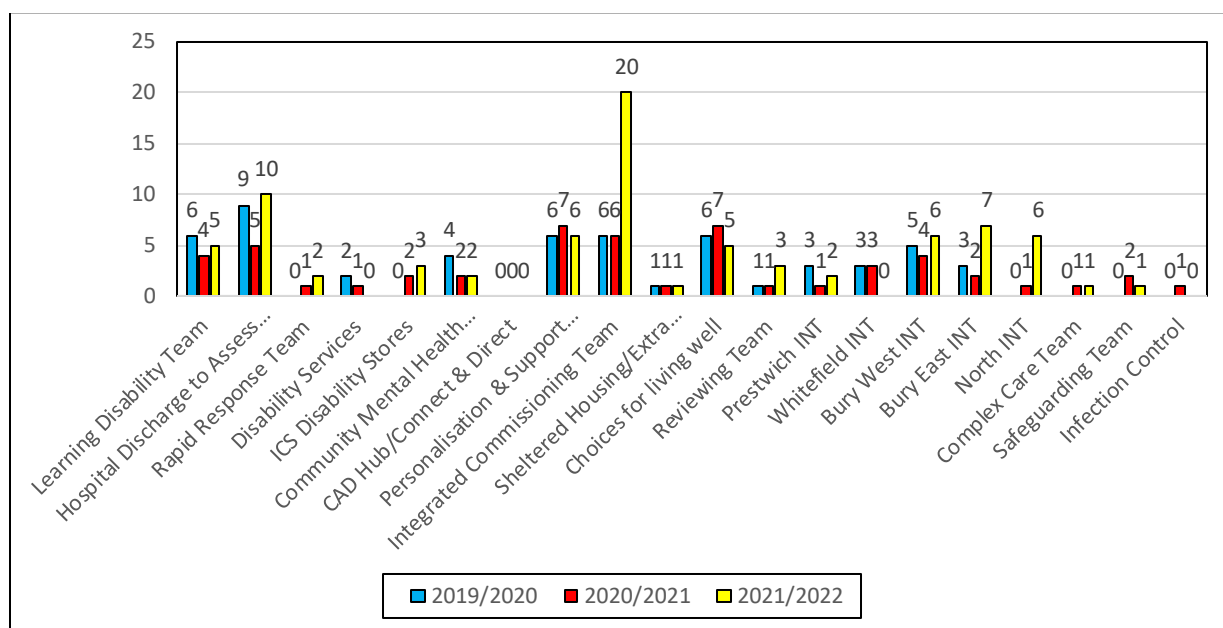
4.2 The increase in complaints relating to external agency issues is explained in detail in section 5.

4.3 The increase in the number of complaints about the quality of care/service is harder to explain as this is a very generic heading and could relate to a number of different service areas. The increase in delays in providing services/assessments is due to the high volume of demand on the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.

4.4 During the period 2021/2022 it has shown the number of complaints upheld/partially upheld has also increased from the previous year 2020/2021. In all cases when complaints are received, learning is drawn from the comments received and the subsequent investigation.

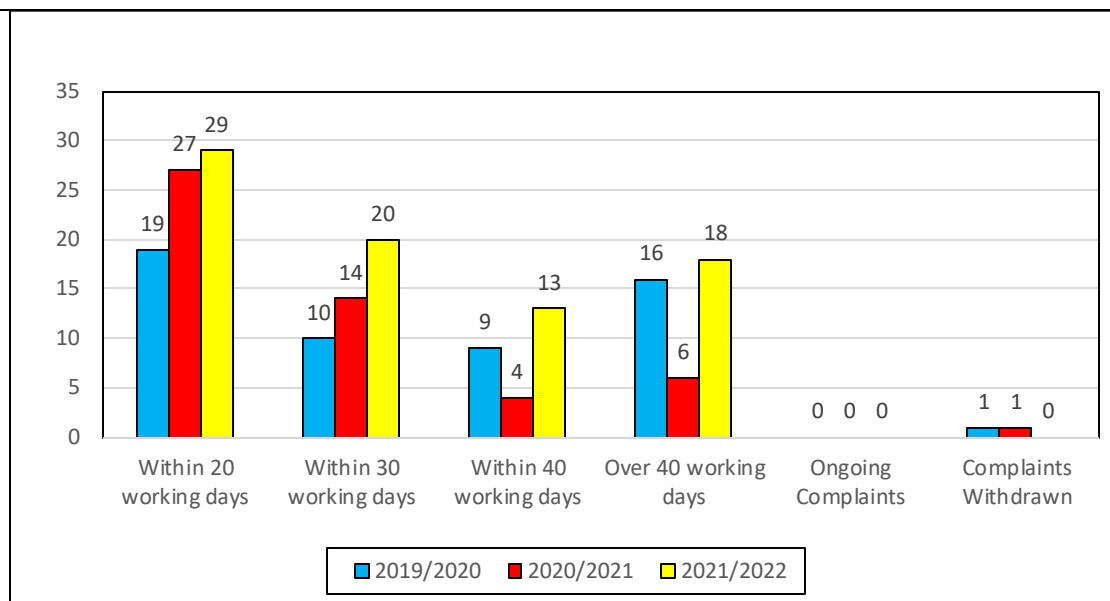
	Complaints Received	Upheld/ Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn
2019/2020	55	42 (76%)	12 (22%)	1
2020/2021	52	24 (46%)	27 (52%)	1
2021/2022	80	63 (79%)	17 (21%)	0

5.0 COMPLAINTS PER TEAM



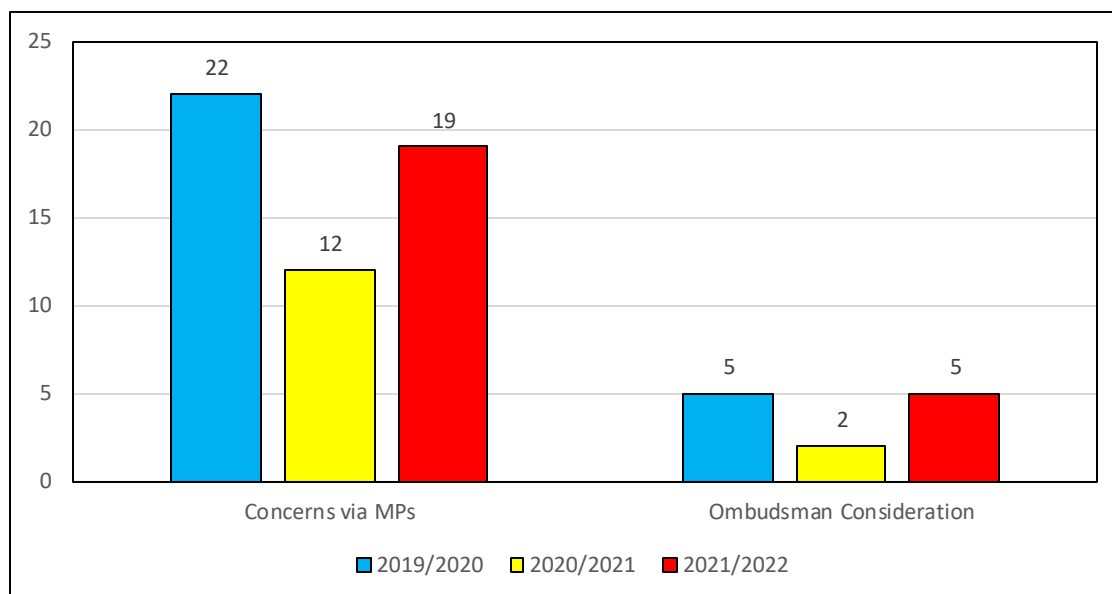
- 5.1 In comparison the overall number of complaints within teams has remained steady.
- 5.2 The report has, however, highlighted a significant increase in complaints from the Integrated Commissioning Team, the complaints do not necessarily relate to services offered by this team directly, but the services they are responsible for, for example the complaints received by the Integrated Commissioning Team will include complaints about external providers contracted by the Council to deliver services overseen by the Integrated Commissioning Team.
- 5.3 In 2021 the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman issued guidance on Effective Complaint Handling. The law says the Ombudsman can treat the actions of third parties as if they were actions of the council, where any such third-party arrangement exists. This means councils keep responsibility for third party actions, including complaint handling, no matter what the arrangement are with that party. As a result of this the Integrated Commissioning Team introduced a new process whereby all complaints raised directly to the council would be investigated and responded to by this team. Previously these types of complaints would have been sent directly to the third party and would only have come back to the council if the complainant continued to remain dissatisfied with the third party's response. Therefore, in previous years these complaints would not have been captured as part of this monitoring exercise. This new process allows the council to quality check performance on the handling of complaints and reduces complaint timescales which overall improves the complaint journey for our customers.
- 5.4 All complaints are considered in terms of the learning that they can provide on how to improve the services and help us to make sure our staff are trained to give the correct advice and support.

6.0 TIMESCALES



- 6.1 Whilst there are no statutory timescales with which the department must comply in responding to complaints, we do aim to resolve complaints within twenty working days on receipt of complaint. For more complex complaints which involve different service areas, 3rd party organisations, NHS for example, timescales will exceed the twenty working days.
- 6.2 It is for the council and complainant to agree how the complaint will be handled, the likely duration of the investigation and when the complainant can expect to receive a response.
- 6.3 In 2021/22, 29 (36.25%) of complaints were responded to within the 20 working day timescales, 33 (41.25%) of complaints were responded to over the 20 working day timescales, and 18 (22.50%) of those were over 40 working days. Complaints responded to over 20 working days is a significant increase from the previous year, especially complaints over 40 working days. This is likely due to the complexity of the complaint whereby several departments or other organisations have been party to all or some of the complaint subject areas, complex and involved collation of information required from several different service areas. These can often result in increased response times. Of the complaints responded to outside of the 20 working day timescales all complainants were kept updated on the delay, the reason for the delay and provided with a new response date.
- 6.4 The report has highlighted that a number of those complaints responded overtimescales relate to complaints raised about third-party organisations. The Integrated Commissioning Team are working with third-party organisations to improve and work better in responding to complaints in a timely manner.
- 6.5 It should, however, also be noted there has been a continued increase in the number of complaints that have been responded to within 20 working days from previous years.

7.0 MP CONCERNS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN CONSIDERATIONS / ENQUIRIES



- 7.1 As has been previously mentioned, concerns raised on behalf of constituents by Members of Parliament are recorded separately. There has been an increase from 12 in 2020/2021 to 19 in 2021/2022.
- 7.2 The number of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has increased from 2 cases in 2020/2021 to 5 cases in 2021/2022. It is, however, positive that 93.75% of the complaints received were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant with only 6.25% remaining dissatisfied and approaching the LGSCO.
- 7.3 Of the five cases received the LGSCO found one case to be a premature complaint, no fault was found with two cases and two cases fault was found. On the two cases where fault was found, recommended action was taken in the form of a written apology and one case financial recompense was recommended.
- 7.4 The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman's office facilitate a one-day training session on effective complaint handling. Previously these sessions have been well received and had a positive impact, staff felt more confident when investigating and responding to complaints. A further session is being commissioned, with priority being given to members of staff from the Integrated Commissioning Team.

8.0 COMPLIMENTS

8.1 In addition to complaints received, the department also records the number of compliments.

Total number of Compliments received 2020/2021	Total number of Compliments received 2021/2022
333	515

Service Area	2020/2021	2021/2022
Hospital Social Work/Discharge to Assess Team	8	0
Choices for Living Well – Intermediate Care Reablement/Killelea/IMC @ Home	182	240
Sheltered Housing / Carelink / Support at Home	3	41
Integrated Community Equipment Services	9	11
Learning Disability Team	4	5
Older People’s Community Mental Health Team	1	3
CAD Hub/Connect & Direct	1	4
Personalisation and Support Business Team	19	40
Rapid Response Team	56	44
Disability Services	5	65
Older Peoples Staying Well Team	37	31
Prestwich INT	1	1
Whitefield INT	1	0
Bury East INT	0	3
Bury North INT	3	2
Bury West INT	1	2
Adult Social Care Complaints Section	1	0
Urban Renewal Team	1	0
Integrated Commissioning Team	0	3
Reviewing Team	0	18
Bury Employment Support and Training	0	2

- 8.2 The number of compliments received has shown an increase from the previous year. Team Managers are reminded and encouraged to record and share all compliments received.
- 8.3 It is pleasing to see the increase in compliments received, especially when those services are front line, for example there has been an increase in compliments for the Choices for Living Well Service, Sheltered Housing/Carelink/Support at Home, Disability Services and the Reviewing Team. Staff have continued to work tirelessly during the most challenging of times and it is pleasing to see that their hard work is being acknowledged and recognised.
- 8.4 When a compliment is received that acknowledges the efforts of an individual member of staff a personal thank you letter is sent by the Director - Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning. A copy is also placed on the individual's personnel record.
- 8.5 Here are some examples of positive feedbacks received from customers receiving a service:

➤ **Choices for Living Well – Reablement**

I would just like to say, the treatment/support and kindness I've had from your staff is overwhelming. What a warm, caring, professional bunch of people you have. I must commend the hardwork/kindness and professionalism of your team in Reablement. I just want to say thank you as my mental health is suffering badly with this ongoing stress. Thank you again.

➤ **Personalisation and Support Team**

You have been very helpful in what is a very stressful and difficult time for the family. We have been unable to visit dad due to the home frequently having covid outbreaks so you can imagine this has had a significant impact on his mental health in not being able to see us so your support in coming back to me as quickly as you have done re this information is very much appreciated and is reassuring.

➤ **Carelink**

We received a telephone call from the family of a service user who thanked us for our service to their mother. Their mother had pressed her trigger in the early hours and had asked for family to be contacted. Family have stated that she had never needed to press her trigger before but on that occasion our prompt action 'Gave the family great comfort as she was not alone when she passed away'.

➤ **Disability Services**

We are all very grateful to you for your help especially as we understand this matter is now, strictly speaking, out of your hands. It is refreshing to meet someone who genuinely cares and is prepared to go "above and beyond" to help others. Thank you once again for all your help.

➤ **Older Adults Mental Health Team**

Outstanding Social Worker. Social Worker has been allocated to my mum for the past 18 months or so and has been extremely patient, caring and understanding and has always kept his promises about what he was intending to do/organise.

I am a social worker for another local authority, so I suspect as an advocate for my mum, I haven't always been the easiest relative to deal with, the social worker has been absolutely professional from day one.

My mum has recently passed away and he phoned me when he heard that she had been in hospital to check where she was and was extremely compassionate about the situation. Thank you, for facilitating my mum's move to Peachment Place for my mum where she was very happy in her final few months.

➤ **Rapid Response**

We didn't know that Rapid Response existed as we have had no need of it. We are very very impressed. They were rapid, they were efficient and within 2 hours we were set up with equipment which has made my husband's life at present so much easier. Thank you very much.

➤ **Older People's Staying Well Team**

Thinks you are absolutely wonderful in terms of the support you have provided. He particularly wished to comment that you asked him what he needed rather than what he wanted. You arranged things very quickly and regularly kept in touch and both he and his wife cannot thank you enough. He advised me he is going to Lavender Hill for a respite stay and he is looking forward to this as it will enable his wife to visit their great grandchild in Cornwall this summer. Unfortunately, he will not be able to travel but he feels glad she will be able to take a break from her caring role.

➤ **Bury East INT Team**

I refer to one of your employees I have spoken to him many times on the telephone. However, today I met him face to face and discussed an issue regarding a colleague of mine who is in a care home! He was fully understanding of my colleagues' issues and has done his utmost to help him. I therefore wish Bury council to recognise his passionate belief in his care and understanding of people in need! He is an asset to Bury social services.

➤ **CAD Hub**

Thank you so much for sending this across and for your time on the phone yesterday. You've been incredibly helpful. I will be discussing everything with my parents over the weekend and plan that we will give you or your office a call next week.

➤ **Choices for Living Well - Killelea IMC & Reablement Team**

When my mum was admitted to Killelea she was very frail, not eating, lost a great deal of weight. From the outset all the staff at Killelea were extremely welcoming, helpful and professional in delivering care.

Even though there were significant issues surrounding mum's health, the care assistants, physiotherapists, and doctors worked tirelessly in raising mum's wellbeing, from mobility, eating and being infection free.

I would like to take this opportunity in expressing my sincere gratitude to all concerned, including the aftercare provided at home by the reablement team, which has been excellent.

Reviewing Team

Thank you so much. Just had a lovely chat with Mum... I guess she rethought the nurse visit and called them today and the nurse is now doing a home visit. I am really happy she did this and is thinking about her own limitations. I also told her about the care service being able to be hired to do visits other than showering if needs be. She will let me know if she has any upcoming hospital appointments. Take care and once again thank you for being there to support Mum's needs.

➤ **Support at Home**

I received a compliment yesterday from a 95-year-old lady who I visited in the community she lives in a privately rented property, and she has to wait a week for some plumbing work to be done so she has been unable to use her washing machine. Her daughter doesn't live local, and the lady was getting herself worked up about not having clean clothes, so I took her washing and did it for her and returned it the next day, the lady was so thankful.

➤ **Integrated Community Equipment Services.**

I requested an urgent delivery of a bed to a palliative care gentleman in his 90's and asked if they could do the delivery first so we could transfer him with support of a care team. This was arranged for us by your wonderful team. Please say a big thank you to all your staff, we highly appreciate all their support, effort and kindness.

➤ **Learning Disability Team**

Thank you. You have been brilliant since taking over as our daughter's social worker. I know as a department that you are under tremendous pressure. So, it means even more to us that you got us over the line in the quickest timeline possible. You've been really diligent, and we can't thank you enough.

9.0 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 While complaints highlight where customers are dissatisfied with the services they have received, they are also beneficial in helping to develop lessons learned to improve services and ensure any mistakes are not repeated.
- 9.2 Examples of action taken in response to investigation findings to improve services:

Complaint	Lessons Learnt
<p>Delays in providing equipment. Complainant's daughter has profound multiple learning difficulties and is a wheelchair user. She needed a new Triton chair, but the order was not sent through, because the member of staff thought there was a chair in Stores that would be suitable. This was not acted on which cause significant delays.</p>	<p>Changes made to working practice. It is now standard practice that all chairs are ordered direct from the supplier once it has been authorised. Admin team will now record all dates that an action takes place on the customers record so there is a clear audit trail. Admin staff set follow up dates on the outlook system to check with the store staff for any equipment that is being checked. Each one passed through to stores is going to be flagged up with a red flag for admin to chase within a set number of days, i.e. 2 working days.</p>
<p>Incorrect information that led to being awarded the incorrect amount of carers personal budget.</p>	<p>All managers and practitioners have had refresher training related to carers personal budgets to prevent this happening in the future.</p>
<p>Did not know who to contact out of hours or in an emergency.</p>	<p>A 'useful numbers' section is now in all customer's files which is highlighted to customers during the initial assessment. A customer information leaflet has been created which covers all the services within the Intermediate Tier.</p>

10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Despite coming out of a global pandemic, staff remotely working, reduction in staff resources and an increase on services, the number / proportion of complaints received still remains relatively low.
- 10.2 Similarly, the number of concerns raised directly to Members of Parliament has remained stable.
- 10.3 Positively, only two cases escalated to the LGSCO has found fault with the Council.
- 10.4 The Director and Assistant Director meet fortnightly with the complaint coordinator. Details of all complaints, concerns and compliments are provided to monitor timescales, and to identify any trends and monitor any issues in order to support the complaints process.
- 10.5 The Council will continue to seek to learn from complaints, concerns and compliments raised with them. Complaints and compliments provide valuable information to the department on how well it is performing, where resources need to be used, and where improvements need to be made. Regular updates on timescales and quality of responses are shared with senior managers on a regular basis.

Bury
Council