

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE  
SERVICES**

**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS &  
COMPLIMENTS**

**APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023**

September 2023

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION**

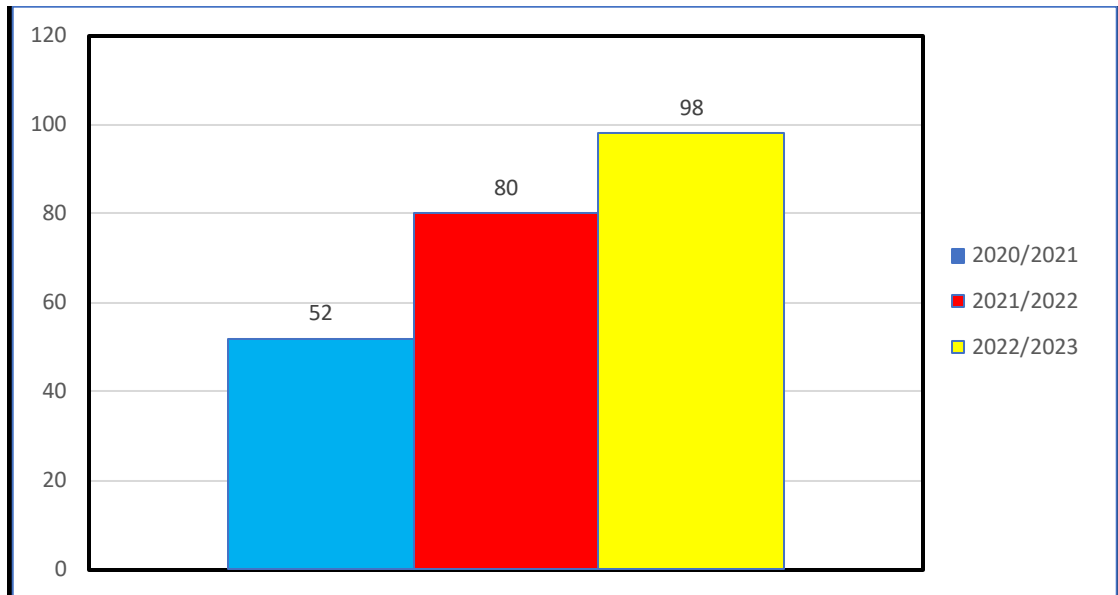
- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Complaints Report relating to Adult Social Care Complaints, received by the Corporate Core Department, Bury Council.
- 1.2 This report is to provide members of Health Scrutiny Committee with details of information relating to Adult Social Care Services.
- 1.3 The report relates to the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 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

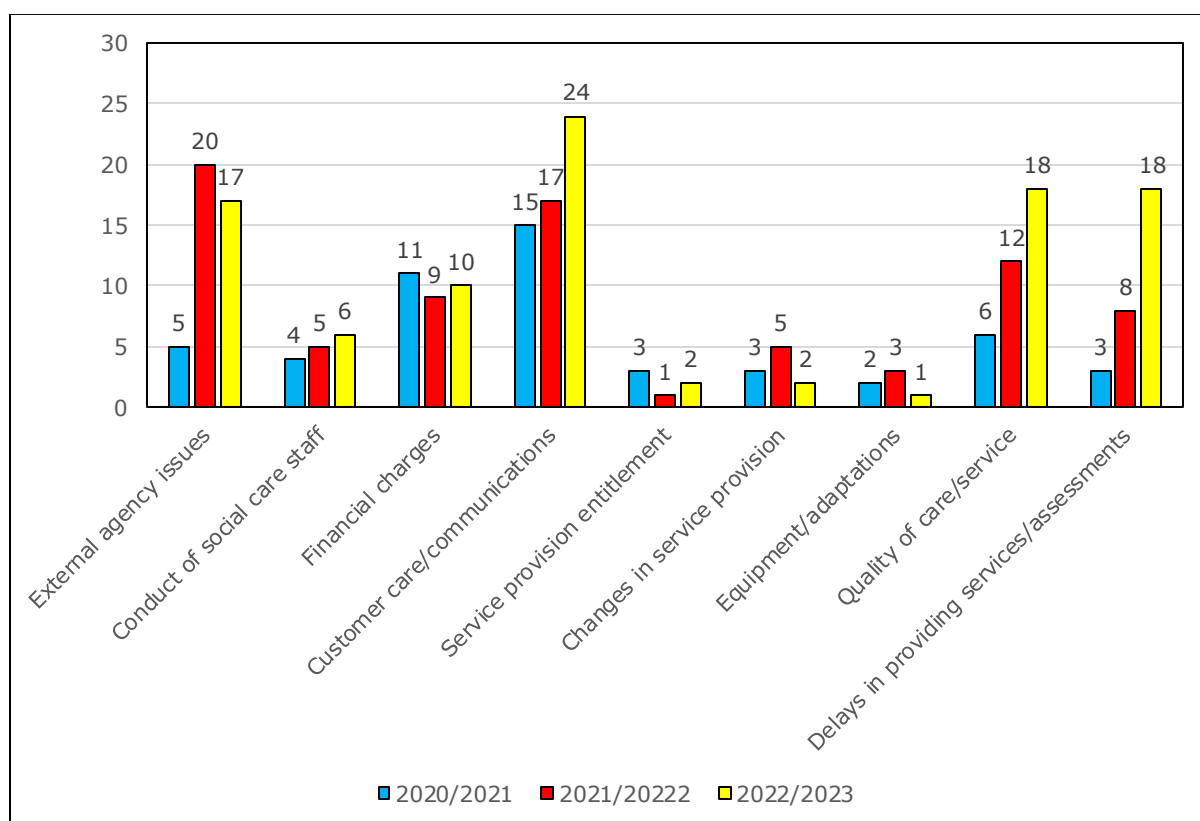
### 3.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS



- 3.1 The total number of complaints received in 2022/2023 has increased from the previous years.
- 3.2 The number of complaints received should 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 2022/2023 was 6,103. It is positive that the proportion of people wanting to make a complaint about the services received from the department is still relatively low at 98.
- 3.3 Out of the 98 complaints received, 15 complaints came back to the department to advise they remained dissatisfied, meaning 83 complaints were initially resolved. A further review of these complaints was carried out by a senior manager of the service.
- 3.4 As would be expected when dealing with complaints from predominantly vulnerable groups, a large number of complaints received are made by a family member, advocate or solicitor of a service user, rather than the service user themselves.

	Complaints raised by a service user	Complaints raised on behalf of a service user	%
<b>2020/2021</b>	52	33	63%
<b>2021/2022</b>	80	64	81%
<b>2022/2023</b>	98	63	64%

## 4.0 NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

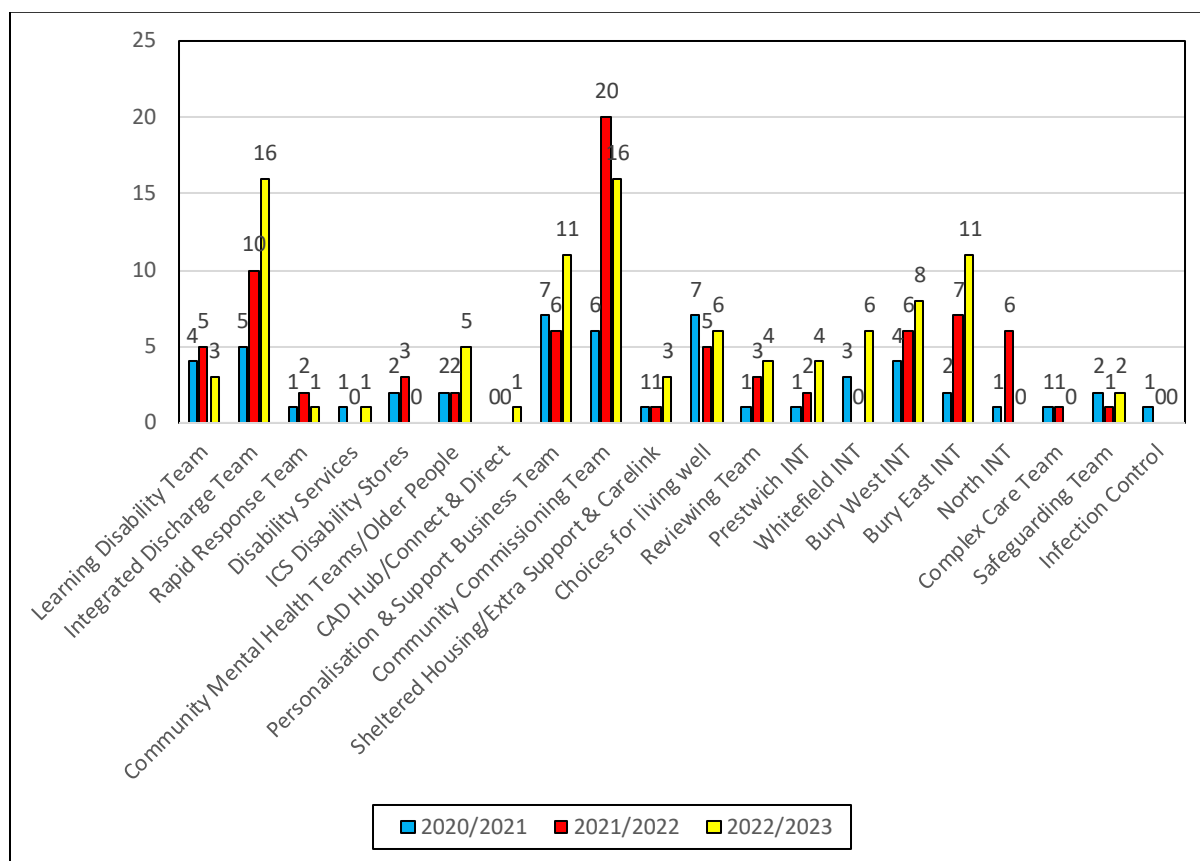


4.1 On the whole, the nature of complaints has shown no real noticeable increases. There has been a slight increase in complaints relating to 'customer care/communications' (from 17 to 24), and 'delays in providing services/assessments' (from 8 to 18), representing 70% & 44% increases respectively. As the department has emerged from the pandemic, we have seen the number of people waiting for an assessment from a social worker increase. The department is currently developing a programme to reduce the numbers waiting that will start in autumn 2023.

4.2 During the period 2022/2023 it has shown the number of complaints upheld/partially upheld has shown a slight decrease from the previous year 2021/2022. In all cases when complaints are received, learning is drawn from the comments received and the subsequent investigation.

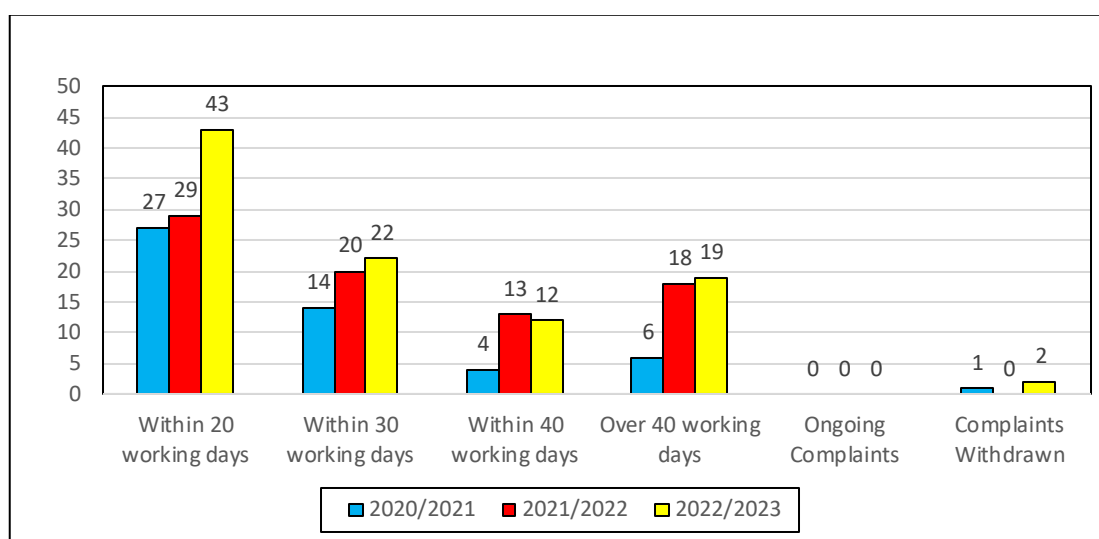
	Number of Complaints Received	Complaints Upheld / Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints Withdrawn
<b>2020/2021</b>	52	24 (47%)	27 (53%)	1
<b>2021/2022</b>	80	63 (79%)	17 (21%)	0
<b>2022/2023</b>	98	63 (66%)	33 (34%)	2

## 5.0 COMPLAINTS PER TEAM



- 5.1 In comparison the overall number of complaints within teams has remained steady.
- 5.2 The report has highlighted an increase from previous years in complaints for the Integrated Discharge Team and Personalisation & Support Business Team. It has also highlighted a slight increase in complaints from the previous year relating to Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, namely Whitefield INT and Bury East INT. Complaints for the Integrated Discharge Team and Personalisation and Business Support Team relate to charges for services. Rules relating to charging for adult social care returned to normal this year following a long period of care being provided free as part of the government's response to the pandemic and pandemic recovery. Confusion in the hospital systems resulted in miscommunication and a subsequent increase in complaints.
- 5.3 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.

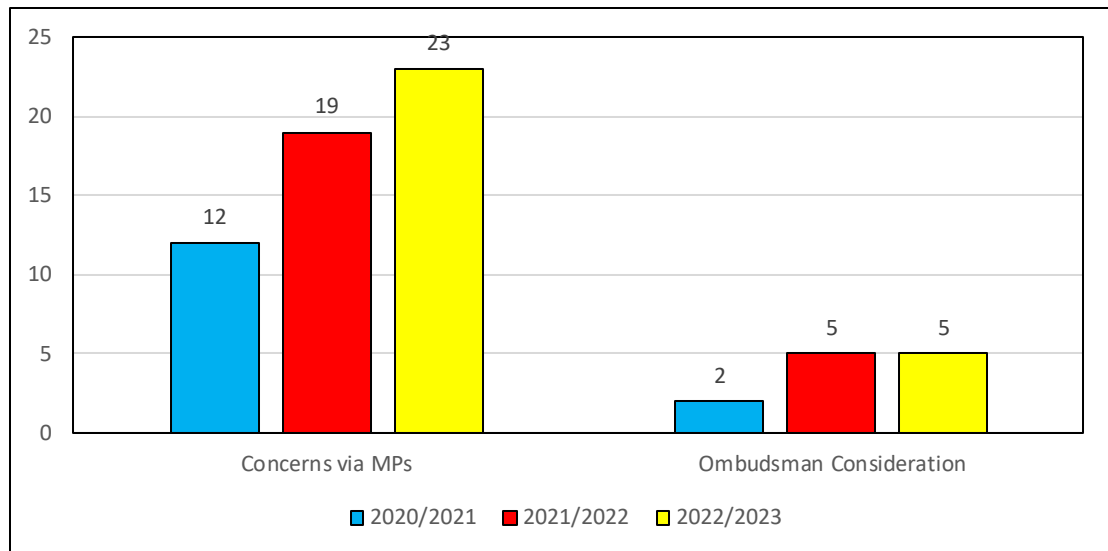
## 6.0 TIMESCALES



- 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2022/23, 43 of complaints were responded to within the 20 working day timescales, 22 of complaints were responded to outside of the 20 working day timescales, 12 of those were over 40 working days. Complaints responded to over 40 working days has remained steady from the previous year. 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 It is pleasing to see nearly half of the complaints received were responded to within 20 working days. Which is a significant improvement from the previous years.
- 6.5 Towards the end of the year The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's office will be carrying out a training session with key members of staff on effective complaint handling, how to investigate complaints, decision making and remedy recommendations. Previously sessions have been well received and had a positive impact, staff felt more confident when investigating and responding to complaints.
- 6.6 In the summer of 2023 a new Adult Social Care Complaints Policy will be launched, staff and service users will have access to this via Bury Council's Website.

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

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- 7.1 As has been previously mentioned, concerns raised on behalf of constituents by Members of Parliament are recorded separately. There has been a slight increase from 19 in 2021/2022 to 23 in 2022/2023.
- 7.2 The number of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has not increased and remained as the previous year of 5 cases in 2022/2023. It is positive that 95% of the complaints received were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant with only 5% remaining dissatisfied and approaching the LGSCO.
- 7.3 Of the five cases received the LGSCO closed one case after initial enquiries, as they could not add to the Council's response or make a different finding. On the other cases fault was found with recommended action to be taken in the form of a written apology and financial recompense.

## 8.0 COMPLIMENTS

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

Total number of Compliments received 2021/2022	Total number of Compliments received 2022/2023
515	601

Service Area	2021/2022	2022/2023
Integrated Hospital Discharge/Discharge to Assess Team	0	5
Choices for Living Well Intermediate Care, Reablement, Killelea, IMC @ Home	240	220
Sheltered Housing / Carelink / Support at Home	41	64
Integrated Community Equipment Services	11	59
Learning Disability Team	5	0
Older People's Community Mental Health Team	3	5
CAD Hub/Connect & Direct	4	1
Personalisation and Support Business Team	40	41
Rapid Response Team	44	57
Disability Services	65	58
Older Peoples Staying Well Team	31	52
Prestwich INT	1	3
Whitefield INT	0	6
Bury East INT	3	3
Bury North INT	2	6
Bury West INT	2	0
Integrated Commissioning Team	3	0
Reviewing Team	18	21
Bury Employment Support and Training	2	0
Safeguarding Team	1	0

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 a noticeable increase in compliments for the Integrated Community Equipment Services, Sheltered Housing/Carelink/Support at Home, Rapid Response Team, and Older Peoples Staying Well 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 feedback received from people receiving a service:

➤ **Discharge to Assess Team**

I wish to comment on the very able, and capable services provided to my husband during his stay at Heathlands! The team, including the physiotherapy personnel worked hard to achieve safety and quality of the rehabilitation of his complex needs, especially mobility. I would like to personally thank the social worker for all his professional help in the outcome.

I can truly commend and recommend the whole unit, as a very useful and necessary provision in the realms of health care and the national health service.

➤ **Choices for Living Well - Killelea IMC**

In this day and age, people are all too ready to criticise and complain when things go wrong, so it's gives me great pleasure to compliment the therapists from Killelea. They have both been absolutely brilliant, they have advanced me from not being able to walk to now walking with a walking stick in two weeks something I thought would take much longer. I cannot praise them highly enough.

➤ **Whitefield INT**

I just wanted to say a proper thank you for your help with my Mum. Your professionalism and genuine care for her has been so appreciated by me and the rest of the family.

The way you assessed the situation with mum at Heathlands and the advice you were able to offer really helped me understand Mum's needs and how to keep her safe.

I am totally happy with the decision to make Mum permanent at Heathlands and the nurse responsible for her and all the carers are so lovely with her. Many thanks once again for all your help.

➤ **Rapid Response Team**

Each and every one of the staff who have visited me, carers, physios, nurses have been excellent with me. They are caring, helpful and very friendly. They have advised me on caring for myself and without them I would not be in the position I am today. Much more mobile. Thank you everyone.

➤ **Choices for Living Well – Reablement Team**

Of all my NHS related services I have received since my fall, this was by far the best. All carers were helpful, cheerful, and seemed to love their work. I have improved so much in the last few weeks with this wonderful help.

➤ **Choices for Living Well – IMC at Home**

I was extremely lucky to have someone so caring to teach me how to walk again after hip surgery. I cannot suggest any improvements to such a wonderful service and physio instructor.

➤ **North INT**

The professionalism and dedication from the social worker were second to none. She listened and was realistic with the package of care which has significantly impacted upon the wellbeing of my daughter.

➤ **Older Peoples Staying Well Team**

Just a message to say a very big thank you for all the work you have done on behalf of my Mum. We are quite astounded at how much you have managed to achieve in such a short space of time!! She's especially pleased with her new steps & handrails which now means she can access outside safely. Many thanks for your help, patience and understanding, it is greatly appreciated by us both.

➤ **Personalisation and Support Team**

I really wanted to say thank you for everything you have done. You have been a great help throughout what was a difficult time. You have answered all my questions, you have shown empathy, you have delivered on your promises, and you have done it all without hesitation. I cannot thank you enough. You have been an absolute god send. I will be forever grateful.

➤ **Integrated Discharge Team**

Feedback from family members re hospital discharge support following a very difficult discharge. Just had a phone call from the daughter of a patient that was discharged yesterday. She wanted to say that the social care officer was indeed right with her assessment and wanted to say a massive thanks for all her commitment and hard work. She said that we do an amazing hard job and just wanted to make sure that she knew that it was appreciated.

➤ **Older People's Mental Health Team**

I just wanted to let you know how amazing the social worker is and how she has assisted my parents. For months now she has been at the end of the phone when they or I needed her. There have been a couple of situations where my mum has needed to contact her, and she is always there to give advice and help.

She goes above and beyond which shows she really cares about the people she looks after. Nothing is ever too much trouble, and I can't put into words the amount of help she has given us. I will never be able to repay her for all the emotional and practical support she has given and continues to give to my parents and myself. Dedicated staff deserve to be recognised, and I just wanted you to know what a special person she is. Truly 'An angel without wings'

➤ **Integrated Community Equipment Services**

The service received over the last few weeks has been amazing, from calling to arrange deliveries, from staff delivering and removing. Immeasurable support at a very hard time in our journey with mum. Thank you.

➤ **Carelink**

Customer fell last night suffering a head injury. Her son telephoned and wanted to pass on his thanks to the duty controller for her prompt actions in contacting son and requesting an ambulance. He was very complimentary of both the duty controller and the service.

➤ **Support at Home**

Number of compliments received from the tenants at Moorfield re the darts evening and sandwiches that had been arranged. The tenants really enjoyed it, it started at 7.30pm and went on till 11pm, the tenants are now going to have a darts evening weekly.

➤ **Reviewing Team**

I'd like to say how much we appreciated your visit, she was resistant to, and anxious about a visit from a Social Worker, but you really put her mind at rest. She told us, after your visit, that she felt included in all decisions and believes that you have her best interests at heart. That is massive for us.

Thank you too for all the information you gave us. My sister, who is Mum's main carer is happy with the plan and reassured that more support is at hand.

Throughout the visit you had a positive and respectful attitude, please pass on to your manager how pleased we all were!

## 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
Communication regarding discharge procedures.	<p>The team have been reminded of the importance of communicating with key family members.</p> <p>Improvements made to documentation to make it much easier to identify any nominated family members, ensuring it is documented who to liaise with on their behalf or keep updated on any developments relating to their stay.</p> <p>At quality monthly meeting experience discussed with senior management. The current discharge process has been reviewed to ensure our systems are robust enough to avoid this happening again.</p> <p>All staff will be reminded in the next team meeting of the importance of clear communication with patients and family members to ensure that a smooth transfer of care takes place.</p> <p>Across the service we will be developing documentation to ensure that key contacts for each customer is identifiable.</p>
Fall and missing items of equipment following a respite stay.	<p>All staff reminded of the importance of completing full incident reports where a customer falls or staff support the customer to the floor to avoid a fall.</p> <p>Increase spot checks and observations of night staff.</p> <p>Label and photograph all equipment brought in by customers.</p> <p>Implement new care management system to provide managers with greater oversight of incidents and time stamped activities.</p>
Not receiving actual care hours specified on care plan.	<p>Carried out a review of care at home providers actual contact time against the planned time. This will ensure we are able to monitor where calls are potentially being rushed in order to reduce these issues occurring in the future.</p>

## **10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

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- 10.1 Despite an increase on service demand, 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 five cases escalated to the LGSCO out of 98 complaints.
- 10.4 The Council will continue to seek to learn from complaints, concerns and compliments raised with them.
- 10.5 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. Details of all complaints, concerns and compliments are provided to senior officers on a monthly basis, enabling them to identify any trends or issues within the services they are responsible for.

Bury  
Council