



# **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2018 / 2019**

***August 2019***

**SOCIAL SERVICES  
REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS 2018/19**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and relates to representations and complaints received by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate regarding services and support provided by Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

Social Services Authorities are required to maintain a procedure for considering complaints and representations (comments and compliments). Any member of the public, including a child who has received or was entitled to receive a service from social services may make a complaint. The purpose of this report is to provide a review and statistical analysis of the complaints, comments and compliments received by Social Services during the reporting period.

This is the fourth Annual Report relating to representations and complaints received by the Directorate which have been handled in accordance with the revised Welsh Government Complaint Guidelines "A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services" which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014. The guidance supports the implementation of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. The Regulations introduced a new two stage process which replaced the previous three stages and also brings the process for social services into line with the NHS Complaints Procedure.

## 2. SUMMARY OF THE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**"A Guide to handling complaints and representations by local authority social services" (Welsh Government).**

**Stage 1 – Local Resolution:** As with the previous guidelines, particular emphasis is placed upon swift resolution of the majority of complaints. An offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant must therefore be made to attempt to resolve matters. This discussion must take place within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement of the complaint. Where this approach leads to mutually acceptable resolution, the local authority must write to the complainant with details of the terms of the resolution within 5 working days of the date on which the complaint or representation was resolved.

**Stage 2 – Formal Investigation:** Appointment of an Independent Investigator is made and, as with the previous guidelines an Independent Person must also be appointed to oversee the investigation process (children's complaints). Collaborative arrangements have now been established (on a reciprocal basis) with neighbouring Local Authorities to share staff to undertake investigations

The Investigation must be completed and a full written response issued to the complainant within 25 working days. Where this is not possible, the Authority must write to the complainant to explain the reason for the delay and ensure the response is issued as soon as possible and no later than 6 months from the date of receipt of the complaint.

### 3. THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Where complainants have exhausted the complaints procedure, the complainant has the right to refer their concern for consideration by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales provides an external independent service for the purpose of considering complaints made by members of the public in relation to all local authority services, including social services. The Public Services Ombudsman also has jurisdiction to examine and determine complaints of injustice as a result of maladministration on the part of the local authority.

The Ombudsman will normally require complainants to have sought redress, in the first instance, via the local authority's complaints procedure prior to accepting and investigating a complaint of maladministration on the part of the local authority.

During 2018/19, four complaints were received by the Public Services Ombudsman's Office, two of which related to Children's Social Care, one in respect of Adult Social Care and one relating to Finance (Non-Residential Charges). The Public Services Ombudsman decided not to investigate the four complaints but made recommendations for the Adults and Childrens Social Care complaints, which the Local Authority agreed and implemented the recommended actions by way of early settlement.

### 4. MEMBER REFERRALS

The Representations and Complaints Procedure does not preclude the right of an individual to approach their Local Councillor, Assembly Member or Member of Parliament. They undertake an important role in handling concerns and queries that individual constituents may have. Collectively, these are called Member referrals and can range from comments and queries to complaints.

If an elected Member considers it to be inappropriate to deal with a concern, the matter can be referred for consideration under the Complaints Procedure. With effect from 2017 only those referrals received from Elected Members have been recorded by Democratic Services. Cabinet Members may liaise with Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to complete referrals but this data is no longer recorded.

During 2018/19, Member referrals were received as follows:-

**Table A**

<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>Adult Social Care</b>
Wellbeing: Adult Social Care	61
Wellbeing: Children's Social Care	27
<b>Total</b>	

### 5. ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

In addition to receiving comments and compliments from service users and their relatives/carers, the Directorate also issues a range of feedback questionnaires from across service areas. A cross-section of the feedback generated from user/carer feedback surveys undertaken during 2018/19 is set out below:-

## Adult Social Care:

The Homecare survey is forwarded to all people who have accessed a Local Authority Domiciliary Care Service and have an active Care and Support Plan. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, 124 surveys were distributed, 49 were returned completed (39.5%). 96% of respondents confirmed they were either very/quite satisfied with the service they receive. General comments provided include:-

“The homecare team are the best carers I have been with. They make me feel safe and comfortable also I can confide in them and we also have a laugh together. I would not change them.”

“Sometimes there are a lot of different people coming to my dad’s house which causes him confusion as he has Alzheimer’s”

“Since using your care team I would recommend them fully. Girls are friendly, helpful and caring and treat my mum with respect and kindness every time...It has made a massive impact to use your care system as we get to spend quality time with our mum. Very satisfied with everything they do.”

The Bridgestart service provides short term (usually 6 weeks) personal care to service users in their homes. 100% of respondents indicated that the service they received was very good. Comments provided include:-

“The service received has been exemplary. I only wish it could continue with the same people. Every one of those carers we have met are all absolutely brilliant and a pleasure to know them. We will miss the service sorely.”

“Generally very good, sometimes turned up a little bit later.”

“I can only praise the service for everything it’s done for me and my wife to keep me independent. I came out of hospital not walking and now I can use the bathroom independently and walk again.”

The Bridgeway service provides an enabling service for people with dementia and their families, comments include:-

““To all at Bridgeway, many thanks for all your help with mum. She has improved with all the care you have given and she will miss you all coming in.”

“...Would you please thank the carers who were so good looking after my father and mother... Their kindness and consideration was much appreciated....Thank you so much.”

The Reablement Service provides support to service users usually following hospital admission to help them regain their independence to remain living in their own home. Comments received on feedback questionnaires include:-

“I have been asked for comments about the service provided to me by the Reablement Team. I am pleased to say that I find myself with absolutely nothing vaguely like a cause for complaint. The care that I’ve received has been far beyond my expectations. Every member of the team has shown me compassion, courtesy and co-operation at an amazing level, and I am only sorry that I shall lose contact with all of these exceptional people. My thanks and best wishes go to every member of the team.”

“This team provides a service up and beyond our expectations. We have no complaints at all. Please allow funding for this very important service.”

Telecare/Mobile Response: Provides a support service within the home (also in emergency situations), via use of wireless technology and sensors/pendant buttons. The Early Response Service links into the 24/7 mobile personal care service provided as part of the Telecare service and provides emergency assistance to service users in their home. Comments received about the service include:-

"I spoke to 'X's daughter today and while we were on the phone she was singing the praises of the MRT, especially the people who came to her rescue in the early hours of Friday last week when her mum fell out of bed."

"I wanted to pass onto you feedback about the service from Mrs 'X'. Although Mr 'X' has never had to use the service the re-assurance of having the service has been a huge help to Mrs 'X' as it was getting to a point where the worry of him having a fall and the worry of her having to try pick him up on her own was making her ill. She said it is a fantastic service and well worth the £5.28 per week. I thanked her for her feedback and told her I would pass this onto the team."

Contract Monitoring and Commissioning:

Rota Visits to residential care settings and other services have been undertaken by Elected Members (including independent providers). Members' observations included:-

Adult Residential Homes:

Danygraig House: "We spoke to a number of residents and some visiting relatives all of whom were very happy with the service they were receiving...The Home was clean and tidy and smelt fresh with rooms well decorated and equipped. There were no obvious concerns other than the tv in the main lounge is possibly too small for the size of the room...A first class home. This is where I want to stay when it's my turn!"

Anwen Care Home: "This is quite an impressive home. We spoke to residents and relatives all of whom were complimentary about the treatment and service received...The Manageress gave an example of an ambulance responding...being unable to find the premises there being no road sign to the Home. She therefore requested a directional sign be placed on the main road...A referral has been submitted."

Brocastle Manor Nursing Home: "... 'X' gave us a tour of the facility and left us to speak to the residents and staff privately as necessary. Every indication was of happy residents and staff...The building was in excellent condition with new fire doors being fitted and redecorating throughout. This is the first Home I have visited with a bar for its residents!! Marvellous!"

Oaklands Residential Home: "...Most of the 17 residents were still assembled in the largest of the two lounges, having been involved in the morning activities, and were awaiting to go into the dining room for lunch, the menus are all worked out on the needs of the individuals...The Home is clean and tidy, warm, airy and comfortable and there is an ongoing programme of planned refurbishment...The Home also receives visits from other community groups that provide entertainment and additional socialisation for the residents..."

Heathfields Residential Home: "Heathfields is a busy/full residential home. Clean and tidy, well maintained. We met several residents and chatted openly. They are content and well catered for. They expressed they like living there and the staff were helpful."

## Adult Social Care - Advocacy Arrangements

Following a successful Hub & Spoke Pilot Scheme, Bridgend fully commissioned 'Bridgend Voice & Choice' (BVC) in July 2018 as its Statutory Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) service. To March 2019 the BVC Advocacy Hub received 180+ contacts for information, signposting and referral. The IPA service reported 79 Individuals receiving advocacy support with 145 separate issues (cases). The BVC service convened its first Bridgend Advocacy Network meeting with wider stakeholders and continues to work with the national Golden Thread Advocacy Programme to develop robust reporting of outcomes for people using the advocacy service.

### Children's Social Care:

Rota visits are undertaken by Elected Members to the Department's residential homes (children's), following which a report is submitted which focusses on the quality of care provided to service users. Feedback for visits undertaken during this reporting period included:-

Sunnyside Pant Morfa: "It was clear until the last 2/3 years there had been issues with the 'statement of purpose' for this premises in respect of the level of need identified for the young person qualifying for a place at the home, this appears now to have been resolved...Before we left one of the residents returned from school, we were able to have a brief conversation with him...he made no complaints...The staff whom we met appeared to have a high level of job satisfaction supported by the fact that each had been working at the home for a number of years and still enjoying the work. Task (1) Update staff as to remodelling (2) Install Wi-Fi."

Bakers Way (Short Stay Unit): "...We were shown around the building by a group of very helpful staff...we were shown the range of specialist equipment need to meet the needs of the young people who they accommodated...there were 4 young people staying at the unit...we were shown the outdoor play area and noted that some of the play equipment needs replacing and that a grass banking needs to be removed to improve the play area..."

Maple Tree House: "I was extremely pleased to see the improvements that have been made since our last visit. The building is far more homely and welcoming and it's clear a lot of time and effort has been spent on the improvements. The changes clearly consider and should improve the wellbeing of children and staff."

### Children's Social Care – Advocacy Arrangements

Tros Gynnal Plant continued to deliver the regional advocacy service covering Bridgend and following the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy. The number of CYP referred to advocacy support for the year was 228, with 186 cases being supported to conclusion in the period. Of these 2 young people were supported to make informal complaints with 5 young people being supported with cases against the Council. The new Active Offer of advocacy is becoming established starting with 2 Active Offer sessions delivered in the first quarter and 34 Active Offers delivered in the last quarter of the year. This year also saw Bridgend preparing to move from Western Bay to Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The regional change required BCBC to join a regional procurement for advocacy which was concluded in early 2019 with the new service starting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

## Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 - National Performance Framework:

As part of the National performance framework (in line with their duties under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014), Local Authorities are required to collect qualitative information annually about people who use their Social Care Services. This data is to be collected locally and provided nationally to the Welsh Government in relation to the provision of care and support. Surveys were sent out in October 2018 and a range of questions were asked relative to services and support provided to adults, children, parents and carers. Results were as follows:-

Adults: A total of 1352 questionnaires were despatched to adults (over 18 years), 406 were returned, a response rate of 30%. Some of the comments received include:

"Initially I thought it was going somewhere but now because of a policy I receive almost nothing."
"The care workers have been excellent."
"So thankful to everyone who made it possible for Picton Court to become my care home - so appreciate everyone."
"Still waiting on things that I have asked my social worker to do."
"On the whole, the carers are kind, helpful but sometimes they have been in a rush to get in and get out."

Carers: A total of 48 questionnaires were despatched to adults (over 18 years), 15 were returned, a response rate of 31%. Comments received include the following:

"Very often carer's views & opinions are brushed aside even though they know the person they are caring for best. This can result in the carer & care being unnecessarily traumatised."
"Social Services, Dementia support and the staff in the home are my rocks."
"Following the very comprehensive Carers assessment carried out by Bridgend Carers Centre ( which was never suggested to me by any of the care services and which I sought out myself on a Carers stand in the local hospital ) I feel supported to continue my caring role for my Elderly Father who has Dementia. But in relation to supporting our son who has a serious and enduring Mental Health diagnosis. The information and support has been non-existent. Again it is only as I am able to source 3rd sector support through services such as Hafal I have been able to cope."

Children: A total of 460 questionnaires were despatched to children (age 7-17 years), 51 were returned, a response rate of 11%. Some of the comments received include:

"It's great here and I wouldn't go anywhere else if I had to be moved! ...They are always happy which makes me happy."
"Auntie 'X' does not smack me or shout at me and call me names or shut me in my room all day."
"They treat me like their own, love them to bits."
"Some people around where I live are horrible and rude, specially the kids around here!"
"Everyone in my house. I feel safe with and enjoy their company."



Parents: A total of 340 questionnaires were despatched to parents, 19 were returned, response rate of 6%. Some of the comments provided included:-

“Not at all. The service is not fit for purpose, never has been. We have never met the social worker, no one has kept us informed. There will be a full complaint going in there is/ has been no plan. For any support no meeting to discharge us from your services.”

“Following the involuntary separation of my children and myself, grateful for the contact SS is facilitating. Unhappy that my children's wishes and feelings are not being respected. Unhappy that it hasn't been recognised how adaptable and resilient the children have been to an aggressively different parenting style and how well they have coped with the tragic loss of their family. They are a credit to themselves and to the parenting they have received in their earlier years. SS has shown no insight into narcissist relationship and offered no support to me in reply to my request for parenting course. SS has not asked themselves how to fulfil the children's wish to reunite with me. Communication has not been satisfactory. Am grateful for the opportunity to express these views and would like to continue the communication for the benefit of the children.”

Overall a total of 491 responses were received.

## 6. STATISTICAL INFORMATION 2018/2019

### Number of Representations Received and Timescales

**Table 1**

<b>No. Representations Received Statutory Complaints Procedure – April 2018 to March 2019</b>			
		<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Compliments/Comments</b>
<b>Adult Social Care</b>		*19	149
<b>Children's Social Care</b>		17	29
<b>Business Support /Finance</b>		2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	38	183
	<b>Stage 2</b>	**3 (ASC) 0 (CS)	

\*\* (2 x consent not provided, unable to progress complaints)

\*\* (1 x st 2 complaint subsequently withdrawn)

**Timescales:** 100% Stage 1 complaints were resolved within the prescribed timescale of 10 working days.

**Timescales:** All Stage 1 complaints were acknowledged in writing within 2 working days of the date of their receipt. 100% were resolved within the prescribed timescale of 10 working days and written responses provided within 5 working days of the date of resolution. There were no complaints received outside the 12 month time limit for investigation.

## **Complaints Resolved Informally (pre-Complaints Procedure Stage 1)**

Bridgend County Borough Council complaints processes have, for a number of years, involved successful early resolution of complaints wherever possible. Recently, the new Complaint Guidelines emphasise that the complaints process will provide for a more straightforward and citizen centred approach. Swift and effective complaints handling is also encouraged with an expectation that the majority of complaints and representations should be resolved by Local Resolution.

Complaints staff therefore undertake a significant amount of work liaising with managers to identify and agree swift resolutions to the satisfaction of the complainant (by the end of the working day following the day on which the complaint was made).

**Table 2**

<b>No. Complaints Resolved prior to invoking the formal Complaints Procedure(s) 2018/2019</b>	
	2018/19
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	54
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	152
<b>Business/Finance Support</b>	2
<b>Commissioned Services</b>	26
<b>Total:</b>	<b>234</b>

Statistics reflect that the Directorate has continued to achieve an early resolution for complainants. The number of complaints resolved by this approach increased again in 2018/19 compared to previous years, 198 in 2017/18 and 187 in 2016/17.

## **Corporate Complaints Procedure**

There are instances whereby aspects of a complaint do not fall within the remit of the social services statutory complaints procedure and, in these instances, the Authority's Corporate Complaints Procedure is utilised. 41 complaints were received which were deemed appropriate to be addressed in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Procedure during 2018/19. Nine related to Adult Social Care, 31 to Children's Social Care and 1 related to Business/Finance Support.

## **Total Representations Received 2018/19**

The total number of representations received in relation to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care is as follows:-

**Table 3**

<b>2018/19 - Total No. Representations Handled via:</b>	
<b>Complaints Resolved at pre-Complaints stage</b>	234
<b>Statutory Social Services Complaints (St 1 &amp; St 2)</b>	41
<b>Corporate Complaints</b>	41
<b>Ombudsman</b>	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>320</b>

The total number of complaints (Stage 1 and Stage 2) received and addressed in accordance with the Statutory Complaints Procedure by Social Services during

2018/2019 was 41 compared with 26 in 2017/18. The number of people receiving a service from Adult Social Care during the reporting period was 5769 and 2222 from Children’s Social Care.

### **Complaint Outcomes (Statutory)**

Complaint outcomes are identified within the categories: Upheld, Partially Upheld and Not Upheld. Outcomes for each service area have been recorded during 2018/19 as follows:-

**Table 4 – Complaint Outcomes (St. 1 - Statutory Complaints Procedure)**

<b>2018/19</b>	<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>Children’s Social Care</b>	<b>Business /Finance Support</b>
Not Upheld	2	7	-
Partially Upheld	10	7	1
Upheld	7	3	1

(2 x consent not provided, unable to progress complaints)

(1 x st 2 complaint withdrawn)

### **NATURE OF COMPLAINTS**

The nature of complaints received varied and included:-

**Table 5**

<b>2018/19 – Most Common Complaints Received</b>
Quality / Level of Service / Standard of Care
Lack of / Poor Communication
Disagreement with Assessment / Care Plan
Unacceptable Delays
Poor advice / misinformation
Staff attitude / conduct
Policy / Procedure Non-compliance
Missed / Late Appointments / Times of Visits
Charges for Care Services
Disagreement with Policy / Procedure

## **7. HOW COMPLAINTS WERE RESOLVED and LESSONS LEARNED**

A variety of methods were used to resolve complaints, including:-

- Liaison by complaints officers with senior managers to identify/agree immediate/informal resolution;
- Meetings by senior officers with complainants to discuss/resolve their concerns;
- Provision of explanation of reasons for decisions (verbal and/or written);
- Provision of an apology (written), where appropriate;
- Corrective actions, e.g. change of decisions, review of procedures;
- Reassessment (independent);
- Advocacy services/support;
- Independent investigation;
- Staff training (E:learning).

Key lessons learned during 2018/19 were as follows:-

**Table 6**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Lessons Learned/Actions Implemented</b>
<p><b>Adult Social Care:</b> Telecare/Emergency Response</p>	<p>A new protocol has been introduced with the Team which requires staff to ask callers to repeat the address back to the Call monitoring centre to check/ensure they have the right details.</p>
<p><b>Adult Social Care:</b> Residential Settings</p>	<p>Detailed Action Plan developed and actions introduced across Adults Residential settings, including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of key proforma documents to equip carers with the ability to better record/evidence they have followed special requirements e.g. diabetic, prompts to service users to complete personal tasks such as oral hygiene;</li> <li>• Aid Carers to ensure they record all their concerns to avoid confusion or doubt in the future;</li> <li>• Review of Resident's Property Form;</li> <li>• Staff to complete a Body Map on admission to record whether existing or no pressure areas;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children's Social Care:</b> Child Protection</p>	<p>Review of process for despatch of Child Protection Conference Minute and Reports completed. Actions identified to prevent data breaches.</p>
<p><b>Children's Social Care:</b> Care Planning Process</p>	<p>Review of the design of key proforma documents used in the care planning process, particularly in respect of documents not having the provision to show key information such as dates, names and designations, when printed off the system.</p>

### **Welsh Language Standards**

There have been no complaints received during this reporting period that have been communicated via the medium of Welsh.

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards all complaints publicity material, including leaflets and the complaints website have been translated and are readily available in the medium of Welsh. Complaints staff have also attended basic Welsh Language training.

## Compliments

Compliments are regarded as important information which can be used to identify good practice. All compliments are therefore recorded centrally and details provided in management reports. As mentioned above, 183 compliments were recorded during 2018/19, a selection of which are set out below:-

**Table 7**

<b>Compliments - Adult Social Care:</b>
Glyncynffig: "To the bestest staff in the world! Just want to say a massive thank you from the bottom of my heart to all of you for all your help and support, you're all amazing! I've lived with many groups of staff over these past 15 years and I can honestly say you're all the best. I love you all so much and I am gonna miss you all very much! but will definitely be back to see you all!"
CRT Reablement: "I am pleased to say that I find myself with absolutely nothing vaguely like a cause for complaint. The care that I've received has been far beyond my expectations. Every member of the team has shown me compassion, courtesy and co-operation at an amazing level, and I am only sorry that I shall lose contact with all of these exceptional people. My thanks and best wishes go to every member of the team."
Common Access Point: "Huge thanks 'X' for all your help with dad which has been most appreciated. Thank you especially for your patience when helping me sometimes over hours on the phone orienteer around what has been one of the saddest and most confusing times for me and for assisting me when I have felt overwhelmed by the reality of dad's illness. I am extremely grateful and I know you do a very challenging job with grace and sensitivity for the people you come into contact with. Many thanks..."
Better@Home: "I am very grateful for the wonderful support and assistance received from the excellent carers. All of whom were very kind and very knowledgeable – able to advise and greatly improve my confidence."
Older People Mental Health: "Firstly, on behalf of all of the family thank you for all of your help over the years. I really believe that it is thanks to all of you and Bridgend County Borough Council is the reason Mum is so comfortable and indeed still in her own home. I am sure 'X' will take on your role with the same professionalism we have come to respect from the team and I look forward to meeting her... I wish you all the best in your new role.."
Community Learning Disability Team: "I was having a catch up with 'X's sister yesterday...She could not speak highly enough of the support the family have received and continue to receive from you which she feels is over and above anything she has experienced before. She talked about how you have made this process so much easier for them at what has been an incredibly difficult and stressful time...Thanks for all your support to the team, we couldn't have asked for more."
Ty Penybont: "A little message to say how much I enjoyed my experience with all the staff and service users at Ty Penybont! I felt very welcome and comfortable working with yourselves in such a friendly environment. I feel this experience will benefit me throughout my career in nursing. Thank you all for your time and effort throughout this week's learning experience. It's been a pleasure working alongside you all. Thank you."
Mobile Response Team: "I wanted to pass onto you feedback about the service from Mrs 'X'. Although Mr 'X' has never had to use the service the re-assurance of having the service has been a huge help to Mrs 'X' as it was getting to a point where the worry of him having a fall and the worry of her having to try pick him up on her own was making her ill. She said it is a fantastic service and well worth the

£5.28 per week. I thanked her for her feedback and told her I would pass this onto the team.”
<b>Compliments – Children’s Social Care:</b>
MASH/Assessment Team: Compliment received from the Mental Health Tribunal regarding the social worker for the case. The Tribunal found X’s evidence to be comprehensive and carefully considered. The social worker was an impressive witness.
Disabled Childrens Team: “X has now developed a number of new skills and is happy and relaxed in his new home – the social worker has been a fantastic advocate for X’.
North Safeguarding Team: “You have had X’s best interests at the centre of your practice which is reflected in the time and effort that you invest into him with you always seeking the best possible outcomes for him.”
Fostering Team: “They have gone over and above in securing a placement for ‘X’ and in agreeing on-going contact as part of his plan’.
East Safeguarding Team: Compliment in respect of the standard of a Section 7 Report for Court – “the social worker had undertaken a thorough assessment of the children and her analysis is detailed and well documented.”
East Safeguarding Team: “I have been appreciative of all the work you’ve done on this case given how complex the issues have been. This has helped achieve the FAO which will make a difference to ‘X’.”
<b>Compliments - Business Support/Finance:</b>
Safeguarding: “Thank you both for all you have done to assist ‘X’ over the years...”
Residential Charging: “...I spoke to ‘x’ in the residential team and we have reached a decision on the costs of Mums attendance, so I was well pleased with that. I would like to say a special thanks to ‘x’, actually, as he has been very good with me, as you have been also, thanks. Both of you showing a warm, caring, but professional attitude...”

## 8. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK – THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The rate of return by complainants of completed questionnaires has been very poor over a number of years, with those making comments tending to focus upon the outcome of their complaint, as opposed to their experience of using the complaints procedure. Questionnaires were not despatched during this reporting period as a review of how best to engage with complainants to obtain their views is planned.

## 9. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018/2019

Achievements during 2018/19 include:-

- Complaints staff have encouraged and worked closely with managers/staff to aim to resolve complaints locally and as swiftly as possible. This is reflected in the high number of complaints resolved at the pre-complaints stage (**Table 2**);
- There was a 27% increase in the total number of complaints handled during the period compared to 2018/19.

- 100% of the Stage 1 statutory complaints were resolved and responded to within the statutory timescale;
- On-line complaint information has been updated and included on the Local Authority's website. The information is also available in the medium of Welsh;
- Complaints information has been uploaded, reviewed and kept up-to-date on the Dewis Cymru Information database. The Dewis Cymru website provides a single point of access to information about wellbeing in Wales. The website can be accessed by members of the public as well as social care professionals across Wales.

## **10. OBJECTIVES FOR 2019/2020**

Plans for 2019/20 include:-

- Continue to encourage and work with managers/staff to aim to resolve complaints locally and as swiftly as possible;
- Continue to monitor Stage One timescale compliance rates;
- Work with ICT to develop the use of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) to record an report on complaints;
- The Complaints Awareness E:learning module developed in 2015/16 (aimed at new and existing staff employed by the Directorate) has had a low staff take-up. Consideration will therefore be given to inclusion of this Module within the Social Services Induction Programme to ensure that all new starters complete it;
- Commence/complete the development of the E:Learning module "Managing Complaints Effectively" (aimed at managers responsible for investigating and responding to complaints).
- Undertake a review of how best to engage with complainants to obtain their views about their experience of using the complaints procedure.

## **11. EQUALITIES**

A screening for equality impact has been carried out in relation to the representation and complaints procedure. There is no negative impact on the protected equality characteristics.

There have been no complaints received during the reporting period in relation to the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure.

**Report prepared for Susan Cooper  
Statutory Director of Social Services  
By the Complaints & Quality Manager  
August 2019**

