



BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 / 2020

October 2020

**SOCIAL SERVICES
REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS 2019/20**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 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 fifth 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 1st 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 2019/2020, nine complaints were received by the Public Services Ombudsman's Office, two of which related to Children's Social Care, six in respect of Adult Social Care and one relating to Finance. The Public Services Ombudsman decided not to investigate the nine complaints but made recommendations for the Adults and Childrens Social Care complaints, which the Local Authority agreed and implemented.

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 2019/20, Member referrals were received as follows:-

Table A

2019/2020	Adult Social Care
Wellbeing: Adult Social Care and Wellbeing	90
Wellbeing: Children's Social Care	32
Total	122

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 2019/2020 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 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 118 surveys were distributed, 42 were returned completed (35.6%).**

General comments provided include:-

<p>The care team that X has are very helpful, kind and help her with a lot of things and listen to her when she is upset. They are a great team and we are very happy with them. I am X's friend, who also looks after her and the team always keep me informed if they have any worries about her or concerns.</p>
<p>Couldn't wish for better carers. The two I have coming regular are kind and thoughtful.</p>
<p>I have nothing but praise for the carers who attend to my husband, they treat him with respect, understanding and empathy, at all times they protect his dignity. His communication is very poor, the carers take time to try and understand him. To him he says they are his angels. A big thank you.</p>
<p>The team is incredible. The carers are so friendly and amiable. I hear my mother laughing with them and that is a joy! She did not want carers- this is brilliant. They have made a massive difference to my 'free time' and quality of life and that of my mother. They make a point of getting to know the family they are working with and show genuine interest in them. I cannot praise them enough. Wonderful. Committed. Honest. Professional. Thank you!!</p>
<p>I don't know how I would manage without them</p>
<p>The service we get from the Home Care ladies is 1st class, and from the ladies we contact in the office. The one thing I would down mark is the organising of the service, it seems to be quite a shambles. i.e. team continuity, and times of visits. I know these things change through sickness and holidays, but other things must be changing for it to be as bad as it is.</p>
<p>The home care service has been very helpful and the particular home carers I have has have been most diligent and patient with me. Their support for me and my wife (who is my carer) is greatly appreciated. They showed understanding and respect together with some humour when carrying out their duties in my care. The system of change over from council to private agency is flawed and needs reviewing to take in the wishes of a dementia/Alzheimer patient and his or her carer.</p>
<p>There will never be enough words and praise that we, as a family, can every say to you all for the help you gave us in looking after Mum. Without your help, support, compassion, humour and respect, Mum would have had to leave her home a lot earlier. You kept her where she belonged. Thank you from our broken hearts."</p>

The Bridgestart service provides short term (usually 6 weeks) personal care to service users in their homes.

Comments provided include:-

<p>She wanted to express her thanks to both myself & X for our support yesterday, she said it was a very trying day and having the support off us both was what she needed.</p>

You've been with Dad for a long time and have come to understand him and his needs very well. I am very very grateful to you for all that you have done. Could you also please pass on my thanks to X and the team. They have been amazing.

On times it was average

The Bridgeway service provides an enabling service for people with dementia and their families.

Comments include:-

Any changes in the support received from the service were discussed with me. I was treated with dignity and respect by the team members. The service cannot be faulted.

Thank you so much for all your help co-ordinating mum's care visits over the last ten months. I have really appreciated the professionalism of your service. I have also really appreciated the Bridgeway carers who have come in every day to help mum get washed, dressed and ready for the day. I understood from 'X' that Bridgeway is unique in the country

I visited my parents yesterday...and wanted to thank you and in particular the Bridgeway Team for the difference it has made to lives of my parents. Bridgeway have worked so hard in building a relationship with my Mum in her involvement in being part of the everyday care team for my Dad. This has taken patience, dedication, perseverance and some inventiveness on their part. I have seen how good they are with my Mum displaying a high level of anxiety moving in and out of rooms getting upset and tearful as others were doing what she felt was her job, to where they are now. They are just part of the everyday routine in the house and accepted by my Mum and Dad. The whole team display a high level of professionalism, care and consideration in their contact and I wish to pass on my thanks to the Team. They have made such a difference to all of our lives

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 include:-

All around, a very high quality. My work plan was set out and everything possible was done for me to achieve my goals. The staff worked very hard, could not have been any better.

The medical staff & O.T's were very efficient and easing - I was very well looked after, Thank you all.

I was given all of the support needed to get back to my independent state and had all the questions answered, and was grateful for all of the support I needed.

This service was first class in all ways. The staff were excellent and the rapport with them was ideal. Without this service, I would have struggled to meet my own needs.

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:-

Third Person, on behalf of X - I just wanted to pass on a compliment I have received from X this morning. She was saying how amazing the telecare service is as well as how amazing care and repair are and have been, she is so grateful for the telecare service and the additional equipment care and repair have installed into her home to ensure her safety (including grab rails).

She stated that everyone involved with her mum have been so very kind and after the loss of her son it has kept them all going and looking after her mum keeps her going. She sees her mum every day but at times does not have the car to get there quickly so having the meds dispenser gives her peace of mind. She also said that she thinks that the boys that come out are so kind and nice to them both.

Contract Monitoring and Commissioning:

Rota Visits to residential care settings and other services have been undertaken by Elected Members (including independent providers). The total number of rota visits undertaken from March 2019 – April 2020 for Adult Social Care settings are as follows:-

Adult social care settings – 6

Independent sector settings – 12

Members' observations for Adult social care settings include:-

Bryn Y Cae Residential Care Home: Very pleasant welcome. Members chatted generally about the unit and the manager provided lots of information about the unit as they were escorted around the building. Members were shown the garden area where residents are encouraged to help grow vegetables. The main eating area was pleasant and had clear details of what food was available that day. Members were shown the TV area and craft area and also told that they have regular intergenerational days with a local school. The unit was in good decorative order and very clean. The manager explained about a dementia garden project that is planned and the unit sits in a very green expanse of land; it sounds that the project will only add to the quality of the garden space for the residents. Members had the opportunity to see the treatment room and there seems to be an issue with appropriate storage at the unit, although it was explained that some shed storage would soon be available. All those spoken to in the hair salon said how much they enjoy hair day. There were many and varied activities available to the residents. It was clear from those spoken to that they enjoyed their time in the unit and felt well looked after. They enjoyed the food and everyone spoken to appeared content. The words 'home' and 'happy' were used many times by the residents we spoke with.

Cwm Calon Localised Base: Members were warmly welcomed by the Manager and observed a bright and uncluttered reception and entrance area. Manager was proud to welcome the Members and share the work of Cwm Calon. Facilities were well laid out and organised by staff and informed that a number of activities take place at the same time, either within the premises or outside using the minibus; a range of outdoor trips are offered. The Manager clearly had a passion which was shared by her team – clearly very much a team spirit. Volunteers also spoken to who give of their time. Members spoke to many of the service users who advised that they liked attending Cwm Calon. Some had

just returned from a cinema visit. There was a buzz about the place; staff and service users clearly interacted well together.

Overall impression is of a service which BCBC and staff can be justly proud of.

Glyncynffig Hostel: Members were able to speak to most of the residents. All residents spoken to were happy with the care and support of staff. Staff were excited about the development of the new provision for young people with complex needs.

Heathfields Residential Home: Members were impressed with the homely feel when entering the premises and the spacious rooms available for residents. All the residents spoken to were very content and happy. It was of no surprise to learn that the home is almost always at full capacity.

Penybont Court Residential Home: Despite the very challenging needs of the service users, the home provides very safe and clean accommodation and caters for a variety of needs across different age groups, e.g. the home provides services such as entertainment and day trips for which they have been commended. Members met a number of staff who appeared well motivated and happy. They also met service users from both male and female units and service users appeared happy and well catered for. Members were both impressed with the service provided and satisfied with the quality of care provided by staff

Danygraig House Residential Home: Establishment was clean and bright, staff friendly and warm on discussion and residents that were spoken to were happy and well presented clothing and appearance. A good feeling that they were being cared for and looked after. Members were shown food menu, which was varied and interesting. Grounds were well maintained and plenty of chairs and benches available outside. Entertainment was organised for residents on occasion, good engagement with staff and with catering staff who were very approachable and forthcoming

Adult Social Care - Advocacy Arrangements

Statutory Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) is provided under the Bridgend Voice & Choice service. This is delivered by 3 x independent providers: PromoCymru, who operate the BVC Advocacy Hub (contact centre); MHMWales, who operate 2 x contracts for client-specific IPA; and People First Bridgend, who operate IPA for clients with a learning disability.

To March 2020 the BVC Advocacy Hub received 364 contacts with 246 contacts connected and supported.

The Advocacy Hub is able to provide initial information and advice, signpost to other IAA services, support individuals to self-advocate, or make referrals to informal or formal advocacy. For 2019/20, 50 referrals were passed to statutory IPA services via the Hub.

The IPA service operated by MHMWales and PFB are able to receive referrals via the Hub or directly from referring social work teams. In this period the number of new IPA referrals accepted as unique individuals was 92.

The IPA service providers are working with BCBC to identify where advocacy support has helped an individual to meet National Wellbeing Outcomes.

Some of the outcomes achieved, as reported by IPA service providers, include:

- I know and understand what care, support and opportunities are available and use these to help me achieve my wellbeing

- I can access the right information, when I need it, in the way I want it and use this manage and improve my wellbeing
- My voice is heard and listened to
- My individual circumstances are considered
- I speak for myself and contribute to the decisions that affect my life, or have someone who can do it for me

Some examples of comments from client to the IPA provider are as follows:

I wanted to write to thank you for your amazing, professional, and individualised advocacy support
It is so reassuring, there are not enough words to express, how invaluable your advocacy service and support has, and continues to be. I live alone, I have no family of my own. I felt lost and isolated and lacked any confidence to access services or query/complain about poor treatment, especially in light of the sensitive nature of living with mental health issues. I feel I have found that essential, crucial support in advocacy support services, where I am listened to actively, heard, and supported

Children's Social Care:

Rota visits are undertaken by Elected Members to Children's social care settings, following which a report is submitted which focusses on the quality of care provided to service users. 5 rota visits to these settings took place during the period April 2019 - March 2020. Some comments received are included below:

Bakers Way: Members were warmly welcomed by the manager and team. It was noted that all had been with the respite facility for a considerable time. This often means that staff feel valued in what they are doing which in turn gives parents and children confidence and stability in using the respite service. Members spoke with each of the children who were all happy. The service users do need a high level of support and one to one engagement and this engagement presented a good atmosphere. Meal and overnight arrangements were discussed and how children are taken on a wide range of trips and visits using the minibus. Members were also informed of how they are stimulated through play.
Maple Tree House: Establishment was clean and tidy. No concerns with appearance. Member had the opportunity to meet with one or two service users who advised that everything was ok and staff were good. Retention of staff will always be an issue in this type of service environment but staff present were very helpful and honest about their roles.
Sunnybank: Satisfactory visit of Sunnybank. Significant improvements to interior making the home more homely for service users. Members spoke to a client who is making excellent progress who would have difficulties completing his education without the one to one support on offer.
Crosspoint Children's Home: A very informative visit of a much-needed service where there is little alternative provision. Members were escorted around the premises by the manager who was very enthusiastic about the service and the facility provided.

Children’s Social Care – Advocacy Arrangements

Advocacy for children and young people in Bridgend is provided through a regional contract to deliver the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy, as prescribed by Welsh Government. The contract for Bridgend transferred from the Western Bay region into the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region on 1st May 2019. The service provider in Bridgend remained in place, namely Tros Gynnal Plant. This continuity of provider ensured that all ongoing advocacy cases at the point of contract transfer were maintained with existing advocates.

For the period May 2019/March 2020, the advocacy service delivered the following:

Active Offers made:	68
Of which Active Offers accepted:	59
Issue-based Advocacy cases opened:	204
Of which cases were closed:	186

The level of advocacy being provided in Bridgend remains consistently high, and the increasing numbers of Active Offers being made and delivered indicates an improving position under the new regional service.

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

In previous years as part of the National Performance Framework Local Authorities have collected qualitative information annually about people who use their Social Care Services. However, the National Survey was not sent out for 2019/20 as Welsh Government were reviewing the Performance Management Framework, and Local Authorities were advised by Welsh Government that the survey was no longer to be undertaken in its current format.

6. STATISTICAL INFORMATION 2019/2020

Number of Representations Received and Timescales

Table 1

No. Representations Received Statutory Complaints Procedure – April 2019 to March 2020			
		Complaints	Compliments/Comments
Adult Social Care		85	85
Children’s Social Care		148	8
	Total Complaints: 233		
Breakdown *see table 2 for informal breakdown	Business Support /Finance	6 *informal	3
	Commissioned	19 *informal	Total Compliments: 96
	Stage 1	27 (13 ASC, 14 CSC)	
	Stage 2	5 (2 ASC, 3 CSC)	

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

Timescales: 100% 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

No. Complaints Resolved prior to invoking the formal Complaints Procedure(s) 2019/2020	
	2019/20
Adult Social Care	53
Children's Social Care	123
Business/Finance Support	6
Commissioned Services	19
Total:	201

Statistics reflect that the Directorate has continued to achieve a high level of early resolution for complainants. The number of complaints resolved by this approach in previous years are 234 in 2018/19, 198 in 2017/18 and 187 in 2016/17. Therefore although there has been a reduction in the number of complaints with early resolution by 33 this year it is important also to note that the total overall number of complaints received in the year by the Directorate has also reduced by 44.

Some of the feedback comments received in relation to Complaint staff's involvement with complainants in terms of discussion to understand the nature of complaints and potential early resolution is as follows:-

Thank you for doing this for me. It has really reduced my anxiety and stress
Thank you so much... the meeting today made me and my family feel valued and I am very grateful for all your help

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; 35 complaints were received which were deemed appropriate to be addressed in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Procedure during 2019/20; 8 related to Adult Social Care (5 at stage 1 and 3 at stage 2), 27 to Children's Social Care (5 at stage 1, and 22 at stage 2), and 0 related to Business/Finance Support.

Total Representations Received 209/20

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

Table 3

2019/20 - Total No. Representations Handled via:	
Complaints Resolved at pre-Complaints stage	201
Statutory Social Services Complaints (St 1 & St 2)	32
Corporate Complaints (St 1 and St 2)	35
Ombudsman	9
Total:	277

The total number of complaints (Stage 1 and Stage 2) received and addressed in accordance with the Statutory Complaints Procedure by Social Services during 2019/2020 was 32 compared with 41 in 2018/19.

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 2019/20 as follows:-

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

2019/20	Adult Social Care	Children's Social Care	Business /Finance Support	Total
Not Upheld	8	4	-	12
Partially Upheld	1	4	-	5
Upheld	4	6	-	10

NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

The nature of complaints received varied and included:-

Table 5

2019/20 – Most Common Complaints Received
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 2019/20 were as follows:-

Table 6

Service Area	Lessons Learned/Actions Implemented
Adult Social Care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Joint Protocol which would include guidance for residential staff to improve communication between BCBC Social Services Department and the District Nursing Team (particularly in a situation where the individual being cared for by residential care staff has a clear medical need). • Discussions should take place with the G.P. surgery to ensure that arrangements can be secured to ensure that GP support is available and provided when required. • Ensure that individuals in residential care (permanent or respite) are offered a choice each morning of what they want to wear for the day • Ensure that it is made clear to individuals and their family members during their pre-assessment visit that the home is a residential care home and does not provide 1:1 care. • Ensure that staff understand the importance of respecting and implementing residents' and family members wishes as far as practicably possible. e.g. use of own personal hygiene products, offer of choice of clothing etc...
Children's Social Care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent application of Child Protection Procedures – lesson learned shared with staff directly involved in this area

	of practice and a rolling programme of safeguarding procedures training is in place across the Directorate.
Children's Social Care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccurate recording and poor quality of case information – Recording skills training in place across the Directorate and Corporate Data Protection and GDPR training in place across the Local Authority.

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.

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, 96 compliments were recorded during 2020/21, a selection of which are set out below:-

Table 7

Compliments - Adult Social Care:
Common Access Point: X asked me to send her 'thanks' to Y, also complimented her for being very helpful and supportive over the last few days while she was resolving her concerns regarding Mrs Z.
Common Access Point: Many thanks for your assistance in setting up an assessment for possible Domiciliary care for my wife X. You have a very easy and sympathetic style of communicating and it is appreciated.
CRT Reablement: I found the service was very good and couldn't find any faults, the staff involved were very friendly and helpful. I was more than pleased.
Glyncynffig: Staff are very good and very understanding
ICNT West: I would like to comment on Mum's meeting, it seemed to be a masterclass in discharge planning and we are all grateful for your efforts. I know Dad certainly found it a lot less traumatic than he'd anticipated...
Hospital Team: You may have heard from the hospital That my uncle Z died on 2nd October. Although we knew this was the most likely outcome, it was very helpful to have the process of finding a care home explained so clearly. I wanted to thank you for your help. It was good to know that there was nothing more X's family could be doing for him at that time and that the social care team did not become involved until he was ready to be discharged. This had not been made clear on the ward but perhaps the staff were being tactful as they already knew this was likely to be unnecessary. Thank you for your help and the kindness you showed in taking time to explain clearly the process which is so familiar to you. It was very helpful at a time when I was not sure if there was more I should be doing. Best wishes
Community Learning Disability Team: To all staff and especially X, (social worker) I would like to say thank you for supporting my son over a lot of years. Again I'd like to say thank you very much to you all for supporting my child. Thank you very much.

Occupational Therapy: The occupational therapist went to my Dads today and he was very kind and empathetic to my Dads needs

Compliments – Children’s Social Care:

MASH/Assessment Team: I would like to acknowledge the extensive work you have undertaken on this case and crucially in terms of the direct work and time spent with the children to support them in the process of accommodation and separation from their siblings. It was clear that you worked above our usual statutory processes to support these children. Additionally, your assistance in consultations in Court were valuable.

MASH/Assessment Team: I took a phone call off the mother of Y and Z wanting to speak to X. Mum explained that she wanted to thank X in relation to speaking to the children yesterday as she received positive feedback from them saying that X was really lovely.”

Permanence Team: Please can you record that Conwy Local Authority have approached X as a result of his work within the Permanence Team and asked that he conference call with 2 Team Managers within the local authority to advise them about setting up their own permanence service. This a wonderful compliment to X and the permanence service that we provide.

16 Plus Team: I was sorry that I wasn’t able to see you in X’s last review. I just wanted to say that it has been a pleasure working with you. You are such a wonderful social worker. You have been brilliant at keeping me informed about everything and you always have the best interests of the child in mind. You are calm, unflappable and able to contain risk which is so helpful with the young people we see. You are an ambassador for social services and a model for the way social services can work collaboratively with other professionals. I don’t know who your supervisor is but I hope you will share this e mail with her/him as I feel strongly that she/he should know how amazing you are

East Safeguarding Team: I just wanted to let you know the GAL was singing the SW’s praises in his evidence. He made the following comments: “Really good social worker, competent does not go halfway there. She has carried out meticulous assessments and undertaken brilliant direct work with the children. She has worked hard at establishing a relationship with both the children and their parents. It has been a benefit to this family to have been allocated her to the case”. Thought I would pass on the comments as they don’t get said enough

Fostering: I’ve just had a phone call from ‘X’ who wanted to advise she’s been to a meeting with ‘Y’ and feels she has gone above and beyond to support ‘Z’s plan. ‘X’ explained that ‘Y’ has given excellent advice to ‘Z’s parents and is very supportive of them. ‘Y’ has been expected to do a great deal of transport to and from contact which has been increased to a high level and ‘X’ feels that Lisa has transported without complaining. ‘X’ said ‘Y’ has done everything they have asked her to do and more and described her as “fantastic” and so she wants this raised, particularly for her annual review as she is aware that her initial report was a little negative however, ‘Y’ has been fantastic over the last month or so.“

Compliments - Business Support/Finance:

Financial Safeguarding: Thank you again for all of your support and excellent ‘person centred approach’ shown towards ‘X’ – this is really appreciated and when I have 5 I will certainly advise our commissioning team J

Residential Charging: I’ve just taken a call from ‘X’. He wanted to pay his invoice but didn’t want me to take payment as he wanted to thank you personally for all the help and support you have provided.

Residential Charging: Thank you for taking the time to explain dads costs. It’s been very hard to sort things out with his funeral and registering his death due to

distance. So I was dreading sorting out his affairs for his care home fees, but I must say you have been so helpful and patient in explaining all that I had to do from filling in the application form (several calls to you) and to its conclusion. I really must express how professional and polite but above all friendly you have been. You are a great asset to Bridgend Borough Council and I felt I had to say so too, people are always quick to email in complaints but not that quick to compliment.

8. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019/2020

- 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**) of 201.
- There was a reduction from 38 to 27 (11) in the number of Stage 1 formal complaints handled in the period compared to 2018/19, however there was a slight increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints from 3 to 5. Overall there was a reduction in all social services complaints received by 42 (from 275 to 233) this period compared to 2018/19.

9. OBJECTIVES FOR 2020/2021

- Continue to encourage and work with managers/staff to aim to resolve complaints locally and as swiftly as possible;
- Considering the slight increase in the number of cases progressing to Stage 2 of the complaints process and the request from the Ombudsman to progress all requests for a stage 2 to an independent investigation, there will be a need to further increase the cohort of available and appropriately skilled independent investigators
- Work with ICT to develop the use of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) to record and report on complaints; initial work has begun in this area and the plan is to achieve this in 2020/21
- 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.

10. 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 Claire Marchant
Statutory Director of Social Services**

By the Business Support Manager and Complaints & Quality Staff