

ADULT HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Extract from the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 January 2007 at Shire Hall, Warwick

“ Half Year Report on Adult Directorate Complaints and Representations April – September 2006

Members considered the report of the Strategic Director Adult, Health & Community Services commenting on the operation and effectiveness of Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate Complaints and Representations procedures over the first six months of this financial year.

Members made the following comments:

1. It was noted that there had been a change in attitude and culture with a greater recognition of people's feelings and apologising where appropriate.
2. In general most complaints were resolved at a local problemsolving level but there was currently no benchmarking data available corporately as not all Directorates reported consistently on compliments.
3. The Committee asked that their thanks be given to the Nuneaton and Bedworth and Stratford Older People teams for their commitment and hard work.
4. The Committee noted their concern at the increase in the number of complaints received relating to outside providers. It was reported that external providers were required to have robust complaints procedures in place and that discussions were underway to ensure that in the future quarterly feedback was received from outside providers. Service providers were also keen to receive advice and support in this area where there had been little guidance in terms of monitoring and compliance activities.
5. The changes to the charging policy were expected to increase the number of complaints received and it was important to recognise the reasons behind any changes to normal patterns.
6. Graeme Betts agreed to check the process in terms of communicating with Councillors any changes expected to impact on users.
7. The Complaints and Compliments Procedure was open to all members of the public and not just those receiving services.
8. The need to understand the context in which a complaint was made was embedded in the training and promoted as part of the culture of the Council.
9. The change of loan time for library books from four weeks to three weeks had been seen in overall terms as a success, allowing

greater turnover of books. Graeme Betts agreed to revert to Members with data on compliments about the change in order to allow Members to get a better overall picture.

10. The Directorate was mindful of complaints about staff rudeness and to date there had been no pattern with specific individuals or teams. The ability to deal with difficult customers, deliver unwelcome messages and communicate without causing offence was part of the customer care training and staff development. Committee Members endorsed the good performance and areas for improvement and agreed to receive a full year review in July 2007.

A report has not yet gone to Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the complaints and compliments handling performance of Trading Standards.

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Adult and Community Overview And Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee 10th January 2007
Report Title Half Year Report on Adult Directorate Complaints and Representations April – September 2006
Summary *This report comments on the operation and effectiveness of Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate Complaints and Representations procedures over the first six months of this financial year.*

For further information please contact:

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Would the recommendation decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No.

Background papers Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2005-6, Performance Management Report December 2006

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal

- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No

Adult and Community Overview And Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2007

Half Year Report on Adult Representations & Complaints April - September 2006

Report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate

Recommendation

Committee Members are asked to:

1. Note good performance and areas for improvement
2. Receive a full year review in July 2007

1. Introduction

WCC has a corporate complaints procedure. It is an expectation that relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive six monthly reports detailing the operation and effectiveness of the corporate complaints procedure within their area of responsibility, and provide Members and senior officers with anonymised information about the numbers and types of complaint received, the time taken to deal with them and their outcome. This information should be used as a measure of performance and a means of quality assurance. The services within this Directorate subject to the corporate complaints procedure are Libraries and Heritage, Adult Learning and Trading Standards. Trading Standards will report separately to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Additionally, there is a separate and distinct complaints and representations procedure for handling complaints about adult social care which imposes similar expectations for regular reporting to Members.

Summary data from all Directorates is then presented to the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide the Council with an overview of how effectively

complaints and representations are being handled across all Directorates.

2. Performance

Details of this Directorate's performance in handling complaints and representations over the six months April – September 2006 are attached.

Key points to note are:

- ◆ Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate consistently receive high numbers of compliments, and this compares well with other Directorates within Warwickshire County Council. Libraries and Heritage consistently receive the highest volume of compliments in the Council.
- ◆ Our customer satisfaction feedback about the adult social care complaints process shows people feel they are dealt with politely, are kept regularly informed of the progress of the investigation, get a clear response which answers their concerns and are pleased with the outcome.
- ◆ 96% of all adult social care complaints are resolved locally at Stage 1 of our complaints and representations procedures, and 86% of Libraries and Heritage complaints were resolved informally before they got to Stage 1. This compares well with other local authorities, and reflects a consistent level of problem-solving achievement over a number of years.

3. Progress 2006 - 2007

Progress towards the key areas we agreed to focus on this year has gone well:

- Launch and roll-out of the new adult social care complaints and representations policy and procedures, as approved by Cabinet 12th October 2006, completed.
- Development underway of a range of supporting documents and guidance for customers to support the new adult social care complaints procedures
- Developed the Independent Persons pool with Coventry and Solihull for Stage 3 adult social care Review Panels, and putting in

place mechanisms to firm up the recruitment, retention, payment and competency development process for IPs

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Adult Social Care Half Year Complaints & Representations Dataset 2006/7

1. Introduction

We must, by law, have an effective Representations and Complaints Procedure to enable our customers to challenge adult social care decisions and actions, in compliance with the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003.

Service users, or those acting on their behalf, should have the right to express a view concerning services offered, provided, or not provided by the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate. The procedure should be accessible to all sections of the community, robust in meeting timescales and in attempting to solve problems as close to where they happened as possible. We must, by law, produce an annual report to tell Members about how the representations and complaints procedure has been used.

Representations are any comments made about the availability, delivery and nature of services provided by us to individuals or groups. They are not just criticisms. We seek out and welcome this information – it is important to know when customers are pleased with the services they receive, to look at the suggestions for service improvement they put forward, and to try to resolve any problems they experience.

We encourage all staff to respond quickly and clearly to any concerns that are raised by individuals or groups. However, it may not always be possible to sort out problems in this way. Sometimes a more detailed investigation may be required. This report explains the different stages of the representations and complaints procedures and how they are managed. The statistics we have used are based on the information we have been given by teams and units across the Directorate.

The Three Stage Process

There are three stages within the Adult Social Care Representations and Complaints Procedures:

Stage 1:

We aim to resolve most complaints as close as possible to where the problem first arose. Local teams and units are responsible for responding as quickly and clearly as possible to problems. We aim to answer complaints at this stage within 10 working days, and to resolve as many complaints as we can at Stage 1 of our process.

Stage 2:

If someone is not happy with the outcome at Stage 1 they have the right to ask for their complaint to be formally investigated at Stage 2. People can also request an investigation at Stage 2 without having the matter considered at Stage 1. We might decide that the problems raised are too complex or difficult to deal with at Stage 1, so may recommend that some complaints are progressed to Stage 2 straight away.

Stage 2 complaints are usually investigated by Investigating Officers independent of the Council. We aim to send a report of the investigation to the complainant within 25 working days, or agree a different completion date with them if necessary. The appropriate Service Manager within the Directorate is responsible for responding to the complainant, outlining what action, if any, will be taken in relation to the recommendations arising from the investigation.

Stage 3:

If a Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome and recommendations at Stage 2 they have the right to request an Independent Review Panel. They will be invited to make a submission to the Panel, which consists of three Independent People. The Panel will consider the complaint, whether it has been properly investigated, and why the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome. The Panel will then make recommendations for resolution to the Director. The Director then has the responsibility of responding to the complainant.

Local Government Ombudsman:

When our complaints process has been exhausted, people may ask for their complaint to be looked at by the Local Government Ombudsman. They need to do this within 12 months of receiving our final response

2. Key Complaints and Representations Data

Data	HALF YEAR	2005/6	2004/5	2003/4
Compliments	200	409	511	262
Complaints Received:				
Stage1	100 (96%)	217 (96%)	159 (95%)	161 (88%)
Stage2	4	7	8	18
Stage3	0	1	2	3
Representations against policy	3	12	9	21
Complaints as % of open cases on CareFirst	-	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%
Of those received:				
From ethnic minorities	3	11	7	8
About externally provided services	41	19	15	12
Investigations completed				

Data	HALF YEAR		2005/6		2004/5		2003/4	
in period:	97		205		154		172	
Stage 1	4		7		5		17	
Stage 2	1		1		2		3	
Stage 3								
Timescale compliance:								
Stage 1: In 14 days	59%		48%		43%		47%	
Within 28	73%		71%		67%		69%	
days	27 calendar		30 calendar		26 calendar		29 calendar	
Average time	days		days		days		days	
to complete	0		13%		0		6%	
Stage 2: In 28 days	33%		63%		75%		41%	
Within 3	122 calendar		82 calendar		86 calendar		117 calendar	
months	days		days		days		days	
Average time								
to complete								
Number of complaints	Upheld	Partly	Upheld	Partly	Upheld	Partly	Upheld	Partly
justified:								
Stage 1	56%	19%	42%	24%	42%	21%	34%	32%
Stage 2	75%	25%	29%	-	40%	20%	35%	41%

NB: Timescale expectations changed from 1st September 2006. The data being reported on here primarily relates to the period prior to this, so the previous timescale have been reported in this data set.

No adverse reports from LGO—One complaint relating to mental health services considered by LGO and dismissed – no evidence of maladministration.

3. Analysis

Compliments

High numbers of compliments continue to be received about adult care services. 79% of these were from or on behalf of older people, and most related to the support received from social work teams, in house home care services and in house residential homes. This is to be expected, as older people make up the highest proportion of our social care client base, and these are the service areas which have the highest levels of daily contact with service users. Teams deserving special mention because of the high number of compliments received include Nuneaton and Bedworth Older People's Team (38), and Stratford on Avon Older People's Team (35).

Further breakdown shows no compliments registered for mental health and learning disability services, or in house day services. This may reflect poor recording, or may be suggestive that there are significant best practice sharing opportunities for teams who appear to be less well thought of by their

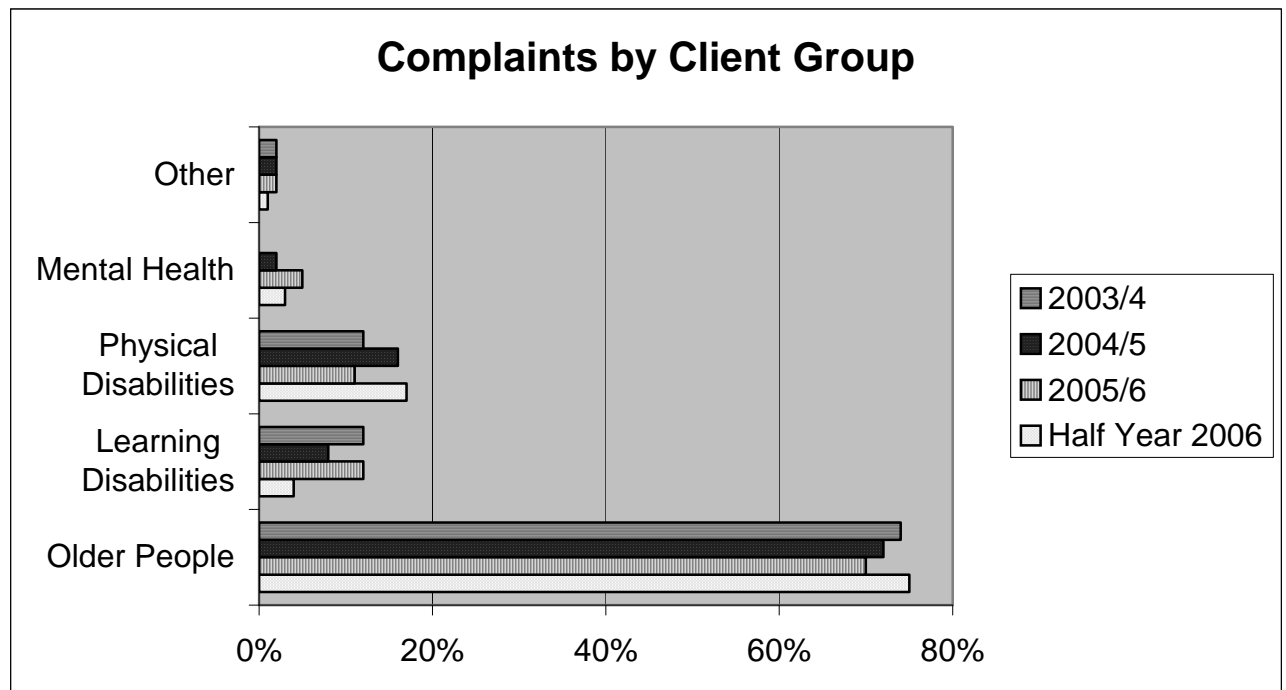
customers and teams who are regularly being complimented on their services.

RECOMMENDATION: Managers of services not registering compliments are asked to urgently review their compliment registration processes to establish whether there is a problem with the registration process, or whether they need to reflect and learn from other teams and units who are more successful at achieving positive customer satisfaction.

Complaints

The increase in complaints activity registered in the previous 12 months has been maintained. Adult social care have continued to resolve a high level of these complaints at a local team level.

A major factor in the volume of complaints activity in this period has been the problems experienced with a key external home care provider for the Warwick, Kenilworth and Leamington areas. 23 of the complaints about external providers related to this single provider. The Customer Relations Team has been actively involved with working with the service provider and our commissioning and contracting unit to ensure that complaints about this service are appropriately responded to, and that issues of service continuity and standards are effectively picked up and addressed through the contracting process. This has also inevitably affected the percentage of

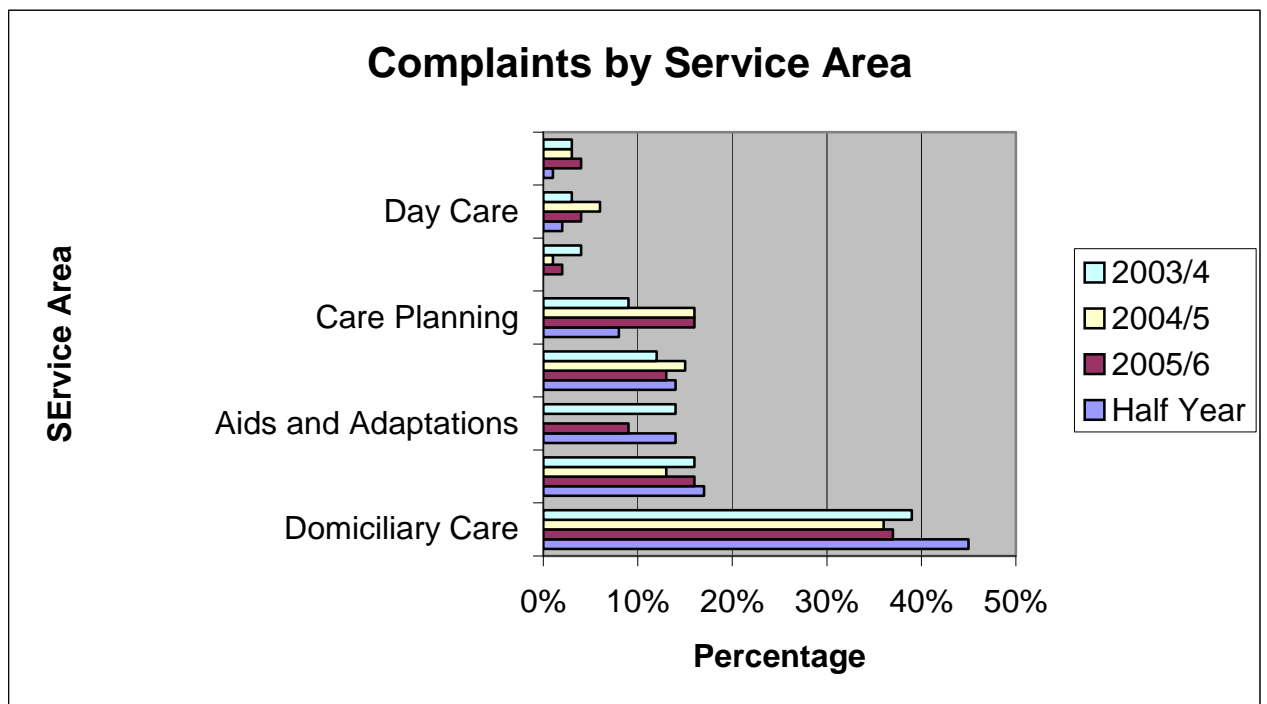


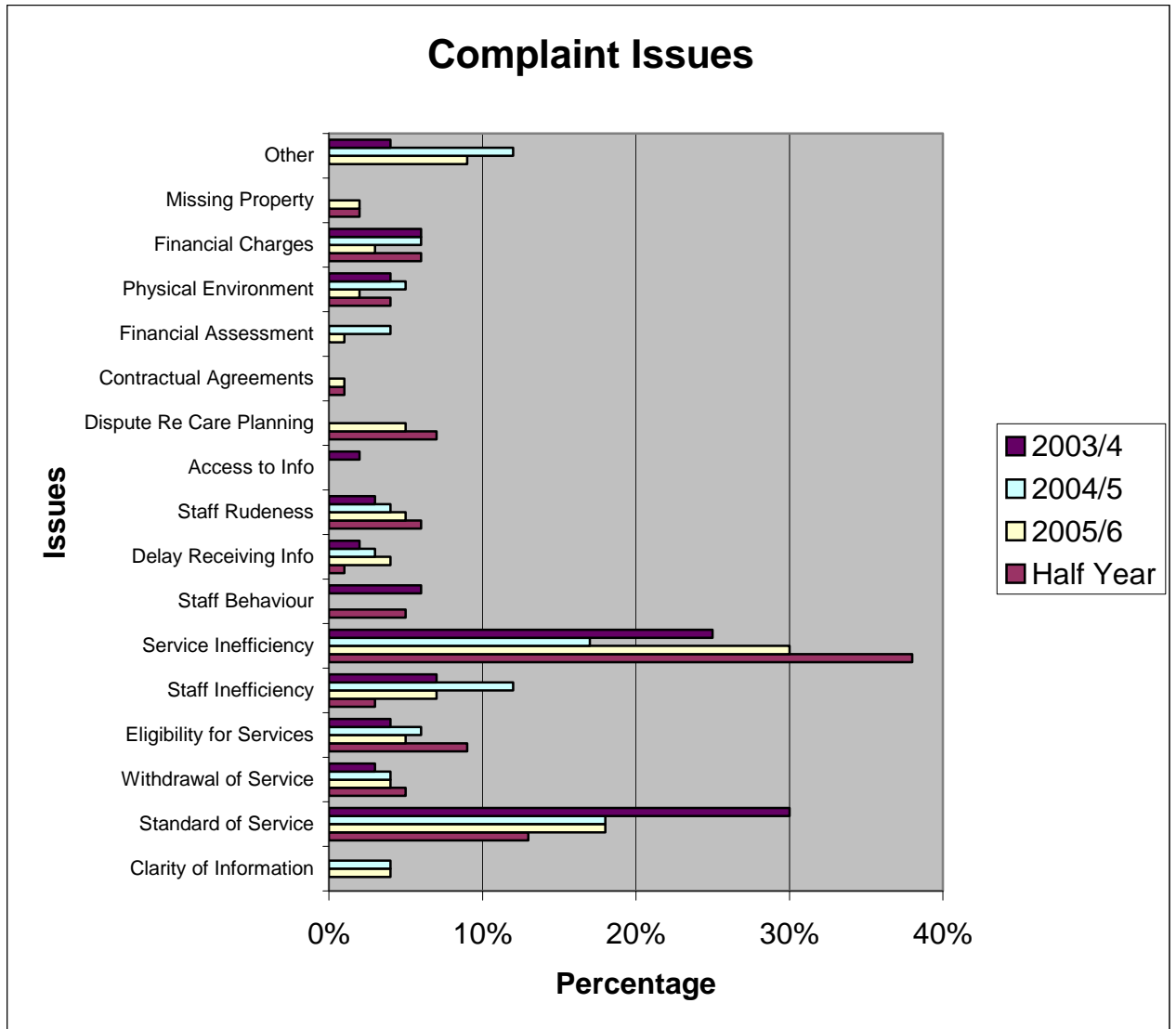
complaints upheld, and the satisfaction levels of those people affected with our complaints process, because there have been some difficulties in obtaining satisfactory responses from this service provider.

However, there also appears to have been an increase in the number of complaints about other external domiciliary care providers which needs exploring further by the operational teams and the commissioning and contracting team.

Please note, whilst there are figures relating to complaints about externally provided services, these only relate to the number that the Customer Relations Team are made aware of, usually because the complainant comes directly to them. It does not include figures about locally resolved complaints from all externally provided services, where the complainant has gone directly to the service provider with their concerns. Similarly, we do not have figures relating to compliments received by externally provided services.

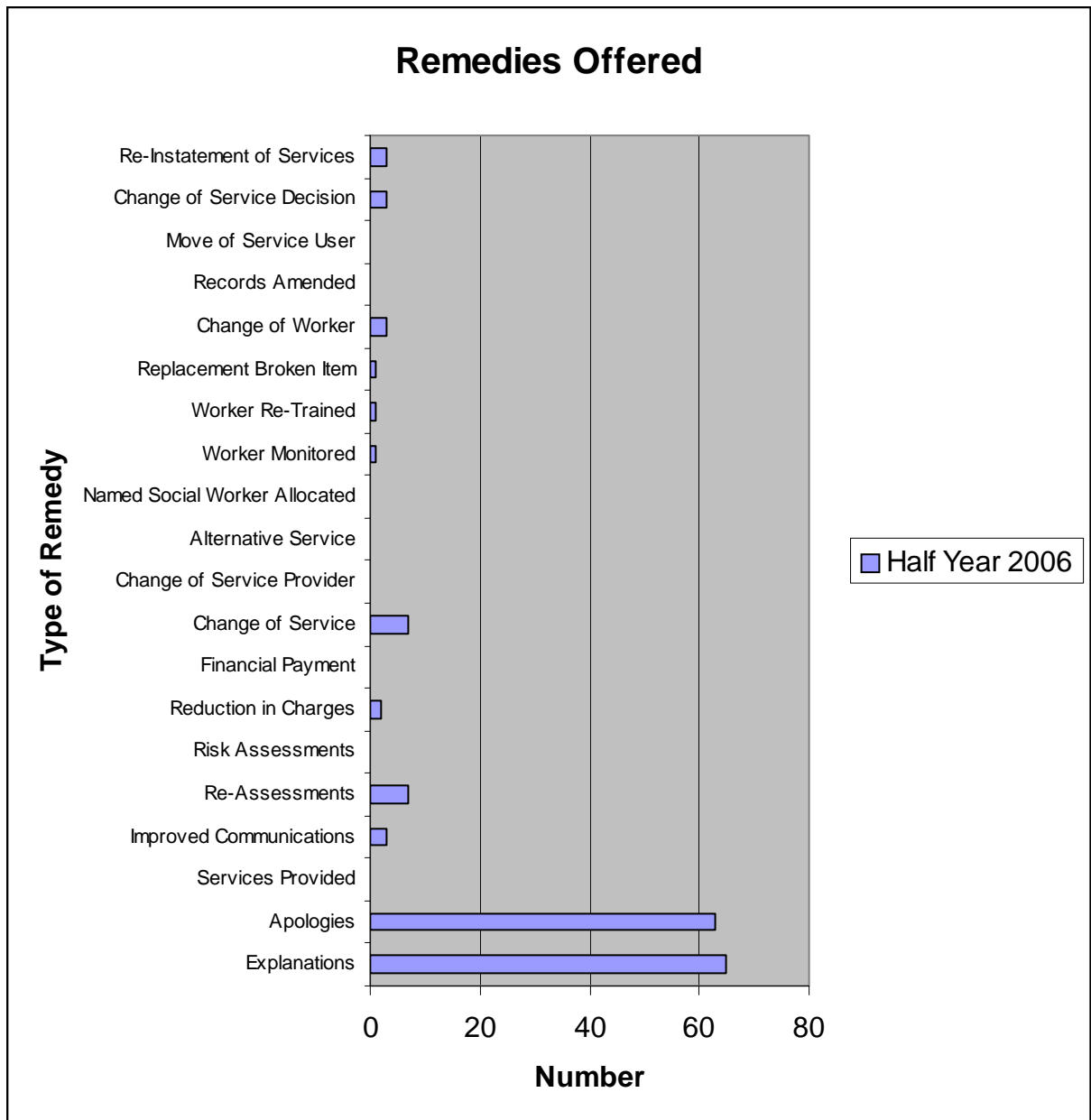
RECOMMENDATION: As part of contract monitoring process, quarterly returns are requested from all external service providers to enable a better overview of the level of customer satisfaction with external and in house services.





Examination of the reasons for complaint again, in the main, reflect a relatively consistent pattern.

The majority of complaints are resolved through explanation, and, where appropriate, apology. A significant number also result in a change in the way a service is provided, a reassessment or a change in the communication process. It is worth commenting that financial remedies continue to be rare, and again that the vast majority of complaints continue to be effectively resolved at a local team level.



We have had a 35% return rate on the feedback forms we issue at the close of the Stage 1 process. This shows a generally high satisfaction rate with the way we handle complaints, most people feeling they were dealt with politely, that they were kept regularly informed of the progress of the investigation, that they received a clear response, that this answered their concerns, and they were pleased with the outcome. However, it does reflect a higher level of dissatisfaction caused by the way external providers have responded to complaints. In general, this reflects well on the effectiveness of our current complaints process.

Results show a slight improvement in average timescale compliance at Stage 1, and overall this is a good performance. Most complaints at Stage 1 are resolved quickly.

	Question	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied Dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Number of surveys sent <u>102</u> Number of surveys returned <u>36</u>	Kept regularly informed of progress of investigation	17%	36%	14%	22%	11%
	Staff dealing with complaint were polite	31%	64%	3%	0%	3%
	Final response answered my questions	20%	34%	26%	11%	9%
	Response was clear	19%	39%	19%	11%	11%
	Pleased with outcome	18%	29%	9%	32%	12%

4. Sample of Compliments:

Rugby Home Care

WCC/01112ASC Service users' sister thanked team for their standard of care and patience in getting her brother to agree to help with personal care, commented on how much difference having a carer had helped her.

Financial Assessment Team

WCC/01073ASC Thanks from brother of lady in nursing home for help with discussions about sister's financial circumstances, and thanked named worker for helping him understand an extremely complicated benefits situation

Fast Response Team, Bedworth Home Care

WCC/01063ASC Service user pleased to have been contacted during hot weather to make sure she was taking enough fluids (one of a number of vulnerable service users contacted by phone by the Team to check on their welfare)

Hospital Social Work Team (Ellen Badger)

WCC/01087 Sister of service user "Thanks a lot for your help. It is so good to have my sister settled. People comment on how well I look since I have been relieved of the strain I was under previously. It is marvellous to be able to see my sister regularly. Thank you."

Respite Care, Low Furlong HEP

WCC/01113ASC Son of service user thanking Home for looking after father.

Respite Care, The Lawns HEP

WCC/01109ASC Wife of service user "... It's a great deal that I have an easy mind when Eddie is in respite care"

Stratford OPCC Team

WCC/01075ASC Daughter of service user "... I would just like to say how grateful I am for your caring and sympathetic approach in this case, and cannot speak highly enough of the efficient and excellent service you have provided"

Occupational Therapy Assessment

WCC/01108ASC Service user "... Also was very pleased with the help I was offered. My Worker was very helpful and polite"

Four Acres HEP

WCC/01071ASC Wife of service user who had died "Thank you very much for the wonderful care and love you all showed to Syd for so many years whilst he was with you, we are all so very grateful. Many many thanks. God bless you."

Rugby OPCCS

WCC/01067ASC Husband of service user approached service manager at Carer Group meeting to personally tell her about how wonderful a social worker had been when they dealt with his wife

Nuneaton Home Care

WCC/01068ASC Daughter of service user who had died "Mum and I were particularly fond of, who was so helpful and caring. I would like to say thank you to her.."

North Warwickshire OPCCS

WCC/01069ASC Family of service user receiving home care package "Thank you, for all your kind care and expertise in meeting Gwen and Jack's needs at home. It meant so much to Gwen, knowing Jack was well cared-for! It now means a lot to Jack and us all. You are always thoughtful and caring, friendly too....."

Nuneaton & Bedworth Disabilities Team

WCC/01125ASC Relative , after death of service user "... Louise always enjoyed your visits and always said that you were a very nice lady with a lovely smile. I would like to thank you for all the help, kindness and advice that you gave me during Louise's illness ..."

Warwick OPCCS

WCC/01080ASC Son of service user "... I am very grateful to you for all your help so far.....Many thanks for your professional and caring attitude"

5. Sample of Complaints Resulting in Service Improvements

Park View HEP

WSSD/0394 Daughter of a service user complained about delay calling paramedics after father had a fall. New instructions now given to all staff to call paramedics at once if family of resident requests this.

Aids

WSSD/03074 Service user challenged the right to have different bathing equipment rather than the shower chair offered, because of the nature of his medical condition. The complaint highlighted the need for OTs to keep up to date with current medical views on what sort of aids might better assist people with particular disabilities – in this case the efficacy of hot baths for people with MS.

Adaptations

WSSD/03362 Plan to convert ground floor of property, against wishes of service user with physical disabilities. Complaint identified inadequate advice, a further OT review was provided, and this meant astair lift option could be pursued.

Learning Disability

WSSD/03600 Mother of service user complained about lack of support during son's college holiday periods. Complaint investigation triggered a new assessment for holiday period support, which confirmed the need for support, and put in place suitable support.

Domiciliary Care

WSSD/03283 Service user complained about persistent failure to make calls at the stated times, which was affecting service users health. Action taken to challenge behaviour of staff as unacceptable, and safety measures put in place to prioritise call timing, because of service users health issues.

Karen Smith
Customer Relations Manager

Compliments and Complaints Half-Year Report 2006-07

Libraries, Learning & Culture Division

1 Introduction

Any expression of dissatisfaction regarding a service provided by Libraries, Learning & Culture (LLC) received within the Division follows the corporate complaints procedure. Where it is possible to deal with the complaint quickly and easily, then we acknowledge and respond to the complaint as soon as possible.

All groups within LLC monitor numbers of complaints and track trends, raising any issues with their senior managers. Complaints are reported to the Directorate's Leadership Team.

Each complaint is reported in detail including how the complaint was resolved and any policy changes as a result.

The table below shows three-year half-year (April – September) results for the total number of compliments and complaints received by Libraries and Culture. (Data is currently not available for Adult and Community Learning).

Year	Compliments	Complaints
2006/07	970	151
2005/06	894	80
2004/05	1202	148

2 Complaints Detail - April – September 2006

The following tables show the detail behind the complaint figures received during April – September 2006.

Number of complaints received	151
Number of comments received	283
Number of compliments received	970

Number of these complaints which are of a discriminatory nature	Race	-
	Disability	-
	Age	1
	Gender	-
	Religion	-
	Sexual Orientation	-

Stage the complaint went to	Informal Within 7 working days	130
	Stage 1 Within 15 working days	21
	Stage 2 Within 21 working days	-
	Stage 3 Within 30 working days	-
Number of complaints dealt with within the time scales set out in the Complaints Procedure.		151
Number of complaints substantiated/justified		33
Number of complaints referred on by Members		1 (details below)
Number of complainants who asked for Members to be notified of their complaint.		3

Reason for Complaint	Poor/inadequate service	29
	Conduct of staff	4
	Council policy	71
	Facilities	28
	Other	19

3 Analysis of complaints and actions taken

The data regarding complaints to Libraries and Culture indicates that they are sporadic by nature with no discernable trend.

The nature of the complaints tends to be one-off and is usually resolved at the informal stage, however, during the period April to September 2006 over 57% of the complaints received by the Libraries and Culture were with regard to 2 main issues – the change to the book loan period and People’s Network.

Loan period change

In January this year the Library service revised the loan period for books and spoken word to 3 weeks from 4 weeks. The shorter loan period means that WCC will offer greater choice to customers, a shorter waiting time for items in demand and a better turnover of stock. However, this change in policy has resulted in 38 complaints (25% of all complaints into the division) during the six-month period (April – September 2006).

The 3-week loan period policy is to be reviewed at the end of the year.

People’s Network

Libraries received 49 complaints (32% of all complaints into the division) during April to September relating to aspects of the People’s Network service, ranging from difficulty in obtaining website access, either because of demand

or poor IT connections; slowness of the corporate broadband connections; corporate firewall problems; filtering/blocking policies. Additionally, a small number of complaints were received relating to printing difficulties associated with our software.

Technical improvements are continually being made to the People's Network services in conjunction with CAMS.

There have been a small number of complaints regarding the use of mobile phones by customers in libraries. Cllr Chris Davis lodged one such complaint on behalf of a resident with regard to an incident in Leamington.

The Library Service does not routinely ban all mobile use. Our policy is to ask customers to use mobile phones sensitively in libraries and consider other users.

We ask customers not to use their mobile phones in designated quiet areas of the library or in the Learning Zone and also to keep mobile phones on silent, in these specific areas in larger libraries.

In other areas of the library mobile phone conversations should be kept to a minimum. Library users are encouraged to inform library staff if they feel that other customers are being unreasonable in their use of mobile phones. Staff will approach individuals concerned, as it is Library policy that mobile phones and personal stereo players should not be used where they are likely to disturb others.

A written instruction to all of our staff reminding them of the need for a balanced approach to the use of mobile phones has been re-issued, and a note is now displayed on our plasma screens in libraries about our policy

The remainder of the complaints to the division are of a 'one-off' nature.