

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

18th January 2022

REPORT AUTHOR:

**County Councillors
Rachel Powell
Myfanwy Alexander
Portfolio Holders for
Young People & Culture
Adults Social Care & Welsh Language**

**REPORT TITLE: Annual Report 2020/21 Social Services Complaints,
Compliments and Representations Report**

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have in place a representations and complaints procedure for Social Services under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the associated guidance.
- 1.2 This Annual Report (appendix 1) provides information about the operation of the Social Services representation and complaints procedure between the 1st of April 2020 and the 31st of March 2021. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and provides details of the activities undertaken during this period to develop the service.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Report details the number and theme of complaints and compliments received by Powys Social Services during the last financial year.
- 2.2 The number of complaints over the last 4 years has remained fairly consistent; however, there is a greater proportion of these being handled as enquiries and resolved before being considered a formal complaint.
- 2.3 Until the period 2020/21, there was a downward trend in the total number of complaints and enquiries received. 2020/21 saw a small increase in the number of complaints, this is not unexpected or unsurprising given the Coronavirus pandemic and the impact this has had on the service and the overnight change in the way services have been delivered.

- 2.4 Adult Services saw no complaint progress to Stage 2 during 2020/21, this was down from 4 in 2019/20. Children's Services saw 7 Stage 2's in 2020/21, up from 5 in 2019/20
- 2.5 Across Wales, Social Service Complaints Officers are noting that complaints are growing in complexity and often have multiple elements each of which needs addressing. Local experience is no different, with Children's Services complaints in particular often containing multiple elements of a complaint needing to be addressed.
- 2.6 The first 6 months of 2021/22 have exceeded the number of complaints received in the first 6 months of 2020/21. It is likely the total number of complaints during 2021/22 will be higher than 2020/21, this is not unexpected and is in keeping with the trend across Wales.
- 2.7 The Service has seen an increase in the total number of compliments received, with particular emphasis in Children's Services to record Compliments centrally rather than only at team level. These are now shared on a monthly basis as part of the Complaints and Quality Assurance meetings and with Senior Managers through the Complaints Performance Report to ensure that the necessary learning is incorporated into professional practice.

3. Advice

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the Annual Report including the growing complexity of complaints being submitted to the Authority.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to be reassured that there is considerable work taking place to identify the theme of complaints, which quite often stems from a failure to adequately communicate or manage customer expectations, this is being addressed as policies are reviewed and through the launch of the Social Services Customer Care Charter and ethos, which will set a standard expected of employees and members of the public. However, this will not create an overnight change and will take time to embed this ethos into the Service alongside improvements in promotion and informational material.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The team is permanently staffed by 2.5 employees whose role is to manage the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, and to support the improvement of the customer experience and work on Adult Social Care Policies. Funding is in place and has been built into the base budget going forward.
- 4.2 The Team currently has increased by 1.5 FTE temporarily to March 2022 to support the current demand on the Complaints Officer and to support the delivery plan of improvements to the customer experience. This will

be re-assessed in February and March 2022 to determine how the team will be shaped from April 2022.

4.3 This report has no financial or resource implications for Cabinet to consider.

4.4 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of the report.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Legal: the recommendations can be accepted from a legal point of view.

5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: “ I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report”.

6. Data Protection

6.1 The team work closely with the Information Compliance Team where required. This report has no implication on the processing of personal data.

7. Comment from local member(s)

7.1 N/A

8. Impact Assessment

8.1 Report is for information and discussion. No Impact Assessment required.

9. Recommendation

9.1 For Cabinet to note the contents of the report at Appendix 1 and the growing number and complexity of complaints experienced by Social Services.

9.2 For Cabinet to note the compliments contained within the report and congratulate the work of social care staff where outstanding service has been delivered.

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