

Adult Social Care

Compliments and Complaints

Annual Report
2013 -14



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

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1. Executive Summary

This report contains a summary of the data produced by the Adult Social Care Complaints procedure between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

In 2013-14, 112 complaints were received either directly from Service users, their families or representatives. 4 complaints went to the Local Government Ombudsman but none were upheld.

The complaints received during 2013-14 have identified the following specific service development needs:-

- Communicate more proactively with clients whilst waiting for an assessment and review staff training.
- Communicate more effectively with individuals involved in meetings with professionals so families understand what is being discussed, feel able to contribute and understand the possible outcomes.
- Reassess individual every time they go into respite care to understand if their needs have changed.
- Revise information and simplify guidance notes provided to clients regarding potential charges for services.

Whilst it is important to reflect on the themes and nature of complaints, we also need to recognise where the service has worked well. During 2013-14 West Berkshire Council received 136 compliments from service providers, families and partner agencies.

2. Complaints: A definition

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service the Council has provided. Feedback from users is important to the Council as it provides not only an opportunity to identify why people have found our services unsatisfactory, but also a means of identifying how the services being provided can be improved.

Any adult receiving care by West Berkshire Council is entitled to use the complaints process. We also accept complaints from their family or representatives who support them. Every person who makes use of the complaints procedure is advised of their right to assistance from an independent advocate and is given information about how to access the advocacy service if they wish to do so.

Issues regarding the delivery of social care services are dealt with under the Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure.

3. Complaints Process

The National framework for managing complaints about adult social care is set out within the Department of Health's guidance 'Listening, Responding, Improving – A guide to better customer care', published in February 2009, and the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

West Berkshire Council's Complaints Procedure for Adult Social Care can be found in Appendix A.

The statutory complaints process is structured around three main principles:

- Listening
- Responding
- Improving

These principles focus on taking a more active approach to asking for people views, to allow us to deal with complaints more effectively and use the information received to learn and improve services for all its service users.

These three principles are embedded within our Complaints process, as we endeavour through dealing with complaints, to improve services for people who use them as well as for the staff working in them.

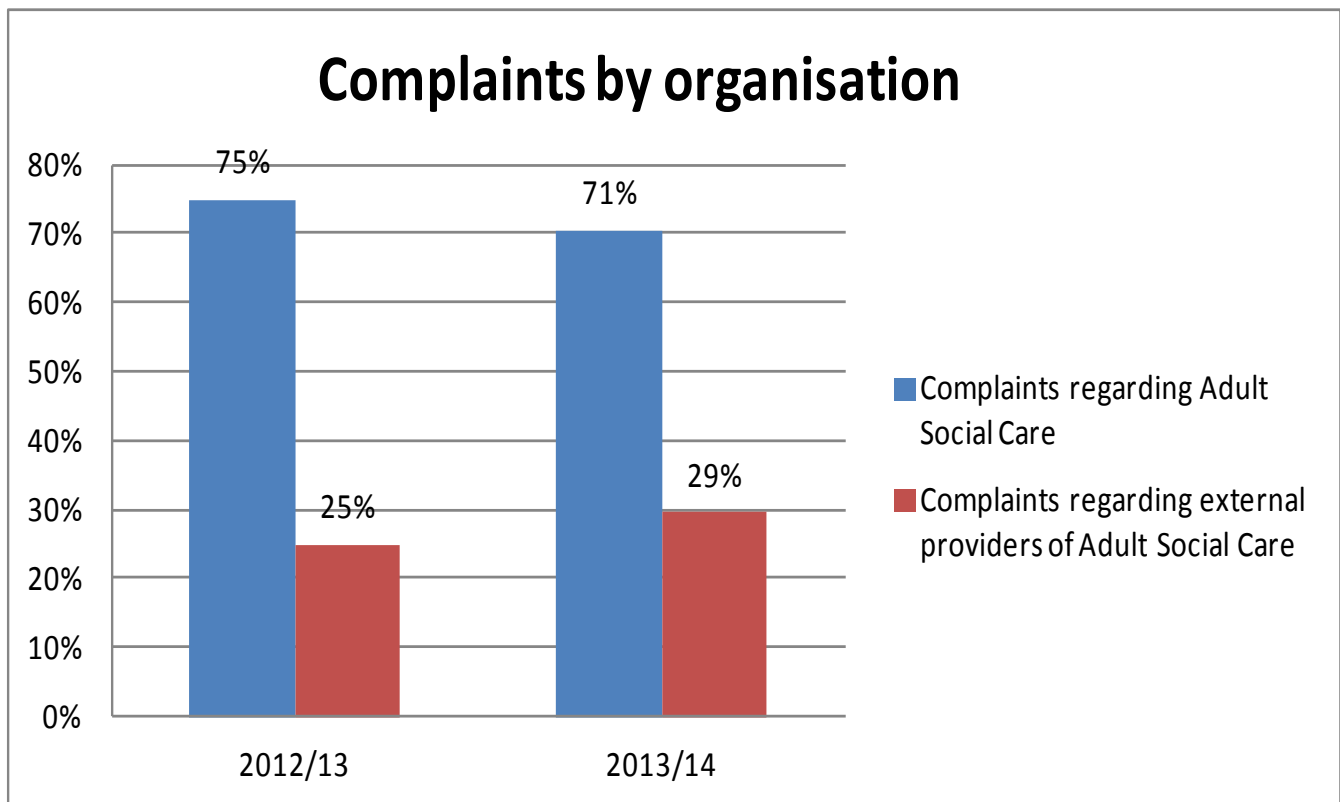
If having exhausted all reasonable avenues within the Council's complaints procedure, a complainant remains dissatisfied; they may ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to consider their complaint. A complaint lodged with the LGO before a Council has had reasonable opportunity to respond will be deemed 'premature' and will be referred back to the Local Authority complaints process.

4. Analysis

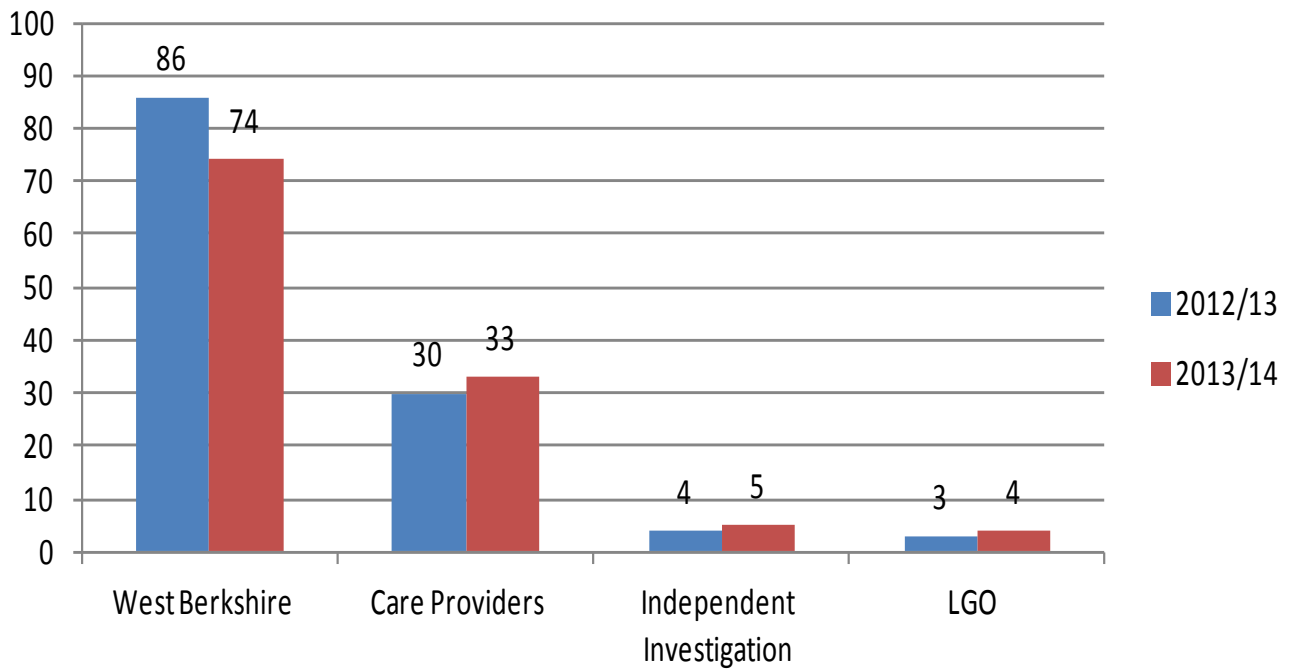
Volume of complaints Received

During 2013 -14, a total of 112 complaints were received. 71% (79) were about Adult Social Care and 29% (32) were about external service providers. 4% (4) of complaints were investigated via an Independent Investigation and 3.5% (4) of complaints went to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). None were upheld, this is evidence that the person centred approach to complaints achieves resolution at the earliest possible stage.

In comparison to 2012-13, a total of 120 complaints were received. 75% (90) were about Adult Social Care and 25% (30) were about external service providers. 3 % (4) of complaints were investigated via an Independent Investigation and 2.5% (3) of complaints went to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). None were upheld

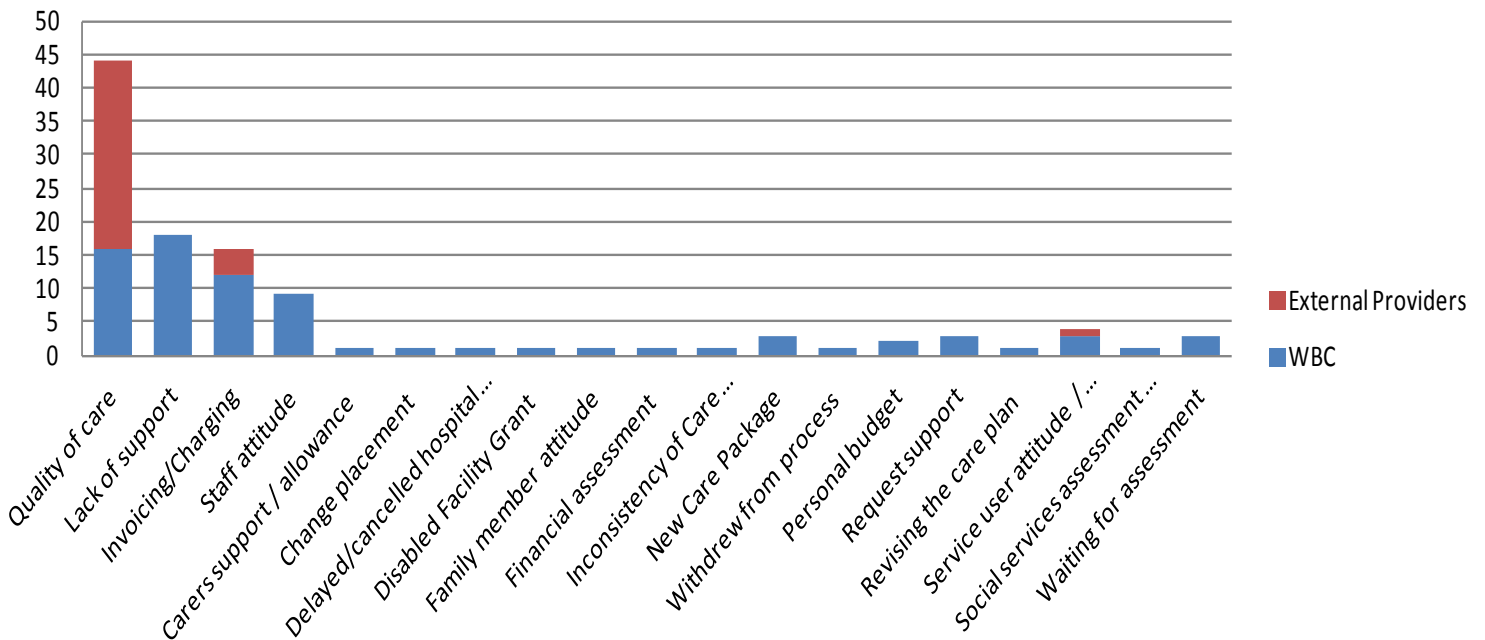


Complaint by resolution



Nature of Adult Social Care Complaints

Nature of Complaint by organisation



Timescale for responses

100% of Complaints were acknowledged in 3 working days. As outlined in the Adult Social Care Complaints procedure timescales are negotiated and agreed with the client before the investigation commences. 3.57% (4) of complaints went beyond the original agreed timescales, but met the revised agreed timescale.

5. Lessons Learned

The Complaints report is considered by the senior management team, who will monitor and evaluate practise against the required lessons learned and actions. This will include identifying lead officers and timescales for any further remedial actions.

Example of lessons learned are outlined below.

Complaint 1:

Invoices for care were delayed being sent to clients, this was primarily due to changes in internal financial systems, and more robust monitoring of provider services to ensure care being delivered accurately reflects care being charged.

Lessons Learnt:

Although clients received communications to advise them their invoices may be late, a number of vulnerable clients found it difficult to manage and plan their finances if they do not receive monthly invoices.

Management Action:

A review of the invoicing process to ensure that clients impacted by late or incorrect invoices are notified as soon as possible to allow them to budget accordingly and payment plans set up.

Complaint 2:

Client from the Learning Disability Group became upset when they made contact with the Team to be told that their allocated Care Manager / Social worker had left the Authority.

Lessons Learnt:

Clients form a trusting relationship with their Care Manager / Social Worker and find it difficult to build new relationships with staff.

Management Action:

For the staff member to notify their client that they are leaving and advise them of the name and contact details of their new Care Manager / Social Worker.

Complaint 3:

Care Plan had not been updated when client went into respite, this resulted in them having food that was inappropriate for their changing dietary needs

Lessons Learnt:

Although care plans are reviewed and updated annually, when clients go into respite a new review is needed to ensure changing medical needs are met.

Management Action:

Management to consider a mechanism to be implemented to review clients needs before each respite session.

6. Compliments

Whilst it is important to reflect on the themes and nature of complaints, we also need to recognise where the service has worked well; below is a small selection of the 136 compliments we received about the service our staff provide from families and partner agencies.

<p>"Your staff provided the best support and actual therapy that I have ever received. I felt I was able to express my feelings to someone who understood and was completely non judgmental. Talking with her has continued to sustain me during what have been trying and emotional circumstances."</p>
<p>"It was lovely to meet in your offices and chat yesterday. I asked for someone to support my husband and myself. Wow we got the jackpot!!! You are great and all through my stay in hospital I was so happy knowing that he was taken care of so well."</p>
<p>"It's always a joy to see you. You are so funny and honest. I smile when I think of you. Thank you for being you and continuing to support my husband and myself."</p>
<p>"I don't know where you find your team members from but I found her to be extremely efficient, honest and have a complete understanding of the work we do! The MARD assessment that was carried out by her was spot on! It was accurate in every detail and left us feeling completely confident in her views/opinions..... A really positive meeting with a lady that I feel the trust can work really well with."</p>
<p>" I am very grateful to West Berks for all they have done in making my life as a carer to my wife so much easier". I was worried about letting her go to begin with because I do miss her, but have had a good rest and felt able to carry on supporting her because of these respite breaks.</p>
<p>My family want to give a massive THANK YOU to your office. We want to compliment your staff, who have been outstanding, have been willing to go that extra mile and are a credit to West Berks Council. Once again I cannot thank you all enough for what you have done for my family.</p>
<p>We continue to have excellent working relationships with all your team and this situation has yet again highlighted this relationship in the way in which this review has been conducted... in a sensible and well considered manner... thanks to you all.</p>
<p>The best support and actual therapy that I have ever received. I felt I was able to express my feelings to someone who understood and was completely non judgmental. Talking to your staff has continued to sustain me in trying emotional circumstances.</p>
<p>. Wow we got the jackpot!!! You are great and all through my stay in hospital I was so happy that my son was taken care of so well. It's always a joy to see you. You are so funny and honest. I smile when I think of you. Thank you for being you and continuing to support us.</p>
<p>Just want to take this opportunity to say how impressed I have been by your commitment and determination in making things happen for us.</p>
<p>I have to say what a proactive a person centered team they are! Their enthusiasm for the service, staff morale, and consideration of customers was so obvious that their enthusiasm rubbed off on us, and we wanted to work there too :-)</p>

7. Conclusion

There has been an increase in the number of issues raised within the detail of complaints, despite the overall number of complaints remaining fairly static. This has affected the overall response times, although effective written responses, mediation and follow up has resulted in complaints being thoroughly investigated and resolved.

The overall management of complaints is robust and undertaken with sensitivity, which meets the requirements of the relevant guidance and regulations.

However, the Council is not complacent and recognises that good communication and standard of service delivery are areas for ongoing improvement in order to meet the expectations of our clients.

Appendix A

Adults Social Care Procedure

From 1st April 2009, a single approach to handling complaints across Health and Adult Social Care was introduced.

The new regulations:

- 1- enable organisations to develop more flexible and responsive complaints process, providing a more **personalised response**
- 2- Introduce single local resolution stage, replacing the tiered stages
- 3- Introduce a new single system for independent review (Health Service Ombudsman or Local Government Ombudsman)

The statutory complaints procedure is structured around three main principles:

‘LISTENING’, ‘RESPONDING’, ‘IMPROVING’

These principles help the Authority to take a more active approach to deal with complaints more effectively and use the information received to learn and improve services for all its service users.

LISTENING

A proactive approach will be taken to LISTEN to people about their complaint, to:-

- make sure that we really understand the issues
- find out what they want to happen as a result
- obtain the right information to assess the seriousness of a complaint

In doing this, people will feel more valued, they will have more confidence in our organisation, and we will be able to manage their expectations, so that the outcome is more likely to be to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

It is a statutory requirement for all complaints to be acknowledged within **3 working days**. A clear statement of the complaint and **Action Plan** of how it is proposed to investigate the complaint will be sent to complainant.

The Complaints Manager will negotiate timescales for responses on an individual basis.

RESPONDING

The Complaints manager will risk assess the seriousness of each complaint, to assist in ensuring the right action is taken.

The Investigating Manager will respond to the complainant within the agreed timescales.

If a complaint is established as very serious or of high complexity or has not been resolved by a local investigation an independent investigator/ mediator will be appointed.

If after completion of the independent investigation the complainant is still not happy they have the right to ask the Local Government Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

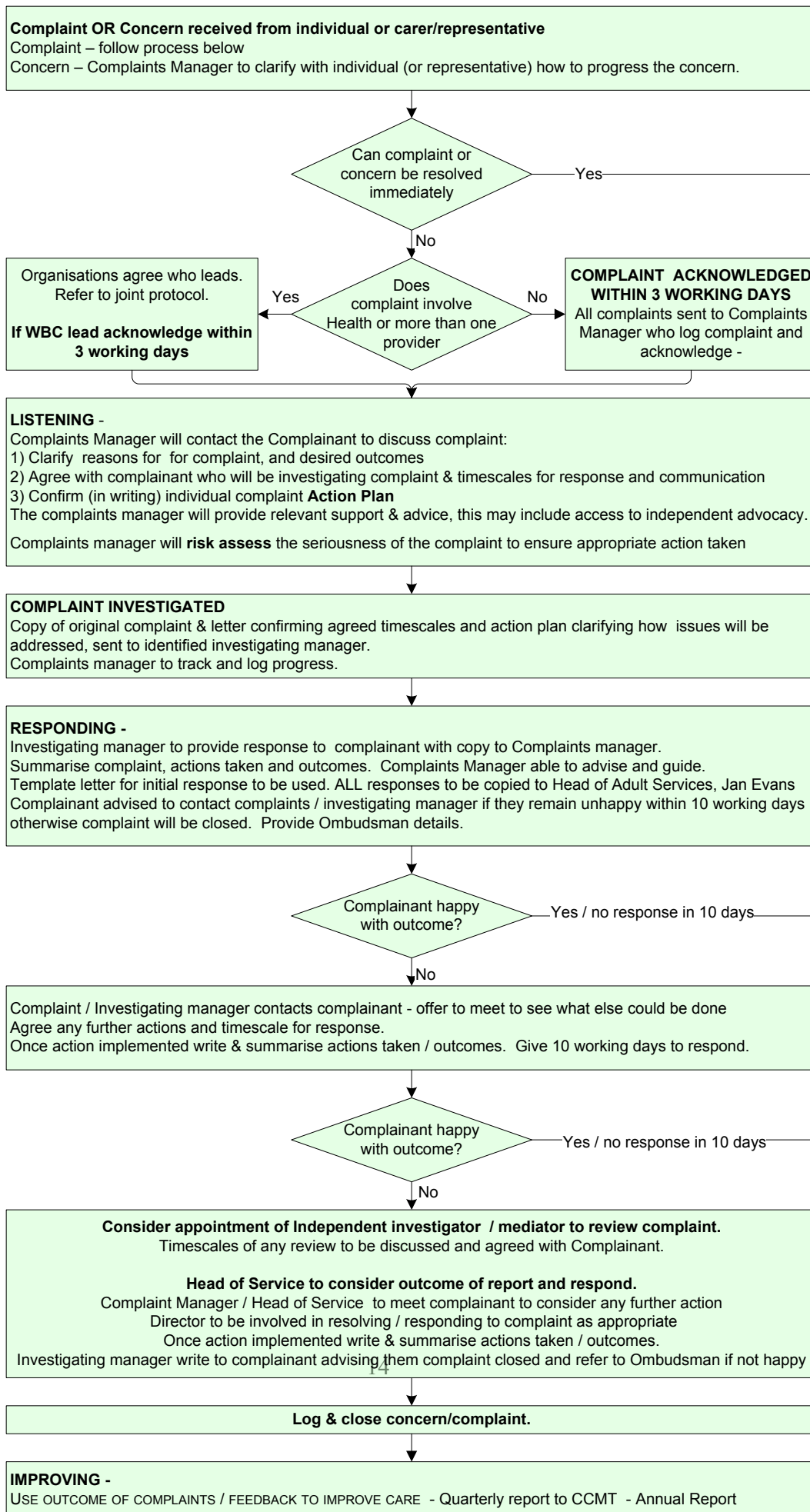
IMPROVING

Complaints provide a vital source of insight about peoples experiences. We will use this feedback to assist in making improvements to the service we work in and improve staff learning and professional development.

The resolution of any complaint is seen as a continuous process responding to individual needs, ***please refer to the flowchart overleaf***

Listening, Responding, Improving – WBC Adult Social Care complaints process

LISTENING
RESPONDING
IMPROVING



Safeguarding Adults

If any Safeguarding issues are identified then the Safeguarding process is activated & the complaints process frozen until the Safeguarding issues are resolved.

Complaints Manager to notify complainant in writing.