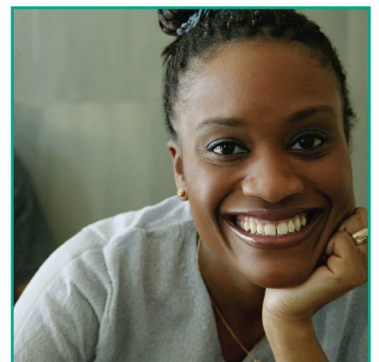


# Adult Social Care

## Compliments and Complaints

Annual Report  
2014 -15



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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 2014 and 31 March 2015. It highlights how the service has performed in relation to statutory timescales as well as in respect of learning and service improvements identified through the analysis of the complaints process in previous years.

During this period 97 complaints were received either directly from Service users, their families or representatives. 95 complaints were successfully investigated and resolved through our Adult Social Care Management Team, 1 complaint was investigated and resolved by an Independent Investigator and 1 complaint was progressed to the Government Ombudsman for consideration neither were upheld.

The complaints received encompass multiple issues, the key themes of which can be identified as:-

- Quality of care
- Lack of support
- Invoicing/charging
- Staff attitude
- Dispute over assessed care package
- Communications
- Care planning
- Changes to care team
- Delayed discharge
- Missing item
- Personal budget
- Service user attitude/behaviour
- Waiting for services
- Not being kept updated
- Delayed / poor discharge planning
- Reports being sent out late
- No minutes of meeting shared
- Staff not returning phone calls
- No feedback
- Not carrying out tasks
- Changes to Care Manager

This list has been used throughout the year to track the nature of the complaints. However it is recognised that the themes above are too broad and work has now taken place to ensure themes are more explicit for 2015/16. In addition a quarterly report will be produced and presented to the Management Team within Adult Social Care to ensure that emerging themes are identified and where necessary action is

taken to improve.

100% of complaints were acknowledged in 3 working days and 99% of complaints were responded to within agreed timescales.

In 2014/15 the Service received 221 compliments from service providers, families and partner agencies. A small selection of these are shown later in the report.

## **2. Complaints Process**

The framework for managing complaints is set out within the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

The fundamental principles that underpin the Adults Social Care complaints procedure are:-

- Listening
- Responding
- Improving

If having exhausted all reasonable avenues within the Council's complaints procedure, the complainant still remains dissatisfied; they may ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to consider their complaint.

A summary of the Adult Social Care Complaints Process is at Appendix A.

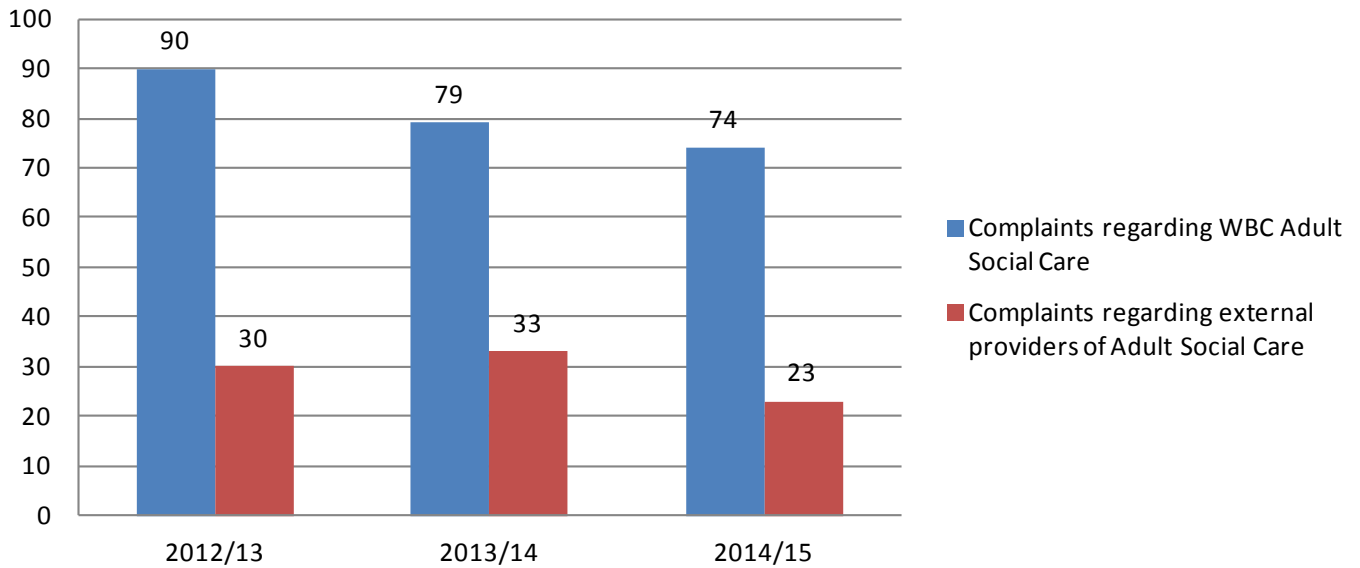
## **3. Analysis**

During 2014 -15, 97 complaints were received. Of these 74 were about Adult Social Care and 23 were about external service providers.

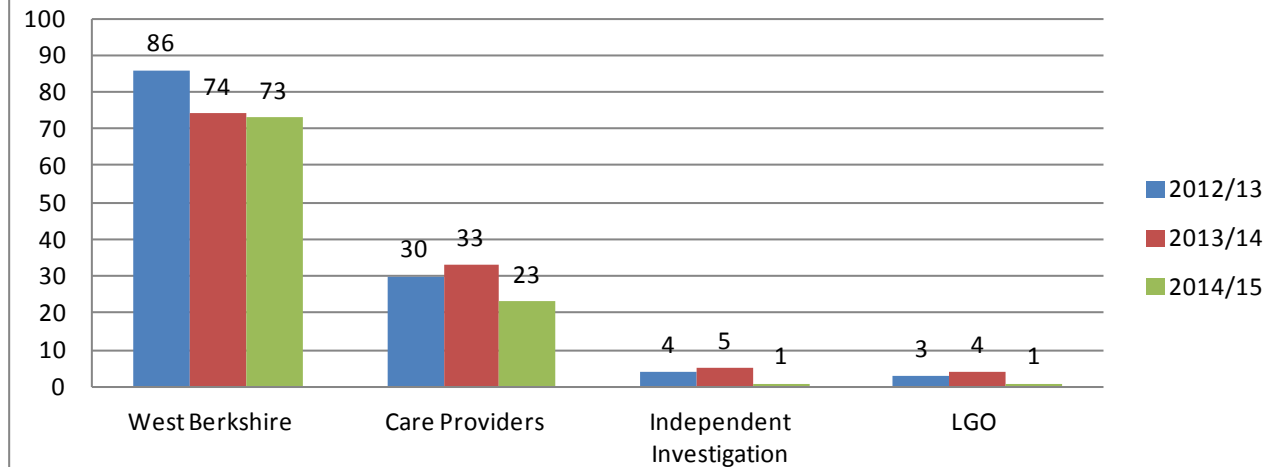
Of the 97 complaints received, 95 were successfully resolved by the Adult Social Care team, 1 complaint was investigated via an Independents Investigation and 1 complaint went to the Local Government Ombudsman, neither were upheld.

The number of provider complaints has fallen from 32 in 2013/14 to 23 in 2014/15, this is partly due to more robust early intervention and proactive visits carried out by the Care Quality team, who work with and support providers to improve their services and improve the quality of care being delivered.

## Volumes of Complaints



## Complaint by resolution



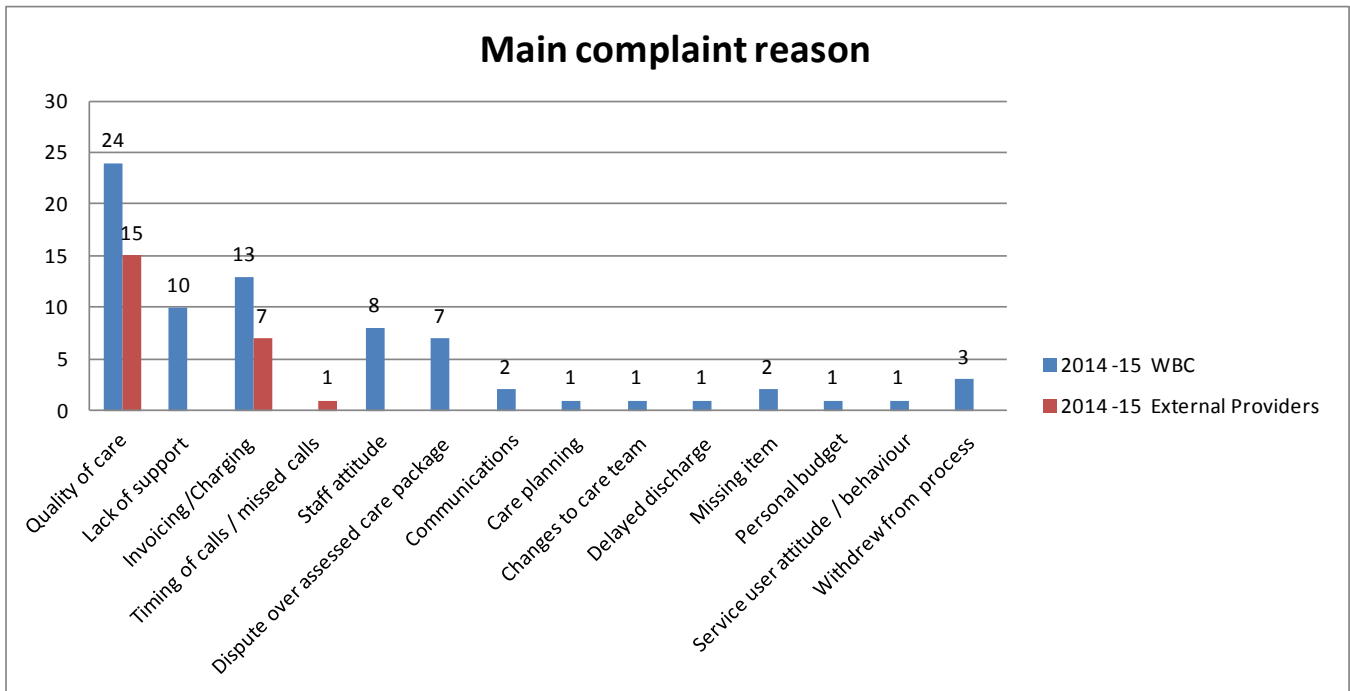
### 4. Timescale for Responses to Complaints

100% of complaints were acknowledged within 3 days and 99% of complaints were responded to within the agreed timescales.

### 5. Themes

The complaints received encompass multiple issues with the main areas being: quality of care, lack of support, charging and staff attitude. It is recognised that

these themes are too broad and work has now taken place to ensure themes are more explicit for 2015/16. In addition a quarterly report will be produced and presented to the Management Team within Adult Social Care to ensure that the number of complaints and emerging themes are identified, monitored and where necessary action is taken to improve.



## 6. Conclusion

There has been a decrease in the overall number of complaints with 98% of complaints being resolved locally and only 2% going to either an independent investigation or the Local Government Ombudsman.

Within the graph above the headings quality of care and lack of support are generic headings where a number of issues have come in from a single complainant. During 2015/16 the headings will be more defined, they will also include new categories being introduced due to the implementation of the Care Act.

The overall management of complaints is robust and undertaken with sensitivity, which meets the required regulations. Complaints are taken seriously and resolution is sought at the earliest opportunity resulting in less stress for the complainants and their families. However, the Service is not complacent and recognises that good communication and standard of service delivery are areas of ongoing improvement.

Whilst it is important to reflect on the themes of complaints and areas for ongoing improvement, we also need to recognise where the service has worked well. During 2014/15 the Service received 221 compliments from service providers, families and partner agencies.

## 7. Lessons Learned

The complaints received during 2014-15 have identified the following as areas of improvement:-

- **Staff Attitude** - More pro-active communication with clients plus greater care when using consent to share proformas.
- **Lack of support & staff attitude** - More effective communication with individuals and families involved in meetings with professionals, to ensure a greater understanding of what is being discussed, and agreed. This will empower families to contribute more effectively and understand outcomes and consequences.
- **Lack of Support & Quality of Care** - Key worker systems to be adopted by the 4 x West Berkshire Care Homes to enable families to have confidence in a single point of contact.
- **Charging** - Revise information and simplify guidance notes provided to clients regarding potential charges for services.

### Example of lessons learned:-

**Complaint 1:** A Care Manager telephoned a family home and spoke to clients' adult son about his Mother's condition and ability to manage personal care/requirement for a DFG. A "consent to share" form had been signed. However, the son and husband had the same name and Client was very upset as she had not shared the full extent of her illness with her son as she wanted to protect him.

**Lessons Learnt:** If a request from a family member is received, we should speak to them directly, rather than client, but where the client has capacity we still need to obtain the client's permission.

**Management Action:** Confidentiality was discussed in all team meetings in Adult Social Care to remind staff about the importance and it was agreed that the "consent to share" form should be reviewed, and staff should be reminded to complete the form if it has not already been completed by another team.

**Complaint 2:** During a "best interest" meeting the husband of a client was very vocal and disruptive, not allowing other family members to share their views. The extended family felt that the Manager was unable to control the meeting resulting in

the family not being able to fully contribute to the meeting.

**Lessons Learnt:** The Manager chaired and took the minutes, which impacted how the meeting was run and the opportunities for all family members to participate.

**Management Action:** A dedicated person will be present at all future “best interest” meetings to take minutes. .

**Complaint 3:** When a service user went into a residential home, the family were unsure who they should be speaking to about their father’s care when the Manager was not around. When they approached care staff they seemed unable to answer their queries.

**Lessons Learnt:** It is important that all staff have the confidence to respond to family requests and that residential homes have a robust system for passing on requests from family.

**Management Action:** The Registered Manager of a residential home will set up and monitor “ key worker system” and all relatives will be notified of the named key workers and the expectations that they can have of the key worker/s. Compliments

During 2015/16 the theme categories will be re-visited, monitored and presented to the Adult Social Care Management Team on a quarterly basis to ensure learning is cascaded throughout the Service.

## 8. Compliments

Below is a small selection of the 221 compliments we received about the service our staff provide from families and partner agencies: -

“We want Social Services to know how much we appreciate your being there in our times of need, so much appreciated. You should be so proud, keep up the great work.”

“I am wiring to offer my gratitude to you and your team for the help and continued support with the care of my mother in law.”

“Mum feels very lucky to be in an area of the country where the elderly are so well looked after by the local council. She has been singing your praises to anyone she meets- I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for the quality service provided.”

“I think you all need to know what a fantastic job the team does. The carers are simply wonderful; helping with personal care, and in our case, working to give Dad the confidence to try and do things for himself again, in fact in the 3 weeks he has been home he has gone from being mostly bedridden to walking on a



frame. The whole package you provide is a credit to West Berkshire.”

“Thank you for your email and telephone call. This information will help me and my brother to move my parents forward and reduce the stress on us. You have been very helpful, and it is comforting to know that I can contact you and receive sound advice.”

*“First, I cannot adequately express my thanks to you all. Knowing that the Council/Social Services often receive negative comments I want it on record that you did everything you could to find somewhere suitable for my mother and were, throughout, patient and understanding. You found her somewhere really lovely and very comfortable.”*

## **Appendix A – Adult Social Care Procedure**

From 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

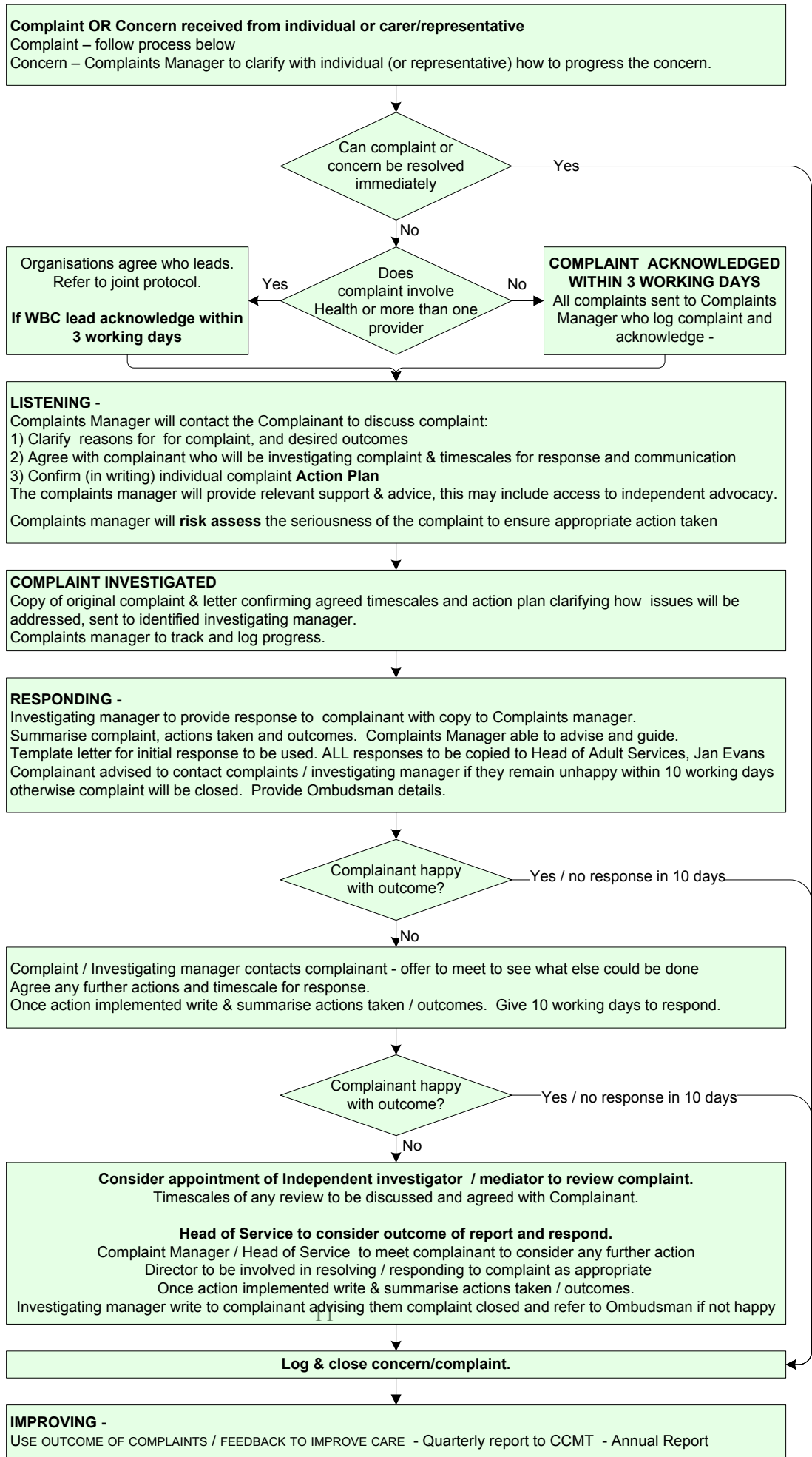
Complaints provide a vital source of insight about peoples experiences.

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.

