

Adult Social Care and Health Annual Complaints Report

2012 - 2013

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London Borough of Barnet Adult Social Care and Health

Annual Complaints Report – 2012/2013

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1. Introduction

This report provides information on complaints and representations for Barnet Adult Social Care and Health (from 1 April 2013 known as Adults and Communities) for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 dealt with through the statutory adult social care and corporate complaints procedures.

1.1 Background

Barnet Council is required under statutory regulations, to report annually to the relevant Council committee on adult social care complaints.

The Council is required to operate a separate statutory complaints and representations procedure, in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (hereby referred to as 'the Regulations'). Any complaint which does not fall under these requirements will be considered under the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

2. Adult social care statutory complaints procedure

Since 1 April 2009 complaints have been assessed in terms of their seriousness and how likely the issue is to recur, so that appropriate and proportionate action can be taken in response. This is in line with the Department of Health's Guidance 'Listening, Responding, Improving', where complaints are considered as low, moderate or high risk. Barnet Adult Social Care and Health then assigns low and moderate risk complaints as 'Straightforward' and high risk complaints as 'Serious and/or Complex'. A complaint can be re-assigned if new information arises during the investigation process.

Straightforward complaints (Low or Moderate risk) - Local resolution

When a complaint is assessed as straightforward, it is dealt with by a member of staff and/or line manager in the team providing the services, within 20 working days with the aim of achieving resolution. Where possible, the response is provided within 10 working days.

The complainant is invited to comment on the response. Where there is disagreement, a meeting is offered to discuss the concerns with a manager and the Complaints and Representations Manager. A final decision on the complaint is then provided by the Head of Service.

Serious and/or Complex complaints (High risk) - Independent investigation

If the complaint is especially serious and/or complex an independent investigation will be arranged that produces a report. Adjudication with remedy is then provided within 25 working days (extendable to 65 working days) from the date the complaint is agreed.

The complainant is invited to comment on the response and if there is disagreement, a meeting is arranged to discuss the concerns with a senior manager and the Complaints and Representations Manager. A final decision on the complaint is then provided by the senior manager.

Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) is an independent organisation

authorised to investigate complaints where the Council's own investigations have not resolved the issues raised.

The person making the complaint retains the right to approach the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. However, the Local Government Ombudsman's policy is to allow the local authority to consider the complaint first and will refer the complaint back to the Council unless exceptional criteria are met.

All timescales contained within this report are in working days.

3. Accessing the complaints procedure

A number of steps have been taken to ensure that the complaints procedure is accessible to all service users, carers and their representatives. The Adult Social Care and Health complaints procedure continues to be widely publicised:

- The Comments, Compliments and Complaints booklets are widely distributed to public offices in the borough, including voluntary organisations and to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community groups.
- The Easy Read version of the booklet 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints' is also widely distributed. This is aimed at people with learning disabilities and people whose first language is not English.
- Information about making a comment, compliment or complaint in relation to Adult Social Care and Health is available on the Barnet Council website at www.barnet.gov.uk
- Public information on making a complaint about Adult Social Care and Health is also available at public events. We held several public events including Barnet Older People's Assembly, The Big Health Check Event, Have Your Say Day, and Safeguarding Month, which were attended by a wide range of our service users and carers including older adults and people with learning disabilities and their carers. In addition, we also had information available at the Multicultural Day Event and Stroke Event in early 2013.
- Information about representations and complaints was shared at various meetings with key stakeholders representing various disability groups, including the Barnet Experts by Experience Group, the Clinical Commissioning Group and at the Healthwatch Launch event.
- Information about representations and complaints was shared with the Leadership Team and Care Services Delivery managers and the complaints service promoted.
- Managers are asked to feature compliments, representations and complaints as a standing item in their individual team meetings and their Information Centres. Staff and managers are also reminded and encouraged to utilise the support services provided by the Complaints and Representations Team.
- There is an interim joint agreement between Adult Social Care and Health and Your Choice Barnet - The Barnet Group on how to manage complaints, which involve the two organisations. Information will be provided and the service promoted once the policy is approved by senior management.

All staff are advised to promote the use of advocates for vulnerable people, and advocacy support is available to complainants if they wish to help them to make their complaint. This support is commissioned through a contract with Barnet Centre for Independent Living, who has sub-contracts with Advocacy in Barnet and Mind in Barnet to provide advocacy services. All public information booklets promote the use of advocates.

4. Overview

From the 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 inclusive the department has dealt with 12,998 people.

- The figure 12,998 above consists of 5,459 contacts and 7,539 people receiving a service in 2012/2013.
- The figure 7,539 above consists of 1,959 new Community Care Assessments and 5,580 reassessments.

In the same period the following communications were received from service users, carers and/or their representatives:

- 112 compliments
- 35 representations
- 86 complaints
- 4 Local Government Ombudsman enquiries and complaints

Common themes of complaints received relating to Adult Social Care and Health are:

- Disagreement with Community Care Assessments
- Staff conduct and attitude
- General 'quality of service' provided

Of which, just over half (55%) of all the 86 complaints received were considered justified in full or in part.

Customers expect their interaction with the department to be professional and positive, and in the main this is the case. When things go wrong they expect swift action to be taken to resolve the matters causing concern.

Lessons have been learnt from the complaints received throughout 2012/2013 and generally there is a need for the department and some of our care providers to improve on customer care. This is being addressed by adopting a more customer focused approach through council wide 'Think Customer' initiative, allowing more involvement from the service users and their carers/representatives and improving the communication processes in place to enable this to happen.

5. Learning from representations and complaints

The complaints process provides the council with an additional means of monitoring performance and improving service quality, and provides an important opportunity to learn from complaints.

There is an established system in place to capture a range of complaints information including the nature of the complaint, the action taken, the outcome of each complaint and whether there was compliance with the time periods specified in the Regulations. The information captured from this monitoring is used in a number of ways including:

- The provision of feedback and the dissemination of the information to managers, to improve systems and procedures
- A monthly update to Practice Governance group
- A quarterly update report to Leadership Team, which includes senior management attendance
- Measurement of performance and quality control
- Where services are purchased under contract, informing both the appropriate service Commissioners and Supply Management Team who monitor each contract.

6. Service improvements

The nature and complexities of delivering social care means that some times things go wrong or we find as a result of our investigations that we could improve the way we do things and improve the experience of our service users. Some complaints outcomes are a matter of putting things right for the individual and apologising to the service user. Other outcomes have a wider significance on service delivery.

The following lessons have been learnt from complaints throughout the year, with changes already made based upon the learning, and include proposed changes for the future.

It should be noted that the complaints described below are in relation to individual members of staff' working practices, rather than a systematic departmental problem. The issues raised were discussed with the individual and dealt with by the line manager in supervision 1:2:1 meetings where support, advice and/or training were provided to deal with the shortcoming of the worker.

- It is expected that service users views should be taken into account in the assessment process, and not rely on previous contact and records to make decisions.
- Carers issues to take as higher priority as service user issues when discussing the best way of supporting individuals and families
- The need for social workers to prepare before community care assessment reviews, with a proper agenda and minute taker and in turn for the service user and/or carer to be informed prior to the meeting of what is to be expected, so they too are prepared.
- Controversial matters to be discussed outside of the review process, such as potential safeguarding or detailed financial issues
- Importance of transition planning to ensure that a smooth handover takes place between children's and adult services, so that service users and their families are prepared for the transition and services are able to plan together for transfers of high cost complex care packages.

Customer Care and Communication

- The need to involve families in a meaningful way in safeguarding investigations, case conferences and in understanding the outcomes in order to instil confidence in the outcome
- Review documents, Support Plans etc must always be dated and must be clear whether it is a draft or final version.

- Electronic (and manual) diaries to be kept up-to-date and current at all times, as this should prevent missed appointments and/or late attendance
- Managers to keep in contact with complainant throughout the complaint investigation process
- Requests to be dealt with in a timely manner and should further information be required, this is communicated to the requester – with regular updates provided if appropriate
- Limit the number of staff members communicating with a service user /family (especially when things have gone wrong) - appoint a link-officer to minimise this
- The need to adhere to corporate standards, including timescales
- The need to consider the spoken or written tone when communicating with the public

Contracts

- Joint working between the contract team and social work teams should be considered and co-ordinated as early on in the process as possible
- Clear communication must be in place in regards to the expectations of the external service provider for each service user
- Annual contract monitoring needs to be evidenced (recorded)

Service Provider

- External service providers should try to, where possible provide regular carers and monitor care provision closely
- External service providers to be supported to follow up complaints and to be held accountable when things go wrong, by providing explanations, acknowledgements and apologies (if necessary), as well as ensuring that the service being provided improves
- External service providers must ensure they fulfil their responsibilities in regards to meeting the needs of the service user as outlined in the Support Plan
- Clarification around consent for use of service users monies needs to be in place (recorded)
- External service providers to adopt a positive approach when dealing with complaints from service users. Although the process may be being followed, it is felt the human element to complaints handling is sometimes lacking; therefore, consideration should be given to new complainants being offered the opportunity to meet with the agency' complaint investigator, which is standard procedure in the Council's statutory complaints process.

Social Work

- Protection plan review documents to be user-friendly and should be shared with families with some explanation.
- Social workers to ensure a separate Carers' Assessment is offered to carers (the assessment is available, on the Barnet Council website) and to advise carers that the Barnet Carers Centre can also provide assistance.
- Social workers to ensure service users/carers are informed of the outcome of costing panel
- When leaving or moving team, social workers must ensure any outstanding actions on individual cases are properly handed over to the new worker or existing team leader.

- The department has a duty of care to ensure where concerns have been raised about an individual that checks are made with that person to ensure they are safe (in spite of it not always being appreciated or welcomed).
- Social workers to ensure the eligibility criteria is explained in full and is clear/understood
- Clear explanation needed of role and function of the assessment and/or service
- Clear explanation of decision process i.e. 'Best interest'

Electronic databases

- Accurate recording by all members of staff

Miscellaneous

- It is acceptable for social care staff to challenge medical colleagues if they consider information held on health records are not accurate
- Staff are reminded to always wear and show their Barnet Council official name badge or ID (identification) on arrival when visiting a customer's home or property
- Informal agreement of social care costs is not sufficient, there needs to be written confirmation to ensure care does not continue without formal agreement

Staff have been informed of the learning relevant to their service area through emails, supervision sessions and team meetings. Adherence to the learning from complaints is monitored via regular quality assurance checks by respective managers.

In addition, a Practice Governance Working Group for managers is in operation and a section of the work programme is dedicated to complaints and the group examines the lessons learnt from complaints, including identifying and implementing training requirements that arise. Workforce Development is involved and provides assistance to support the implementation of this.

Managers within Care Services Delivery have also been briefed on how compliments, enquiries and complaints can feature on their individual team Information Centres. The working of this is monitored periodically.

As part of this process, managers are encouraged to remind their staff to review their own professional practices and to ensure that they share good practice and any new initiatives.

In June 2012 all Adult Social Care and Health staff were invited to a conference, which focused on the 'customer, client, service user' and three sessions within the programme included:

- Think customer – good customer care, best practice and corporate standards
- Protecting customer information – Data Protection requirements, and
- The customer journey in Adult Social Care and Health.

Designed to improve and deliver better customer services to our service users for the future.

7. Compliments

a. Total number of compliments

Table 1a below shows the total number of compliments recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 compared to the previous two years.

Table 1a: Compliments			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Compliments	80	48	112

Table 1a: Number of compliments recorded in the last three years

There has been a significant increase in the numbers of compliments received in 2012/2013. It is difficult to benchmark performance in relation to this as compliments received in other directorates within the Council are not recorded and very few other local authorities' have a system in place for recording compliments; however, it definitely indicates that good practice is happening across the department and our service users are grateful and satisfied with aspects of the service provided.

The compliments received varied and ranged from individual messages of gratitude to specific members of staff; i.e. support staff, social workers, care coordinators and managers, to thank you cards to whole teams for the work they had done for the service user and their carer. For example:

- One compliment was received thanking a worker for arranging for occupational therapy equipment for her mother and she wrote, *"Mum commented on how helpful she found the new stair rail. She does not usually volunteer information when things are working, so I think it has made a big difference to her. Thanks for the perseverance."*
- Another read, *"A big thank you for all you have done for mum. I know that without your help my mother would not have gone to RF care home. All your patience and kindness was so much appreciated."*
- Another, *"Thank you for visiting mum - she loves having people over! Thank you too for the information about the taxis"*.
- Another, *"Thank you very much for your professional care, diligence and patience. I feel that I finally started to get my life back in balance."*
- And a team compliment read, *"I value the support that I received throughout my time at the group..."*

Satisfaction in the national Adult Social Care Survey for 2011/2012 showed 88% compared to 90% nationally. The results for 2012/2013 showed satisfaction in Barnet is 87% compared to 90% nationally and an average of 86% in our comparator group.

b. Compliments by service area and period received

Table 1b below shows the total number of compliments recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by service area and gives a comparison to the previous two years.

Table 1b: Compliments by service area and period received			
Service Area	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Access	8	8	45
Enablement	21		
Physical and Sensory Impairment	0		
Complex Planning	8	19	37
Older Adults	0		
Learning Disabilities	8	9	3
Mental Health	12	11	10
Performance and Supply Management	0	1	2
Strategic Commissioning	6		
Transformation and Resources	17	0	15
Total	80	48	112

Table 1b: Number of compliments recorded by service area and period received in the last three years

8. Representations

Service users may make representations about the contact they have had with Adult Social Care and Health or the service they have received without necessarily making a complaint under the formal procedure.

A representation may be regarded as a comment, enquiry or statement of a formal nature regarding matters such as the availability, delivery or nature of services. They will not necessarily be critical. They can be taken into account when assessing the quality of a service provided, but are not usually viewed as a complaint. They may be critical but the service user does not wish to go through the complaints procedure.

In 2012/2013, 31 representations were received, of which 4 escalated to the formal complaints procedure. In 2011/2012, 22 representations were received, of which 4 also escalated to the formal complaints procedure. In 2010/2011, 25 representations were received and all were satisfactorily resolved, as none escalated through to the formal complaints procedure.

a. Total number of representations

Table 2a below shows the total number of new representations recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 compared to the previous two years and the number of representations that escalated to a formal complaint.

Table 2a: Representations			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Representations	25	22	31
Escalated to formal complaints procedure	0	4	4

Table 2a: Number of representations recorded in the last three years, including the number that escalated to a formal complaint

b. Representations by service area and period received

Table 2b below shows a breakdown of representations recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by service area, compared to the previous two years.

Table 2b: Representations by service area and period received			
Service Area	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Access, Enablement and Rehabilitation	7	10	5 (1)
Older People and Long Term Conditions	7	3	8 (1)
Learning Disabilities Social Work	3	2 (1)	6 (1)
Mental Health Services	1	1	5
Strategic Commissioning	3	2	1
Transformation and Resources	4	4 (3)	6 (1)
Total no. of representations	25	22 (4)	31 (4)

Table 2b: Number of representations recorded in the last three years by service area and period received

The numbers in the brackets are where the representation escalated through to the complaints process.

9. Complaints

a. Total number of complaints

Table 3a below shows the total number of new complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 compared to the previous two years.

Table 3a: Complaints			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Complaints	88	100	86

Table 3a: Number of complaints recorded in the last three years

In 2010/2011, 88 complaints were received. The number increased to 100 complaints in 2011/2012 and increase of 14%. In 2012/2013 the number of complaints received fell to 86, a reduction of 14%. Overall in the last three years given the small numbers concerned and the benchmarking data shown below this is not seen as significant. All complaints are reviewed to ensure that we identify any patterns in relation to reoccurring issues.

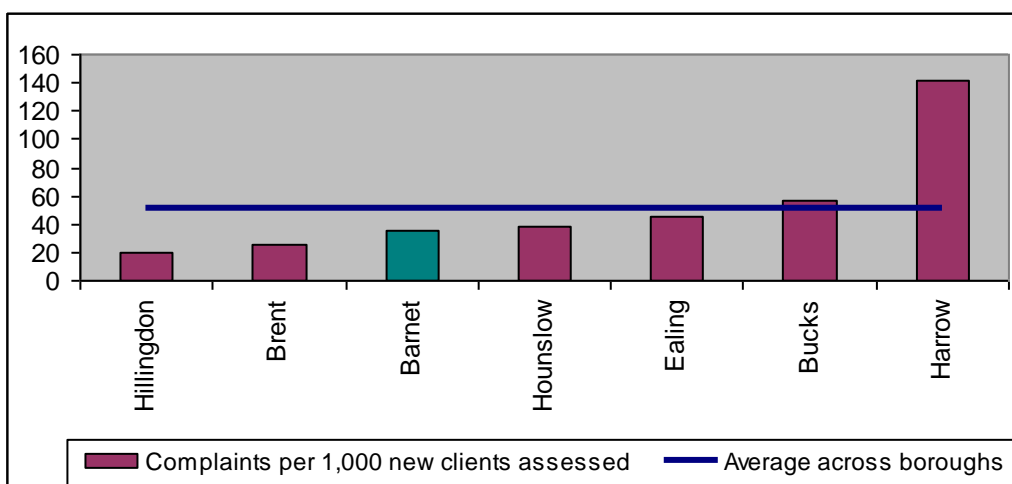
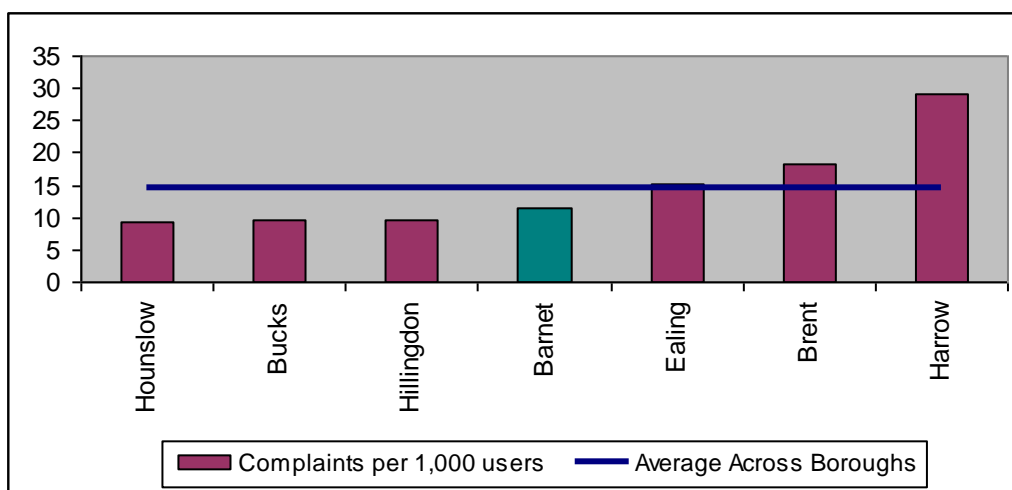
In 2010/2011 the number of people who received a new social care assessment was 2,339, compared to 2,466 in 2011/2012 and 2,495 in 2012/2013; the number of people receiving a service went up by 1.8% from 7,394 in 2010/2011 to 7,525 in 2011/2012 and in 2012/2013 the number was 7,539.

b. Benchmarking - Boroughs within the North West London group

Table 3b: 2012/2013 - Comparative boroughs in the North West London group

Borough	Complaints 2012/13	Service users 2011/12	Complaints per 1,000 users	New clients assessed 2011/12	Complaints per 1,000 clients assessed
Barnet	86	7,525	11	2,465	35
Brent	107	5,845	18	4,165	26
Ealing	143	9,405	15	3,160	45
Bucks	126	13,235	10	2,245	56
Harrow	178	6,115	29	1,260	141
Hillingdon	55	5,680	10	2,815	20
Hounslow	51	5,500	9	1,355	38

The calculations for 'Per 1000 service users' and 'Per 1000 clients' assessed are based on 2011/2012 figures for service users and new clients assessed, as the 2012/2013 comparative data is not be available for a few months.



The above analysis shows that the number of complaints received in Barnet in the year 2012/13, as in 2011/12 this is not unduly worrying. Given the relatively small numbers involved it is very difficult to say what good or bad would look like in relation to the number of complaints. For example having a very low number of complaints

may not necessary signify good performance, it could highlight that individuals do not know how to complain.

c. Compliments compared to complaints

Table 3c below shows the total number of compliments recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, compared to the total number of complaints recorded and gives a comparison to the previous two years.

Table 3c: Number of compliments and complaints			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Compliments	80	48	112
Complaints	88	100	86

Table 3c: Number of compliments and complaints recorded in the last three years

d. Complaints by procedure

Table 3d below shows the distribution of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by complaints procedure and gives a comparison to the previous two years.

Table 3d: Complaints by procedure			
Procedure	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Statutory complaints	78	94	81
Corporate complaints	10	6	5
Total	88	100	86

Table 3d: Number of complaints recorded by complaints procedure in the last three years

e. Complaints by procedure and seriousness or stage

Table 3e below shows the total number of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by type and seriousness or stage.

Table 3e: 2011/12 - Complaints by procedure and seriousness/stage			
Number of complaints recorded under the statutory social care procedure		Number of complaints recorded under Council's corporate procedure	
Straightforward (Low/Moderate risk)	80	Stage 1	4
Serious and/or Complex (High risk)	1	Stage 2	1
		Stage 3	0
Total	81	Total	5

Table 3e: Number of complaints recorded in 2011/2012 by procedure and seriousness/stage

A total of 86 complaints were recorded as received between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 and of these, 81 complaints were dealt with under the statutory social care complaints procedure and 5 were dealt with under the corporate complaints procedure.

Of the 81 statutory social care complaints received, 80 were considered as Straightforward and 1 considered a Serious and/or Complex complaint.

Of the 5 corporate complaints received, four were resolved at Stage 1, but 1 escalated to Stage 2 of the process, but was resolved there. There were no Stage 3 complaint investigations.

f. Complaints by service area

Table 3f below shows a breakdown of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by service area, compared to the previous two years.

Table 3f: Complaints by service area			
Service Area	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Access	8	26	27
Enablement	20		
Physical and Sensory Impairment	-		
Complex Planning	21	11	23
Older Adults	-		
Learning Disabilities	19	20	16
Mental Health	10	13	6
Performance and Supply Management	-	6	7
Strategic Commissioning	3		
Transformation and Resources	7	24	7
Total	88	100	86

Table 3f: Number of complaints recorded by service area in last three years

g. Complaints by service area and period received

Table 3g below shows the total number of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by service area and period received.

Table 3g: 2012/13 - Complaints by service area and period received					
Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total incl. %
Enablement and Rehabilitation	5	8	7	7	27 (31%)
Older People and Long Term Conditions	3	10	6	4	23 (27%)
Learning Disabilities	3	5	4	4	16 (19%)
Mental Health	1	2	2	1	6 (7%)
Strategic Commissioning	1	2	2	2	7 (8%)
Transformation and Resources	0	4	1	2	7 (8%)
Total	13 (15%)	31 (36%)	22 (26%)	20 (23%)	86 (100%)

Table 3g: Complaints recorded in 2012/ 2013 by service area and period received

h. Complaints by subject category

Table 3h below provides a breakdown of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by complaint subject and gives a comparison to the previous two years.

Table 3h: Complaints by subject category						
Category	No. of Complaints 2010/11	% of Complaints 2010/11	No. of Complaints 2011/12	% of Complaints 2011/12	No. of Complaints 2012/13	% of Complaints 2012/13
Assessment delay	6	6.8%	4	4%	2	2%
Assessment disagreement	22	25%	8	8%	12	14%
Assessment request	1	1.1%	-	-	-	-
Conduct of staff	11	12.5%	10	10%	18	21%
Ext. Ser. Prov.	-	-	13	13%	-	-
Ext. Serv. Prov. Appointment	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Care Home	-	-	-	-	2	2%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Carer	-	-	-	-	6	7%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Conduct of staff	-	-	-	-	2	2%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Equipment	-	-	-	-	1	1%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Quality of service	-	-	-	-	6	7%
Ext. Serv. Prov. Timeliness	-	-	-	-	2	2%
Financial Assessment Disagreement	-	-	10	10%	1	1%
Information	4	4.6%	3	3%	7	8%
No response to previous comm.	4	4.6%	11	11%	3	4%
Quality of service	30	34%	25*	25%	14	16%
Service delay	5	5.7%	8	8%	7	8%
Unsatisfactory assessment	4	4.6%	5	5%	1	1%
Unsatisfactory response to previous comm.	1	1.1%	3	3%	1	1%
Total	88	100%	100	100%	86	100%

Table 3h Number of complaints recorded in the last three years by subject category

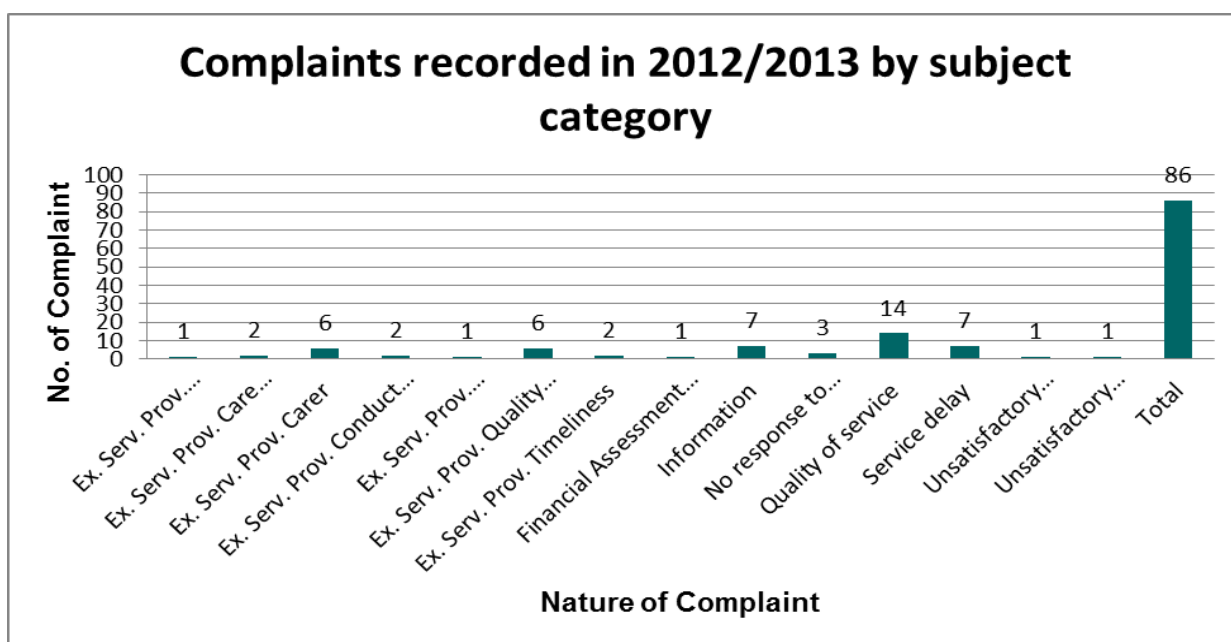
*Conduct of staff = 18 complaints – 1 (6%) upheld, 8(44%) partially upheld and 9 (50%) not upheld (see Table 3j)

It should be noted that the complaints described above are in relation to individual members of staffs working practice, rather than a systematic departmental problem. When this is the case, the issues raised within the complaint are discussed and dealt with by the line manager in 1:2:1 supervision meetings and support, advice and where necessary, training is provided to the individual and lessons learnt with reflexive practice.

In 2012/2013 significant transformational activity took place in Adult Social Care and Health, i.e. major restructuring. It was expected that during a period of significant change, complaints could increase and/or change their focus; the complaints and enquiries function closely monitored this and ensured that trends informed projects and change management activity.

i. Complaints by subject category - 2012/2013

Bar chart 3i below shows a breakdown of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 in graphical format by subject category.



Bar Chart 3i: Number of complaints recorded in 2012/2013 by subject category

j. Complaints by outcome

Tables 3j below shows the total number of Adult Social Care and Health complaints made during the past three years that were upheld (well founded), partially upheld (partially founded) and not upheld (not founded), together with those which were carried forward into the next reporting cycle, these being incomplete at year end.

Table 3j: Statutory complaints by outcome						
Straightforward and Corporate complaints	Number of complaints 2010/2011	% of complaints 2010/2011	Number of complaints 2011/2012	% of complaints 2011/2012	Number of complaints 2012/2013	% of complaints 2012/2013
Upheld (Well founded)	30	35%	28	28%	21	25%
Partially upheld (Partly founded)	14	16%	38	38%	26	30%
Not upheld (Not founded)	42	49%	33	33%	37	43%
Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	86	100%	99	99%	85	99%
Serious and/or Complex complaints	Number of complaints 2010/2011	% of complaints 2010/2011	Number of complaints 2011/2012	% of complaints 2011/2012	Number of complaints 2012/2013	% of complaints 2012/2013
Upheld (Well founded)	0	0%	0	0	0	0
Partially upheld (Partly founded)	2	100%	1	1%	1	1%
Not upheld (Not founded)	0	0%	0	0	0	0
Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0	0	0
Total	2	100%	1	1%	1	1%

Table 3j: Number of complaints recorded by outcome in last three years

In 2010/2011 just over 50% of the complaints received were justified in full or in part and in 2011/2012 this increased to two-thirds (66%), which meant more complaints were found to be justified. In 2012/2013 the numbers fell to just over 50% of the complaints received were justified in full or in part.

k. Complaints by outcome and subject

Table 3k below shows the total number of Adult Social Care and Health complaints recorded from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by the outcome and subject.

Table 3k: 2012/2013 – Complaints by outcome and subject					
Complaint subject	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	No. of complaints
Assessment delay	2	-	-	-	2
Assessment disagreement	4	-	8	-	12
Conduct of staff	1	8	9	-	18
External Service Provider Appointment	-	1	-	-	1
External Service Provider Care Home	-	2	-	-	2
External Service Provider Carer	2	1	3	-	6
External Service Provider Conduct of staff	1	1	-	-	2
External Service Provider Equipment	-	1	-	-	1
External Service Provider Quality of service	2	4	-	-	6
Ex. Serv. Prov. Timeliness	1	1	-	-	2
Financial assessment disagreement	-	1	-	-	1
Information	1	2	4	-	7
No response to previous communication	2	1	-	-	3
Service delay	-	2	5	-	7
Quality of service	5	1	7	1	14
Unsatisfactory assessment	-	1	-	-	1
Unsatisfactory response to previous communication	-	-	1	-	1
Total no. of complaints	21 (24%)	27 (31%)	37 (43%)	1 (1%)	86 (100%)

Table 3k: Complaints recorded by outcome and subject in 2012/2013

Complaints upheld and partially upheld vary in theme, and include some of the following:

- One carer arrived instead of two carers
- Carers not arriving on time
- Delay in assessment and arranging services. Also delay in paying Direct Payment
- Delay in providing invoices
- Social worker did not attend an arranged review meeting
- The council cancelled care package; therefore, not meeting service users needs
- Unhappy with occupational therapist and social worker who insisted on installing a iron framed bed with an inflatable rubber mattress to replace a standard orthopaedic bed.
- Unhappy with services provided by external service provider

- Concerns with lack of clarification given when speaking to a social worker
- Unhappy to receive personal budget survey letter, when have never received a personal budget
- Unhappy with community nurse behaviour
- Unhappy with the amount of care received
- Concerns at the number of inaccuracies in annual review report
- Inconsistent timings observed by carers and inconsistency in the care workers attending.
- Carer left service user in chair overnight and did not report the incident to the home care manager
- Unhappy with the lack of response to emails and letters. Unhappy that her mother is incorrectly being sent invoices, when she should be exempt from payment.
- Delay and difficulties experienced when arranging funding for care home accommodation
- Unhappy with the general quality of service from a commissioned service, including the lack of professionalism
- Concerns in relation to the attitude of staff towards the elderly when booking meetings and the installing occupational therapy equipment.
- No response to request from external service provider for an uplift in a service user's weekly fee.

Section 6 of this report outlines the lessons that have been learnt from some of these complaints and the service improvements that have been implemented.

I. Timeliness of statutory complaints acknowledgements

Table 3l below shows of the 81 statutory complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, 63 (78%) were acknowledged within the 3 working day statutory timescale.

Table 3l: 2012/2013 – Statutory acknowledgment letter/email sent			
Completed within timescale	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Total no. of complaints
Total	63 (78%)	18 (22%)	81 (100%)

Table 3l: Number of complaints acknowledged within 3 working day timescale

m. Timeliness of corporate complaints acknowledgments

Table 3m below shows of the 5 corporate complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, 4 (80%) were acknowledged within the agreed 2 working day timescale.

Table 3m: 2012/2013 – Corporate acknowledgment letter/email sent			
Completed within timescale	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Total no. of complaints
Total	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)

Table 3m: Number of complaints acknowledged within 2 working day timescale

n. Timeliness of complaint responses

Adult Social Care and Health target for responding to new complaints was 80%. The timescale for responding to a Straightforward complaint is 20 working days, a Serious and/or Complex complaint is 25 working days (extendable to 65 working days) and a Corporate complaint is 10 working days.

In 2010/2011, of the 88 complaints received 71 (88%) were dealt with within timescale. In 2011/2012 of the 100 complaints received, 77 (77%) were completed within timescale and in 2012/2013, of the 86 complaints received, 64 (75%) were dealt with within timescale. Although this performance in the last two years fell short of the usual standard and expectation, it is recognised that the complaints received during the said period were particularly complex in nature, requiring very detailed, robust investigations/responses.

Responding to complaints within timescales has been and will continue to be a priority for all managers within Adults and Communities and this will be reflected in their annual objectives/ appraisals

Table 3n below shows of the 86 complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, 1 complaint was withdrawn and 64 (75%) complaints were responded to within the set or agreed timescale.

Where the set or agreed timescales were not met complainants were kept informed and updated throughout the investigation process.

Table 3n: 2012/13 – Timeliness of complaint responses			
Completed within timescale	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Total no. of complaints
Total	64 (75%)	21 (25%)	*85 (100%)

Table 3n: Timeliness of complaint responses
* 1 complaint withdrawn

o. Timeliness of complaint responses by service area

Table 3o below shows the total number of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by service area and whether the timescale for responding to the complaint was met or not.

Table 3o: 2012/2013 – Timeliness of complaint responses by service area					
Service Area	No. of complaints	Timescale met		Timescale not met	
Enablement and Rehabilitation	27	20	74%	7	26%
*Older People and Long Term Conditions	22	18	82%	4	18%
Learning Disabilities Social Work	16	11	69%	5	31%
Mental Health Services	6	5	83%	1	17%
Strategic Commissioning	7	4	57%	3	43%
Transformation and Resources	7	6	86%	1	14%
Total	85	64 (75%)		21 (25%)	

Table 3o: Timeliness of complaint responses by service area
* 1 complaint withdrawn

p. Complaints by ethnicity breakdown

Table 3p and bar chart 3q shows the number of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by ethnicity.

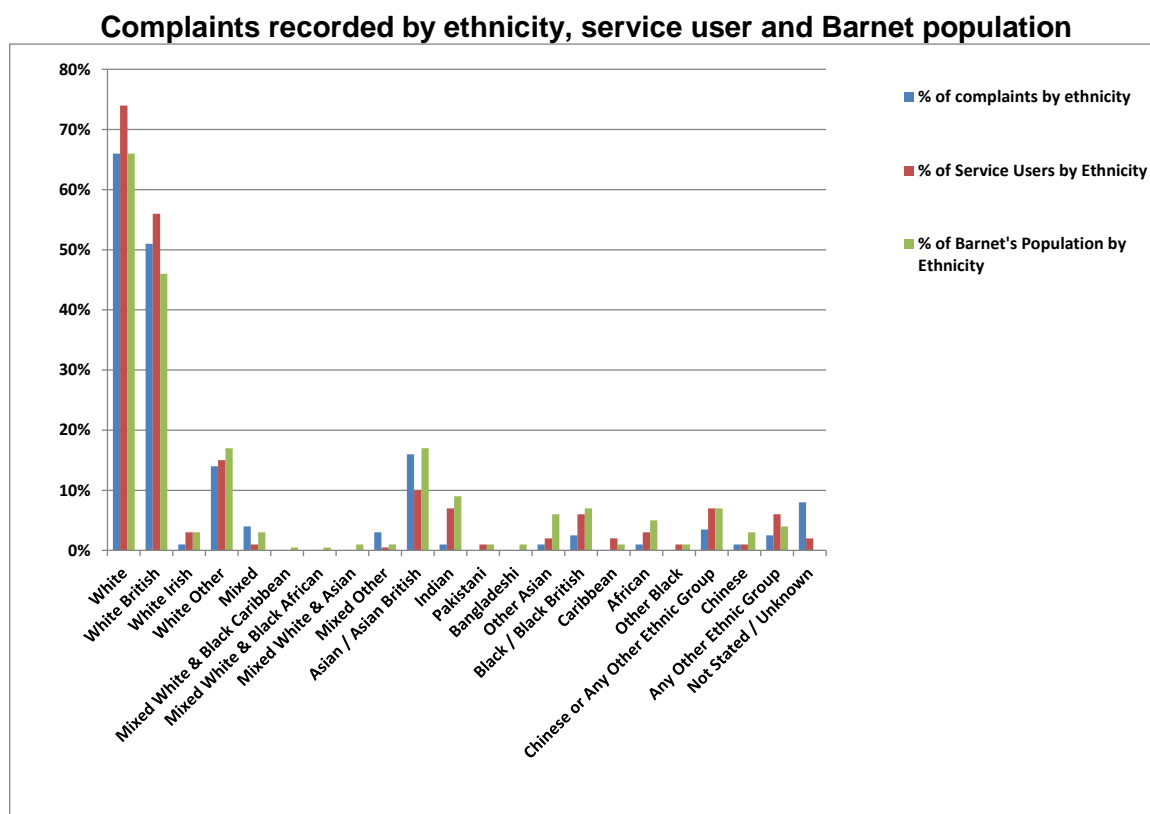
Table 3p: 2011/12 – Comparative ethnicity data				
	No. of complaints 2012/13		No. of service users 2012/13	Barnet's population
White	57	66%	74%	66%
<i>White British</i>	44	51%	56%	46%
<i>White Irish</i>	1	1%	3%	3%
<i>White Other</i>	12	14%	15%	17%
Mixed	3	4%	1%	3%
<i>Mixed White & Black Caribbean</i>	-	-	<0.5%	0.5%
<i>Mixed White & Black African</i>	-	-	<0.5%	0.5%
<i>Mixed White & Asian</i>	-	-	<0.5%	1%
<i>Mixed Other</i>	3	3%	0.5%	1%
Asian / Asian British	14	16%	10%	17%
<i>Indian</i>	1	1%	7%	9%
<i>Pakistani</i>	-	-	1%	1%
<i>Bangladeshi</i>	-	-	<0.5%	1%
<i>Other Asian</i>	1	1%	2%	6%
Black / Black British	2	2.5%	6%	7%
<i>Caribbean</i>	-	-	2%	1%
<i>African</i>	1	1%	3%	5%
<i>Other Black</i>	-	-	1%	1%
Chinese or Any Other Ethnic Group	3	3.5%	7%	7%
<i>Chinese</i>	1	1%	1%	3%
<i>Any Other Ethnic Group</i>	2	2.5%	6%	4%
Not Stated / Unknown	7	8%	2%	-
Total	86	100%	100%	100%

Table 3p: Comparative data between number of complaints recorded in 2012/2013, total number of services users and London Borough of Barnet adult population

Service User data source: Calculations based on data published by the Office for National Statistics via Nomis, on 25 July 2013
(ONS Crown Copyright Reserved)

Barnet's Population data source: GLA 2012 Round Ethnic Group Projections - TREND Interim
(These data are the sole copyright of the © Greater London Authority, 2013).

q. Complaints by ethnicity, service user and Barnet population



Bar Chart 3q: Breakdown of complaints recorded by ethnicity, service users and Barnet's population in 2012/2013

In 2011/12 the ethnic profile of complainants was found to be more reflective of the service user population than in previous years, with fewer complaints from Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British groups. The actual figures suggested the significant changes were due to small population sub-groups, where a minor change in complaints resulted in a high percentage swing.

In 2012/13 the ethnic profile of complainants remained reasonably reflective of the service user population; however, there were once again a higher proportion of Asian/Asian British complainants than would be expected from the service user demographics. Complaints from those within this ethnic group increased by over 50% (from 9 complaints in 2011/12 to 14 in 2012/13) representing 10% of total complaints received throughout 2012/13.

The percentage of complainants within the Black / Black British demographic has continued to fall; now representing just 2.5% of all complaints received.

This year was the first in which the ethnic background of some complainants was unknown or not stated.

r. Complaints by comparative ethnicity data

Table 3r below provides a percentage breakdown of complaints recorded in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 by ethnicity and service users and gives a comparison to the previous two years.

Table 3r: 2012/2013 – Comparative ethnicity data				
Ethnicity	2010/11 No. of complaints	2011/12 No. of complaints	2012/13 % of complaints	2012/13 No. of service users
White	71%	80%	66%	74%
Mixed	0%	2%	4%	1%
Asian / Asian British	17%	9%	16%	10%
Black / Black British	12%	4%	2.5%	6%
Chinese	0%	1%	1%	1%
Any other ethnic group	0%	3%	2.5%	6%
Not stated/Unknown	0%	0%	8%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3r: Percentage of complaints in last three years by ethnicity and service users

10. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) is an external body that looks at complaints relating to local authorities. The LGO is able to investigate matters where there is an alleged or apparent 'maladministration' or service failure. There are some situations in which the LGO will be unable to investigate a complaint such as conduct of Court proceedings. During an investigation the LGO will consider whether a member of the public has suffered injustice and whether that injustice arose as a result of a fault by the Council.

The LGO may prepare a statement of reasons, instead of a report where he decides a report is not appropriate. If satisfied with the action taken or proposed by the Council, he can also publish all or part of a report or statement, or a summary of a matter which is the subject of a report or statement.

When a local authority carries out a function entirely or partly by means of an arrangement with another person, the action taken by the other person shall be treated as action taken on behalf of the Council and in the exercise of the Council's function.

The LGO is able to investigate complaints relating to failure in a service which was the Council's function to provide and is carried out entirely or partly by means of an arrangement with another person, including through a partnership with another body.

If, during the course of an investigation into a complaint, a service failure or apparent maladministration comes to the attention of the LGO, his office may investigate, even where no one has complained of that particular service failure or maladministration.

The LGO may also make a finding of 'service failure', even where there is no maladministration.

The LGO, in a report where there is no injustice, is able to recommend action.

A complainant has the right to raise a complaint with the LGO at any time. Under the 'Council First' procedure the LGO in summary, requires all complainants to go through all stages of their local authority's own complaints procedure before the Ombudsman will consider the complaint.

However, the LGO has decided that the following complaints will normally be treated as exceptions to this general requirement:

- Complaints where the subject means the matter is clearly urgent
- Complaints where the complainant's circumstances indicate a need for priority

- Complaints where the LGO or the Council decide that completing the Council's own procedure would be to the detriment of the complainant, (for example due to delay or to avoid different timescales for different procedures in a complaint which is made against two authorities within the jurisdiction of the LGO, or within the jurisdiction of the LGO and Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman).

In addition the LGO have the power to deal with complaints from people who self fund or arrange their own personal social care. The service will give self-funded users the same access to the LGO service as those who have assistance from the Council. Previously, a person using services under a private contract had no remedy other than to go to court if they had an unresolved dispute with their provider.

Care providers have been written to with information relating to the protocol with regard to dealing with self funders, reinforcing the first point of contact should be the company/care provider and the second port of call should be the LGO office. For Council service users the second port of call is the Adult Social Care and Health Department.

11. Local Government Ombudsman enquiries and complaints

a. Enquiries and complaints via the Local Government Ombudsman

Table 4a below shows the total number of new LGO enquiries and complaints received in Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, compared to the previous two years.

Table 4a: Enquiries and complaints via the Local Government Ombudsman			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Enquiries	3	6	2
Complaints	7	15	2
Total	10	21	4

Table 4a: Number of enquiries and complaints involving the LGO in the last 3 years

In 2010/2011, 10 LGO enquiries and complaints were received and in 2011/2012, 21 were received. The number of LGO enquiries and complaints were high, and could have been as a result of the number of stages within the complaints process being reduced from three to one, following the introduction of the 2009 statutory adult social care complaints regulations, and complainants wanting an independent authority to adjudicate and sort out their issues of concern. However, in 2012/2013 4 LGO enquiries and complaints were received, which was significantly less than in two previous years.

Tables 4b, 4c and 4d below shows the number of enquiries and complaints received involving the LGO for the last three years and summarises the outcomes.

Where a complaint has not been considered under the Council's complaints procedures and the LGO refers the complainant back to the local authority. Such complaints are described as 'premature'.

b. LGO enquiries and complaints - 2010/2011

Table 4b: 2010/2011 - Complaints via Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)		
LGO	Number of decisions	Outcome
Enquiries	3	3 x Rejected as premature
Complaints (Closed)	7	1 x Outside LGO jurisdiction 1 x Complaint withdrawn 3 x No or insufficient evidence of maladministration (no report) 1 x Local settlement (no report) 1 x LGO to discontinue investigation
Total	10	

Table 4b: Number of complaints involving the LGO concluded in 2010/2011, with the decision

c. LGO enquiries and complaints - 2011/2012

Table 4c: 2011/2012 - Complaints via Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)		
LGO	No. of decisions	Outcome
Enquiries	6	6 x Rejected as premature
Complaints (Closed)	14	1 x No or insufficient evidence of maladministration (no report) 7 x To discontinue investigation (no report) 4 x To discontinue investigation: injustice remedied (no report) 1 x Local settlement (no report) 1 x Investigation complete, satisfied with authorities actions (no report)
Complaints (Active)	1	1 x Investigation incomplete
Total	21	

Table 4c: Number of complaints involving the LGO concluded in 2011/2012, with the decision

d. LGO enquiries and complaints – 2012/2013

Table 4d: 2012/2013 - Complaints via Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)		
LGO	Number of decisions	Outcome
Enquiries	2	2 x Rejected as premature
Complaints (Closed)	2	1 x To discontinue investigation (no report) 1 x Investigation complete, satisfied with authorities actions (no report)
Total	4	

Table 4d: Number of complaints involving the LGO concluded in 2012/2013, with the decision

At the time of writing this report, one complaint continues to remain outstanding from 2011/2012 and is still being investigated by the LGO. The decision on the outstanding complaint will be reported in the 2013/2014 Annual Complaints Report.

In 2012/2013 the number of complaints that escalated to the LGO was significantly less than in the previous two years.

The LGO decisions did not find maladministration or fault against the council in the reported cases.

e. Local settlements

In 2010/2011 the LGO found an element of maladministration or fault against the council in only 1 (14%) of the 7 complaints investigated by the LGO and in 2011/2012 again just 1 (7%) of the 14 complaints required a local settlement by the council.

In 2012/2013 the LGO did not find maladministration or fault against the council in any of the complaints brought to its attention.

This indicates that the LGO considers the department's intervention when investigating complaints to be fair and reasonable and the outcomes reached by the council, just and appropriate.

The LGO have not reported formally on any of the complaints received in the last three years.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Complaints	1 (14%) out of 7 cases	1 (7%) out of 14* cases	0(0%) out of 2 cases

Table 4e:

Number of complaints investigated by the LGO in the last three years and where maladministration or fault was found

* = 1 complaint incomplete and remains active

f. LGO Annual review - 2012/2013

The LGO annual review report of Barnet is for the whole of Barnet and the statistics include the number of enquiries and complaints received by the LGO Advice Team. The report states that from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, ASCH received 5 enquiries and complaints (including one premature). The LGO made 6 decisions. The fifth complaint the LGO refers to was dealt with by Environmental Health and reported by them as it relates to their handling of a Disabled Facilities Grant application. The extra/additional/sixth decision was reported in 2011/2012 Annual Complaints Report. Decisions are sometimes made in a different year to the year in which the complaints were received.

The enquiries and complaints received were varied and ranged from the disagreement with a Community Care assessment, to the disagreement with the Council's invoicing process, to being unhappy with the decision of an external service provider.

The LGO reports that there are no concerns in relation to ASCH response times and there are no issues arising from any of the complaints referred to within the report.

12. Complaints managed by contractors (external service providers)

Adult Social Care and Health welcome complaints as a way of measuring how well the Home and Community Support Providers are providing services. Only complaints that are escalated are recorded by the Council, with Home and Community Support Providers also recording their own. Complaints and compliments are monitored by the Council when attending regular site visits carried out by the Supply Management Team and are also discussed in detail with the lead providers at the regular contract management meetings.

In 2012/2013 the total numbers of complaints escalated through Supply Management were 119. This figure represents a decrease of 20 from last year 2011/12. Further this decrease represents a decline of 14.38%.

a. Complaints managed by contractors (external service providers)

Table 5a below shows a breakdown of complaints managed by contractors (external service providers) on behalf of Adult Social Care and Health from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, compared to the previous two years.

Table 5a: Complaints managed by contractors (External service providers)			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Complaints	114	139	119

Table 5a: Number of complaints managed by contractors (external service providers) recorded in the last three years

13. Complaint User Survey

A complaint user questionnaire was sent to all the 2012/2013 complainants. The report containing the results from the survey captures the level of overall satisfaction with the complaints process, and includes the outcomes from the complainants' perspective (See Appendix 1).

Based on the survey's findings, a number of key actions to improve the complaints journey for future complainants have been established.

The Complaints and Representations Team will review the standard Comments, Compliments and Complaints booklet and decide whether it can be simplified, or whether to routinely provide the easy-read version to all complainants.

To deliver these actions, the Complaints and Representations Team will also continue to work closely with managers to ensure that:

- The Comments, Compliments and Complaints booklet is distributed on receipt of each new complaint received by their teams
- They speak to complainants on receipt of each new complaint, where appropriate, a meeting is offered and that they:
 - Take the complaint seriously. Demonstrate empathy and real concern
 - Obtain as much information and facts about the complaint as possible
 - Inform the complainant about the complaints process, i.e. plan of investigation (interviews, files, policies, procedures, legislation)
 - Inform the complainant when they can expect a written response to their complaint.
 - Manage the expectations of the complainant in relation to outcomes
- Face-to-face discussions (resolution meetings) with complainants is offered
- The whole complaint is investigated and addressed in the response letter
- All the reasons for decisions taken are detailed in the response provided to complainant
- Managers do what they say they will do as a result of the complaint

The Complaints and Representations Lead will remind managers to continue to be mindful of their audience and to ensure all responses are clear, using plain English and to refrain from using complicated language, jargon, abbreviations or acronyms.

14. London and North West London Complaints Network

The Complaints and Representations Manager continues to work closely with colleagues from the London and North West London Complaints Managers groups to ensure that Adult Social Care and Health are kept informed and in a position to adopt as consistent an approach to complaints handling as possible.

15. Training

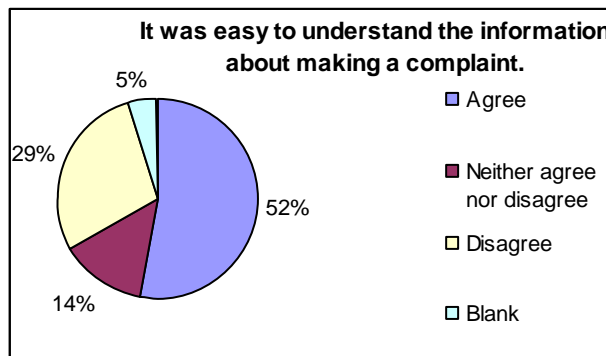
Between October 2012 and May 2013 Corporate Customer Services ran a number of Customer Care training sessions and ASCH staff were invited to attend. The offer was accepted and attended by 89 members of staff. Adhering to good customer care also forms part of all Adults and Communities workers annual objectives/appraisals.

In 2013/2014 effective complaints handling training has been commissioned by the Workforce Development Team from the Local Government Ombudsman and will be attended by Heads of Services, Service Managers and Team Leads across adult social care. The aim and expectation is that complaints handling across the delivery unit will improve and as a result customer satisfaction improves.

Appendix 1 - Outcome of 2012/2013 Complaints User Survey

In 2012/2013, questionnaires were sent to each complainant, 86 in total. Reminder letters were sent to complainants who had not returned their questionnaire. In addition, the complainants were contacted by telephone in the hope of completing unreturned questionnaires. Of the 86 questionnaires sent out, 21 (24%) were completed and returned.

Question 1 It was easy to understand the information about making a complaint.		
Agree	11	52%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	14%
Disagree	6	29%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%

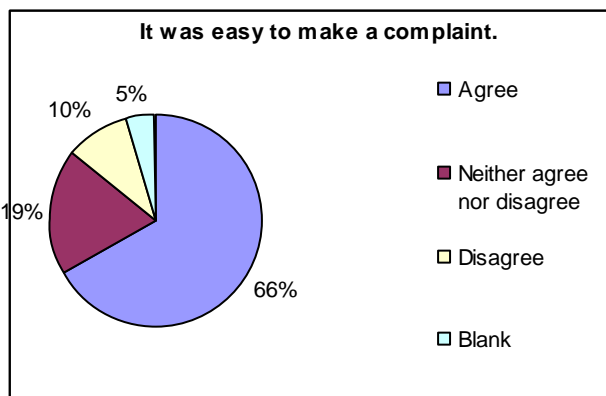


A Comments, compliments and complaints booklet explaining how to make a comment, compliment and/or a complaint and the statutory adult social care complaints process is sent to all complainants on receipt of their correspondence.

Of the 21 participants who took part in the survey 52% found it easy to understand the information provided about making a complaint.

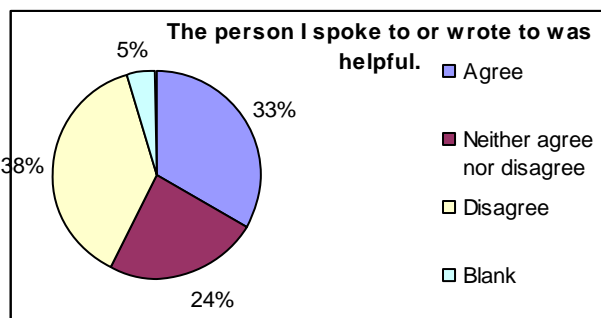
The Complaints and Representations Team will review the standard Comments, compliments and complaints booklet and decide whether it can be simplified, or whether to routinely provide the easy-read version instead.

Question 2 It was easy to make a complaint.		
Agree	14	66%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	19%
Disagree	2	10%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%



Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, 14 participants - over 65% found it easy to make their complaint.

Question 3 The person I spoke to or wrote to was helpful.		
Agree	7	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	24%
Disagree	8	38%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%

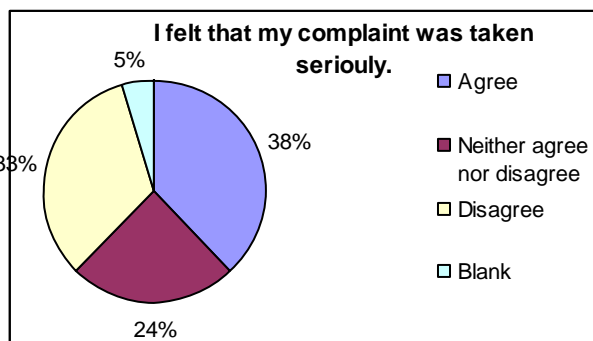


Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, 7 (33%) complainants agreed that the person they spoke to was helpful.

There is a need for managers to consider the spoken or written tone when communicating with complainants.

The Complaints and Representations Team will remind all managers who deal with complaints that they must endeavour to be helpful and provide as much information about our services. If appropriate to sign post people.

Question 4 I felt that my complaint was taken seriously.		
Agree	8	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	24%
Disagree	7	33%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%



Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, 7 (33%) participants felt that their complaint was not taken seriously enough.

The Complaints and Representations Team encourages managers to speak to complainants and/or service users very early on during the complaints process, normally within 5 working days of the complaint being received by the council, and during that initial conversation they are advised to:

- obtain as much information and facts about the complaint as possible
- inform the complainant about the complaints process, i.e. plan of investigation (interviews, files, policies, procedures, legislation)
- inform the complainant when they can expect a written response to their complaint.

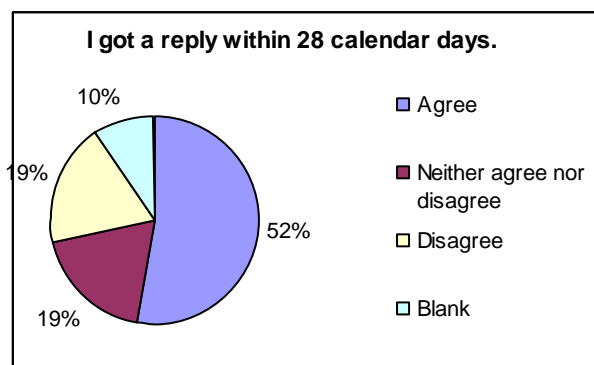
It is also expected that this conversation is used to manage the complainant's expectations in relation to the possible outcome of their complaint, together with showing empathy and real concern.

Managers are also asked to consider the benefits of face-to-face discussions with complainants and/or service users when investigating complaints.

The Complaints and Representations Lead will remind all investigating managers on allocation

of a new complaint of the requirements and expectations within that initial conversation when speaking to the complainant and that it may also be helpful to arrange to meet with the complainant in order to discuss the concerns raised in detail.

Question 5 I got a reply within 28 calendar days.		
Agree	11	52%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	19%
Disagree	4	19%
Did not answer/left blank	2	10%
Total	21	100%



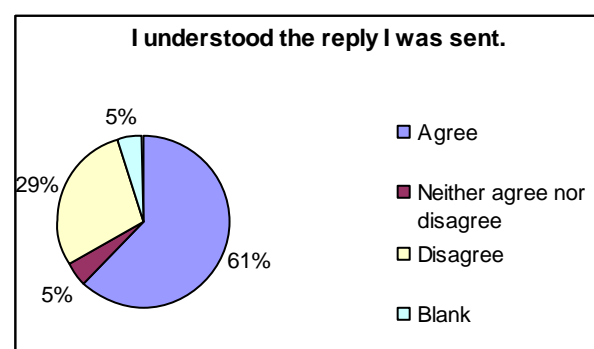
Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, 19% of participants were dissatisfied with the time it took to respond to their complaints.

It is the department's aim to respond in writing to Straightforward complaints within 20 working days and Corporate complaints within 10 working days. In 2012/2013 of the 86 complaints received, 75% (64) were dealt with within timescale.

Managers are consistently reminded of keep an eye on the timescales and are encouraged to make every effort to achieve them; however, it is noted that the complaints received tend to be multifaceted and difficult by nature by the time the department is made aware of the concerns.

The Complaints and Representations Lead and the Practice Governance Group has recently reviewed the timescales for managers responding to statutory complaints and it was considered that on average 20 days is reasonable.

Question 6 I understood the reply I was sent		
Agree	13	62%^
Neither agree nor disagree	1	5%
Disagree	6	28%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%

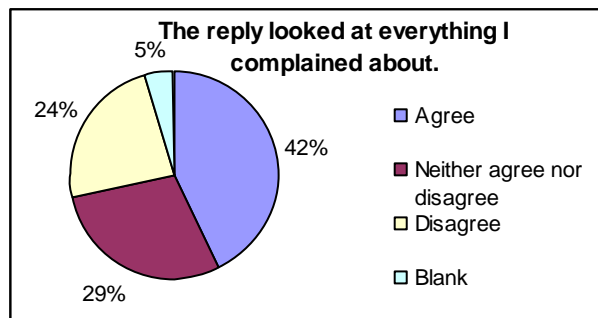


Over 60% of participants that took part in the survey said it was easy to understand the response to their complaint and that is probably because all responses are generally in plain English.

Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, only 28% of participants said they did not understand the response provided.

The Complaints and Representations Lead will remind managers to continue to be mindful of their audience and to ensure all responses are clear, using plain English and to refrain from using complicated language, jargon, abbreviations or acronyms.

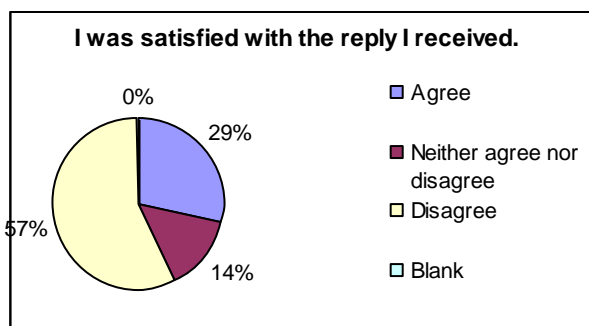
Question 7 The reply looked at everything I complained about		
Agree	9	43%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	28%
Disagree	5	24%
Did not answer/left blank	1	5%
Total	21	100%



Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, 24% said managers did not address or respond to each issue raised. This may be because the initial, early telephone conversations are not routinely happening or when they are, not enough information is being sought and so managers are only responding to the written complaints received.

The Complaints and Representations Team will monitor this to ensure that conversations are taking place and that the whole complaint is being captured and addressed in the response letters.

Question 8 I was satisfied with the reply received		
Agree	6	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	14%
Disagree	12	57%
Did not answer/left blank	0	0%
Total	21	100%

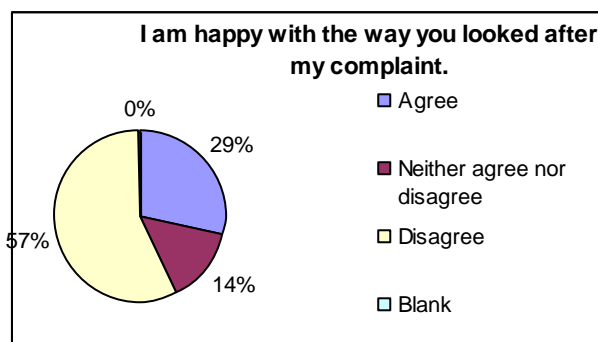


Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, over 50% of participants said they were unhappy with reply to their complaint.

A 43% of all complaints received were not upheld or considered justified, so this may explain the reason for complainants remaining unhappy.

The Complaints and Representations Team will monitor this through receipt of the completed Complaints Recording Form (Action Plan and Feedback Form) and regular discussions with investigating managers.

Question 9 I am happy with the way you looked after my complaint		
Agree	7	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	14%
Disagree	12	57%
Did not answer/left blank	0	0%
Total	21	100%



Of the 21 participants that took part in this survey, over 50% were unhappy with the way their complaint was looked after.

Having said that, 43% of all complaints received were not upheld, which could have an impact on this result.

The Complaints and Representations Team will give consideration to how to improve complainants experiences.