



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE, 2018

**NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS ONLY
AT 10.00 A.M.**

Location

Siambwr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

<http://www.gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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(DISTRIBUTED 30/05/18)

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Alan Jones Evans
Elin Walker Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Annwen Daniels
Rheinallt Puw

Sian Wyn Hughes
Dafydd Owen
Cemlyn Rees Williams
Linda Ann Jones
Peter Read

Independent (5)

Councillors

Eryl Jones-Williams
Beth Lawton
Angela Russell

Richard Medwyn Hughes
Dewi Wyn Roberts

Llais Gwynedd (1)

Councillor
Anwen J. Davies

Gwynedd United Independents (1)

Vacant Seat

Individual Member (1)

Councillor
Nigel Pickavance

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

A G E N D A

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman for this Committee for 2018-19.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

To elect a Vice-Chairman for this Committee for 2018-19.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

6. MINUTES

4 - 9

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 20 April 2018, be signed as a true copy.

7. SOCIAL SERVICES' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

10 - 29

Cabinet Member: Councillor W. Gareth Roberts

To receive a report on the above.

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20.04.18

Present: **Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams - Chairman**
 Councillor R. Medwyn Hughes - Vice-chairman

Councillors: Annwen Daniels, Anwen J. Davies, Alan Jones Evans, Sian Wyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Owen, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Angela Russell and Cemlyn Williams.

Officers: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Families Service), Aled Gibbard (Senior Operational Manager - Care Resources), Llinos Edwards (Senior Executive Officer), Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Glynda O'Brien (Member Support Officer).

Cabinet Members: Councillor Dilwyn Morgan

Apologies: Councillor Elfed P. Roberts

1. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

2. **URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were received.

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 30 January 2018, as a true record.

4. **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Submitted - the report of the Children and Young People Cabinet Member regarding the above and he took advantage of the opportunity to thank the Chairman and the Committee for their interest in the Service and for its support.

The report outlined the background, number of looked after children, comparison with other Counties, Court cases and information regarding the Edge of Care Team. He noted that the number of looked after children was increasing; however, he hastened to add that this was a national pattern. It was noted that the Nuffield Charity was currently carrying out a valuable review to look into care orders and hopefully, feedback would be received from that review soon. Reference was made to the comparison graphs within the reports and although progress can be seen in the total number of looked after children this year, it was noted that there were positive messages in the content of the report as well.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the contents of the report and they highlighted the following points:

(a) From looking at the graph on page 17 of the report, concern was expressed that the figure of looked after children for Gwynedd appeared high compared to other Counties and they asked what could be done to reduce it. Is there a geographical pattern to figures within Gwynedd?

In response, it was noted that gradually over time the figure had increased to 227 in March and to 230 in January. It was difficult for the Service to anticipate how many referrals are received and that decisions must be made in line with the thresholds. The Edge of Care Team was established in an attempt to keep numbers down and success had been seen in changing the pattern by returning children home where it was safe to do so. It was also emphasised that comprehensive information had not been received from other counties, but it appeared that an increase had been seen in every authority in the last year and consideration also had to be given to the nature of the population of the counties.

Consideration had to be given to the fact that the Service acted to safeguard children and in the most appropriate way. Whilst acknowledging that numbers appeared high, the profile of looked after children was a factor to consider and whether the Service acted to safeguard children in the most appropriate way. It was acknowledged that an increase had been seen in the referrals received; however, the density and complexity of cases had to be borne in mind and the Committee was reassured that the Service responded promptly, in a timely way and took steps to safeguard in all cases. It was added that the Service identifies risks and responds to them by putting appropriate plans in place to safeguard children.

In terms of geographical pattern, it was noted that numbers vary across the County.

(b) How successful were looked after children educationally, and was the fact that they moved from location to location a factor that contributed towards this?

It was noted, in general, that educational results on GCSE level and A level were amongst the best in Wales due to the support received. Whilst accepting at times that children had to move from one place to another, it was ensured that this was not a concern to the Service and that the measure was 3 placements or more in terms of offering stability. Efforts were made to keep children within a school catchment area but sometimes, it was noted that this was not possible due to safety reasons and the children's welfare had to be considered. It was confirmed that every effort was made to keep them in their schools but at times this was difficult to avoid due to the failure to have a practical placement. In addition, when considering the safety of a child, consideration was given to the extended family / friends that looked after them and sometimes this was a considerable distance from their school but the child was kept within the family.

(c) For how long was the Edge of Care Team support provided?

It was noted that a specific timetable had not been determined and an example was provided where the Team had worked with the family for 18 months.

(ch) How many children had been placed outside Wales?

It was noted that children were placed in nearby counties such as Anglesey, Conwy and often, these placements were closer to the child's home. The majority of the children placed outside Wales were in specialist residential units due to the nature and density of their needs and the need for specialist therapy.

(d) In terms of the Edge of Care Team's work, it was felt from the content of the report that it was difficult for the Committee to scrutinise and measure the success of the Service.

Whilst accepting the observation, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People noted that the Service had attached a case study to the report as an example of the work done by the Edge of Care Team but in future, it was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Scrutiny Committee to receive specialist presentations on the work of the Edge of Care Team.

Statistics were elaborated upon, and up to last April, the Edge of Care Team had worked with approximately 166 children with 66% showing progress, and of those, 63% of the children continued to live at home. There were different aspects of success and certainly, more information could be submitted in the future.

In addition, it was noted that the Service gathered the views of families and children regarding the support and that this contributed towards measuring the success of any Team.

(dd) Considering the figures in table 6 of the report, it appeared that Gwynedd had seen the greatest increase, and Denbighshire had reduced. Therefore, were different arrangements in place in Gwynedd compared with other authorities?

It was noted that the above observation was difficult to answer, but in terms of Gwynedd, it was seen that complexities were becoming more intense; however, the Head of Service was completely confident that they were responding in a timely way. Instructions and grants had been received from Government to develop Edge of Care Teams and advantages had been seen from having an Edge of Care Team for three years now, e.g. issues identified earlier. It was difficult to compare with other counties unless a survey was carried out on their arrangements; however, it was noted that every authority complied with national guidelines for safeguarding children, along with court processes. The Head of Service gave assurance that she was not overly-concerned about the figures as she knew that every child received the necessary service.

(e) Was it possible that the increase showed success and/or failures? Were examples of good practice shared between authorities?

The Head of Service noted that she did not consider the figures a failure as she provided assurance that the Service responded to children's needs and did not disregard what constituted a risk. In terms of sharing good practice, she provided assurance that this happened regularly at meetings held between the Heads of Children Services across the north. In addition, national work was taking place through the Ministerial Advisory Group and the Head of Service served as the representative of North Wales Heads of Service on this group. It was considering four work streams and one of those was the reasons why an increase had been seen in numbers. Also, it was noted that currently, six authorities had been selected by Care Inspectorate Wales to be a part of an inspection process. This would result in a report for each county and one composite national report that would make recommendations on the way forward. Therefore, assurance was provided that developmental work was progressing regionally, sub-regionally and nationally.

(f) In terms of the length of time that children were the subject of a Care Order, it was explained that this varied, however, the placements would be scrutinised every two

months. A piece of work would be completed with the Edge of Care Team and the Service would scrutinise within the teams' work processes.

(ff) How much support did a child receive in Court cases and what were the arrangements in terms of confidentiality?

It was explained that every child was open to a Social Worker and thorough work was done with the child. In addition, it was noted that a child had a guardian, namely an independent person who worked for the Court on behalf of the child. The guardian would remain with the child until the decision regarding the order would be made. In terms of children over 8 years of age, they were offered an advocacy service from independent advocates who worked for a national organisation.

In terms of confidentiality, assurance was given that arrangements were very robust. As a Head of Service, she stated that she knew every one of the looked after children. In addition, arrangements were in place where Senior Managers supervised, placement scrutiny panels were held and a different cohort of children were considered at every meeting. The Head of Service acted on the authority's behalf as Agency Decision Maker and made final decisions on adoption matters, medical treatment, holidays, fostering, etc.

(g) At grass roots level, how much good service did the child receive? Did the figures include children with disabilities? What were the children's ages?

It was confirmed that no disabled child was in a residential placement; five were in a fostering placement due to safeguarding factors. It was added that the profile in terms of young people had changed due to the support in the provision that supported families at home and there was an opportunity for families to receive respite in Hafan y Sêr.

In terms of the children's ages, it was noted that the figures included children up to 18 years old, and then arrangements were in place for individuals aged between 18 and 25 years. Of the 220, it was noted that there was a pattern with the majority of the children at a very young age under 5, and the rest were relatively dispersed across the age-range, however, she promised to send the figure profile to Councillor Elin Walker Jones in line with her wish.

(h) What steps are taken to ensure the safety of the children who are at risk, and what is the reason for the high cost of a residential placement outside Gwynedd?

It was explained, in some circumstances, that the looked after children with their parents were the riskier cases, however, assurance was given that the cases were regularly scrutinised. She added that the responsibilities were exactly the same with an access to a Social Worker, and statutory reviews were also carried out.

It was explained that the specialist residential placements for young people with profound needs were expensive and that such a provision was not available in north Wales. However, it was noted that regional work was progressing to see whether it was possible to obtain such a provision. It was noted that the costs were high due to staffing and the placements could essentially name their price as there was so much demand for a specific provision.

(i) What arrangements were available for foster / adoptive parents to support them, in particular with young people suffering from emotional problems?

It was explained that the adoption system was a regional service and thorough work was carried out in terms of assessments, identifying a plan for the child.

It was explained that the following was done:

- Providing training
- Purchasing specialist programmes from other organisations
- Workforce training
- Strengthening skills

(j) How many open cases do Social Workers have allocated to them at any given time? How was staff morale?

It was noted that Social Workers had no more than 22 cases at any given time which was comparatively low compared with some nearby counties.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explained that the staff's morale was incredibly high considering that they were under pressure and had to deal with providing complex reports. To prove this, he noted that staff turnover was virtually nil with everyone staying to work in Gwynedd. From his experience of going around the teams with the Head of Service, he had seen exceptionally committed teams.

(k) What support was provided to families when shortcomings were identified?

It was explained that efforts were made to collaborate with the parents who were waiting for a service, but at times it was difficult to have urgent referrals due to pressures in the CAMHS service.

(l) For information, it was noted that a measure, namely 28 days, had to be followed in relation to a mental health assessment.

(m) Members were reminded of their responsibility as corporate parents and they were encouraged to attend the training.

Resolved: To accept, note and give thanks for the report and positive responses as noted above.

5. SUPPORTING FAMILIES STRATEGY IN GWYNEDD

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, noting that it was a very exciting strategy. Historically, there had been successful preventative work, however, there was a need to learn from integrated working and the importance of the individual, and a prime example of this was the implementation of the Ysbyty Alltwen Scheme. It was noted that a Parliamentary Review of Health and Care in Wales referred to developing seamless care services that are convenient and close to home. The intention was to make the services much more integrated within the Council and other partners, in the hope to focus everyone's attention on early intervention and targeting families correctly and offering services that would reduce the subsequent need for much more intense intervention. It was acknowledged that there was a duty on everyone to safeguard children and young people; however, focus needed to be placed on dealing with issues early and the hope was that we would strive to develop the concept within the Council and the external partnerships. A positive step that had been made was the transfer of an officer from the Economy Department to the Children and Families Department and this provided additional capacity within the Department.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and the following points were highlighted:

(a) Reference was made to the Families First programme and the acknowledgement that the programme had been successful and that the input of the third sector had been essential, e.g. Citizens' Advice Bureau. If the programmes were successful, why did the model have to be changed?

The Head of Service explained that the Government had decided to abolish the grants to the third sector for the purposes of developing financial literacy. During the transitional year, Gwynedd was the only authority that funded last year, but whilst accepting that it had been a success, it was not possible to extend the resource due to the lack of financial resources and the national guidance. It was added that this did not mean that families could not be referred to the Citizens' Advice Bureau; however, the money used to ensure that they were given priority.

In terms of the proposed model, a lot was learnt from the advantages and the benefits over the past five years, that needs were not being met, specifically families where the children were teenagers, low-level mental health, speech and language delay and homelessness issues. The intention was to have services in their place, and target families so that it was possible to identify children who came into care and put a team around them, i.e. assessment of needs and realising that there was a need to recommission and target a different cohort of families.

(b) Did the Education Department have input as a result of problems with children's lack of skills?

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirmed that Education was one of the essential partners and that support had already been received from the Department. Also, fortunately, it was noted that the health service was a very strong partner in Gwynedd and was a huge hub for the Children and Families Service.

The Head of Service added that speech and language was one of the main priorities. It was acknowledged across the age ranges, including teenagers, that it affected their confidence, behaviour and ability to reach their potential. The intention was to extend the provision across the County and to collaborate with the Health Board, the third sector, as well as the Education Department in order to better identify the families.

(c) The strategy was welcomed and it was asked whether there was an intention to work with Housing Associations?

The Head of Service confirmed that more attention needed to be given to the above in its entirety, and reference was made to a pilot example of working with Housing Wardens in Maesgeirchen, Bangor, who had a wealth of key information.

(ch) Whilst welcoming the report, more information was needed and they were reminded of the need to address the needs of children with disabilities.

The Head of Service noted that the vision was presented before the Committee and that she was very grateful to the Leadership Team for the support to move forward. The task of the new officer would be to refine the plan and collaborate with the partnership and an update could be presented on the developments in a year's time.

(d) The importance of the trans-agency collaboration and how successful the model had been, was noted. Hopefully, the new youth workers would be able to contribute to the above strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explained that the Youth Service only reached 25% of youths, noting that there were missed young people in the County. Hopefully, the new model in youth work would reach out so that more young people were reached, however, in terms of the Children and Families Service, any additional partnership was welcomed.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:05pm.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 7

TITLE	Annual Report on the administration of complaints by the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department during 2017-2018
PURPOSE	Present an overview of complaints received during 2017-18
AUTHOR	Geraint Wyn Jones Customer Care Officer (Adults) Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit (Adults)
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor W Gareth Roberts
DATE	May 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 which came into force on the 1st of August 2014, it is required that the Director of Social Services produces an annual report on the methods used to investigate and address complaints received by the service. The report is produced by the Customer Care Officer on behalf of the Director of Social Services.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the reasons for and the number of complaints received during the year and also includes the steps taken to resolve those complaints by the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department. The report also includes a summary of the lessons learned and the steps taken to address those lessons arising from the complaints that were received.

2. Context

- 2.1 Throughout the year, the Customer Care Officer (Adults), within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit, deals with the administration of the complaints procedure in accordance with the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure.

3. Access to the Complaints Process

- 3.1 When an individual contacts the Customer Care Officer it is usually in connection to being dissatisfied with the service provided by the Department and making an official complaint is often the last resort. The Officer concentrates on ensuring that the Complaints Procedure is easily accessible so that individuals are aware of their right to be heard. In order to achieve this goal, information about the Complaint Procedure is widely shared in a number of formats, such as leaflets, on-line and in an "easy-read" format. All the information is available in both Welsh and English so that the complainant can choose their preferred language when making a complaint. Facilities such as Braille, other languages and advocacy services are also available to ensure that the Complaints Procedure is accessible to all. The information leaflets are regularly updated by the Information Officer.

4. Matters recorded as Enquiries

- 4.1 The aim is to respond to each complaint fairly, impartially and respectfully, so that every individual can be confident that their complaint will be treated with professionally in a positive way, rather than in a negative manner. In many cases, where the complainant has chosen not to make an official complaint and follow the Complaints Procedure, the matter is dealt with as an enquiry or informal complaint. An example of this would be a letter from a Member of Parliament or Local Councillor expressing dissatisfaction or asking for an answer to a specific question.
- 4.2 By responding positively at an early stage, a significant number of matters can be resolved without the need to use the Complaints Procedure. Without doubt, resolving these issues quickly provides the best outcome for all concerned. Please refer to [Table 1](#) in this report for a numerical analysis of the sources of every enquiry, along with the unit/service who is responsible for responding to each enquiry. [Table 2](#) provides more detailed information about the nature of some of the enquiries received.

5. Stage 1 – Social Services Statutory Complaints Procedure – Local Resolution

- 5.1 Every effort is made to respond to and resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant and the Service. A local resolution of the complaint is obviously the method which provides the best outcome, and this is done by investing time and effort at the early stages of a complaint. However, if the complainant decides to make a formal complaint, contact is made with the complainant and/or their representative, either by telephone, email or face-to-face in order to attempt to resolve the complaint. Over the years, the Customer Care Officers have fostered a close relationship between themselves and the teams, managers and the legal department within Social Services to facilitate the efficient resolution of complaints. This is reflected in the very small number of complaints which progress to Stage 2 of the Complaint Procedure. Please refer to [Table 2](#) for more detailed examples of complaints which received a response at stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure. [Tables 3 and 4](#) in this report shows a comparison between the numbers of complaints addressed at stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure during 2016/17 and 2017/18.

6. Stage 2 – Social Services Statutory Complaints Procedure – Formal Investigation by an Independent Investigator

- 6.1 By upholding the principal of concentrating on successfully resolving complaints early and efficiently at the local stage (Stage 1), the progression of complaints to Stage 2 (Formal Investigation) in order to resolve the matter in question is a rare occurrence in Gwynedd. In comparison to other Local Authorities in North Wales, the evidence shows that Gwynedd have the fewest number of complaints that have been progressed to Stage 2, which reflects on the emphasis given by the Customer Care Officer on effectively resolving complaints at Stage 1.

During 2017/18, two were escalated to stage 2 of the Social Services Complaints Procedure. Both investigations have been concluded and a full response has been provided by the Department in both cases. To our knowledge, neither of these cases has yet been escalated further to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

7. Complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman

- 7.1 If a complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction following an investigation at Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure, the complainant has a right to escalate the complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman, the Welsh Language Commissioner, or the Commissioner for Equality and Human Rights. The applicable authority depends on the nature of the complaint to be resolved.
- 7.2 No complaints at Stage 2 were escalated to the Ombudsman during 2017/18.

8. Adherence to the Timetable for Responding to Complaints under the Statutory Complaints Procedure

- 8.1 The Local Authority has a duty to report on the methods used to investigate and resolve complaints with the timescales laid out in the Guidance and Regulations. The Department has succeeded in responding to 83% of all complaints at stage 1 within the statutory timescales during 2017/18. Please see [Table 5](#) in this report for more details.
- 8.2 There were a variety of reasons recorded during the year for extending the response time for some complaints. The reason recorded most often was the unavailability, due to holidays and/or sickness, of staff at all levels who were needed to provide their response to the complaint before it could be answered comprehensively. The time period for providing a written response to a complaint is very short, i.e. only 5 working days following the date that the complaint was discussed with the complainant. Two of the complaints that were late receiving a written response at stage 1 were required to be investigated under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults procedures (POVA). A POVA investigation takes precedence over the provision of a written response under stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure, and the process must have been concluded first before the complaint can be addressed under stage 1. The statistics show that the majority of complaints received a response within the statutory timescale during 2017/18. In those cases where the written response was late, each complainant agreed to our request for and increase to the response time, which was an extension of, on average, 7 working days in each case.

9. Gwynedd Council Complaints Procedure

- 9.1 Some of the complaints received during the year fell outside the scope of the Social Services Complaints Procedure. These complaints were addressed under the Gwynedd Council Corporate Complaints Policy. Not all complaints received were brought to the attention of the Customer Care Officer as some will have been dealt with directly by the team/service concerned.
- 9.2 Some examples of this type of complaint: a member of the public complaining about a decision made by the Housing Service that they are not entitled to social housing; spelling and grammatical errors in official documents; an owner occupier asking for advice on boiler repairs and central heating.
- 9.3 No complaints were received during 2017/18 that were relevant to the Gwynedd Council Complaints Procedure. All complaints received were answered by using the Social Services Complaints Procedure during 2017/18.

10. Learning Lessons and Identifying Trends within Complaints

10.1 Learning Lessons from Complaints and Enquiries

A quarterly report is presented to the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Senior Management Team. This presents an opportunity to analyse each complaint and to identify lessons to be learned so that the service that we offer can be continually improved.

- 10.2 The Senior Management Team include the lessons to be learned in their ongoing work plans and any training needs arising are also identified. As recommended in the recent Internal Audit of the complaints handling procedure by the Department, a 'lessons to be learned' log has been created. The Customer Care Officer shares the log with Senior Managers at the end of each quarter in order to notify them of the lessons learned that need to be addressed. The log is updated regularly to include any information on actions taken in connection with the lessons. This recording method will be a more effective way of identifying the lessons to be learned and to monitor the progress made in implementing these improvements.

Please see a copy of the Complaints Log on pages 6 to 9 of this report for more information on the lessons identified during 2017/18 and the actions completed in each case.

10.3 Recurring themes identified from Enquiries and Complaints – Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department

- 10.3a As part of the process of analysing the data on complaints and enquiries for the purpose of producing quarterly reports during 2017/18, the Customer Care Officer identifies common trends in the content of complaints and enquiries received. This exercise is vital in order to identify any recurring problems that have arisen in specific areas of the Service which have given rise to several complaints or enquiries so that they can be urgently addressed by the Senior Management Team.

- 10.3b By far the most prevalent theme of complaints received during 2017/18 was the complaints and concerns, originating from several different sources, about the difficulties associated with arranging sufficient hours of home care for Service Users in Gwynedd, especially in rural areas of the county. The Department received 10 complaints at stage 1 about issues related to the provision of home care during 2017/18. This equates to almost one third of all complaints addressed at stage 1 during the year. In addition to these complaints, several enquiries were received on behalf of Service Users and their families from Members of Parliament and Local Councillors about delays in discharging patients from hospital due to lack of available home care.

- 10.3c The problems associated with the provision of home care was also the main theme identified during 2016/17. The Department is continuing with the development of projects and strategies to address the home care supply problems. A summary of some of these measures is contained later in this report.

11. Training and Staff awareness of the Complaints Procedure

- 11.1 An important element of the Customer Care Officer's role is to provide information and training for staff about the Social Services Complaints Procedure so that they are fully aware of the regulations and confident in their role in its administration. In order to ensure that all members of staff can receive this training, there is an intention to provide this as an e-learning module rather than a traditional workshop training session. This method of delivery should be easier and more cost effective as the usual costs associated with traditional training workshops are eliminated.
- 11.2 The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a consultation with a view to formulating new complaints procedure guidance which will align more closely with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014. The North Wales Complaints Officers Group (NWCOG), of which the Customer Care Officer is a member, have contributed towards the consultation by preparing a number of suggestions for improvements to be incorporated within the new regulations.
- 11.3 The complaints procedures are therefore set to change within the next 12 to 18 months, which will mean that a new training course will need to be devised. Therefore, there are no immediate plans to provide widespread training for staff on the current procedures. Once the new regulations have been published by the Welsh Government, the Customer Care Officer will devise a training course for delivery to all staff. In the meantime, the Customer Care Officer is always available to provide answers to any questions from staff about the current complaints procedure.

12. Other Duties

- 12.1 The Customer Care Officer (Adults) is a member of the Parking Bays for Disabled People Panel, and is responsible for coordinating the process of assessing applications from the public for the installation of a parking bay for the disabled adjacent to their property. The Panel meets every three months to consider the applications. The Customer Care Officer is responsible for ensuring that the application forms are correct and up to date, and is also responsible for replying to queries about the application process which are received by letter, telephone and email. The Customer Care Officer assists the Administrative Assistant to communicate decisions on the applications following each meeting of the Panel.

13. Expressing Gratitude

- 13.1 As well as responding to concerns, complaints and comments from service users, families and members of the public, it is also very important to record and acknowledge the expressions of gratitude and thanks we receive as a Department from a wide variety of sources.

The number of recorded expressions of gratitude have increased this year. The Customer Care Officer, with the help of team leaders and managers of all teams across the county, has raised awareness amongst staff of the importance of recording any expressions of gratitude and actively encouraged staff to submit these to the Customer Care Officer when received.

Please see Table 6 for a statistical analysis of the expressions of gratitude received, and Table 7 contains examples of the types of messages received.

14. Action Plan for 2018/19

- 14.1 To continue to respond to concerns, enquiries and complaints by adhering to the regulations contained within the Social Services Complaints Procedure, as determined by the Welsh Government, and also ensuring that lessons to be learned from each case are regularly brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team. To continue to monitor the progress of actions taken in order to develop the service.
- 14.2 The Customer Care Officer (Adults) is currently serving as Chair of the North Wales Complaints Officer Group (NWCOG). Meetings of the group are held on a quarterly basis.
- 14.3 Assist the Customer Care Officer (Children and Families) and the Information Officer to ensure that efficiency of the new upgraded RESPOND system from June 2018. This IT system is used to record details of each case and is being upgraded to the latest version this year. The aim is to develop the new system to enhance how lessons to be learned from complaints are monitored and addressed.

15. Statistics for the use of Welsh and English when responding to enquiries and complaints

- 15.1 The Customer Care Officer (Adults) responds to all correspondence by using the preferred language of the complainant or enquirer.

An analysis of the use of both languages can be seen in Table 8 at the end of this report.

16. Actions taken to address identified trends and lessons deriving from complaints received during 2017/18

- 16.1 The actions taken to address issues identified from lessons learned and trends identified from dealing with complaints and concerns received is an ongoing process, resulting in changes, and subsequent improvements, in the services we provide.

16.2 Addressing problems associated with the supply of home care

The most prevalent theme identified during this year (and during 2016/17) was problems associated with our inability, in some cases, to provide the required number of hours/calls of home care to some Gwynedd residents, with these problems identified as more prevalent in rural areas of the county.

- 16.3 In order to address the issues identified from this theme, a project, administered in partnership between Gwynedd Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, has been up and running since 2017. The aim of the project is to establish a system where care providers become part of a wider health and social care team, with contracts awarded to provide their services in specific areas of the county, as opposed to buying home care services from providers by the hour.

- 16.4 A trial period of this system has already begun in the Bethesda area since July 2017, with a consultation session held for service users, families and Local Members in November 2017. The consultation proved invaluable to understand more about service users' expectations of the service and to learn how we can meet their needs in

a way that enhances the user's quality of life. The Project Team intends to continue to experiment and to formulate a detailed action plan in order to implement the co-commissioning model from 2019/20.

16.5 Establishing new arrangements to meet the need to provide 'Information, Advice and Assistance'

In response to the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales), which became law in 2014, the Department has developed a more effective method of delivering 'Information, Advice and Assistance' to Gwynedd residents. The establishment of this system is also linked to addressing the complaints received by users who reported that they were not able to get through to the central Adult Advice and Assessment Team by telephone due to long delays waiting on-hold.

16.6 From the 5th of February 2018, the Department has restructured by working as five new areas covered by Community Resource Teams, which are multi-disciplinary and integrated across the disciplines of Health and Community Care. The central Adult Advice and Assessment Team was disbanded, with its resources being allocated around each of the five areas, thereby creating five new local access points for use by professionals and the public alike.

16.7 The implementation team have indicated that the initial statistics on calls answered by the new teams following the change to the new area teams are very positive. This is reflected in the fact that no new complaints have been received about call waiting times since the changes were implemented.

16.8 Please see the copy of the Lessons to be Learned Log 2017/18, on pages 7-10 of this report, for more details on further actions taken to address the other lessons derived from complaints during 2017/18.

Lessons Learned log derived from complaints received during 2017/18

Key: SU - Service User ; SW - Social Worker

Date complaint received	Reference No	Short description of the complaint	Lesson identified	Manager/Staff Involved	Responsible Senior Manager	Target Date for Actions	Date discussed by Management Team	Management Team comments	Result of Actions Taken
08/05/17	GC/3879-17	SU submitted a complaint about the lack of home care provision available in South Meirionnydd	A need identified to increase and broaden the range of options available when sourcing providers of home care in South Meirionnydd in response the increased levels of demand for the service.	Business Unit Staff	Mari Wynne Jones (Enablement Senior Manager); Rhion Glyn (Business Senior Manager)	As soon as possible	Aug-17	Gwynedd and BCUHB are conducting a joint Home Care Project to establish a commissioning system where a specific care provider takes responsibility for providing care in specific areas of the county. There is also work underway to increase co-working between Social Workers, Community Nurses and Occupational Therapists. A pilot project is underway at the moment.	Work continues towards enhancing the levels of home care available across Gwynedd.
19/07/17	GC/4023-17	SU (subject to a DoLS order) was allowed to leave a Council-owned residential home undetected following a fire alarm incident. The outside doors had opened automatically. Staff did not notice that the SU was missing for over an hour. SU was found to have walked to a public house in Caernarfon	Ensure that the register of residents is thoroughly and immediately checked following the sounding of the fire alarm. This action is needed to ensure that every SU is safe and has not left the building unsupervised	Managers and Staff of Gwynedd Council Residential Care Homes	Mari Wynne Jones (Enablement Senior Manager); Cath Ellis a Gwen Hughes (Residential Care Senior Managers)	As soon as possible	Awst 2017	Training has been provided during staff meetings at the residential homes to ensure that the actions that need to be taken during and after the sounding of the fire alarm are clear from now onwards. Staff have been reminded about the importance of keeping the register of residents and visitors up to date so that it can be fully establish who is present in the building when the fire alarm sounds.	All staff have been trained on all the requirements of what needs to be done when the fire alarm sounds at all of our residential homes

02/10/17	GC/4182-17	SU's daughter complained about the lack of alternative home care provision available after a care company ceased to provide care to her mother at very short notice. No other care company was available to take over the package and she was concerned about her mother's safety. She wanted to know how the Council can agree to companies pulling out of providing care at such short notice and why there is no contingency plan in place to provide care to vulnerable people when this happens.	A care company pulled out of supplying a care package to a client at very short notice (one day's notice). Possible need to look again at the terms and conditions attached to contracts awarded to private care providers.	Business Unit Staff	Rhion Glyn (Senior Business Manager)	As soon as possible			
19/10/17	GC/4235-17	SU wrote to the Department to complain about the lack of private meeting spaces at Ysbyty Alltwn where one-to-one meetings can be conducted with Social Workers.	Need identified to review the arrangements for the provision of private interview spaces for the public at Ysbyty Alltwn	Integrated Health and Social Care Team (Gwynedd Council and BCUHB)	Mari Wynne Jones (Enablement Senior Manager); Rhion Glyn (Senior Business Manager)	As soon as possible	Jan-18	Work has commenced to review the spaces available for the North Meirionnydd Team at Ysbyty Alltwn to conduct private interviews. There is a need to work together with BCUHB to release more space for this purpose at Ysbyty Alltwn	Work is underway to improve the provision of this aspect of the service

23/10/17	GC/4246-17	A relative of a resident at Plas Pengwaith expressed concerns that he was not contacted by the staff to report to him that his father-in-law had suffered a fall at the home	Need identified to ensure that staff are aware of the need to keep family members informed of any significant incidents involving their loved ones, especially where accidents and injuries were involved.	Managers and Staff of Gwynedd Council Residential Care Homes	Gwen Hughes (Residential and Day Care Area Manager [North]); Cath Ellis (Residential and Day Care Area Manager [South])	As soon as possible	Jan-18	Reminder issued to staff of the need to record every accident on the SU's personal file and to contact the family to report any incident where the SU has suffered an injury as soon as possible afterwards	Work towards enhanced communication between staff in residential homes and residents' family members
14/11/17	GC/4280-17	Mrs G expressed concerns about staffing levels at Plas Hedd having a negative effect on the quality of care. Mrs G was worried that the residents were not sufficiently encouraged to eat and that staff were rushed off their feet	CSSIW report has identified a weakness in respect of staffing levels at Plas Hedd. Review of staffing levels required?	Managers and Staff of Gwynedd Council Residential Care Homes	Mari Wynne Jones (Enablement Senior Manager); Rhion Glyn (Senior Business Manager); Gwen Hughes (Residential and Day Care Area Manager [North]); Cath Ellis (Residential and Day Care Area Manager [South])	As soon as possible	Jan-18	Efforts continuing to try to recruit more care staff at residential homes. Very difficult to obtain new staff at the moment as the number of applicants are very small.	Work continues to attempt to source suitable staff for care work in Gwynedd's residential homes

28/12/17	GC/4399-17	A member of the public complained about the long time taken for staff to answer the telephone when they attempted to contact the Adult Advice and Assessment Team. The complainant had waited for over an hour.	Need identified to improve contact arrangements between the public and the Adult Advice and Assessment Team. Work is already underway to improve this service.	Uwch Reolwr Busnes; Rheolwr Tim Cyngori Ac Asesu	Mari Wynne Jones (Uwch Reolwr Galluogi); Rhion Glyn (Uwch Reolwr Busnes)	As soon as possible	Jan-18	The advice and assessment system has been rearranged to expand the Team's services across 5 separate areas across the county. The correct contact number depends on which area of Gwynedd the call is coming from. It is hoped that the new system will reduce waiting times for calls to be answered and the number of calls missed.	The new system is in place and early indications show a substantial decrease in the number of unanswered calls and call waiting times.
09/01/18	GC/4411-17	Complaint received from the mother of an SU at Manton about the lack of communication from the management about the reduction in the amount of Christmas bonus paid to SU's in 2017.	Need identified to improve the communication of decisions about the service to SU's by management staff at Manton. The decision made to reduce the Christmas bonus was not communicated effectively.	Managers and Staff of the Learning Disabilities Team	Ceryl Teleri Davies (Complex Needs Senior Manager)	As soon as possible	Jan-18	Apologies were issued in writing to the complainant with an undertaking to communicate decisions more directly and efficiently in future	Managers made aware of the need for effective communication of decisions that affect Service Users

29/01/18	GC/4460-17	Telephone call from a relative of an SU from South Meirionnydd. SU is living with her in England for the past three months to have surgery and is now ready to go home to Gwynedd. No home care available at the moment in the area - original care company has closed the care package without informing the family	Ensure that decisions about closing a care package to an SU who is away from home temporarily are communicated to the family and/or SU in order that other arrangements can be made when the SU returns home.	Business Unit Staff	Rhion Glyn (Senior Business Manager)	As soon as possible				
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TABLES AND STATISTICS FOR COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRIES 2017-18

TABLE I: Enquires and Informal Complaints received during 2017-2018							
	Adults	In House Provider	Business	Housing	External Provider	Multi-Team	Total
Solicitors	6	1					7
Ombudsman							
Local Members	3			1			4
Members of Parliament or WAG	24		1	1		1	27
Service Users	2		1		1	1	5
Relatives	17	9	6				32
The Public	3	2	1			2	8
Advocates	3						3
Other agencies	3						3
Disabled Parking Bay Applicants						1	1
Other Local Authorities							
Social Workers						1	1
Older People's Commissioner							
Welsh Language Commissioner							
Information Commissioner							
External Provider			1				1
CSSIW/CIW							
Health Board Staff	1						1
CYFANSWM	62	12	10	2	1	6	93

TABLE 2: Examples of Complaints and Enquiries 2017/2018 – ADULTS

	Description	Category	Stage	Unit/Team	Resolution
GC/3927-17	Mrs R complained that Mr G had been discharged from hospital for over 2 weeks and that home care had not been arranged. Mrs R reported that the family were having trouble coping with caring for Mr G	Complaint	Stage 1	Adults Services (Adults)	The Department responded by apologising to Mrs R for the delay in arranging home care and explained that urgent enquiries were underway to source a provider who would be able to commence the care package.
GC/3995-17	Letter received from an MP on behalf of Mr L's father. The MP stated that Mr L's father was worried that Mr L would need to move away from the area to receive care once he became unable to care for him himself. The MP asked the Department for an update on the current situation and what plans are in place for the future.	Member's Enquiry	Enquiry	Learning Disabilities Team (Adults)	A full explanation of the current circumstances of this case was given to the MP as requested. Future plans were also outlined, along with an assurance that the Department was willing to work closely with the family.
GC/4021-17	Letter received from a solicitor representing DG's family. The family expressed concerns about several aspects of the care given to DG and requested a full review.	Solicitor's Enquiry	Enquiry	Adults Services (Adults)	The Adults Team replied in full to the enquiry and agreed to undertake a full review of the care provided to DG
GC/4028-17	Mrs J wrote on behalf of her mother to disagree with the results of an OT assessment. Mrs J did not	Complaint	Stage 1	Adults Services (Occupational Therapy)	The Department responded in full by agreeing to conduct a reassessment by a different Occupational Therapist before a final decision is made on her eligibility for a stair lift

	agree that her mother was not eligible for a stair lift and asked for a reassessment for her mother.				
GC/4058-17	The Ombudsman received a complaint from C about the legitimacy of charging his daughter for residential care. The Ombudsman ordered the complaint to be considered under the Complaints Procedure before he could investigate it	Complaint	Stage 2	Learning Disabilities Team (Adults)	An investigation was conducted under stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure by an independent investigator. A comprehensive response was provided to the complainant following the conclusion of the investigation.
GC/4124-17	A Welsh Assembly Member contacted the Department on behalf of a son who expressed concerns about his mother's mobility within the home and that she was in danger of falling on the stairs. The AM asked the Department to assess her care needs in full, refer the case to the OT and for the son to receive a carer's assessment	Member's Enquiry	Enquiry	Adults Services (Adults)	The Department responded in full to the AM by stating that an urgent referral had been made to the Occupational Therapist and to offer the son a full carer's assessment
GC/4239-17	Mr S stated that he had been charged for services that his	Enquiry (Service User)	Enquiry	Income and Welfare Unit (Business Services)	A full explanation was given to Mr S about why the invoices issued to him were incorrect and did not reflect the correct number of hours

	wife had not received. His wife was receiving home care. Mr S was concerned that other service users were being charged for care that had not been provided due to care providers delaying the confirmation of their hours provided to the Department				provided. A full apology was provided with an assurance that arrangements would be made to improve communication between the Department and care providers
GC/4280-17	Mrs G expressed concerns about staffing levels at Plas Hedd having a negative effect on the quality of care. Mrs G was worried that the residents were not sufficiently encouraged to eat and that staff were rushed off their feet	Enquiry/Concern	Enquiry	Residential and Day Care (Adult, In House Provider)	A full response was provided in writing, explaining that there is an intention to work with the staff at the home to review the staffing levels and to consult with the staff to identify any concerns that they may have.
GC/4179-17	Mrs W expressed concerns about her mother. Her mother was unable to go home from hospital due to the lack of available home care. Mrs W also expressed concerns about this issue in general and asked for the Department's comments on what was being	Complaint	Stage I	Adults Services (Adults)	A full apology for the delay in arranging home care was given in writing. A full explanation was also provided of what measures the Department is taking to address the shortage of home care hours in Gwynedd.

	done to increase the levels of home care provision				
GC/4235-17	Ms G complained that there were no private rooms available for her to use when she called in to Ysbyty Alltwn to see her social worker. Ms G was concerned about the lack of space for this purpose.	Complaint	Stage 1	Adults Services (Adults)	A full apology was provided in writing about the lack of space to conduct private interviews at Ysbyty Alltwn. The letter explained that a full review of the facilities at Ysbyty Alltwn was underway and that a solution would hopefully be found very soon

TABLE 3: Statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure 2017/18

	Adults	In House Provider	Business	Housing	External Provider	Multi-Team	Total
Stage 1	20	7	2	1	5		35
Stage 2	2						2
Ombudsman							
Total	22	7	2	1	5		37

TABLE 4: Statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure 2017/18

	Adults	In House Provider	Business	Housing	External Provider	Multi-Team	Total
Stage 1	26	5	3		3		37
Stage 2	2						2
Ombudsman							
Total	28	5	3		3		39

TABLE 5: ADHERENCE TO THE TIMESCALES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AT STAGE I – ADULTS

Complaints received more than 12 months after the original incident	Complaint acknowledged within 2 working days	Discussion with complainant held within 10 working days	Response provided within 5 working days of the date of discussion	Final response time extended	Average number of days extended
0	36	36	30	7	7

TABLE 6: NUMBERS OF THANKS RECEIVED DURING 2017-2018 - ADULTS

Adults	In House Provider (Home care and residential)	Business	Housing	External Provider	Multi-Team	Total
28	66	1	0	0	0	95

**TABLE 7: THANKS AND APPRECIATION (ADULTS)
EXAMPLES FROM 2017/2018**

GC/3846-17	<p>“I felt I had to email you to tell how impressed I am at the change in Dolfeurig. I haven't been there for some time but popped in today to see Olwen. I always used to find it quite 'scary' going in there but the atmosphere has completely changed. It's now friendly and inviting. The crafts they are making are fantastic and the whole place just feels transformed.”</p>	Thanks	Learning Disabilities Team (Adults)
GC/3869-17	<p>“Thank you very much to you all for looking after Mam at Plas Gwilym. I stayed with her last night and she was full of life this morning. I told her that I had noticed a great improvement in her ability to walk and Mam agreed that it was because of the work done by the staff at Plas Gwilym. Thank you very much!”</p>	Thanks	Residential and Day Care (Adult, In House Provider)
GC/4193-17	<p>“Thank you for your phone call and your kind words after the death of my Aunt. Getting her out of hospital when I did so she could be at home was one of the best</p>	Thanks	Adults Services (Adults)

	<p>things we ever did. Thank you for all you did to help me over the years. I consider myself very lucky to have had you as a social worker"</p>		
GC/4258-17	<p>"We are writing to thank you and the team for the services that you provided our mother, for the last 18 months. Your team really went the extra mile to support us, and we wanted you to know that this support for her and for us was invaluable. The team's efforts and dedication to support her made our mother's last few months comfortable and happy in her own home, which is what she wanted. Please can you pass our thanks and gratitude to everyone who helped her and us."</p>	Thanks	Home Care (Adults, In House Provider)
GC/4272-17	<p>"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of your team, for pulling everything together, to enable my father to be able to return to his own home. We as a family are very happy and very relieved that this is now going to happen! I would especially like to thank my father's Social Worker Nia Owen, for being so understanding, and sympathetic towards my parents and so understanding of my father's needs and desires. Thank you once again."</p>	Thanks	Home Care (Adults, In House Provider)

GC/4388-17	<p>“Just a few words of thanks for all your support, advice and understanding of our situation here in Tywyn. I would have been completely lost without your input. In a time of cuts in public services I find it amazing that you have always been available and have been so professional with everything you have done. Many thanks”</p>	Thanks	Residential and Day Care (Adult, In House Provider)
GC/4480-17	<p>“S extended a thank you to the whole team for supporting her over the years, especially Dr B and Karen Lloyd Roberts (Social Worker) who has worked with her most recently. S reported that she has learnt many skills and that she has now "got more in the toolbox" to deal with things. She reported doing yoga and mindfulness regularly and these are the methods that work for her. S reported that she has been well now for some time and hopes she will not need a service in the near future but is confident that she can access help if she needs as the team have been there for her over the last few years. She is grateful to the CMHT and CAEDS for supporting her and sends best wishes.”</p>	Thanks	Mental Health Team (Adults)
GC/4545-17	<p>“I understand from the Head of Department, Aled Davies, that</p>	Thanks	Home Care (Adults, In House Provider)

	<p>acknowledgement has been received about members of Team who have gone the extra mile to support our service users during the recent extreme weather. As you are aware, some of our service users are totally dependent on you to enable them to live at home according to their wishes. It was my pleasure to hear about your efforts and I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of you for your commitment and to assure you that your efforts are much appreciated. Thank you very much. Cllr W G Roberts”</p>		
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TABLE 8: Complainant/Enquirer’s requested language of correspondence - 2017/2018 (ADULTS)

	Welsh	English	Total
<i>Enquiries and Informal Complaints</i>	31	60	91
<i>Stage 1</i>	18	19	37
<i>Stage 2</i>	1	2	3
<i>Ombudsman</i>	0	0	0