



Customer Opinion and Organisational Learning in Adult Social Care

Annual Report
2020/2021

Contents

Introduction	3
Executive Summary	3
Complaints	4
Summary of complaints activity in 2020/21	4
Complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)	5
Complaint themes	6
Communication	6
Financial (funding issues, charges or fees)	6
Professional practice	6
The lessons we have learnt from customer feedback	7
Monitoring the effectiveness of the complaints procedure	7
Staffing and aligning of the complaints service	7
Training	8
Compliments	8
Other forms of customer and community feedback	9
Satisfaction surveys	9
NHS Digital Adult Social Care Survey	9
Adult Social Care Contact Centre survey	10
The 'How did we do?' tool	12
Consultations, engagement, information and advice	12
Appendix 1 – the Joint Adult Social Care and Health Complaints Procedure	14
Appendix 2 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decisions received ..	16
Appendix 3 – Equalities information	18
Appendix 4 – Learning from customer feedback	20

Introduction

Feedback from customers is vital to any organisation in making improvements. BCP Council Adult Social Care welcomes and encourages feedback by any means including complaints, compliments, comments, surveys, consultation, engagement and audits and uses this feedback systematically to make improvements.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to report complaints and other representations about health and adult social care under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service (NHS) Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. These require councils and NHS bodies to produce an annual report about the complaints they have received, issues that have been raised and any action that has been taken to improve services.

This annual report covers feedback and learning for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. It aims to:

- review the management and performance of the statutory complaints and representations process in 2020/21 (including statistics, the nature of complaints and compliments received, and how the learning from these has been used to improve services); and
- give examples of how improvements have been made using other forms of customer opinion given by service users, their carers and families.

Executive Summary

In 2020/21 the total number of complaints for BCP Council Adult Social Care was **149**. This compares to a total of **178** in 2019/20.

Communication, professional practice and financial issues have been highlighted as the most common themes from complaints:

- Communication was raised in 68 complaints
- Concerns around professional practice was the reason for 38 complaints
- Issues around finance were highlighted in 48 complaints
- 34 complaints related to assessment and eligibility

A total of **69** individual concerns were managed outside the complaints process with the individuals involved not wishing to pursue a complaint despite being offered the service, but feeling they needed support to resolve a situation. These cases were dealt with in conjunction with Adult Social Care operational teams. Moving forwards consideration is being given to how learning from these issues can also be extracted; however, the learning is often individual rather than organisational.

A further **61** general signposting enquiries were also recorded for this period. These usually required signposting the individual to the correct service, such as Safeguarding services, to assist them.

It is important to note that as well as **149** complaints and representations, BCP Council Adult Social Care also received **219** compliments and messages of thanks during 2020/21.

To put the number of complaints received into perspective, during the period April 2020 to March 2021, Adult Social Care received contact from external customers on average, around 300 times per day. This includes contact via telephone calls, emails and people walking into customer centres. This contact included reports of safeguarding concerns, calls to the Crisis Loan Line for assistance and contact calls to practitioners.

Over the year, customer opinion has also been sought via consumer surveys, consultations and engagement events. These findings feed into quality assurance reporting to senior leaders for direction and to influence future planning.

Complaints

It is stated in legislation that most complaints should be resolved by local resolution. This means trying to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. An investigation may be carried out if requested by the complainant, or if it is judged by the Complaints Manager to be the best way to respond to the issues raised. The complainant can also approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) at any stage of the complaints process. Read more about the statutory process at [Appendix 1](#).

Summary of complaints activity in 2020/21

	2020/21	2019/20	Comments
Complaints received	149	178	Fewer complaints were received this year, talking to our neighbouring authorities and health complaints partners, there was a national trend of fewer complaints received during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown periods.
Complaints acknowledged within 3 days	98% (147)	99% (178)	Two complaint acknowledgements were delayed due to staffing absence whilst working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Resolved at local resolution	93% (137)	93% (165)	The percentage of complaints resolved at an early stage through local resolution remains high, with only 10 complaints going on to the ombudsman for review
Resolved within 20 days	71% (106)	86% (153)	It was recorded by the council that complaint responses may need to be delayed in 2020/21, due to the councils need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and support vulnerable adults during this time.

	2020/21	2019/20	Comments
Resolved within 20 days (continued)			Where delays were unavoidable, complainants were kept informed and updated of when they could expect a response by. This decision was kept under review and supported by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and was a national approach.
Formal/in-depth Investigations	0	2	No cases required a formal investigation.
The Unreasonably Persistent Complaints process	2% (3)	1% (2)	This year we have had to invoke the Unreasonably Persistent Complaints process on 3 occasions due to the protracted nature of these complaints.

Complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Fifteen complainants referred their complaint to the ombudsman for an independent review. Common themes were around quality of care provision from independent sector care providers and charging including client contributions.

The Ombudsman chose not to investigate 5 of the 15 referrals as either they were premature or the complainant did not have the authority to make the complaint. Some complainants took too long to raise an Ombudsman referral or the ombudsman felt that the council had already done all they could to rectify the situation and an investigation would not change the outcome.

Therefore, ten complaints were investigated this year, compared to 13 investigations in 19/20

- one referral is still at the assessment stage
- four decisions have been received. Please see [Appendix 2](#) for details around cases and decisions
- five are currently still under investigation and are awaiting decision.

Four decisions from 2019/20 referrals that were outstanding, were also received this year and the details of these cases may be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Complaint themes

To enable detailed recording and identification of key areas of learning and improvement, complaints may have more than one theme recorded.

Complaint theme	2019/20	2020/21
Communication (perceived inadequate communication, information and advice)	62	68
Finance (decisions around funding, invoice disputes/delays, self-funders approaching the council for funding, financial assessment)	52	48
Professional practice (level of support and guidance, feeling involved/ empowered in assessment process)	57	38
Decision around assessment and eligibility	42	34
Delay in providing a service	11	20
Policy or process	25	17
Quality of residential or nursing home	11	15
Quality of domiciliary provision	13	9
Safeguarding process	7	8
Commissioning	3	7
Extra Care Housing	1	5
Respite	3	1

Communication

Many of the complaints around communication relate to providing information in a timely manner and families not feeling as involved as they would have liked to have been. Adult Social Care is looking to address this issue and consider what additional support can be provided to staff to improve communication. Please see the learning table in [Appendix 4](#).

Financial (funding issues, charges or fees)

Individual complainants have challenged national and local policy decisions in terms of funding eligibility.

Professional practice

Challenges have been made around the expectation of the level of service provision available and the approach to how needs and services are determined. These include individuals not feeling empowered and supported during the assessment process.

Complaints around commissioning decisions and delay in providing a service have increased and include issues around providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lessons we have learnt from customer feedback

In year the main learning points have focussed around:

- Supporting independent sector providers to deliver good quality complaint responses.
- Supporting staff and managers to deliver good quality responses and to ensure complaints staff are informed early on in the process of complaints and concerns raised. A tool kit is currently in development to assist with this
- Ensuring information is accessible to all adults who need to contact and seek support from Adult Social Care

It is the case that in many instances, outcomes to complaints are specific to the case, and there are few general learning points that would influence policy or procedure. This is similar to the national picture as noted by the LGSCO, who reports that in 2019/20 of the 78% of cases they investigated, the outcome was a remedy for injustice for the individual i.e. an apology, financial redress or provision of service, with the remaining 22% recommending learning and improvement at organisational level e.g. staff training or procedural change (<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/adult-social-care-reviews>).

Individual issues about specific teams are dealt with through supervision with team managers and team meetings. This can be followed up through the performance management and operational management meetings where specific elements of learning are discussed, and actions agreed as required.

Please see a full table of learning, including organisational learning, being rolled out across the BCP Council area in [Appendix 4](#).

Monitoring the effectiveness of the complaints procedure

A routine online feedback survey is sent to complainants after the process has closed but take up is variable and therefore the process is being reviewed. However complimentary individual feedback has been received by the team thanking them for their support and facilitation in managing complaints both by complainants and by managers responding to complaints.

Staffing and aligning of the complaints service

Currently there are two officers in post who manage the day-to-day process including acknowledging, recording, tracking and monitoring each case for Adult Social Care. Work has now completed to align the three predecessor authorities complaint processes and the service now operates as one including contact details, day-to-day procedures, guidance and reporting.

Training

There is now an online complaints training module for practitioners to use across the whole of social care. This course is intended to be used as an induction and refresher. Since being rolled out at the beginning of 2020, 44 people have completed the course. Consideration is being given as to how to increase uptake of this course, particularly as we return to a new normal following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bespoke workshops and team-focused complaints training has been delivered online by the complaints staff. This training and opportunity to discuss the complaint process with responding managers and social care workers has been well received and strengthened the working relationship between the complaints staff and operational teams and creating a more robust service.

An online staff toolbox is being designed to provide support documents such as letter templates, language checklists, legislative information and LGSCO information.

Compliments

Service users and staff are encouraged to report feedback about services. Compliments are vital because they help to give us a complete picture of opinions about services. In addition to complaints, they can help us make changes to improve services further by identifying good practice.

In total, **219** compliments and messages of thanks were received.

Areas where the highest numbers of compliments have been received	2020/21
Locality Teams	66
Carers Services	27
Learning Disability	19
Preparing for Adulthood	12
Shared Lives	11

Compliments and positive feedback are shared with staff on a regular basis through the staff newsletter. At the same time, teams are reminded to feedback comments from adults and carers and many teams now have a systematic way of doing this.

A small selection of compliments are detailed below:

“ I am writing to say thank you for all the help and support you have given me over the past months. The adaptations to my home have helped me a lot – I find it easier to get in and out of the house with the grab rails. The new stair rail also makes me feel safer when going up and down stairs. I really appreciated your help with the Blue Badge application and since receiving it my life has been greatly improved and I can now get out more. I am very grateful for your help and would like to say thank you once again. ”

“ I think every visitor, visit, phone call from this department has been really excellent. No-one has been hasty or disinterested and I praise everyone who has visited or written to me. I praise you all. ”

“ I want to thank you for this amazing service...Both [therapies] have helped to relieve a lot of the stress I carry because of my role and mother/carer to my son. CRISP are a wonderful team of two highly qualified ladies who have come into my life, not just as professionals, but as friends. [They] have supported me psychologically as well and physically, and I'm very grateful that thanks to CRISP, I was able to have both treatments to help with my stress. Once again, thank you to all of you at CRISP and to [X] for originally arranging this for me. I look forward to my next twelve vouchers, which I presume I'll receive in the next few months. People should be shouting about CRISP at the top of their voices. This service is truly awesome. ”

“ I will certainly miss having you there as support throughout all of Mum's transition from hospital to home and all I can say is how right you all were! Mum has thrived at home and you would not recognise her. The care she is receiving has a lot to do with that and she has learnt to accept it gracefully and welcome it. Long may it last. Take care and thank you. ”

Other forms of customer and community feedback

Satisfaction surveys

NHS Digital Adult Social Care Survey

In 2020/21 NHS Digital took steps to reduce the reporting burden on Local Authorities by making the national Annual Adult Social Care Survey a voluntary return due to the increased pressure on systems in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Locally a focus group supporting the work of Adult Social Care were consulted to seek their views on conducting the survey at this time. They expressed concerns about the uptake in response and asking people to complete a lengthy questionnaire during a difficult time, though they did highlight the importance of finding out peoples experience of services during the pandemic. It was therefore agreed to conduct a scaled back local survey to understand people's views. Only 24 councils around the country decided to go ahead with the national survey.

The Focus group co-designed the shorter local survey which was sent out at the end of March to 686 people with a closing date of early June. Full results of this survey will be available by late Summer.

In response to the findings from the Adult Social Care Survey which was run during 2019/20, a small number of people were approached to take part in one to one telephone interviews, as they indicated in the survey that they were dissatisfied with services relating to the below Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) national performance measures these were:

3A – Overall satisfaction of people who use service with their care and support

3D1 – The proportion of service users who find it easy to find information about services

The overall number of people who said they were deeply dissatisfied with the above was 25, of which only a small number were deemed as appropriate to contact due to complexity of their needs or their current health situation.

The theme identified from the calls has been around dissatisfaction with domiciliary care providers however those that have been interviewed have now said that their care was reviewed at the time, and their issues were sorted out and they no longer felt unhappy.

Whilst it has been difficult to identify more tangible actions for improvement around these 2 performance measures, there are still improvement plans ongoing which include information and advice as a whole service being reviewed as follows:

- Updating information from the 3 predecessor councils to the new BCP Council website
- Aligning Adult Social Care Factsheets for BCP Council
- Developing electronic information packs to accompany virtual online social care assessments
- Developing and improving My life my care the Council's online information and advice offer for Adult Social Care. Specifically widening the scope of the website to include wellbeing and preventative information, linking more closely with voluntary sector communities as part of the Strengths-Based Approach and Adult Social Care Contact Centre projects.

Adult Social Care Contact Centre survey

Work is taking place to develop a questionnaire to understand people's experience of contacting the Adult Social Care Contact Centre. It will be developed to reflect the principles around the "strengths based approach to practice". The survey is being co-produced working with Adult Social Care run focus groups and will be rolled out in the Spring 2021.

The ‘How did we do?’ tool

Similar to the Adult Social Care Contact Centre survey this tool has also been co-produced with the above focus groups. Its purpose is to collect feedback from people who use services to understand their experience of the assessment process and will be critical in understanding how strength based approaches to practice are being embedded.

The tool will be piloted with a small number of engaged social work staff so we can review its functionality before it is used across services. Due to the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic this work has been delayed but plans are in place to progress this in the Summer of 2021.

Consultations, engagement, information and advice

A number of engagement and consultation exercises have been carried out with service users over the past year including:

- Through the Adult Social Care User Survey, we identified 198 people who said they may like to be involved in the work of Adult Social Care in developing services.
- A Virtual Consultation Group is ongoing and has been used on a regular basis, including giving feedback on new My life my care pages, the design of joint health and social care public information leaflets and the local user and carers survey questions.
- A regular focus group has been established to further engage with service users and carers around the information and advice offer and other areas of business when needed. This group has continued to meet bi-monthly online during the Covid-19 pandemic and has offered feedback and helped co-design a number of surveys such as the local survey detailed earlier in this report and a survey to gather views on the new hospital discharge service arrangements implemented at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board which represents the BCP Council area, continues to drive service improvements through change action groups as part of the Big Plan 2018 to 2021. The Board and action groups engage with adults with a learning disability and family carers to enable them to have a voice, as well as with partners such as Health and the police and three BCP Council elected members are members of the Board. The Covid-19 pandemic caused the Board and action groups to be postponed for some months, however these are now reinstated as virtual meetings.
- Work continues to promote adult social care factsheets with GPs, community centres and libraries and this is being extended to places of worship and sheltered accommodation. We also now send a regular GP/Pharmacy news bulletin to inform partners of Adult Social Care projects and updates and gather their feedback where appropriate.
- The Adult Social Care factsheets are now aligned where possible across BCP Council services and during the pandemic we produced electronic versions of user and carers information packs containing factsheets to support online assessments.
- The My life my care online information directory has continued to be promoted with our partners, staff and residents of the BCP Council area and has received some very positive feedback around the Covid-19 related information pages, which were designed during the pandemic to offer local advice - including meal provision, online pharmacy ordering, wellbeing and the vaccination programme. The site continues to receive around 5000 visitors a month, which increased to 10,000 during the height of the pandemic.

- This year BCP Council representatives have attended a Community Health Ambassador forum group, held fortnightly, jointly hosted by Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC) and Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group. As part of the Dorset Integrated Care System, the council were invited to have an Adult Social Care representative join these meetings to work collaboratively with health and Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) community partners to offer support, advice and guidance on services available, and seek critical insight into community needs and aspirations, with a view to reducing exclusion.
- A 'you said we did' infographic newsletter has been developed to raise awareness of the action taken in response to feedback, which will also encourage people to feed back in future.
- Work has progressed with the Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS) to co-design engagement principles for partner organisations to adopt, to ensure those working in public engagement within the ICS have common standards and purpose joining together to use feedback to inform the future shaping of local services.

Appendix 1 – the Joint Adult Social Care and Health Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about the actions, decisions or apparent failings of a local authority's adult social care services provision which requires a response.

What is a representation?

A comment, suggestion or compliment made about the service provided. Legislation states that if it is possible to resolve a lower level matter immediately or within 24 hours, there is no need to engage the complaints process.

Who can complain?

An adult who is entitled to, or has a possible need for, a personal social service at any stage in their contact with the service. They also qualify if they are acting on behalf of the adult as their representative and acting in their best interests.

How the procedure works

a) Local resolution

In the majority of cases, a problem-solving approach will be adopted to resolve complaints as close to the point of service delivery as possible. Most complaints are resolved using this approach and typically by the operational manager. Timescales for responding to complaints are agreed between the complainant and the Complaints Officer. Locally, complaints are normally responded to within 20 working days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint they have the option to ask for their complaint to be formally investigated or to request a further meeting, or they can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

b) Formal investigation

In discussion with the complainant and Complaints Officer, an investigation can be invoked rather than using local resolution. The risk, complexity and seriousness of the complaint will be considered when making this judgement.

An in-depth examination of the complaint is completed by an investigating officer who is independent of the service area. A report will be compiled and forwarded to the Director of Service who acts as an adjudicator and will identify the Service Unit's response/decision on each point of complaint and any actions with timescales for implementation. Timescales are agreed between the complainant, the responding manager and the investigating officer.

c) Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

The complainant can approach the LGSCO at any time during the procedure or if they remain unhappy after the local authority's efforts at resolution have been exhausted. However, if the ombudsman considers that issues could be resolved at a local level, they will refer the complaint back to the local authority.

Complaints that have both health and social care elements

There may be some occasions when complaints have elements of both health and social care services. If so, the Complaints Officer will look at the issues and decide whether the Protocol for Dealing with Joint Complaints needs to be adopted and the complaint progressed in accordance with this route.

Appendix 2 – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decisions received.

Date of complaint referral	Complaint summary	Complaint themes	Decision	Remedy/Learning
2020/21	Complaint around information regarding client contributions to care costs	Finance Communication – information and advice	Upheld	The Ombudsman recommended that the Council made an apology and make a payment of £400 to remedy the injustice. A review of financial information available was undertaken
2020/21	Complaint around the quality of a care and support assessment and the care provider	Quality of assessment Quality of domiciliary provision	Upheld	The ombudsman recommended a payment of £300 to reflect the distress and inconvenience caused.
2020/21	Complaint around a Disabled Facilities Grant	Quality of assessment	Partially upheld	The ombudsman found that the council appropriately assessed the case however there was a delay of 3 weeks in providing equipment and therefore it recommended that the council pay a remedy of £150 time and trouble payment.
2020/21	Not available	Professional practice	Upheld	The Ombudsman has not made publicly available the details of this investigation nor of their findings due to the complexity and confidential nature of this case.

Date of complaint referral	Complaint summary	Complaint themes	Decision	Remedy/Learning
2019/20	A complaint around quality of residential care and the way that the provider dealt with a complaint	Quality of residential care	Upheld	The ombudsman found the provider did not provide an adequate response to the complaint and recommended that the council apologise and ensure that a full written response was given.
2019/20	A complaint around the length of time taken to around homecare	Delay in providing a service	Upheld	The ombudsman found there was a delay of 3 weeks in arranging a care agency and recommended that the Council apologise and pay £200 to reflect the inconvenience.
2019/20	A complaint around information about charging for care services and handling of the complaint.	Finance Communication	Upheld	The ombudsman recommended that the council apologise and review its process. The council now provides a specific officer for the family to contact to avoid any further confusion.
2019/20	A complaint around the council's decision not to renew a Blue Badge	Blue Badges	Not upheld	The ombudsman found the council had acted appropriately

Appendix 3 – Equalities information

Primary Support Reason	2020/21
Physical support - personal care support	26% (39)
Support with memory and cognition	10% (15)
Learning disability support	9% (13)
Physical support - access and mobility only	9% (13)
Not applicable -corporate complaint	8% (12)
Mental health support	7% (11)
Not applicable - carer	7% (11)
Not recorded	7% (11)
Not known - not a service user	5% (8)
Physical Support (non specific)	3% (5)
Social support - Support for social isolation / other	3% (4)
Sensory support - support for visual impairment	2% (3)
Sensory support - support for hearing impairment	1% (2)
Sensory support - support for visual impairment	1% (1)

Gender	2020/21
Female	58% (87)
Male	34% (50)
Corporate	8% (12)

Ethnicity	2020/21
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	67% (101)
Not recorded	18% (28)
Corporate	8% (12)
White - Any other White background	3% (4)

continued/...

Ethnicity	2020/21
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1% (1)
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	1% (1)
Other ethnic group - Other	1% (1)
Other ethnic group - Arab	1% (1)

Appendix 4 – Learning from customer feedback

NB - Below is a summary of learning which is measured and reviewed as part of the quality assurance framework. The table carries open learning forward from each year to ensure improvements are monitored and embedded.

Origin of learning and issues raised	Learning improvement identified	Measure/outcome of learning
2020-21 LGSCO recommendation and guidance – Councils need to work more closely with providers on complaint responses in regard to what is expected from their response and process.	Consider how to work with providers to ensure they understand our statutory process - some provider forums and workshops will be held for providers as and when the pandemic allows.	Reviewed in 2020/21 – articles added to provider newsletter and work will be progressed as and when possible.
Complaints around communication and comments from surveys	Reflection on working practices to improve communications. The ongoing Strengths Based Approach project will embed a model of social care work that will review our processes; in particular, those practices which we use to communicate with, and work in collaboration with our service users, carers and families.	To be reviewed in 2021/22.
Apr-Jun 2020 complaints - A number of complaints have been received where we have not had sight of formal consent documents.	A Data breach has been recorded. IG training to include the need for formal recording around consent. Reminder article for the newsletter. Further training required around consent.	Work will progress as the pandemic allows - requires long term reflection.
2020-21 - Three complaints/concerns raised from members of the public around the behaviour of residents in community-based placements.	A clear process is now in place around how to process these complaints as it is not always possible to identify the clients.	Better communication and clearer advice for complainants

Origin of learning and issues raised	Learning improvement identified	Measure/outcome of learning
Complaint investigation report completed and recommendations around improving services for those within the sight and hearing team.	SignLive can now be used to contact the ASC Contact Centre and there is a text facility for the complaints team. BSL training for staff; being considered as may now be more accessible with the development of online courses. Further improvements will be considered within the SBA work i.e., building links with interpreters and co-producing services/info and advice with the deaf community.	Better access to services for the deaf community
2020/21 A number of complaints have included not being passed to the complaints team in a timely manner, issues of consent, delays in statutory timescales and complex complaint cases that need close management.	The complaints team delivered complaints training workshops to responding managers – workshop includes information about the aligned BCP complaint service and how it can support managers in terms of responses, communications, ombudsman guidance and managing unreasonably persistent complainants.	Workshops have begun and have been well received – there is already better communications between managers and the complaints team, in turn offering a better service to complainants.
2020/21 Ombudsman referral complaint around delays in invoicing resulting in the council being recommended to pay a £400 time and trouble payment.	The Council is reviewing operational processes, to ensure that the process for following up missed payments is consistently applied and prevents any recurrence. We have moved clients onto an online card for Direct Payments This will allow us to see all expenditure on the account without having to wait for clients to post /e-mail in their returns which means we can respond more quickly where there is evidence of non-payment of contributions. DP teams are now aligned thereby giving greater support to cover any individual's long-term absence from the Direct Payment team	Assurance that DP delays in payments will be identified at an early stage.

Origin of learning and issues raised	Learning improvement identified	Measure/outcome of learning
<p>2020/21 Complaint around a deferred payment agreement (DPA) on a shared property where the service user had passed away before the agreement was finalised.</p>	<p>FAB reminded to fully investigate any changes to financial assessments, and to thoroughly check any amounts before invoicing. The legal and finance teams are working together to review the processes regarding DPA and how decisions are made when recovering outstanding monies owed.</p>	<p>Better communication between directorates</p>
<p>2020/21 Complaint in relation to a number of residents who remained in hospital rather than being returned to residential placements due to the policy in relation to discharges from hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Within the development of the pandemic the policy was able to be reviewed and a risk assessment was considered for individual cases as opposed to a blanket approach</p>	<p>A more individualised approach for care/nursing home residents and providers</p>
<p>2020/21 Complaint from a family about a relationship breakdown between them and the care provider</p>	<p>A meeting was facilitated by the complaints team to discuss the issues. A number of concerns with the provider arose and it was agreed they would work with the QA team and SIT as and when they needed to formally communicate with families in the future so they can understand what is expected from the council.</p>	<p>Better relationships and communication between families and providers</p>