



# **ANNUAL SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT 2018-19**



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have in place a representations and complaints procedure for Social Services under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and its associated 2014 guidance.
- 1.2 Each Local Authority is required to produce an annual report concerning the operation of its representation and complaints procedure.
- 1.3 This Annual Report provides information about the operation of the Social Services representation and complaints procedure between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by Complaints Team during that period to develop the service.

## 2. Background

2.1 In relation to complaints, our approach is based on “**Getting it right**” first time & if not, then “**Putting it right**” as soon as possible.

2.2 An effective complaint handling system is one that provides confidence that complaints are dealt with effectively through the following three steps:

- 1) Arrangements for enabling people to make complaints are customer focused, visible, accessible and valued, and supported by management.
- 2) Complaints are responded to promptly, handled objectively, fairly and confidentially. Remedies are provided where complaints are upheld and there is a system for review.
- 3) There are clear accountabilities for complaint handling and complaints are used to stimulate and mandate (as appropriate) organisational improvements.

2.3 Powys County Council Social Services Complaints Procedures seek to empower service users or those eligible to speak on their behalf to voice their concerns in relation to the exercise of Social Services functions.

2.4 The Complaints Team are committed to ensuring that concerns raised are listened to and resolved quickly and efficiently. Lessons learned from this process are fed back to relevant teams and used, wherever possible, to improve future service delivery.

2.5 Similarly, Social Services in Powys adopts a positive attitude towards complaints and views them as a valuable form of feedback, which assists in the development and improvement of its services.

- 2.6 The aim is to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and teams are encouraged to be proactive in achieving this goal.
- 2.7 Where someone has been deemed 'not eligible' to utilise the Social Services Complaints Procedure, in accordance with guidance/legislation, the Complaints Team will endeavour to provide assistance informally in order to provide best service to the complainant. The Complaints Team keep account of these contacts and these are referred to throughout this report as 'enquiries'.
- 2.8 Where a complaint relates to a young person, Looked After Child, a care leaver or vulnerable adult, the Local Authority has a duty to provide information about advocacy services and to offer help, where relevant, in obtaining an advocate to support them through the complaints process and this is actively pursued.
- 2.9 Effective engagement with advocacy services empowers more individuals and groups to make use of the complaints process at the earliest opportunity. There has been an increase in complainants utilising advocacy services over the past 12 months and this is certainly something that the Complaints Team would continue to encourage and support.
- 2.10 Experience indicates that complainants who opt to use the services of an advocate, tend to have more of an understanding of their circumstances, their rights and the Authority's responsibilities. In addition, in the majority of cases individuals are able to reconcile their feelings about the situation through an advocate and resolution is more speedily achieved.

THE YEAR IN SUMMARY

# SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRIES

2018-2019

284 COMPLAINTS &  
ENQUIRIES RECEIVED



143 COMPLAINTS &  
141 ENQUIRIES

2.5%



Increase in Complaints & Enquiries received during the same period in 2017/18.

143 COMPLAINTS

25% decrease from 17/18



141 ENQUIRIES

64% Increase from 2017/18

COMPLAINTS  
ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

58



COMPLAINTS  
CHILDRENS SOCIAL  
SERVICES



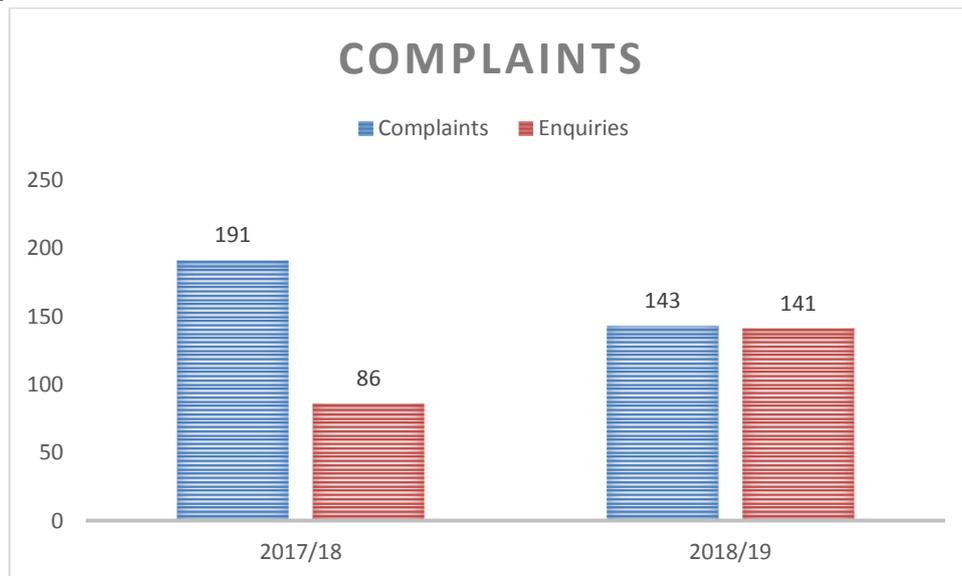
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QUARTER 1 APRIL - JUNE 2018 RECEIVED THE MOST COMPLAINTS OVERALL (44)

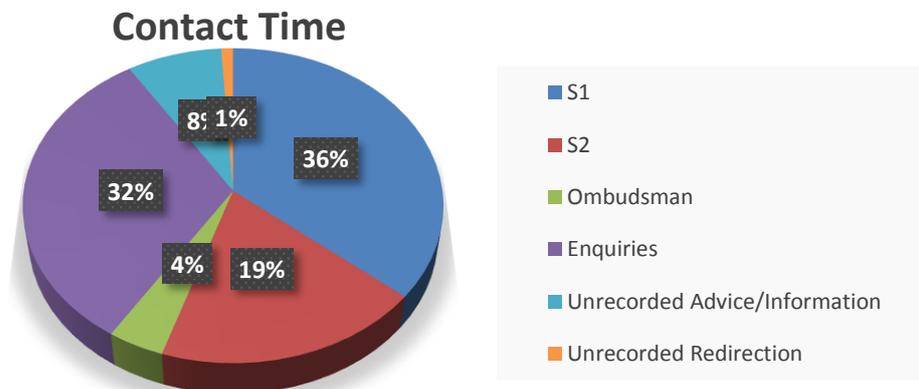
### 3. Year in Summary Analysis

- 3.1 When analysing complaints, it is important to remember that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided. An increase may indicate the positive view that is taken towards complaints, together with the fact that people are more well-informed about how to make a complaint. Given the vulnerability of many people accessing services, it would be worrying if people felt they were unable to complain if, in their opinion, they were receiving an unsatisfactory service.
- 3.2 As can be seen from the above Year in Summary, there has been a prodigious decrease in the number of complaints handled in an official capacity during 2018/19. However, it is interesting to note the vast increase in the number of enquiries dealt with during the same period, in comparison with 2017/18, as per the graph below.
- 3.3 Complaints submitted are more complex than in previous years and as a consequence often take much longer to investigate and resolve.

**Graph 1**



The pie-chart below identifies the percentage of contact time that the Complaints team have spent on the different stages of “complaints” in 2018/19.



- 3.4 There has been a marked decrease in complaints across both service areas, with a 21% decrease in Children’s Services and a decrease of 32% in Adults Social Services.
- 3.5 The Complaints Unit undertook to deal with incoming concerns as ‘enquiries’ wherever possible in 2018/19 in order to both support individuals, seeking a more immediate recognition of and resolution to their concern, “complaint”. This was a successful endeavour as is evident in the decrease in the number of official Complaints dealt with by Teams during this period.
- 3.6 It should be noted that whilst the number of overall contacts received in 2017-18 (277 complaints and enquiries) is very similar to the figures received in 2018-19 (284 complaints and enquiries), as highlighted there is a significant change (improvement) in the relative percentage resolved as Enquiries.
- 3.7 There should have been a discernible impact felt by the service in relation to the decrease in the volume of complaints, where the Complaints Unit undertook to respond to these as enquiries, with little or no input required from teams.
- 3.8 In addition to the above, the Unit receives further communication which is not recorded and can usually be dealt with by the provision of information/advice or by simple redirection to an alternative department e.g. Corporate Complaints Team.

#### 4. Complaints by Stage

**Table 1**

<b>Complaints received relating to Adults and Children’s Services</b>		
	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Ombudsman</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>*Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>143</b>

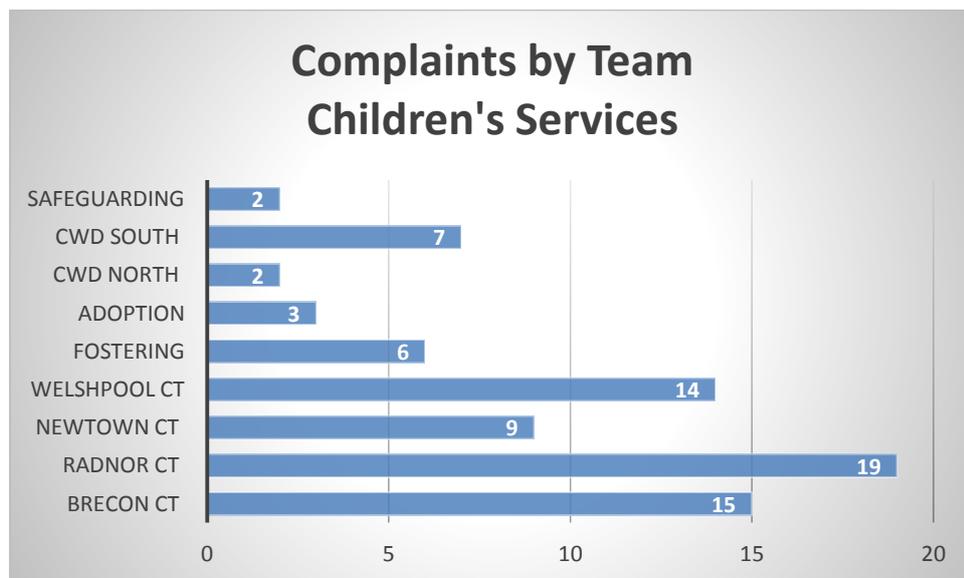
*\*It should be noted that a number of the complaints will be double/triple counted as they are included in each stage of the complaints process that they triggered in the year 2018/2019. However not all complaints at the Ombudsman or at Stage 2 will have been in Stage 1 in this year.*

- 4.1 As already identified and as per Table 1, there has been a positive decrease in the number of complaints received in the previous financial year. What is most significant is the continuing theme following on from 2017/18 where we experienced a 200% increase in Stage 2 Complaints. 2018/19 has seen a further 150% increase in Stage 2 complaints. As stated previously, there has been a number of more complex complaints and it is becoming more difficult to address and conclude matters at Stage 1, thus requiring the formal complaint investigation by an Independent Investigator.

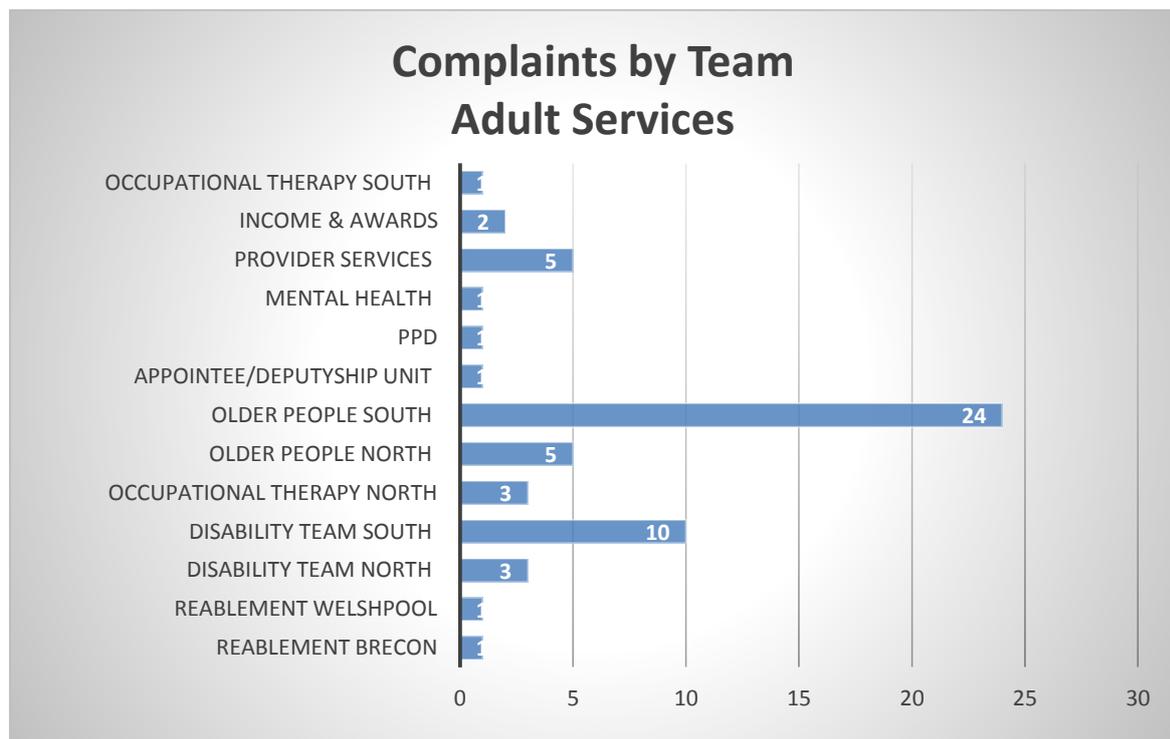
- 4.2 Despite the increase in Stage 2 complaints, the number still remains low in comparison to the number of Stage 1 complaints. This would demonstrate that the majority of complainants are happy for the Council to deal with their concerns at a local level and that managers are effectively dealing with the issues raised.
- 4.3 There were a number of complainants that on initial contact with the Complaints Unit requested their complaints be addressed at Stage 2. However, with the intervention of the Complaints Officer these were able to be resolved without the need for external independent investigation therefore settling issues for individuals more promptly and saving the Authority considerable time and additional expense, in addition to providing service users with a more timely and personal resolution.

### **Complaints by Team**

**Graph 2**



**Graph 3**



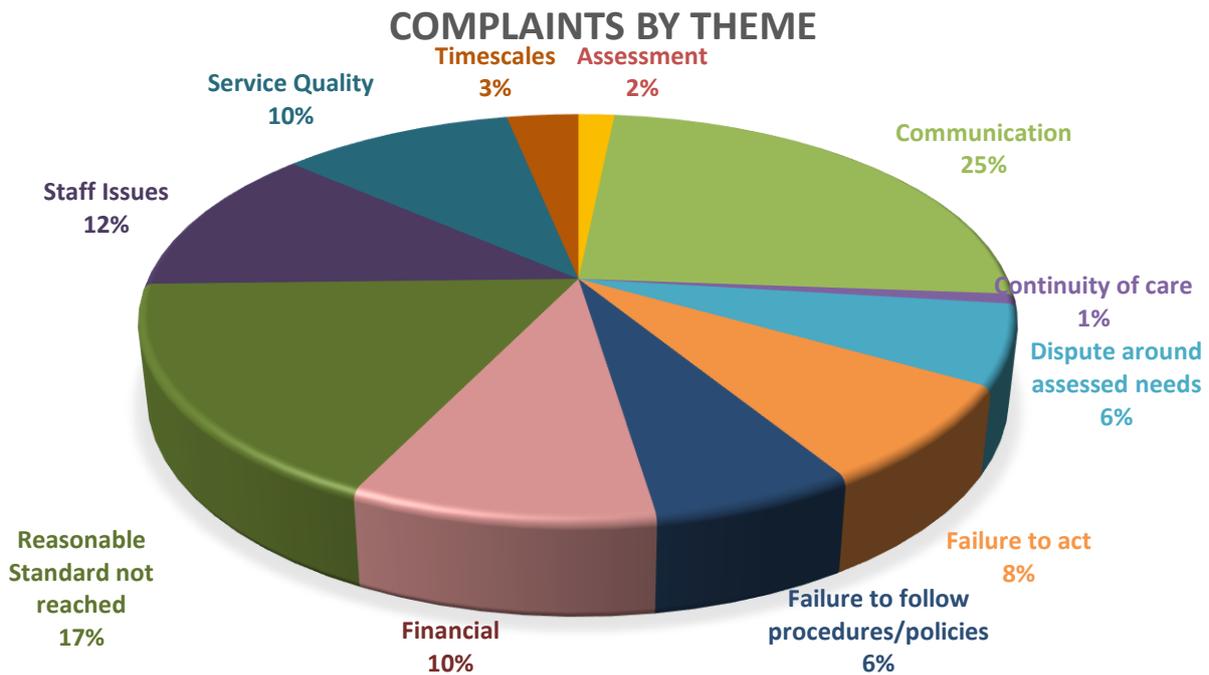
4.4 For the second year running the Older People South Team has received the highest number of complaints in 2018/19 overall. The reasons behind the complaints are varied and wide-ranging in their nature. It is recognised that pressure on capacity within the team is likely to be a major factor, which has led to an increase in complaints; many of which were due to delays in care being provided or assessed, or a lack of communication with service users and their families. The team has experienced a high degree of disruption during this period resulting from high levels of sickness absence and a high turnover of staff including management changes.

4.5 It is worth noting that the Older People’s Teams are made up of 2 teams (North and South) whereas the Children’s Teams are broken down further into service areas.

## **5. Areas of Complaint**

5.1 Breakdown of the reasons complaints have been submitted are shown in Chart 1. Service users have unique and complex individual circumstances for registering their complaint and it is becoming harder to identify one sole theme to a complaint. Complaints could include multiple areas of concerns and could fit into several thematic headings, however, upon analysis of each complaint we have grouped into ‘best fit’ generic headings reporting purposes.

**Chart 1**



- 5.2 We continue to see themes emerge in relation to the complaints we receive and we highlight these themes in order to learn from complaints and improve both our approach to, and the services we deliver. Even when a complaint investigation has been carried out and a complaint is not upheld, lessons can still be learnt.
- 5.3 Issues with communication is a theme that continues to be identified in complaints submitted across all teams. Service users have felt the need to escalate their concerns as a result of significant delays in communication from teams, no response from teams or inadequate response from teams, together with a failure to act upon agreed actions, resulting in unacceptable delays, with the reasons not being passed on to Service Users.
- 5.4 Being unable to make contact with a Social Worker or team has been highlighted as an issue in the 2018/19 period. Understandably it has proved to be frustrating when direct dials are not answered, are bounced through to a support team, or on occasion, do not connect at all.
- 5.5 In such instances, we have worked with teams to change the way in which their telephony systems are set up and automatic redirection of calls has been removed, in order for calls to go through to direct workers wherever possible. Where technical issues have been acknowledged these have been reported to ICT Services. In addition, the need to return a call or email in a timely manner, even if to advise that there is no update, has been emphasised to staff teams and we are now seeing evidence of this being carried out. It is

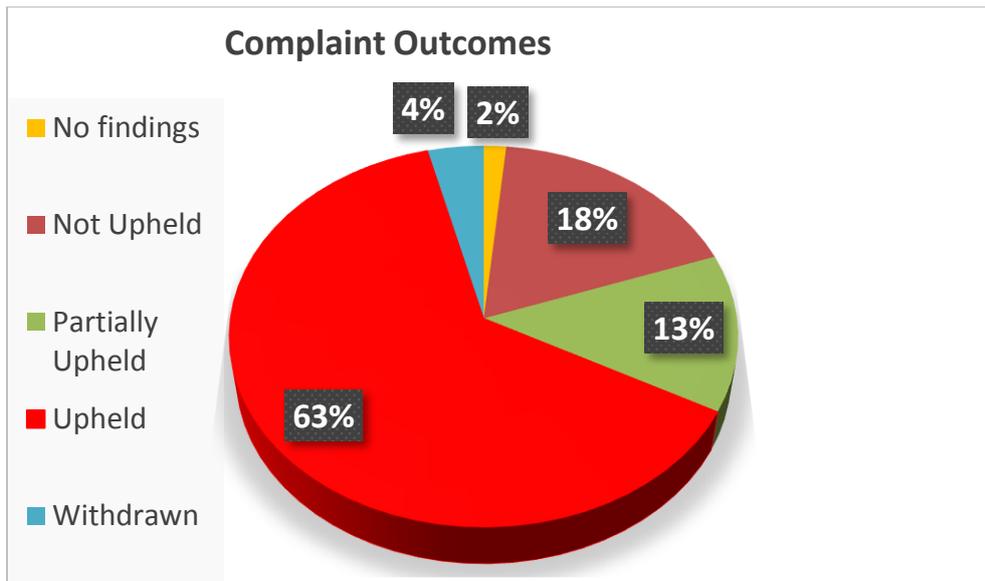
hoped in time that we will go on to see a decrease in the number of complaints in relation to poor communication.

- 5.6 Complaints Officers work closely with staff to support and develop practice. In addition, Complaints Officers regularly attend Senior Management, Operational Management and Team meetings to feedback on areas of concern emerging.
- 5.7 It is positive to note that the majority of feedback received by the Complaints Team praises the work carried out by Social Services staff. It is regrettable therefore, that teams are not always able to keep service users updated of progress.
- 5.8 It is also important to highlight, particularly in relation to Adults Services, that many of the complaints relate to the actions and practice of the care providers we commission and not just solely to PCC staff in Adult Services.
- 5.9 We have a number of processes in place to address concerns with our commissioned care providers which include contract management oversight and where necessary formal reporting via "Poor Practice" records to the Integrated Quality Assurance Board, where specific actions are required to assure and evidence improvements.
- 5.8 We also need to support PCC Officers by publicising the Council's **Habitual or Vexatious Complainants Policy**, as these take a significant amount of Officer time, reduce time available to address and respond in a timely manner to genuine concerns and increases levels of stress and anxiety amongst the officers who have to directly deal with or are accused as part of the vexatious nature of the complaints

**Example of a vexatious/habitual complainant:**

Received in excess of 300 emails from a parent in the space of 3 months as a result of their representations we also received , more than 15 letters forwarded or instituted by MP's, AM's, County Councillors, WLGA. In addition this person also came in person to differing PCC offices and made in excess of 200 phone calls to complain.

- 5.8.1 The complaints department deals with approximately 10 individuals who could reasonably be identified as a Habitual or Vexatious Complainant based on the above policy.
- 5.9 In analysing the outcome of complaints we see that over three-quarters are upheld /partially upheld, which means that this process is an important and essential pathway for people to seek and gain recognition and apology for areas where our practise, policies and decisions are not what they should have been.



## **6. Examples of Complaints**

### **6.1 Complaint 1 – Submitted by parent in relation to Children’s Services**

6.1.1 The complainant expressed concern about the Care & Wellbeing Assessment that had been produced. The complainant advised that the content of the assessment was factually incorrect, one sided and did not accurately reflect the feelings of one side of the family. In addition, communication had been poor and it was felt that the complainant had not been listened to throughout the process.

6.1.2 Prior to a response being sent, the Team Manager contacted the parent to discuss the concerns within the Care & Wellbeing Assessment. It was relayed to the parent that the Assessment cannot be changed, however, a further note will be added to the assessment to ensure that their views have been adequately input into the process. A final response was provided thereafter and the additions provided. An apology was made for the lack of communication and the time take to rectify the issue.

### **6.2 Complaint 2- Submitted by an adult with Power of Attorney for a family member requiring the involvement of Adult Social Care**

6.2.1 A complaint can only be submitted by someone who has an appropriate relationship with the Service User; i.e. has Parental Responsibility, Power of Attorney or has been appointed to act on behalf of the individual. In this instance, the complaint was put forward by a family member who had Power of Attorney on behalf of his elderly relatives.

6.2.2 The complaint was in relation to the delay in a care package being arranged by the service upon the family members discharge from hospital. In addition, the complainant raised technical issues with the referral process encountered on the Powys website and over the telephone.

6.2.3 The issues raised were investigated by the Team Manager and a response was sent within timescale. It was identified that the delay in the assessment being carried out was as a result of staff sickness and this was followed up immediately upon the SW's return to work and a package was put in place. In addition, the concerns relating to the telephony and website referral technical issues were shared with ICT Services Web Team and addressed as part of ongoing improvements.

6.3 **Complaint 3 – Submitted by parent of a young person in relation to Children's Services**

6.3.1 Due to the complex and sensitive nature of this complaint, it was escalated to a Stage 2 complaint immediately upon submission. The complainant highlighted concerns in the way in which a Social Worker had interacted with the family and offered poor advice, meetings has been postponed, cancelled and never re-arranged. Additional complaints were submitted in relation to the family's poor experience with other departments within the Local Authority and these were handled separately.

6.3.2 The Independent Investigator was appointed and worked closely with the family to fully understand the wide remit of the complaint made. The complaint investigation period was extended due to the number of individuals/departments involved and required to interview. The family were happy for the complaint to be extended in order for a thorough investigation to take place.

6.3.3 On receipt of the Investigation report, it was found that all areas of the complaint had been upheld. A response was sent from the Director of Social Services apologising for the distress caused as a result of the interaction with Social Services. It was confirmed that the Local Authority fully accepted all of the report recommendations and would be working on implementation of these with immediate effect.

6.4 **Complaint 4 – Submitted by an Adult with authority to act on behalf of their parent**

6.4.1 This complaint was submitted by an individual who was acting on behalf of their parent, who is a recipient of Adult Social Care.

6.4.2 The complaint relates to conflicting and delayed communication of information in relation to in the care management, co-ordination and delivery of care. Furthermore, once the support package was in place; call times were inconvenient and issues were identified with regards to provision of medication.

- 6.4.3 Although a stage 1 complaint, it was agreed for the HOS to lead on this particular investigation. As part of the complaint investigation, the HOS met with the complainant and went on to conduct complaint investigation interviews with staff. Failings had been identified as part of the complaint process and a lessons learnt session was held.
- 6.4.4. In addition, The Contracts and Commissioning team contacted providers to discuss identified issues and ensure that they were to remain fully compliant with the Medication Policy for Domiciliary Care.

## **7. Enquiries**

- 7.1 Enquires are becoming more varied and can take a significant proportion of the Unit's time to deal with. These include:
- Returning complainants, coming back with issues and associated issues from complaints already responded to but do not accept the response.
  - Contact from individuals who are in relationship disputes raising issues that could be vexatious.
  - Contact from individuals who are either going through legal proceedings and therefore are unable to make a complaint,
  - Contact from family members of individuals receiving Social Services support but are unable to make an official complaint, primarily through a lack of parental responsibility (PR) or authority from those who do have PR (these tend to be grandparents).
- 7.2 If someone has an issue with the service received but is not eligible to complain, the Complaints Officers strive to provide some informal resolution wherever possible.
- 7.3 If possible, the Complaints Unit will endeavour to manage an enquiry with little or no input from the team in order to relieve pressure on the service.
- 7.4 In addition to the above, the Unit receives further communication which is not recorded and can be usually be dealt with by the provision of information/advice or by simple redirection to an alternative department e.g. Corporate Complaints Team.

## **8. Compliments**

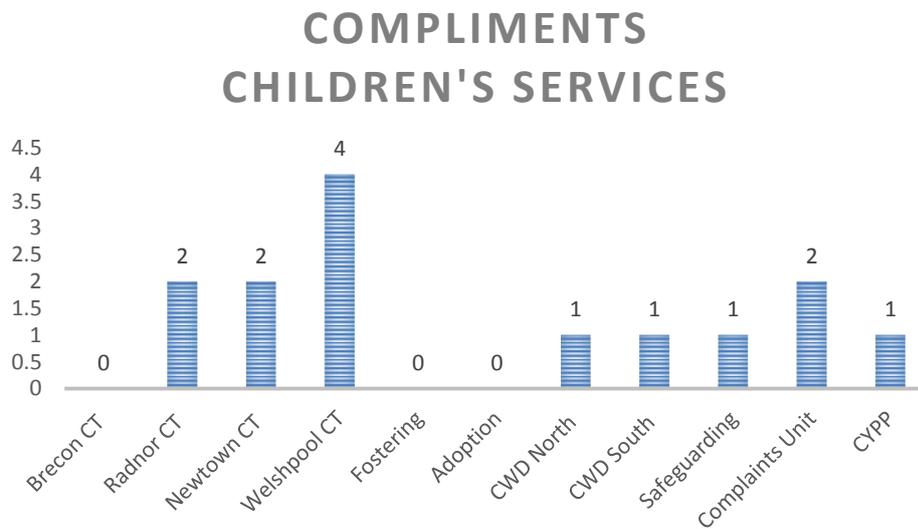
- 8.1 There has been a significant increase of 154% in the number of compliments recorded during 2018/19.
- 8.2 The Complaints Team have encouraged staff to return all compliments to the Unit to celebrate and log during 2018/19, this has significantly increased the number of compliments recorded.

- 8.3 When considered overall, as with previous years, Adult Services continue to be in receipt of the majority of compliments in 2018/19. The higher percentage of compliments received by Adult Services over that of Children's Services would seem to be attributable to the overarching nature of the services that Children's Services provide ( which are much more interventionist and statutory to assure the safety and wellbeing of children).
- 8.4 Adult Services are often seen as a provider of supportive services such as home care, aides and adaptations. These are all viewed as helpful, enabling people to live their lives as independently as possible and easing the strain, again a good reason for submitting a compliment.
- 8.5 Children's Services on the other hand are perceived as fulfilling a more regulatory function, initiating care proceedings, undertaking child protection functions, removing children from the family home and placing them in care and by their very nature are perceived as more intrusive, monitoring and enforcing, thus less likely to generate compliments.
- 8.6 However, both services have statutory safeguarding duties and can become involved with individuals and their families at times of crisis, when things have gone wrong or reached a critical point, giving rise to the need for intervention or safeguarding and at such time both service areas can be viewed with suspicion and mistrust, a view further exacerbated by the medias portrayal of the profession.
- 8.7 The breakdown of compliments received by Adult and Children's Services have been identified in Table 3 below and compared with the previous year. Although the compliments received are not vast in quantity, it was pleasing to note that Children's Services has seen a 50% increase in compliments received within the comparable time period.

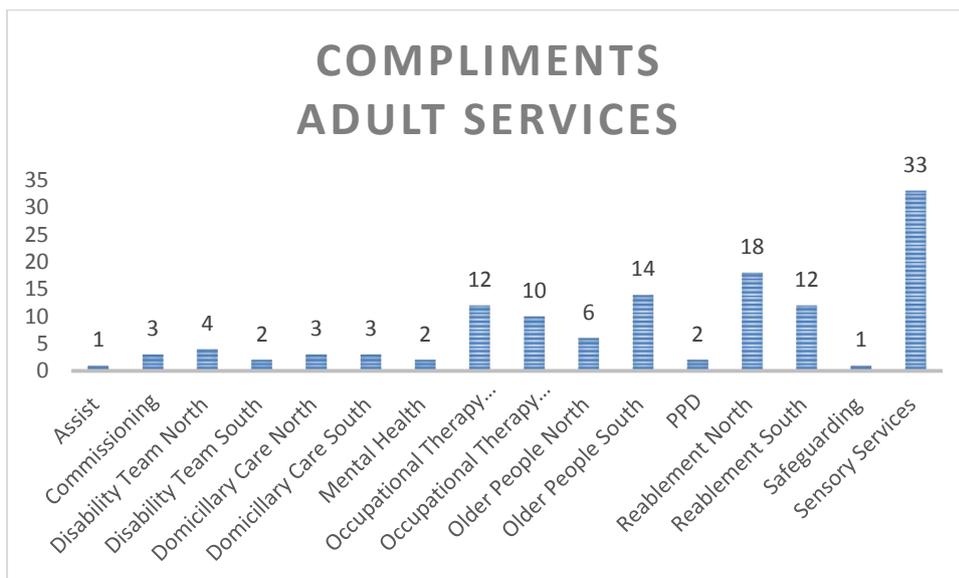
**Table 2**

<b>Compliments</b>		
	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
<b>Children's</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Adults</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>126</b>

**Graph 4**



**Graph 5**



8.8 Table 5 provides some examples of compliments that have been passed to the Complaints Team from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 in relation to Adult and Children's Services. The individual staff members have been made aware of the compliments concerning them, and their, Team Manager, Senior Manager and Head of Service has also been advised.

8.9 As well as substantial acknowledgements of thanks from service users that are given to staff at the point of service delivery, service users, relatives or friends can convey their appreciation more formally through the compliment process.

**Table 3**

<b>Compliments received</b>	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> April 18 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 19</b>	
<b>Team</b>	
Welshpool Children's Team	<i>This has been a difficult time for us over the last few months but I would like to let you know that both {Social Worker's - SW's} have been great with their support. They have both put so much help and support with us. For the first time in a long while we have got our confidence back with Social Services and I know that without [SW's] this would have not happened. We are all too quick to complain when things are not going right and not so quick to praise so {SW's} deserve a lot of praise for all their hard work and commitment to us. So a big Thank You</i>
Domiciliary Care	<i>Thanks very much for having supported my father so well in his home. Quality of care delivered was outstanding and always reliable. Kind and solicitous of my father, respecting his independence whilst keeping him safe. Timetables were received making things easier for family with medication. Staff almost always on time, which I know is a challenge in delivery of dom care in rural environment but much appreciated by father. Special mention to {SW's} who were especially kind &amp; sensitive and quite simply extremely good at their job. Others too but not meet them often enough to learn their names and fully appreciate their work. Please pass these thanks to the team of care staff who supported dad and he is settling down to his new life.</i>
Policy & Care Team	<i>New Canary System installed October 2016 arranged by {SW's}. As a family we are extremely grateful to be supported in this positive and prompt manner. Thank you for you proactive &amp; positive input into fathers careplan. It is greatly appreciated.</i>
Newtown Children's Team	<i>Just wanted to pass on my thanks to {SW} for the amazing work that she has done with **. I visited him in his new placement on Monday evening and it was crystal clear how important his relationship with {SW} is to him. We were talking about various things, and more than once he listed {SW} as being one of the most important people in his life..... unprompted. When talking about who he wanted at his review, he wanted mum and {SW}. When talking about who he likes to speak to and spend time with, it was mum, dad and {SW}! This shows the value of consistency to a child, as {SW} has worked with this child from the start and through some extremely testing circumstances. This has clearly been crucial to support ** development and sense of security. So: Thank You {SW}for the care and support you have given this young man, it has clearly been invaluable to him. And Thank You to the locality team for working to keep {SW} working with ** and providing her with the support to keep going with this situation which has tested us all. Great work, whatever it is you are doing, it is working so please keep doing it!!</i>
Reablement	<i>I would like to express my thanks to all the members of your team for their dedicated support, help and advice, carried out in all weathers,</i>

	<i>following my discharge from hospital, which helped me get back on my feet again. It was nice to know that a friendly face would be calling 3 times a day to help assess my future needs.</i>
Older People South	<i>We would like to thank the social services team that have helped ** during the last 2 years. We would especially like to thank {SW} who we have dealt with. He was professional and a very caring and courteous person in his capacity as a social worker, in what has been a very difficult situation to deal with.</i>

8.10 Compliments received are an equal reflection of individual and team efforts and Service teams should be encouraged by their successes.

## **9. Going forward**

9.1 It would appear from complaints received that the key areas for improvement are in relation to communication, Standard of service and in particular a delay in the provision of service.

9.2 A further finding is the lack of continuity of social workers, with some cases having experienced multiple changes of worker. For increasing numbers of service users this can create numerous difficulties relating to consistency and continuity and adds to their frustration with having to repeat their story including historic issues time and time again. There have been examples where such changes have contributed to delays in the provision of service.

9.2.1 This is an extremely difficult matter for the Authority to manage as it is directly linked to recruitment and retention issues, both of which are influenced and exacerbated by the nature of the profession and the county's geographic location. There have been recruitment drives within the 2017-18 and 2018/19 period, including canvassing for Social Workers at a National Social Services events. This has resulted in appointments being made, but does not fully address the issue.

9.2.2 We are undertaking work with our Employee Rep group to develop a strategy to make "Powys – My Employer of Choice" and this work continues into 2019/20.

9.2.3 It is hoped that within Children's Services in particular and with the bedding in of it's new structure, that there will be continuity and support within teams and a reduction therefore of complaints.

9.3 To assist in attempts to improve and understand the failures in the standard of communication, seen by service users, changes are being made by teams, in particular in Radnor Children's Team, whereby call management has been improved and Service User's frustrations lowered, by the introduction of a new procedure where, unless a Social Worker has indicated that they are unavailable to take calls, then all call will go direct to the Social Worker. This has improved wait times and improved customer satisfaction. A new way of working that seems to be a success.

- 9.4 In order to continue to improve services, two Social Services Quality Assurance Officers were appointed in 2018. This has resulted in Complaints Officers and Quality Assurance Officers working closely together, to monitor complaints, identify themes and any areas of concern, which are fed into an overarching Quality Assurance Panel. This link has led to a better understanding of the importance of complaints and by extension the role improved communication could play in reducing stress and upset, which in turn should improve the way in which the Authority is perceived. It is felt that by reporting to the Quality Assurance Panel, which is attended by Senior Members of staff including the Head of Service, it is keeping lessons learnt from complaints at the fore of service agendas.
- 9.5 The 2018/19 period has also see the introduction of a new Social Services online complaints processing system. The new system has been developed to ensure that anyone who has a complaint, compliment or comment, can make this online with greater ease at a time to suit them. It is hoped that implementation of the system will make the complaints process easier for anyone having to use it but will also assist the Complaints Unit with better monitoring and quality assurance feedback and provide a real time service to complainants.
- 9.6 Complaints Training Sessions will be delivered in Summer 2019 across Adult & Children's Services to support staff with areas identified needing improvement as part of our internal quality assurance of complaints.
- 9.7 Learning will include, Response Writing, Having Difficult Conversations & Managing Expectations. An "Aide Memoir/Check list" is being developed for discussion at these learning events to ensure that staff are clear about key standards and stages they need to adhere to and evidence in order to undertake a transparent, thorough and timely investigation to manage and respond to complaints on behalf of the Local Authority.
- 9.8 Training is continuing to be rolled out to staff teams on the new Social Service Complaints Management System. Similarly, staff teams are feeding back suggestions to strengthen the system, which is still in its infancy, in order to improve it's accessibility and user satisfaction for both staff and complainants alike. Modifications and improvements are being carried out by the Web Technical Support Team.
- 9.9 One of the improvements being implemented is the setup of Investigation Officer response times being brought forward internally to 12 day. This is to ensure that the Complaints Team have a further 3 days thereafter to ensure the response is sufficiently robust and responded to within timescale.
- 9.10 At the same time, it must be recognised that effective from August 2019 , the capacity within the complaints team will be reduced by 50%, when we go from 2 to 1 Complaints Officer and form 1 to 0.5 fte Administrative officer due to the Business Support restructure.

- 9.11 We are undertaking a major transformation across both Adults and Children's Social Services and whilst this transformation will result in a stronger, more person centred, strengths based approach to our social care offer and delivery of services, it is also understandable that there will be levels of uncertainty and anxiety about the potential impact for individuals and their families, which may result in an increase in complaints being received.
- 9.12 Due to the forthcoming reduction in capacity within the Complaints Unit, there will be a requirement to forward more complaints onto teams to process officially, rather than the complaints unit manage as 'enquiries'. Therefore, next year we anticipate that this is likely to result in a rise in the number of complaints recorded and a reduction in the number of 'enquiries'.

## 10. Conclusion

- 10.1 There has been a decrease in the number of Stage 1 Complaints received within 2018/19 and a significant increase in Enquiries which people have been happy to resolve with us without feeling the need to make a formal complaint.
- 10.2 There has also been a substantial increase in the number of compliments received during the same periods.
- 10.3 Regular performance information is produced for Children's and Adult Services and we have a clear set of actions and to ensure that managers and front-line staff understand, learn from and respond to any themes, lessons learnt and quality assurance matters.
- 10.4 We are confident that governance, oversight and assurance in relation to ensuring we are "**Getting it right**" first time & if not, then "**Putting it right**" as soon as possible is in place and working more effectively this year than last, and next year will improve further.

**Ali Bulman**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Social Services**  
**Powys County Council**  
**10 June 2019**