

# Solihull Adult Social Care

## Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2025-2026



# **Annual Complaints & Compliments Report Solihull's Adults Social Care Services**

**1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Every Local Authority with a responsibility for Social Care Services is required to provide an annual report, outlining the workings of both their Adults and Children's complaints and representations procedures. This is the Annual Report of Solihull Council's Adults Social Care Complaints and Representations, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 1.2 The procedure for dealing with complaints and representations relating to Adults Social Care Services is determined by the following legislation:
  - The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009; and
  - The accompanying guidance 'Listening, Responding, Improving: A guide to better customer care' (DoH February 2009).
- 1.3 The Regulations cover complaints made in relation to NHS and Adult Social Care Services and/or any of its commissioned services and/or independent services.

The Regulations state that:

- a. Every organisation must have a Complaints Manager.
- b. Every organisation has a single stage system to deal with complaints.
- c. Complaints should be dealt with within a maximum of 6 months and that this can only be extended with the complainant's agreement.
- d. Following investigation of the complaint by the Council, if the complainant is still unhappy, the next stage is to approach the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
- e. Every organisation should make the complainant aware of the response period that they work to and the way the response will be handled.
- f. Where complaints involve several organisations, these organisations should discuss and agree who will take the lead.
- g. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman will consider complaints from those people who fund their own social care and will liaise directly with the relevant organisation.
- h. Complainants must approach the Council to highlight their complaint within twelve months of the incident happening, or within twelve months\* of discovering the problem.

\* Complaints outside of this timescale will be considered individually by the Council's Complaints Team and an assessment made regarding whether a fair and transparent investigation can still be carried out.

## **2. The Complaints Team**

In Solihull, the responsibility for the management and day to day administration of complaints for Adults and Children's Services lies with the Children's & Adults Complaints Team.

This team is part of the Business Improvement and Performance Division, within the Resources Directorate. The Complaints Team strive to ensure that:

- a. They achieve respectful dialogue with all complainants and work with investigating professionals to provide the best response in the most efficient timescales.
- b. Requests to raise complaints are acknowledged within 3 working days.
- c. Complaints are responded to within 60 working days (which is well within the six-month timescale set by the regulations)
- d. Complaints and compliments are accurately recorded, leading to the production of accurate performance data.
- e. When things have gone wrong, they work with other Council officers to put things right as quickly as possible.
- f. Both complainants and staff understand the complaints procedure, how it relates to them and their rights and responsibilities within it
- g. Any learning from complaints is acknowledged and appropriate changes are made to improve services provided.
- h. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman requests are dealt with, within the requested timescales.

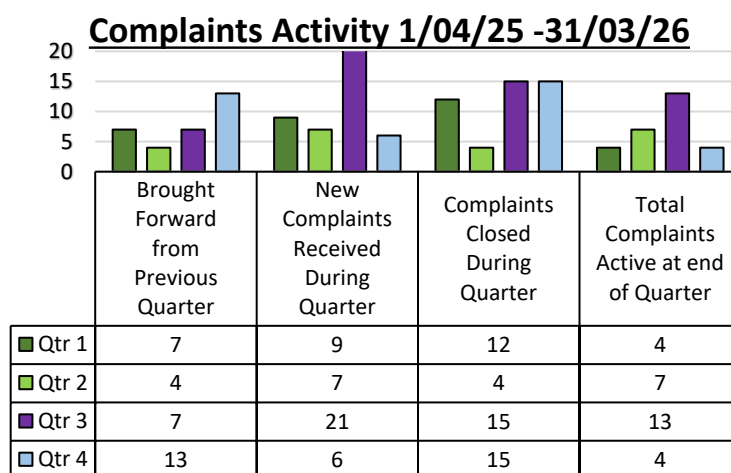
## **3. Statutory and Corporate Complaints**

- 3.1 We may receive legitimate complaints that do not fall within the boundaries of the Statutory Social Care Complaints Process. These will usually fall within the remit of the Council's Corporate Complaint Process. It is the responsibility of the Complaints Team to record and monitor all complaints which relate directly to services provided across the Adults Social Care Directorate.

## **4. A Summary of Complaints**

- 4.1 During the 2025/26 financial year, Solihull's Adult Social Care Services received 43 new complaints from individuals needing care and support services / their families. This is a significant decrease (23%) in comparison with the 56 new complaints received in 2024/25.
- 4.2 Of these 43 new complaints, 21 (49%) involved the Council's Adult Social Work teams, 16 (37%) named a commissioned provider. The Council's finance teams who deal with Adults Social Care Finance were named in 11 (26%) and 2 (5%) of the new complaints involved Commissioning and Brokerage.
- 4.3 The 16 new complaints concerning Solihull's commissioned providers (which include residential and nursing homes and those providing care in the home) is a slight decrease when compared to the 18 which were received in 2024/25.
- 4.4 Complaints are also recorded per area. This is to support learning. When complaints span more than one area, the same complaint will be registered more than once, in each relevant area. This is why the total number of complaints registered in this breakdown is higher than the total of 43 complaints overall, and it is purely because of the necessary duplication of recording. (see figure 3 below).

- 4.5 When considering the numbers of new complaints, it is also important to consider the percentage of those complaints/issues that following investigation, are upheld/partly upheld (see 10.2 below).
- 4.6 Fig 1 below shows the number of new complaints received in 2025/26 (43) split across each quarter. The lowest number of complaints allocated for investigation was in Quarter 4 (6). The highest number of complaints to be allocated for investigation was in Quarter 3 (21).



**Fig. 1**

## **5 How We Received Complaints**

- 5.1 Solihull Adults Social Care Services have an open and responsive complaints and representations process and officers in Adults Social Care proactively signpost individuals wishing to complain to this process.

Clear information, advising individuals about how they can make complaints regarding Adults Social Care Services, is provided on Solihull Council's website at <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Tell-us/Adult-social-care-complaints>. The website outlines a range of ways in which individuals can raise concerns or request to raise a formal complaint including via e-mail, telephone, completing a complaints leaflet (downloadable from the website) or writing to the Complaints Team at the address provided.

The Council does have a translation and interpreting service for users of Council services where their first language is not English or due to their disability or impairment, they require alternative formats such as British Sign Language, large print etc.

- 5.2 Figure 2 below shows that in 2025/26, initial contact regarding Adult Social Care Services complaints were received in four different ways:

| Method                     | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Letter / Complaint Leaflet | 10%     | 2%      | 7%      |
| Email / Webform            | 72%     | 66%     | 79%     |
| Telephone                  | 18%     | 30%     | 14%     |
| In Person                  | -       | 2%      | -       |

**Fig. 2**

- 5.3 Email contact remains the most popular form of contact and provides complainants with written evidence of their complaint submission, along with any follow up conversations. This enables the Complaints Team to acknowledge the request to make a formal complaint quickly, which is reassuring to complainants.

The Complaints Team continue to use a secure e-mail system to provide any follow up communication to complainants wherever possible, which allows communication in a very confidential way. Where complainants do not have an email address and hence this is not possible, responses are sent via the post and, where necessary, reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure we do all we can to remove any barriers to complainants, in the complaints handling process.

- 5.4 It is noticeable that initial contact by telephone has decreased this year, which coincides with complainants' preference to raise concerns through email. Telephone conversations between the Complaints Team and the complainant (where necessary), also provides both parties with the opportunity to discuss concerns and provide clarity regarding the complaints process. Maintaining good communication with complainants, as outlined above, also assists the Complaints Team to accurately reflect and understand the issues being raised and therefore, in turn, obtain good quality responses from investigating managers.
- 5.5 Talking to complainants can also mean that, where it is appropriate and possible, concerns are resolved without the need to progress to the formal complaints process. This can prove to be a quicker and more beneficial means of resolution for all concerned.

The Complaints Team have, in 2025/26, handled 91 such "duty" cases for Adults Social Care Services compared to 55 in 2024/25. This evidences how the Complaints Team and service area within Adult Social Care work collaboratively in order to resolve concerns as early as we possibly can. These can range from assisting a liaison between the complainant and the relevant team to quickly resolve concerns or by providing a more in-depth mediation role between the complainant and the team(s) involved.

- 5.6.1 If the person making the complaint is not the named person receiving a service, then the Complaints Team will always liaise with the service area to ascertain if the individual needing care and support services has capacity to consent to a complaint being made on their behalf. If they do have capacity, then consent is obtained from the individuals needing care and support services before a complaint investigation is instigated.
- 5.6.2 In addition, and as outlined in The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, a complaint may also be made by “*a person who is affected, or likely to be affected, by the action, omission or decision of the responsible body which is the subject of the complaint.*” This person may not be the individual needing care and support services and hence consent, in these circumstances, would not be applicable.

## **6. Who Made Complaints?**

- 6.1 During 2025/26, Solihull Council’s Adult Social Care Services provided a service to 9008 customers (including carers).

These are people with whom Solihull Adults Social Care Services have had some level of involvement. It includes both safeguarding and DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) cases, clients and carers currently waiting to be assessed and also those who were assessed, but who did not go on to receive a service.

- 6.2 The new 43 formal complaints received were therefore, from only 0.48% of these people. Females made up 65% of these complainants, whilst 35% of complaints were received from males.

## **7. Risk Assessment of Complaints**

- 7.1 The Complaints Team risk assess each complaint received, in order to ascertain the seriousness of the issues raised and to ensure the appropriate course of action is taken.
- 7.2 Any complaint that they feel raises significant issues regarding the quality of care, safeguarding issues, denial of rights, or has clear quality assurance or risk management issues that may cause lasting problems for the organisation, or highlights the possibility of litigation/adverse local publicity, is highlighted immediately to senior managers and if appropriate, follows the Council’s safeguarding procedures.
- 7.3 There is a clear process in place across Adult Social Care that is used when safeguarding concerns are identified and this is also relayed to customers. If a complaint is received regarding the same issues, the Complaints Team will liaise with the service area to ascertain if a safeguarding investigation is already underway or is deemed necessary. If this is the case, the safeguarding investigation will always take precedent and the complaint is advised to contact the Complaints Team for further advice if they feel the safeguarding process was not conducted correctly.

- 7.4 If any safeguarding issues are raised in relation to people receiving a homecare service, or living in residential or nursing homes, then the Complaints Team will also notify the appropriate Care Quality Monitoring Officer immediately, who will then work closely with the relevant social care team to try and resolve any identified issues as soon as possible. The CQC (Care Quality Commission) may also be notified.

## 8. An overview of new complaint issues for Adults Social Care by service area / team

- 8.1 Figure 3 (below) shows a comparison of both new complaints and the number of associated issues within these complaints for each service area/team, both in 2024/25 and 2025/26. Some of the new complaints received in 2025/26 concern more than one team and this is shown below in the total number of complaints against each team.

| Service Area                                          | Number of Complaints 24/25 | Number of Issues 24/25 | Number of Complaints 25/26 | Number of Issues 25/26 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Adults Disability Team                                | 5                          | 7                      | 2                          | 13                     |
| Adults Duty Team                                      | 3                          | 13                     | 1                          | 6                      |
| ASC Connect                                           | 2                          | 2                      |                            |                        |
| ASC in general (no specific team referred to)         | 2                          | 2                      |                            |                        |
| DoLS Team                                             |                            |                        | 1                          | 1                      |
| Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)                    | 2                          | 3                      |                            |                        |
| Hospital SW Team                                      | 10                         | 56                     | 3                          | 17                     |
| Mental Health & Autism Team                           | 3                          | 13                     | 3                          | 16                     |
| Older Adults Community Team                           | 11                         | 56                     | 4                          | 21                     |
| Occupational Therapy Team                             | 9                          | 27                     | 7                          | 22                     |
| Preparing for Adulthood & Exploitation Reduction Team |                            |                        | 2                          | 5                      |
| Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB)             | 1                          | 4                      |                            |                        |
| Reablement                                            |                            |                        | 1                          | 2                      |
| Adult Social Care teams                               | 48                         | 183                    | 24                         | 103                    |
| Commissioning and Brokerage                           |                            |                        | 2                          | 3                      |
| Adult Social Care Finance/ Income and Awards teams    | 7                          | 20                     | 11                         | 32                     |
| Independent Providers                                 | 17                         | 198                    | 16                         | 117                    |
| Grand Total                                           | 72*                        | 401                    | 53*                        | 255                    |

\* This number is greater than 43 as some complaints are split across multiple teams/areas.

**Fig. 3**

- 8.2 As detailed in 4.1, there has been an 23% decrease in the number of new complaints (43) received in 2025/26 compared to the 56 received in 2024/25, and this has corresponded to a 36% decrease in the total number of issues raised. It is to be noted that 133 of the complaint issues in 2025/26 were generated from just 8 of the new complaints received.

- 8.3 There has been a significant decrease in the number of new complaints for

Older Adults Community Team which has seen a 64% decrease in complaints in comparison to 2024/25.

The reasons for this decrease cannot be identified by a single factor; however the team have placed a stronger emphasis on the quality of recording and more effective communication with individuals and their families over the past year. The increase in AI tools has enabled members of staff to communicate more effectively and consistently, as well as produce clear documentation which can reduce misunderstandings. The team have also worked closely with our Brokerage Service and has seen improvements and quicker responses to requests regarding the sourcing of care.

- 8.4 There has been a significant decrease in complaints and issues for the Hospital Social Work Team, with a 70% decrease in complaints in comparison to 2024/25. During 2025/26 the Hospital Social Work Team have improved processes to ensure that staff have a clear view of what is expected from them in relation to financial processes, which involved engaging with individuals needing care and support services and their families and providing the correct financial guidance. Focus has been placed on areas within the team where complaints have highlighted improvements could be made.

The team have also moved away from leading on discharges from acute hospitals, in line with national guidance, therefore the team have been able to concentrate on providing robust and timely support to people once they have been discharged. The team have also focused on a timely response to concerns and have resolved some matters informally. This is reflected in the number of complaints and issues received in 2025/2026 and in the number of overall Adult Social care cases that have been resolved at 'duty' stage.

- 8.5 The number of complaint issues for the Adult Disability Team has increased (86%); however the overall number of complaints for the team have decreased by 60% in comparison to 2024/2025. The reason for the increase in complaint issues is due to 13 issues being generated from just 2 complaints.
- 8.6 Detailed performance reporting to senior management ensures that numbers of complaints are highlighted, and any necessary action is taken where required.

## **9. Categories of new issues raised within complaints**

### **9.1 Adults Social Work / Adult Social Care Finance and Commissioning and Brokerage**

As shown in fig 3 above and figs 4 and 5 below, there were a total of 255 separate issues defined within the 43 new complaints received in 2025/26.

Fig 3 confirms that there were 103 issues for the Adults Social Work teams, 32 for Income and Awards / Adult Social Care Finance, and 3 for Commissioning and Brokerage.

| Type of issues                                                 | Qtr 1     | Qtr 2     | Qtr 3     | Qtr 4     | Grand Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE</b>                                       |           |           |           |           |             |
| Attitude and Behaviour                                         |           |           | 11        | 1         | 12          |
| Breach of confidentiality                                      |           |           | 2         |           | 2           |
| Correct process / procedure not followed                       |           | 1         | 6         |           | 7           |
| Decision making                                                |           |           | 4         | 2         | 6           |
| Delay in providing support                                     | 2         | 3         |           |           | 5           |
| Dissatisfaction with care plan / assessment / review process   | 8         | 1         | 11        | 3         | 23          |
| Failure to complete agreed outcome                             |           |           | 1         |           | 1           |
| Failure to provide/collect Equipment                           |           |           | 1         | 3         | 4           |
| Funding of care - Financial Assessment / Charges               |           |           | 1         | 4         | 5           |
| Recording of information                                       |           |           | 1         |           | 1           |
| Support not provided by allocated worker                       | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 4           |
| Unsatisfactory Communication                                   | 2         | 4         | 18        | 9         | 33          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                             | <b>13</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>103</b>  |
| <b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE FINANCE</b>                               |           |           |           |           |             |
| Attitude and Behaviour                                         | 1         |           | 1         |           | 2           |
| Correct process / procedure not followed                       |           |           | 2         |           | 2           |
| Decision making                                                |           |           | 1         |           | 1           |
| Delay in carrying out Financial Assessment                     | 1         |           |           |           | 1           |
| Dissatisfaction with Direct Payment / Process                  |           |           | 4         |           | 4           |
| Funding of care - Financial Assessment / Charges               |           | 1         | 4         |           | 5           |
| Impact of LA policy/ process on individual receiving a service |           |           | 1         |           | 1           |
| Unsatisfactory Communication                                   | 1         | 3         | 12        |           | 16          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                             | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>25</b> | <b>-</b>  | <b>32</b>   |
| <b>COMMISSIONING AND BROKERAGE</b>                             |           |           |           |           |             |
| Attitude and Behaviour                                         |           |           | 1         |           | 1           |
| Decision making                                                |           |           | 2         |           | 2           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                             | <b>-</b>  | <b>-</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>-</b>  | <b>3</b>    |

**Fig. 4**

- 9.2 Figure 4 above, shows that the main issue of complaint for the Adult Social Work teams was “*Unsatisfactory Communication*” (33 issues received). These issues were generated from 15 of the 21 new complaints involving Adult Social Work teams. Unsatisfactory communication is a common root cause for complaints in any complaints arena and continual improvements in this area can have a very positive impact on a reduction in complaints.
- 9.3 The next most common issue of complaint was “*Dissatisfaction with care plan / assessment*” with 23 issues being raised under this issue type. These complaint issues were generated from 12 of the 21 new complaints which involved Adult Social Work teams.

The two areas outlined above give a combined total of 54% (56/103) of the total number of new Adult Social Work issues received in 2025/2026.

## 9.4 Commissioned providers

Fig 5. outlines the 117 complaint issues for Solihull's commissioned providers.

| Type of Issues (Independent Provider)              | Qtr 1     | Qtr 2    | Qtr 3     | Qtr 4     | Grand Total |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Attitude and Behaviour                             |           |          | 1         | 4         | 5           |
| Correct process / procedure not followed           | 4         |          | 3         |           | 7           |
| Dissatisfaction with quality of care               |           | 3        | 24        | 16        | 43          |
| Failure to complete agreed outcome                 | 1         |          |           | 1         | 2           |
| Incorrect cancellation of care                     |           |          | 1         |           | 1           |
| Incorrect time of service call                     |           | 2        |           |           | 2           |
| Issues with key safe                               |           | 1        |           |           | 1           |
| Lack of involvement of family member with POA / PR |           |          | 1         |           | 1           |
| Missed medication / wrongly administered           |           |          | 3         | 1         | 4           |
| Personal items gone missing                        |           |          | 1         |           | 1           |
| Poor cleanliness in home                           |           |          | 1         | 1         | 2           |
| Poor record keeping                                |           |          | 7         |           | 7           |
| Recording of information                           |           |          |           | 1         | 1           |
| Safety Issues (non safeguarding)                   |           |          |           | 2         | 2           |
| Unsatisfactory Communication                       | 10        | 1        | 21        | 6         | 38          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                                 | <b>15</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>117</b>  |

**Fig. 5**

As shown in fig 5 above, 49% (117/255) of the total new issues raised in 2025/26 were in relation to commissioned providers.

Fig 5 shows that during 2025/26, the main area of complaint regarding commissioned providers was "*Dissatisfaction with quality of care*" (43). This is a significant decrease in comparison to the 88 received in 2024/25; however, this type of issue would not be unexpected when dealing with concerns regarding care providers. This is supported by the fact that 9 of the 16 new complaints in relation to commissioned providers, raised concerns regarding this issue.

- 9.5 The second highest issue is *Unsatisfactory Communication* (38). As outlined at 9.2 above, unsatisfactory communication is a common root cause for complaints in any complaints arena and continual improvements in this area can have a very positive impact on a reduction in complaints. The 38 issues were generated from 9 of the 16 complaints received regarding commissioned services.
- 9.6 The Complaints Team liaise with providers to ensure that all complaint issues raised have been responded to in detail and any corresponding learning actions have been identified, via the completion of a Monitoring and Learning Form. Each learning form is then forwarded to, and monitored by, the appropriate Care Quality Monitoring Officer.
- 9.7 Performance reports to senior managers include further detail concerning all types of issues raised across Adults Social Care, so that any emerging trends or themes can be highlighted and responded to appropriately.

## 9.8 Statutory & corporate complaints procedures

As outlined at 3.1 above, all complaints are responded to via either the statutory or corporate complaints procedure.

The statutory procedure is governed by The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 which state at 5 (1) that:

*A complaint may be made by—*

*(a) a person who receives or has received services from a responsible body; or  
(b) a person who is affected, or likely to be affected, by the action, omission or decision of the responsible body which is the subject of the complaint.*

Most complaints raised in relation to Adults Social Care will fall under the statutory procedure. One of the reasons the corporate complaints procedure would be used is to respond to a challenge from a complainant regarding the content of a policy being used by Adults Social Care.

| Issues v Complaints procedure |           |           |            |           |             |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Types of new complaint issues | Qtr 1     | Qtr 2     | Qtr 3      | Qtr 4     | Grand Total |
| Corporate                     |           |           | 15         | 3         | 18          |
| Statutory                     | 31        | 21        | 133        | 52        | 237         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>            | <b>31</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>148</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>255</b>  |

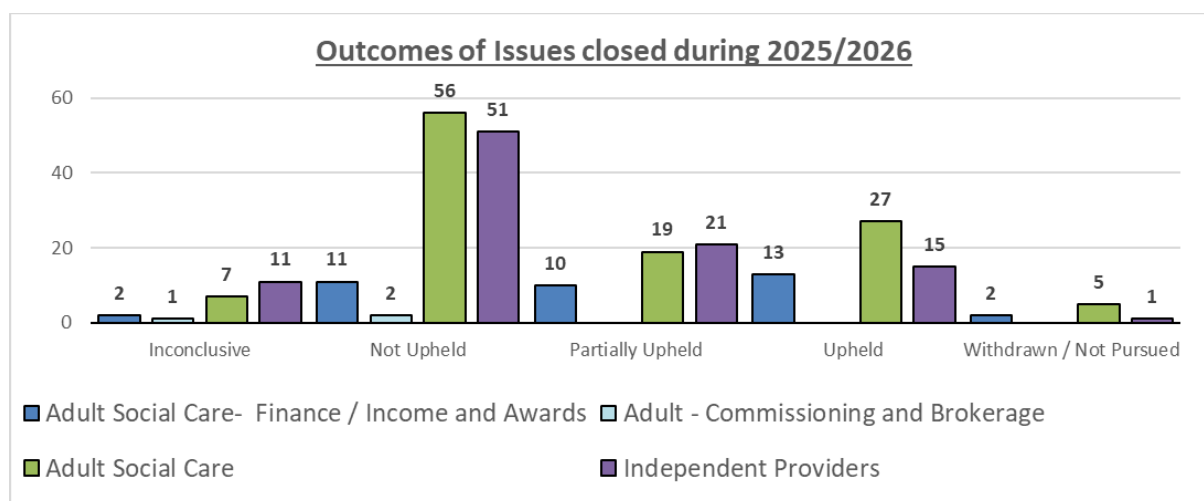
**Fig. 6**

9.9 As shown in fig 6 above, 93% (237) of the new complaint issues received in 2025/26 were progressed through the statutory complaints process and only 7% (18) complaints were progressed via the corporate process.

9.10 In line with the Council's legal obligations under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016, the Council's complaints procedure incorporates a measure in which a customer can make a formal complaint to the Council, should any member of the public feel that a customer-facing council officer has insufficient fluency in spoken English in the performance of their role.

Since the implementation of the Act, we have received no formal complaints on this basis. This is a positive indicator regarding the quality of staff employed in Adults Social Care Services.

## 10. Outcome of complaint issues investigated



**Fig. 7**

- 10.1 There were 254 issues investigated and responded to during 2025/26. Some of the issues in fig 7 above relate to investigations that were ongoing and brought forward from 2024/25 and outcomes were then identified in 2025/26. Two complaints (containing 8 issues) closed in 2025/26 were withdrawn.

55 issues were upheld, 50 were partially upheld, 120 were not upheld and 21 were found to be inconclusive.

- 10.2 Fig 7 shows that 43% (105/246) of issues investigated during 2025/26 were upheld or partially upheld. This is a slight increase in comparison to the 38% of issues upheld and partially upheld in 2024/25.

As outlined at 12.3 below, the quality of investigation and complaint responses in Solihull remains thorough and this appears to correlate with the low number of cases which are referred to the LGSCO (Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman) which are investigated and where fault is then found by the Ombudsman.

## 11. Timescales of complaint responses within Adult Services

- 11.1 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, state in 14(3), that the Local Authority should respond to an Adult Social Services complaint within a period of six months.
- 11.2 From 1 April 2025, Adult Social Care amended its local target timescale for completing complaints to 60 working days. This change was introduced to support thorough and proportionate investigations, particularly where input from commissioned providers and detailed evidence review are required. The revised timeframe reflects a more realistic assessment of the work involved in ensuring responses are accurate, evidence based and address the issues raised in full, while maintaining a focus on resolving concerns at the earliest opportunity. Performance continues to be closely monitored and, in practice, most responses are issued well within the target. The revised target also remains well within the statutory timescale of six months, ensuring compliance while prioritising the quality and integrity of complaint handling.

The Complaints Team provide a quality checking service for all investigating managers who are required to provide complaint responses. The Deputy Director or Head of Service for Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships (and the Director, where required) also work with the Complaints Team to monitor the quality of responses and provide covering letters for statutory complaints.

| Complaints Handling Response Times |                           |     |                                   |      |                         |      |                                  |     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Working Days to Respond            | Adult Social Care 2025/26 |     | Adult Social Care Finance 2025/26 |      | Commissioning 2025/2026 |      | Independent Provider 2025 / 2026 |     |
|                                    | Number                    | %   | Number                            | %    | Number                  | %    | Number                           | %   |
| 0-60                               | 19                        | 90% | 7                                 | 100% | 1                       | 100% | 11                               | 73% |
| 61 +                               | 2                         | 10% |                                   |      |                         |      | 4                                | 27% |
| Withdrawn                          | 1                         | -   |                                   |      |                         |      | 1                                | -   |

**fig. 8**

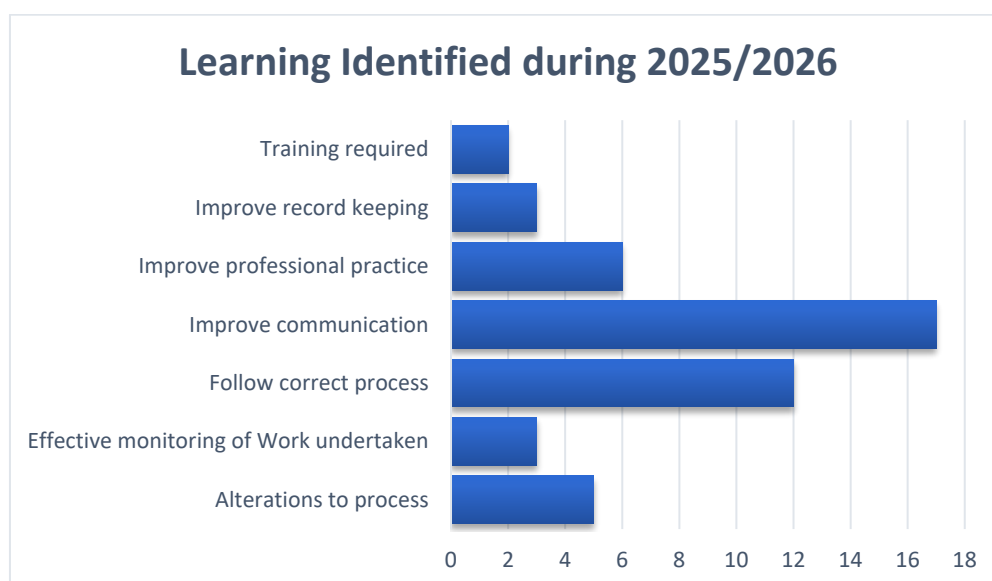
- 11.3 The statutory timescale for responding to Adult Social Care complaints is 6 months. In Solihull, 90% (19/21) of complaints responded to in 2025/26 regarding the Adults Social Care teams were completed within the Council's internal 60 working day timescale with an average response timeframe of 32 working days. A further 1 complaint was withdrawn.
- 11.4 100% (7/7) Adult Social Care Finance complaints investigated in 2025/26 were closed within the 60 working day timescale, with an average response timeframe of 35 working days.
- 11.5 73% (11/15) of the commissioned provider complaints were responded to within 60 working days, with an average response timeframe of 51 working days. A further 1 complaint was withdrawn. As part of the process, colleagues in our Commissioning Team liaise heavily with providers to ensure all evidence relied upon as part of the investigation, is reviewed and scrutinised with the same level of oversight as the Council's internal investigations.
- 11.6 Senior staff in the Adult Care & Support Directorate read all responses and will raise questions where applicable, in order to ensure all responses are quality checked.
- Upon completion of this process, the complaint response letter is provided to complainants with a covering letter, which comments on the response and highlights any learning, so that social work team managers can work with their staff and the Commissioning Team can work with providers to improve their practice.
- 11.8 In circumstances where responses to complaints are delayed, the Complaints Team liaise with complainants to ensure that they are kept fully updated regarding the progression of their complaint.

## 12. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints

- 12.1 During 2025/26 the LGSCO made a decision regarding 12 cases in relation to Adult Social Care. Six cases were referred back to the Council for local resolution (premature); 3 cases were closed after initial enquires had been made; and 3 cases were upheld. For one of the upheld cases however, the LGSCO confirmed that the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman and therefore issued a “*declined to investigate*” letter. For the other two cases, the Council complied fully with the LGSCO requirements.
- 12.2 Solihull ASC continue to do well in a landscape where nationally numbers of complaints upheld by the LGSCO are increasing. Complaint investigations in Solihull are thorough and therefore the quality of complaint response is good. This appears to correlate with the low number of cases which are referred to the LGSCO where fault is then found.

## 13. Learning from Complaints

- 13.1 97% (36/37) of the internal Adult Social Care learning forms sent to investigating managers in 2025/26, following an investigation, had been completed and returned by the end of the reporting period. Only one form was outstanding at the end of the year however, this has since been returned.



**Fig. 10**

- 13.2 Fig 10 shows the learning identified from the forms that were returned in 2025/26. From the 36 learning forms returned in 2025/26, 6 identified that ‘No Learning’ had been identified,
- 13.3 The main area highlighted for improvement was to “*Improve communication*” (17 learning issues). This is in line with the information provided above at 9.2.

Any learning identified is followed up by the Complaints Team until implementation is confirmed by the Investigating Manager.

Data regarding the implementation of learning is then formatted into spreadsheets and distributed to senior staff, so that this can be tracked by them and managers can comment on the differences that learning has made to practice.

- 13.4 Below are some examples of the types of learning that have been put into place in Adults Social Care Services and have therefore been used to inform service improvements:

- **A complaint was received regarding contacting the relevant Adult Social Care Team and being advised that a Social Worker was no longer allocated to the case. The complainant complained about not being made aware of this change and expressed her concerns as there were some aspects of care that had been left unresolved.**

The investigation identified that following a review of the care provided, it was found that there were care quality issues relating to the support provided by an Independent Provider. The relevant concerns were promptly shared with the Care Quality Team who oversees care providers in Solihull to ensure care standards are met.

It was explained that following the review, the case was then transitioned to an unallocated status, which is standard practice when no active involvement from a social care practitioner is required.

When the complainant contacted Adult Social Care regarding her ongoing concerns about the Independent Provider, she was advised that this matter was referred to the Adult Duty Team and someone would be in touch to discuss the concerns raised.

An apology was provided regarding not being informed about the Social Worker no longer being assigned to the case and it was acknowledged that this was an oversight by the Social Worker.

This complaint identified that the Social Worker should have continued to support the resolution of issues with the care provider. The Adult Duty Team subsequently assisted with this matter and arranged a change of care provider.

**The learning highlighted the importance of good communication to the expected standard with people and their families and that cases remain allocated until issues are resolved. It was also agreed that this will continue to be monitored by the Team Manager to ensure improvement is made.**

- **A complainant raised issues relating to contacting Adult Social Care and experiencing delays in receiving financial guidance relating to an individual's circumstances, where that person had moved to a care home.**

The investigation identified that the complainant had expressed concerns originally to the Adult Social Care Team and also to the Local Authority's Solihull Connect Service.

The response to this complaint acknowledged that contact should have been received directly by the allocated Social Worker, as this would have provided greater clarity and reassurance during a time when the complainant was seeking urgent guidance, however during the time period when contact was received from the complainant, the allocated Social Worker was away from work. An apology was provided for the delay in contact being made and providing a response to the financial queries that were initially raised.

**The learning from this complaint identified that during the period of time when the allocated Social Worker was absent from work, closer oversight was required by the Assistant Team Manager (ATM), regarding the caseload of absent workers, as this would have ensured that issues requiring a priority response were acted upon. This learning was shared with the respective ATM.**

- 13.5 The two examples above relate to *“improve communication”* and *“Effective monitoring of work undertaken”*. The learning embedded within Solihull Adult Social Care in 2025/26 will have a positive impact on the services provided in 2026/27, as it has done in previous years.

Some further examples of this are as follows:

- **A complainant raised concerns regarding the completion of a Care Act Assessment, which impacted the decision making relating to the way the individuals needing care and support services would be cared for.**

The findings of the complaint investigation identified that the Social Worker involved should have considered completing a further mental capacity assessment to re-confirm that the individual needing care and support services fully understood the risks and had sufficient insight and awareness to make an informed decision about the care they received and their decision to return home.

The investigating manager outlined that a mental capacity assessment should have been considered to ensure that the Care Act Assessment was sufficiently thorough and evidence-based to ensure the individual needing care and support services had the awareness and ability to make an informed decision at that time and understood the risks attached to wanting to return home.

**The learning from this complaint was shared with staff to ensure that assessments are thorough and evidence based.**

- **A complaint was made regarding being provided with a mobile sit-to-stand transfer aid. The complainant referred to a visit from a member of staff and their request for equipment being ignored.**

The response to the complaint explained about functional ability, the use of suitable equipment and the assistance needed in their home to support this. As part of the investigation, it was identified that there was no corresponding record of the discussion or conclusion between the complainant and the member of staff who carried out the visit.

An explanation was provided regarding the involvement of the member of staff, their recollection of events and assurance that the request was not ignored; however, an apology was provided as there was a lack of record keeping meaning there was no corresponding record of the discussion, conclusion or confirmation of this outcome being previously provided.

**The learning from this complaint identified that more detailed documentation of interactions and decision making with the individual needing care and support services required. The member of staff, ATM and the wider team were reminded of the importance to record actions, discussions and reasoning in sufficient detail to present a clear, auditable record for future reference.**

- **A complaint was received about the delay in resolving issues regarding care provided to the individual needing care and support services by an Independent Provider.**

The investigation into this complaint identified that the complainant did raise concerns about the care provider; however, they needed to raise their concerns on numerous occasions before the issue was escalated appropriately and resolved.

**The learning from this complaint was shared with members of staff within the respective social work team and they were reminded of the importance of promptly escalating any concerns or complaints raised with them to a manager, so the matter can be addressed appropriately and without delay.**

#### **14. Compliments for the Adults Social Care teams**

##### **14.1 265 compliments were received for Adult Social Care in 2025/26.**

Within the 265 compliments received, several of the compliments also involved services provided by more than one team. This demonstrates how teams working together can have a very positive outcome for the person receiving the service.

Fig 11 below shows a total of the individual compliments received for each service area.

| <b>Compliments received in 2025/26</b> |            |
|----------------------------------------|------------|
| SMBC Care Homes / Day Centres          | 17         |
| Adult Social Care teams (Internal)     | 185        |
| Commissioning and Brokerage Team       | 16         |
| Independent Providers                  | 47         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                     | <b>265</b> |

**Fig. 11**

- 14.2 Occupational Therapy received the highest number of Adult Social Care compliments in 2025/26 (34), followed by the Older Adults Community Team (25) and Reablement (24).
- 14.3 During 2025/26, 47 compliments were received in relation to the services provided by its commissioned providers, of which 18 were for Nationwide Homecare Services.
- 14.4 Compliments received from people accessing services provided by Solihull Adults Social Care by team**

**Mental Health Team**

*"I hope you are well. I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all your hard work, professionalism and careful placement of my brother. He is closer to visit regularly now and the accommodation looks perfect for him. You have been fantastic as I am sure he will be so happy in his new surroundings".*

**Occupational Therapy**

*"The lady wanted to thank everyone who was involved. She stated it has made a huge difference to her as she is now able to get into the garden safely and she now feels safe when showering and is not fearful of slipping in the bathroom."*

**DoLS Team**

*"I would like to thank you so much for all your help regarding my mum and her care, you have been fantastic and come across very caring about our needs. You acted very promptly and got things moving very fast which doesn't happen very often and I am so grateful for all your help."*

**Adult Disability Team**

*"Her practice was "amazing". I had no idea what services were available, but she took her time to go through all her options and ensured the support was person centred and appropriate to meet my needs. She made me feel at ease and her patience and support was life changing"*

**Hospital Team**

*"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for the exemplary way you conducted yourself and the empathy & understanding you showed to my family. You are a credit to your profession and organisation. I wish all health care professionals could follow & learn from your high standards."*

## **Older Adults Community Team**

*"I just want to send an email of appreciation for her and how much she has helped my family over the last couple of months. She has been compassionate, kind and has communicated well throughout the process which is very rare to find these days. She deserves this recognition and my nan wants to pass on her heartfelt thanks."*

## **Community Equipment Services**

*A son arrived to collect equipment for his mother, who pointed out that the 2 guys who attended her property a couple of days previous, were both very respectful and professional while fitting the equipment."*

## **Day Opportunities – North**

*"I wanted to take the time to thank you personally for everything you have done for my family. You truly cared for her and I am so grateful me and my family met you. We appreciate everything you do. I can't thank you enough."*

## **Day Opportunities- South**

*The son of an individual needing care and support services complimented a staff member stating "You gave him a new lease of life, thank you all for all what you did for him. I honestly can't thank you enough."*

## **14.5 Compliments from professionals by team**

### **Commissioning and Brokerage**

*"I have been very grateful to have the opportunity to work with the Council and their Social Services team. It has been a very supportive and caring environment where staff have been willing to listen to the viewpoints of carers. I have felt it has been a positive experience and I really have a sense of the Council wishing to make their services work for those who use them."*

### **7/8/9 Downing Close**

*"The staff across all three homes demonstrated exceptional professionalism. They were friendly, cooperative, and exhibited a comprehensive understanding of medication protocols, contributing to the audit's smooth process. This audit highlights the commitment of the staff to providing safe and effective medication management. Their positive attitude and diligence are commendable."*

## **Nationwide (independent Provider)**

*"As the Housing Manager I would like to express my appreciation and thanks for the support your Carer gives to the residents here. He consistently goes over and above for all his clients, often in his own time, to ensure they are safe, well and looked after. He has also developed good relationships with both housing staff and wider community here. He is an asset to your company."*

## **Day Opportunities - South**

*"Thank you so much for having me in today. I really enjoyed the session, it was full of wonderful energy and so many smiles. It was also really lovely to see such caring and involved staff members supporting the group. That kind of environment makes such a difference and really helps create a positive space for everyone to take part. Today honestly made me very happy, and I would absolutely love the opportunity for us to work together again in the future. Thanks again for the warm welcome today, and I hope to see you all again soon."*

- 14.7 Areas of good practice highlighted through compliments can also be used by social work managers as learning opportunities for all staff.

### **15. Maintaining high standards in the processing of Adults Social Care complaints**

- 15.1 During 2025/26, the Complaints Team and Adults Social Care Services have continued to work very well together, aiming to ensure that timescales were met and high-quality responses were provided for complainants, in order to ensure that we consistently deliver high standards in processing complaints.
- 15.2 The quality of complaint responses is high, aided by the quality checking process between the Complaints Team and Adults Social Care investigating managers, and reminders are sent to investigating managers regarding the due dates for responses.
- 15.3 Detailed and timely conversations with prospective complainants, both by telephone and e-mail, continue to ensure that customers feel listened to and reassured that their concerns will be dealt with. Wherever possible, concerns are resolved outside of the formal complaints process with the agreement of the complainant which often expedites resolution of these concerns. As outlined at 5.5, during 2025/26 we have dealt with 36 ( 65%) more complaints at 'duty' stage and a 23% reduction in formal complaint investigations compared to 2024/25. This process appears to be working well with more complainants finding their desired resolution, much sooner in the process.
- 15.4 Careful analysis of complaints made in relation to Adults Social Care Services continues to ensure that complaints are pursued through the correct complaint's procedure.
- 15.5 Following completion of the complaints process, the Complaints Team send learning forms to all investigating managers so that they can highlight any learning from each complaint, along with a date for implementation. All learning is monitored through to implementation and then, at a later date, managers are requested to highlight the impact on practice of this learning.

15.6 The Complaints Team use a well organised records management system which has proven to be a very efficient way of recording complaints detail and ensures swift responses to both complainants and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. It also ensures that any member of the Complaints Team can, at any time, establish the current status of a complaint along with the detail of any correspondence that has taken place in relation to that complaint. This ensures that an excellent level of customer service is maintained.

15.7 Customer feedback is sought following each complaint via an on-line questionnaire (also available on request in printed format) which has been developed and published on the Smart Survey website. Complainants/their representatives are invited to feedback their comments concerning their experience of the complaints procedure and this in turn, will feed into the learning and improvement process.

As part of this process the Council seeks to gather equality information from complainants to help them check that we are treating people fairly and to identify any issues we might need to address. For the period of 2025/26 there were no equality issues identified via this means.

15.8 The Complaints Team have also received very positive feedback regarding the nature of their customer contact and their helpfulness when dealing with complaints as shown below.

#### **15.8.1 Feedback from Complainants**

- *Dear XX, thank you for your kind consideration and help*
- *"... everything has been explained clearly to me in the letter and they sent it in time. Thank you."*
- *I particularly appreciated the opportunity to discuss my concerns and the exact nature of my complaint with the lady who contacted me by telephone. She was most empathetic and objective. After that I felt quite comfortable that the issues raised were understood and would be dealt with in an appropriate and professional manner.*
- *The complaint was handled very professionally and my concerns were listened to and acknowledged and I received a reply and communication about the complaint within the time scale advised.*
- *Your summary of my complaint is exemplary. Thank you for your concise and accurate representation. I appreciate the time you've taken to look into this as well as the evidence submitted.*

## Feedback from professionals

- *Thanks XX, you are a superstar 😊*
- *Thank you so much for your assistance it made it so much easier to complete*
- *Thank you for our updated report, much appreciated.*
- Thanks all for your work on this

## 16. Reporting on Complaints

- 16.1 Live complaint reports for the Deputy Director and heads of service are produced monthly. These reports enable heads of service and the Deputy director for the Adults Social Care teams and Head of Service for Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships, to track timescales and intervene if there is a risk that a complaint will not be dealt with within the desired time limit.
- 16.2 Quarterly complaint reports for the Directorate Leadership Team, detail activity and performance, including categories of complaint and outcomes by service area and team, response timescales and any learning outcomes; data which highlights any emerging trends. This ensures that managers can again intervene early if an issue is detected.
- 16.3 Ombudsman activity / responses are also reported to DLT and CLT (Corporate Leadership Team) on a quarterly basis with the Chief Executive and Director being informed of all fault found outcomes as they are received.
- 16.4 The reporting process to senior management is an established and very important part of the complaint procedure. Where potential improvements to this process are identified, however minor, these are built into the process immediately by the Complaints Team.

Accurate recording on the Respond database enables one-off reports to be produced efficiently, as requested by managers, in order to establish whether there are issues that need attention in specific areas of Adults Social Care Services.

- 16.5 The Complaints Team also provides advice and guidance for investigating managers to compliment the formal procedures already in place and to assist staff further when responding to complaints.

## 17. Looking ahead to 2026/27

- 17.1 During 2026/27 the Complaints Team approach is to work with people to achieve early resolution of issues where-ever possible, prior to them reaching a formal complaint. This approach is in line with the LGSCO's advice and guidance.
- 17.2 The Complaints Team will continue to work closely with all staff involved in investigating formal complaints, with the aim of achieving timely and satisfactory resolutions for complaints.

- 17.3 The Complaints Team will continue to provide high quality support to Adult Social Care staff investigating complaints, with the aim of minimising adverse findings by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
- 17.4 During 2026/27, the Complaints Team will continue to look at the accessibility of the complaints process and also revisit (in conjunction with the Council's Equality & Diversity Team) how they gather equality information from individuals needing care and support services and we will use the insights to further improve the experiences for people accessing and utilising the complaints and compliments processes.

## **18. Conclusion**

- 18.1 During 2025/26 the Complaints Team have, as always, continued to work closely with Adults Social Care Services staff to ensure that where possible, complainants found their desired resolution much earlier in the process. For those cases that progressed to formal complaint, the Complaints Team and Adults Social Care Services continued to work collaboratively to ensure as many responses as possible met the appropriate timescales and that complaint responses are of a high quality.
- 18.2 Contacting complainants early on in the process with a view to seek early resolution and the quality of complaint responses; once a complaint has progressed via the formal route, has continued to have a positive impact on the requests for escalation and hence the very low numbers of complaints investigated by the LGSCO where fault is then found.
- 18.3 Detailed and quality performance reporting to senior management has continued, ensuring that any concerns are highlighted, and subsequent actions taken. The detail provided, along with the breakdown of complaint issues, means that focussed learning has continued and hence, has had a direct impact on service improvement and reduced the number of complaint issues raised in certain areas.
- 18.4 During 2026/27, the Complaints Team will continue, as always, to review its practice in accordance with feedback from complainants and then work with managers and staff in Solihull Adults Social Care Services to make any changes that are essential to enhance the experience of people using their services and complainants in Solihull.

**June 2026**