

Complaints, Service Requests & Compliments

Annual Report

April 2025 to March 2026





ANNUAL COMPLAINTS, SERVICE REQUESTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2025/26

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1.0 Executive Summary

This is the Adult Social Care Annual Complaints, Service Requests and Compliments report for the financial year 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Complaints, service requests and compliments form a vital part of our overall engagement activity. By listening to the adults we support, along with their carers and family we can gain valuable insight into the unique experiences of adults who use our services.

Whilst our service works closely with adults and their families to ensure they understand what is happening or will happen when they receive care and support from us, there may be times where things go wrong. Our aim is to resolve and learn from complaints raised, identify when we are not getting things right and what we need to do to improve our services to ensure it does not happen again.

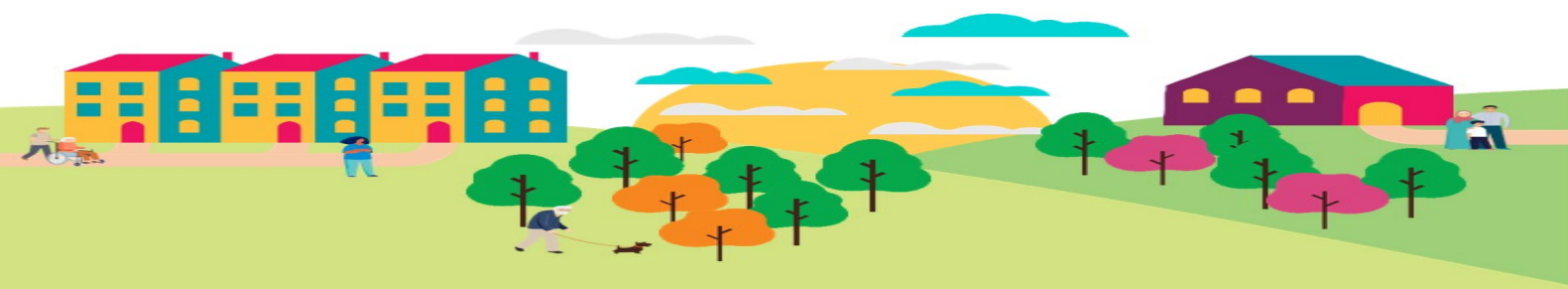
This report provides an overview and analysis of all concerns received and handled through the Council's statutory complaints procedure, resolved through normal service delivery in the first instance as a service request, and feedback received in the form of compliments about Adult Social Care services. Comparisons from the previous reporting period, i.e., from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, have been included where available.

We aim to:

- To make it easy and accessible for adults and their relatives to make a complaint.
- To try and resolve a complaint or respond to a service request as efficiently as possible.
- To provide concise comparable data on feedback received about our services.
- To identify topics and trends which will inform service improvements to demonstrate learning to improve our practices and processes.
- To show our commitment to transparency and a positive approach to dealing with and learning from complaints.

It is common for a complaint to involve different services including, for example, the NHS, GP practices, and commissioned care providers. Each complaint is dealt with on an individual basis with Adult Social Care taking the lead and working with other services to ensure the complainant receives one coordinated response.

On occasion there are safeguarding concerns raised within a complaint. Those concerns are referred directly to our Adults Safeguarding Team to be considered as part of our statutory requirement to carry out enquiries to decide whether any further action should be taken.



2.0 Complaints, Service Requests, and Compliments Activity

In 2025/26 complaints decreased from 33 in 2024/25 to 32 in 2025/26, service requests increased from 50 in 24/25 to 63 in 25/26 and the number of compliments we received increased from 500 in 24/25 to 611 in 25/26.



There has been an increase in the combined number of complaints and service requests received by the Complaints and Compliments Team this year.

We have seen an increase in compliments this year. This is due to improved recording and inclusion of feedback from Satisfaction Questionnaires which form part of our engagement and assurance activities. Figures now offer a comprehensive overview of the total compliments received from individuals and their families, as well as positive feedback shared by staff about their interactions with colleagues. There has also been an increased awareness amongst teams to share compliments received with the Complaints and Compliments Team for accurate recording and awareness.

What is a Service Request

A service request is defined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as:

"A request that the organisation provide or improves a services, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision."

Concerns are assessed at the outset and if appropriate the concerns are resolved as a service request. Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Some issues can be addressed through normal service delivery in the first instance. By utilising the service request option, we strive to address the concerns efficiently without the need to escalate to a formal complaint. Service requests are a proactive effort to prevent issues from escalating into formal complaints, addressing concerns earlier, providing a timely and appropriate outcome for the individuals. If the complainant remains unhappy after Adult Social Care has attempted to resolve the matter, it can be escalated and dealt with as a complaint.

What is a Complaint

A complaint is defined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as:

"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals."

A complaint can be made if an individual is not satisfied with the outcome of a service request or:

- They feel they have not been treated with courtesy or fairness.
- They are unhappy about the standard of service received.
- They feel we have failed to provide a service to which they are entitled.
- They are unhappy about the action taken.

3.0 Overview of the Statutory Adults Complaints Procedure

It is a statutory requirement for all local authorities who deliver a social care service to report annually on the number of complaints received. Such complaints are administered by the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

In Adult Social Care, we have a one stage process for complaints about one of our services or any of our commissioned services. A commissioned service is a service provided by an external company or voluntary agency on behalf of the Council. A complaint made about a commissioned care provider can be referred to the Council if the complainant is dissatisfied or the relationship between the two parties has broken down. When a complaint does not relate specifically to the care of an adult, the complaint may be handled under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Complaints can be made by anyone who has received a service, is currently receiving a service or by a representative acting on behalf of the adult with their consent. We will only investigate a complaint within 12 months of the incident which caused the complaint to be raised. Should a complaint be made after the 12-month timeframe, the Council will look at the circumstances to determine if there is merit in investigating the complaint outside of the timeframe.

At the conclusion of the complaint investigation, lessons learned are reviewed by Service Managers and discussed with senior management to capture any learning and improvements to be made. This is recorded and monitored to give assurances those improvements have been made and any agreed actions completed.

Should a complaint not be resolved through our complaints process, a referral can be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will independently review the complaint to determine if there is any fault and identify recommendations to remedy that fault. A complaint can only be referred to the Ombudsman after the Council has investigated the complaint, and a final response has been issued by the Council.

4.0 Accessing the Adult Social Care complaints procedure

Adult Social Care encourages adults and their carers who use our services to provide their feedback to us about the care and support they have received.

Information on how to make a compliment, a service request or complaint is readily available on our dedicated Adult Social Care webpage on the Council website. There is also an Adult Social Care form which can be used to make a compliment, complaint or inform us of a service request about our services, which is given to adults and/or their relatives during our involvement with them.

We also have an easy read version of our complaints procedure to support adults with learning disabilities to make a complaint, and those adults who may find it easier to understand a simplified version.

The most used method to make a complaint in 2025/26 was by email (19), feedback forms (6), our website (4), by letter (2) and telephone call (1).

Advocacy services are available upon request to support with raising a complaint and the ongoing process.



5.0 Role of the Complaints Officer

The Adult Social Care Complaints Officer facilitates the complaints process and referrals to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

6.0 Key Findings/Summary

- Adult Social Care supported 905 carers and 8781 adults between 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. This includes all direct and commissioned services for short-term, one-off services and longer-term support.
- 32 complaints and 63 service requests were received in the same period. This represents 0.98% of the total adults supported in this year felt they had concerns that required escalation.
- The most common theme for complaints was the quality-of-service delivery (37%) and lack of communication/information (18%).
- A total of 17 (53%) complaints had an outcome of upheld or partially upheld.
- 6 (18%) complaints were not upheld.
- 1 (3%) complaint was resolved informally after progression through the Adult Social Care Complaints process.
- 1 (3%) complaint was inconclusive.
- 7 (21%) complaints were unable to proceed due to a desired resolution being sought through an alternative process, resulted in a safeguarding referral, involved court proceedings or were over 12 months old.
- Compliments have increased by 22% when compared to the previous year.



The complaint outcomes reported by individuals and their families this year highlight ongoing concerns about the quality-of-service delivery.

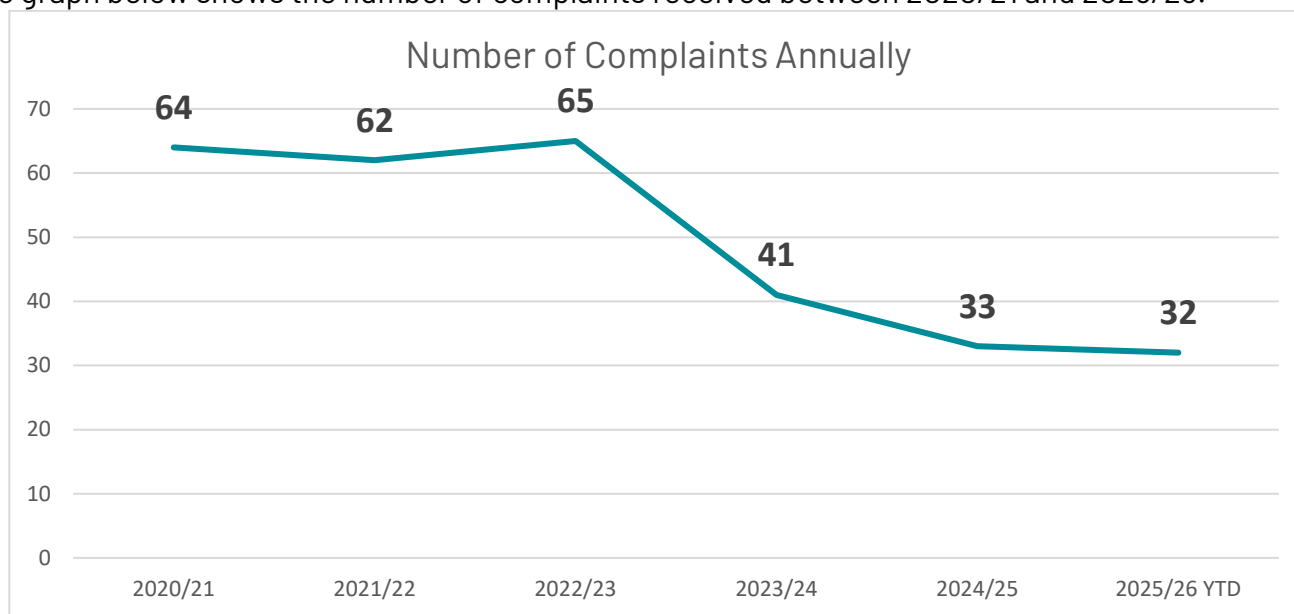
Key issues include delays and lack of timely action, concerns about provider staffing levels, and inconsistencies in assessment and decision-making. In addition, there were concerns relating to the management of financial matters and poor coordination between Adult Social Care and care providers. These issues are often interconnected and are underpinned by insufficient communication.

There remains a clear need for staff to ensure that individuals and their families receive appropriate, accurate, and timely information and support. Staff across the service have been reminded of the importance of clear and effective communication, both in direct practice and through team meetings and supervision sessions. This includes reinforcing the need to accurately record decisions, as well as documenting when information has been shared and with whom.

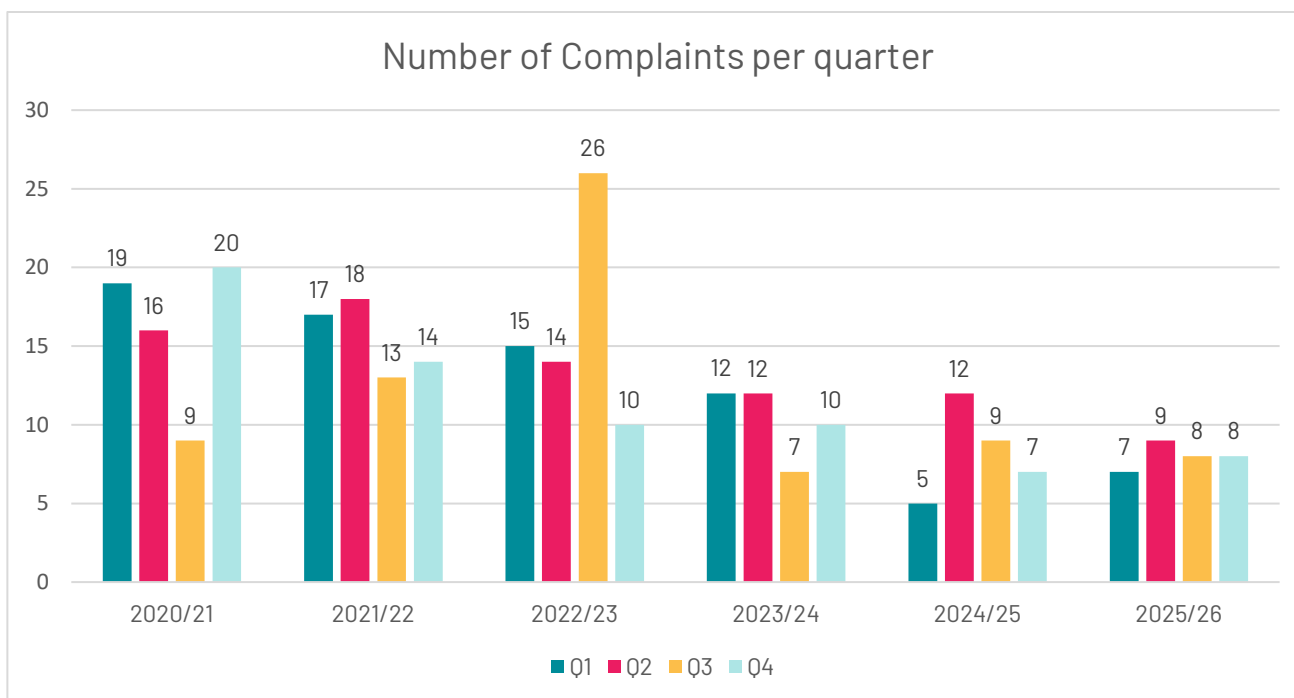
6.1 Number of Complaints

32 formal complaints were received during 2025/26.

The graph below shows the number of complaints received between 2020/21 and 2025/26.



The chart below shows quarterly comparative data for complaints over the last 6 years.



The average number of complaints received each quarter over the past six years has remained largely consistent, with only slight variations. This steady pattern suggests service delivery standards are consistent and do not lead to significant spikes or concentrated periods of complaints.

Quarter	Number of complaints received
Q1	75
Q2	81
Q3	72
Q4	69

6.2 Time taken to respond to complaints in 2025/26

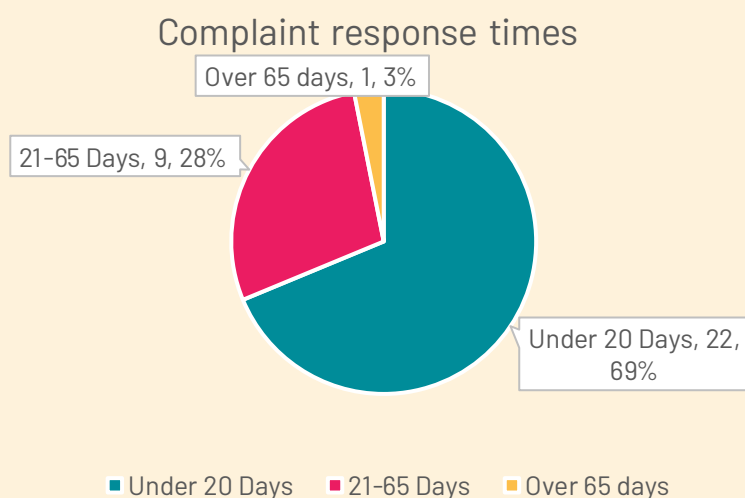
It is important to note that when something is wrong, we act quickly to remedy the issue to ensure individuals, and their carers are supported and safe; and we do not wait until the outcome of the investigation to put things right.

Concerns are assessed at the outset and if appropriate the concerns are resolved as a service request. By utilising the service request option, we strive to address the concerns efficiently without the need to escalate to a formal complaint. Service requests are a proactive effort to prevent issues from escalating into formal complaints, addressing concerns earlier, providing a timely and appropriate outcome for the individuals.

We have a timeframe of twenty working days to provide a full written response to a complaint and we do our best to investigate and provide a written response within these timescales. However, when the investigation is underway there are times when other issues emerge that mean further time is required to investigate all relevant issues and reach a properly informed conclusion. These could be, delays in allocating an investigating officer, absence of staff who need to be interviewed as part of the investigation and waiting for a third party to respond.

In this circumstance we will provide a written response no later than 65 working days. The complainant is kept informed of the progress of their complaint and any causes for extension or delay.

In 2025/26 the timescales to investigate and formally respond to complaints is illustrated below.



The average length of time to conclude a complaint in 2025/26 was 21 days. In comparison to 2024/25 the average length of time to conclude a complaint was 33 days. This represents a significant improvement in timeliness, demonstrating increased efficiency in complaint handling and a more responsive service for individuals and their families.

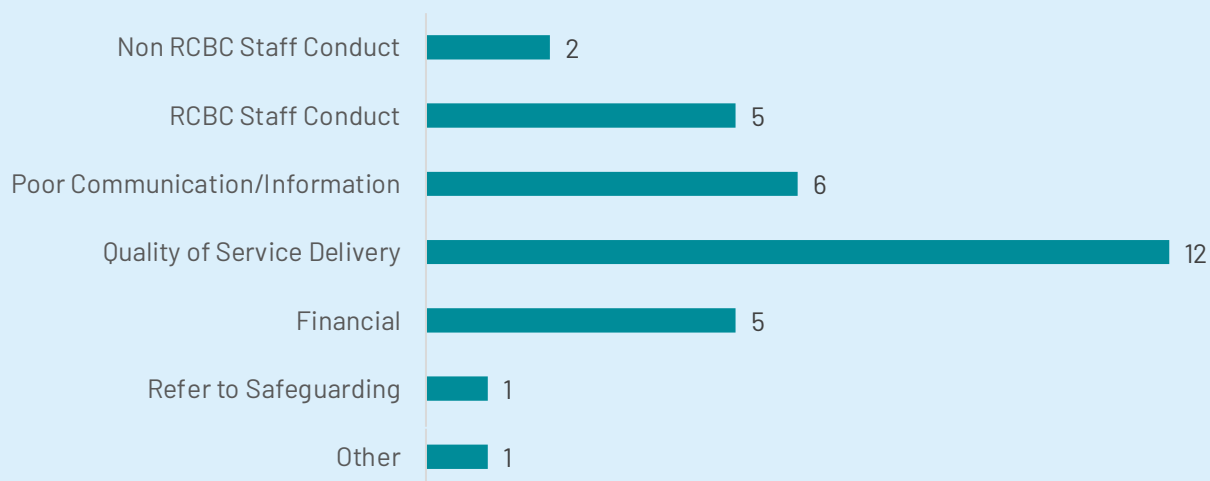
Service Managers are now reviewing concerns in a timely manner, with an average response time of 1.5 days. They have been reminded of the importance of prioritising the initial review of concerns to determine whether the complaints process is the most appropriate course of action, and to ensure that Investigating Officers are allocated promptly to minimise any potential delays.

Complaints exceeding 30 days are now escalated to Assistant Directors. This has also contributed to the improvement of response times.

6.3 Nature of complaints in 2025/26

Due to the complex health and care needs of the individuals we support, complaints received by Adult Social Care will often raise more than one issue. However, the complaint is recorded by the primary area of concern as shown in the table below:

Nature of Complaints in 2025/26



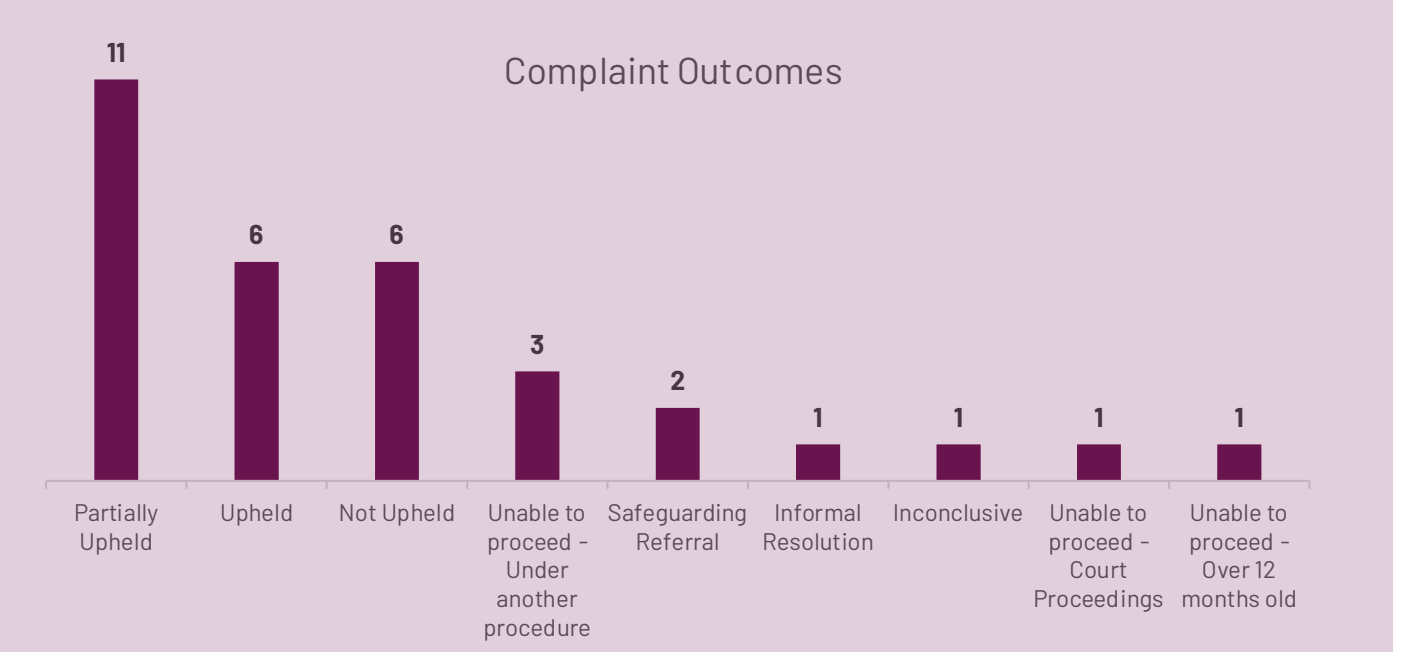
6.4 Complaint Outcomes

When reaching a decision on the outcome of a complaint, we use one of the following definitions:

- Upheld
- Partially Upheld
- Not Upheld
- Withdrawn
- Informal Resolution
- Safeguarding Referral
- Referred
- Inconclusive
- Unable to proceed – Consent not held
- Unable to proceed – Under Another Procedure
- Unable to proceed – Court Proceedings
- Unable to proceed – Over 12 months old

Adult Social Care complaints frequently include several elements with often multiple resolutions. It is therefore expected some of those complaints will conclude with a mix of outcomes.

The below graphic shows the number of outcomes from complaints investigated in the reporting year.



The percentage of ‘upheld’ complaints was 18%, ‘partially upheld’ 34% and ‘not upheld’ complaints was 18%.

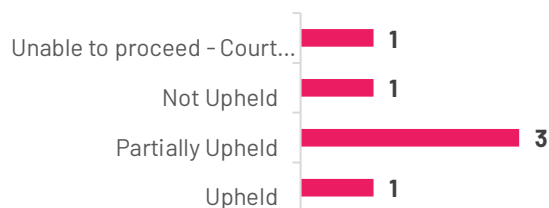
The complaint outcomes show a mixed distribution, with a higher proportion resulting in at least some level of upheld outcome. The largest category is Partially Upheld with (11 cases), indicating that investigations identified some validity in the complaint, but not all aspects were substantiated. Both Upheld (6 cases) and Not Upheld (6 cases) outcomes demonstrates that complaints are being fairly investigated. The presence of safeguarding referrals highlights that the complaints process is also functioning as an important route for adults and their families to reach out to raise concerns.

One complaint (3%) exceeded the 65-day response timeframe due to conflicting work commitments of the Investigating Officer; however, regular updates to the complainant were provided throughout the investigation. The complainant was kept informed of any delays, the reasons for these, and provided with revised timescales, ensuring transparency and ongoing engagement throughout the process.

6.5 Breakdown of complaints by service area

Detailed below is a breakdown of complaint outcomes by service area.

Outcome Analysis



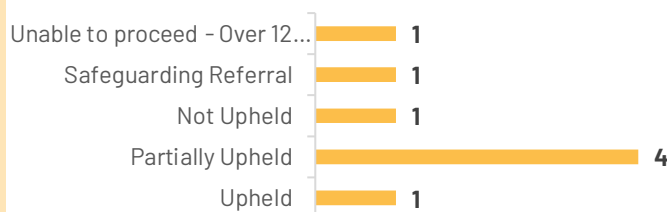
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health Social Work Services

The service area includes social work for Adult Mental Health, Older Persons Mental Health, Adults with Learning Disabilities, and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

Social Work & Safeguarding

The service area includes social work for Adult Access and Safeguarding, Community Locality Assessment, and Hospital Social Work.

Outcome Analysis



Outcome Analysis



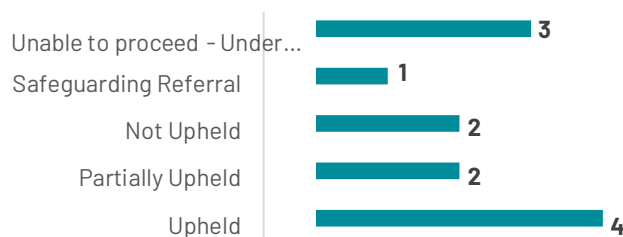
Occupational Therapy, Partnerships & Provider Services

The service area includes the Occupational Therapy service, Pathways to Independence and other In-house Provider Services.

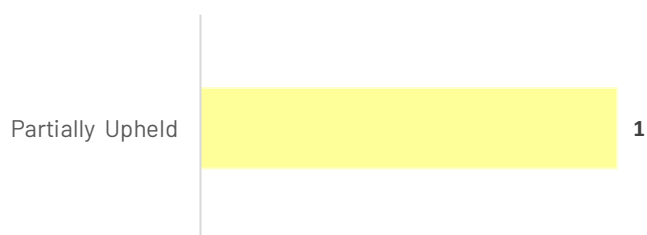
Commissioning & Social Care Finance

The service area includes Commissioning, Brokerage, Social Care Income & Payments, and Property & Financial Affairs.

Outcome Analysis



Outcome Analysis



Provider Services

The service area includes the Meadowgate Intermediate Care Centre and various Pathways to Independence.

6.6 Complaints to the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) investigates a complaint when it has not been resolved by the Council through our complaint's procedure. The Adult Social Care complaints procedure is a one stage process for all Adult Social Care complaints in Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. Complainants can refer their complaint to the Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied with the response received from us.

Every year the Ombudsman produces an annual letter which provides information on the Council's complaint handling performance. The annual letter was issued to authorities in May 2026.

The annual review letter from the Ombudsman provided a full breakdown of the total amount of complainants who directed their complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman do not make the Council aware of each case unless further information is required to assist with their investigation.

The Ombudsman annual letter reported 9 Adult Social Care complaints were referred to the Ombudsman during 2025/26.

Out of the 9 complaints reported to the Ombudsman, 6 were considered by the Ombudsman, resulting in 4 complaints being investigated and 2 closed after initial enquiries. Below is a summary of the 6 complaints:

1. **Complaint:** Mrs X complains that a delay by the Council in assessing her mother for NHS CHC funding caused her to spend £9000 engaging a private company to carry out the assessment and delayed the implementation of the funding until June 2024. She says the Council should reimburse the agency fee and pay the care home charges back to the beginning of 2024.

Decision: Not Upheld – No Fault.

The LGSCO decided no injustice was caused to Mrs X by the actions of the Council. The evidence showed the Council was not responsible for the costs incurred by Mrs X.

2. **Complaint:** Mr and Mrs X complained about the Council's management of their direct payments, delays in completing Care Plans and a Carers Assessment and poor recording keeping.

Decision: Upheld: Fault and Injustice caused.

The LGSCO found fault by the Council in its management of Mr X and Mrs X's direct payments and delays in completing care plans and a carers assessment. The Council agreed to the LGSCO's recommendations to remedy the injustice caused to Mr and Mrs X.

3. **Complaint:** Mrs X complained about the care home where her husband, Mr X, stayed. She said the Care Provider issued notice in retaliation after she had complained, without following proper procedure. She said the Care Provider sent no carers to support Mr X on the day of his move. She also complained it did not respond to her complaint.

Decision: Upheld no further action – organisation already remedied.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate the complaint about the actions of a Care Provider the Council commissioned to care for Mrs X's husband. The Council has already accepted the Care Provider was at fault and made suitable recommendations. The LGSCO could not add to the Council's investigation or achieve anything more meaningful.

4. **Complaint:** Mr X and Mrs X complained on behalf of their adult son, Mr Z. They complained about the actions of the Council and NHS Northeast and North Cumbria ICB (the ICB).

Decision: Upheld: Fault and Injustice caused.

The LGSCO upheld some of the complaint elements. The Council and ICB have accepted the LGSCO's recommendations.

**Limited information is published on this complaint due to confidentiality.*

5. **Complaint:** Mrs X complains the Council failed to inform her and her husband Mr X, that he would have to contribute towards the costs of care he received at home.

Decision: Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate as there was not enough evidence of fault or injustice to warrant an investigation.

6. **Complaint:** Mr B complains the Council refused his request to refund care fees he paid for his wife's care because of his mistake. Mr B says he believed savings were held in a savings account with joint names, but he later found out the savings account was in his sole name.

Decision: Closed after initial enquiries – no further action.

The LGSCO decided not to investigate this complaint about the way the Council dealt with Mr B's request for a refund of residential care fees he paid for his wife's care. There is not enough evidence of fault to justify investigating.

6.7 Vexatious Complainants

The Council will handle complaints impartially, objectively, and professionally, treating complainants with respect. Complainants and their families will not face adverse treatment for making a complaint.

However, if a complainant's behaviour is abusive, offensive, or threatening, the Council may restrict contact to protect staff. Legitimate queries or criticisms are acceptable if raised appropriately. If a complainant is unhappy with an outcome and simply seeks to challenge it, this will not result in them being considered as vexatious or unreasonable.

Furthermore, we appreciate that complainants may often be frustrated and aggrieved, and it is, therefore, important to consider the merits of their case rather than their attitude. However, if a complainant becomes unreasonable in an unnecessarily persistent or aggressive manner, action under the Vexatious Complaints Procedure may be considered.

In 2025/26 three individuals receiving support from Adult Social Care were made vexatious.

1. Miss Y's conduct became unreasonable due to persistent email communications and her refusal to accept that certain queries related to other organisations and were therefore outside the Council's remit to address. This placed excessive demands on the time and resources of numerous council officers.
Formal restrictions were invoked for a period of 12 months, outlining the local authority would only accept communications via email to a single point of contact email address.
2. Mr X's conduct had become unreasonable in the unnecessarily persistent email communications with numerous Council Officers regarding the same issues, not accepting our responses and using inappropriate language. This placed excessive demands on the time and resources of numerous council officers.
Formal restrictions were invoked for a period of 12 months and subsequently have been extended for a further 6 months. These restrictions outlined the local authority would only accept communications via email to a single point of contact email address and Council officers will not engage in telephone conversations.
3. Mr X's conduct had become unreasonable in the unnecessarily persistent email communications with numerous Council Officers and using inappropriate language. This placed excessive demands on the time and resources of numerous council officers.
Formal restrictions were invoked for a period of 12 months, outlining the local authority would only accept communications via email to a single point of contact email address and would only accept requests for case reviews by using the appropriate request method.

7.0 Lessons Learnt

The priority in dealing with all complaints is seeking a timely and satisfactory resolution, where lessons are learnt and where outcomes from complaints can inform service improvements. Learning from complaints gives us opportunities for improvements to be made, for issues to be prevented where possible going forward, and to inform our future plans for services delivery.

Through our engagement plan, we identify a set of commitments and actions we will take to fulfil our pledge to put people at the heart of everything we do. We achieve this by listening and involving the individuals we support as they are best placed to tell us their lived experience, and how we can make positive changes to our services.

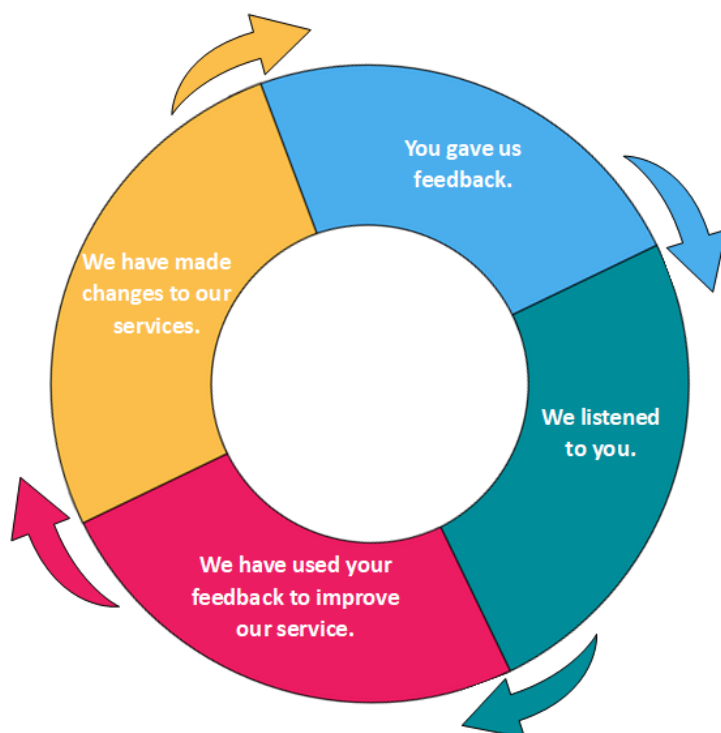
By analysing trends in complaints, we can use this intelligence to inform our commissioning intentions and service delivery. We share new developments, changes in guidance and practice updates, through team meetings, our staff newsletter, and our quality assurance process. Individual issues and specific learning are addressed through training, reflection, and supervision.

Of the 32 complaints investigated and 63 service requests actioned last year, 22 investigations identified learning actions such as training for staff, improvements to our processes and communication, changes to working practices and revision of our documentation to be implemented.

Examples of learning from complaints for this reporting year are detailed below:

Theme	Recommendation for improvement
Improved Processes	- Managers will review a practitioner's workload where unexpected leave occurs, to consider re-allocation and rearranging of any booked appointments. - Create practice guidance regarding Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
Improved Care Provider Processes	- Management of care provider to conduct out-of-hour visits to check service delivery standards. - Increase staff training on handling challenging situations and de-escalation techniques.
Improved Communication	- Practitioners will provide a copy of our privacy notice to adults and carers which explains how their information is handled by the Council. - Create a briefing, noting learnings that have arose from complaints and share regularly in team meetings. - Expectations to be set with contractors on how to interact with adults and their families during adaptation works.
Training	- Training workshop to remind staff of their duties under the Care Act 2014. - Train staff to complete more thorough checks over property disregards to avoid delays in grant funding. - Recording skills for practitioner's refresher training.

In addition, where a complaint involves a commissioned service, this is addressed through contract management procedures with lessons learned fed back to the service by Adult Social Care Commissioning. This shapes the work of the Commissioning service to review working practices, procedures, policies, and contract compliance with commissioned providers to improve the quality-of-care provision across the social care sector within the borough. The quality of care is monitored through those contract compliance mechanisms which includes quality assurance visits, working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where a provider is not meeting the standard of care or their regulated function, and following up on safeguarding concerns where appropriate.



8.0 Overview of Service Requests received in 2025 - 2026

Service Requests are received across a wide range of topics that range from social work and occupational therapy practice to housing adaptations and commissioned services. Service requests increased from 50 in 24/25 to 63 in 25/26. Outlined below are a range of examples.

What happened	What we did
Concerns around mother being allowed to walk unaided and staff not considering family views.	Discussed concerns with family, provided information as reassurance on decision making and provided a written response.
Sharing concern relating to provision and standards at care home.	The Quality Assurance Team undertook ongoing monitoring to ensure satisfactory service delivery and care home manager spoke with family raising concerns.
Request for support from Occupational Therapy.	Visit arranged to speak with adult to assess needs.
Concerns about changes to package of support.	Social Worker arranged a review.
Express dissatisfaction regarding Foxrush Mental Health Services.	Provided contact details on how to redirect concerns as Foxrush is a service provided by the NHS.

During 2025/26 a total of 95 concerns were identified by individuals where they felt their concerns required escalation. A total of all concerns raised, irrespective of the resolution process, shows our transparency and commitment to address and resolve any issues. Concerns were assessed at the outset and if appropriate the concerns were resolved as a service request. By utilising the service request option, we strive to address the concerns efficiently without the need to escalate to a formal complaint. Out of the 63 concerns handled as a service request, only one required to be escalated as a formal complaint to establish a resolution. Service requests are a proactive effort to prevent issues from escalating into formal complaints, addressing concerns earlier, providing a timely and appropriate outcome for the individuals.

9.0 Compliments

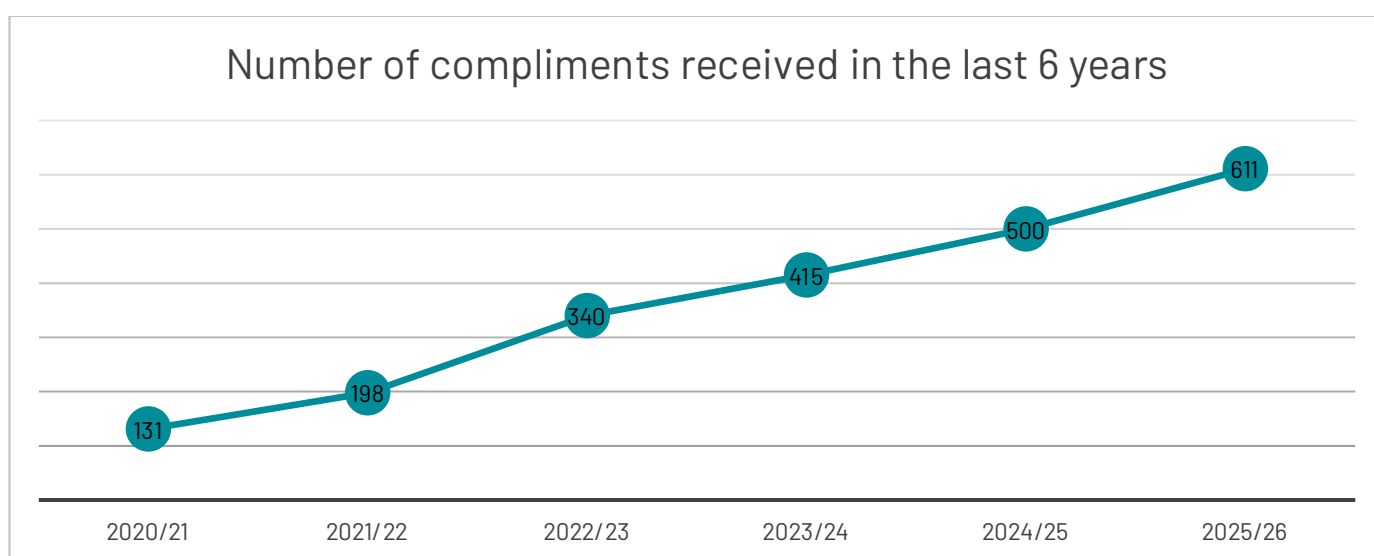
9.1 What is a compliment?

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments Policy states a compliment is: *"An unsolicited statement of satisfaction or praise received from an outside source regarding an aspect of the service or an individual member of staff."*

9.2 Number of compliments?

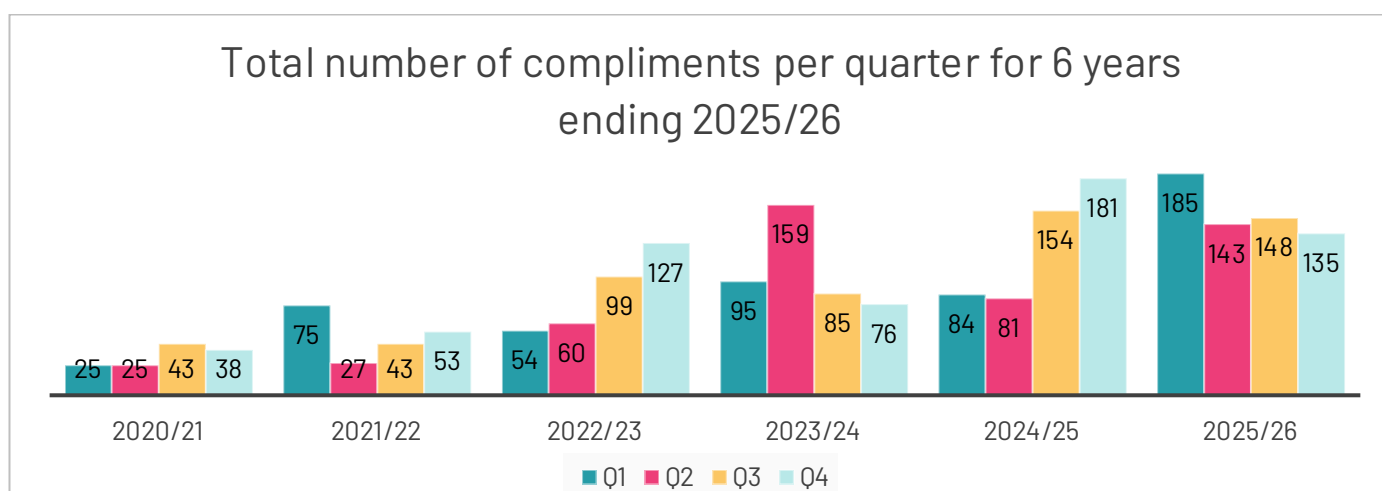
We received 611 compliments in 2025/26 compared to 500 in 2024/25 which is a 22% increase. Compliments evidence how Adult Social Care is meeting the key qualities individuals and their carers expect from a social care service such as being treated with dignity, respect, staff being caring, response to people's needs, being effective and well-led.

The table below shows the number of compliments received over the last 6 years.



Compliments are received by letter, email, thank you cards, feedback forms and satisfaction surveys. They are recorded and the members of staff involved are congratulated by the senior management team on their good practice. We use feedback received from compliments to affirm when services are working well and have made a positive impact on individuals accessing our service.

The chart below shows the quarterly breakdown of compliments over the last six years.



Across the Adult Social Care service, Provider Services historically receive the highest number of compliments from individuals and their families. In 2025/26 Provider Services received the highest number of compliments with 215, 35% of the total compliments received.

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Adult Social Work & Safeguarding	53	33	45	43	174
Adults Commissioning and Support Services	0	2	1	0	3
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health	13	11	13	14	51
Provider Services	70	52	50	43	215
Prevention and Partnerships	49	45	38	35	167
Principal Social Worker and Business Support Teams	0	0	1	0	1
Total	185	143	148	135	611

Feedback received come directly from adults who have accessed our services, as well as their families. In particular, individuals who have spent time at the Meadowgate Intermediate Care Centre and those supported through the Community Reablement Teams.

Adults and their families frequently acknowledge the positive impact that both the Meadowgate facility and Community Reablement services have had on their recovery, independence, and overall wellbeing.

The next page shows 10 anonymised quotes from compliments we have received in the reporting year.

9.3 Adult Social Care 2025/26 Compliments

Once I was given an OT and she visited, things about my mobility issues improved. I was impressed with the skills of the OT in identifying my needs, I felt immediately better.

My Social Worker is very informative, I feel sure she will explain everything in fine detail, like she has with everything else, she's a star.

My mam wants to say thank you so much from the bottom of her heart, she can't believe how fast you acted, it's really reassured my family. My mam feels more confident in asking for support and now has the numbers to do this if needed. She was also reassured about the amount of support that is available and now knows what to do if this is needed. They were the loveliest girls, and she was very impressed on how they dealt with assessment she couldn't thank them enough; she got quite emotional about how relieved she felt.

Your support financially for a cleaner, gardener and window cleaner has made my life as a carer much more bearable and given me a much happier life, mentally I don't feel so alone, struggling with everything. And to know you are there if I have a problem, somebody to listen and help. Many thanks.

I would like to say thank you for all the wonderful care I was given during my recent stay at Meadowgate. The people concerned were simply fantastic in all their different positions. The humour was great, the care and compassion was great, but most of all the way everyone helped one another, nothing was too much trouble, long may it continue.

The lady who completed a home visit, treated me with respect, put me at ease, covered all aspects of life, money and who to contact with any problems. She knew her job and worked with confidence throughout. A member of staff you should be proud of.

Our social worker is the best we've ever had; he is professional, polite, easy to talk to and very understanding. He always provides us extra information if we are struggling. Getting to know us is appreciated with the past amounts of social worker changes. Your life problems can be very stressful but knowing he is caring to us, helps and makes us more relaxed, plus our dog loves him.

The two gentlemen who installed the minor adaptations to my property, I was very impressed with the works completed and their professionalism.

The social worker was polite, caring, supportive. Also explained the situation and gave advice when needed. He kept in contact to inform us of any developments. I felt supported at a difficult time.

Thank you both for all your help and assistance over what has been a really difficult and stressful time. We lost a much loved and very brave relative, he was a dignified and brave old soldier who had served in the Coldstream guards guarding Buckingham palace in his younger life and didn't want to end his days being a burden, often refusing help when it was so obviously needed. On this occasion I am so pleased I accepted the offer of help & advice on his behalf you have both gone above and beyond to assist and I could not have helped support my Mum through all of this without you. I can't thank you enough for your help and assistance. I will use the words of the cold stream guard regimental motto which describes your actions perfectly, your kindness has been. "Second to none" and I've learned the lesson of never to underestimate the value of human kindness.

10.0 Conclusion

This report demonstrates that Adult Social Care continues to respond positively to feedback from adults and their families. During 2025/26, 32 formal complaints and 63 service requests were received, representing a small proportion of the overall number of adults and carers supported. While complaints decreased slightly compared with the previous year, service requests increased.

The continued use of service requests has supported a more timely and proportionate response to concerns, helping to resolve issues before they escalate into formal complaints. This approach supports individuals and their families to feel listened to, while enabling teams to take prompt action where this is required. The average time taken to conclude a complaint also improved significantly, reducing from 33 days in 2024/25 to 21 days in 2025/26, demonstrating stronger oversight, improved escalation arrangements and a more responsive complaints process.

The themes arising from complaints show that quality of service delivery, communication and timely action remain important areas of focus. Where complaints have identified learning, actions have been taken to improve practice, strengthen processes, support staff development and improve communication with adults and their families. Learning from complaints continues to be shared through supervision, team meetings, training, quality assurance activity and contract management arrangements where commissioned services are involved.

Referrals to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman remained relatively low. Where the Ombudsman identified fault, the Council accepted the findings and agreed recommendations to remedy injustice and improve future practice. This reinforces the importance of maintaining an open, transparent and accountable approach to complaint handling, and ensuring that learning is embedded across Adult Social Care.

The increase in compliments, from 500 in 2024/25 to 611 in 2025/26, provides strong evidence of the positive impact Adult Social Care services have on adults, carers and families. Feedback particularly recognises the quality of support provided by frontline teams, including Provider Services, Meadowgate Intermediate Care Centre and Community Reablement. Compliments help to recognise good practice and reinforce what is working well.

Overall, the findings in this report show a service that is committed to listening, responding and learning. Adult Social Care will continue to promote accessible routes for feedback, resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity, strengthen complaint handling practice and use feedback to inform continuous improvement. This will support the ongoing aim of delivering safe, person-centred care and support for adults across Redcar and Cleveland.

11.0 Future Developments 2026/27

A number of key developments are planned to strengthen and modernise the complaints' function.

1. A priority focus is the design and implementation of a new case management system that will provide a single, uniform platform for recording and managing complaints across all services. This will ensure greater consistency, improved oversight, and more effective reporting.
2. A strong emphasis on the increased use of technology to streamline complaint handling processes. By improving digital systems and reducing manual administrative tasks, investigating officers will be able to spend less time on writing and recording, and more time on thoroughly investigating concerns and engaging with adults and their families. This shift will support more timely, high-quality responses and improved outcomes.
3. Investment will be made in strengthening the Complaints Team. This will include staff training to build skills, confidence, and consistency in complaint handling, as well as the recruitment of an apprentice. This approach will support workforce development, build capacity, and ensure long-term sustainability within the team.
4. A review of all public-facing information relating to complaints and compliments will be undertaken. This will ensure that all materials are accurate, accessible, and easy to understand for adults and their families. Clear and user-friendly information is essential in supporting individuals to raise concerns, provide feedback, and feel confident in the process.

Our vision:

We will help you live safe and well, in the place you call home, with the people and things you love, connected to your community, doing the things that matter to you.

Our commitment to adults and unpaid carers:

Listen I am listened to and shape my own support

Advise I am given information and advice when I need it

Enable I am enabled to regain my wellbeing and independence

Support I am provided with quality care that is value for money.

