

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE  
SERVICES**

**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS &  
COMPLIMENTS**

**APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024**

June 2024

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION**

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- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce an Annual Complaints Report relating to Adult Social Care Complaints, received by the Corporate Core Department, Bury Council.
- 1.2 This report is to provide members of Health Scrutiny Committee with details of information relating to Adult Social Care Services.
- 1.3 The report relates to the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and provides comparisons between previous years, as well as detailing the nature, scope and scale of some of the complaints received.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

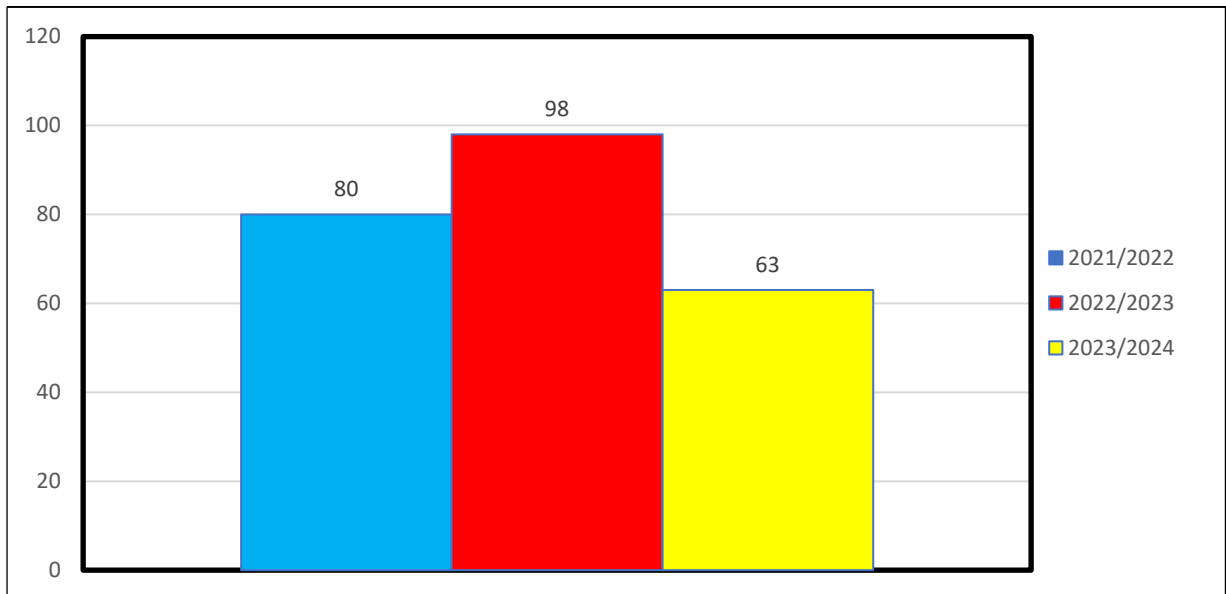
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- 2.1 The council is required to operate a separate Statutory Complaints and Representations procedure, in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 which was laid before Parliament on 27th February 2009 and came into effect on 1st April 2009. From 1st April 2009 there has been a single approach to dealing with complaints to ensure consistency in complaints handling across health and social care organisations. This procedure is based on the Department of Health's guidance, 'Listening, Responding and Improving' which supports the statutory requirements for the handling and consideration of complaints. Its intention is to allow more flexibility when responding to complaints and to encourage a culture that uses people's experiences of care to improve the services provided by Bury Adult Care Services.
- 2.2 The complaints mentioned in this report typically relate to issues where customers, their families or carers feel that the service they have received have not met their expectations. In these cases, the Council will always have endeavoured to resolve any concerns or dissatisfaction before a formal complaint has been received. Complaints, therefore, usually arise when the customer does not agree with the Council's interpretation of events or, in some cases, where policy delivers an outcome which they do not agree with.
- 2.3 Within the regulations which govern the complaints process, the Council adopts a flexible approach which prioritises local resolution. However, where complainants remain dissatisfied, they have the option to take their case to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.
- 2.4 Members of Parliament cannot make a complaint on behalf of a constituent using the statutory process. However, MP's can raise a 'Concern' on behalf of a constituent with the Council and these are then managed accordingly.
- 2.5 The Complaint Procedure is not intended for dealing with allegation of serious misconduct by staff. These are covered by and dealt with through the Council's separate disciplinary procedures.

## DATA ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

### 3.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS

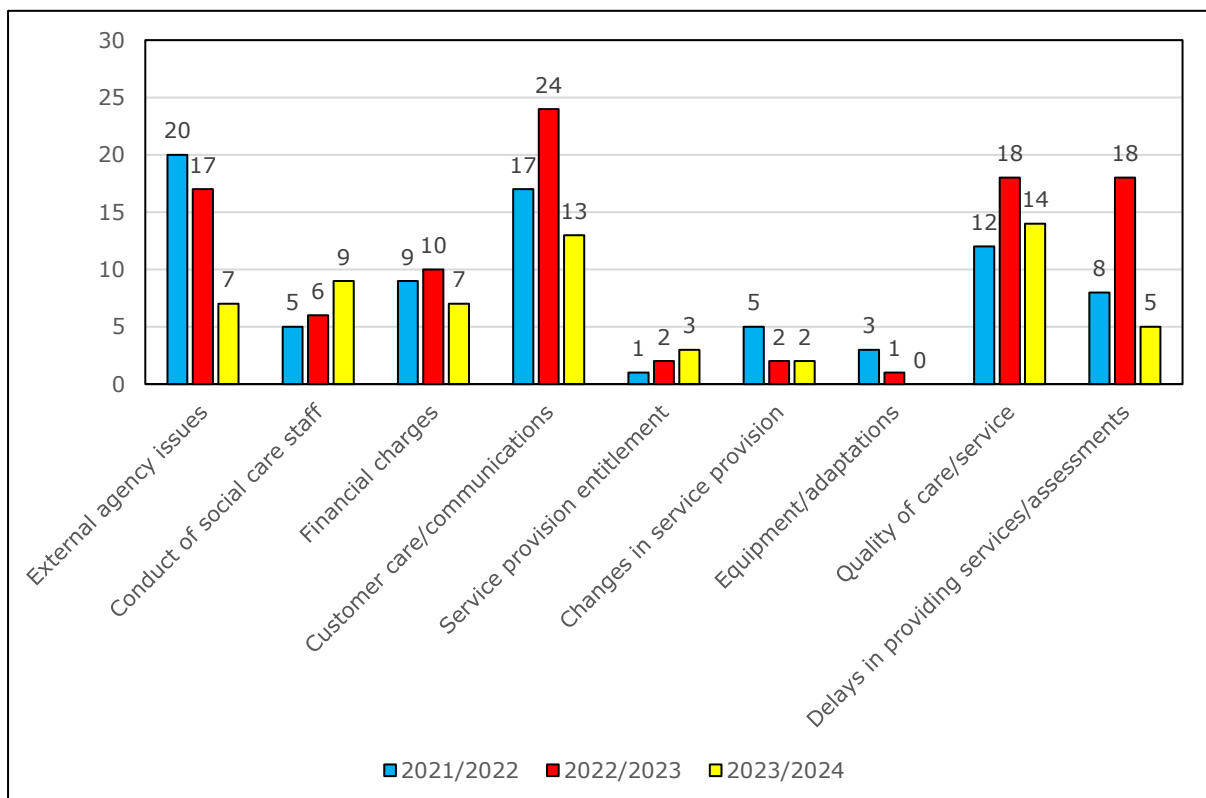
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- 3.1 It is pleasing to report the total number of complaints received in 2023/2024 has decreased from the previous years.
- 3.2 The number of complaints received should be considered in context with the number of people actually having direct contact with Adult Social Care Services (excluding their relatives, friends or carers who might make complaints on their behalf). The number of people to have direct contact with Adult Social Care Services during 2023/2024 was 8,343. It is positive that the proportion of people wanting to make a complaint about the services received from the department is low at only 63.
- 3.3 The drop was to be expected in part as in 21/22 the department changed the way it dealt with complaints about care provision and in 22/23 changes to government rules regarding how care post hospital stays were funded caused some confusion. Both these issues are no longer present and this year there are no factors that would cause temporary increases.
- 3.4 Out of the 63 complaints received, 4 complaints came back to the department to advise they remained dissatisfied, meaning 59 complaints were resolved after the initial response.
- 3.5 As would be expected when dealing with complaints from predominantly vulnerable groups, a large number of complaints received are made by a family member, advocate or solicitor of the person receiving a service, rather than the person themselves.

	Complaints raised by the person receiving a service	Complaints raised on behalf of the person receiving a service	%
<b>2021/2022</b>	16	64	80%
<b>2022/2023</b>	35	63	64%
<b>2023/2024</b>	22	41	65%

## 4.0 NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

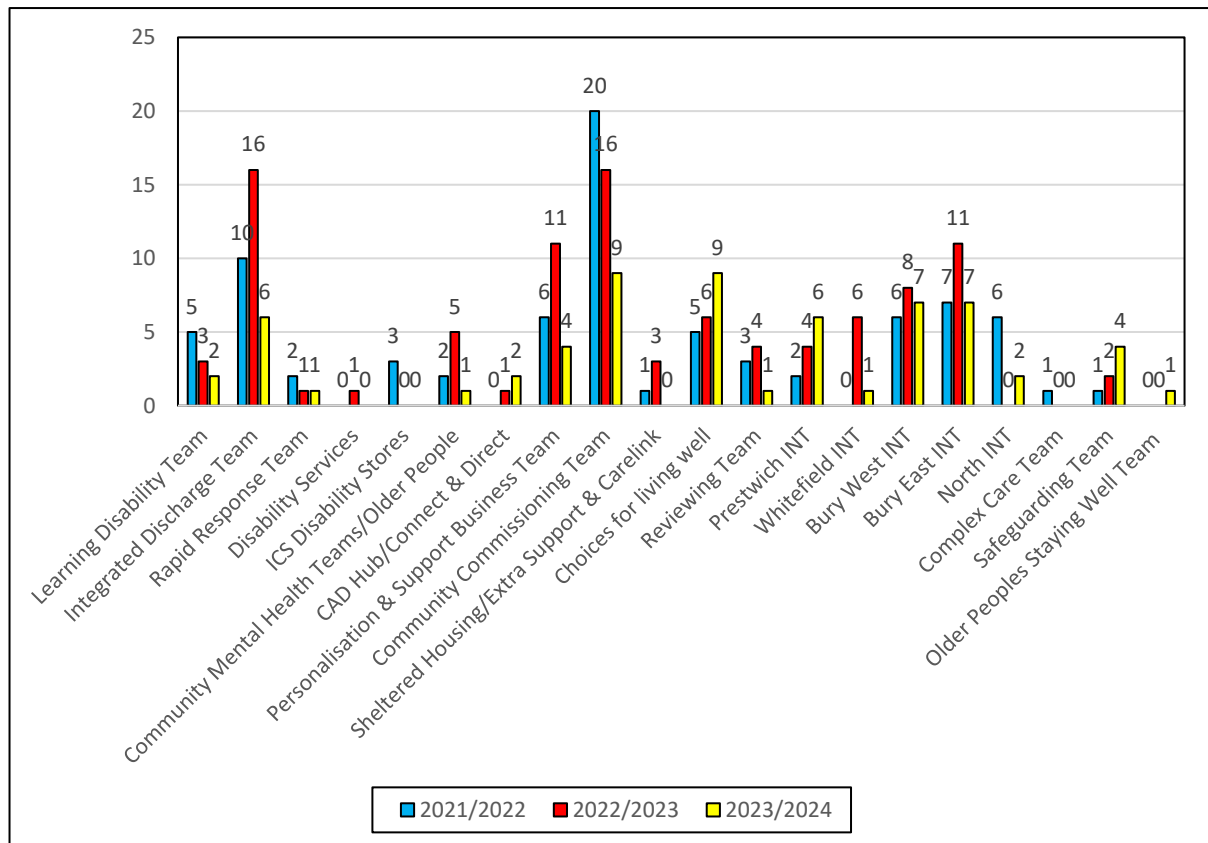


4.1 On the whole, the nature of complaints has shown no real noticeable increases. There has been a slight increase in complaints relating to 'conduct of social care staff' (from 6 to 9). Whilst there has been a slight increase in this area, no particular service area, team or individuals have been highlighted as a concern.

	Number of complaints received	Complaints Upheld / Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints Ongoing/ Withdrawn
<b>2021/2022</b>	80	63 (79%)	17	0
<b>2022/2023</b>	98	63 (64%)	33	2
<b>2023/2024</b>	63	36 (57%)	23	4

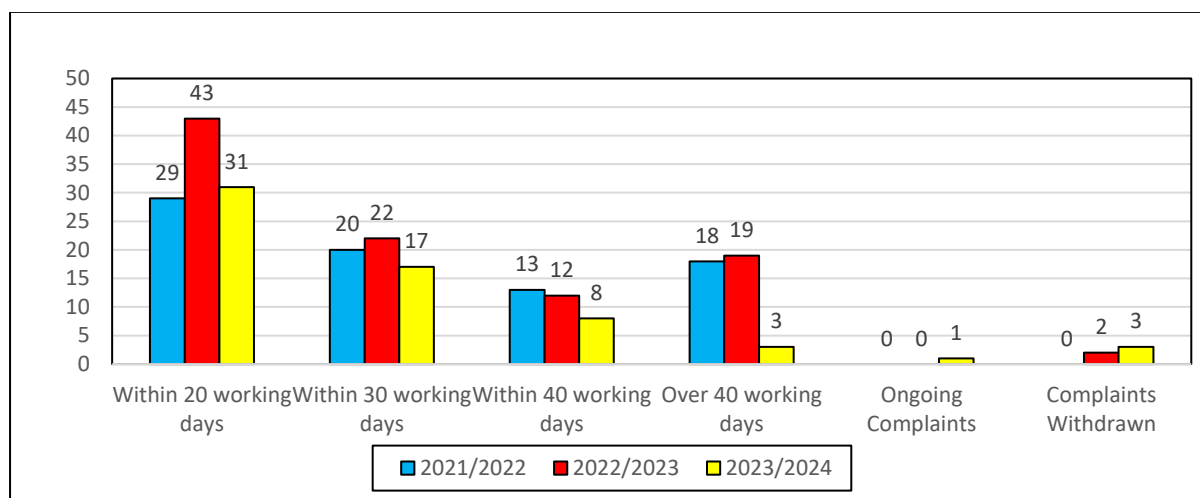
4.2 During the period 2023/2024 it has shown the number of complaints upheld/partially upheld has shown a slight decrease from the previous year 2022/2023. In all cases when complaints are received, learning is drawn from the comments received and the subsequent investigation.

## 5.0 COMPLAINTS PER TEAM



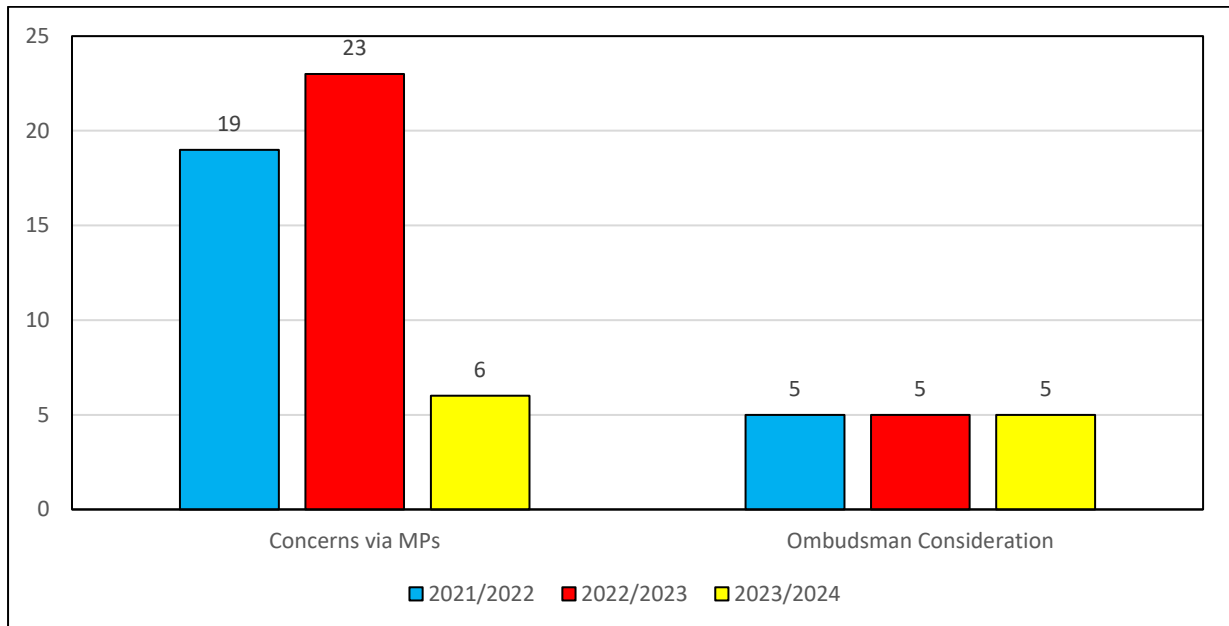
- 5.1 In comparison the overall number of complaints within teams has reduced.
- 5.2 The report has highlighted a slight increase from previous years in complaints for CAD Hub, Choices for Living Well, Prestwich Integrated Neighbourhood Team and the Safeguarding Team. Although the report highlights an increase the numbers are still relatively low, which does not indicate any area of concern.
- 5.3 All complaints are considered in terms of the learning that they can provide on how to improve the services and helps us to detect any themes or areas which require additional training or support.

## 6.0 TIMESCALES



- 6.1 Whilst there are no statutory timescales with which the department must comply in responding to complaints, we do aim to resolve complaints within twenty working days on receipt of complaint. For more complex complaints which involve different service areas, 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations, NHS for example, timescales will exceed the twenty working days.
- 6.2 It is for the council and complainant to agree how the complaint will be handled, the likely duration of the investigation and when the complainant can expect to receive a response.
- 6.3 In 2023/24, 49% of the complaints received were responded to within the 20 working day timescales, 27% of complaints were responded to outside of the 20 working day timescales, 13% of those were over 40 working days and 3% of complaints were responded to over 40 working days. Of the complaints responded to outside of the 20 working day timescales all complainants were kept updated on the delay, the reason for the delay and provided with a new response date.
- 6.4 It is really positive to see nearly half of the complaints received were responded to within 20 working days, which remains consistent with the previous year. Complaints over 40 working days has shown a significant improvement being reduced from 19 to 3.
- 6.5 The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman's office carried out two online workshops for senior managers on Effective Complaint Handling which included how to investigate complaints, decision making and remedy recommendations. The sessions received positive feedback, staff felt more confident when investigating and responding to complaints.

## 7.0 MP CONCERNS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN CONSIDERATIONS / ENQUIRIES



- 7.1 As has been previously mentioned, concerns raised on behalf of constituents by Members of Parliament are recorded separately. There has been a reduction from 23 in 2022/2023 to 6 in 2023/2024.
- 7.2 The number of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has not increased and remained as the previous years of 5 cases in 2023/2024.
- 7.3 All five cases received by LGSCO were closed after initial enquiries, as they could not add to the Council's response or make a different finding. Which resulted in no further action.

## 8.0 COMPLIMENTS

8.1 In addition to complaints, the department also records the number of compliments received.

Total number of Compliments received 2022/2023	Total number of Compliments received 2023/2024
601	826

Service Area	2022/2023	2023/2024
Integrated Hospital Discharge/Discharge to Assess Team	5	3
Choices for Living Well Intermediate Care, Reablement, Killelea, IMC @ Home	220	246
Sheltered Housing / Carelink / Support at Home	64	69
Integrated Community Equipment Services	59	63
Learning Disability Team	0	3
Older People's Community Mental Health Team	5	2
CAD Hub/Connect & Direct	1	11
Personalisation and Support Business Team	41	25
Rapid Response Team	57	86
Disability Services	58	23
Older Peoples Staying Well Team	52	368
Prestwich INT	3	7
Whitefield INT	6	8
Bury East INT	3	2
Bury North INT	6	1
Bury West INT	0	0
Community Commissioning Team	0	2
Reviewing Team	21	20
Safeguarding Team	0	1

8.2 The number of compliments received has shown an increase from the previous year. Team Managers are reminded and encouraged to record and share all compliments received.

8.3 It is pleasing to see the increase in compliments received, especially when those services are front line. Staff have continued to work tirelessly during the most challenging of times and it is pleasing to see that their hard work is being acknowledged and recognised.

8.4 When a compliment is received that acknowledges the efforts of an individual member of staff a personal thank you letter is sent by the Director - Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning. A copy is also placed on the individual's personnel record.



8.5 Here are some examples of positive feedback received from people receiving a service:

➤ **Choices for Living Well – Reablement Team**

“Case opened from Christies. This lady evidently is very poorly. Her home environment was pretty grim. It was full of bags of rubbish which contained rotting food, empty boxes, bottles, dirty pads, kitchen was unusable, it was full of flies. Another person may well have tried to get this lady back into hospital due to her home environment. Whilst I was opening the case, I bagged up some rubbish from her lounge, to make her walkway clear for her, but the rest needed a good deep clean and declutter. I had to move on to open other cases. I allocated some time to two carers over Wednesday evening, Thursday and today to try and make her home more habitable for her. Well, what a job those girls have done, her home looks so much better, she is able to live there more safely, and she can mobilise around her home without risk of falls. They have gone above and beyond their job role, not many staff would have done what those girls have done this week. This lady was so appreciative of their help as she was so embarrassed that things had got to this stage”.

➤ **Whitefield INT**

“Thank you so much for your incredible efforts, for your understanding and for all your help and advice. I’m certain dad will be safe, comfortable and happy in Regency – all thanks to your support. It’s a massive life changing decision for dad and all the family, would not have been possible without your negotiation, support and guidance. I’ve just had the best night’s sleep in weeks and I’m sure dad has also. He couldn’t wait to be rid of us as we dropped him off yesterday, he was so excited to explore and make new friends”.

➤ **Personalisation and Support Team**

“Finally, let me thank you and your colleagues for this amazing service you provide. It has enabled the family and most of all mum (now 93!) to have peace of mind about financial matters and for us to get on with the job of making her life as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. Without your guidance and assistance, we would have had lots of stress and worries about funding”.

➤ **Community Mental Health Social Care Team (Older People)**

“I wanted to thank you for your support during this time. I found the process quite draining and at times emotional. I really appreciated your empathy and compassion and I felt that you really had mum's best interests at heart, whilst also managing my expectations and concerns. Wishing you all the best”.

➤ **Older Peoples Staying Well Team**

“I have just been to visit two of my customers to do an equipment check. Both were very complimentary about the service. They told me that they want to really thank me because even from the very first phone call, everyone has been lovely and very professional. The things that have been

put in place, particularly the minor adaptations and equipment have made a massive difference and have just taken a bit of pressure off them both”.

➤ **Rapid Response Team**

“Care provided to her mother was very professional, caring, individualised to patient need, respectful, and gave the daughter the confidence and reassurance that her mother was getting the 100% best. Daughter stated, it was as if they were providing the care to one of their own family members and would have them both back caring for my mother in a heartbeat”.

➤ **Discharge to Assess Team**

“Thank you so much for all the help, advice and encouragement you have given to us during the past six weeks. I am very grateful to you and hope I have made the right decision with regards care, but I don’t think I could manage him at home. All my very best wishes to you and many thanks”.

➤ **CAD Hub**

“Compliment today from a caller who was very distressed and tearful, not managing due to decline in mobility and health condition. The Enquiry Referral Officer listened to her and gave advice, information as well as making immediate referrals. The caller rang back to say thank you for her help said she was ‘an angel’ and she would not forget her kindness”.

➤ **Bury East INT**

“I just wanted to say a big thank you for your help and support for my Mum and me over the last few weeks. Moving an elderly parent into residential care is not an easy decision but throughout this process you have listened to our wishes and offered a choice of solutions in a caring and professional manner. Both Mum and myself are grateful for your assistance and I thought I needed to let you know how much this has meant to us and how you have smoothed a set of decisions that at times was stressful to make. Thank you again and take care”.

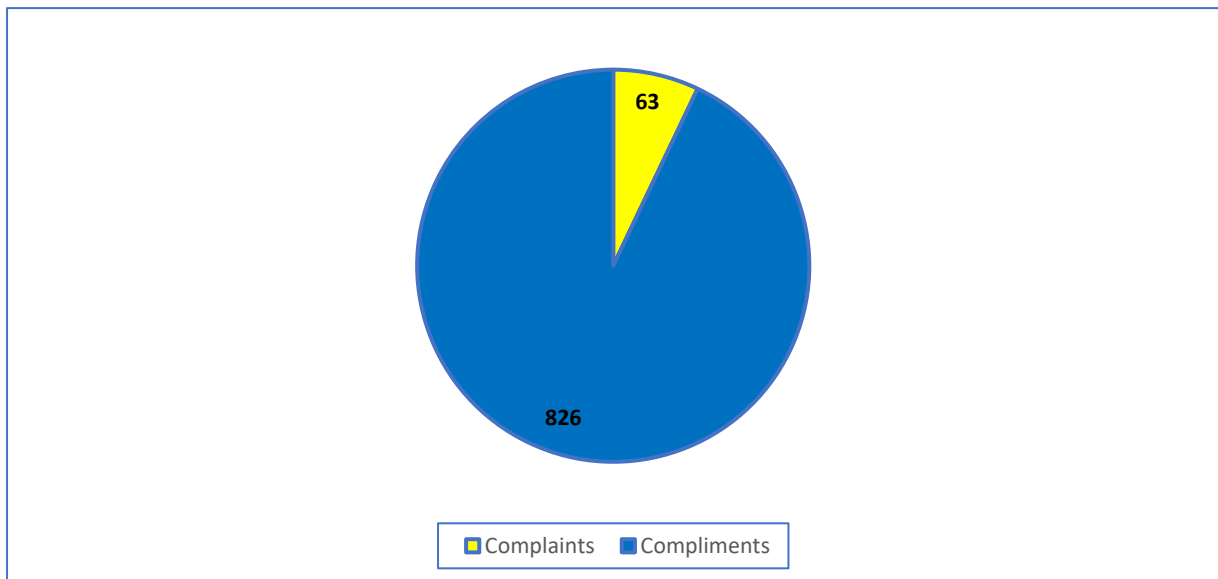
## 9.0 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 While complaints highlight where customers are dissatisfied with the services they have received, they are also beneficial in helping to develop lessons learned to improve services and ensure any mistakes are not repeated.
- 9.2 Examples of action taken in response to investigation findings to improve services:

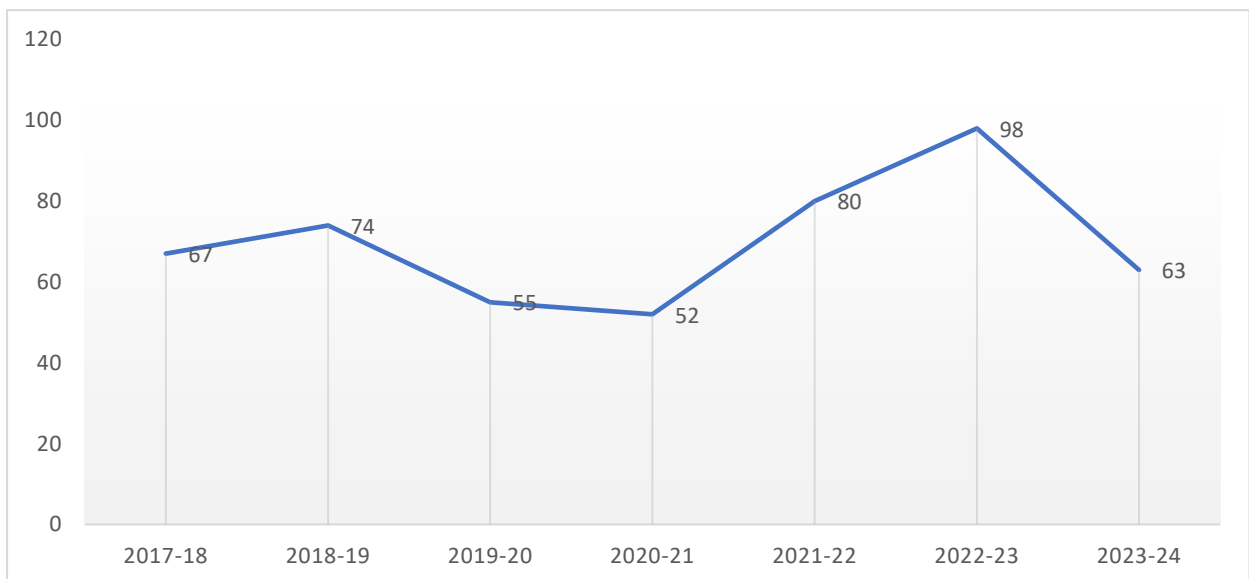
Complaint	Lessons Learnt
Communication regarding discharge procedures.	This complaint will be discussed at the next Therapy Team meeting to ensure patients' families are involved in the discharge planning process and are aware of intended discharge date at least 48 hrs prior in all instances. This will be included in the Discharge Planning Procedure which is planned to be reviewed and updated in the coming months.
Incorrect financial charging information provided by hospital staff.	I will be sharing the outcome of my investigation with senior managers within the Discharge team and North Manchester Hospital to ensure lessons are learnt and communication between the two organisations is clear in relation to Bury Council's Charging Policy and procedures to be followed.
Communication regarding financial charges following hospital discharge.	To ensure lesson have been learnt the Integrated Discharge Team has implemented a charges form. This form will prompt members of staff to discuss the financial implication relating to care packages with everyone at the point of discharge.
Security concerns at residential care home.	Management have spoken with the whole team about ensuring all visitors are asked to sign in and out of the home and their identification are checked.
Communication following a safeguarding investigation.	This practice has been reviewed and it is expected that all safeguarding concerns raised are responded to so that the person referring has knowledge of the outcome.

## 10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Complaint / Compliment Comparison 2023-2024



### Yearly Complaint Comparison 2017 – 2024

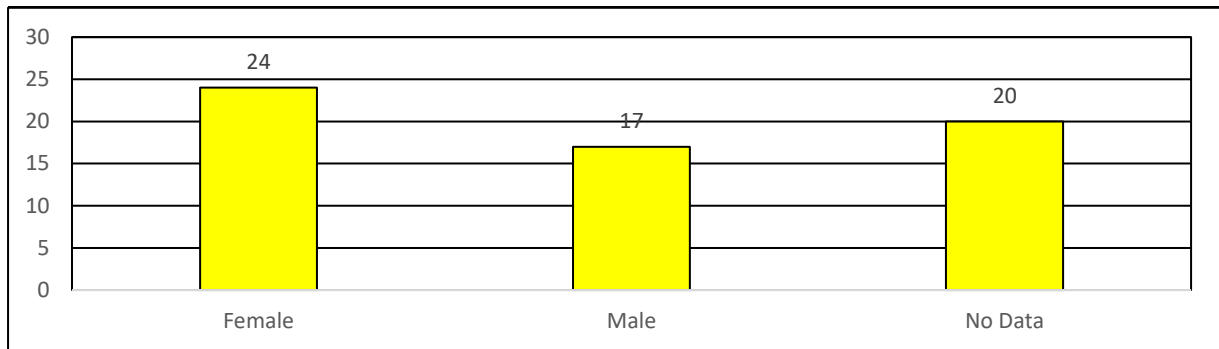


- 10.1 Although 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 showed an increase in complaints, these figures are benchmarked against the recovery from the pandemic and the significant impact this had on the care sector. This year has highlighted complaints are now in keeping with the number of complaints raised pre-covid (67no. - 2017-18, 74no. - 2018-19).
- 10.2 Despite an increase on service demand with 8,343 people having direct contact with Adult Social Care Services during 2023/2024, the number / proportion of complaints received remains remarkably low at 63.

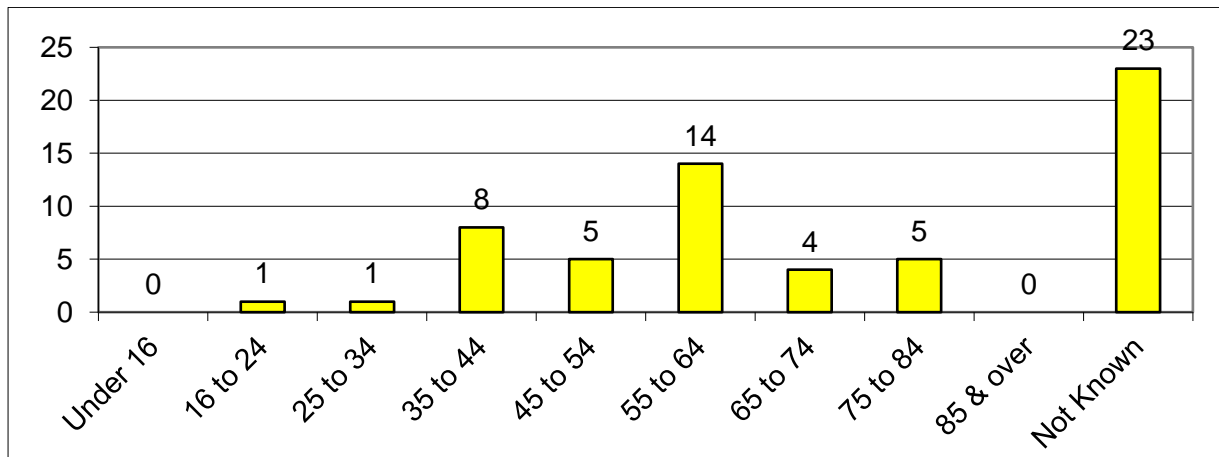
- 10.3 Positively, only five cases escalated to the LGSCO out of 63 complaints. All 5 cases the LGSCO made the decision not to investigate as they were unlikely to find fault.
- 10.5 The Council will continue to seek to learn from complaints, concerns and compliments raised with them.
- 10.6 Complaints and compliments provide valuable information to the department on how well it is performing, where resources need to be used, and where improvements need to be made. Details of all complaints, concerns and compliments are provided to senior officers on a monthly basis, enabling them to identify any trends or issues within the services they are responsible for.

## 11.0 EQUALITY MONITORING

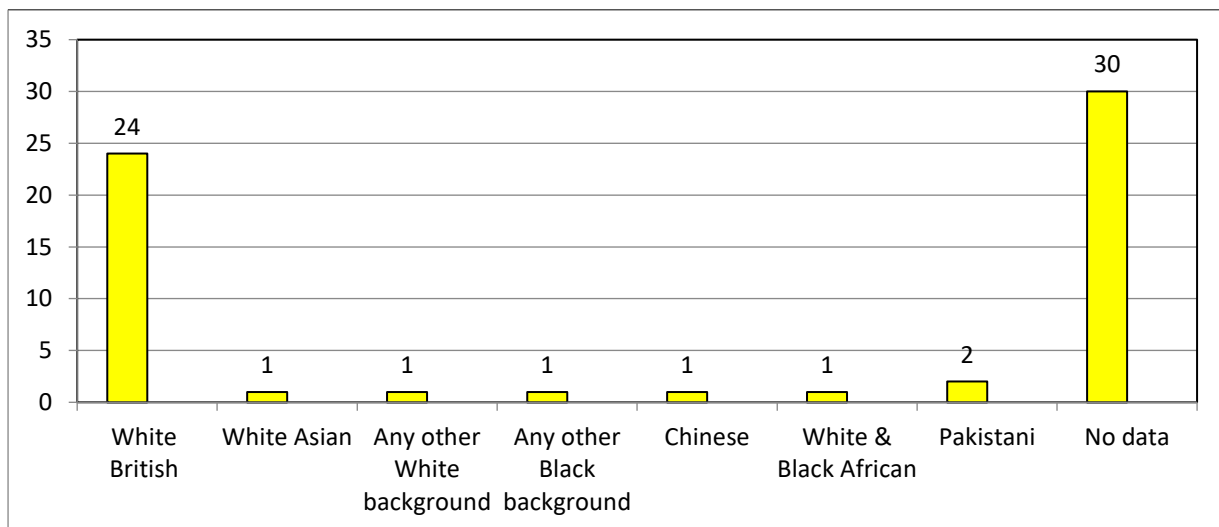
### 11.1 GENDER



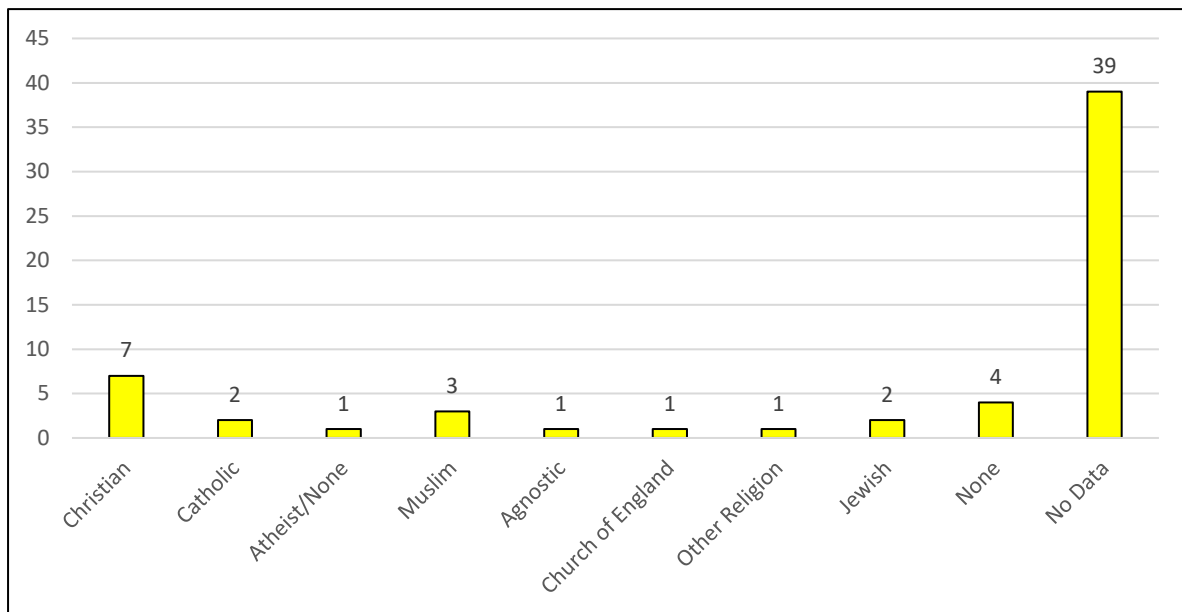
### 11.2 AGE



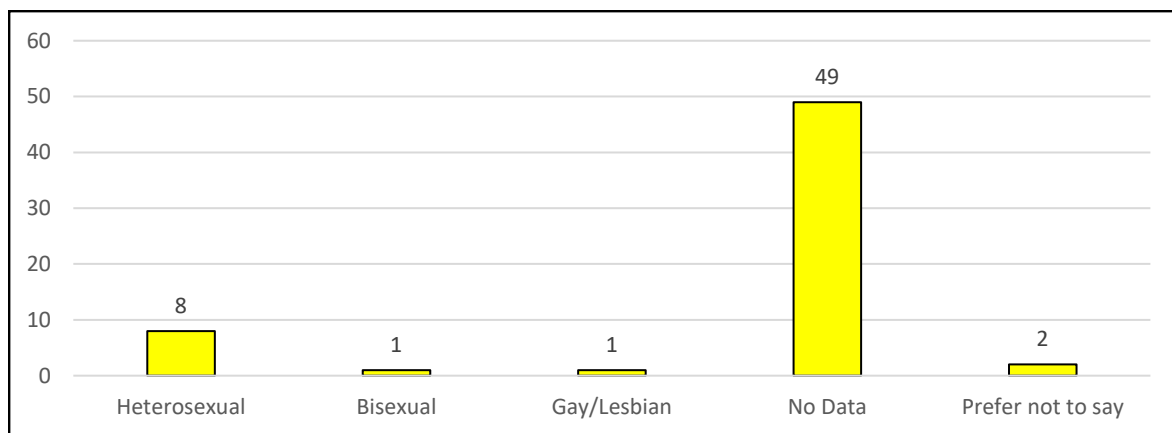
### 11.3 ETHNICITY



### 11.3 RELIGION



### 11.4 SEXUAL ORIENTATION



\*\*These figures are based on people complaining, not the number of complaints received.

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Council