



ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES
ANNUAL COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS
APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025



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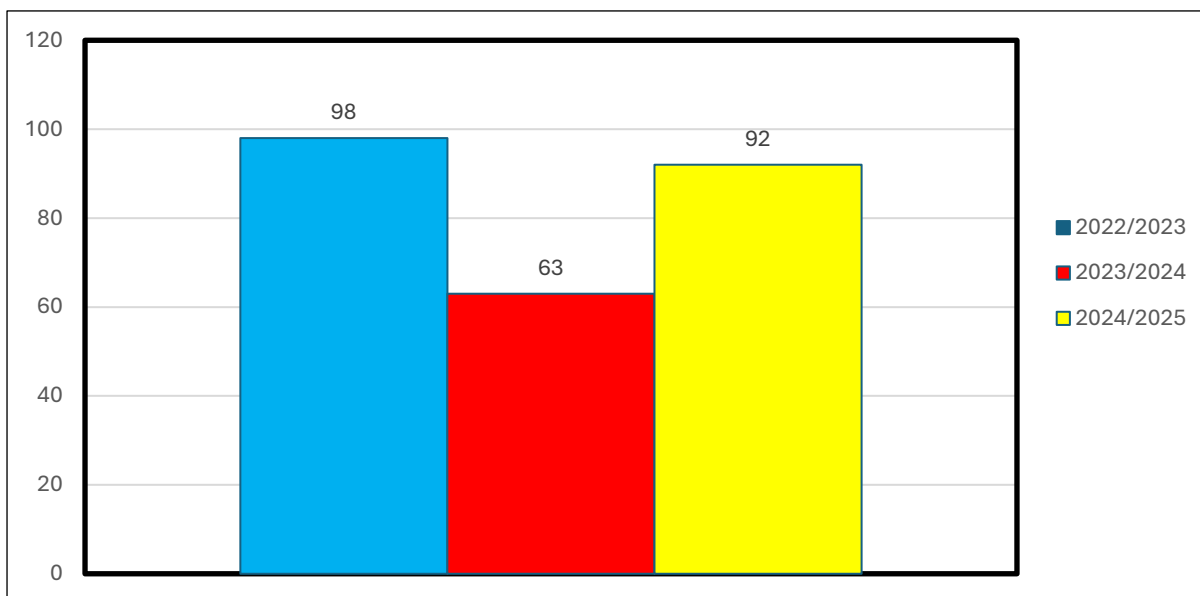
1.0 PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

- 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 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025, and provides comparisons between previous years, as well as detailing the nature, scope and scale of some of the complaints received.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 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.

3.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS - DATA ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED



3.1 The report has highlighted the total number of complaints received in 2024/2025 has shown an increase from the previous year.

3.2 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.

3.3 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 2024/2025 was 9,034. Although, there has been

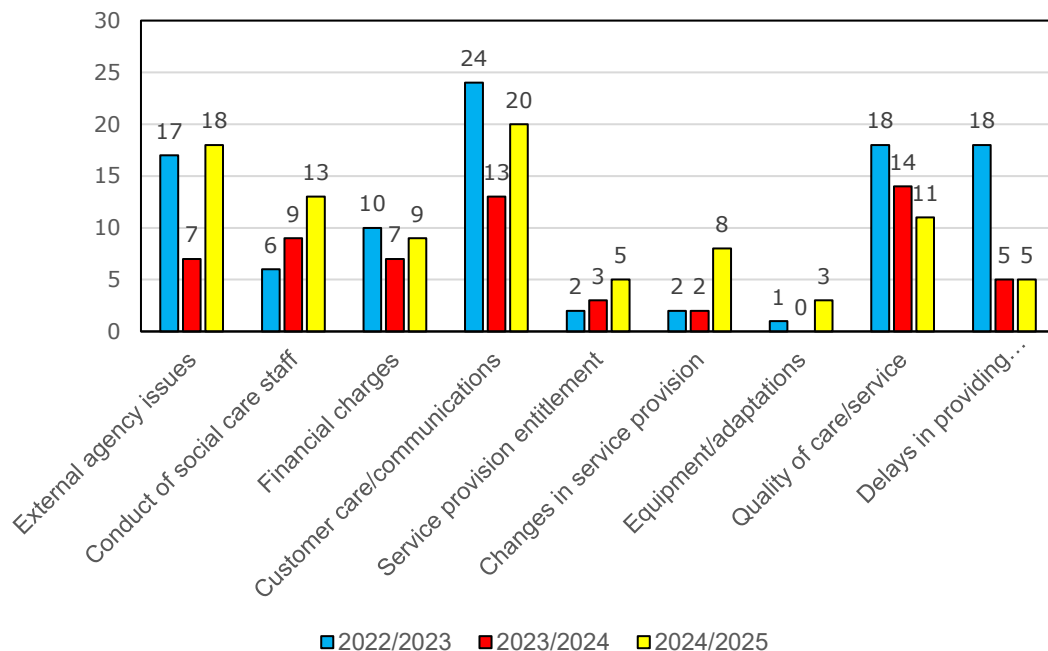
an increase on the number of complaints received, it is positive that the proportion of people wanting to make a complaint about the services received from the department is low at only 92 (1.08%).

3.4 Out of the 92 complaints received, 21 complaints came back to the department to advise they remained dissatisfied, meaning 71 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, as shown in the table below.

	Complaints raised by the person receiving a service	%	Complaints raised on behalf of the person receiving a service	%
2022/2023	35	36%	63	64%
2023/2024	22	35%	41	65%
2024/2025	26	28%	66	72%

4.0 NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

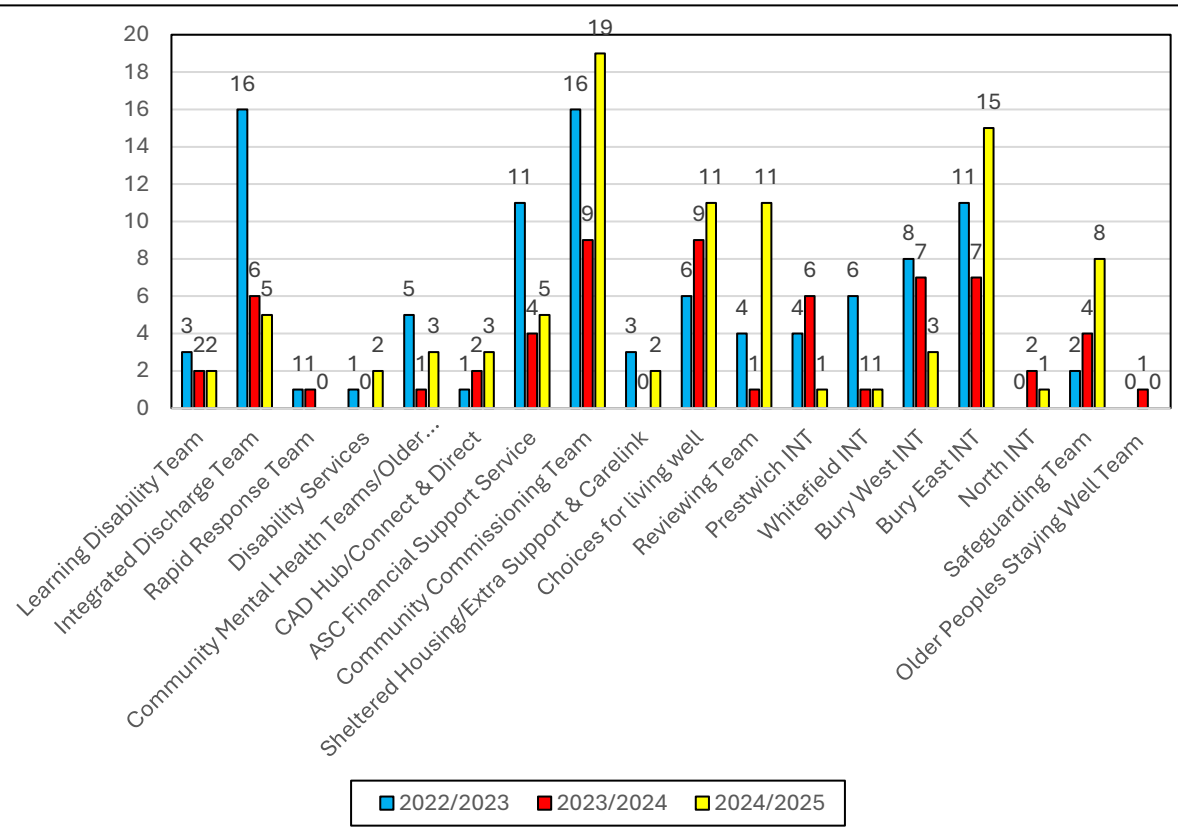


4.1 On the whole, the nature of complaints has shown no real noticeable increases. There has been an increase in complaints relating to 'external agency issues' (from 7 to 18), 'customer care/communications' (from 13 to 20) and 'changes in service provision' (from 2 to 8) from the previous year. Whilst there has been a slight increase in these areas, no particular service area, team or individuals have been highlighted as a concern.

	Number of complaints received	Complaints Upheld / Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Withdrawn / Ongoing
2023/2024	63	36	23	4
2024/2025	92	55	34	3

4.2 During the period 2024/2025 the number of complaints upheld/partially upheld has shown an increase from the previous year 2023/2024. 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 The report has highlighted either a slight decrease or consistent numbers from previous years in complaints in some service areas. However, an increase has been highlighted in the following service areas: -

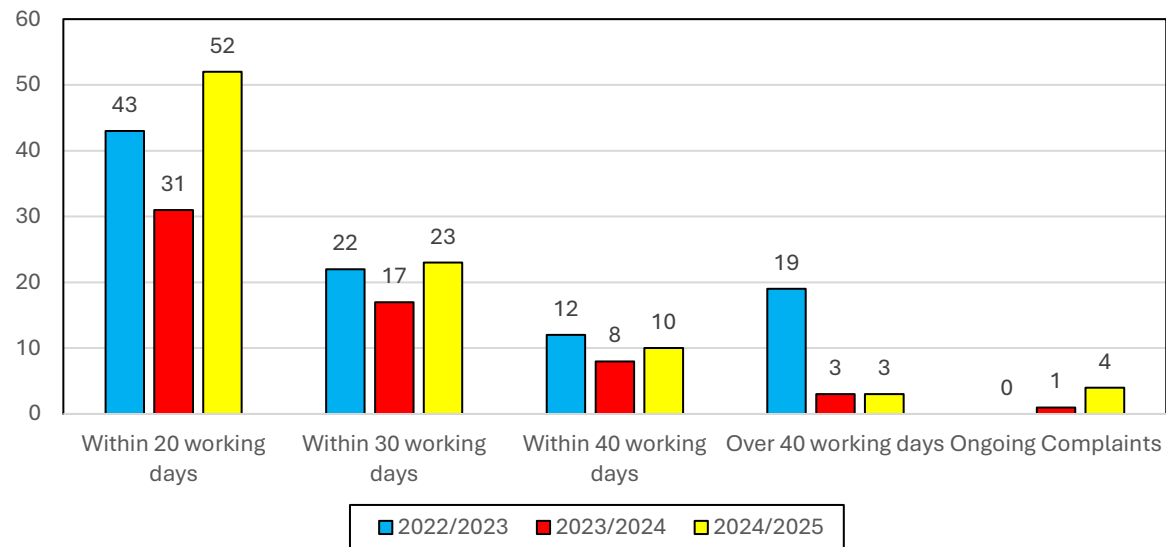
5.2 Community Commissioning Team (16-09-19). The Community Commissioning Team have implemented a new complaints and quality assurance process with an increase focus on proactively gaining feedback from users of services. The increase in complaints was therefore expected and with 2,611 people in receipt of packages of care the proportion of complaints still remains relatively low at 0.73%.

5.3 Reviewing Team (04-01-11). This increase is largely due to the expansion of the team and the increased volume of reviews being carried out. As well as increased focus on applying strength-based practice and reversing previous oversubscription of care allocation.

5.4 Bury East INT (11-07-15). Bury East INT have been successfully utilising a strength-based approach in the assessment process and working with the seven steps to support planning which is based on needs. It was expected that this would result in an increase in formal complaints.

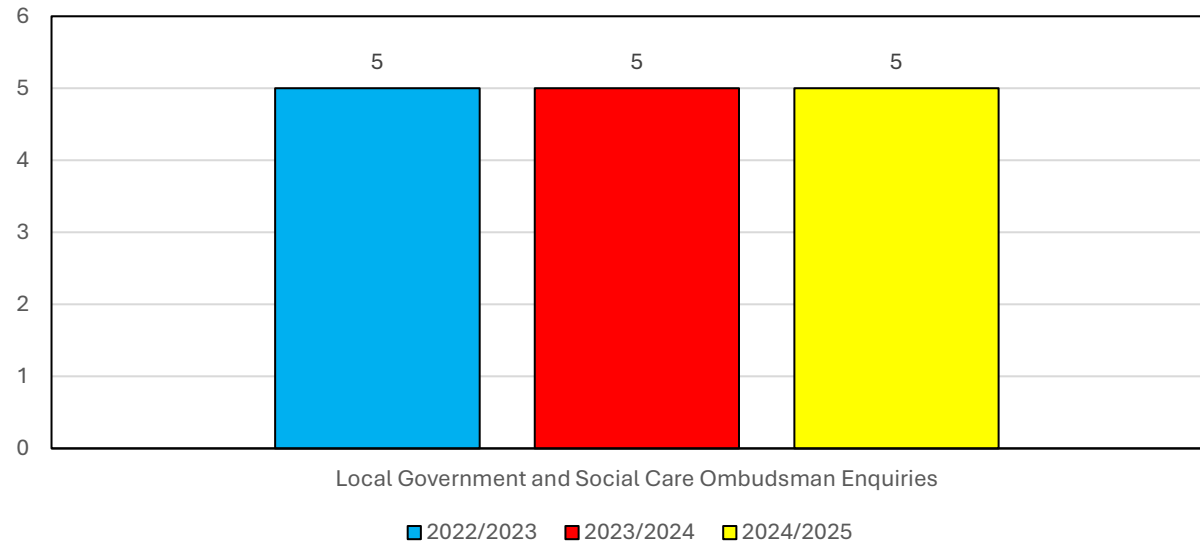
5.5 Adult Safeguarding Team (02-04-08). 4 out of the 8 complaints received are from two individuals which have long standing safeguarding concerns, including a court of protection case. Given the nature of the service, and the potential for family to not agree with outcomes for the individual this level of complaints is not usual and shows an increase knowledge and awareness in the safeguarding team to appropriately challenge family and advocates for the individuals themselves.

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, 3rd 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 2024/25, 57% of the complaints received were responded to within the 20 working day timescales, 25% of complaints were responded to outside of the 20 working day timescales, 11% 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 that over half of the complaints received were responded to within 20 working days, which remains consistent with the previous year.

7.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN



- 7.1 The number of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has been consistent and remained as the previous years of 5 cases in 2024/2025.
- 7.2 Of the five cases received by LGSCO, 2 cases were classed as premature complaints, 2 cases were closed on initial enquiry as there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council and 1 case remains ongoing.

8.0 COMPLIMENTS

Total number of Compliments received 2023/2024	Total number of Compliments received 2024/2025
826	850

Service Area	2023/2024	2024/2025
Integrated Hospital Discharge/Discharge to Assess Team	3	5
Choices for Living Well Intermediate Care, Reablement, Killelea, IMC @ Home	246	246
Sheltered Housing / Carelink / Support at Home	69	1
Integrated Community Equipment Services	63	15
Learning Disability Team	3	1
Older People's Community Mental Health Team	2	3
CAD Hub/Connect & Direct	11	7
Adult Social Care Financial Support Service	25	15
Hospital at Home/Rapid Response Team	86	68
Disability Services	23	0
Older Peoples Staying Well Team	368	383
Prestwich INT	7	4
Whitefield INT	8	2
Bury East INT	2	2
Bury North INT	1	4
Bury West INT	0	1
Community Commissioning Team	2	60
Reviewing Team	20	27
Safeguarding Team	1	1
Community Mental Health Team	0	4
Bury EST	0	1

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

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 Compliments continue to remain high, especially from front line services. 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 – Killelea IMC & Reablement

"I just wanted to email you to thank you, your wonderful service and fabulous staff for the care and support provided to my mum during her time at Killelea and Reablement. I have always known Choices for Living Well is an excellent service, but after my mum's fall, I got to see for myself the facilities at Killelea, starting with always receiving a warm welcome from those on the reception desk. The rooms were spotless, homely (not clinical), the care staff were patient, friendly and always treated my mum with kindness and encouragement. When she arrived at Killelea I wondered what mobility she'd regain, but with the support from

the physios, OT's and care staff and with her own determination to be independent, she made huge progress. As a family we feel if she had not gone to Killelea her recovery would have taken much longer. Once home and with the additional support of the Reablement carers, mum has continued to improve to the point she is now back living independently, something a few weeks back seemed unlikely. On behalf of my mum and my family thank you all so much."

➤ **Bury West INT**

"He is my mother in laws allocated social worker. He has been extremely proactive from his first assessment with her, which was difficult due to her suffering with Alzheimer's, he was patient, kind and thorough. Things quickly escalated following her husband suddenly being admitted to hospital, he supported us in finding and securing emergency respite care for her. He has been in constant communication with me which has been a really good support for me at this difficult and emotional time. I fully appreciate his case load and lack of resources within social care, but he has been outstanding in his role."

➤ **Adult Safeguarding Team**

"Wow, what a fantastic response from your team and in particular yourself, to my hugely complex and upsetting correspondence over the phone in the past few days. If you could pass on to your employers my direct thanks for your kindness and empathy towards my father. In this, his time of need, I've been fighting against the tide of dementia and circumstances to get him to recognise his position and accept help. What you did today for us as a family shouldn't go unheralded. Thank you so much. I found everyone I spoke with to be hugely professional and both offering advice, a kind ear and impartiality. I hope now dad will allow himself to accept the kindness and professional help he requires and deserves. My faith in your services is certainly very high as a result of your actions in the past few days. Thanks for being there for dad."

➤ **Bury North INT**

"We just wanted to express our gratitude to you for all of your help. Your level of experience shone through from the start. You quickly grasped the severity of our situation and made the necessary arrangements to optimise his health, have a much-needed bed-based assessment over a period of time, with a view to determining what type of professional care and equipment is needed within the home. We think you helping to secure this referral will make all of our lives safer and more fulfilling. Warmest wishes"

➤ **Rapid Response Team/Hospital at Home**

"We were so grateful for the way the carers and the Rapid Response Team coped with the difficulties over the first couple of weeks. The carers went way beyond what was expected of them, and the Rapid Response Team were there to provide the equipment and support as needed. Without doubt she would have needed to be re-admitted but for their assistance."

➤ **Older Peoples Staying Well Team**

"She went out to see him and from the first telephone call she managed to get him to engage and really went slowly with him, he didn't need a lot of input, but he did need someone other than family to listen to him. Honestly he's so stubborn so we didn't expect much engagement and she may think she didn't do a lot but she has managed to do more than any of us and not only did he engage with her but thanks to her time and patience she not only managed to arrange a GP appointment which is a miracle in its self but he agreed to it and engaged with the GP and has been several times since and agreed to an onward referral. Honestly, we are all so grateful and can't thank her enough, she instinctively seemed to know how best to approach it and was very patient with him".

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

It's something that can be said for Bury; the social workers are great. You have been with my dad every step of the way and spent time getting to know him and I am thankful for that.

➤ **Integrated Hospital Discharge Team**

"She has been helping my mum to get sorted over the last couple of weeks whilst she has been in Fairfield. I live 3 hours away and I'm her only child so it has not been easy, but she has kept me informed at all times she has been patient and has done everything in her power to get things done efficiently and I would just like to personally thank her nothing has been too much trouble. She really does go above & beyond. Thank you."

➤ **CAD Hub**

"My Aunt rang last week as she is really struggling to manage her caring role for my uncle who has dementia. She herself has failing health and I've tried to encourage her to ring a few times, but she was scared of a social worker getting involved (old fashioned view of SS). Anyway, she rang last week and as a full payer didn't expect to get much help. She said the service she received from CAD was outstanding. They were kind, compassionate and really knowledgeable and helpful. They explained her options both as a carer and for my uncle. They referred her to a social worker who in turn rang the same day and arranged for my uncle to go into Grundy Day Care Centre to give her respite. Please pass on my thanks and well done to your team".

➤ **Reviewing Team**

"Thank you so much for all your hard work and effort on mum's behalf in this matter. I can't express how much of a concern this has all been for mum and the rest of the family, and consequently how much relief your latest email has brought - we are all very grateful that the matter has been resolved. Finally, on a slightly more personal note, please let me express my admiration and gratitude to you for the respectful, polite and patient manner with which you have conducted this review. Thank you once again for your help, time and professionalism".

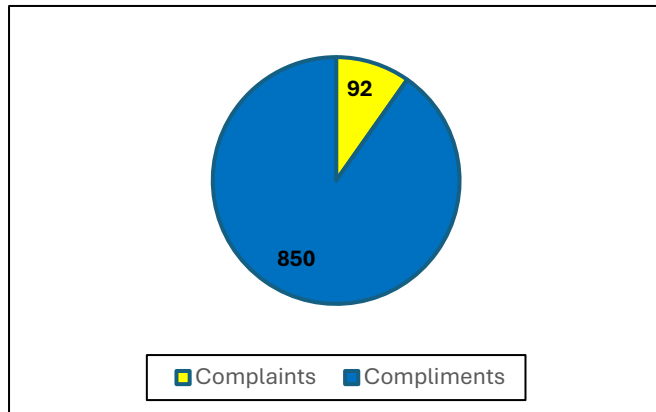
9.0 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 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:

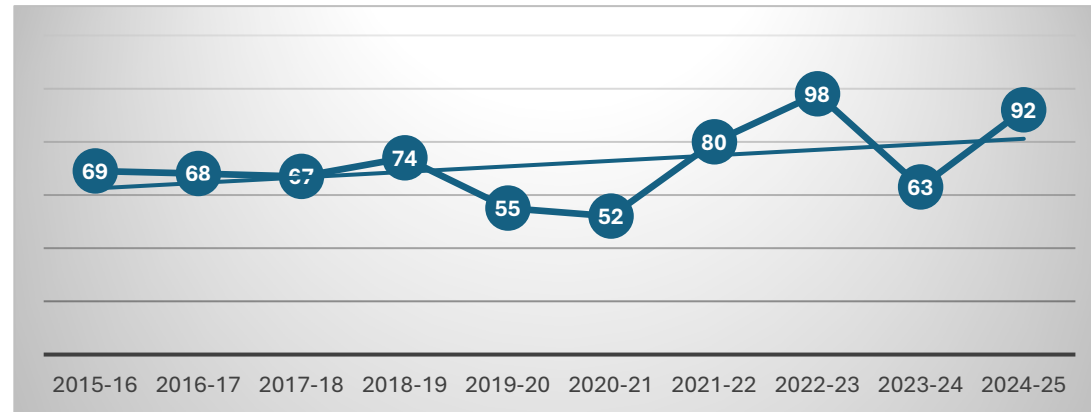
Complaint	Lessons Learnt
Incorrectly charged for convalescence care following discharge from hospital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A meeting is to be arranged between senior management to reaffirm discharge pathways to ensure relevant legislation is being adhered to, and to also ensure this does not reoccur.• Team Managers to strengthen the learning on discharge processes with members of the team.
Changes to customer communication pathway following a complaint relating to incorrect financial charging information provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holding responses must be made to the customer after 48 hours if a query is complex. Customers must be kept informed so they know we are trying to resolve their query and that they can expect a call back from us when we have the information for them.• Escalation to Team Leaders must be made if there are difficulties with casework or obstacles staff can't resolve.• Caseload management. The finance officer has had some inputs from Team Leader on how they might better manage the outstanding query tray. This is to ensure that queries are not lost sight of in the myriad of calls and queries received each week.• Better Communications need to be established between Financial Assessment Team and Social Work Teams, when it is unclear regarding charges.
Commissioning processes unclear	Plan to publish updated Commissioning Intentions and Market Position Statements on Bury Council's website articulating strategic direction and future commissioning opportunities including the processes to be followed. We will take the opportunity to share this with all providers via our provider forums and all our Social Work Teams internally to ensure clear communication going forward.
Reablement Services ceasing	We will be reviewing our current processes to ensure that in incidents like this there is enough notice given to enable families to seek alternative support
Fraudulent data logging	Quality Assurance review process has been refreshed to include unannounced spot checks of care at home provider visits. Care at home framework is being retendered with introduction of NFC technology to accurately record entry and exit times, to stop fraudulent data being submitted.

10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Complaint / Compliment Comparison 2024-2025



Ten Year Complaint Comparison 2015 – 2025



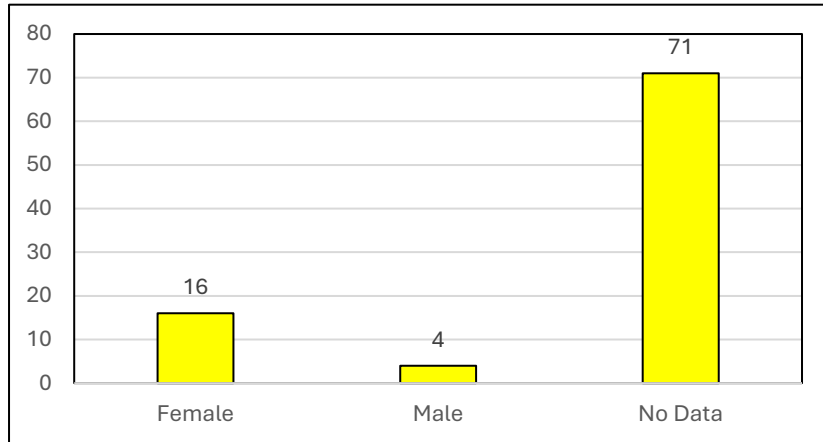
10.1 Although 2024/2025 showed an increase in complaints, this can be explained by the increase in service demand as detailed below:

	23/24	24/25
the number of people who had direct contact with Adult Social Care	8343	9034
the number of people to have assessments	2678	2786
the number of people to have reviews	1789	2554

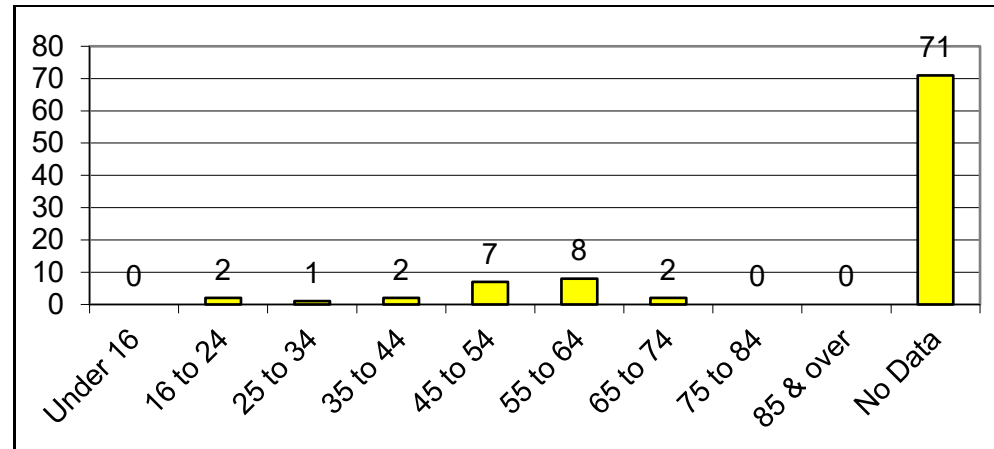
- 10.2 Despite this increase on service demand with 9,034 people having direct contact with Adult Social Care Services during 2024/2025, the number / proportion of complaints received remains remarkably low at 92.
- 10.3 Positively, only five cases escalated to the LGSCO out of 92 complaints. All 5 cases the LGSCO made the decision either to not investigate as they were unlikely to find fault, or the complaint was premature.
- 10.4 The Council will continue to seek to learn from complaints, concerns and compliments raised with them. 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

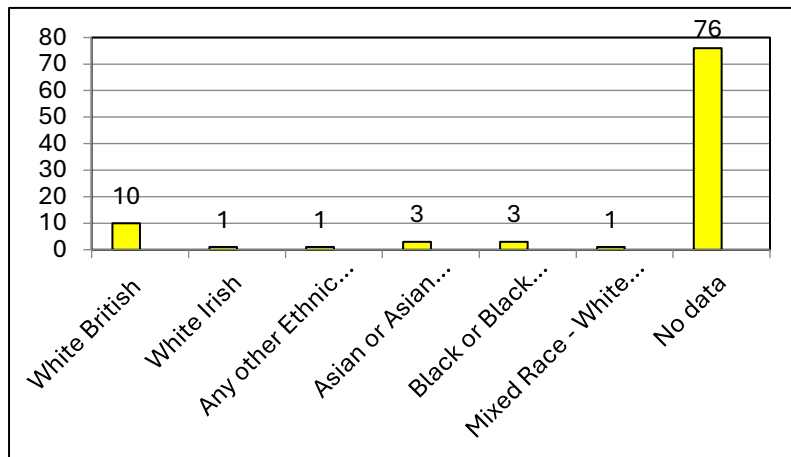
11.1 GENDER



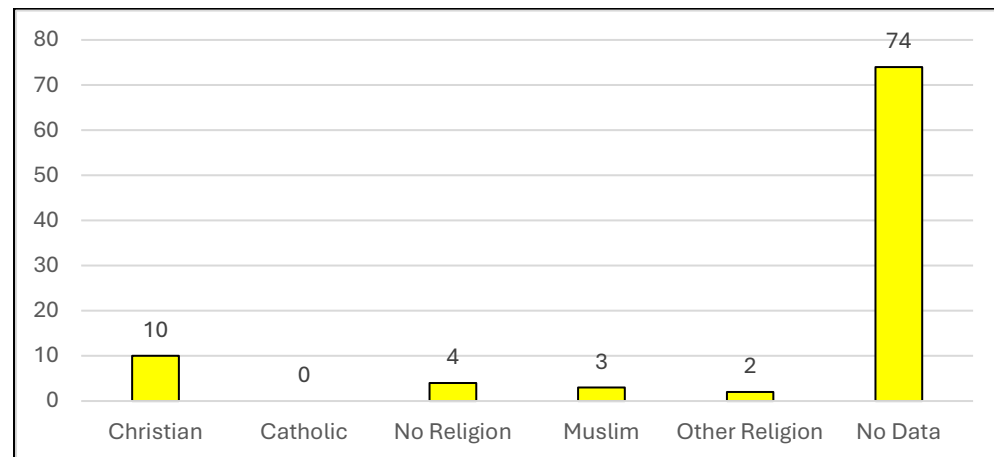
11.2 AGE



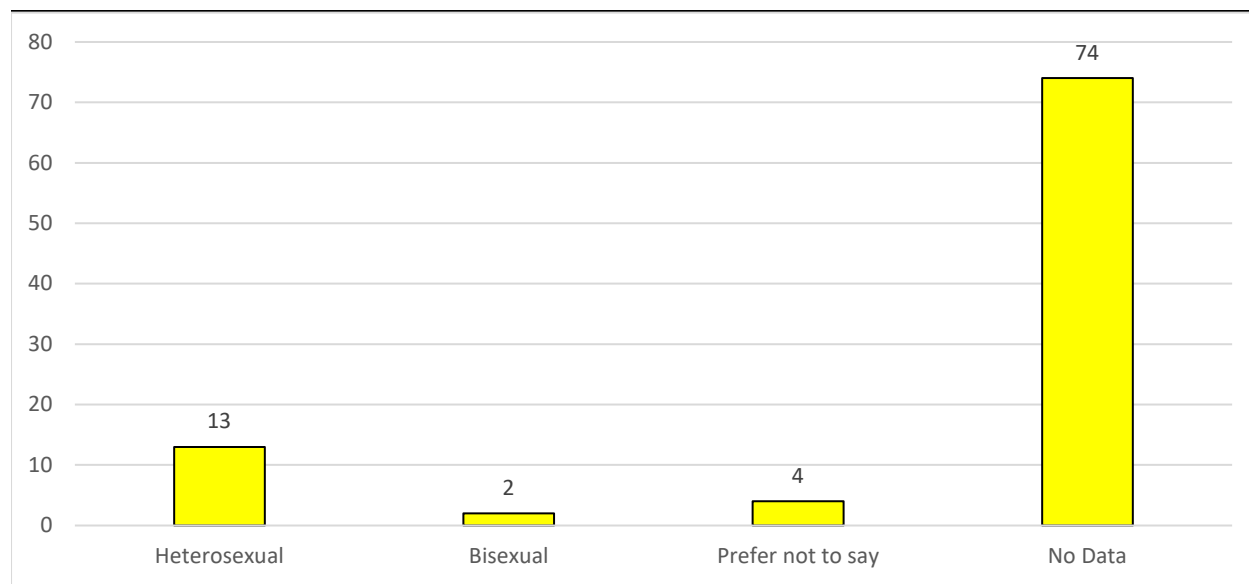
11.3 ETHNICITY



11.4 RELIGION



11.5 SEXUAL ORIENTATION



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

As part of our ongoing commitment to learning and improving our services, the Policy Compliance Team has implemented a change to the complaints submission process. Equality Monitoring questions on the complaint form are now mandatory, with complainants required to either provide responses or select “Prefer not to say” in order to proceed. This adjustment aims to ensure more consistent and comprehensive data collection, enabling us to gain clearer insights into the demographics of those engaging with our complaints process. It is hoped that this will significantly enhance the quality of our reporting and support more decision making in future complaints analysis.