

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO :	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	15 September 2015
SUBJECT :	Annual Report – ‘Listening and Learning from Complaints’
PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):	Cllr. Aled Morris Jones
REPORT AUTHOR: Tel: E-mail:	Sophie Shanahan / Gareth Llwyd 01248 752717 / 01248 752708 slsss@anglesey.gov.uk / gllss@anglesey.gov.uk

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

R1- To note the nature of the complaints received during 2014/15 regarding the services provided by the Social Services Department.

R2- To note the performance of the Social Services Department in implementing the Representations and Complaints Procedure and dealing with complaints.

R3- To note the Action Plan for developing the arrangements for dealing effectively with representations and complaints received from service users and their representatives.

2.0 REASONS

2.1 Social Services operate a statutory Representations and Complaints Procedure in Wales. Until August 2014, this was in accordance with the ‘Listening and Learning’ regulations and guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2006; from 01/08/2014, these have been superseded by new regulations and guidance from Welsh Government, ‘Making Things Better’. There is an obligation to produce an Annual Report on the operation of the Representations and Complaints Procedure and present it to the relevant Local Authority Scrutiny Committee to monitor the arrangements for dealing effectively with complaints received from service users and their representatives.

2.2 It is considered vital that a record is kept of comments and complaints in order for the Social Services Department to learn lessons from them, as part of improving service delivery. It is considered good practice to share the annual complaints report with council members to ensure transparency.

Author: Sophie Shanahan
Job Title: Customer Care Development and Complaints Officer, Social Services
Department
Date: May 2015

APPENDIX 1- Annual Report: 'Listening and Learning from Complaints'

APPENDIX 2- Action Plan 2015/16



COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

‘Listening and Learning from Complaints’

SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

ANNUAL REPORT - 2014/15

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report refers to the way the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure was implemented within the Children's and Adult Services during the period from April 2014 until the end of March 2015.
- 1.2 The Complaints and Customer Care Development Officer located within the Community Department was responsible for the Representations and Complaints Procedure during this reporting period. The Complaints Officer is accountable to the Director of Community and is managed and supervised on a daily basis by the Service Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.
- 1.3 The Complaints Officer is responsible for:
- Managing the procedure for recording complaints and positive and negative comments from service users and their representatives;
 - Monitoring the response to complaints within timescales specified in the Welsh Government guidance for dealing with complaints under Stage 1;
 - Co-ordinating investigations by independent investigation officers into formal complaints under Stage 2 of the procedure;
 - Ensuring that a formal written response together with a copy of the independent investigation report is sent to the complainant within the timescale of 25 working days under Stage 2 of the procedure, keeping the complainant informed if any delay to the timescale is anticipated;
 - Co-ordinating responses by the Department into inquiries held by the Office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales into complaints in relation to Social Services matters;
 - Ensuring that lessons are learnt from the process of investigating complaints in order to improve the quality of the services that are provided, standards of practice and departmental protocols and policies;
 - Monitoring, appraising and developing the internal Representations and Complaints Procedure regarding services for children and families and services for adults;
 - Ensuring that information is available in order to facilitate access to the Representations and Complaints Procedure for service users and their representatives in accordance with the regulations and guidance;
 - Providing training and support to promote better understanding of the function of the Representations and Complaints Procedure amongst staff at every level within the Department.
- 1.4 The main objective of these arrangements is to:
- Record any comments, be they negative or positive, about the services provided in response to the needs of our service users;
 - Attempt to deal with comments and complaints from service users and other eligible people as near as possible to the point of delivery of the services in order to avoid escalation, wherever possible, to a full official investigation under Stage 2 of the Guidance;

- Provide an opportunity for service users and other eligible people to present formal complaints regarding services provided by the Department and receive a formal response from the Director within the prescribed timescales.

2. Representations – Positive and Negative Comments

2.1 Positive Comments

2.1.1 A total of 110 positive comments were recorded during the year (33 for Children’s Services, 77 for Adult Services), which is higher than the previous year’s total of 34 (12 for Children’s Services, 22 for Adult Services in 2013/14). It is likely that part of this increase is due to the increased awareness of staff that they should record positive comments and forward them to the Complaints Officer. Of the 33 positive comments received by Children’s Services in 2014/15, 22 were from colleagues, while 11 were from service users, their representatives or family members, or foster carers. All the positive comments received by Adult Services were from service users or their family members. The 110 positive comments were categorised as follows:

Table 1

POSITIVE COMMENTS			
Children’s Services		Adults’ Services	
LAC Team	2	Residential Care	54
Admin Team	1	Home Care	17
Family Intervention Team	13	Adults North Team	4
Duty Team	6	Physical Disabilities Team	1
Child Placement Team	9	Admin Team	1
Management	1		
Other	1		
Total	33	Total	77

2.1.2 Examples of positive comments received are as follows:

“We really appreciate your excellent support and understanding” – **Child Placement Team**

“[The social worker] has been absolutely brilliant since he started on the case” – **Family Intervention Team**

"You have really excelled yourself this time! I loved it all, lots of info and also light touches (loved creative corner)... so useful" – **Child Placement Team (regarding foster carers' newsletter)**

"The way the young person was treated by you as the Chair of the meeting, with acceptance and inclusion contributed to their engagement" – **Children's Duty Team**

"An excellent piece of social work with clear communication lines being used appropriately with all relevant agencies in the best interest of the child" – **LAC Team**

"I would like to say how grateful I am to the carer for her prompt actions and quick thinking and would like to commend her for the way she carried out her duties" – **Môn Care**

"Very many thanks for the wonderful care and attention I have received since my discharge from hospital" – **Môn Care**

"Thanks for all the friendliness and support you showed to us as a family" – **Brwynog**

"I would like to thank you for being so kind to me during my stay. The food was lovely and I had fun with the staff." – **Garreglwyd**

"The social worker advised us of the support available, obtained urgent help from the re-ablement service and ensured that my relative avoided an unnecessary hospital stay... I cannot commend her highly enough for her kindness, professionalism and ability to get things moving." – **Adults North**

2.2 Negative Comments

- 2.2.1 A total of 30 negative comments / concerns were received by the Complaints Officer during the year: 16 for Children's Services and 14 for Adult Services. This is again an increase on those recorded the previous year (13 negative comments: 5 for Children's Services and 8 for Adult Services in 2013/14). This increase is again likely to be partially due to increased awareness by staff that they should forward a record of concerns / negative comments received to the Complaints Officer. Another factor relevant to the increase in concerns recorded at this level is that there were fewer complaints logged under Stage 1 this year. This suggests that an increased proportion of concerns received were resolved speedily so as not to require consideration under Stage 1; if a complaint can be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction within 24 hours, it is logged as a concern rather than a Stage 1 complaint. Some of the concerns were dealt with via other processes, as appropriate, e.g. Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) / Contract Compliance. When concerns from members of the public who are not eligible to complain under the Social Services Complaints Procedure are received, they are still

investigated via an appropriate process. The 30 negative comments were categorised as follows:

Table 2

NEGATIVE COMMENTS			
Children's Services		Adults' Services	
Duty Team	3	Physical Disabilities	1
Specialist Children's Services	1	Learning Disabilities	2
Family Intervention Team	3	Residential Care	1
LAC Team	5	Adults North Team	3
Child Placement Team	1	Home Care	3
Support Work Team	1	Management	2
Management	1	Duty Team	1
Other	1	Admin Team	1
Total	16	Total	14

3. Stage 1 Complaints – Local Resolution

3.1 Table 3 below summarises the number of complaints received over the last seven years concerning the Adult and Children's Services under Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the Representations and Complaints Procedure. To put these figures into perspective, Table 4 shows statistics relating to services provided by Children's Services, and Table 5 shows statistics for the services provided by Adult Services in 2014-15.

Table 3

Year	Stage 1 Adults	Stage 1 Children	Stage 1 Total	Stage 2 Adults	Stage 2 Children	Stage 2 Total	Stage 3 Adults	Stage 3 Children	Stage 3 Total
2008/09	45	13	58	2	0	2	1	0	1
2009/10	29	23	52	4	1	5	1	0	1
2010/11	37	20	57	1	2	3	0	0	0
2011/12	25	40	65	3	4	7	0	0	0
2012/13	32	24	56	2	4	6	2	3	5
2013/14	24	26	50	5	6	11	0	0	0
2014/15	17	20	37	2	5	7	1	0	1

Table 4

Children's Services 2014-15	
No. of Children in Need on 31 March	234

No. of Looked After Children on 31 March	91
No. of children placed on the Register during the year	77
Contacts received during the year	3681
Of the above contacts, number which became Referrals	1627
Total number of Police Contacts/Referrals	2120
Initial Assessments completed	535
Core Assessments completed	110

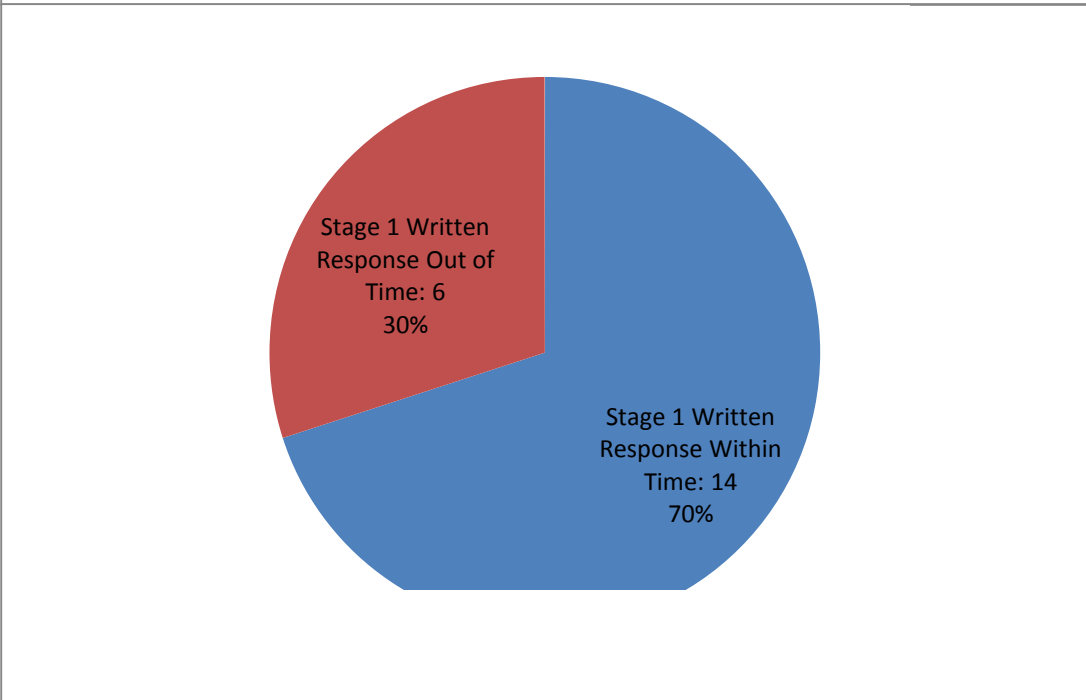
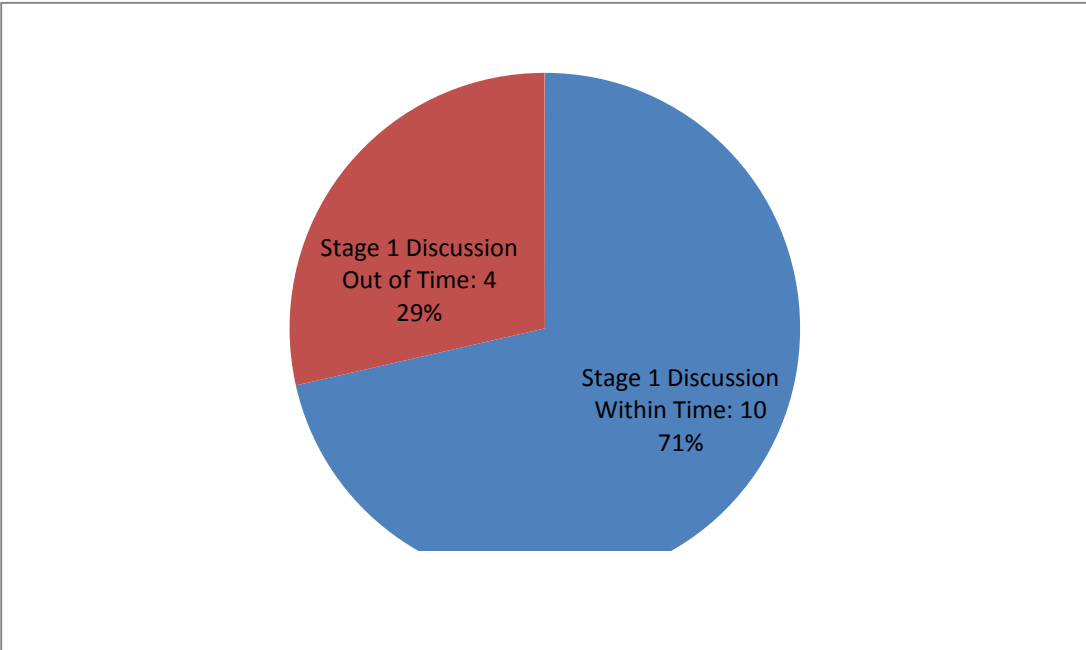
Table 5

Adult Services 2014-15	
No of adults receiving a service on 31 March	1,708
New care plans completed (Both Domiciliary and Residential Care)	969
New carers' assessments undertaken	521
People provided with a Direct Payment	56
Hours of domiciliary care commissioned	247,073
People provided with residential/nursing home care	659
Reviews undertaken	971
People provided with assistive technology	412
People provided with equipment to assist with activities of daily living	478
People provided with equipment to assist with major or minor housing adaptations	225
People provided with a re-ablement service	500

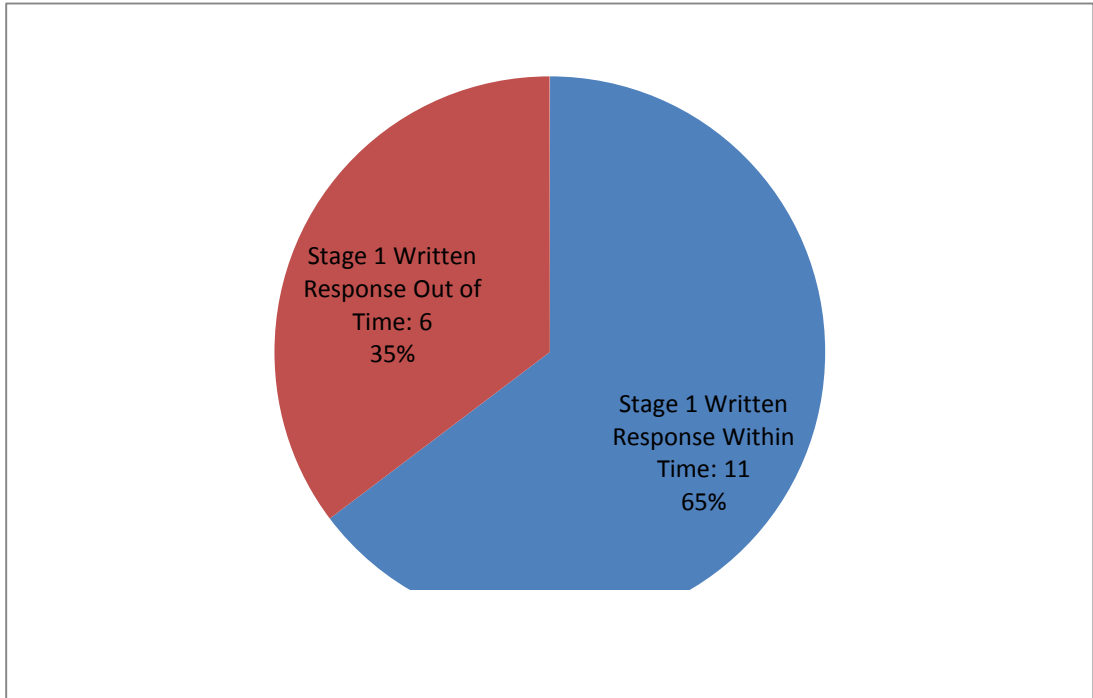
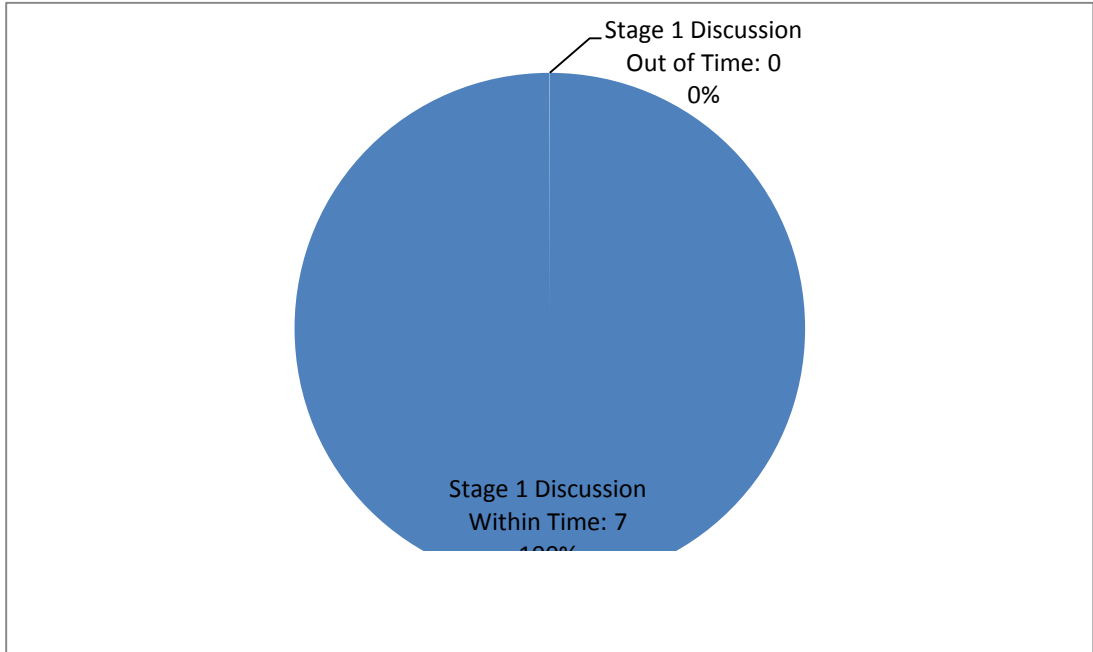
3.2.1 Table 3 shows that the number of complaints recorded under Stage 1 of the Procedure has decreased compared with the previous year, and also that the number of complaints escalated to Stage 2 of the Procedure has decreased, particularly for Adult Services. We continue to put emphasis on resolving complaints as quickly as possible to avoid escalation. In addition to these concerns, 7 complaints to Children's Services and 3 complaints to Adult Services were responded to under the council's Corporate Complaints Procedure in 2014-15 due to the complaint not being eligible for consideration under the Social Services procedure (e.g. because the complaint was from an agency, rather than a service user); an increase on the previous year. The decrease in Stage 2 investigations suggests that proactive attempts to resolve concerns, and the Stage 1 complaint meetings/discussions offered under the new complaints procedure, are helping to resolve complaints at an earlier stage. Additional meetings are sometimes offered to complainants who are unhappy following receipt of the Stage 1 response, in order to attempt to resolve issues without escalation to Stage 2.

3.2.2 The Pie Charts below illustrate the Department's performance in relation to responding to Stage 1 Complaints within statutory timescales. From August 2014, under the new procedure, complainants have been offered meetings / telephone discussions within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, followed by a response letter to confirm the terms of the resolution of their complaint within 5 working days of the discussion.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES



ADULT SERVICES



3.2.3 The above figures show an improvement in the proportion of complaints which received a written response within timescale compared to the previous year (54% of written responses were within time for Children’s Services and 58% for Adult Services in 2013-2014).

3.2.4 Table 6 illustrates a breakdown of the service areas for complaints received under Stage 1 of the Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure in Children’s and Adult Services.

Table 6

STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS			
Children's Services		Adults' Services	
Duty Team	3	Physical Disabilities	2
Support Work Team	2	Learning Disabilities	2
Family Intervention Team	7	Adults South Team	2
LAC Team	4	Adults North Team	5
Child Placement Team	4	Community Support Services	3
Specialist Children's Services	0	Client Finance	3
Integrated Family Support Service	0	Duty / Administration	0
Administration Team	0		
Total	20	Total	17

3.4 An analysis of the nature of the complaints to Children's Services shows that the complaints were mainly concerning:

- Inadequate or insensitive communication;
- Inaccurate information recorded;
- Dissatisfaction with the actions or attitude of Social Work staff, including perceived bias;
- Concerns about the manner or actions of support workers;
- Insufficient investigation or intervention;
- Appointments cancelled without prior notice;
- Dissatisfaction with contact arrangements;
- Insufficient support during the adoption process;
- Dissatisfaction with the organisation of the fostering assessment processes;
- Issues relating to compliance with court orders.

3.5 Within Adult Services, the complaints were mainly concerning:

- Dissatisfaction with service users being placed in accommodation perceived as inappropriate;
- Insufficient consultation with families in relation to accommodation;
- Withdrawal of reablement service, or reablement offered rather than usual care package;
- Communication issues regarding Deprivation of Liberty or DOLS assessments;
- Dissatisfaction with home care visits, including the times of visits offered, adherence to care plans and missed calls;
- Insufficient communication with family members of service users.

4. Formal Complaints (Stage 2) Overview

- 4.1.1 Stage 2 of the Procedure requires an investigation by an Independent Investigating Officer. Although every effort is made to resolve complaints at Stage 1, there are occasions when this cannot be achieved, especially with more complex cases or when the complainant has insisted on going forward to Stage 2. Complainants have the right to bypass Stage 1 and request formal consideration under Stage 2 should they so wish.
- 4.1.2 During the year, a total of 7 complaints were registered under Stage 2, a decrease compared to 11 during 2013/14. 5 of the complaints investigated under Stage 2 in 2014/15 had been responded to previously under Stage 1. The other 2 complaints went straight to Stage 2 because the complainant requested this.
- 4.1.3 Only 2 of the 7 Stage 2 investigations completed during the year were completed within the 25 working day timescale; however, none of the responses were significantly delayed, with the longest time taken to complete the process being 35 working days. The new regulations place greater emphasis on completing the Stage 2 process within timescale, and so investigators are now requested to present their report to the Department within 20 working days.
- 4.1.4 Action Plans are created following Stage 2 investigations. Stage 2 investigations into complaints to Children’s Services now involve discussion with the Independent Person regarding the contents of the Action Plans. These are signed off by the Head of Service and are then monitored on a monthly basis until all the actions are completed.

4.2 Children’s Services

- 4.2.3 During 2014/15, five complaints to Children’s Services were registered under Stage 2 of the Procedure. Investigations by Independent Investigating Officers were arranged with an Independent Person supervising the fairness and equity of the inquiry. Table 7 examines the five complaints in more detail:

Table 7

NUMBER / CATEGORY	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
STAGE 2 CS016 Children	Complaint regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign language needs influenced the approach that the designated social worker used, which was inconsiderate and lacking in kindness and consideration 	The Independent Investigating Officer upheld 7 points of complaint, but did not uphold 1 point of complaint LESSONS LEARNED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full translations of minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No written copy or clear explanation of the procedures and Statutes involved in the holding of a Child Protection Case Conference • Records of the Child Protection meetings were not provided in the language requested • Decisions and judgements were based on incorrect factual information shared between the involved agencies • Meeting did not take place as arranged, without an apology being given • Insensitive communication with child • Social worker claimed not to be aware of contact details which were available on file • Designated social worker held mistaken belief about family member 	<p>to be provided to families not fluent in Welsh/English, on request</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written information regarding Case Conferences to be provided to parents prior to Initial Case Conference • Service users to be informed in advance if meetings are to be cancelled • Social workers to ensure that names of service users on case records are accurate
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>CS017</p> <p>Children</p>	<p>Complaint regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untrue statements written as if they were fact, and assessments based upon these untrue statements • Social worker had a bias towards a family member • Meetings held without complainant's knowledge • Investigation based on hearsay used against complainant • Social worker suggested a 'Caring Dads' course without basis • Inaccurate information contained in Social Services files • Refusal to change the social worker tasked with writing a Court Report 	<p>The Independent Investigator partially upheld 2 points of complaint, did not uphold 2 points of complaint and decided that no decision was appropriate for 3 point of complaint</p> <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to be careful to use objective language in recording • Staff to clearly record the source of all information placed on file • When a serious unsubstantiated allegation is found to have been recorded, a check should be made with the police to confirm whether the information is correct, and the outcome recorded

<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>CS018 Children</p>	<p>Complaint regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children had very little Life Story Work with no informative preparation for Adoption • Lack of previous medical and healthcare information provided to adoptive parents • Concerns regarding additional support at school ignored by Social Services staff • Inadequate communication from Social Services staff throughout the whole adoption process, with calls not being returned • Inadequate support in applying for Adoption Allowance • Inadequate communication from Social Services to other Departments, particularly Education 	<p>The Independent Investigator upheld 4 points of complaint but did not uphold 2 points of complaint</p> <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to ensure that surnames for service users are changed on RAISE when necessary, e.g. when they are placed following Adoption • Financial process in relation to making Adoption Allowance payments to be clarified to avoid delays • Procedure needed for escalation of differences between IOACC staff and NWS staff • Identify staff with a particular interest in adoption and enhance their skills • If a child is adopted and placed in another county, liaison needs to take place with other Local Authority to provide clarity regarding responsibility for children's needs • Provision of information to adoptive parents, including medical information, to be timely and not unduly delayed by Data Protection concerns
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>CS019 Children</p>	<p>Complaint regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker sent a letter which was worded in an inappropriate and insensitive manner, without proper consultation • Insufficient support from Social Services provided to challenge the Housing 	<p>The Independent Investigator upheld 4 points of complaint and partially upheld 2 points of complaint.</p> <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to be clear regarding their responsibilities under Family Assistance Orders

	<p>Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker reacted swiftly in stopping parent's visits with child • Social worker did not keep family member informed of the process the complainant was going through • Social worker failed to supervise and support a contact order • Social worker suggested a monthly update from the Substance Misuse Service, which was unattainable due to confidentiality issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social work staff to inform their line managers if their workload is preventing them from complying with court orders • Team managers to support social workers who are struggling with their caseloads, and clearly record actions taken to manage this in supervision notes • Sensitivity needed in wording of letters to family members, particularly when animosity already exists • Case notes to be contemporaneous and clear • If parts of court orders prove impossible to comply with, court to be advised
<p>STAGE 2</p> <p>CS020</p> <p>Children</p>	<p>Complaint regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's wishes and feelings not discussed at their LAC Reviews, and their booklets not present • Parent's wishes and feelings not discussed at LAC Reviews • Parent's consultation paper not read before LAC Reviews or discussed in them • Children should not have been present for the whole duration of the LAC Reviews • Non-compliance with court order in respect of ensuring children receive therapy • Non-compliance with court order in respect of transferring allocated contacts to other family members 	<p>The Independent Investigator upheld 2 points of complaint, partially upheld 3 points of complaint and did not uphold 2 points of complaint.</p> <p>LESSONS LEARNED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify plans for Looked After Children to parents in unambiguous terms • Ensure that case files have chronologies of significant events, including placement details • Ensure LAC Reviews include discussion of wishes and feelings of parents and children • Explore whether documentation prepared for LAC Reviews should be shared with attendees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-compliance with court order in respect of increasing contact 	
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4.3 Adult Services

4.3.3 During 2014/15, two complaints were received under Stage 2 of the Procedure. Table 8 below examines the two complaints in more detail:

Table 8

NUMBER / CATEGORY	NATURE OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
STAGE 2 OP005 Adults	Complaint regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family not informed of criteria for EMI nursing • Telephone calls to Social Services not returned • Family's considerations ignored by Social Services • Family told that service user didn't stand a chance of being moved to a local home • Stage 1 letter contained no apology 	The Independent Investigator partially upheld 2 points of complaint, but did not uphold 3 points of complaint. <p style="text-align: center;">LESSONS LEARNED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve appropriate family members in relation to EMI assessments • Review information provided to families regarding eligibility for residential and nursing care • Clearly agree, when communicating with families with different siblings involved, who should be the point of contact with the Department • If calls cannot be returned, families should be kept informed, and the decision documented clearly in case notes • Complaint responses to be dealt with complaints on a point-by-point basis
STAGE 2 MH004 Adults	Complaint regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service user placed within a home where service user was potentially at risk • Service user's family not 	The Independent Investigator partially upheld 1 point of complaint, but did not uphold 3 points of complaint <p style="text-align: center;">LESSONS LEARNED</p>

	<p>made aware of risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service user's family's views not listened to • Social services continuing to put service user at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reviews to be held annually and not delayed • Communication with families to adhere to communication plans and to be clearly agreed
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5. Independent Review Panel – Stage 3

- 5.1.1 Under the 'Listening and Learning' Guidance issued by Welsh Government in April 2006, a procedure was introduced for dealing with requests for an independent review under Stage 3 of the Procedure. The Welsh Assembly Government established the Independent Complaints Secretariat to ensure an independent review under Stage 3 of the Procedure. The purpose of the Independent Panels was to review the way the authority has dealt with the complaint and the response provided to the complainant by the Director.
- 5.1.2 Under the new 'Making Things Better' Guidance from Welsh Government, implemented from August 2014, the Independent Panels have been abolished. During 2014/15, 1 Stage 3 review of a complaint was conducted by the Independent Complaints Secretariat.

6. Independent Investigation Officers Panel

- 6.1 Social Services Departments for the 6 counties across North Wales conduct a Panel of Joint Officers to respond to requests for Stage 2 investigations. Continuous attempts are made to identify and recruit qualified and experienced staff to serve as independent investigation officers for the 6 counties. The North Wales Complaints Officer's Group is in the process of updating the guidance provided to Independent Investigating Officers and Independent Persons.
- 6.2 Under the provisions of the Children Act 1989, Independent Persons have to be appointed to supervise the way the Department conducts an investigation into formal complaints under Parts III and IV of the Act. Independent Persons were appointed for all the Stage 2 investigations into complaints to Children's Services during 2014/15.

7. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

- 7.1 The Ombudsman decided to conduct an enquiry into 2 complaints of maladministration to Social Services during 2014/15, both for Children's Services. One of these complaints had previously been investigated under Stage 2 of the Social Services Complaints Procedure; the other had been

investigated under the council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. The Department is awaiting the outcome of these two enquiries.

- 7.2 In addition, 2 further complaints were made to the Ombudsman during 2014/15, but the Ombudsman declined to conduct an enquiry as they judged that correct procedures had been followed.

8. Advocacy Services

- 8.1 In 2014/2015 Social Services continued to develop independent professional Advocacy Services with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) under a joint Service Level Agreement with Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council. This contract terminated at the end of March 2015, and from April 2015 independent advocacy services for children will be provided by Tros Gynnal Plant. The main focus of the service was to:

- Provide information in relation to Advocacy Services and the rights of children;
- Provide an Advocacy Service to individuals and groups of children and young people, especially Looked After Children;
- Provide feedback from children and young people about the services received from the Department;
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to present their opinions on developments within the Department;

- 8.2 The Department has a service level agreement with North Wales Advice and Advocacy Service to provide advocacy for service users with learning disabilities. Other adults may be signposted to 3rd sector organisations such as Y Bont, Mental Health Advocacy Service or Age Concern.

9. Complaints in relation to services provided jointly with the Health Board

- 9.1 There has been a Joint Protocol since 2001 that was formed to provide a framework for dealing with complaints about services provided jointly between the Health Board and the Social Services Department. In view of the new Welsh Government complaints guidance for Social Services, work has been undertaken in 2014/2015 by the North Wales Complaints Officers' Group to update this protocol. It is hoped that the updated protocol will be finalised and signed off in the first quarter of 2015/2016. No complaints received by Social Services in 2014/2015 were dealt with under this protocol.

10. Information Strategy

- 10.1 The Department regularly reviews the series of information leaflets published concerning the range of services available to support children and families and adult service users, and ensures that there is a sufficient supply to meet the demand. These leaflets are also circulated to a number of information points

on the Island in order to draw the public's attention to the services that are available. An information leaflet for children regarding the Representations and Complaints Procedure is given to all children who receive a service from Children's Services when the Initial Assessment is undertaken. It has been agreed that adult service users will be sent complaints leaflets when the initial referral is received, and adult service users are also reminded of the complaints procedure when they have their Annual Reviews. Service users and their family members are sent a copy of the complaints leaflet when complaints from them are received, along with the written acknowledgement for their complaint, within two working days of the complaint being received.

10.2 Some of the information leaflets published by the department include a reference to the Representations and Complaints Procedure and encourage service users to present feedback about the service that they receive. Information regarding the Representations and Complaints Procedure is also published on Isle of Anglesey County Council's website.

11. 2014-15 Expenditure

11.1 In maintaining and implementing the Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure under the statutory guidance, the main costs to the Department are:

- Cost of sessional work by Independent Persons appointed by the Department to oversee investigations into complaints under the Children Act 1989;
- Costs of appointing Independent Investigating Officers to undertake investigations into formal complaints received by the Department;
- Costs of attending meetings and/or training;
- Costs relating to publicity and publishing information leaflets.

11.2 Table 9 below shows the expenditure for appointing investigators and independent persons during the period 01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015 (including costs for investigations conducted during the previous financial year which was not invoiced until 2014/2015).

Table 9

Children's Services

01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015		
Service	Nature of Spend	£
Children's Services	IIO	1616.00
Children's Services	IP	865.00
Children's Services	IIO	2578.51
Children's Services	IP	583.28
Children's Services	IIO	1079.75
Children's Services	IP	379.50

Children's Services	IIO	1292.00
Children's Services	IP	970.00
Children's Services	IIO	1275.81
Children's Services	IP	451.84
Children's Services	IP	366.50
Children's Services	IIO	1050.25
TOTAL		£12,508.44

Adult Services

01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015		
Service	Nature of Spend	£
Adult Services	IIO	1045.80
Adult Services	IIO	1629.25
Adult Services	IIO	1434.75
Adult Services	IIO	1872.00
Adult Services	IIO	575.03
Adult Services	IIO	407.00
TOTAL		£6,963.83

12. Monitoring and evaluating the operation of the Complaints Procedure

- 12.1 Quarterly monitoring reports are presented to the Adult Services Management Team and Children's Services Quality Assurance Panel, which evaluate the number of complaints received against each service under each stage of the procedure and the lessons learnt from these complaints. We also monitor how effective the Department is in dealing with complaints within the required timescales in accordance with the requirements of the guidance from Welsh Government.
- 12.2 The Department sends out monitoring forms to complainants following their being sent a written response to their complaint under Stage 1 of the Procedure. This allows the Department to monitor how effective the arrangements are for dealing with complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- 12.3 During the year, the North Wales Complaints Officers Group met on a quarterly basis and the main focus of discussions was the implementation of the new Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure and the updating of relevant protocols and guidance.

13. Training

- 13.1 Training days by Albany Mediation Services, 'Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills for Managers and Social Workers', were attended by Social Services managers in October 2014 and March 2015. A conference, 'How to

Turn Public Sector Complaints into Services Improvements', was attended by the Designated Complaints Officer.

- 13.2 Written guidance was provided by the Designated Complaints Officer to managers regarding Stage 1 response letters and meetings. The Designated Complaints Officer circulated internal protocols and attended Adult and Children's Services management meetings to ensure all managers were aware of the new Social Services Representations and Complaints Procedure.

**Sophie Shanahan,
Customer Care Development and Designated Complaints Officer**

Date: May 2015

Action Plan 2015/16

Area	Action	Steps by Whom	By when
1. Strengthen the operation of the Representations and Complaints Procedure	i) Continuously ensure that all Departmental staff follow the Guidance and record positive and negative comments and complaints so that the Complaints Officer can keep accurate statistics.	Heads of Service / Service Managers / Team Managers	Ongoing
2. Deal with complaints in an effective and timely manner under Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Procedure	i) Conduct a thorough investigation of complaints at Stage 1 of the Procedure to ensure a comprehensive response in an effort to allay dissatisfaction and avoid escalation to Stage 2	Heads of Service / Service Managers / Team Managers	Ongoing
	ii) Ensure timely responses to complaints within the set timescale of 10 working days to hold a discussion with the complainant and 5 days from the discussion to send out the written response.	Heads of Service / Service Managers / Team Managers	Ongoing
	iii) Ensure timely responses to complaints within the set timescale of 25 working days under Stage 2 of the	Designated Complaints Officer	

	Procedure.		
3. Learn lessons from investigations into complaints	Form action plans in response to recommendations in investigation reports into complaints	Heads of Service / Service Managers / Designated Complaints Officer	Within 20 working days of providing the complainant with a formal written response and a copy of the investigation report
4. Provide information regarding the operation of the Representations and Complaints Procedure	i) Ensure that the information booklet on the Complaints Procedure is circulated to every child who receives a service from the Department	Team Managers	Ongoing
	ii) Distribute complaint leaflets to every Adult Services service user when referral received by the Department; remind service users of complaints procedure at Annual Reviews.	Team Managers	Ongoing
5. Provide training on the operation of the Representations and Complaints Procedure	Provide training to new Social Services staff on the Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure and Social Services Department Customer Care Standards	Designated Complaints Officer	Ongoing