

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND INCLUSION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE : 8 NOVEMBER 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview on the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure for the year 1st April 2006 - 31st March 2007.

Information is provided on the background to the Social Services Statutory Complaints Procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults Services, together with achievements for 2006/7 and future developments. The Appendix presents information in a format required by the Guidance to the Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006.

There is public interest in disclosure of this item due to it being a Statutory requirement.

1 Background

- 1.1 The statutory Complaints and Representations Procedures were established in 1991, under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Children Act 1989 respectively. The Procedures consist of a number of stages through which service-users or their carers and family can make complaints and representations to the Department, with the aim always being to resolve them as close to the point of service delivery as possible.
- 1.2 *The Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006*, which came into force on 1 September 2006 revised a number of the details of statutory complaint handling, as did the supporting 'Guidance' which also carried legal status. These changes were all successfully undertaken by the Department and are reflected in some of the content of this report. The Appendix to this report is in the format required by the Guidance.
- 1.3 The Quality Assurance Unit also continues to monitor the number and type of service enquiries made by Members of Parliament and Local Authority Elected Members on behalf of people who use services although this information does not form part of this Report.
- 1.4 As a context, over the course of the business year 2006 – 2007, the Department received;-

352.Compliments
335 Complaints

2 Objectives achieved during 2006/2007.

2.1 As detailed in the Business Plan for 2006/2007 the Quality and Assurance Unit: -

- provided relevant, accurate and timely data and analysis for Divisional, Departmental and Corporate requirements;
- continued to address the time-scales of complaints investigations at Stage Two;
- reviewed the system of recording Stage One Complaints to meet new legislative requirements;
- reviewed the system of disseminating complaint information throughout the Department;
- successfully reviewed and adapted the Complaint training schedule in light of the changed legislation;
- maintained effective communication with the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Wirral Primary Care Trust, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust and Wirral University Hospital Trust to ensure complaints presented by people using joint or allied services are appropriately addressed;
- modified all complaint handling procedures in response to the legislative changes in Complaint Procedures of September 2006;
- successfully administered the separation of Children's and Adult's Services in terms of legislative complaint procedures.

3 Objectives for 2007/2008

3.1 As detailed in the Business Plan for 2006/2007 and other areas, the Quality and Assurance Unit will: -

- Meet the Best Value Performance Indicator 8041 and ensure 100% of all Stage One complaints are responded to within 20 days;
- Revise and redistribute complaint advice literature;
- Establish formal Service Level Agreements with all internal customers;
- Work closely with Health and community partners towards delivering an effective response to consultation on the proposed merger of complaint procedures;

4 Departmental Monitoring

4.1 A summary of current complaint activity is now presented to the Departmental Management Team on a quarterly basis. A statistical report about the volume and nature of complaints, together with trend analyses accompanies this report.

- 4.2 Information about the progress of Stage One (or *Informal*) complaints responses are presented to senior operational managers of all Divisions on a weekly basis. This enables both a closer monitoring of this activity and an up-to-date awareness of the service-location of complaints.
- 4.3 Information about the progress of Political Enquiries and responses are also presented to senior operational managers of all Divisions on a weekly basis. This again enables both a closer monitoring of this activity and an up-to-date awareness of the service-location of political awareness.
- 4.4 In response to legislative requirements, the process by which changes in operational practices brought about by formal complaints can be monitored and recorded has been established.

4 Financial Implications

None arising from this Report

5 Staffing Implications

None arising from this Report

6 Equal Opportunities Implications

All service users have the right of equal access to complaint procedures and relevant data identified by statute and Corporate Policy is collected.

7 Community Safety Implications

None arising from this Report

8 Local Agenda 21 Implications

None arising from this Report

9 Planning Implications

None arising from this Report

10 Anti Poverty Implications

None arising from this Report

11 Social Inclusion Implications

None arising from this Report

12 Local Member Support Implications

None arising from this Report

13 Background Papers

NHS & Community Care Act 1990.

Children Act 1989.

The Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations
2006

14 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of this report.

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