

Adult Social Care Complaints: Overview 2007-08 (for OSOC)

1. The Adult Social Services Complaints Unit was informed of **88 complaints in 2007-08** (up to 20.03.08) at **Stage 1** of the statutory adult social services complaints procedure, compared to 102 complaints in 2006-07. These figures include complaints across the Adult Social Care Division, Learning Disability Services and local social care services in the Sussex Partnership Trust.
2. Of these, **68%** were dealt with **within** our target of **10 working days**, a further **19%** **within** the timescale for complex complaints of **20 working days**, with 13% taking longer to resolve at Stage 1.
3. Additionally **9 complaints** were accepted at **Stage 2** of the adult social services complaints procedure, under which an independent investigator is appointed, compared to 10 complaints at Stage 2 last year.
4. There have also been **3 Complaints at Stage 3** in 2007-08 which have been reviewed by an independent complaint review panel, compared to 2 complaints at Stage 3 in 2006-07.
5. Finally, there have been **2 complaints made via the Local Government Ombudsman**. One was deemed premature and directed back to the local authority, the other was looked into by the Ombudsman and recorded as a local resolution. None of the Stage 3 complaints escalated to the Ombudsman. The first was withdrawn in order to pursue legal action and the second was resolved without recourse to the Ombudsman. The third is currently concluding and may well also be resolved without recourse to the Ombudsman.
6. Key themes in complex complaints are proportionality in the implementation of the Safeguarding Adults procedure; balancing potentially conflicting viewpoints of professionals and informal carers in cases where adults no longer have mental capacity; and finally putting things right more quickly when mistakes are identified. Each complaint at Stage 2 or Stage 3 should result in an action plan identifying what learning has come out of the complaint and how that learning will be implemented in practice.
7. Note: these figures and comments are provisional pending a more intensive analysis for the annual report for senior managers.
8. Wider context: the current complaints regulations in adult social services, in effect since September 2006, are under review, along with the regulations governing complaints in the NHS. The Government intends to introduce the same simplified 2 stage complaints procedure across health and social care (excluding children's services) from April 2009. There has been a national consultation process and pilot sites include Kent and Portsmouth in the South. Further information can be found via this link:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Closedconsultations/DH_075652