



**Glasgow City Council**

**Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny  
Committee**

**Report by Chief Officer, Glasgow City Health and Social Care  
Partnership**

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**Item 3**

**16<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2021-22**

**Purpose of Report:**

To report on complaints activity for social care complaints in Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**Recommendations:**

Committee is asked to:

- a) note the content of the annual social care complaints report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No  consulted: Yes  No

## **1 Purpose of Report and Background**

- 1.1 Appendix 1, accompanying this report, gives a full analysis of complaints about social care services in the period April 2021 – March 2022 processed under the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) complaint procedure. This procedure is scheduled to be replaced by a new GCC Local Authority Complaints Handling Procedure, as directed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Complaints Standards Authority. Changes to process will however be relatively minor and this will continue to involve three stages of complaint: Stage 1: 'Front-line resolution' (timescale 5 working days that may be extended); Stage 2: formal Investigation and written response (timescale 20 working days); stage 3: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (independent review that may lead to formal investigation, decision and recommendations or to a decision not to take matters further).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present and summarise the main features of that fuller analysis across all 3 stages of complaint. An annual report will also be presented to Glasgow City IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 which covers Health and Social Care Complaints Activity.
- 1.3 Figures in the accompanying report are given separately for social work (including Homelessness) and care service complaints. These are processed within two different information systems ('C4' for social work / homelessness and 'Lagan' for most care services). It is not anticipated that these complaints will be fully integrated until both Lagan and C4 are replaced and complaints are managed across GCC under a common procedure and on a common information system. Work on this solution is ongoing at present.

## **2 Summary of Main Findings**

- 2.1 Volumes of social work complaints increased substantially in 2021-22, rising by 26% from 393 to 496. Care Services complaints, however, fell by 13% from 315 to 275.
- 2.2 There has been little change in the distribution of social work complaints proportionately between the localities. Almost all care service complaints focus on home care, with more in South locality than the other localities, but this is in line with the greater population and scope of services.
- 2.3 While the number and proportion of homelessness complaints fell in the previous year, reversing a trend of the previous three years, the number of complaints has increased slightly this year. The proportion, however, has fallen further. Continued measures to provide more emergency accommodation and reduce rough sleeping in the wake of the pandemic are likely to have been a contributory factor in the rise in preventing a more significant rise in the number of homelessness complaints.

- 2.4 Performance against timescale for stage 2 investigations of complaints has reduced in 2021-22, following a marked improvement in 2020-21. In 2019-20, only 52% of social work stage 2 complaints had been investigated and responded to by CFIT within the 20 working day time limit, but this rose to 84.3% in 2020-21, before falling again this year to 70.8%. While this represents a significant decrease in compliance, this still meets the target of 70% compliance. This fall is attributed to the increase in volume of complaints, and also to a significant increase in the volume of work unrelated to complaints handled by the team in relation to the Subject Access process.
- 2.5 Timescales for stage 1 complaints were not met for social work complaints (except in North East locality). 64.2% of these were in time across GCHSCP, up fractionally from the year before. The target was, therefore, not met for complaints across both stages, with only 67.5% of all responses being within deadline.
- 2.6 Section 3.4 summarises the particular client groups submitting complaints, with the majority of complaints relating to Children and Families involvement – this is typical, and directly related to the general dissatisfaction that many complainants feel towards social work involvement in their family lives.
- 2.7 Section 3.5 summarises the main issues raised by service users across social work complaints and across care services complaints.
- 2.8 There has been a noticeable rise in social work complaints concerning alleged failures to respond to service users. This may be related to staff absences or other staffing issues relating to Covid. The proportions of other complaint types have remained similar, with the exception of a decrease in complaints of a financial nature.
- 2.9 For Care Services the top three issues were quality of service, competency of staff and failure to arrive. Complaints about failure to arrive, late arrival or failure to complete tasks have risen (numerically) from a combined 28 in 2020-21 to 34, but remain well below pre-pandemic levels of 112 (32.7%) in 2019-20. Conversely the combined number and proportion of complaints about staff competency and attitude has fallen from 108 (40.6%) to 84 (36.5%), despite the overall fall in complaints.
- 2.10 A larger proportion of both social work and care services complaints have been upheld or partially upheld in 2021-22 than in the preceding year, however while Social work complaints upheld or partially upheld have increased from 23.5% to 35.3%, care services complaints upheld or partially upheld have increased only fractionally, from 58% to 59.6%. As overall numbers of complaints have also increased across both areas, more complaints have been upheld than in the previous year, however 2020-21 is noted as representing a particularly exceptional year where fewer complaints were upheld or partially upheld than in any preceding year.

- 2.11 23 cases were considered by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) at stage 3 of the complaints process. Case summaries and outcomes are presented at section 3.7 of this report. One case was upheld, and one other was partially upheld.
- 2.12 In addition, one case previously upheld by the SPSO was reviewed and the decision subsequently overturned, following representations made by both SWS and GCC Legal.
- 2.13 The remaining cases were not upheld, or not taken further by the SPSO following initial assessment, which equates to agreement with the stage 2 response issued to the complainant. This generally gives reassurance that the internal complaints process is functioning correctly at the second stage, although complaints handling was specifically criticised in the upheld and partially upheld cases, leading to learning points for the team.
- 2.14 For social work complaints that were upheld, there is good evidence that actions were then taken to offer redress to complainers and improve the services to them. These were largely confined to improvements at an individual case level, but were nevertheless important from the customer's perspective, often involving increased financial and other support, improved engagement or the expediting of services. Relevant actions are listed in full at section 3.8 for 116 cases where this applied.

### 3 Policy and Resource Implications

#### Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	There are no new financial implications arising from this report.
<i>Legal:</i>	This report raises no new legal issues.
<i>Personnel:</i>	There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.
<i>Procurement:</i>	There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

#### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	There are no proposals in this report having any relevant potential equality impacts.
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*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* N/A.

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.* N/A.

**Climate Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* There are no proposals in this report having any relevant potential climate impacts.

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* N/A.

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* N/A.

**Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** There are no proposals in this report having any relevant privacy and data protection impacts.

**4 Recommendations**

4.1 Committee is asked to:

- a) note the content of the annual social care complaints report.