



**Public Health
Complaints, Compliments
and Comments
Annual Report
2016/17**

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Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to inform service users, carers, the public, Council Members and staff of the effectiveness of the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the Procedure).

On the 1 April 2013 the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) came into force. Part five of the Regulations deals with Complaints about Public Health Functions of Local Authorities.

The Council implemented a new procedure providing a local framework to ensure complaints are handled effectively and in line with the regulations.

The procedure aims to:

- (a) Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users and their carers to raise complaints;
- (b) Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
- (c) Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
- (d) Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
- (e) Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to Public Health complaints and improve services as a result.

The Chief Executive is designated as the 'Responsible Person' for ensuring compliance with the arrangements made under the Regulations, and in particular ensuring that action is taken if necessary in the light of the outcome of a complaint. The functions of the responsible person will usually be performed by the Director of Public Health.

The Complaints and Information Governance Manager is designated the 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the regulations and is responsible for managing the procedures for handling and considering complaints in accordance with the arrangements made under the Regulations.

Local Government Ombudsman

Although complainants can refer their complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) from the outset, the LGO will not normally investigate until the Council or service provider has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they may refer the matter to the LGO.

Information and Accessibility

We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.

The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

Summary

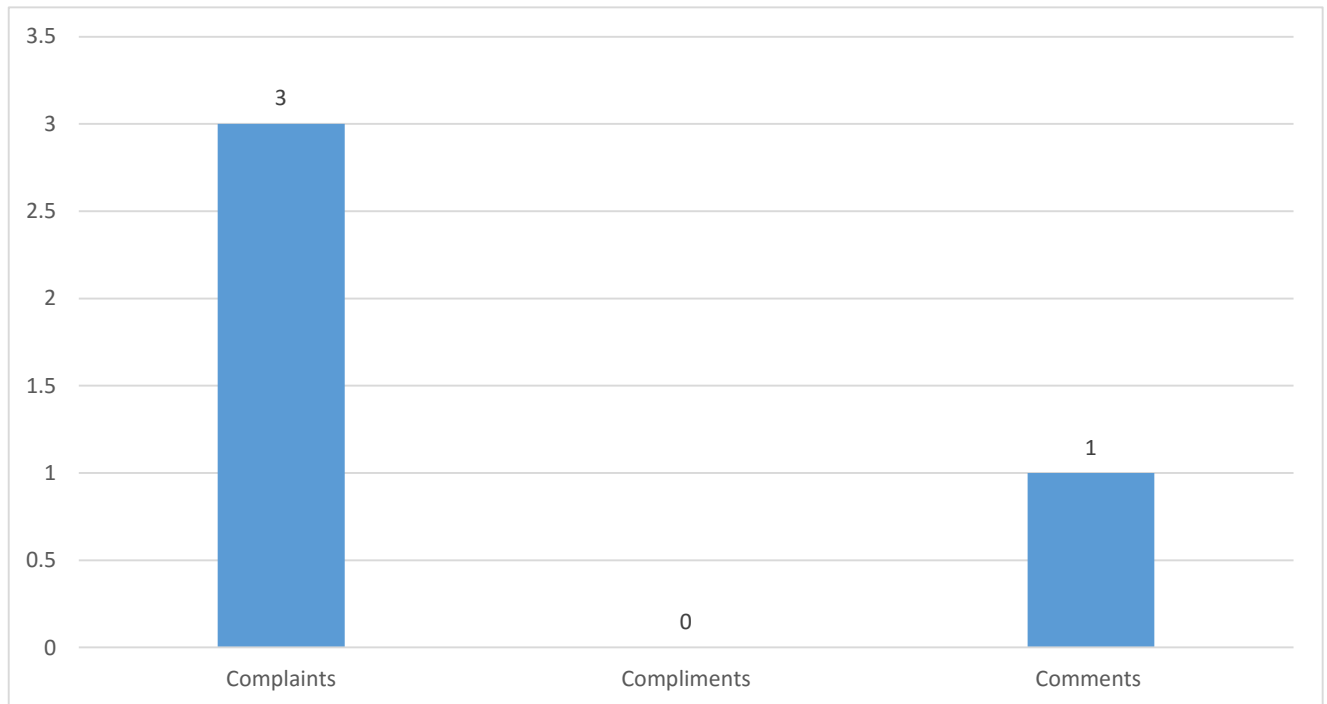
- The Council received four representations under the Procedure, compared to zero in 2015/16.
- The Council received three complaints about Public Health services during 2016/17, an increase from zero in 2015/16.
- The Council received one comment, an increase from zero in 2015/16.
- The Council did not receive any compliments, as was the case in 2015/16.

Review of the Year

Breakdown of all Representations

A total of four representations were handled under the procedure during 2016/17.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received 2016/17



One of the complaints received concerned the commissioning of the Contraception and Sexual Health (CASH) Service. This complaint also concerned the quality of the service provided at the CASH Clinic.

The Council received a further complaint about the service provided at the CASH Clinic.

The Council also received a complaint about the 0-19 years' Service and in particular the Health Visitor Service.

The comment received concerned problems an individual experience in accessing the Contraception and Sexual Health (CASH) service while transitional arrangements were in place.

Complaint Outcomes

2 complaint investigations dealing with three separate issues were concluded during 2016/17. The outcomes of these complaints are detailed in the chart below.

Service Area/Team	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
Darlington Borough Council	0	0	1	1
CASH Service	0	2	0	2
TOTAL	0	2	1	3

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Received 2016/17

Zero Public Health complaints were progressed to the LGO during 2016/17, the same as in 2015/16.

Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Outcomes 2016/17

Zero Public Health complaints were determined by the LGO during 2016/17, the same as in 2015/16.

Organisational Learning

All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2016/17. As a result of one complaint it was agreed that all Darlington GP practices would adopt a more proactive way of providing information and signposting to the new service for those women that they know have an IUD, IUS or Contraceptive Implant to enable them to plan for their contraceptive needs.

It was also agreed that in relation to the CASH Service all clinical staff would be reminded about introducing themselves at every stage of a patient's journey. Staff were also reminded of the provider's Dignity & Respect policy. All staff were also reminded of the Patient Group Direction in relation to the supply and administration of lidocaine and the provider Primary Healthcare Darlington provided a patient information leaflet (PIL) to be given to all patients undergoing an injection. A written consent form detailing procedure details was introduced to ensure standard information and advice is given to patients to ensure that patients are fully informed. The Contraceptive and Sexual Health GP mentor, as the senior clinician, agreed to conduct a review on the practice and procedures undertaken during appointments in the clinics in order to provide feedback and update training for clinical staff.

Further recommendations

There are no further recommendations.

Performance against the Procedure

While the regulations allow a maximum of six months to respond to a complaint we aim to respond to complaints within 30 working days.

One complaint was responded to within 30 working days. The other was responded to in 31 working days.

Performance Indicator for 2016/17

In relation to Public Health complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government Ombudsman. The Council received zero maladministration decisions during 2016/17.