

**CWOP/03/10**

**Policy & Scrutiny Committees** Community Wellbeing & Older People

**Date of meeting** 14 January 2010

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**COMPLAINTS TASK AND FINISH GROUP INTERIM REPORT**

**Report by:** The Complaints Task and Finish Group

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To receive the attached interim report of the Task and Finish Group looking into Complaints.

## **Task and Finish Group on Complaints Process.**

The members firstly met the complaints team to enquire on the makeup of the complaints and the geographic spread.

The complaints were broken down into categories and disciplines.

At our first meeting it was difficult to distinguish the reasons for residents making complaints and identify the root cause.

Members requested that we focus on subjects which appeared to generate the largest amount of complaints.

The items that were suggested for the next meeting were, Quality of Social Work Support, Failure to Provide, Delay in Provision and Quality of O/T Service.

After discussions, it was agreed that a sample of complaints should be chosen at random to present to the next meeting scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> October 09.

We looked at the breakdown of complaints over a 12 month period. We looked at 16 specific cases chosen at random, demographic information relating to local populations and type of complaints, training materials which support the new complaint handling procedures currently being rolled out and the Ombudsman principles for good complaint handling

From this early scrutiny it was felt that complaints generated by councillors should have a procedure devised to facilitate speedier resolution to residents concerns raised via their councillor. Whilst there is a need for speedy resolution we must be mindful of the requirements to protect individuals and their personal information. Such a procedure may eradicate the complaints which could be dealt with more effectively by a local manager rather than starting at the top and working down lengthening the process and therefore the timescale.

There is a need for access to local managers to assist members to resolve local issues much more speedily. The more local members familiarise themselves with local staff the quicker problems will be resolved.

### **Recommendation:-**

**We await the outcomes of the special group under Cllr Finch who are specifically addressing the issue of member complaints.**

The case we looked at from an MP was for the provision of a shower. Whilst the assessment was carried out by ECC O/T's the actual provision delay is solely attributed to a Local Authority who were responsible for the funding via DFG. Should the process for this complain be changed to refer it straight to the Local Authority directly who can address the complaint much quicker?

**Recommendation that the local manager signposts the complainant to the relevant local authority.**

The group felt that in reviewing all the cases presented to them that if the LOCAL MANAGER had dealt with the complainant directly, with a view to seeking resolution, it is more than likely that a complaints statistic would have been avoided. On the sample we reviewed it seemed evident to us that it was process that was the issue and not specifically the provision of a service, there is an exception on the work of the O/T's which will be subject to further scrutiny.

The training that is in place with local managers should go some way to improving complaints handling in the future. To the forefront at all times is the ability that when we have a complaint we learn from it and there should in theory be not further complaints in that field.

**We therefore recommend that local managers are instructed to resolve the majority of complaints at source. Perhaps we could have some form of performance based indicator.**