

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-17**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

14TH DECEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL
AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Agenda Item No. 3

**WORKING GROUP – TO
CONSIDER REPRESENTATIONS
AND COMPLAINTS
PROCEDURES
ANNUAL REPORT**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group, who conducted a scrutiny review in relation to the Annual report of the Representations and Complaints Procedures.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to endorse the findings of the working group as follows:-
- That Members receive the All Wales comparison data in due course.
 - That Members of the Committee receive the findings from the Health and Wellbeing Act Survey and the questions set out in the Survey by Welsh Government at a future Meeting.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 12th October 2016 the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a working group to consider the Annual report of the Representations and Complaints Procedures.
- 3.2 The Working Group Members consisted of County Borough Councillors (Mrs) A. Calvert, (Mrs) S. Rees (Vice Chair) and R. W. Smith (Chair).
- 3.3 The Working Group met on 9th November, 2016 and obtained the views of the Service Director, Adult Services and the Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager. The Working Group also received information of the Representation and Complaints Unit 1st Quarterly Report from 1st April – 30th June 2016.

- 3.4 The Working Group was informed that although there was a number of service users who had made a complaint during the year relating to the service received from adult services the total number of complaints received remained comparatively low and that the majority of people are happy for the Council to deal with their complaints at a local level. Members felt that Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure in line with the statutory requirements.
- 3.5 Members learned that the new legislation introduced through the Social Services and Wellbeing Act had been implemented effectively and no concerns had been raised in relation to the operation of the complaints process. Members noted that all complaints received had been dealt with accordingly.
- 3.6 The Working Group concluded that although Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure, they felt that there was a need to promote the service more to raise community awareness.
- 3.7 The Working Group also felt that lessons can be learnt from the compliment aspects made by service users in addition to the complaints that had been received as they provided valuable information regarding the quality of services that were being provided and identify where they perform well.
- 3.8 The Working Group was informed that there were a number of advocacy Services available to all service users, such as Dewis Centre for Independent Living and Age Connect Morgannwg that are well-established with experienced and trained advocacy caseworkers that provide people with the advice and support to live independent lives. Members felt that more could be done to raise public awareness of these types of services that are available to them.
- 3.9 The Working Group was informed that the annual report highlights a gap in service provision for young adults with high level physical disability and that this can be problematic during the transition from children's services to adult services. Also identified was a need for these young adults to be more actively involved and engaged in the care and support planning process and decisions as to how resources are allocated and developed in the future.
- 3.10 The working group discussed a complaint that was raised regarding a resident having access to the broadband password in their residential home. This has been addressed and the Broadband package has been rolled out across the Authority to enable service users to gain effective access to services via the internet..
- 3.11 The Working Group was informed that an experienced worker had been employed by Public Service Ombudsman for Wales and would be shadowing a number of RCT Officers to undertake a review of the work which was being carried out in relation to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act.

3.12 The Working Group was informed that the complaints relating to staffing issues remained the highest category of complaint and generally related to conduct and behaviour. All complaints would be investigated and appropriate action taken. In some cases, they would be referred and dealt with through the Adult Safeguarding process.

3.13 The Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager reported that she is Chair of the All Wales and would be able to provide the Committee with the All Wales comparison data.

3.14 Members learned that it is crucial that there is learning from complaints at all stages of the procedure, resulting in improved services and delivery wherever possible. Some examples of action points were discussed and are summarised below:-

- An equality statement being added to the introductory statement for adult protection meetings to comply with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to protected characteristics – The Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager reported that this requirement had now been implemented to comply with Policy.
- The identification of the need for training in relation to the Equality Act 2010 - The Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager reported that this training need had been fed into existing training plans.
- The need to address the gap in residential provision that provide high level support to young adults with a physical disability – The Service Director Adult Services reported that the availability of specialist accommodation for young adults with a physical disability are very limited and further was required to commission more affordable good quality alternatives.
- There is a need to ensure that adults' choices and views are better considered as part of the allocation of resources and commissioning arrangements - The Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager reported that there is a need for further improvement..

3.15 Responding to a query as to why the definition of 'Representations' had been recorded as 'Concerns' in the report, the Complaints and Quality Assurance Manager responded that this is in line with Welsh Governments definition of 'Representations' and reporting requirements.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure in line with the statutory requirements. Complaints are seen as providing valuable customer feedback, with the information from complaints providing valuable lessons learnt when planning and improving services to meet the needs of our customers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Paper

- Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014

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