**Item 2**

**6th November 2024**

**Glasgow City Council**

**Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee**

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

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# Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2023/24

**Purpose of Report:**

To report on complaints activity for social care complaints in Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

**Recommendations:**

Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) note the content of the annual Social Care Complaints report.

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| Ward No(s): | Citywide: ✓ |
| Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ | consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐ |

## 1 Summary of Main Findings

1.1 Appendix 1, accompanying this report covers complaints about social care services in the period April 2023 – March 2024 considered under the appropriate complaint procedure for Social Work Services. This consists of three stages of: Stage 1: 'Front-line resolution' (timescale 5 working days that may be extended to a maximum of 10 working days in certain circumstances); 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 three stages of complaint. An annual report will also be presented to Glasgow City IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 11th December 2024 which covers Health and Social Care Complaints Activity.

1.3 Figures are given separately for Social Work (including Homelessness) and Care Services complaints (primarily home care) as these are processed within two different information systems ('C4' for social work / homelessness and 'Lagan' and other supporting systems for most care services). Development continues on an integrated complaints recording solution however a common system is unlikely to be implemented before 1st April 2025.

1.4 Volumes of Social Work complaints increased substantially in 2023/24, rising by 28% from to 528 in the previous year to 676. Care Services Stage 1 complaints also increased by 60.7% from 277 to 445. The full report for 2022-23 remains available for comparison.

1.5 The distribution of Social Work complaints proportionately between the localities remains relatively consistent. Almost all Care Services complaints focus on Home Care, with more in South locality than the other localities, and while this is in line with the greater population and scope of services in South area, the quantity and rate of increase in Care Services complaints in South is more pronounced this year and is therefore examined in further detail in Appendix 1.

1.6 Performance against timescale for stage 2 investigations of complaints has improved slightly in 2023-24, counter to a trend from 2021-22 after previous marked improvement in 2020-21. This had fallen in 2022-23 to 60.5%, but has now risen slightly to 60.9%. While not a significant increase in compliance, and below the target of 70% compliance, current rate of compliance is attributed to the high volume of Stage 2 complaints, and also to the ongoing challenge of the volume of work unrelated to complaints handled by the team in relation to the Subject Access process.

1.7 Timescales for Stage 1 complaints were not met for Social Work complaints in any area of the city. 57.7% of these were in time across GCHSCP, up considerably from 51% the year before. The target was, therefore, not met for complaints across both stages, with only 59.3% of all responses being within deadline, although this is up from 56.3% the year before.

1.8 Further development work is required to improve recording around the reasons localities are failing to meet timescale targets, as a further step towards addressing this ongoing issue.

1.9 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. Of note is the increase in complaints from those in the Homelessness Client Group and this is explored in further detail within the report.

1.10 Section 3.5 summarises the main issues raised by service users across social work complaints and across care services complaints.

1.11 For Care Services the top three issues were quality of service, failure to arrive and competency of staff. Complaints about failure to arrive have risen noticeably from 32 in 2021/22 to 70 in 2022/23, and have now returned to pre-pandemic levels of 112. Complaints about staff competency have increased slightly, however these represent a very small proportion of all home care clients and visits.

1.12 It is relevant to note the context of the number of visits undertaken by Care Services over the period when considering the very small number of complaints generated by those visits. Over 4.4 million visits are undertaken per year across Care Services, so in that context, only 0.01% of care visits generated any sort of complaint.

1.13 A smaller proportion of Social Work complaints have been upheld or partially upheld in 2023/24 than in the preceding year, with Social Work complaints upheld or partially upheld having decreased from 32.4% to 29.9%. Care Services complaints upheld or partially upheld have increased slightly, from 60.4% to 62%.

1.14 18 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 Appendix 1. None of the cases considered by the SPSO were upheld.

1.15 That each case that reached Stage 3 was either 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 generally gives reassurance that the internal complaints process is functioning correctly, both in relation to the small percentage of complaints that reach the SPSO, and the small proportion of those that lead to any action by the SPSO.

1.16 For social work complaints that were upheld at any stage, 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 of Appendix 1.

1.17 In addition to the detailed report on complaints performance, some additional context and information in relation to the development activity of the Complaints, FOI and Investigations team is summarised at Section 4 of Appendix 1.

## 2 Policy and Resource Implications

**Resource Implications:**

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| *Financial:* | There are no new financial implications arising from this report. |
| *Legal:* | This report raises no new legal issues. |
| *Personnel:* | There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report. |
| *Procurement:* | There are no procurement implications arising from this report. |

**Council Strategic Plan:** As a long-standing reporting requirement, this report does not relate to a specific commitment under the Council's Strategic Plan, however in general terms the function of complaints handling relates directly to 'Grand Challenge: 4. Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities'. In particular, the investigation of and learning from complaints relate directly to the following Missions:

- Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities
- Enable staff to deliver a sustainable and innovative council structure that delivers value for money

**Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

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|---|---|
| *Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* | There are no proposals in this report having any relevant potential equality impacts. |
| *What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* | No significant impact |
| *Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.* | No significant impact |

**Climate Impacts:**

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|---|---|
| *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?* | No significant impact |
| *Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* | No significant impact |

**Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:**

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| Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N | There are no proposals in this report having any relevant privacy and data protection impacts. |

## 3 Recommendations

3.1 Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) note the content of the annual Social Care Complaints report.