Item 2

11th October 2023

Glasgow City Council

Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutiny Committee

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

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Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2022-23

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 2022 – 31st March 2023.

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 2022 – March 2023 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 25th October 2023 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). While previously anticipated that these complaints would be fully integrated by this point, as complaints systems remain separate and significant development is still required on a solution, greater alignment will not be possible until complaints systems are replaced with a common system across all complaints. Work on this solution is ongoing at present.

2 Summary of Main Findings

2.1 Volumes of Social Work complaints increased slightly in 2022-23, rising by 6% from to 496 in the previous year to 528. Care Services complaints, however, fell by 10.9% from 275 to 245.

2.2 There has been little change in the distribution of Social Work complaints proportionately between the localities. Almost all Care Services 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 2022-23, following a trend from 2021-22 after previous 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 in 2021-22 to 70.8%. This has fallen again in 2022-23 to 60.5%. This represents a significant decrease in compliance, and falls below the target of 70% compliance. This fall is attributed to the increase in 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.

2.5 Timescales for Stage 1 complaints were not met for Social Work complaints in any area of the city. 51% of these were in time across GCHSCP, down considerably from 64.2% the year before. The target was, therefore, not met for complaints across both stages, with only 56.3% of all responses being within deadline, down from 67.5% the year before.

2.6 Development work is currently being undertaken to improve recording around the reasons localities are failing to meet timescale targets, as a further step towards addressing this ongoing issue.

2.7 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.

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

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 have risen noticeably from 32 in 2021-22 to 70, but remain well below pre-pandemic levels of 112 (32.7%) in 2019-20. Complaints about staff competency have decreased slightly, and these represent a very small proportion of all home care clients and visits.

2.10 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. 4,444,793 visits were undertaken during the year across Care Services, so in that context, only 0.005% of care visits generated any sort of complaint.

2.11 A smaller proportion of Social Work complaints have been upheld or partially upheld in 2022-23 than in the preceding year, with Social Work complaints upheld or partially upheld having decreased from 35.3% to 32.4%. Care Services complaints upheld or partially upheld have increased only fractionally, from 59.6% to 60.4%.

2.12 19 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 of the cases considered by the SPSO was upheld following investigation and one case led to the SPSO asking SWS to take minor action to avoid further SPSO involvement.

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, 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.

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.

3 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

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:

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:

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: Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	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.