

Adult Social Care

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

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Foreword from Executive Director



I am pleased to present the 2024–2025 Annual Report on Complaints, Compliments, and Comments for Adult Social Care. This report is not only a statutory requirement but a vital reflection of our values—transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. It offers a clear view of how we listen to those who use our services, how we respond, and how we learn.

This year's report demonstrates our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care. While the number of formal complaints has slightly decreased, we recognise that every concern raised is an opportunity to reflect, improve, and grow. We are particularly encouraged by the increase in compliments received, which reflects the dedication and compassion of our workforce.

We have made significant strides in strengthening our learning culture. Our governance arrangements, including the Adults Quality Board and Adults Practice Quality Board, now provide greater visibility of complaint themes and enable us to act swiftly on emerging issues. We continue to embed learning from complaints into our wider improvement plans, supported by our Head of Quality and Performance, Principal Social Worker and Principal Occupational Therapist, who are championing reflective practice and quality assurance across the service.

This year, we have also taken bold steps to improve people's experience of adult social care. From simplifying financial assessment communications to enhancing our digital accessibility, we are working to ensure that people understand their rights, feel heard, and are treated with dignity and respect. Our Customer Experience Manager is leading this work, ensuring that co-production and lived experience are central to how we design and deliver services.

We acknowledge that challenges remain—particularly in meeting our target response times to complaints and in addressing complex complaints that span multiple services. However, we are committed to improving our responsiveness and ensuring that every complaint is handled with care, empathy, and professionalism.

To everyone who has taken the time to share their feedback—whether positive or critical—thank you. Your voices shape our services and help us to do better. And to our staff, thank you for your resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to the people of Gloucestershire.

Together, we remain focused on making the difference that matters—by listening, learning, and acting with the purpose of improving lives and build a more responsive, inclusive, and trusted Adult Social Care service for all.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Professor Sarah Scott

Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Communities

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Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	June 2025	Colin Davies	<i>First draft prepared for Head of Quality & Performance review</i>
1	July 2025	Colin Davies	<i>Amended following feedback by Head of Quality & Performance</i>
2	20 th August 2025	Colin Davies / Cheryl Hampson	<i>Amended following discussion with Head of Quality & Performance and Principal Social Worker</i>
	18.09.2025	Colin Davies	<i>For discussion at Adults Risk Management Group</i>
	15.10.2025	Colin Davies	<i>Approved by Adults Quality Assurance Board</i>

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of Gloucestershire County Council's performance on Adult Social Care complaints and compliments and feedback activity between the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. This has been in line with the Adult Social Care Complaints Policy¹.

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction by an individual about an action, lack of action or standard of service from Adult Social Care, or services commissioned by Adult Social Care.

When we receive a complaint in Adult Social Care, our aim is to resolve and learn from them, so it does not happen again. Our ambition is to ensure we get things right first time so that people do not need to make a complaint.

Summary of key findings in this report

	<p>In the period Adult Social Care had completed 9798 assessments and 4631 reviews (92,539 contacts).</p> <p>In the same period, we received 88 formal complaints (which represents 0.89% of total assessments). This is a slight decrease from 91 the previous year and continues a 5-year downward trend.</p> <p>A further 122 concerns were resolved without recourse to the complaints process, which represents 1.24% of total assessments</p>
	<p>Complaints year on year</p> <p>This compares with,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 91 complaints received in 2023-2024,• 107 complaints received in 2022-2023,• 126 complaints received in 2021-2022, and• 92 complaints received in 2020-2021.

	<p>Response times</p> <p>63% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days. Target is 75%.</p> <p>The quickest response to a complaint was 1 day and the longest 115 days, where the complainant had not been through the care providers' process first and subsequently the care home could not be visited by Contract Monitoring colleagues due to sickness within the home</p>
	<p>Reason why people complain?</p> <p>Most complaints recorded the primary failure as,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: delay in provision of information, response, returned contact (25% of the total complaints investigated). Communication: information, policy or plan not properly explained (22% of the total complaints investigated). Quantity, frequency or charge for a service: inappropriate charge for service, all disability related expenditure not considered (22% of the total complaints investigated)
	<p>58% of complaints were either upheld or partially upheld. 41% were not upheld. (1% withdrawn)</p> <p>15 complaints were escalated to the <u>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</u>, of which 6 were investigated.</p>
	<p>Learning</p> <p>The services that received the most complaints were,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance including Finance and Benefits (16%) • LD Operations (14%)



Improvement Actions

Complaints received during 2024–2025 have provided valuable insights into service delivery across Adult Social Care. Thematic analysis has identified three key areas for improvement: Finance, People's Experience, and Practice Development.

Finance

A significant proportion of complaints related to financial assessments and communication. In response, we have introduced an Online Financial Assessment Tool aimed at simplifying the process for individuals and families. This digital solution is designed to improve clarity, reduce delays, and enhance accessibility. Additionally, we are reinforcing the importance of effective communication, particularly around progress updates and timeframes, and ensuring accurate and timely record-keeping to support transparency and trust.

People's Experience

To improve the experience of adult social care, a Customer Experience Manager was appointed in 2024. Over the past year, the role has focused on understanding and improving the experiences of unpaid carers, enhancing accessibility, and exploring practical approaches to co-production within Adult Social Care. This work has included a review of accessible information on our website and has directly informed a transformation programme that will be launched shortly. The programme aims to redesign processes and pathways based on feedback received, ensuring that co-production is embedded throughout and that people's experiences are central to service improvement.

Practice Development

Since July 2025, the Practice Development Team has assumed responsibility for investigating complaints within ASC Operations. Acting as an independent arbiter, the team ensures consistency and impartiality in decision-making. A standardised response template, developed by the Principal Social Worker, is now used across all investigations. The team also leads on embedding learning by:

- Addressing themes directly with practitioners,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing practice guidance,• Delivering targeted training. <p>This approach ensures that learning is not only captured but also actioned and evidenced, closing the feedback loop and driving continuous improvement.</p> <p>A full breakdown of improvement actions can be seen on Pages 17 – 19.</p>
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1. Background and Introduction

This report provides an overview of complaints and feedback received about Gloucestershire County Council's Adult Social Care services during 2024–2025, in line with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the updated 2025 guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The [LGSCO's new guide](#)¹, launched in February 2025, reinforces the importance of a single-stage complaints process and encourages early, person-centred resolution wherever possible. It aims to ensure consistency in how complaints are handled across the country and to promote a culture of fairness, transparency, and learning. The guidance also clarifies the rights of service users and the responsibilities of local authorities, with a strong emphasis on enabling people to live independently and with dignity.

In Gloucestershire, we are committed to aligning our complaints handling with this national model. Our approach is designed to:

- Provide a clear and accessible route for raising concerns.
- Resolve issues promptly and informally where possible.
- Ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, proportionately, and in a timely manner.
- Use feedback to drive service improvement and uphold the rights of individuals.

Anyone who receives, has received, or is seeking adult social care services from Gloucestershire County Council—or their representative—can make a complaint. This includes services commissioned by the Council and delivered by external providers.

We continue to manage complaints through a single-stage process. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate their concerns to the LGSCO, who acts as the final stage for independent review.

¹ <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2025/feb/adult-care-complaints-guide-launched>

This report is intended for a wide audience, including individuals, carers, staff, elected members, Healthwatch Gloucestershire, the Care Quality Commission, and the wider public. It reflects our commitment to openness, accountability, and making the difference that matters.

How to make a complaint

Gloucestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that everyone has a clear, accessible, and fair route to raise concerns about Adult Social Care services. In line with the updated 2025 guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), we continue to operate a single-stage complaints process that prioritises early resolution, transparency, and learning.

Key Principles from the 2025 LGSCO Guidance:

- **Single-Stage Process:** Complaints should be resolved at the earliest opportunity by the service involved, without unnecessary escalation.
- **Person-Centred Approach:** Complaints must be handled with empathy, flexibility, and a focus on the individual's experience and desired outcomes.
- **Accessibility:** People must be able to complain in a way that suits them—whether by phone, email, letter, online form, or in person. Reasonable adjustments, including interpreters or advocates, should be offered where needed.
- **Clarity and Timeliness:** Responses should be clear, jargon-free, and timely. Where delays occur, complainants must be kept informed.
- **Learning and Accountability:** Complaints should be seen as opportunities to improve services, not as failures to be defended.

Anyone who receives, has received, or is seeking adult social care services from Gloucestershire County Council—or their representative—can make a complaint. This includes services commissioned by the Council and delivered by external providers.

You can make a complaint:

- **Online form:** via our <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-feedback/complaints-about-adult-social-care/>

- **By phone:** 01452 427 082
- **By email or letter:** Contact details are available on our website.
- **In person:** At any council office or through your social care worker.

We will acknowledge your complaint and aim to respond within 20 working days. If your complaint is complex or involves multiple services, we will agree a realistic timescale with you and keep you informed throughout.

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving our response, you have the right to escalate your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, who provides an independent and impartial review.

More detail on this process is described in [Appendix 2](#)

Services provided by an external provider acting on the Council's behalf are also included. In such instances, complaints can be submitted directly to the provider or the Council.

Information and accessibility

We are committed to making sure everyone has equal access to all of our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure we have information about our complaints process in leaflet format as well as on our website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint which complements existing communication routes (letter, email and telephone). People can make a complaint in any format they wish.

The complaints manager can arrange interpreters where appropriate.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Gloucestershire County Council is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who use our Adult Social Care services. In line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the updated 2025 guidance from the Local Government and Social Care

Ombudsman (LGSCO), we ensure that all personal information is handled lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

We collect and process personal data to manage complaints effectively and to meet our statutory responsibilities. This may include information about individuals receiving care, their families, carers, or representatives. We only collect information that is necessary to investigate and respond to complaints, and we do so with the utmost respect for privacy.

Key Principles:

- **Purpose Limitation:** Personal data is used solely for the purpose of managing and resolving complaints, and for service improvement where appropriate.
- **Data Minimisation:** We only collect information that is relevant and necessary.
- **Security:** All data is stored securely, and access is restricted to authorised personnel.
- **Retention:** Personal data is retained in accordance with the Council's [Records Retention and Disposal Schedule](#)², or longer where legally required (e.g. for ongoing complaints or legal claims).
- **Transparency:** Individuals are informed about how their data will be used, and their rights under data protection law.

Where appropriate, anonymised data may be used for reporting and analysis to help us improve services and identify trends. We will never share personal information without consent unless required to do so by law or where there is a safeguarding concern.

We also ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to support individuals in accessing the complaints process, including the provision of interpreters, advocates, or alternative formats.

² <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/how-we-manage-information/records-management/how-long-do-we-keep-records-for/>



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For more information on how we manage personal data, please refer to our [Privacy Notices online](#)³ and [Information on how long we keep records for](#)⁴.

³ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-protection/privacy-notices/>
⁴ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/how-we-manage-information/records-management/how-long-do-we-keep-records-for/>.



2. Statistical Data

Breakdown for 2024-2025

Chart 1 - Complaints over a five-year period – trends

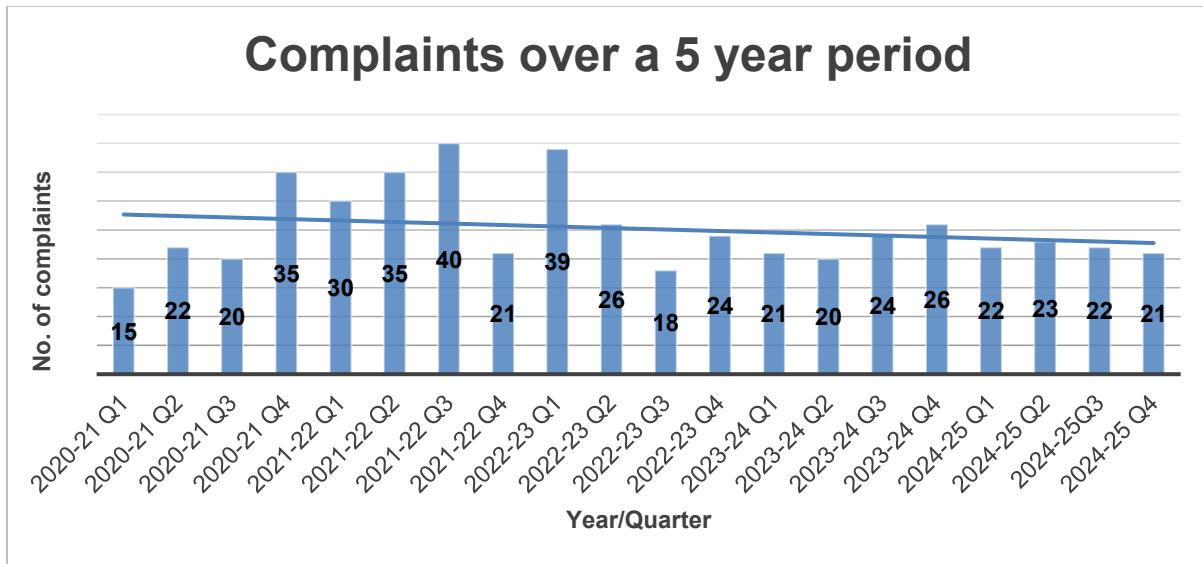
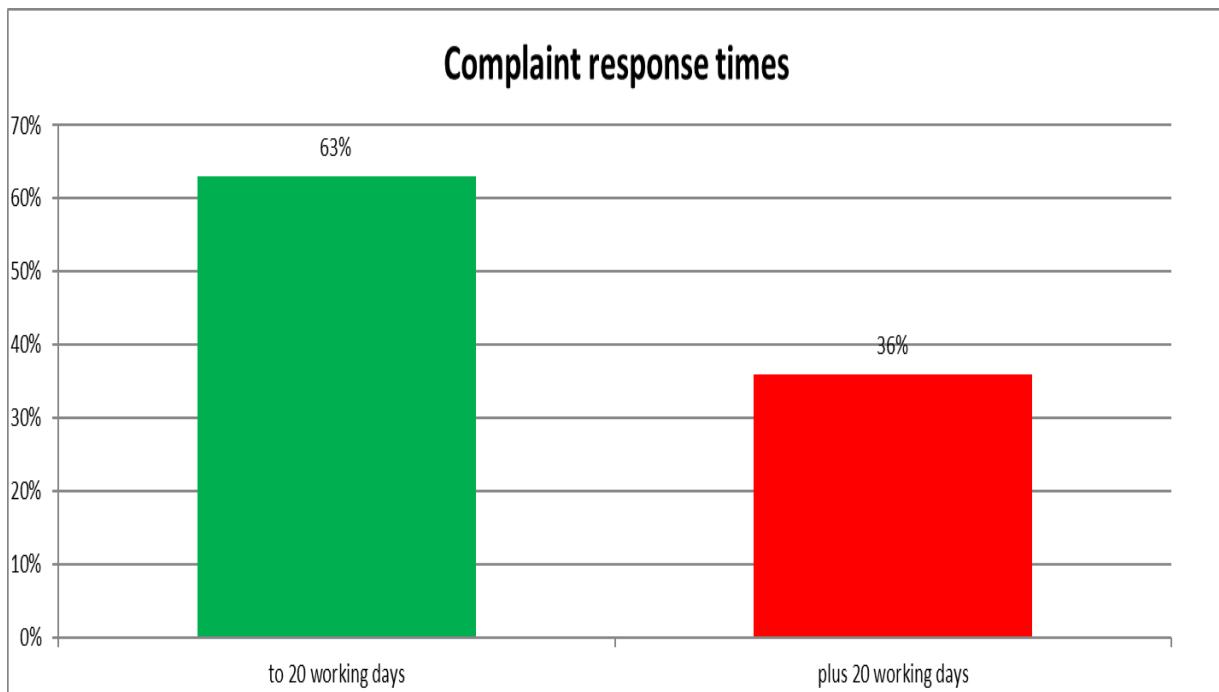


Chart 2 - Complaint response times 2024-2025 (target is 75% responded to within 20 days)



Issues such as staff availability and complex matters needing the input of numerous teams account for the reasons complaints take over 20 working days to respond to.



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Chart 3 - Complaint response times by quarter over last 5 years

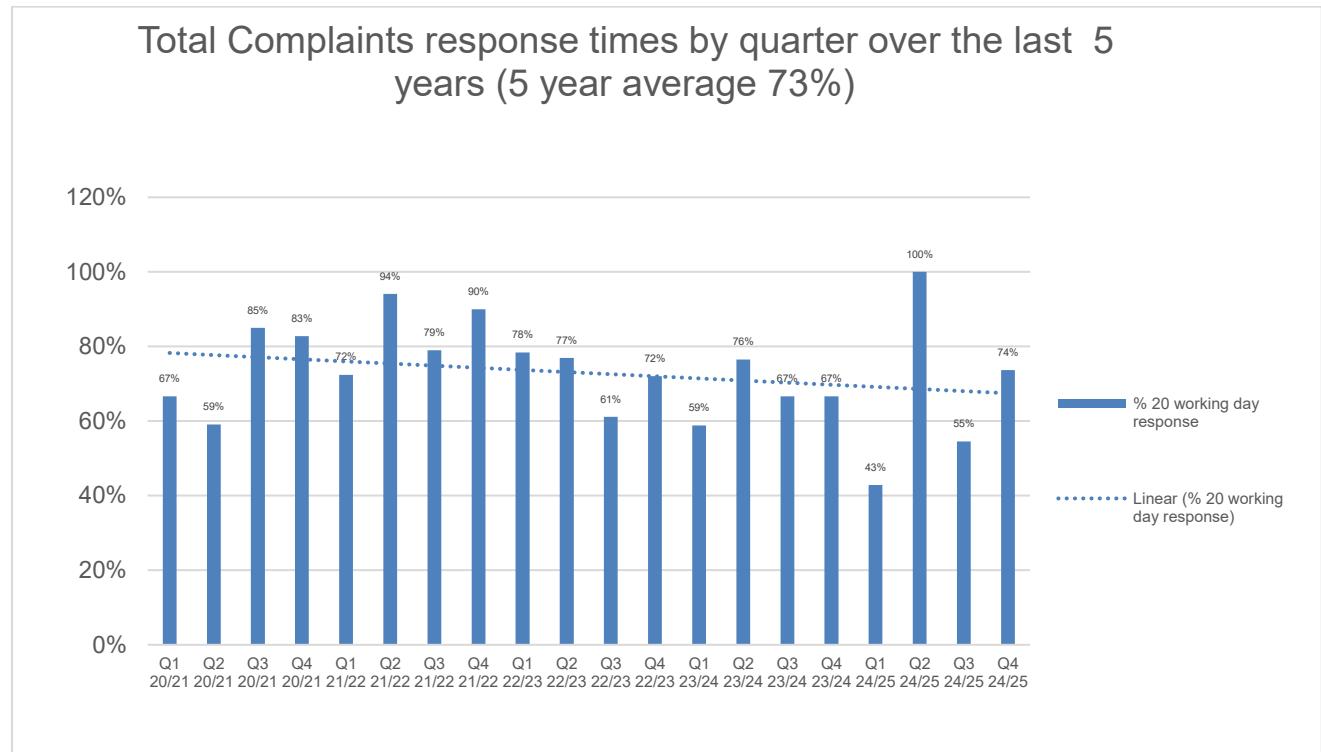


Chart 4 - Complaints received in 2024-2025 by team



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Chart 5 - Complaints not upheld by team 2024-2025

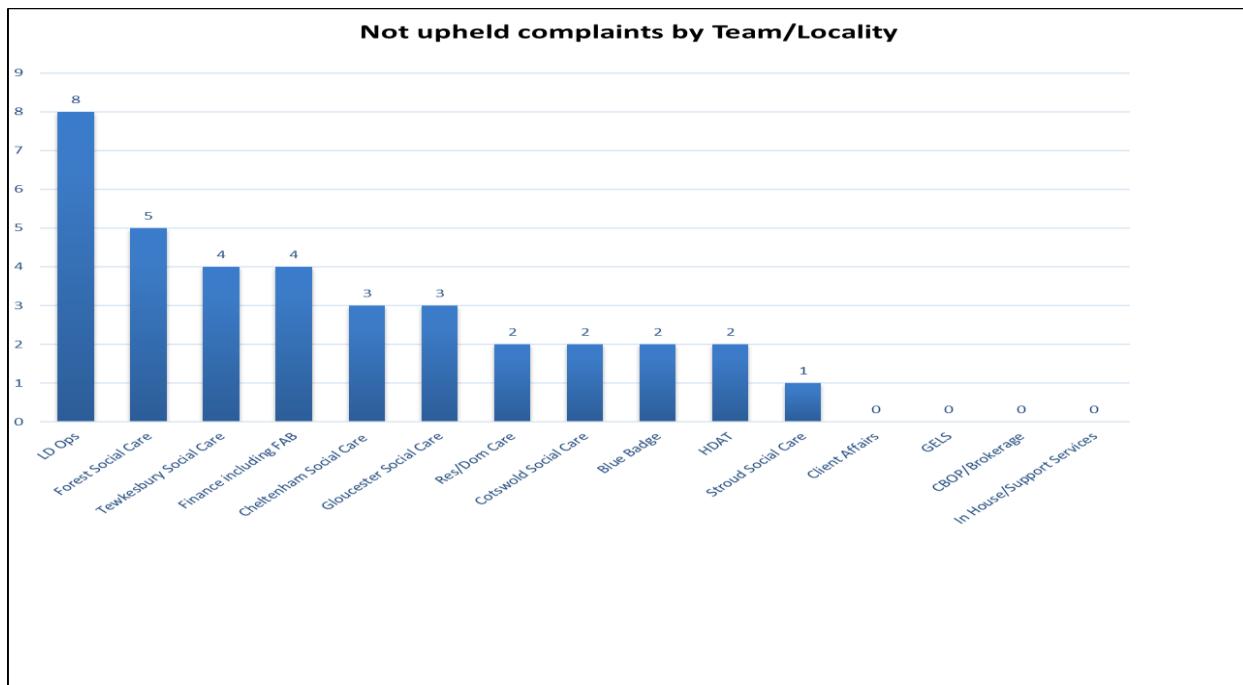
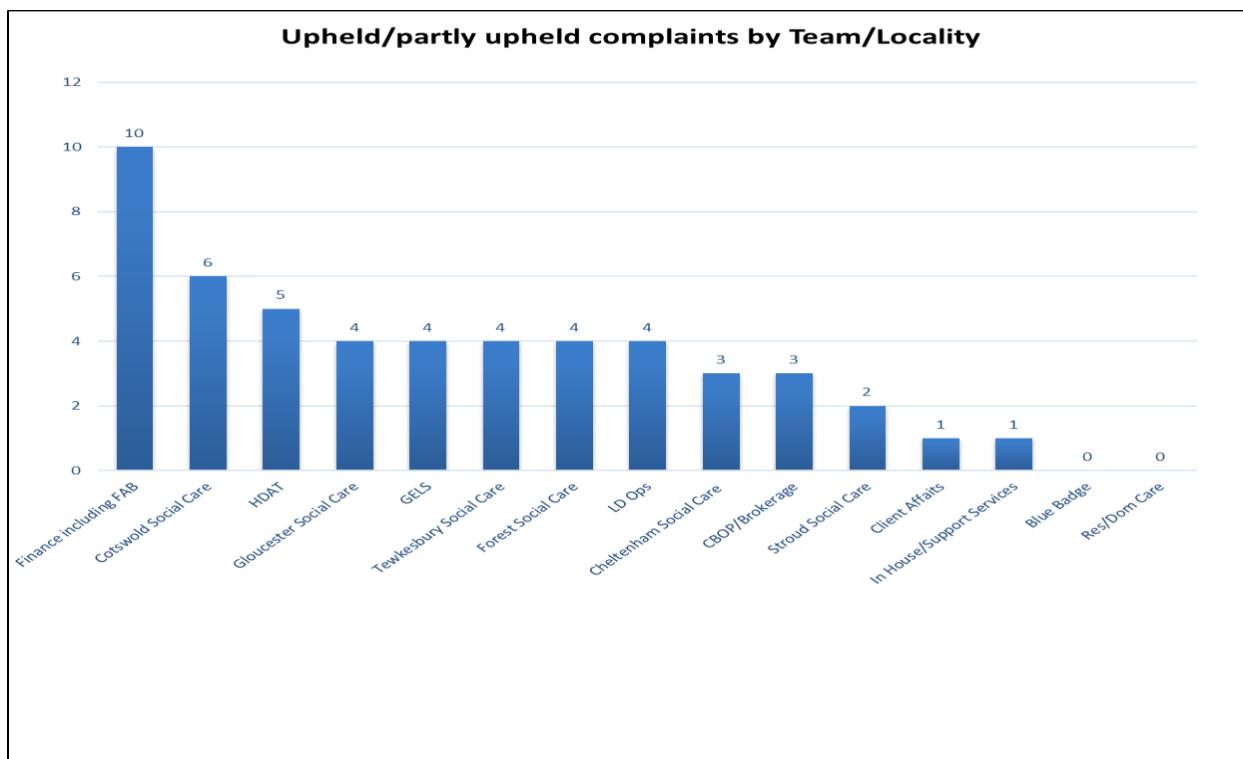


Chart 6 - Complaints upheld/partly upheld by team 2024-2025



Analysis

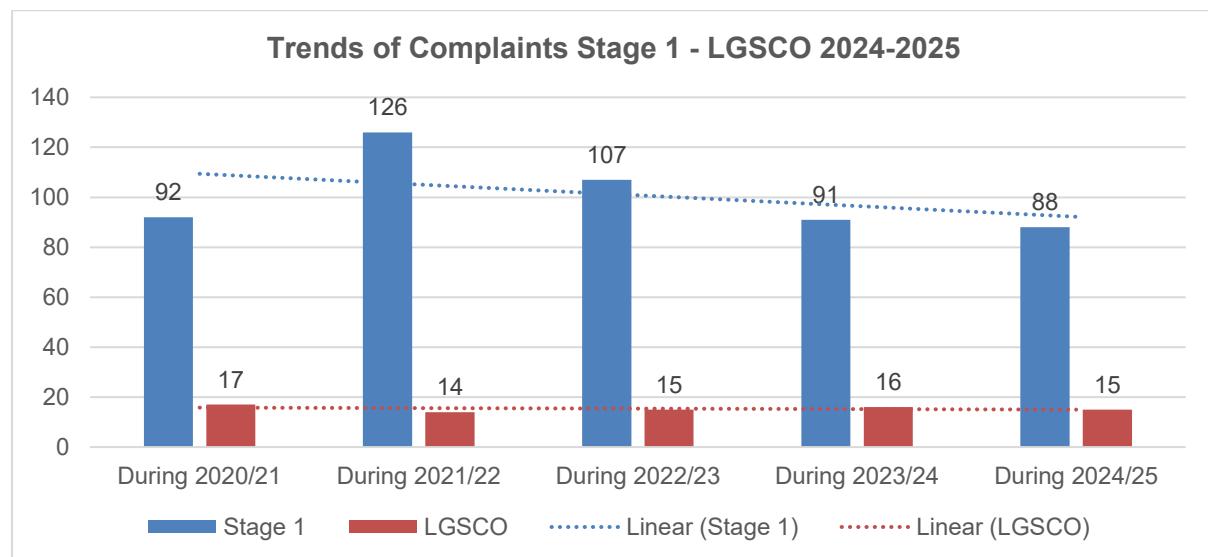
In 2024-2025, 88 Adult Social Care complaints were received by the Council of which 57% were either fully upheld or partly upheld. This was a slight decrease in numbers received compared to the previous year, when a total of 91 complaints were received.

Positively the number of complaints received over the last 5 years are on a downward trend and this is as a result of the strength of the Adult Operations teams and support services in improving the delivery of service year on year, and when issues occur, resolving them locally within their teams without recourse to the complaints process.

Table 1 - Summary of year-on-year trends for complaints at stage 1 and LGSCO

Number of Adult Social Care complaints managed at:	During 2020/21	During 2021/22	During 2022/23	During 2023/24	During 2024/25
Stage 1	92	126	107	91	88
LGSCO	17	14	15	16	15

Chart 7 - Stage 1 and LGSCO Complaints over time



A further 20 contacts from individuals were received but these were handed over / signposted to other agencies as they were not in relation to services provided by the

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council.

The following section looks at complaints related to Adult Social Care (ASC) Teams and then separately summarises all other complaints within the remit of Adult Care Services.

Table 2 - Reason for complaint by team 2024-2025

Team	Reasons for complaint by team
Adult Social Care Locality Teams	
Gloucester	8 complaints received In summary the themes were; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication, timeliness of responding to telephone messages / e-mails / providing information• Assessment took too long / took too long to resolve funding issue• Funding not made clear• Assessment outcome was wrong, and subsequent care offered was not appropriate to the need• General conduct of staff, including lack of empathy• Care pathway and subsequent funding not made clear
Cheltenham	6 complaints received In summary the themes were; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication, interested parties not being kept informed of developments• Funding not made clear• No one took responsibility or ownership of case• Challenge to Mental Capacity assessment
Stroud	1 complaint received In summary the themes were; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment took too long / took too long to resolve funding issue• Care pathway and subsequent funding not made clear
Forest	9 complaints received In summary the themes were; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment took too long / took too long to resolve funding issue• Assessment outcome was wrong, and subsequent care offered was not appropriate to the need

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Team	Reasons for complaint by team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding not made clear, including “Top Up” arrangements • General conduct of staff, including lack of empathy / dismissive approach • Challenge to Mental Capacity assessment • Communication, interested parties not being kept informed of developments
Tewkesbury	<p>8 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care pathway and subsequent funding not made clear • Assessment took too long / took too long to resolve funding issue • Communication, interested parties not being kept informed of developments • Challenge to Mental Capacity assessment • No one took responsibility or ownership of case, too many handovers to other staff • Communication, timeliness of responding to telephone messages / e-mails / providing information
Cotswold	<p>8 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment took too long / took too long to resolve funding issue • Assessment outcome was wrong, and subsequent care offered was not appropriate to the need • General conduct of staff, including being unhelpful • Communication, interested parties not being kept informed of developments, unclear regarding charges
Adult Social Care Countywide Teams	
Learning Disability Operations	<p>12 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, timeliness of responding to telephone messages • Assessment took too long • Inappropriate respite placement • Assessment outcome was wrong, and the subsequent care offered was not appropriate to need
Hospital Discharge and Assessment	<p>7 complaints received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care pathway not made clear, including funding arrangements

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Team	Reasons for complaint by team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHC checklist took too long • Delay in completing assessment
Gloucestershire Equipment Loans Service (previously GIS)	<p>4 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items that GIS had promised to be delivered / collected did not happen • E-mails / telephone messages were not responded to, and telephone calls were not answered / promises of call back did not happen / could not get hold of anyone to discuss
Finance including FAB	<p>14 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments not taking into account disability related expenses (DRE) • Factual errors in the financial assessment / time taken to complete • Incorrect invoices issued (part of wider process breakdown) • Multiple handoffs when trying to resolve issue (relates to FAB, Finance and Brokerage)
Client Affairs	<p>1 complaint received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication poor, took a long time to resolve issue
Blue Badge	<p>2 complaints received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication poor, promise to call back did not happen • Process took too long
CBOP/Brokerage/Dom & Res Care	<p>3 complaints received</p> <p>In summary the themes were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision made to on offer of care provision without consultation with individual. • E-mails were not responded to, and telephone calls were not answered. • Too long to set up a contract • Quality of residential care x 2 providers

Learning and improvement themes

Learning and improvement themes

Learning from complaints is a vital part of our quality assurance framework. It helps

us understand where things have gone wrong, identify patterns, and take action to improve both individual experiences and system-wide processes.

In 2024–2025, most complaints led to actions that improved outcomes for individuals. A smaller number highlighted wider service issues, prompting reflective practice, supervision, and policy review. Where financial detriment was identified, we applied the principle of restitution—waiving fees, reimbursing charges, or offering compensation where appropriate.

Key themes identified across Adult Social Care Locality and Countywide Teams included:

- **Assessment Delays:** A recurring concern was the length of time taken to complete assessments and resolve funding issues. This impacted timely access to care and created uncertainty for individuals and families.
- **Care Pathway and Funding Clarity:** Complaints frequently cited a lack of transparency around care pathways and funding arrangements, including confusion over “top-up” payments and Continuing Healthcare (CHC) processes.
- **Communication:** Poor communication was a consistent theme, including delays in responding to emails and phone calls, failure to keep interested parties informed, and lack of clarity in written correspondence.
- **Assessment Outcomes:** Several complaints challenged the accuracy of assessments and the appropriateness of care offered, highlighting the need for robust decision-making and clear rationale.
- **Mental Capacity Assessments:** Concerns were raised about the conduct and conclusions of mental capacity assessments, prompting a review of practice standards and staff training.
- **Staff Conduct and Ownership:** Some complaints reflected dissatisfaction with staff attitudes, empathy, and accountability, particularly where cases were

handed over multiple times without clear ownership.

By addressing these themes, we aim to reduce repeat issues, improve service quality, and ensure that people experience adult social care as responsive, respectful, and effective.

Social Care Charging

We know that understanding and managing the costs of care can be confusing and stressful for individuals and families. This year, we received several complaints about delays, unclear communication, and inconsistent processes around financial assessments and disability-related expenses (DRE).

In response, we've taken important steps to make things simpler, fairer, and more transparent:

- **Online Financial Assessments:** We have introduced a new online tool that allows people to complete their financial assessment digitally. This makes the process quicker, easier to understand, and more accessible for those who prefer to manage things online or who live and work outside of Gloucestershire.
- **Fairer Contributions Policy:** We have updated our approach to how people contribute to the cost of their care. This includes clearer guidance on what counts as a disability-related expense and how decisions are made. Our aim is to make sure people are only asked to pay what is reasonable and fair, based on their individual circumstances.
- **Better Communication:** We continue to provide the "Paying for your care" booklet to everyone before a financial assessment. This explains what to expect, what information is needed, and where to get free financial advice. We've also introduced a form that confirms this information has been shared and understood.

- Improved Tracking and Follow-Up: We've introduced new systems to flag when financial assessments are missing or delayed. This helps us follow up quickly and avoid people being charged incorrectly or left with uncertainty.
- Contingency Planning: If a financial assessment appointment needs to be rescheduled (for example, due to staff sickness), we now have procedures in place to offer an alternative appointment within 1–2 weeks.
- Information, advice and Guidance from [The Care Advice Line](https://www.thecareadviseline.org/)⁵(TCAL): This is a free, independent and confidential service for adults and carers in Gloucestershire. TCAL helps people understand their care options and how to pay for them, offering personalised financial information and advice tailored to individual circumstances, guidance on navigating the complex care funding system. By working in partnership with TCAL we are helping people make informed decisions at what can be a very difficult time. This service complements our internal improvements and ensures that people have access to expert, impartial advice when they need it most to help us deliver a more joined-up, person centred approach to care and support.

Adult Social Care Operations

This year has seen significant progress in how we deliver timely, person-centered support across our operational teams. We've focused on reducing delays, improving communication, and ensuring that people can access the right help at the right time.

Thanks to targeted efforts across our locality and specialist teams, we've made substantial improvements in reducing waiting times:

- **Assessment Waiting Times:** The number of people waiting for an assessment has dropped significantly—from over 200 in early 2024 to just 58 by June 2025. The average waiting time has reduced from 45 days to just 12 days.
- **Review Completion:** The proportion of people with an up-to-date review has increased from 38% to 76%, exceeding our internal target and reflecting a

⁵ <https://www.thecareadviseline.org/>

strong focus on proactive care planning.

We've also strengthened our digital information, advice and guidance offer to ensure people can access clear, accessible information about adult social care. As part of our Ageing Well communications programme, we've refreshed the adult social care webpages on the Gloucestershire County Council website to include:

- **Plain English explanations** of what adult social care is and how it can help.
- **Step-by-step guidance** on the journey through adult social care—from first contact to assessment, support planning, and review.
- **Dedicated sections** for unpaid carers, people with long-term conditions, and those planning for later life.
- **Links to community resources**, equipment and adaptations, and support to stay connected and independent.

This work is aligned with our commitment to prevention and early intervention, ensuring that people can make informed decisions and access support before reaching a crisis point.

Commissioned Care

Complaints involving commissioned care providers continue to offer valuable insights into the quality and consistency of externally delivered services. This year, themes included missed or delayed visits, poor communication, and concerns about staff conduct or training.

In response, we have taken the following actions:

- **Provider-Led Improvements:** One provider reviewed and strengthened its rota management and staff absence procedures following concerns about continuity of care. Another revised its induction and training policy to ensure new staff are better prepared to meet service expectations.
- **Quality Monitoring and Oversight:** Our Disabilities Quality Monitoring Team conduct targeted audits of provider policies and practices, focusing on areas such as staff supervision, safeguarding, and record-keeping. Where necessary, providers were supported to develop improvement plans and monitored for compliance.

- **Learning from Complaints:** We are embedding complaint themes into our contract management and provider engagement forums. This ensures that learning is shared across the market and that providers are held accountable for addressing recurring issues.
- **Co-Production and Feedback:** We are working with providers to improve how they capture and respond to feedback from people who use services and their families. This includes encouraging providers to log compliments and informal concerns as part of a broader learning culture.
- **Market-Wide Learning:** Themes from complaints can be shared through the Provider Network and the Adults Quality Board to ensure a consistent approach to improvement and to support providers in delivering safe, person-centred care.

These actions reflect our commitment to working in partnership with providers to ensure that commissioned services meet the standards expected by the council and the people of Gloucestershire. A new Quality Assurance Team within Commissioning will go live from September 2025, providing dedicated oversight, support, and challenge to commissioned providers to ensure consistent standards of care, strengthen contract compliance, and embed learning from complaints and feedback into continuous improvement.

Compliments

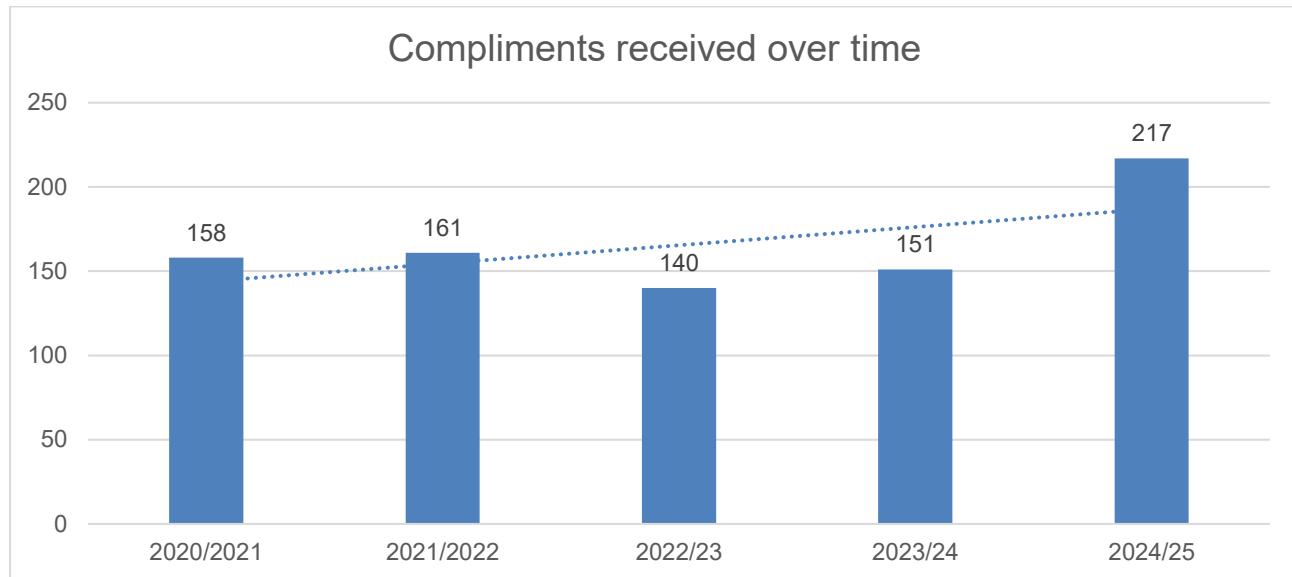
Managers are encouraged to log the compliments they receive as learning is derived from positive feedback, as well as negative.

During 2024-2025, 217 compliments were logged centrally regarding Adult Social Care. The majority of compliments related to members of staff. Trends around compliments have remained fairly consistent over the last 4 years (4 year rolling average 167 compliments per year).

Table 3 - Compliments over time

Adult Social Care Services Compliments received by year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	158	161	140	151	217

Chart 8 - Compliments received over time



Below are some examples of compliments received.

"During a long conversation about charging dates and invoices, xx mentioned how kind xx was when they had to do a very late FAB assessment for her late husband who died last July. She said she appreciated it as it was upsetting for her to have to go through the process – especially as she had completed a Postal FAB in August 23 and apparently part of it was received and the rest disappeared, and the bank statements had been originals and she didn't get them back. She had to go over all the information she had provided again, but as xx was so kind she managed to get through it."

"I would like to make you aware of the outstanding and professionalism of the Duty Social Worker xx. Our father xxxx was in hospital he had heart failure and many other things wrong. He was discharged with no package to a small flat in Cirencester, where he lived alone. xx was amazing spoke to Dad with dignity and respect, took his time to help Dad understand. Treated him with compassion and understanding. xx was a fountain of all knowledge. We had a package that enabled him to stay at home. Dad is a very poorly man and xx has enabled Dad to live the best he can with support and have a good quality of life giving him some independence. We don't know how long Dad has but we as a family want to thank xx for what he has done and to be recognised for this."

"xx represents herself and the LA well. There is no big attitude with her. She has worked with us both and has asked us how she can help. She is professional and respectful. I think she does everything well. From the moment we met her, she has been kind, thoughtful, considerate and polite. Out of all the Social Workers we have had, she has been the most respectful, polite and understanding. She is brilliant. xx has explained everything. She has read up about Huntington's and spoken to other professionals. It's not a common condition and the previous worker did not really

understand the disease itself or grasp the spectrum of it. xx has been prepared and is understanding of it. We think xx is doing absolutely brilliantly and she has been a ray of sunshine for us. Any person who works with xx will be very lucky. Her whole attitude to life – she is always smiling and knows when we are struggling. Its important to have a worker who understands. Others could really learn from her – she has the ability to change it all for people.”

“Just wanted to write in to say a huge thank you to the transport staff and drive fitter that dealt with a delivery to the above address this morning. I only ordered yesterday after 3.30pm and it arrived this am. This was an amazing service and was ordered as a prevention of admission, as patient discharged yesterday and could not stand. He declined to go back into hospital, so equipment ordered as a P1 and I could not believe it when it arrived today. Also wanted to say how amazing and helpful the driver fitter was. Unsure of his name but he was so helpful moving the current bed and furniture from the lounge so hospital bed would fit in. Nothing was too much trouble and it really helped the reablement workers to arrange the equipment/environment for the patient. Working together has really helped to keep this patient at home. Really appreciate your help and hard work.”

“I am dropping you a line to express our profound thanks for the kindness, professionalism, and most excellent communication that you gave to our family during the hospital discharge, care at xx and final weeks in xx Nursing Home. From December 2022 you have been on our side. No one could have done more than you did - and your instinctive level of empathy whilst dealing with such difficult issues was exemplary. Thanks largely to you, xxxx had the best possible care in her final months, and we were able to give her a thankful, loving, and positive send-off on Wednesday this week at Cheltenham cemetery. We are all most grateful.”

“The support we have received from the Enablement Team, and in particular xx has been second to none. Following a traumatic family death last year, it became apparent that my relatives had not been coping well, and we didn't think that my uncle was going cope living independently in his home. However, along came xx. Xx was fully aware of the circumstances of my aunts death, and when she met my uncle, she was excellent at putting my uncle at ease by being sensitive and compassionate. This was exactly the right approach for my uncle, as he was initially reluctant to accept any help. xx was incredibly knowledgeable regarding services available to help my uncle improve his living conditions, and the financial support available to him which we were unaware of. xx arranged to complete the application for Attendance Allowance with my uncle, and immediately knew due to his poor mobility and poor health, that he should be entitled to the higher rate, which she successfully secured for him. In addition to this, xx arranged cleaners to carry out a deep clean of my uncles house, and for regular cleaning to then be conducted, she liaised with his GP and the local pharmacy to have his medication dispensed weekly in a blister pack, has set up Telecare all in order to make life more simple and safer for my uncle to manage his medication, which he was previously not doing. xx ordered urine bottles for him to use upstairs due to the bathroom being downstairs, arranged for grab rails to be fitted in the shower and a key box to be fitted outside in case of an emergency. In addition to all of this xx has applied for several grants for items such as a mobility scooter and stairlift. To say that the support my uncle has

received from your service, and in particular xx, has changed his life is an understatement. I don't know where he or indeed, myself and my family would be without everything that has been implemented to allow him to remain living in his home, in cleaner and safer surroundings. A while ago I asked xx for her managers name so that I could contact them to let them know what an incredible job she was doing, but xx never did let me know, so I am delighted to be able to at last feedback on our experience with xx. xx has been nothing less than exceptional and I feel that she should be recognised for all she has done for not only my uncle, but for my family. I honestly can't thank xx enough for what she has done for us, she is incredible! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

3. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their complaint, the complaint can be referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO will usually only accept referrals that have previously been considered through the Local Authority's complaint procedure, however, under the regulatory reforms, the LGSCO now has the discretion to investigate if it is considered that there is no benefit in the Local Authority firstly considering the case.

In 2024/2025, the council received 15 referrals from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman regarding Adult Social Care, in the previous year it received 16.

Of the 15 referrals, 6 led to full investigations. Table 4 LGSCO Decisions 2024-2025 sets out the decisions made on each case by the Ombudsman.

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Chart 9 - LGSCO Complaints and Decisions year on year trends⁶

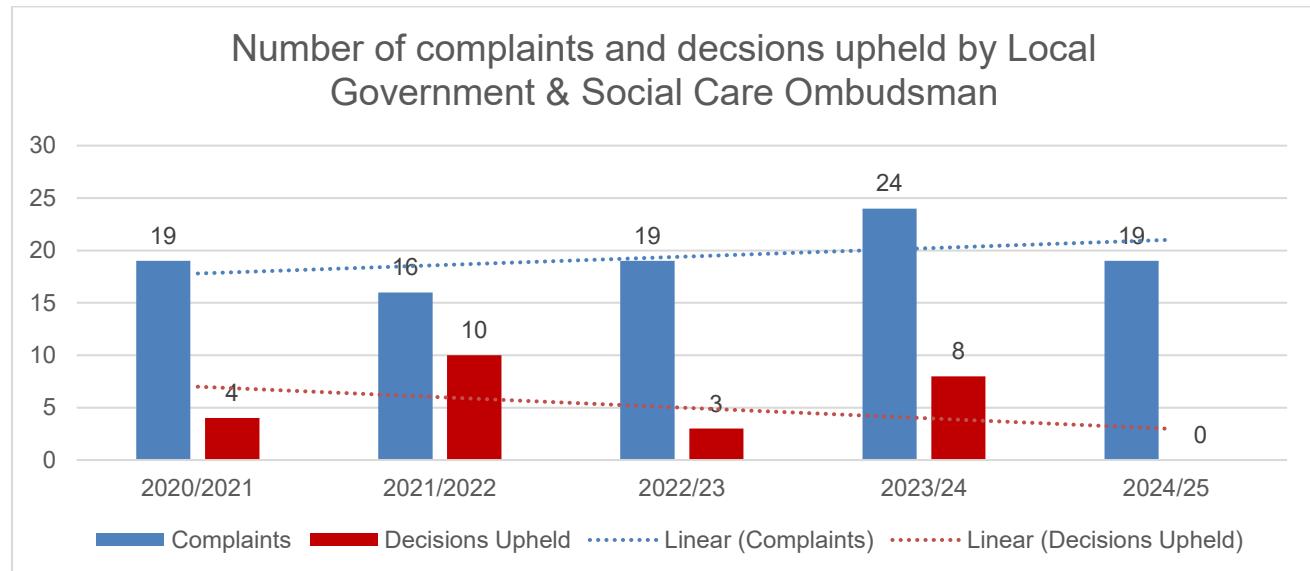
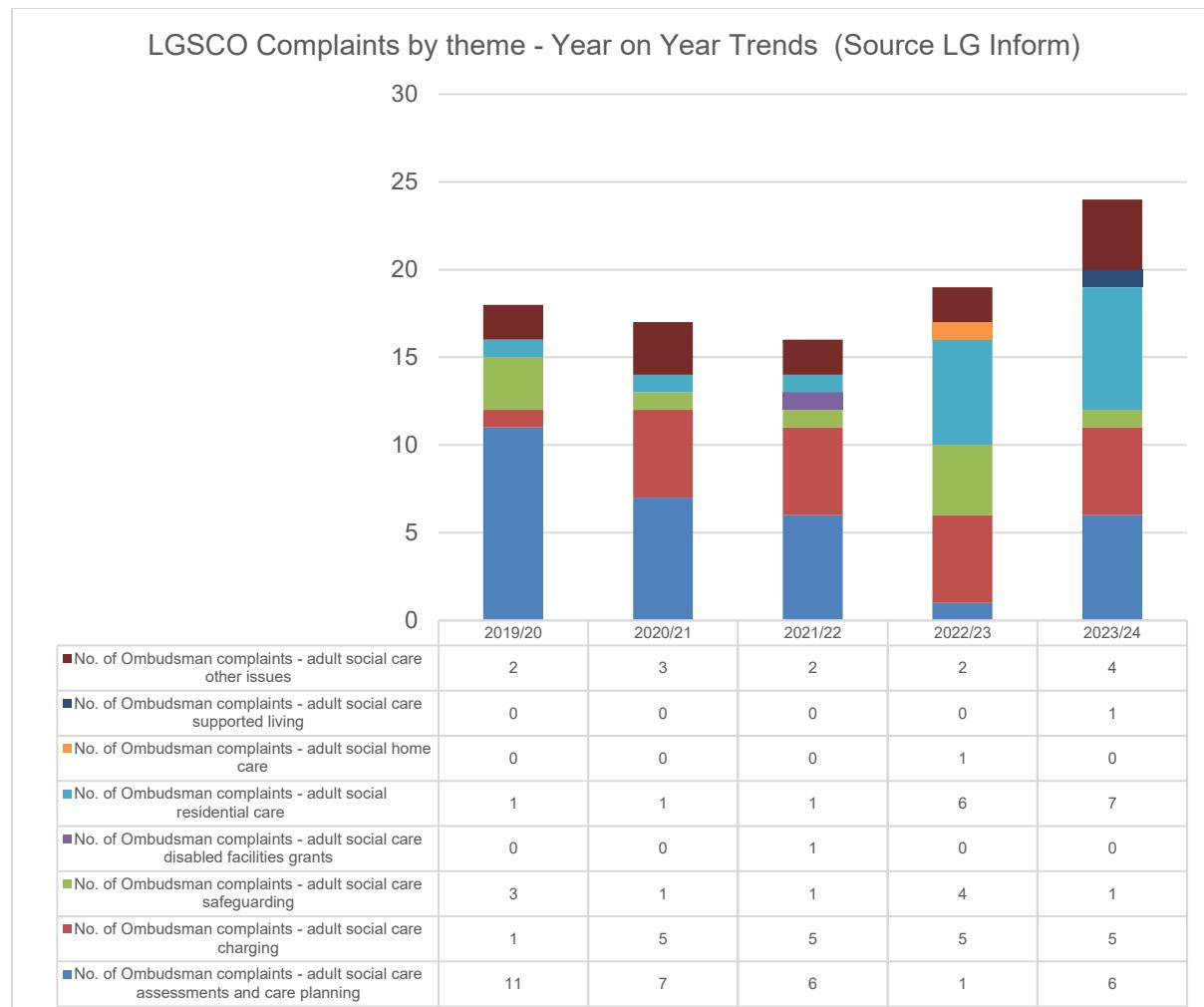


Chart 10 - LGSCO Complaints - Themes year on year.



⁶ Source: LG Inform accessed 20.08.2025

Table 4 LGSCO Decisions 2024-2025

LGSCO Decision received in year ending 31 March 2024				
Closed after initial inquiry	Premature	No fault	Fault/Injustice	No decision made
8	1	2	3	1

Overview of the 3 cases where fault / injustice was found.

Case reference	Summary of complaint	Decision	Remedy and learning
1 - 23020540	Consistently issued incorrect invoices for Day Care attendance because attendance information was not always being entered into GCC systems in a timely way.	There was a delay in inputting data, and this was a fault, causing the individual injustice.	The complainant received £200 in recognition of the fault identified. An apology was provided for the fault.
2 - 24007719	No reasonable allowance was made for a Disability Related Expense in a financial assessment.	Fault was found in the rationale used for declining the Disability Related Expense.	The council was asked to reconsider the request.
3 - 24007998	The council failed to assess an individual's capacity or consult with family before making a decision about respite and delays and lack of action in regard to safeguarding.	There was fault by the council in respect of communication on the safeguarding matter.	An apology was provided for the fault.

4. Comments and Member of Parliament contacts

In addition to managing the statutory complaints procedure and administrating the compliments process, the Complaints Team also deal with a number of other letters and contacts which are usually classed as comments. These contacts are generally concerns or requests for information that can be dealt with without recourse to the formal complaints' procedure. In most cases these are dealt with within 1-2 working days of receipt.

Table 5 - Comments over time

Adult Social Care Services comments/concerns received by year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	203	204	122

Of the 122 comments/concerns, 5 were made via MP's offices around the county. This represents a decrease on the previous year where 13 comments/concerns were recorded by the team from MP's offices.

5. Who is using the Complaints Procedure?

This section looks at who is raising issues, complaints or concerns in regard to Adult Social Care Services and offers some analysis of the equalities and diversity data which has been returned to us.

The following key points can be identified in regard to the people using our complaints processes, and who answered our equalities monitoring questions:

There were 7 complaints received directly from individuals who receive a service and a further 46 from their immediate families.

Equalities Information

- Where it was stated, 79% of complainants identified as White British
- Where it was stated, 43% of complainants identified as female with the rest male or unspecified
- Where it was stated, 50% of complainants identified as having a disability

6. Conclusion

This year's Complaints Annual Report reflects a service that is listening, learning, and acting with purpose. While the number of formal complaints has slightly decreased, we recognise that every piece of feedback—whether a concern, compliment, or comment—is an opportunity to improve the experience of those who rely on us.

We are proud of the progress made in key areas, including reduced assessment waiting times, more timely reviews, and an enhanced digital information and advice offer. These improvements are the result of strong leadership, collaborative working, and a shared commitment to delivering person-centered care.

Importantly, we have strengthened how learning from complaints is embedded into our wider quality assurance and commissioning frameworks. Our Practice Development Team now leads all investigations relevant to operational teams, ensuring consistency and enabling learning to be translated into action. From September 2025, the launch of a new Quality Assurance Team in Commissioning will further enhance our oversight of externally delivered care—supporting providers and holding them to account for delivering safe, high-quality services.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on improving our responsiveness to complaints, strengthening co-production, and ensuring our services are inclusive, transparent, and fair. Planned improvements with our Digital and Information Technology colleagues will enable us to capture data and learning more systematically, providing regular assurance and visibility of key themes and trends. Through the Adults Quality Assurance Board and Adults Practice Quality Board, we will continue to use complaints intelligence to inform our improvement priorities and drive meaningful change.

Above all, we are committed to making the difference that matters—by listening to people's experiences, acting on what we hear, and working together to build a more responsive, compassionate, and trusted adult social care service for Gloucestershire.

Appendices

Appendix 1

A General Summary of The Reasons Given for All Adult Care Services in 2024/25

Communication	Mishandling of information, not complying with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), data breach	2	59
	Delay in provision of information, response, returned contact	22	
	Not being kept informed or involved, not being listened to	13	
	Information, policy or plan not properly explained	19	
	No or little communication being given regarding absence, cancellation or lateness	1	
	Relevant staff not being available at time of contact	2	
Quantity, frequency or charge for a service	Inappropriate charge for service, all disability related expenditure not considered	19	20
	'Tax payers' money wasted	0	
	Unhappy with changes to financial support	1	
Delay in decision making	Decision not provided within given timescales	1	18
	Too long to solve overpayment issue with home or family	3	
	Too long to solve an issue with funding or contributions to care	14	
Discrimination	Discriminated against due to age	0	0
	Discriminated against due to gender	0	
	Discriminated against due to race or nationality	0	
	Discriminated against due to religion	0	
	Discriminated against due to class or on a personal level	0	
	Discriminated against due to mental health or physical health or disabilities	0	
Application of eligibility and assessment criteria	Decision to provide home care not residential care	0	10
	Unhappy with number of home calls offered	0	
	Decision to provide respite care in hospital not at home	0	
	Unhappy with outcome of Care Needs Assessment	6	
	Unhappy with outcome of FAB Assessment	4	

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Unwelcome or disputed decision	Decision to not fund Shared Lives carer at fostering rate	0	6
	Decision to not re-imburse costs	1	
	Initiation/outcome of Safeguarding enquiry	3	
	Individual's request for additional funds refused	2	
	Additional funding not agreed for nursing placement	0	
	Decision to place SU at different home or respite	0	
	Inappropriate DOLs or Best Interest decision	0	
	Decision to move person back into their own home rather than with relatives	0	
	Decision to move SU from or to residential placement	0	
Quality or appropriateness of a service	Quality of charging process	5	44
	Errors made in assessment, letters, statements, minutes	0	
	Person's wishes overlooked by decision	5	
	Individual managed by incorrect Social Work Team	0	
	Key safe damaged by staff	0	
	Quality of community meals or lateness of delivery	0	
	Telecare/GIS equipment not working correctly, unhappy with service	3	
	Reduction of care or support/care or support options offered not appropriate	3	
	No benefit seen from GCC's involvement	0	
	Quality of residential, nursing, respite care	6	
	Quality of supported living provision	1	
	Quality of domiciliary care	3	
	Inappropriately chasing a debt	12	
	Errors with invoice, invoice received late, time taken to adjust invoice	5	
	Incorrect Mental Capacity Assessment	1	
	Failure to protect from financial abuse	0	
	Worker works part time, is never contactable	0	
	Equipment not delivered or collected when promised or within reasonable timescale	2	

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Delivery or non-delivery of a service	Care needs assessment/financial assessment took too long or was never started	10	33
	Carers assessment not completed or referred	0	
	Delay in finding a suitable placement	5	
	Delay in applying FNC or CHC or correct charge to GCC system	1	
	Limited or no support provided, support not provided in a timely way following assessment	15	
Attitude or behaviour of staff	Staff member displaying a lack of empathy or being unhelpful or unprofessional	12	23
	Staff member displaying a lack of honesty	2	
	Staff member displaying a lack of knowledge or competence	6	
	Staff member not listening to individual's wishes or pushing their own agenda	1	
	Staff member not talking to interested parties in the case or listening to other professionals	1	
	Staff member displaying rude or aggressive behaviour	1	

Appendix 2

The Complaints Process Explained

What is a complaint?

'An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about services delivered or commissioned on behalf of an individual by the Local Authority, which requires a response'.

Who can make a complaint?

- Anyone who is dissatisfied with the service they have received from Adult Social Care or with an Adult Social Care decision, action or omission may make a complaint. This includes:
- adults with care and support needs
- their carers
- young people aged under 18, their carers and young carers aged under 18 who are transitioning to Adult Social Care
- a representative of someone who has used our Adult Social Care Service

(including someone who has died)

- Anyone who is self-funding their care and support arrangements and has entered into an agreement independently of the Council with a social care provider (such as a care home or a home-care agency), should complain directly to The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

Stages of the complaint's procedure

The statutory complaints procedure has 2 stages:

1. **Stage 1:** This is the most important stage of the complaint's procedure, and the one at which service areas / external contractors providing services on our behalf are expected to resolve as many complaints as possible.

We will investigate complaints thoroughly, fairly and without delay. In most cases we will provide the outcome of our investigation in writing within twenty (20) working days of receiving the complaint. If we are unable to complete our investigation within this timeframe, we will agree a reasonable deadline for a response with the complainant. Unless a complaint was made anonymously, we will keep complainants informed about progress and about any unexpected delays.

2. **Stage 2:** We encourage anyone who is concerned about the final outcome of their complaint to discuss their concerns with the Complaints Manager to explore any further avenue that may provide a resolution.

Anyone who is not satisfied with the final outcome has the right to ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review their complaint. We will provide information about how to contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and will co-operate with any requests from the Ombudsman.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman



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The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman is an independent government body, empowered to investigate complaints about councils when the council's own investigations have not provided resolution. They offer a free service, and can both offer advice and '*investigate complaints in a fair and independent way*' (Source - <https://www.lgo.org.uk>).

Complainants retain the right to approach the Ombudsman at any time, though the Ombudsman will typically expect complainants to have completed the council's complaints process before they investigate matters themselves.

For more details please click on,

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

References

¹ <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/0dyof4uo/asc-complaints-policy-oct-2021.pdf>