Appendix B: Adult's Services Statutory Information

Report: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Findings and Statutory Complaints Reporting – Dorset Council

Reporting Period: 2024–2025

Overview.

The Infographic provides key information at a glance in a format that allows the Quarters to be directly compared. We include the specific the number of complaints and the manner in which they were considered. We have specified the number of complaints which were justified, and the number referred to the Ombudsman. Complaints should be regarded as an important tool and be performance monitored to ensure the Council can evidence that we are a learning organisation. Compliments should also be valued and communicated effectively to staff. Good practice and learning should be disseminated. These are feedback as soon as we receive them and are highlighted in internal quarterly reporting

1 Complaint Volumes

The Corporate Complaints Team reports a notable increase in complaints for 2024–25 compared to the previous year:

Directorate	2024–25	2023–24	% Change
Adult Social Care	**201**	**126**	**+60%**
Adult Non-Social Care	**133**	**126**	**+6%**

This increase is partly attributed to improved complaint capture protocols, ensuring that complaints received via MPs or the Chief Executive are now routed through a single point of entry where possible. This has resulted in a more accurate and representative picture of complaints across Adult Services.

2 Complaint Themes and Subject matter

We report on the following themes, shown below by Quarter

Q1

Complaint Themes	2024-5
Service Provision / Quality of Service	15
Disagreement with Decision	15
Finance	8
Customer Service	4
Communication	2

Q2

Complaint Themes	2023-4
Service Provision / Quality of Service	23
Disagreement with Decision	12
Finance	4

Customer Service	1
Communication	1

Q3

Complaint Themes	2024-5
Service Provision / Quality of Service	17
Disagreement with Decision	13
Finance	10
Customer Service	2
Communication	5
Other	2

Q4

Complaint Themes	2024-25
Service Provision / Quality of Service	21
Disagreement with Decision	4
Finance	3
Customer Service	4
Communication	4
Other	1

3 Learning and Engagement

Dorset Council's Complaints Team are very proud of the fact we have collected 64 learning points from complaint cases in 2024-25. This is an increase of 220%, which demonstrates a tremendous improvement in engagement, and doubtless a success from the Teams steps in channelling complaints correctly through the process, and preventing over-escalation and bypassing process. A full list will appear in the forthcoming annual report.

There is no doubt that the engagement with the Quality Assurance (QA) group, and regular meetings with locality heads have improved the ability to learn from complaints and implement service improvements.

Case ID /Team or Locality	What we have learned from Complaints	What we have done as a result to improve practice
COM/2304	There were gaps in decision-making, communication and practice regarding the status of the placement at Casterbridge Lodge.	To avoid a repetition of the errors that occurred we will be reviewing matters with the practitioners and managers involved with a view to supporting their ongoing professional development.

COM/6470 Formal ASC (BL)	Communications from both Dorset Council OT's + external services can be overwhelming and confusing – we need to be more mindful of the amount of information provided to service users, and the way information is communicated	APM will make every effort to discuss this with the Occupational Therapists in the team and further appropriate organisations such as Millbrook Healthcare ensuring that communication needs are identified and prioritised appropriately to reduce any confusion and/or anxieties moving forward.
COM/6683 ASC KR	In response to your complaint, we have concluded that we could have communicated more frequently and consistently with the complainant and his representatives, and the complaint is partially justified.	To prevent other users of the service experiencing a similar outcome we have put in place clear tracking of the financial assessment, with checks at 1, 2 and 3 weeks to ensure these are returned to allow the financial assessment to be completed and where absent individuals will receive confirmation at week 4 that they will be responsible for the full cost of their care.
COM 6723 Formal ASC (DMc)	Guidance not clearly documented with new care home placement in respect of having family and friends visit	Social Worker spoken to. Ensure no miscommunication going forward
COM 6704 Formal ASC (DMc)	Confused language used by the Council regarding different financial assessments	Be more explicit in guidance and start date for charging people who self fund and clarifying expectations about the care and support available
COM 6758 Formal (KR)	Investigation findings: • The accommodation officers provided generic advice on housing benefits and did not follow up due to lack of further contact. • The tenant was incorrectly advised to wait for a housing benefit award before making payments,	Learnings from this complaint: • Improved Communication: Clear and accurate information about rent payments and housing benefits must be provided to tenants to prevent confusion and avoidable arrears. • Enhanced Training: Accommodation officers require better training to understand and explain discretionary housing payments accurately.

	leading to arrears. They later made a payment of £835 towards these arrears.	• Rigorous Property Inspections: Properties must be thoroughly inspected before letting to ensure compliance with safety and habitability standards.
	• The property was not inspected before letting, leading to non-compliance with mandatory requirements. Remedial training and strict performance measures have been implemented.	• Timely Maintenance Checks: All necessary certifications, such as gas checks, must be completed before a property is let. • Comprehensive Cleaning: Ensure all aspects of property cleaning, including carpets, are completed before tenancy begins, addressing any logistical issues such as electricity supply.
	• The gas check was delayed, making the property non-compliant at let. • Mould in the property was attributed to living conditions and lack of ventilation, not present at initial inspection.	• Pre-Let Appliance Testing: Conduct PAT testing and functionality checks on all provided appliances to ensure they are in working order before tenants move in. • Responsive Repairs: Promptly address reported issues with property fixtures and appliances to maintain living standards and tenant satisfaction.
	• The property was cleaned prior to tenancy except for the carpets due to electricity supply issues. • The washing machine was not initially checked or PAT tested, but was replaced after	• Continuous Monitoring: Implement strict performance measures and regular monitoring to ensure compliance with all procedures and policies. "In conclusion I can confirm that there have been several noncompliance issues and failures in service delivery, I have discussed these serious concerns with my team and have started putting strict measures in place so this is not repeated in the future as well as ensuring these tasks are embedded within our policies and

	being reported defective.	procedures, which will be rigorously measured and monitored on a regular basis.”
COM/6785 ASC (KR)	Special Equipment always carries more risk as it cannot be exchanged for another held as stock within the local equipment service, but practitioners continue to request changes to the stock catalogue to meet the needs of Dorset residents	We plan to review the guidance to staff on the repair or replacement of special equipment to reduce unnecessary delays in resolving the issues.
COM/6935 (LC)	apologised for not allocating a professional until the 30th of April 2024 when the referral was first given to us in Feb 2024. This was due to the shortage of staff within our team. The case was always an urgent case to prioritise, and the service did their best to prioritise this case.	a social work has been allocated to the case, we recognise the need to communicate with the NHS team more effectively in the future. a 117 response is always prioritised, therefore, any delay in allocation would be minimal. Also, manager will attend the 117 discharge meetings when available, and this will continue if a professional has not been allocated.
COM/6925 ASC (KR)	• Contact Dorset Council’s CHC Team to explore the possibility of backdating the start date for the CHC funding. • We will look further into the actions of the initial allocated worker further due to the impact their actions have had on complainants capital sum. This is to ensure this does not happen in the future.	• Continue to review waiting lists to minimise delays in allocation. We have also made changes to the way the team process new referrals into the team so we can see people sooner where possible.
COM/6371 A SC (LW)	Complainant gave clear instructions of wanting to give notice of accommodation. We have not provided care and	Manger confirmed that they have now put measures in place to ensure that this doesn’t happen again in the future. I am sorry for any distress that this may have caused you.

	support in the timely manner that we would expect it to be delivered. Upon reflection, care should have been reallocated to a named worker to coordinate and support the complainant's care needs, which would have perhaps prevented this issue.	
COM 7065 A SC (DMc)	Unhappy with communication style of staff	Discussed with appropriate staff.
COM 6956 ASC (KR)	Raised the issue that clear concerns about the quality of care being provided by the care home I believe that the issues have been raised with the provider and that they have taken steps to address the concerns'	A Social Worker will be assigned to this case to coordinate with you and the provider to address concerns. The concerns and the provider's response have been forwarded to the Quality & Improvement team, who will seek a response and action plan from the care home. This will be monitored during regular inspections.
COM 7065 ASC (DMc)	Style of communication	Staff member spoken to and advised for future communication
COM/6885 A SC (BL)	Communication has been below standard expected of Dorset Council	Financial assessment has been requested and a request to expedite due to delay New social worker arranged - they will be in contact to discuss monitoring of Direct Payments Concerns to be discussed with original social worker during supervision session(s) and feedback will be provided to family by end of June 2024
COM/7071 ASC (BL)		There will be an initial review of placement in mid-July We are currently searching to commission an alternative care home that will be closer to

		family, however being mindful of subjects' best interests
COM/ 7087 ASC (KR)		Discussed the learning points: how changes to care are communicated to service users with the previously allocated SW. I have also reiterated the importance of checking dates before sending out information. As previously mentioned, I have also re-allocated the case at your request
COM 6912 ASC (DMc)	Crisis experienced by adult in social care which should have been dealt with differently by the Team	System wide safeguarding enquiry taking place to ensure lessons are learnt form this
COM/7211 A WA (LW)	One of the team's Social Workers had contact with Destiny Healthcare, and the Council copied and pasted the email received from CQC and sent it to the Registered Manager and CEO of Destiny Healthcare who were able to determine who had raised this. Manager acknowledges that we could have made the enquiries in a way that would have made the complainant less identifiable to the employer and also acknowledges that, given the complainant had previously raised concerns with his employer, there was a risk that he could have been identified by them.	Manager to review the information we provide to complainants at the start of the complaints process, so we ensure expectations regarding anonymity are realistic. Manager will also be following up with the worker involved and the wider Safeguarding Team to make sure information is shared appropriately in future.
COM/7610 A SC (CC)	Client felt care plan was not effective/suitable.	A joint visit undertaken by ASC and OT would have enabled them to discuss the manual handling and care plan with Mrs G and her daughter together which may have been more effective and better joined up working.

		In future if a DC OT is also involved we will try and undertake a joint visit to address all concerns for the individual at one time.
COM/7256 A SC (LW)	The financial declaration and how charging would be implemented by Dorset Council was not explained clearly to the complainant by Altogether Care.	Manager advised that it was a pilot scheme that was being run at the time and Adults have now provided Altogether Care with some appropriate wording to hand out in the future.
COM/7243 ASC (LC)	Failure to communicate or advise on Joint FundIng Customer found out through an appeal about the joint funding application outcome That this had happened two months prior to your appeal but not communicated	offer apology on behalf of Dorset Council that this outcome was related in this way and that no formal notification was communicated to family at an earlier point. We recognise that this outcome should have been communicated to customers representatives at a much earlier stage and have since amended processes to prevent such a situation occurring for others in the future.
COM/6920 ASC (BL)	Contents of assessment were recorded incorrectly, and this impacted receiving grant	Partial Justification Discussed with worker to ensure that points of view of family members are clearly recorded on assessment. Manager to also consider further training required Offer of reassessment
COM/7366 ASC (KR)	Replaced SW from the individual case as requested by the complainant and removed references to complainant criminal past in the personal care plan (which bears no relevance to care plan)	
COM/7415 ASC (KR)	The complaint left a voicemail for a finical assessment to be moved, this was not picked up until after the date of the assessment	• Apologies were given • In response the complaint, the assessment manager “considered the monitoring the of the team email inbox during the busiest periods of the year and put in place new processes to ensure that emails requesting that appointments are rearranged are picked up in a more timely manner.”

COM/7243	1. Errors contained within the response, specifically the following points of the chronology: 2. grievance at the costs you have incurred in appealing the outcome of CHC eligibility with NHS Dorset	An apology for the quality of communication about this was included in the last letter to you and I wish to reiterate that in this letter to you as well. Having reviewed the correspondence between yourself and the officer concerned, I can see that you did not receive responses that you wished for during this period. discussed this with management team. Feedback on this point will be used for future team training. For this, apology on behalf of our service.
COM/7446 A SC (KR)	Officer gave information and advice about considering a move to St Martin's House, including that prospective tenants should be on the housing register and have a critical need for care and support. Manager identified learning around the clarity of the information given by Officer, which may have helped daughter to understand the purpose of extra care housing and why the Officer believed the father would not be eligible.	The phrase "critical" does not explain that prospective tenants need to require 24-hour care and manager has addressed this with the officer as part of his learning and development. Manager has worked with Officer to develop his professional curiosity skills which may have negated the need for complainant to call back in with further information about father's situation and led to a smoother customer journey to the Locality Team.
COM/7503 A SC (LW)	A referral for advocacy was not made at an earlier stage	The benefits of joint working with our Advocacy colleagues will be shared in supervision sessions and re-visited in our next Team Meeting. I have also spoken to our admin team, to request that Swan Advocacy are invited to a team meeting in the near future, to discuss how we can work more closely. Manager confirmed that, as a team, they are undertaking updated training in relation to Autism and working with services users who have Personality Disorders. The aim of this is to

	Update training in relation to Autism and working with services users who have Personality Disorders	improve the customer journey and minimise the frustrations/complaints that you have highlighted.
COM/7594 A SC (BL)	Complainant felt bombarded with emails.	The use of effective communication will be addressed in a supervision session, by the manager, with the social worker. Manager will also be proposing actions of ongoing training in respect of the access and use of effective communication with our customers, in particular those within the deaf and blind community.

	What we have Learned	What we have done
COM/4826 (TB)	There was a gap in the two-way communication and understanding which was unrelated to the cost of care.	Manager discussed with social worker and explored and agreed learning around the following; 1. To summarise what was agreed at any future meetings and send this out to those involved for clarity. 2. To organise follow-up calls and to check in with relevant parties and evaluate progress. 3. To instil methods to maintain these and adhere to them as good practice standards.
COM 4516 (DMc)	Communication during assessment process could be clearer to ensure the completion of assessments are transparent	CHC Hub to review communication throughout the assessment process and confirm good practice
COM/4221 (LC)		As a conclusion, I think your complaint is partially justified, the garage was entered and the mobile hoist brought through into the home causing distress to both your parents, however these events could have been avoidable given that various OT's on duty covering the previous 2 weeks had requested that the hoist be moved into the home. ***** regrets entering the garage to locate the hoist and will not do so again in similar circumstances. We have allocated the case to an alternative Occupational Therapist and your family will not have to work with ***** going forward.
COM/4896 (LW) (A SC)	Alongside the Major Adaptation Panel we hold for funding, we hold a complex case panel where there is conflict of opinion between staff and families so we	Manager will be taking this recommendation back to the Housing Standards Team, Adult Social Care service and Commission service as well as our contract provider.

	can look at the issues across the service before they escalate.	
COM/4862 (A SC – Purbeck)) (LW)	Social Worker did not follow Dorset Council policies in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) or follow best practice when assessing care needs.	Manger will discuss the concerns raised with the Social Worker and ensure that she undertakes further training in relation to completing Mental Capacity Act Assessments, understanding the DoLS procedures and legal requirements and further development in assessing under the Care Act.
COM/4911 A SC North (BL)	Breakdown in clear communication between Service User, Social Worker and Medica Professional Unnecessary distressed caused	PARTIALLY JUSTIFIED In order to adopt a more positive relationship between service user and Dorset Council, decision has been made to end Social Worker's involvement and if necessary, transfer case to another SW should further support or work be needed. If there are no further concerns raised by Safeguarding teams and all parties are satisfied and happy, then service users request for referral will be ended with no further action.
COM/4626 A WA Housing Solutions (BL)		Goodwill gesture made £549.13
COM/4571 A SC (LW)	• We did not communicate effectively after we received the first complaint. • There was a void of time before the Locality Manager picked up the complaint when the previous person responded left Dorset Council. • We did not effectively keep the complainant updated with the progress of the complaint.	• Head of Specialist Services feels he should have been more proactive in offering an apology, when staff member left and has taken this learning on board. • Head of Specialist Services has reminded the team that, if someone has attended a meeting, they should be sent a copy of notes / minutes.

COM/3651 A WA Housing (LC)	Confusion and poor communication regarding when complainant's mother had started paying for her accommodation.	In recognition of DC's part in this, we have agreed not to pursue outstanding fees.
COM5414 Financial Assessment (BL)	Consideration of all information available before coming to a decision.	Discussion with team re ensuring all appropriate information has been gathered. Action completed 01 Sept'23
COM/5070 Housing (LC)	Email sent to both parties using cc function resulted in a minor breach of the tenants data.	Manager has spoken directly to the officer responsible and her manager - it was a genuine error. She is aware of the use of CC and BCC in emails. Email guidance has been issued to all officers in Housing Standards about the use of BCC and CC on emails. Use of BCC and CC was discussed at a team meeting Reminder emails to the Housing Standards team about the issue and use of BCC and CC have since been sent.
COM/5922 (BL) ASC Safeguarding	Partial justification We need to be clear in our dealings with service users when discussing matters over the telephone and when we are not in an office environment – this can help to minimise any misunderstanding or confusion The provider and Registered Manager should have advised of the current situation at the home, enabling the complainant time to consider whether the placement was suitable. As the CQC are the regulator it is their responsibility to ensure that Providers exert their duty in this respect. Dorset Council acknowledges actions regarding the care home as being too late given the complainants experiences, however the circumstances around the complaint have had an impact and are contributing	Team discussion to ensure noise during phone calls is minimised or an explanation is provided to ensure this is not misconstrued in future. We have reissued guidance to all providers about the identification and management of contractures. This is to ensure that these are prevented from developing, and that the manual handling of any person with a contracture is managed carefully to reduce the person experiencing pain and any further reduction in mobility. As part of NHS England (enhanced health in care homes programme) work has been initiated to improve the quality of, and access to, healthcare advice and support in care home settings. Dorset Council are now awaiting final decision from the NMC

	to learning across the system to help ensure that other people and families in similar circumstances do not have the same experience.	
COM/5853 (KR) ASC	When a staff member is off sick we need to ensure we check promptly what appointments they have on the day and make contact in a timely manner to cancel/rearrange, hopefully limiting the impact on the clients	Manager to discuss with Management colleagues in the team to ensure there is a robust process in place for this
COM/5981 A SC (BL)		Considering the individual circumstances XXXX, their age and recognising the changes in their health condition, I have decided to make a compassionate decision for her to remain at XXXX and be funded by Dorset Council. We confirm that we will be backdating this award to the date their funding fell below the threshold as advised by the latest financial assessment.
COM/5226 A SC (BL)	Though SW acted in the best interests (re safeguarding concerns) the intervention was misplaced as they did not consult the LPoA's	We will be taking forward some refresher training for teams around working with people who have LPOA's and decision making. Fee's will be reimbursed (£2,600)
COM 6239 A SC (BL)	Social Worker used inappropriate language when speaking to complainant	Social Worker apologised and matter discussed in supervision
COM/6344 ASC – LC	Best Value search was requested within 4 months of previous search moving a placement from temporary to perm. Feedback from brokerage was that this was not necessary and a desktop review of market was sufficient.	Improvements in process between Brokerage and Ops around use of BVS. This will be linked into the brokerage development workstream of transformation.
COM/6242 ASC – KR	Customer felt the duty worker lacked empathy towards situation	As a learning point, I will ensure that they reflect on how they ask questions and also how they offer advice on alternative provisions that may have already been tried
COM/5654 A SC (LW)	The Council will review its response to the safeguarding concern and consider what different steps it should have taken.	The Safeguarding Team should have considered progressing the concern to a section 42 (2) enquiry, this would have been the appropriate response to the concerns raised to allow a full review to have taken place. Further training has

	The Council will also review the way it monitors safeguarding training within the care providers it commissions.	taken place within the service, and we have now incorporated an authorisation process at each stage of the safeguarding process. Reminder sent to team by manager stating: Please ensure you always triangulate the information you monitor during the visits ensuring: • You check the provider's policies and procedures and that they have a copy of Dorset's Safeguarding policies in place. • Ensure the provider is aware that they must report all safeguarding concerns including those that may relate to another provider or health & social care organisation. • Training records demonstrate all staff have received safeguarding training and that the provider assesses staff understanding through supervision and that refresher training is available. • Any incidents identified within care records and supporting documentation that you identify as a safeguarding concern are followed up with the provider to ensure an appropriate safeguarding alert has been raised with the Safeguarding Triage Team. Also discussed at team meeting.
COM 6394 ASC (KR)	Dealing with complex conversations on the telephone phone, particularly specialised needs	Discussions with duty worker and consider any training and learning to support duty role
COM/7895 A SC (LW)	The standard process for completing trusted assessments at the time of this DST occurring did not include members of the DST being contacted by Dorset Council following the DST occurring. Manger stated that there would be value in doing this going forward.	When receiving trusted assessor assessments in the future, the family member of the person will be contacted directly by Dorset Council staff to confirm the views given and provide opportunity for clarification of the needs for the person being assessed. Before signing off the DST, the member of staff in the Dorset Council CHC Hub will query if the recommended outcome has already been shared

		with the family member if they were in attendance at the DST meeting.
COM/6708 (LC)	• *Customer asked that the debt generated by Council error, be expunged.* • *Customer asked for letter of apology, not an email. The email sent to me followed on from a corrected email and, to date, I have been unable to print it out.* • *An invoice or credit note, that states that the 'debt' is cancelled and was generated due to Internal error.* • *Furthermore, there is new information, supplied to Direct payments, of Juliet's income for the year in question. She effectively received less from Universal credit which would have resulted in a different and reduced care payment.*	following complaint the outstanding debt has been removed from our invoicing system. Unfortunately, the wording that can be used on the invoices is limited to certain phrases but the invoice received should be considered in line with this letter which clarifies that the customer did provide the evidence of the change in the mothers income to Dorset Council and the invoice was raised due to an internal error when the information was not shared with other teams who also required the information. The resultant debt has therefore been cleared from the invoicing system in full and apologised sincerely for distress caused to as a result of this error. In response to complaint, manager has put some training in place across the team, to ensure clarity around the sharing of information between teams where necessary, whilst also having consideration for the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
COM 7447 A SC (DMc)	Carers did not attend at expected time Carers did not provide appropriate service when finding person on the floor	Community hospitals to reiterate with all individuals leaving hospital on a short-term service that individuals and their families are aware that the support is not time specific – review of comms by care allocation team which confirmed when booking RCR support for discharge, email states care time unspecific Staff to consider if there are any risks that individuals might attempt to get out of bed unsupported, what telecare could support others present in the property to be alerted via sensors to prevent the likelihood of a fall and subsequent long periods on the floor and to consider any floor to chair lifting equipment that could

		support an individual in this circumstance – Shared at discharge and flow meeting with acute and community hospital leads and completed September 2024
COM/ ASC LC	Referral to Compass	Apology that no referral was made to Compass until customer had to intervene and quote Dorset policies. We will review why this was missed and ensure that staff are reminded of the appropriate process for such referrals to prevent similar situations.
	Prioritisation of Financial Assessment	Social care worker should have requested a financial assessment as soon as KF was identified as having eligible needs and being below the capital limit, regardless of how they would be met. This has been addressed with the social worker, and manager has arranged for the whole team to have an updated training session around direct payments so they are clear on the process and improvements can be made to avoid this again. Acknowledged that this may have created confusion and inconvenience. Training has also been arranged for the financial assessment process and practitioners' advice.
	Hourly rate discrepancy	Regarding the rate of £15.50 that you were initially given and the subsequent communication from Compass stating that only £13 per hour could be paid, apology for the confusion and inconsistency. This is a discussion that the social worker should have had with the customer, and I apologise if this was not the case. Manager has requested that the newly allocated social worker review this with you to ensure the appropriate rate is paid.
	Request for bank statements and GDPR	We understand customers discomfort in providing personal bank statements and the concerns around GDPR compliance. Your concerns about GDPR are being taken seriously, and manager has spoken with the financial team to address them appropriately. They responded that your bank statements were requested as you had chosen to be a DWP appointee for X and subsequently had her income paid into your account. Therefore, although the account is solely in your name, the money belongs to customer and daughter. Should you wish not to

		disclose your details, you can arrange for X's income to be paid into an account in X's name. Apology that you have not received the paperwork, including a copy of the care plan, from the Social Worker. This documentation is essential, and the delay is unacceptable. Customer did not get feedback promised in the letter from the Area Manager, dated 14th June 2024. Appropriate training has been put in place following feedback. There has also been a newly named social worker, and we have addressed the supervision issues with the previous social worker.
	Care Plan documentation Feedback from area manager New social worker contact	Apology for lack of communication. A simple text or email introduction should have been arranged, and we will address this.
COM/7739 A SC CB	Complaint around standards at young person's accommodation - list of actions required and monitoring needed.	Live action plan set up by complaints to monitor. Social worker allocated to review actions with facility manager after 1 month and 3 months.
COM/8026 LC	Have been on a waiting list for a social worker, to be told my son is not unwell enough	In response to complaint, have changed the way the referrals are screened at the point they are received into the team. We now have a staff member calling the person, or the referrer, upon receipt of it into the team. This enables us to gather the information needed to fully risk assess a situation prior to making allocation decisions. Customers situation discussed with the Area Practice Manager for Carers in Dorset, who has advised we create a referral for the customer. This will be to offer support in caring role. Manager confirmed that contact with the Carers Case Worker has already been established with a view to undertaking the assessment at the earliest mutual convenience.
COM 7932 A SC (DMc)	Request for a potential package of care declined by the care allocation team and there being a communication breakdown at	Support implemented for workers and discussed in supervision and at team meetings

	this point which prolonged the process	
COM 7884 ASC (CB)	Staff member did not fully understand impact of their communication with customer with sensory loss.	Staff working with deafblind individuals are to attend training on sensory loss and deafblind training. SW to attend within the next 6 months.
COM 7571 ASC (CB)	Complaint about communication with customer from Traveller community	In response to your complaint, we have revisited our approach to supporting people from the Traveller community and are actively seeking an update to our training of July 2022 to ensure that we have a good understanding of the issues facing people from those communities when working with us to achieve positive outcomes for them.
COM/7608 A NSC (JK)	Complaint regarding ASB and safety fears from DC RSI property	• Increased Surveillance: Installing security cameras in communal areas to monitor and deter anti-social activities. • Regular Patrols: Enhancing the frequency of patrols by housing officers and community safety teams to ensure regular monitoring and immediate response if anti-social behaviour is detected. • Support Services: Offering support services and counselling for those involved in anti-social behaviour to address underlying issues and prevent recurrence. • Enforcement Actions: Enforcing tenancy and licence agreements strictly, including issuing warnings, penalties, and Notices to Quit for repeated breaches, which could lead to eviction. • Collaboration with Police: Working closely with the police to ensure a prompt response to criminal activities and anti-social behaviour, and to aid in the prosecution of offenders. • Educational Programs: Introducing educational programs aimed at promoting good behaviour, conflict resolution, and respect for communal living.
COM/6300 LGSCO A SC (KR) Paid: £200	The Council and Trust acted correctly in changing Miss Y's support but failed in communication, causing distress to Miss Y and Mrs X. They will apologise, improve processes, and make a symbolic payment.	• Apologise and pay £100 each to Miss Y for distress caused by poor communication regarding her ASD. • Apologise and pay £100 each to Mrs X for uncertainty caused by failing to record Miss Y's wishes on information sharing. • Within three months, report to the Ombudsmen on staff training in

		ASD communication, accurate record-keeping, and revising protocols collaboratively with Miss Y and Mrs X.
COM/8032 A SC (CB)	Complaint about comments made by social worker.	Staff coached to be more reflective of their comments and the environment in which they are made.
COM/8154 ASC (BL)	We must emphasise to the individual authorising the care package of the direct impact in any delay of agreement can have long-term psychological impact to the person who was deemed fit for discharge from a hospital setting.	Partially justified We will in future ensure this information is emphasised to facilitate a quicker timeframe to authorise.
COM/7681 ASC (CB)	In response to your complaint we will continue to work with our health colleagues to ensure that they are clear around services being provided upon people's discharge from hospital. We will ensure the outcome of this complaint is shared with the teams within the council involved to provide clear learning in relation to communication and managing issues quickly to alleviate stress to complainants.	We have spoken to the hospital managers about the discharge hub communication of D2A packages of care.
COM/8165 LC	Signed paperwork to handover appointee of sons finances. Name was wrong, and customer had not initialled the changes, so the document wasn't legal. Concerns with sons finances being taken over and requested another social worker.	Manager spent time discussing finances and confirmed benefits now go into his bank. Discussed that at this time we would not be in a position to change Jakes social worker. In response to complaint, have reminded staff that if changes are made on documents they need to be initialled by the person.
COM/7757 LC	*T*here was difficulty in transferring your care and support to Somerset Council Financial assessment review update sent whilst moving	In response to complaint, we have reminded staff of our responsibilities when someone moves to another local authority area to ensure a smooth continuation of care.

COM/8069 LC £300	Failure to Communicate or Even Advise on Joint Funding	We have decided not to investigate Mr X's complaint about poor communication relating to funding his mother's care. The Council has upheld the complaint and apologised. It will make a payment to Mr X to recognise the uncertainty caused.
COM/7712 KR ASC	Communication Issues: Acknowledged that communication between and within services did not meet expected standards, resulting in unnecessary stress and anxiety for the complainant's family. Recognised the need to ensure other staff members are fully informed and prepared to provide support when a social worker is unavailable. Staff Interaction and Sensitivity: Identified that staff interactions, particularly within the Integrated Community Rehabilitation Team (ICRT), need improvement in the use of language and non-verbal communication to maintain professionalism and clarity. Care Assessment and Delivery: Recognised the limitations in care assessments, including the importance of in-person evaluations where possible, and the need for accurate documentation. Financial Guidance and Clarity: Acknowledged the importance of providing clear and accurate information about financial policies (e.g., Deferred Payment Agreements and the 12-Week Property Disregard) to avoid confusion.	Improved Communication Protocols: Reviewed internal communication processes to ensure better coordination between departments and services. Reinforced the importance of maintaining accessible and up-to-date case records for all team members. Staff Training and Reflection: Held reflective discussions with team members to improve the use of language and tone in interactions with service users. Emphasised the need for greater sensitivity and clarity when providing recommendations and addressing concerns. Care Assessment Practices: Promoted in-person assessments where practical and enhanced protocols for remote assessments. Implemented a review process to ensure care assessments are accurate before being shared with families. Financial Guidance Procedures: Obtained legal advice to address unique financial situations and established a precedent for handling similar cases in future. Improved training for the Finance Team to ensure clear and consistent communication about care costs and financial contributions.
COM/7339 KR ASC	Acknowledgment of a disconnect between assessed care needs and actual care provision, particularly regarding one-to-one	Revamping the duty system to adopt a more consistent approach to managing cases.

	care needs, which were identified but not actioned promptly. Recognition of inadequate communication between social services, the family, and care providers, leading to confusion and frustration. Identification of inconsistent handling of cases due to the involvement of multiple duty workers and a lack of case allocation. Understanding that miscommunication regarding funding responsibilities caused stress and misunderstanding for the family. Realisation that errors and delays in processes, such as assessments and brokerage for care, contributed to unsuitable placements and insufficient care.	Commitment to ensuring a clearer communication process between service users, their families, and the council, with a focus on aligning care assessments with outcomes before starting brokerage searches. Decision to waive the service user contribution for temporary residential care in this case to address the miscommunication and resulting stress. Reflection on the need for thorough documentation and accurate care plans, particularly in urgent cases, to avoid similar errors in future placements. Addressing the overall handling of this case as a learning point to improve service delivery moving forward.
COM/ 7755 KR ASC	Dorset Council acknowledges the concern regarding the delay in undertaking a review of care needs. They recognise that due to pressures within the team, there was difficulty in allocating cases promptly. The Council learned that the communication between the team and the complainant could have been improved, especially when managers were unavailable. The issue of not offering an alternative contact in the absence of key staff has been noted. The complaint highlighted the need for a more timely review, particularly in cases involving	The Council has highlighted the importance of offering contact with any available manager when a primary manager is unavailable, ensuring that complainants can access support in such situations. Dorset Council is prioritising the case mentioned and aims to allocate the case soon, recognising the importance of allocating high-priority cases like the one mentioned in the complaint. Dorset Council intends to address the concerns regarding the lack of local support for people with Acquired Brain Injury, which will be discussed during the review. They have reinforced the message that if there is a change in circumstances, the complainant should contact the duty officer immediately for further assistance.

	individuals with complex needs such as Acquired Brain Injury.	
COM 8323 A SC (DMc)	Ensure the correct 'Nearest Relative' is identified	Reminded AMHP to pay due diligence to correct identification of a patient's Nearest Relative. Remidner sent to the Team to investigate who NR is as per Section 26 of the Mental Health Act
COM/8180 Weymouth CB	Complaint about discrepancy in invoice for care charges	I am currently in the process of liaising with our invoicing team to request that your Mother's invoice is amended. You telephoned to cancel the weekend care visits and I apologise that this was not actioned.
COM/7503 Weymouth SC BL	Complainant should have been placed with the most appropriate team from the offset	Reassured that frontline staff receive mandatory training when working with people with autism. Yearly refreshers LM has gone through training records for staff to ensure all up to date Complainants case transferred to relevant team - CMHT Advice given on requesting reassessment Reviewing internal processes to better ensure residents receive a better service ongoing and that others are also supported in the best way.
COM/8284 Financial assessment team CB	Complaint re poor communication around the financial assessment and what is required for the assessment	The Finance and Assessment Team Manager has recognised that there is some learning identified in responding to queries resulting from the financial assessment, and will address this with their team.
COM/8361 ASC MCA (KR)	Miscommunication occurred between the 111 referrals, AAT, and the complainant, leading to confusion and distress and technical issues affected call connections, potentially hindering communication.	Steps will taken to review processes to minimise similar occurrences in the future.
COM/8351 ASC North (KR)	• Verbal aggression towards staff or professionals is not acceptable and needs to be addressed to ensure respectful interactions.	• A review meeting has been arranged to assess ongoing care and support needs, involving relevant professionals and the support provider, Altogether Care.

	• The importance of considering the individual's preferences and support needs, especially when they do not identify as having a learning disability. • Concerns regarding the approach of staff, specifically about the social worker being perceived as bossy, were noted, indicating the need for improved communication.	• A referral has been made to SWAN Advocacy for an Independent Advocate to ensure the individual's voice is heard effectively. • Future concerns will be managed promptly through the duty team if ongoing social work or nursing support is no longer required.
COM/8206 ASC MCS (KR)	DC acknowledges the significant delay in completing the financial assessment and recognises the need for more timely decision-making when senior manager approval is required.	Measures have been implemented to ensure that decisions requiring senior manager approval are addressed more promptly in the future.
COM 8353 A SC (DMc) Financial remedy £500	Proper process to risk assess and mitigate concerns or take into account views of service user and views of family when planning transition to another placement at a care home	New practice guidance and staff training being rolled out in March which includes risk assessment training and timely assessments. Now have a more robust complex case forum.
COM 8632 A SC (DMc)	When communicating with service users or their families via email, always check 'junk mail' to ensure no communication is lost	Staff made aware of this and asked to ensure they always check 'junk mail'
COM/8518 A SC (KR)	The importance of ensuring formal complaints are properly recorded in the system to prevent misunderstandings. The need for clear communication regarding staff availability and alternative contacts. The significance of internal processes for monitoring care providers and addressing concerns.	Complaints and concerns are logged by the Quality Improvement team for monitoring and follow-up. Automatic out-of-office responses now direct individuals to alternative contacts to avoid communication delays. Ongoing provider monitoring ensures concerns raised are considered during quality assessments.
COM/8462 LC	• Was a Best Interest assessment ever completed	• From reading the records that are available, manager unable to find a Mental Capacity Assessment or a Best

	• Was a mental health assessment completed for customer around capacity • Was a health and wellbeing assessment ever completed • Who did you have down as the next of kin? • Social Worker informed you that Michael was a priority • SWsuggested that she would make sure that officer sent an apology -Bucket List – is there something in place for someone when they are dying	Interest Meeting regarding a move into property. I reviewed your request for customer to return to your care and I am unable to confirm that this was followed up by the Social Care Team. -Capacity Assessments are decision specific, and professionals are required to assess someone's capacity surrounding that particular decision. -A Strengths and Needs Assessment was completed on the 30/01/23 and a Care and Support Plan was completed on the 31/01/2. The Care and Support Plan was sent to you on the 17/02/23 by post. -I am unable to respond to this query due to data protection issues. - I am unable to discuss this with officer as she is currently unavailable but, from records, officer can see that customer spoke to her regarding concerns that you had. However, there is no record of the above statement. - The records indicate that the officer explained to you that Dorset Council's policy is to ask people not to shout at staff and to end the call if they continue. - Customer was able to support care user to have an improved garden space with furniture, Individuals can be supported to complete an end-of-life plan; this can be completed with their family and carers to ensure their voice is heard. I am unable to see if this was completed for him as this would be held within his health records. In response to your complaint, officer has considered what the Learning Disability Team can do differently to ensure that a person's voice is heard. Requests from family members should be considered and professionals should follow the Mental Capacity Act 2005, completing capacity assessments and holding best interest meetings to ensure the circle of support are all in agreement with the next steps. I apologise that this was not completed for Michael. The Learning Disability Team are committed to improving their practice in supporting individuals with a learning disability during their end of life. We regularly review findings from Learning from

		Lives and Deaths – People with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR).
COM/8261 KR	DC has recognised the need to ensure that individuals receiving support services have access to regular reviews to assess whether their needs are being met and their intended outcomes are being achieved.	As a result of this case, the Council has decided to allocate a member of the Learning Disability Team to conduct a review of the individual's needs. The approach aims to ensure that support services remain appropriate and responsive to the changing needs of service users.
COM 8459 A SC (DMc)	Social worker could have been clearer in recording her evaluation of the risks associated in lack of personal care for complainant, specifically following review of professionals' meetings	Manager has followed up with her. Manager also did discuss the risks in more details during the Round Table meeting on 22 November 2024.
COM/4571	Complaint regarding unsafe housing of daughter with learning disabilities.	Complaint is fully justified and is being progressed to a Safeguarding Enquiry.
COM/8431 A SC (CB)	Initial visits were missed due to human error.	We have put in a new method of checking allocated calls to stop this happening again. The lessons learnt are as follows. Uncovered work is now checked nightly by the staff member and registered manager as a failsafe to ensure no missed visits on the grounds of un-allocation. -Office team members will be booked onto conflict resolution training on how to support upset/distressed customers over the phone. -
COM/8364 ASC (BL) Financial remedy £300	Escalation of concerns not successfully concluded due to structural changes. Communication/timeliness of response delayed. Communication and clarity of information shared with complainant has not been clear or concise. There have been similar issues regarding the Trusted Assessor Review (TAR) - it was not clear this was a chargeable service, as the process is new. Historical comments made regarding concerns already	Head of Service has made the decision to instruct our Credit Control team to cancel in full the service user charges made for this package of care, which amount to £452.60 in total Communication regarding the TAR process is to be made clear to all service users. We acknowledge delay in providing response and offer our unreserved apology and we are working together on strategies to avoid delays like this in the future. Having taken into account the circumstances, Dorset Council would like to offer payment of: £300 for inconvenience caused in line with LGSCO guidelines

	raised direct to provider will not be revisited, however we offer reassurances that these concerns are noted, and that provider is subject to robust ongoing monitoring by DC's Quality Improvement Team.	

4 LGSCO Findings

The Ombudsman reported 33 UPHELD cases across Dorset Council as a whole authority. Of these only 8 were related to Adult Services.

As a percentage it would read as a big increase on 2023-24 as only 7 were upheld that year. However, this is an increase of 1 case

Dorset Council met the recommendations in 100% of these cases. The cases and outcomes are captured below:

- **Dorset Council (23 004 865)**

Statement Upheld Assessment and care plan 08-Jul-2024

Summary: There was fault as the Council did not invite Ms B to its Care Act assessment of her relative, Mr C. The Council continued to pay Mr C's care home fees for several months, even though Mr C was a self-funder. This meant that Ms B then received a large invoice which had to be paid immediately. The Council has agreed to apologise and make a small payment to Ms B to reflect the distress caused by the fault.

- **Dorset Council (24 006 665)**

Statement Upheld Assessment and care plan 19-Mar-2025

Summary: There was fault in the Council's communication and record keeping. The Council also did not always follow its complaint process and there was a small delay in the financial assessment.

- **Dorset Council (24 007 557)**

Statement Upheld Assessment and care plan 13-Mar-2025

Summary: Mrs B complained about the Council's poor communication, a delay in taking actions and a failure to carry out a continuing healthcare checklist. We have found fault in the Council's actions and the Council has agreed to apologise, pay a financial remedy and carry out the checklist.

- **Dorset Council (24 009 449)**

Statement Upheld Charging 27-Nov-2024

Summary: We have decided not to investigate Mr X's complaint about poor communication relating to funding his mother's care. The Council has upheld the complaint and apologised. It will make a payment to Mr X to recognise the uncertainty caused.

- **Dorset Council (24 002 786)**

Statement Upheld Charging 16-Oct-2024

Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about a failure by the Council to act on the complainant giving it notice that she wished to move from her supported living accommodation. This is because the Council has accepted it was at fault and provided a suitable remedy to the complainant which addresses the injustice caused. Further investigation would therefore unlikely lead to a different outcome.

- **Dorset Council (23 014 444)**

Statement Upheld Other 08-Aug-2024

Summary: We found no fault by a Council and Trust in terms of their decision to change Miss Y's support arrangements. However, we did find fault with how they communicated those changes to Miss Y and her mother, Mrs X. The Council and Trust will apologise for this and make changes to prevent similar problems occurring in future. They will also make a symbolic payment to Miss Y and Mrs X to recognise the distress this caused them.

- **Dorset Council (23 012 384)**

Statement Upheld Assessment and care plan 02-Jun-2024

Summary: Mrs X complains the Council has not dealt properly with adult social care for her and her son Mr Y. The Council is at fault because it has been unable to provide the care Mr Y needs. Mrs X and Mr Y suffered missed care provision and avoidable distress. The Council should pay Mrs X and Mr Y £1,000 each.

- **Dorset Council (23 019 751)**

Statement Upheld Assessment and care plan 13-May-2024

Summary: We will not investigate this complaint about the Council's delay in assessing Miss Y's needs to facilitate a planned move of accommodation. The Council has accepted fault and proposed a personal remedy and service improvements via its internal complaint process, and investigation by us would not achieve a more meaningful outcome.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

While the number of upheld Ombudsman cases in Adult Services remains relatively low, the increase in overall complaints and recurring themes such as communication failures, delays, and record-keeping issues highlight areas for continued focus.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen communication protocols with service users and families.
- Ensure timely assessments and clear care planning.
- Continue to monitor and learn from complaints and celebrate compliments.
- Maintain and improve cross-departmental engagement to embed learning and service improvement.