



Adult Social Care

Customer Services

Annual Report 2022-23

Adults and Health

Customer Services

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Introduction

Kirklees Adult Social Care Customer Services Unit is based within the Directorate for Adults and Health, which is responsible for the assessment and provision of Social Care support to adults, supporting people with charging for Social Care services and commissioning social care providers.

This report provides information about contact made to Adult Social Care between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

We deal with enquiries, complaints, compliments, freedom of information and data protection requests. We work alongside all the teams within the Directorate and liaise with the wider Council corporate team and Information Governance team as well as external agencies and organisations.

Kirklees Council promotes and encourages feedback from all customers whether it is positive or negative, as this supports the continuous assessment and improvement of our service. The customer service process is accessible using various methods, including a dedicated telephone number and web page.

Customers are encouraged to make any comments to the team involved with them prior to it being dealt with as a formal complaint with the Customer Services Unit. Once it has been investigated as a formal complaint, the next stage is for the customer to go to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Headline Findings

This period of time saw a return to normal in terms of complaint figures following a significant drop that coincided with the national Covid crisis.

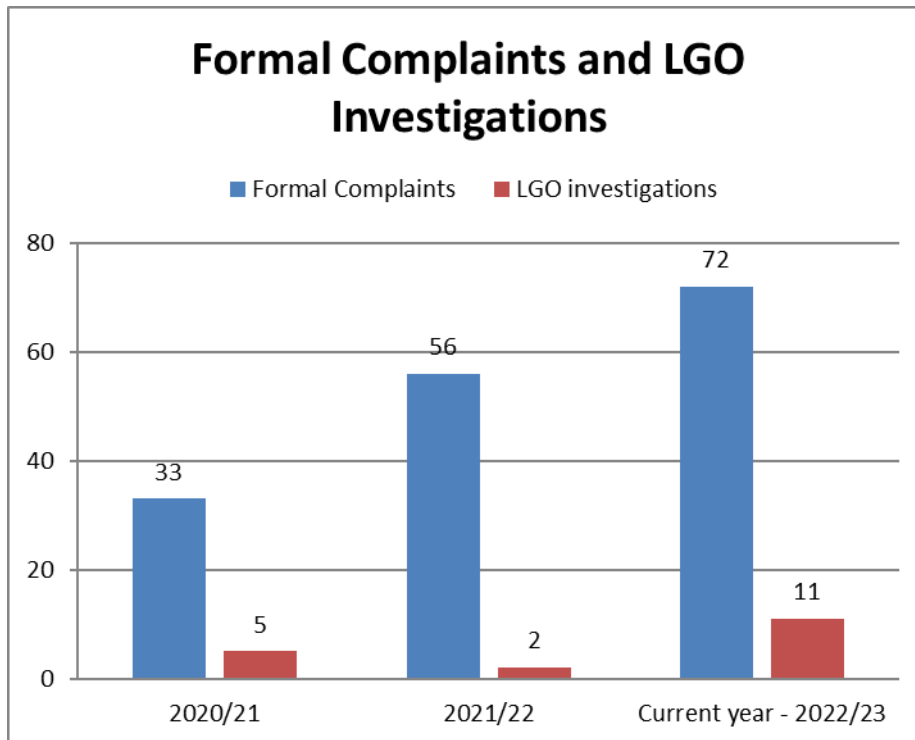
This year saw an increase in the number of investigations performed by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Timeliness in terms of completing investigations before their individual deadline has declined a little since last year to below 70%. This is not an acceptable amount so we have made changes to our process so investigating Managers set a realistic timescale and agree this with the complainant early in the process.

Charging for social care was again the number one theme for complaints in this year as it has consistently been in previous years. Concerns about the quality of service was next followed by the actions of staff.

Complaints Analysis

Table showing numbers of complaints and Local Government Ombudsman full investigations over the past three years.



Complaint numbers continued to increase on the record low in 2020/21 and ended the year appearing to return to levels consistent with previous. (In 2019/20 there were 77 complaints).

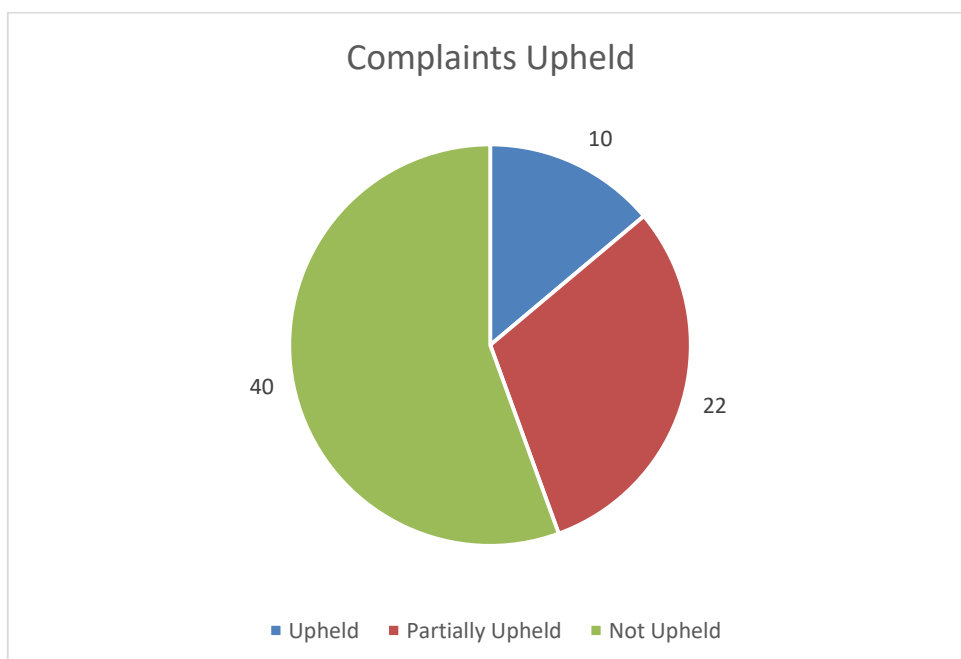
The number of Local Government Ombudsman investigations in 2022/23 – 11 was the highest recorded in recent years.

The Outcome of Complaint Investigations

The outcome of each of our complaints is categorised as follows:

- Upheld – this means we have identified fault in our actions which have had a negative effect on the service user.
- Partially upheld – this means we have identified some aspects of our involvement where our investigation has found fault in our actions.
- Not upheld – this means we have not found any fault in our actions and decisions made regarding the service user.

This graph shows the breakdown of decisions following complaint investigations of which there was a total of 72. It shows whether each complaint was upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.



- 10 complaints were upheld (14% of the total)
- 22 complaints were partially upheld (31% of the total)
- 40 complaints were not upheld (56% of the total)

The ratio of complaints that were fully or partially upheld has remained similar in recent years.

Timescales

Our procedure allows for each formal complaint to have its own timescale to be set in consultation with the complainant. However, we do start with a target of 20 working days as our default.

Of the 72 formal complaints we had the following performance in terms of timeliness:

- 45 were completed within the agreed deadline, 63% of the total.
- 27 were completed late, 37% of the total.

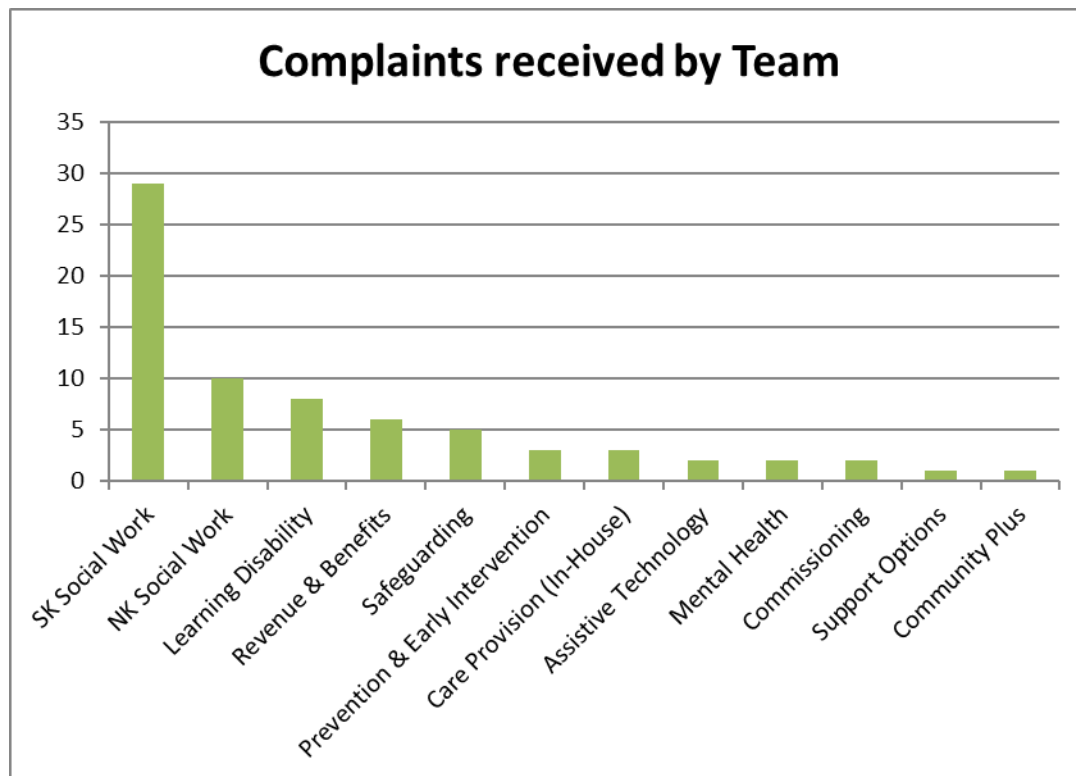
This record of timeliness has shown a drop in the % of complaints that have been completed within the expected timescale and is something we have addressed in recent weeks.

While our standard to respond is 20 working days, it is accepted that on occasion, more time to conduct a thorough investigation will be required. To ensure the complainant is kept apprised of the expected timescale, we send out early reminders to investigating Managers to prompt them to agree a reasonable timescale with the complainant, one that is achievable.

It is our hope that as a result of these changes, our timeliness will improve in the coming months.

Complaints received by Teams

Graph showing the number of complaints received by each team within the Adult Social Care Service.

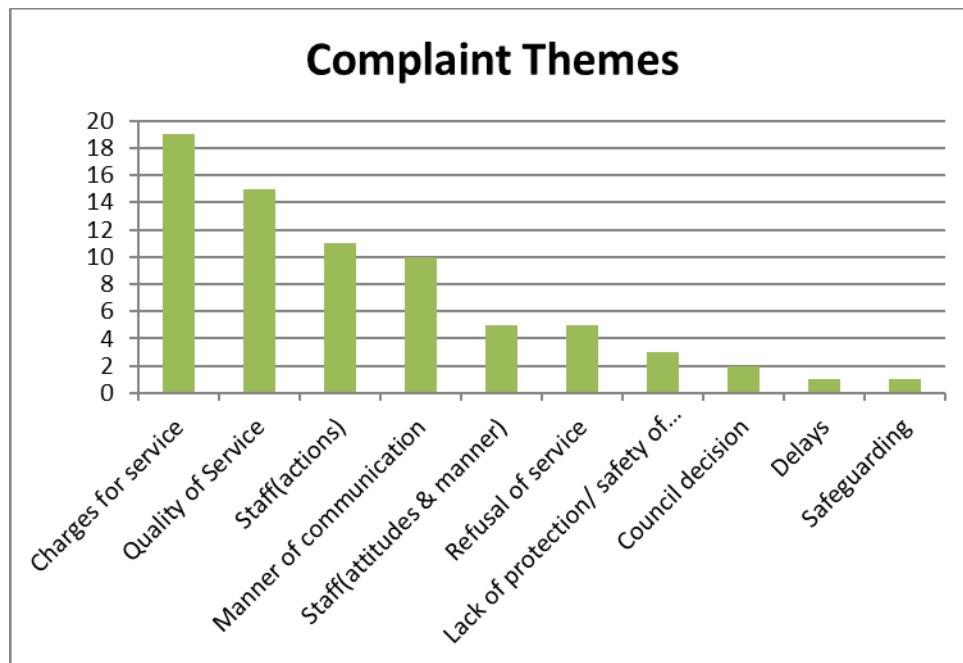


The highest number of complaints received was from the teams dealing with the social care assessment and care management of service users across the hospital, intake and support management teams.

This has been consistent for a number of years and while we continue to focus our attention on service quality, this demonstrates the complexity found in performing assessments and reviews for Adult Social Care.

Complaints by Theme

Graph showing the number of complaints categorised by theme.



Issues connected with charging remains the top issue which is consistent with recent years. For more information see below, Learning and Service Improvement.

Trends and Observations

Common Complaint themes

Finance remains the top issue this year

The need for accurate and correct information to pass between Health and Social Care and to service users and family

Common issues have been reported a number of times, including:

- Conflicting information was provided by different organisations.
- Claim that either told care would be free, or not informed of a charge
- Our case notes often contain record of discussion about charges and financial assessment

To address this issue, the Customer Services team will be spending time in hospitals to work alongside health and social care staff and meet service users and families to understand their situations to see how we can improve our information sharing during often difficult circumstances. This will ensure all organisations and employees have a consistent approach to arranging future care services.

Learning and Service Improvement

The following are examples of lessons learned and changes to service provision brought about as a result of complaint investigations.

Complaint about the information sharing and practices between Kirklees Council and Locala (NHS) in our Intermediate Care services.

This complaint highlighted a number of areas where the communication between the two organisations was not at a level we would expect and this impacted on the care provided to one of our service users.

As a result, a number of actions have been implemented that focus on record keeping, and team responsibilities so as to ensure all professionals involved have clear, up to date information on the wellbeing and health of every resident.

Inappropriate medication given by staff

A pain medication was administered by a staff member in one of the Council run Intermediate Care Homes, which had a negative effect on the service user due to other circumstances.

As a result, we have amended some of our medication procedures to ensure the circumstances and condition of the service user is clearly recorded and used in the decision making for administering the medication.

Information about service user inappropriately shared with a personal assistant

While the service user was in hospital, a Council Contact centre worker was asked questions about the service user by one of his Personal Assistants (PA). The hospital would not share info direct with the PA but did share information with the Council worker despite a password system in operation who then passed info about

his medical status to the PA. There is some fault from both agencies. The individual and team have been briefed on Data Protection using this as an example.

The need for accurate and correct information to pass between Health and Social Care and to service users and family.

As we work more closely with partner organisations including Health, we are seeing more confusion over the various roles and responsibilities that belong to each agency, and how that is communicated to our service users and carers. We are seeing more complaints that require other agencies to provide input, for example nearing the point when a person is deemed medically fit to leave hospital.

In the past we have seen a number of complaints around people saying they were not informed they would be charged for Adult Social Care services. We have worked hard to ensure this is clearly communicated and reported on the case notes. These complaints are still coming in but more recently, it appears the misinformation has come from colleagues in Health and social care officers have then had to correct the information.

Information sharing with family members

One complaint has dealt with a complex family dynamic where we received information and advice from two sons of the service users. They were often at odds which made things difficult for our officers. Information was shared with both in the best interests of the service users which led to a complaint from one son about information sharing. The complaint outcome, and a review by the Council's Data Protection Officer concluded that the information had been shared appropriately. We will be looking to include more guidance for staff when dealing with families and other interested parties so we can be clear what information we are able to share and where we need to withhold information to protect individuals.

Ensuring we respond to complaints in a timely manner

One Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaint criticised the Council's handling of a complaint and in particular, a failure to agree an extended deadline. Our policy has a standard timescale which we begin with for each new complaint – 20 working days. We have revised our internal guidance for Managers when picking up new complaints to ensure that as far as possible, a realistic timescale is determined and communicated with the complainant to avoid delays to our responses.

General recording

One LGO response criticised record keeping, particularly the interactions with other professionals and decisions made.

As part of our suite of guidance information we have a section that explains in detail some good practice advice when recording information and decisions in Adult Social Care. This suite is continuously updated and messages sent out to all staff in our assessment teams.

Complaints investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman

For the year 2022/23 there were 11 full investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

This is a significant increase on the previous year which saw only two full investigations into Adult Social Care matters.

Of these investigations, there were the following outcomes:

- 5 investigations were recorded as upheld
- 5 investigations were recorded as not-upheld
- 1 investigation is still open at the time of this report

An overview of each LGO investigation is provided below. Each one contains the LGO Reference number.

For more information on individual investigations and outcomes, you can search using the reference number by going to www.lgo.org.uk

Upheld LGO Investigations

LGO Reference 21 014 338

This complaint dealt with a hospital discharge and implementation of care charges. The LGO investigation also looked at how the Council dealt with the initial complaint. The investigator found that it was appropriate for the Council to charge for the care. The investigator was critical of the initial care assessment which suggested one carer, which was not sufficient, although it is noted the Council took swift action to

introduce a second carer. The LGO investigator was critical of the length of time the Council took to respond to the complaint.

As a result, the Council has apologised for these faults and has taken action to ensure complaint investigation timescales are agreed with complainants at the outset and are adhered to as far as possible.

LGO Reference 21 001 819

This complaint included concerns about a care assessment and the way in which the Council considered the person's benefits as part of their financial assessment. The investigator found that the Council was at fault for delaying the service user's needs review, although it did not cause a significant injustice.

LGO Reference 22 013 470

The investigator found that the Council was at fault for failing to complete a carer's assessment. The recommendations made included an apology and a payment in recognition of the uncertainty caused by not completing a carer's assessment. A further recommendation stated that the Council should issue written reminders to relevant staff to ensure they are aware of the statutory guidance which says where somebody provides or intends to provide care for another adult and it appears the carer may have any needs for support, the council must carry out a carer's assessment. A carer's assessment must seek to find out not only the carer's needs for support, but also the sustainability of the caring role itself. This includes the practical and emotional support the carer provides to the adult.

LGO Reference 21 013 930

The complaint was about the way the service user had been treated by staff at the extra care housing scheme she lived and believed this was due to her ethnicity. The

investigator found there had been some fault with the actions of the external care provider, but did not find there was evidence to support the allegation that she was treated differently because of her ethnicity.

LGO Reference 21 017 658

The complaint concerned how the Council responded to the service user's concerns about his housing and anti-social behaviour. The investigator deemed there was fault with how the Council responded to a noise nuisance report and how long the service user had to wait for a social care assessment. However, these did not cause the service user an injustice. The Council agreed to provide training to its housing staff and review how it manages social care assessments.

It is important to note that the service user's priority throughout this period was connected to his housing needs and the social care review was requested as a tool to expediate this process. The service user's risk assessment and priority level was reviewed periodically and communication was held throughout.

Not upheld LGO Investigations

LGO Reference 22 000 036

This complaint centred around the size of the care package and the family's belief that it was unnecessary and resulted in additional costs for the service user. The investigator found that the Council acted appropriately and no fault has been found.

LGO Reference 22 000 579

This complaint concerned residential care charges. The LGO ended their investigation as the issues have progressed through a legal process.

LGO Reference 22 001 184

This complaint concerned the quality of care in a private care home. The Council had previously conducted a Safeguarding investigation which identified some learning which was implemented by the Care Home with oversight from the Council. The Council's Complaint response looked at follow up and work done by its Contracts team to monitor the care home for improvements. The LGO closed their investigation as they were satisfied that the issues have been looked at by Council so nothing further to do.

LGO Reference 22 008 897

This complaint concerned the way the Council charged a service user for his care and the quality of the care it provided. The investigation deemed that information was discussed in relation to charging and a financial assessment was conducted and completed. There were issues connected with the quality of the care but this had been reported and dealt with by the home.

LGO Reference 22 009 419

This complaint concerns a disagreement that the service user was informed that care, following a stay in hospital, would be chargeable. The investigator viewed the Council records and found sufficient information to indicate that the service user was clearly informed. No further investigation required.

Low level concerns

Formal complaints are only one part of the service that is operated by the Customer Services Unit. The council received 203 enquiries which were dealt with separately from formal complaints (6 of these 203 were escalated to formal complaints). This was an increase on previous years.

Table showing the numbers of the different enquiry types and the percentage of the total.

| Enquiry type | Number | % |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----|
| Concern | 77 | 35% |
| Query | 67 | 30% |
| Other service | 45 | 20% |
| Safeguarding | 7 | 3% |
| Appeal | 3 | 1% |
| Brokered domiciliary care providers | 21 | 10% |
| Total | 220 | |

All concerns and queries were dealt with by the relevant team.

We are continuing to monitor and review our approach so we ensure our investigations and actions are focussed on the wellbeing of the individuals concerned.

Compliments

The total number of compliments/positive feedback received this year was 555, which was a big increase on previous years that appeared to have been affected by the impact of Covid. It is larger even than the previous recent highest of 442.

As in previous years, the teams with the most compliments was our in-house Short Term and Urgent Support Teams.

Below are a few examples of what we have received:

Huddersfield Hub, Social Work Team

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to you for your invaluable service in supporting both myself and my mum, in two moves into Care Homes due to closures. Throughout both moves, you have put the residents and family first, you have kept me informed all throughout the process in securing the best place for mum, and I cannot praise you highly enough, you have been thoroughly professional and thoughtful in taking into account relatives wishes.

Reablement

From the first phone call for help it was so quickly organised. Overall, grandma was happy with all the carers, she said she felt comfortable and they were really friendly.

Ings Grove House, Intermediate Care Home

Thank you so much for the care and support you have to me during my stay with you. Each and every one of you worked so hard to provide your services as part of your professional team and on a very personal level too. You shared in my progress every step of the way, every day, 24/7 during my tears and my laughter. I will

remember my room at Ings Grove as a sanctuary, where you helped me to recover from the injuries with your compassion and commitment to your work.

Short Team and Urgent Home Care Service

I just wanted to let you know how grateful I am for the wonderful support you have provided me whilst I'm recovering. You helped me cope with my embarrassment at needing personal care. It was something I needed to make me feel more human and more like me. Having seen my tears as well as my struggles and progress you've given me encouragement and we've shared conversations along the way. All the support has definitely made me feel less isolated and, in a very weird way, given me something to look forward to. I know, without the support I wouldn't be where I am today, feeling stronger, and more positive that I'll get back to normal soon. You have been so amazing and make a real difference to people every day.

Learning Disabilities Social Work Hub

Y has moved fully into her supported living accommodation and seems very happy. It is a fabulous place, the staff are wonderful and her new home is now fully furnished and looks lovely. Y has even had some of the family around to celebrate and you can tell that she is very proud of it! We would just like to thank you for all your help over the last 12 months. From what has been a very difficult and unfortunate set of family circumstance, it would be fair to say that a very good outcome has been achieved for Y. None of which would have been possible without your help and support over this period. Selfishly, we feel that we too can now begin to restart our own journey as this will be the first time we have lived alone since we were married over 4 years ago, which is very exciting.

Moorlands Grange, Intermediate Care Home

From the moment I stepped out into Moorlands Grange I realised what a friendly caring staff you are. Every time I visited, all the staff smiled and said "hello". You helped P gain as much mobility as possible. He has been away from home for 5 months. You were patient, you listened and tried to meet his needs. You were always there to help him willingly. I thank you so very much.

Gateway to Care Telephone Team

Many thanks to your team for helping us signpost care for my husband yesterday. You phoned us up and took great care with supporting us with this. M was treated with dignity and respect. The care we had yesterday from gateway to care was outstanding.

Reablement

It has been excellent team to work with. They are all individuals and work to their own ways but the end result is always fantastic delivery of care. Thank you all, be proud of yourselves, fantastic team. As I began to improve the Home Support Worker let me take a more active role, such as now washing and dressing myself and mentally they all took time to talk about themselves and as I have shielded for two years plus they have told me what's happening in Huddersfield. As I have improved to a point, even though I am at the end of life, they have all given 100% and big thank you.

Short Term and Urgent Support Team

What worked extremely well was that the support of all carers who visited, not only to two elderly parents receiving end of life care, but also to my sister and I who also became involved in looking after our parents. I have never witnessed such

dedication, care and compassion as I did with all the carers who attended, not only to my parents but also to my siblings and I. Sadly both parents passed away within 4 days of each other. As sad as it is, they were able to stay in their own home until the very end which was only possible as a result of the sterling care that they received from your team. I will never be able to thank them enough. They really are angels sent from above. I am for ever indebted to them!

Visiting officer, Client Financial Affairs

N has guided us every step of the way in the most stressful and challenging of times for any family. He has been professional yet caring and empathetic. His patience in the numerous times we have had contact has shown no bounds. Please express our thanks and gratefulness to this outstanding member of Kirklees council. The world would be a better place with more N's in it. Grateful thanks

Mental Health Social Work Team

Housing solutions along with the mental health team have gone above and beyond in order to make my very stressful 7 weeks of homelessness & the heart attack I suffered 3 weeks into this period. I couldn't have survived this horrible ordeal without there steadfast attention to my problems and I felt all the time that they really did have my best interest at heart. I can never thank you enough.

Reablement

My experience has been very positive. I have been treated with dignity and respect with my religious and cultural needs (I am of Muslim Faith) considered throughout the period of my support. Staff have actively sought to engage with me and my daughter who has advocated for me due to the fact I am illiterate and have limited English. I have enjoyed sharing my background and experiences with staff. It has

been nice that my whole family has been considered in my journey of recovery. I feel I have made good prayers at pace that was just right, encouraged and motivated by the staff of the reablement team who I cannot thank enough. I will miss everybody who has supported me.

Short Team and Urgent Support Team

Thank you for coming to visit me before Christmas. As I believe you now know, D died during the Christmas holiday and, apart from Home Support Workers, who arrived on the morning of Christmas day when D died, there has been no opportunity to see any of the team who looked after D when he came home from hospital. They were all wonderful and looked after D with great care, attention and affection. They also supported me when I needed it! Would you pass on our thanks to all of the team on our behalf and let them know how grateful we were for all they did for us.