

Providing Partnership Services in Bedfordshire,  
Essex and Luton



# Complaints Annual Report 2011/2012



## **SEPT COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors with a review of the overall performance of Complaints handling in SEPT as follows:

- Mental Health services across Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.
- Community Health services across South East and West Essex for the period 1 August 2011 to 31 March 2012.
- Community Health services across Bedfordshire for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 March 2012.

The contents of this report specifically meet the requirements set out for Complaints Annual Reports in section 18 of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

The Trust will undertake a more detailed qualitative analysis of complaints in order to provide depth of understanding and scope for improvement.

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report will review the overall performance of Complaints handling in SEPT as follows:

- Mental Health services across Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012
- Community Health services across South East and West Essex for the period 1 August 2011 to 31 March 2012
- Community Health services across Bedfordshire for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 March 2012.

In addition, the report will review actions taken to improve services from complaints received, highlight key achievements over the past twelve months and summarise aims for 2012/2013.

Following the acquisition of community services in West Essex, South East Essex and Bedfordshire, the complaints policy and procedure was integrated in October 2011. It has not been possible to access all historical data held by the PCT's. Where it has been possible this has been supplied and will be in the future as the reporting is now recorded on one system.

The complaints function is part of the business support work stream in Corporate Affairs. The complaints function has been centralised and the complaints team has now been fully recruited to following the restructure of the Corporate Affairs Directorate in March 2012.

### **3.0 NUMBER OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED**

A total of 286 formal complaints were received for mental health during 2011/2012. Of the 159 in Essex, 54 remain active as of the end of March 2012 and of the 127 in Bedfordshire and Luton 58 remain active.

Since we acquired the three community services (West and South East Essex in August 2011 and Bedfordshire in September 2011), a total of 95 formal complaints were received (28 from South East Essex, 29 from West Essex and 38 from Bedfordshire).

Area	Number of Complaints Handled
Mental Health – Essex	159
Mental Health – Bedfordshire & Luton	127
Community – South East Essex	28 since 1 August 2011
Community – West Essex	29 since 1 August 2011
Community - Bedfordshire	38 since 1 September 2011

### **4.0 NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS WELLFOUNDED**

37% mental health complaints were well or partially founded and 5% were well founded for community.

Due to the different reporting mechanisms within the 3 Communities and the complexities of data transfer the number of complaints partially founded is not currently available. For 2012/13 all data has been centralised and will be available.

Area	Number of Complaints Well Founded	Number of Complaints Partially Founded	Total
Mental Health - Essex	15	44	59
Mental Health – Bedfordshire & Luton	19	29	48
Community – South East Essex	2	Not available	Not available
Community – West Essex	3	Not available	Not available
Community - Bedfordshire	0	Not available	Not available

Therefore, of the 159 complaints received for mental health services in Essex, a total of 59 were well or partially founded. Of the 127 received for Bedfordshire and Luton a total of 48 were well or partially founded.

**5.0 NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS REFERRED TO THE PARLIAMENTARY & HEALTH SERVICE OMBUDSMAN (PHSO)**

A total of 5 complaints for mental health were referred to the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman and no actions/recommendations were made on 4. 1 complaint from Bedfordshire and Luton is under investigation.

No complaints in respect of community services were referred to the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman from August/September to March 2012.

Area	Number of Complaints Referred	Comments
Mental Health - Essex	3	None recommended for investigation
Mental Health – Bedfordshire & Luton	2	1 not investigated 1 under investigation

**6.0 NUMBER OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY PCT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The table below demonstrates the number of complaints received by PCT area per quarter.

PCT	Quarter 1 2011-12	Quarter 2 2011-12	Quarter 3 2011-12	Quarter 4 2011-12
NHS Bedfordshire	15	17	22	26
NHS Luton	10	19	6	11
N/A	-	3	-	-
South East Essex	13	12	15	16
South West Essex	24	26	16	33
N/A	1	1	-	-

1 Forensic complaint for Essex referred to a Bedfordshire service user.

1 Forensic complaint for Essex referred to a Luton service user.

The table below demonstrates the number of complaints received per CMHT aligned to their respective Local Authority.

LOCAL AUTHORITY	Quarter 1 2011-12	Quarter 2 2011-12	Quarter 3 2011-12	Quarter 4 2011-12
Bedford Borough Council	10	4	0	1
Central Bedfordshire Council	1	1	0	0
Luton Borough Council	2	2	0	1
Essex County Council	6	2	1	4
Southend Borough Council	3	1	0	6
Thurrock Council	0	0	1	1

## 7.0 NATURE OF THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The top three themes for complaints for both mental health and community during 2011/2012 were; unhappy with treatment, staff attitude and communication. The table below shows figures for mental health only as we are unable to access community data.

Top Three Complaint Themes	Total Number of Complaints Received (2011/2012)	Well Founded	Partially Founded	Total
Unhappy with treatment	195 (68%)	2	28	30 (15%)
Staff attitude	81 (28%)	8	17	25 (25%)
Communication	35 (12%)	10	7	17 (48%)

Of the 195 of complaints received in respect of those unhappy with treatment a total of 30 were either well or partially founded. Of the 81 complaints received regarding staff attitude a total of 25 were either well or partially founded. Of the 35 complaints received regarding communication a total of 17 were either well or partially founded.

## 8.0 WAY IN WHICH THE COMPLAINTS WERE HANDLED

79% of complaints received for mental health were resolved within the timescales agreed with individual complainants, and the average time taken to respond to complaints is 38 days. This data was not recorded for community.

The process for handling complaints for mental health is that the complaints manager passes to the appropriate Service Director who appoints an investigating manager. The investigating manager does a response letter to the complainant which is reviewed by the Service Director before being passed to the Chief Executive for signature.

The process that was being used by community services was that the complaints manager wrote some of the response letters to the complainant on receipt of the investigating manager's report.

One single process is now in place with the community services adopting the mental health process. Training is being rolled out to the community services investigating managers in the handling of complaints.

**9.0 NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS REVIEWED BY NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

42 Non-Executive Director reviews of formal complaints were carried out and 15 of these resulted in comments and observations being made about the investigation. Copy of reviews are sent to the relevant Director.

To date no community complaints have been included in the reviews but going forward they will be.

**10.0 NUMBER OF LOCAL RESOLUTIONS RECORDED**

There were a total of 115 local resolution complaints for mental health recorded for the year. Local Resolutions are usually carried out by front line staff who resolve client's concerns/issues to the client's satisfaction, thereby negating the need to make a formal complaint.

This data was not collected for community but will be under the new single system.

**11.0 NUMBER OF PALS ENQUIRIES RECEIVED BY SERVICE AREA**

Service Area	Total number of PALS enquiries 2011/12
Mental Health Essex	370
Mental Health Beds & Luton	421
Community Health South East Essex	Not available
Community Health West Essex	Not available
Community Health Bedfordshire	99*

\*Q3 and Q4 only

Due to the different reporting systems for South East and West Essex Community Services the figures are not available. From 1 April 2012 the PALS function has been centralised to use one system.

## **12.0 MATTERS OF GENERAL IMPORTANCE ARISING OUT OF COMPLAINTS**

Looking at trends, the largest category of complaints overall is in relation to satisfaction with treatment provided of which 30 have been well founded and section 13.0 below identifies some of the service changes that have been taken as a result.

In contrast, communication is the category with the highest proportion of complaints well founded at 48%. This relates however to only 17 complaints well founded in total. In light of the low numbers involved, it has not been possible to identify any significant trends over the past year.

Throughout the year staff attitude and communication has been a cause of concern in letters of complaint. This has mainly been rudeness on the telephone and the way staff have communicated with relatives and carers. The Trust has set out values and standards of behaviour expected. Any staff who do not reach these standards undertake a customer care training workshop and are monitored closely under supervision.

## **13.0 ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE SERVICES AS A RESULT OF THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED**

To ensure organisational learning from complaints, any recommendations made following investigation of a complaint are recorded and monitored. An action log is kept to ensure that any recommendations from complaint investigations are implemented. As a means of monitoring this, a summary is presented to the Lessons Learned Group on a bi-monthly basis. For Community Services actions from complaints have been presented to the Integrated Governance Committees.

### **Actions Taken**

An issue with a pharmacy regarding the non-delivery of dressings ordered by a Clinician was identified as causing a delay in treatment. As a result of this the service no longer uses this pharmacy.

A Team made changes to how it informs service users of any long term sickness of staff involved in their care, by following up any attempted telephone contact with a letter to the service user informing them of their staff member's absence with any contact names and telephone numbers to contact during the period of absence.

Investigators have been reminded of the need to make early contact with complainants to ensure that completion dates are effectively negotiated. Also that regular contact and updates should be maintained throughout the process.

Clinicians have been reminded to make contact with patients prior to visiting and agree a mutually convenient time to meet.

Each named Health Visitor is to agree a system for sharing patient information with the GP and midwives to ensure that clients are contacted in a timely manner.

We are currently reviewing the lessons learned process and will be introducing systems of robust trend analysis in order to look at Trust wide lessons that can be learned.

#### **14.0 NUMBER AND NATURE OF COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED**

A total of 556 compliments were received for mental health and 2,457 for community services. The total number of compliments received for mental health last year was 1190 which was double this year's figure and this was mainly due to a big drive across the Trust to encourage staff to send in their compliments.

The process for the recording of compliments is time consuming and this is currently being reviewed in view of the potential number of compliments being received across the organisation.

The top two categories of compliments received is the same nationally and as in previous years which are appropriate care and treatment and staff attitude. It is worth noting that these categories are the same top two categories that are received for complaints.

Area	Number of Compliments Received
Mental Health - Essex	281
Mental Health – Bedfordshire & Luton	275
Community – South East	1812 since August 2011
Community – West Essex	26 since August 2011
Community - Bedfordshire	619 since September 2011

Here are a few examples of the compliments we have received:

#### **Mental Health - Essex**

- Dear Dr B, I am making contact to thank you for all your care and attention concerning my son. Under your supervision he has gradually improved

- and is doing well, he has been housed where he feels safe and secure. Thank you again for your help and kindness.
- Knightswick Clinic - Dear B, It pleases me to say that your work with me, has made a great difference, particularly recently. I have always enjoyed your support, which is given quite unconditionally. When I was unable to drive, I would like to give a very personal thank you for providing transport and support.

### **Mental Health – Bedfordshire & Luton**

- The Lawns - I have been seeing Dr V for some time and I have just made a plan with her for my discharge. When I first started seeing her I was close to giving up on my life. It has been very hard going but she never gave up on me and has taught me so much. I feel so privileged and honoured to be one of her patients. She is dedicated and professional and such a helpful person. We cannot afford to lose people like her."
- My 90 year old mother was admitted to Milton Ward as she suffers with Dementia and had not been allowing anyone to care for her, resulting in a serious pressure sore. I was very guilty admitting my Mum into hospital. I need not have worries as Mum was settled and she appeared calm. The staff showed her care and understanding at all times, I cannot praise the staff enough. They were also kind and understanding to me and my husband.

As a result of Milton Ward care, my mum was transferred to a care home today, pressure sore free and calmer due to the care she received from staff. Thank You.

### **Community Services – South East Essex**

- I would like to express my immense gratitude for the great care and kindness you showed my husband during the last seven months and for the tremendous support you gave me during that time. I know that he really appreciated your care and did enjoy his chats with you all. For me the guidance and encouragement you provided gave me the confidence to keep my husband at home, which was very important to both of us.

### **Community Services – West Essex**

- My father died recently at St Margaret's Hospital Epping. The care given to him and us was just amazing. Their kindness/compassion should be held as an example to other hospitals.

### **Community Services - Bedfordshire**

- I feel very fortunate to have all these people to help my wife and I. The Parkinson's Nurses speak to you and listen to you in a manner which is

down to earth and practical. We have two wonderful Parkinson's Nurses worth their weight in gold and much more

## **15.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Following the acquisition of community services across Bedfordshire and Essex, the Complaints Policy and Procedure was harmonised.
- Complaints handling e-learning package was harmonised.
- On-going complaints handling training for managers and complaints investigating officers across the Trust.
- Complaints function centralised and relocated.
- Complaints Team strengthened as part of the Corporate Affairs Directorate restructure.
- Generic complaints leaflets covering mental health and community services and comments cards/posters in all service areas.
- Relationships with external agencies, local authorities and PCTs developed and best practices shared.

## **16.0 AIMS FOR 2012/2013**

- Building new Complaints Team/embedding the new structure.
- Complaints systems and processes reviewed, standardised across community and mental health and simplified.
- Evaluation of complaints handling process in place.
- Reviewing the Complaints Policy and Procedure, including the process of the Non-Executive Director review of complaints.
- Simplified process for recording compliments and that compliments are proactively and regularly promoted across the Trust.
- Reviewing the lessons learned process and introducing systems of robust trend analysis in order to look at Trust wide lessons that can be learned.
- 75% senior leadership (bands 7 and above) trained in investigating complaints.
- Utilising Datix system to maximum effect for reporting and trend analysis.

- Reviewing complaints performance reporting.
- Continue to develop relationships with stakeholders across Essex and Bedfordshire.

## **17.0 CONCLUSION**

It has been a very busy and challenging year for the Complaints Department and progress has been made. The Trust continues to be proactive in its management of complaints and recognises that complaints are an invaluable source of information about patients' views about the services we provide.

We will build on the achievements of the past year and continue to improve the processes and systems to ensure a robust effective management and monitoring of complaints handling process is delivered and our key aims for 2012/2013 are achieved.

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**Corporate Business Support**  
**April 2012**