

Somerset County Council

Adult Social Care Customer Feedback Report

1st April 2016 – 31 March 2017



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Introduction

Somerset County Council is committed to encouraging customers to register their feedback and to then use that learning to improve services and the customer experience.

This is the annual report of customer feedback received by Adults Social Care during the year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

As well as this annual report, the Director of Adults Social Care and nominated deputies regularly reviews customer feedback data to ensure lessons are learned, insight is gained and improvements are made.

Context

This is a full annual report of customer feedback received by Adult Social Care during the year 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Data used in this report is taken from the corporate iCasework system which, since September 2015, has been the single system for recording and managing customer feedback within the council. The data in this report represents the first full year of data recorded in the new system. It should be noted that there has been a considerable increase in feedback recorded since the introduction of iCasework. This is thought to be a result of more consistent recording and better reporting capacity rather than a particularly marked increase in customer dissatisfaction. For this reason, at this stage in the life of the system, it would be unwise to draw too firm a conclusion regarding annual trends but the Customer Experience Team will continue to regularly monitor the volume of feedback received and provide regular updates to service leads.

Comparison figures shown in this report for the 2015/16 reporting year are based on actual recorded data for the period 1 September 2015 (when iCasework was launched) to 31 March 2016, scaled up to represent a full 12 months. The figures must therefore be taken as estimates (60% confidence level).

Somerset County Council is committed to encouraging and using customer feedback. All customer feedback is viewed positively as an opportunity to learn and improve customer experience.

SCC defines customer feedback as follows:

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction, which isn't resolved immediately, with the actions or inactions of the Council or its agents, either by a member of the public directly affected or by someone acting on their behalf.

A complaint may arise for a number of reasons, for example as a result of:

- The standard of service received from us
- Our response to a request for service
- Our actions or inactions
- The behaviour of a member of staff
- Perceived harassment, bias or unfair discrimination

Compliment: An unprompted expression of satisfaction or praise regarding the services or actions of the Council.

Comment: A positive or negative remark or statement about the Council's services, policies and practices. Comments might make suggestions about the services being delivered or the way in which they have been delivered.

Customers are able to give feedback by telephone, internet, mail and in person and full details of the SCC complaints process is available on our website:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>

Section 1 Executive Summary

1.1 Summary

Adult Social Care received 483 pieces of logged customer feedback during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. This comprised 305 complaints, 128 compliments, 15 comments and 35 member enquiries.

Of those complaints received, the vast majority were dealt with at the initial stage (Stage 1) with only nine cases escalated into a formal or Local Government Ombudsman investigation.

More than half of the complaints (53%) were either withdrawn or not upheld at the initial stage, 28% partially upheld and 19% were upheld.

The county council has set a target resolution timescale of 10 working days for initial complaints and adults social care complaints have been in excess of that target at an average of 30 days, previously this was 29 days.

The number of compliments received by Adult Social Care remains consistent with the previous 12 months.

More detail on this summary can be found in the analysis sections of this report.

1.2 Learning & Improvement

The primary cause logged for 71% of all complaints fall in to one of the following categories (with a further 11% not assigned a cause):

- service provision
- communication
- service quality
- staff performance

Drilling down a little further, common causes of dissatisfaction have been the length of time it takes for a care needs assessment to be made, disagreement with the level

of support which can be offered, confusion regarding the new 'panel' process and customers/their families not being kept informed of what's happening and when.

The experience of the Customer Experience Team is that, even in cases where communication is not the primary reason for complaint, it is often an additional factor. Complaints are not being addressed within our advertised timescales and sometimes there is a failure to provide a comprehensive response which addresses all concerns raised. This is often frustrating for customers and exacerbates their general levels of dissatisfaction with the council.

During the year, the Customer Experience Team have introduced a new process for reviewing the outcomes of Stage 2 and LGO investigations. The process, led by the Customer Experience Team with the involvement of the appropriate team/service manager, involves a table top review of the investigation report and action planning process to identify appropriate remedies for the affected individuals as well as future prevention measures (e.g. policy/practice changes, staff training or performance management, process amendments etc). Whilst issues and remedies are owned by the service, the Customer Experience Officer monitors the progress of actions. We have found that this approach has been an expedient way of righting wrongs and ensuring practical measures can be taken to mitigate reoccurrence. The approach also helps us demonstrate to customers and the LGO a constructive and practical commitment to improvement.

Additional to the measures above, The Customer Experience Team have, for a number of months during the year, provided quality assurance support for Stage One responses. This 'critical friend' approach has been useful in improving the sufficiency of first responses – ensuring that the complaint has been properly and thoroughly scoped and that the response is clear and complete. This helps reduce avoidable contact and results in a better customer experience.

Below is a summary of recommendations resulting from this report. These recommendations will be taken forward by the Customer Experience Team for consideration by the appropriate services/managers.

Recommendation 1
Work with Adults Social Care to establish blocks and barriers experienced in by services working with the complaints process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the existing complaints process, including stages, timescales and roles to establish blocks and barriers to effective complaints management.• Feed in to corporate review and options appraisal of complaints process.
Recommendation 2
Consider how the complaints process, the Customer Experience Team and the iCasework system can better support communication with the customer during the handling of complaints.

- Ensuring customer communication is a key consideration in the complaints process options appraisal.
- Making better use of iCasework to minimise delays & identify 'inaction' on cases.
- Consider the addition of a 'QA' role to the process to ensure clear and comprehensive responses at Stage 1 (reduce escalation and avoidable contact).

Recommendation 4

Consider ways of supporting more timely handling member enquires

The resolution times for member enquiries in Adults has been excessive during the year and Customer Experience Team view is that practice can be varied across the service. Work needs to be undertaken to ensure that the process is fit for purpose and that staff involved in handling are clear on expectations.

Section 2 High Level Analysis

2.1 Previous Year Comparison

Figures for 2016/17 show an overall increase in total feedback received when compared with figures recorded in the 12 months prior. Broken down, the figures show an increase in complaints and member enquiries received but a decrease in compliments (minor) and comments.

Feedback Type	+/-	%
All Feedback	Increase	14
Complaint	Increase	27
Compliment	Decrease	4
Comment	Decrease	48
Member Enquiries	Increase	84

2.2 Escalation Overview

245 Adult Social Care complaints were resolved during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The vast majority of these (236, 96.5%) were resolved at 'Stage 1' of the process. Only 6 cases (2.5%) escalated to Stage 2 and just 3 cases (1%) were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). Whilst it is difficult to draw comparison from the previous year (there are no Stage 2 or LGO cases recorded on iCasework for the 9 months from September 2015 but we do not have a full year of data), this is generally in-keeping with our experience over recent years.

2.3 Performance Overview

Somerset County Council's complaint procedure sets a target resolution timescale of 10 working days for Stage 1 complaints. The average resolution time for Adult Social Care complaints in 2016/17 has been 30 working days and whilst this remains fairly consistent with the previous period, it is still well in excess of the current policy target.

2.4 Outcomes Overview

Over half of the complaints resolved during the year (53%) were not upheld or resolved upon receipt. 19% of complaints were upheld and a further 28% partially upheld. This is a broadly similar picture to the previous period.

2.5 Causes Overview

The majority of complaints (71%) result from four themes: service provision, communication, service quality and staff performance. For 11% of cases no cause has been recorded and this is an area for improvement.

Section 3 Detailed Analysis

3.1 Volumes and Comparisons

Feedback Type	1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017
ASC Complaints	106	240	305
ASC Compliments	Unknown	133	128
ASC Comments	Unknown	29	15
ASC Member Enquiries	Unknown	19	35
Total Feedback	106	421	483

3.2 Resolution Stages and Times

The table below shows the number and percentage of complaints that were resolved at each stage of the process during the year. Previous year data is given for comparison.

Resolution Stage	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016*		1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	
	No.	%	No	%
Stage 1	103	100%	238	96.5%
Stage 2	0	%	6	2.5%
LGO	0	%	3	1%
	103	100%	247	100%

*Please note, data used is actual data held on iCasework between 1st September 2015 and 31st March 2016. Data for the months April – August not available.

The current SCC policy sets a target for resolution of Stage 1 complaints of 10 working days though this can be extended in agreement with the customer if it is not possible to complete the investigation in that timeframe. The table below shows the current average resolution times for Adult Social Care complaint cases.

Average Resolution Times		
Resolution Stage	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017
Stage 1	29 working days	30 working days
Stage 2	N/A	143 working days
LGO	N/A	219 working days

3.3 Complaint Outcomes

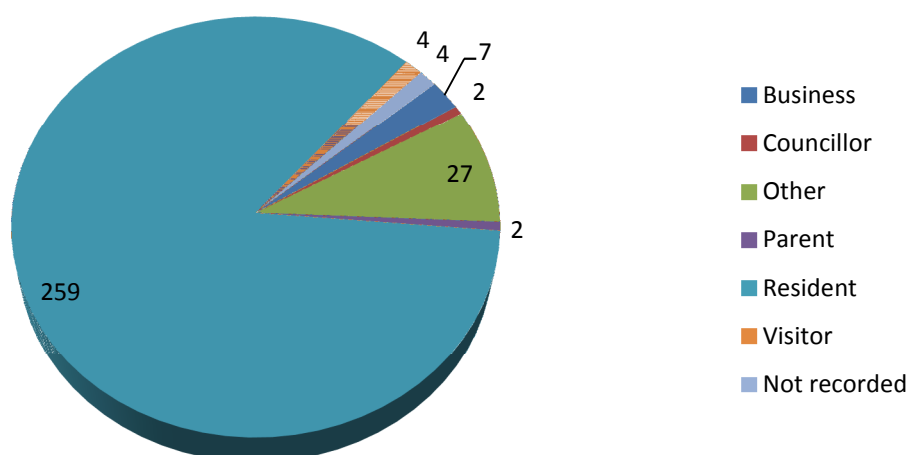
The table below shows the outcome of the 247 cases that were closed during the year

Outcomes	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017		
		Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	20%	48	19%	-
Not Upheld	21%	81	33%	+
Partially Upheld	25%	68	28%	+
Resolved Upon Receipt	20%	49	20%	Neu
Case Withdrawn/Rejected	14%	1	0%	-
	100%	247	100%	

3.4 Customer Profiles

As expected for Adult Social Care, the majority of complaints are made by residents – usually the customer or a member of their family. A number of complaints are also raised by advocates on behalf of customers.

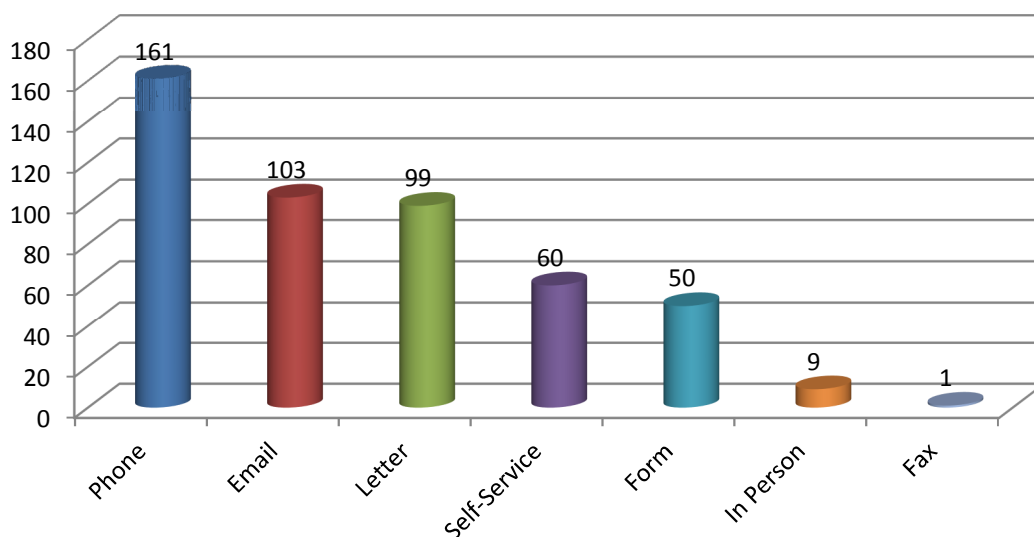
Complaints Source



Whilst the iCasework system is able to record ethnicity and age data in relation to customer feedback, it is evident from the data that this is not happening. Of the 305 complaints made during the year in question, no ethnicity data was recorded for 266 cases. Of the remaining 39 cases, 35 are recorded as 'Bangladeshi' which, taken as a percentage of the whole would equate to 11%. Whilst it is possible that these entries are accurate, it would seem more likely that 'Bangladeshi' has been incorrectly selected by virtue of being first on the pick list. 11% would seem high given the overall ethnic profile of Somerset. Similarly, no age data was recorded for 180 of the 305 complaint cases. Of the 125 cases where data was recorded, 57 complaints (46%) came from customers over the age of 65 (as might be expected given the nature of the service).

Customers are able to provide feedback through a number of channels. The chart below shows that telephony continues to be the preferred channel for feedback (33%) followed by email and letter which account for approximately 21% each of the remaining share. However, looking at the percentage comparison with the previous period, it appears there is a small shift from telephony and mail towards electronic feedback (email and self-service).

Feedback by channel type

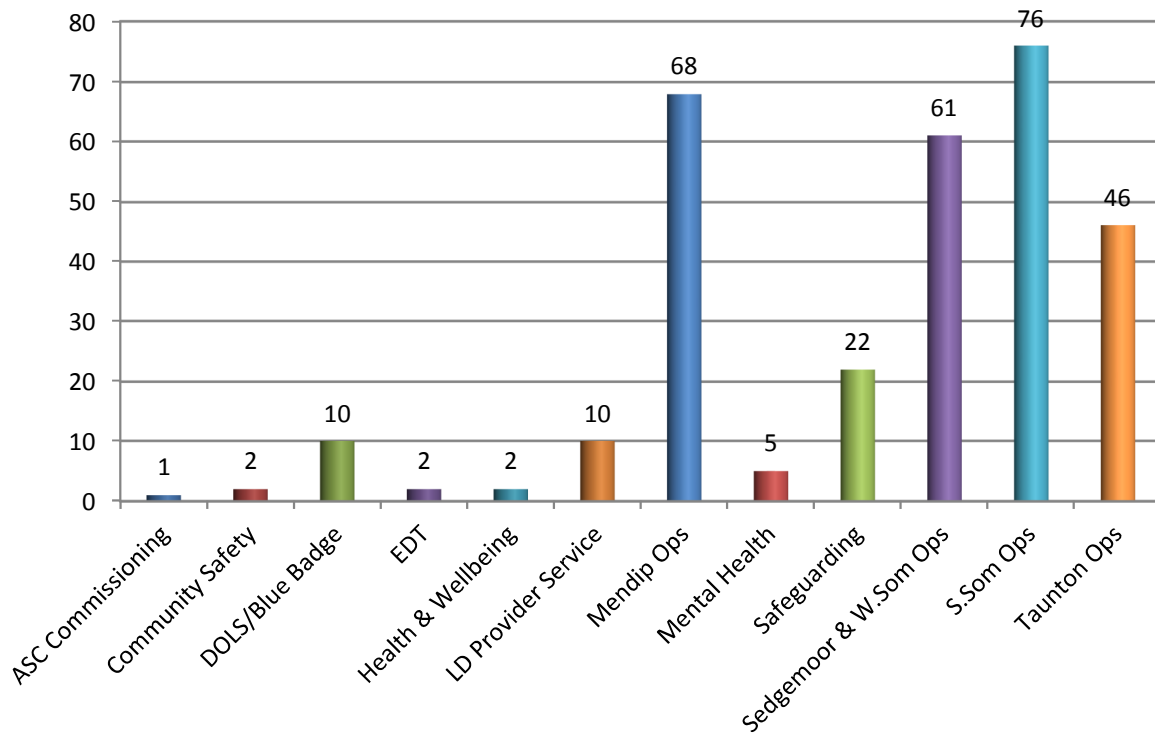


Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2015 – 31 Mar 2016	1 Apr 2016 – 31 Mar 2017	+/-
Phone	44%	33%	-11%
Email	14%	21%	+7%
Letter	24%	20%	-4%
Self-Service	6%	12%	+6%
Form	10%	10%	Neu
In Person	2%	2%	Neu
Fax	0%	0%	Neu

3.5 Complaints by Service/Team/Area

The chart below shows that the majority of complaints – 82% - are assigned to the geographical operations teams, with the percentages ranging between 25% and 15% of the total across the four areas. Other service areas have 10 or less complaints for the year with the exception of Safeguarding with 22 cases (7% of the total).

Complaints by Service Area



The table below shows the average resolution times across service areas for Stage One complaints resolved during the period to 31 March 2017:

Service Area	Average Resolution Time (working days)
Community Safety	6
DOLS/Blue Badge	11
EDT	33
LD Provider Service	12
Mendip Ops	37
Mental Health	44
Safeguarding	37
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops	31
S.Som Ops	33
Taunton ops	17

3.6 Reasons for Complaints

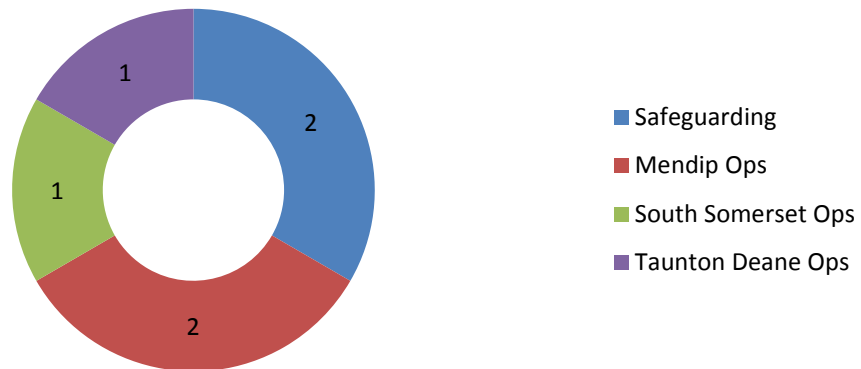
The table below shows a breakdown of the primary causes which have been recorded against each complaint made in the year. The four largest themes emerging are issues with service provision, communication, service quality and staff performance. A primary cause for complaint has not been recorded in 11% of cases.

Primary Cause	No. of Complaints	%
Not recorded	29	11%
Information Issues	13	4%
Amount of information given	6	
Quality of Information or advice given	7	
Financial Issues	22	7%
Amount of charge received	2	
Amount of financial support offered	9	
Payment not received	1	
Timeliness of payment	1	
Other payments or disputed charges cause	9	
Policy & Procedure Issues	21	7%
Application of policy and procedures	7	
Policy or procedure	3	
Decision	8	
Refusal to do something	2	
Other legal and regulatory cause	1	
Service Provision Issues	65	21%
Cancellation or withdrawal of service	10	
Failure to do something	37	
Failure to deliver a service	13	
Other service failure cause	5	
Communication Issues	55	18%
Timeliness in communication	13	
Communication by service	25	
Timeliness in answering call	5	
Other communication cause	12	
Service Quality Issues	53	17%
Quality or standard of service provided	28	
Quality of services provided by a third party	14	
Other service quality cause	11	
Staff Performance Issues	47	15%
Provision of assistance or help by staff	2	
Staff behaviour	8	
Staff rudeness	3	
Timeliness of doing something	31	
Other staff conduct cause	3	
	305	100%

3.7 Stage Two Investigations

6 Stage Two investigations were concluded during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The chart below shows the areas/services to which they relate.

Stage Two Investigations



Of the 6 cases, 1 was upheld, 2 partly upheld, 2 not upheld and 1 was withdrawn.

A case review and action plan was completed for the 3 cases where fault was identified. This was undertaken collaboratively between the relevant service representatives and the Customer Experience Team. The Customer Experience Officer monitors the implementations of actions included in the plan.

Two of the cases where fault was found (one upheld, one partially) centred on a number of concerns regarding third party residential care. Upheld elements included:

- Timeliness and appropriateness of communication between the provision, social worker and family.
- Sufficiency and quality of care.
- Information about the procedure for complaints not being provided by social care staff on request.
- The manner in which the third party provider managed concerns raised by the family.
- Failure of SCC to manage concerns correctly and in a timely manner.
- Absence of a multi-agency approach when addressing concerns.
- Incorrectly restricting family access without DOLS application.

The third case, which was partially upheld, concerned safeguarding concerns raised by the family in relation to their father prior to and following the death of his wife. Whilst the investigation concluded that, despite challenges and refusal of support from the customers, we did act professionally and appropriately in terms of social work practice, it was acknowledged that we did not address concerns raised in a timely manner.

During the year external investigators were employed on 3 of these cases at a total cost of £12,253.90.

3.8 Local Government Ombudsman Investigations

Three Adult Social Care investigations were concluded by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) within the year. Two cases concluded no maladministration had occurred whilst maladministration had been present in the third.

The issue identified was that, whilst the practitioner had recalled and articulated a detailed discussion with the customer during their care needs assessment, the completed paper work lacked sufficient detail and did not adequately cover all areas and explicitly record what was reported to have been discussed and advised during the assessment process. It was recommended that a reassessment be made and that, if eligible needs were identified, they be back dated appropriately.

The Local Government Ombudsman (now the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman) produces an annual review for each council and the Somerset County Council 2017 review can be found at <http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/councils-performance/council/Somerset%20County%20Council>

Section 4 Compliments

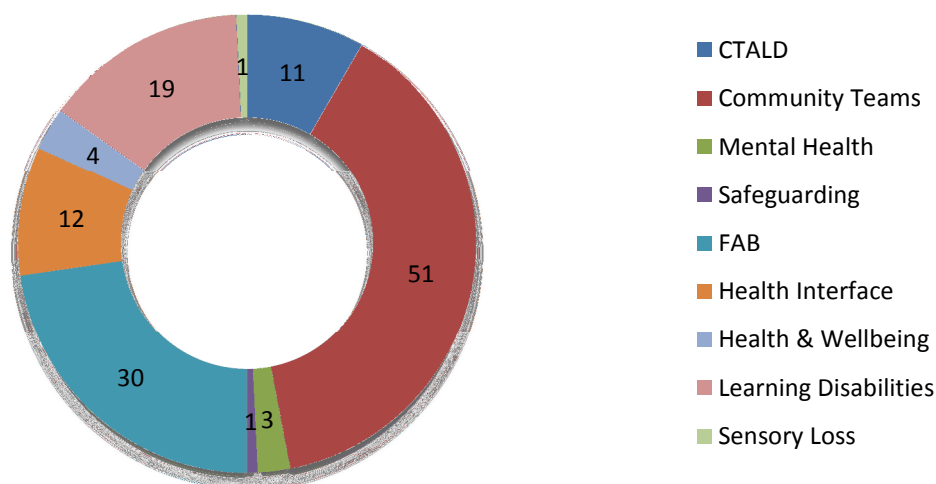
Adult Social Care received 128 compliments during the year to 31 March 2017. This represents a very minor reduction when compared with the full year estimate for the previous period (133, based on 12 month scaling on 9 months actual data held).

The table below shows the spread of compliments across service areas and teams and the chart shows the split by function.

Service Area/Team	No. of Compliments	%
Health & Wellbeing	4	3%
Learning Disabilities Provider Service	19	15%
Mendip Ops – CTALD	4	17%
Mendip Ops – Community Team 1	4	
Mendip Ops – Community Team 2	4	
Mendip Ops – FAB	5	
Mendip Ops – Health Interface	5	
Mental Health Social Care	3	2%
Safeguarding	1	1%
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops - CTALD	1	16%
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops - Community Team 1	9	
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops - Community Team 2	1	
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – FAB	7	
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – Health Interface	1	
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – Sensory Loss	1	
S.Som Ops - CTALD	5	22%
S.Som Ops - Community Team 1	6	

S.Som Ops - Community Team 2	7	24%
S.Som Ops - Community Team 3	6	
S.Som Ops – FAB	3	
S.Som Ops – Health Interface	1	
Taunton Ops - CTALD	1	
Taunton Ops - Community Team 1	10	
Taunton Ops - Community Team 2	4	
Taunton Ops – FAB	15	
Taunton Ops – Health Interface	1	
	128	100%

Compliments received



The recorded reasons for compliments given are shown below:

Service	Cause of satisfaction	No.	%
Advice/information	Prompt communication	1	4%
	Quality of information or advice	1	
	Quality of service	2	
	Service makes a difference	1	
Assessment/Re-assessment	Customer care	4	52%
	Prompt service	2	
	Quality of information or advice	6	
	Quality of service	45	
	Satisfaction with a decision	1	
	Satisfaction with financial support	2	
	Service makes a difference	5	
	Staff conduct	1	
Staff knowledge	1		
Domiciliary Care	Prompt service	1	5%
	Quality of service	2	
	Service makes a difference	3	

Equipment	Prompt communication	1	5%
	Prompt service	1	
	Quality of service	3	
	Service makes a difference	1	
	Staff conduct	1	
Future4	Quality of service	3	2%
Health & Wellbeing	Quality of service	4	3%
Residential	Customer care	1	15%
	Prompt communication	1	
	Prompt service	1	
	Quality of information or advice	1	
	Quality of service	14	
	Staff conduct	1	
Residential short breaks	Quality of service	1	1%
Review	Customer care	2	5%
	Prompt communication	1	
	Quality of information or advice	1	
	Quality of service	1	
	Service makes a difference	1	
Safeguarding	Quality of service	1	1%
Shared Lives	Quality of service	1	1%
Supported Living	Customer care	2	6%
	Prompt communication	1	
	Quality of service	4	
	Service makes a difference	1	
		128	

Section 5 Comments

Only 15 comments were recorded in relation to Adult Social Care during the year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

Analysis indicates that the majority are incorrectly recorded as 'comments'. A number are actually expressions of thanks to a staff member or in relation to a service delivered and should be recorded as compliments. Additionally there are a number which are expressions of general dissatisfaction but the customer is very clear that they do not wish to raise a formal complaint. A number of recorded comments are actually requests for service with have been progressed separately through AIS and did not need to be added to iCasework.

Of the 15 cases recorded, 2 are genuine 'comments':

- A customer opinion that, the current political landscape and impending 'Brexit' will case an economic downturn and that in light of this we should review our focus on social care for the elderly in favour of services for the youth.
- A suggestion about publicity for a changed phone number for the 'take a break' sitter service.

It is clear from this analysis that some work is needed by the Customer Experience Team to ensure that those imputing customer feedback are clear on the definitions and associated actions.

Section 6 | Member Enquiries

35 member enquiries were received in connection to Adult Social Care services during the year. The table below shows the areas and services these enquiries related to.

Area/Service	No. of enquiries	%
DOLS/Blue Badge	1	3%
Public Health	1	3%
Mendip Ops – Community Team 1	4	11%
Mendip Ops – Community Team 2	2	6%
Mental Health	3	8.5%
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – Community Team 1	1	3%
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – Community Team 2	1	3%
Sedgemoor & W.Som Ops – Health Interface	3	8.5%
S.Som Ops – Community Team 1	6	17%
S.Som Ops – Community Team 2	1	3%
S.Som Ops – CTALD	1	3%
S.Som Ops – Health Interface	1	3%
Taunton Ops – Community Team 1	5	14%
Taunton Ops – Health Interface	5	14%
	35	100%

The average number of open working days for a member enquiry during this period was 59.