

Health, Social Care and Housing Committee

10am Tuesday 13 September 2016

Recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee – 26 August 2016

Item number	8.4(a)
Report number	
Wards	All

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Recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee – 26 August 2016

Summary

To refer to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee on consideration of a complaint against the social work service within Health and Social Care.

For decision/action

The Social Work Complaints Review Committee has referred its recommendations on an individual complaint against the social work service within Health and Social Care to the Committee for consideration.

Main report

- 1 Complaints Review Committees (CRCs) are established under the Social Work (Representations) Procedures (Scotland) Directions 1996 as the final stage of a comprehensive Client Complaints system. They are required to be objective and independent in their review of responses to complaints.
- 2 The CRC met in private on 26 August 2016 to consider a complaint against the social work service within Health and Social Care. The complainant, his representative and the service representatives attended throughout.
- 3 The complainant remained dissatisfied with the Council's response to a complaint made about his awarded budgeted hours following his most recent community care assessment.
- 4 The complainant's representative outlined the complaints as follows:
 - 4.1 the complainant was dissatisfied with the budget awarded and believed it was not sufficient to meet his needs.
 - 4.2 the complainant believed that his current social work assessment did not acknowledge his imminent needs.
 - 4.3 the complainant believed that the Council had provided contradictory information regarding meal preparation.
 - 4.4 the complainant believed that the award for shopping was not sufficient.
 - 4.5 the complainant stated that he had suffered increased anxiety as a result delays by the Council in taking forward the complaint review process.

- 5 The complainant's representative confirmed that the complainant received informal support from a neighbour in terms of dealing with correspondence, meals and keeping an eye on his general welfare but this was at best sporadic as the neighbour's health was deteriorating.
- 6 Members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant and his representative.
- 7 The Investigating Officer advised that the complainant had self-referred towards the end of 2014 for a social work assessment to increase his support hours. The complainant had been assessed as eligible for social care support in line with the Council's criteria. The indicative budget generated following the complainant's assessment was £50 per week. However, it was agreed that, due to the difficulties the complainant was having with managing in identified areas, the budget could be increased to £60 per week.
- 8 The areas of need which met the criteria and were within the allocated budget were support with housework, shopping, correspondence, appointments with professionals and advocacy. Support in these areas was provided from Carr Gomm.
- 9 It was acknowledged that the complainant's neighbour/friend provided some informal support to the complainant.
- 10 The Council had reviewed the budget awarded to the complainant and was satisfied that it was appropriate to meet his assessed needs.
- 11 The Investigating Officer advised that the annual review of the complainant's support was due in August 2016. Updated information would be gathered at this time regarding the informal support provided by the complainant's neighbour.
- 12 The members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions of the Investigating Officer.
- 13 Following this, the complainant, his representative and the Investigating Officer withdrew from the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate in private.

Recommendations

After full consideration of the complaints the Committee reached the following decisions/recommendations:

- 1) The complaint detailed at Point 2.1 of the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (that the complainant was dissatisfied with the budget awarded following the most recent social work assessment and that he believed it was not sufficient to meet his needs) was **not upheld**.

The Committee considered that the Council had carried out a comprehensive assessment and recognised that the activities carried out by the informal carer had been included as part of this assessment.

The Committee clarified that they did not have any remit to set or alter any payments or allocate resources resulting from client assessments.

- 2) The complaint detailed at Point 2.2 of the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (that the complainant believed that the current assessment did not acknowledge his imminent need) was **not upheld**.

The Committee noted that the complainant's imminent needs may have changed but that a further assessment was in the process of being arranged.

The Committee strongly recommended that the next assessment was carried out urgently and the report on the assessment communicated to the complainant as soon as possible thereafter.

- 3) The complaint detailed at Point 2.3 of the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (that the complainant believed that the Council had provided contradictory information regarding meal preparation) was **upheld in part**.

The Committee noted that the Council had clarified that it was always preferable that cooking and meal preparation was carried out in order to maximise independence but recognised that the use of ready meals could be an option.

- 4) The complaint detailed at Point 2.4 of the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (that the complainant believed the award for shopping was not sufficient) was **not upheld**.

The Committee noted that the amount of time allocated by the Council for shopping was 1 hour for all clients. The Committee accepted, however, that the complainant's shopping sometimes took more than the allocated 1 hour resulting in less time being available for other tasks but felt that this could be managed within the overall 3 hour allocation.

- 5) The complaint detailed at Point 2.5 of the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (that delays in responding to the complaint raised had resulted in increased anxiety for the complainant) was **upheld**.

The Committee recommended that, if Council response targets could not be met for whatever reason, that this should be communicated to clients at the earliest opportunity.

Background reading/external references

Agenda, confidential papers and minutes for the Complaints Review Committee of 26 August 2016.

Links

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Council outcomes

Single Outcome Agreement

SO2 Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health

Appendices

None.