

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: COMPLAINTS STATUS REPORT 1 <sup>st</sup> APRIL 2004 TO 31 <sup>st</sup> MARCH 2005	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK			
Date: 27 OCTOBER 2005	Ref: JD/MM/EK		

## 1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

This report outlines the annual performance of the Social Work Department in the area of complaints and includes an analysis of statistics and trends regarding complaints.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The Social Work Department Complaints Procedure is operated in line with guidance and directions set in the Scottish Office Circular SWSG 5/96. This requires that investigations take place as close as possible to the point of service delivery within a defined timescale. Mechanisms are being developed to ensure that complaints information can be used to inform and improve operational practice.
- 2.2. The Social Work Department provides a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services to the population of North Lanarkshire. In the current year approximately 20,012 referrals were made to the Department, of these approximately 13,725 were from general Community Care groups and the remainder from Children and Families, and Justice Services. The Department received 128 complaints which represents 0.64% of service referrals. Appendix 1 contains a summary of the statistics.
- 2.3. The complaints procedure is publicised at all Social Work service points. The Complaints Leaflet includes a tear off section with prepaid postage. A complaints procedure for the Care Commission and Local Government Ombudsman Service are also highlighted on a poster, which is displayed in every Social Work unit and office. The revised "Complaints" leaflet and form has been distributed to all social work offices 2005.
- 2.4. Within the Social Work Department the remit for monitoring and analysis of complaints regarding local Social Work services sits with the Resources Section, in order to inform the wider appraisal of performance and continuous improvement within the Department.

## 3. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

- 3.1. HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS REGARDING REGISTERED AND INDEPENDENT SECTOR SERVICES.  
Changes in regulatory arrangements outlined in the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 continue to have an impact on existing guidance and directions relating to complaints handling. Users of services provided by third parties on behalf of Social Work continue to have access to the local authority complaints procedure. Actions arising from this arrangement fall within the remit of the Monitoring and Standards Section.

3.2. **RIGHTS OF APPEAL**

Where any complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of the Social Work Department in respect of the investigation of a complaint and the outcomes of the investigation, they have the option of appeal to the Social Work (Complaints Review) Sub Committee (CRC).

3.3. A complainant also has the right to go to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman who may rule on matters of maladministration. Registerable services can be the subject of complaint to the Care Commission.

3.4. In the year covered by this report one complaint was referred to the CRC.

**4. Recommendation**

4.1. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and Appendix 1.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**19 September 2005**

For further information on this report please contact R. Paul, Head of Social Work Resources, tel: 01698 332023

**Figure 1**

**Complaints Received by Area Team:** sets out the spread of complaints across Teams. The total number of complaints received -128 is a decrease on last year by 13 (128 represents 0.64% of service referrals dealt with during the period of this report).

Total Number of Complaints Received	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004.05
	90	126	141	128

Factors behind wide variations in numbers of complaints received need not necessarily reflect differing service levels within teams, but may reflect the use and application of the complaints procedure as a management tool.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED April 2004-March 2005	Department	Airdrie	Cumbernauld	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Motherwell	Wishaw
Number of Complaints	128	16	43	7	9	39	14

**Figure 2**

Figure 2 sets out areas of complaints by Care Group. The groups Physical Frailty (Elderly), Children and Families and Physical Disability (which has shown a significant decrease from last year) make up 60 % of complaints received by the department. There has, however, been an increase in the number of service users complaining in the area of Mental Ill Health, in a year when the overall number of complaints have significantly decreased.

Care Group	Department	Airdrie	Cumbernauld	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Motherwell	Wishaw
Children & Families	28	3	14	1		7	3
Learn. Dis	5		2	1	1		1
Physic. Dis	18	4	6	1	2	4	1
Multiple. Dis	2	2					
Mental Health	12	5	4	1		2	
Blind Part. Sight	1		1				
Limit L/T Illness	1					1	
Progress. Illness	3			1		1	1
Physic. Frail 65+	41	1	14	2	5	15	4
Child Spec Ed.Needs	1						1
Addiction	1						1
Carer	3					3	
Offenders/Victims	5		2		1	2	
Not Relev. \Appro.	7	1				4	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>

Figure 3

## Primary Reasons for Complaint

Reason	Department	Airdrie	Cumbernauld	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Motherwell	Wishaw
Resource unallocated	6		4				2
Resource inappropriate	4		2			1	1
Resource inadequate	19	5	6		2	3	3
Information Inadequate	14		3		2	7	2
Bad practice	28	3	5	5	1	11	3
Unacceptable delay	24	5	8	1	1	5	4
Procedures not followed	3	1	2				
Staff attitude	22		4	3	2	10	3
Other	17	3	9		1	4	
<b>Totals *</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18</b>

\* Note a complaint can have more than one reason

Figure 4

**Complaints by Area Team and Outcomes** sets out to illustrate the number of complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld by the Team investigating the complaint.

Outcome	Department	Airdrie	Cumbernauld	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Motherwell	Wishaw
Upheld	44	0	15	1	1	22	5
Partially upheld	26	3	12	3	2	4	2
Not upheld	53	11	15	2	5	13	7
<b>Total *</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>

\* Five complaint investigations remain unresolved.

Figure 5

**Timescale for responding to complaints** sets out to illustrate the timescale taken to respond to complaints and the number of complaints resolved or interim letters posted within the timescale indicated in the Customer Service Charter. More than 91% of Complaints are acknowledged within 5 days, the proportion of complaints resolved within the 28 day time frame is 66% both being less than last year.

	Department	Airdrie	Cumbernauld	Bellshill	Coatbridge	Motherwell	Wishaw
Number of Complaints	128	16	43	7	9	39	14
Number Responded to in 5days or less	116	15	38	7	8	35	13
Number Responded to in more than 5days	12	1	5		1	4	1
Final/ Interim less than 28 days	86	14	33	4	3	21	11
Final/ Interim more than 28 days	42	2	10	3	6	18	3