

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

**Briefing for Care Services
Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee
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Annual ECHS Complaints Report

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The Local Authority Social Care and National Service Complaints (England) regulation 2009, s.18 (1),(3) place a duty on the Council to prepare an annual report each year. The Regulatory Reform (Collaboration etc. between Ombudsmen) Order 2007 amended the 1974 Act and clarified the powers of the Local Government Ombudsman and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. This report is available to any person on request. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) has changed their name this year following feedback from its annual survey.
- 1.2 The annual report 'Getting It Right,' content provides an overview of the ECHS Department, the Chief Executive Department and all Local Government Ombudsman enquiries to the Council from 1 April -31 March 2017.
- 1.3 The highlights of the report are the Department received 525 complaints three less than last year, of which 145 (28%) were partially or fully upheld. A slight reduction in complaints and a variance of 2% of complaints upheld when compared to preceding year. The number of compliments received by the Department has increased to 234 (222:15/16). Of all the divisions, Housing Needs Service received the most compliments.
- 1.4 During this period, there has been an increase in social care cases referred to us from the Ombudsman to investigate. Eighty cases were referred to the Council to investigate and of these 54 were for ECHS Department, an increase of 22 (34:15/16) cases on the preceding year. Housing and both adult social care and children services received more cases to investigate. However, local resolution remains at 90% and the percentage rate of cases escalated to LG&SCO remains at 10%.
- 1.5 The majority of cases settle without a financial remedy, however on occasion it is the most appropriate conclusion. The Council made payments of £8,200 in this period (£7,450:15/16).

2. Getting it Right! Annual Report 2016-17

2.1 The annual report (Appendix 1) details compliments, and complaints information received by the Education, Care & Health Services Department.

	Complaints			Compliments			MP Enquiries		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Adults	186	267	245	26	45	50	23	46	16
Children	76	87	96	59	48	25	15	14	11
Education	23	39	26	12	18	6	9	2	9
Housing	110	135	126	35	111	146	78	116	83
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2.2 In Adult Social Care, there has been a slight reduction in the number of complaints made, but an increase within the category of 'quality of service' and a reduction of complaints about the 'attitude of staff'. The category of 'disputed decision' remains roughly in line with last year. People complained about a range of issues but one specific example is a couple said they were being charged more for their care than they were told to expect. Following an investigation into their concerns, it was found that their personal budget had been miscalculated which accounted for the disparity.

2.3 The Council received fewer complaints this year about commissioned domiciliary care agencies, but of the 19 received, eight raised concerns about quality of service, late and missed calls. A daughter complained that the agency missed several visits and her mother was left on her own for six hours, she missed her medication and she was so distressed she fell over in panic.

2.4 The majority of people contribute financially to their care and the charging and finance team process many bills and invoices. These teams received the largest number of complaints with 1 in 4 being upheld for disputed decisions and half being upheld for incorrect information from billing.

2.5 The number of families contacting Housing Needs continues to rise as more people seek assistance with their housing needs. However the number of complaints received by the division is down to 126 (135:15/16) The teams supporting homeless applications and temporary accommodation account for over half of all the complaints received. One in three people who complain about the conditions of their properties have their complaint upheld.

3. Supporting Documents

3.1 Appendix 1. Getting It Right, Annual Report 2016/17.