

# Culture and Communities Committee

10am, Tuesday 19 June 2018

## Recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 2 May 2018

Item number	9.6
Report number	
Wards	All

### Gerrard Clark

Chair, Social Work Complaints Review Committee

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## Recommendations of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 2 May 2018

### Summary

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To refer to the Culture and Communities 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

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

### Main report

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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 2 May 2018 to consider a complaint against the social work service within Health and Social Care. The complainant's representatives and the service representatives attended throughout.
3. The complainant remained dissatisfied with the Council's response to his complaint about disability discrimination and what he saw as an absence of risk assessment in his case.
4. The complainant's representatives advised that the complainant was a vulnerable individual, who had difficulty responding to official correspondence. On a number of occasions the social work service had communicated to him about appointments etc. in writing. His failure/inability to respond to these communications had resulted in service withdrawal. It was understood that this was normal practice where clients failed to respond to three communications.
5. The complainant's representatives suggested such inflexibility resulted in discrimination and bullying, and breached the complainant's human rights.
6. Members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant's representatives.

7. The presenting officer explained the assessment process, including how this was communicated to clients. He accepted that the service had not followed up with the complainant after three unsuccessful communication attempts. Best practice encouraged social work staff to tailor communications to the needs of clients, and he apologised that the particular service hadn't done so. He did, however, note that there remained a range of emergency walk-in services available to the complainant, so it was not entirely accurate to suggest that all services had been withdrawn as a result of the communication breakdown.
8. The presenting officer acknowledged an earlier FOI request from the complainant to access supporting documentation regarding his assessment. He would review the case files further to ensure as much information as possible was made available to the complainant.
9. Members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenting officer.
10. Following this, the complainant's representatives and the presenting officer withdrew from the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate in private.

## Recommendations

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

- 1) To uphold the complaint insofar as it related to a number of communication issues, notably the termination of a service following written communication. Therefore, to request officers to review communications with clients in such circumstances, to ensure they fully recognised the needs of clients with a disability, while recognising the acknowledgement from officers that procedures could be improved.
- 2) To recognise the delays in providing an appropriate service to the complainant, and note that an apology was given. To encourage all parties to work together to review and implement arrangements for the urgent and critical support required by the complainant, and not to allow the separate complaint to cause any further delay.
- 3) To note the remaining issues which are subject to a separate, ongoing, complaint.

## Background reading/external references

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Agenda, confidential papers and minute of the Complaints Review Committee of 2 May 2018.