

## **A message from John Jackson, Director of Adult Social Services, and Jim Leivers, Director for Children, Education and Families**

We are pleased to introduce the annual report for 2014-15 from our Comments and Complaints service which covers both adults' and children's services. The service records and analyses the complaints, concerns, comments and compliments received, so that we can learn from them.

The learning opportunities provided are invaluable for us as Directors and for all of us who are providing services to adults and children. Hearing what people tell us is an important part of our focus on quality and customer service and helps us plan improvements where they are most important to people.

There has been a sharp increase in complaints received across both areas. In Children's Social Care there has been a 15% rise in complaints, but more significantly a 56% rise in complaints about adult social care. Whilst it is inevitable that complaints will increase due to the financial pressures faced by the Council, we welcome this increase as a sign that Oxfordshire County Council embraces a positive culture of complaining and will use the information provided from complaints to learn and improve service provision and ensure that the most vulnerable are protected.

Whilst complaints have increased we were pleased to hear from the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Report, that Oxfordshire County Council has one of the lowest numbers of referrals to the Ombudsman and one of the lowest numbers of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman. This further demonstrates our good practice in relation to complaints.

The increase in complaints should also be balanced against the 205 formal compliments that have been received which have told us how pleased our service users are with the professionalism of our staff and the supportive and compassionate service provided.

Our Comments and Complaints service continues to develop their role working with other organisations which provide support and care, hearing more from children and young people themselves and making sure that commitments made for change are delivered. As Directors we both want to make sure that any changes promised through responding to complaints are put in place and see it as our responsibility to support the Comments and Complaints service in this role.