

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th October 2011

ANNUAL REPORT ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

April 2010 – March 2011

REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLAINTS MANAGER

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES:

- **Safe City**
- **Healthy City**
- **Learning City**

CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES:

- **CI01 - Delivery of customer focused services**
- **CI02 - Being 'One Council'**
- **CI03 - Efficient and effective council**
- **CI04 - Improving Partnership Working to deliver 'One City'**

1.0 Why has this report come to the Committee?

- 1.1 The Council is required, through an appropriate committee, to monitor the complaints arrangements that it has in place regarding children's social care issues, to ensure that those arrangements comply with the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- 1.2 This document presents the Annual Report on Children's Services Social Care complaints (and compliments) for the period April 2010 to March 2011, in accordance with Regulation 13(3) of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The report provides a review of the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.
- 1.3 The aim of this report is to:
 - provide information on the number and type of complaints and compliments we receive
 - describe how the Complaints Procedure operates and give suggestions on how this can be improved
 - indicate any significant changes which have been made following the introduction of new complaints regulations in September 2006
 - Provide information on non Social Care complaints received by the Children's Services Complaints Team

- 1.4 Members' views are welcomed in terms of how information from complaints can be used to improve and develop service delivery and suggestions for improvement in current complaints process.
- 1.5 To assist with this and as a result of a request from Members following the submission of the annual report for the period 2008/2009, more descriptive details of the type of complaints received has been included in the appendices to this report, with a view to identifying trends and themes.
- 1.6 Work around complaints is linked to the following Corporate Improvement Priorities and Corporate Improvement Objectives:-

Corporate Improvement Priorities

- Healthy City (priority 2) - The Statutory Complaints Procedure is used to effectively achieve this priority by ensuring the emotional health and well being of a child/young person.
- Safe City (priority 3) – Use of complaints to ensure that people are free from crime, disorder and substance misuse.
- Learning City (priority 4) – lessons learned from complaints will be used to ensure that all children and young people in the city receive the best preparation and foundation for adult life.

Corporate Improvement Objectives

- Delivering Customer Focused Services (CI01) – putting the customer at the centre of service delivery; seeking customer feedback and views to shape services; using the findings from reviews to shape and improve services.
- Being 'One Council' (CI02) – making all of our services and workforce inclusive to all.
- Efficient and Effective Council (CI03) – ensuring a consistent performance framework and culture across the Council; ensuring services are provided in the most efficient, economic and affordable way.
- Improving Partnership Working to Deliver 'One City' (CI04) – improving the image of the City.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 By Local Government Ombudsman definition a complaint (or representation) is '*An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of a service, action or lack of action, by a department or its staff*'
- 2.2 The regulations and guidance introduced in September 2006 covers complaints and representations made by children and young people. They also apply to parents, foster carers and other adults making a

complaint. These regulations aim to ensure that, regardless of the complexity of their complaint, vulnerable children and young people get the help they need and at the right time and that lessons learned from such complaints lead to an improvement in service delivery. These complaints are usually referred to as 'statutory complaints'.

- 2.3 Separate procedures exist in relation to some school and education complaints but these are still dealt with by the Children's Services Complaints Team. This includes complaints concerning school curriculum, school admissions, pupil exclusions and Special Educational Needs.
- 2.4 Parents/carers must pursue all other school complaints through the school's published complaints procedure which is available on request from the relevant school. At present this process involves informal resolution by a teacher, followed by formal resolution by a head teacher then progression to investigation by the governing body of the school. If a parent/carer should still remain dissatisfied after consideration of the complaint by the Governing Body they are advised of their right to contact the Secretary of State for Education. It should be noted, however, that the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (ASCL) 2009 and the Complaints about Schools (England) Regulations 2010 proposed that the Local Government Ombudsman hosted a new independent complaints handling function for schools to consider school complaints after consideration by the governing body. As a result, The Local Government Ombudsman commenced a pilot scheme in 14 local authorities with full roll out of the new procedure expected in September 2011. This pilot scheme has subsequently been extended and indications from the Local Government Ombudsman are that this proposal will now be discontinued.
- 2.5 Sunderland City Council Children's Services have provided all head teachers with guidance on the new procedure and had intended to issue an example of a 'model' of the new procedure for schools nearer to the implementation date. As this is no longer required the Children's Services Complaints manager will now provide schools with an up to date model of the Department for Education's guidance on dealing with school complaints

3.0 Current position (including regulations)

- 3.1 In September 2006 new statutory regulations were introduced by the then Department for Education & Skills (now the Department for Education) entitled 'Getting the Best from Complaints – Social Care Complaints and Representations Procedure for Children and Young People' to deal with complaints and representations made to Children's Services by children and young people. These regulations revoked and replaced the 1991 Representations Procedure (Children)

in order to reflect the changes made by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care Act 2003.

3.2 Implementation of the new regulations introduced a number of key changes including:

- extension of Local Authority functions, especially those relating to Social Care, about which complaints can be made
- a three stage complaints process with timescales for completing each stage
- requirement for Local Authorities to designate an officer, known as a Complaints Manager, to undertake certain functions in relation to Children's Social Care complaints.
- more focused and precise brief, including the introduction of timescales, for dealing with Stage 2 complaint investigations and Stage 3 Review Panels

3.3 The regulations state that complaints can be made in relation to the following statutory social care functions:-

- an unwelcome or disputed decision
- the quality or appropriateness of a service
- delay in decision making or provision of services
- delivery or non delivery of services, including the complaints procedure
- quantity, frequency, change or cost of a service
- attitude or behaviour of staff
- application of eligibility and assessment criteria
- the impact on a child or young person of the application of a local authority policy
- assessment, care management and review
- accuracy or quality of a social work court report

Parts 4 & 5 of the Children Act, 1989 also dictates that the following functions may be the subject of a complaint:-

- the decision by the local authority to initiate care and supervision orders (section 4.31)
- the effect of the care order and the local authority's actions and decision where a care order is made (section 4.33)
- control of parental contact with children in care (section 4.34)
- how supervisors perform their duties where a supervision order is in force (section 4.35)
- matters that do not relate to the Court and which are specifically actions of the local authority can be considered, regarding applications for and duties in relation to child assessment orders (section 5.43)

- matters relating to applications for emergency protection orders and decision relating to the return of children who have been removed (section 5.44)

Adoption related functions that can be the subject of a complaint:-

- provision of adoption support services
- assessments and related decisions for adoption support services
- placing children for adoption, including parental responsibility and contact issues
- removal of children who are, or may be, placed by adoption agencies

Special Guardianship functions that can be the subject of a complaint:-

- financial support for special guardians
- assistance in relation to contact
- therapeutic services for children and young people

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list. Any other complaint received is considered, if necessary in consultation with the City Solicitor, Data Protection Officer or Freedom of Information advisors.

3.4 Representations, including complaints, can be made by:-

- any child or young person (or a parent or someone with parental responsibility) who is being looked after by the local authority or is not being looked after but is in need
- any local authority foster carer (including those caring for children placed through independent foster care agencies)
- children leaving care
- Special Guardians
- a child or young person (or their parent) to whom a Special Guardian order is in force
- any person who has applied for an assessment under section 14F(3) or (4)
- any child or young person who may be adopted, their parents or guardians
- persons wishing to adopt a child
- any other persons whom arrangements for the provision of adoption services extend
- adopted persons, their parents, natural parents and former guardians
- Any other person who the local authority (Complaints Manager) considers to have sufficient interest in the child or young person's welfare to warrant their representations being considered.

- 3.5 In accordance with DfE statutory requirements, Children's Services has adopted a 3 stage statutory complaints procedure that seeks to resolve dissatisfaction in respect of Social Care complaints. In line with Ombudsman guidance on good practice this procedure is also used for all education related complaints (with the exception of school complaints)
- 3.6 An effective database and monitoring tools are used to ensure that all complaints received by the Children's Services Complaints Team are recorded and monitored. A summary of complaints is presented to the Children's Services Leadership Team and Case Management Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis. This information includes details of trends or themes identified by the Complaints Manager together with an update on implementation of recommendations made by investigating officers and review panel chairs. This information is used to improve and develop service delivery by, for example, highlighting poor practice and identifying staff training requirements.

4.0 Sunderland Children's Services (Social Care) Complaints

- 4.1 The Complaints Procedure provides a three stage process for the resolution and investigation of complaints made by children and young people who use our services, or their representatives.

4.2 Stage 1

The emphasis of the first stage of the procedure is on local problem solving. Most complaints should be resolved at this stage and are usually addressed by operational managers who hold direct responsibility for the service about which the complaint has been made. At this stage complaints are acknowledged within 3 working days and resolved and responded to within 10 working days. Where necessary, and with the agreement of the complainant, this period can be extended by a further 10 working days. If the local authority fails to achieve this timescale the complainant has the right to request immediate progression to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

In 2010/11 there were 127 stage 1 complaints, of which 118 were resolved at stage 1 (93%). Of these 127 complaints 12 (9%) were made by children or young people (see appendix 4 for full details of all Stage 1 complaints received)

This compares to 122 Stage 1 complaints in 2009/10, of which 101 were resolved at Stage 1 (83%), 66 Stage 1 complaints in 2008/9, of which 53 were resolved at Stage 1 (82%) and 62 Stage 1 complaints in 2007/8, of which 46 were resolved at Stage 1 (74%)

It should be noted that although the number of complaints received in 2009/10 almost doubled from the previous year the percentage rate of complaints responded to within statutory timescales increased by 10%.

4.3 Stage 2

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response made at stage 1, or if there has been a delay, they can request progression to stage 2 of the complaints procedure. A stage 2 complaint investigation can be undertaken by a service manager who has had no prior involvement with the case or the complaint and who is not responsible for the service area which the complaint concerns.

If it is considered that a greater element of independence is required (for example if a complaint covers a number of service areas) or a complaint is considered to be particularly sensitive an Investigating Officer from an independent agency is commissioned to carry out the investigation. This is also the case when workload and resource issues dictate that service managers do not have the capacity to carry out these investigations. For this reason external Investigating Officers were appointed for all Stage 2 complaints up until October 2010 when it was decided to trial the use of internal Investigating Officers as part of the efficiency savings.

There is a requirement to provide an Independent Person to oversee all stage 2 complaint investigations. A consortium arrangement is in operation with other regional local authorities to provide this service for a nominal fee.

Stage 2 complaint investigations must be completed within 25 working days of an Investigating Officer agreeing the elements of complaint to be investigated with the complainant, although an extension of up to 65 working days can be requested if necessary. The Head of Safeguarding adjudicates and responds to the outcome and recommendations of the Stage 2 investigation, which may include the offer of redress or compensation, in conjunction with the Complaints Manager

In 2010/11 there were 19 requests for a Stage 2 investigation. This compares to 22 requests in 2009/10 and 20 requests in 2008/9.

Within these 19 investigations there were 112 separate elements of complaint. Of these, 31 were upheld (28%), 47 not upheld (42%), 18 partly upheld (16%), 9 not proven/unsubstantiated or inconclusive (8%) and 7 were unable to be investigated (6%). (See appendix 5)

The cost of commissioning independent Investigating Officers and Independent Persons for Stage 2 complaints in 2010/11 was £41,912.41. This compares to £36,870.38 for 2009/10.

Compensation/redress payments made in 2010/11 amounted to £11,950.00 spread over 5 complaints and ranging from £500.00 to £5000.00. This compares to £24,888.04 spread over 9 complaints for 2009/10 and ranging from £25.00 to £16,962.49.

4.4 **Stage 3**

The final stage of the complaints procedure is an Independent Review Panel. This is an opportunity for the complainant to have any areas of the complaint that remain unresolved heard before an Independent Panel, which comprises an independent chair and two independent persons with knowledge of Social Care policies and procedure. Also present will be the Stage 2 Investigating officer and Independent Person, the Head of Safeguarding, the Complaints Manager and the complainant(s) and chosen representatives. A panel must take place within 30 working days of receiving the request from the complainant.

After hearing the complaint and representations from panel attendees, the Panel will make their recommendations and, together with the Complaints Manager, will produce a panel report with their recommendations which again may include redress or compensation. The panel findings are then responded to by the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Safeguarding and the Complaints Manager.

In 2010/11 there were 3 complaints which progressed to a Stage 3 Review Panel.

This compares to 2 complaints in 2009/10 and 4 in 2008/9

- 4.5 If a complainant still remains dissatisfied following a Stage 3 Review Panel hearing they can request a further investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman.

In 2010/11 the Local Government Ombudsman agreed to formally investigate 8 Sunderland City Council Children's Services Complaints. There were no findings of maladministration arising from these investigations.

This compares to 3 requests in 2009/10, 4 requests in 2008/9, 5 requests in 2007/8, 2 requests in 2006/7 and 2 requests in 2005/6.

- 4.6 The Children's Services Complaints Manager is responsible for the implementation and operation of the complaints procedure on a day to day basis. This post is independent of the operational sections of Children's Services and was, until very recently, accountable to the Head of Service, Performance, Information and Policy, Children's Services. With effect from 1st October 2011 the Children's Services Complaints Manager and Children's Services Complaints Officer have

been integrated into a centralised team within Commercial & Corporate Services together with colleagues from the Health, Housing & Adults and Corporate Complaints Teams. Although it is envisaged that the Children's Services Complaints Manager and Officer will specialise in dealing with Children's Services complaints it is hoped that the new arrangements will provide better cover for service users wishing to make complaints.

4.7 Stage 1 complaints concerning independent service providers commissioned by Children's Services are investigated by the relevant independent provider. Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints will be managed by the Children's Services Complaints Manager. The Complaints Manager will inform the relevant Head of Service if any complaint about a commissioned service is received and consideration is given to sharing information with other appropriate bodies, i.e. Ofsted for concerns relating to registration issues etc.

4.8 The Complaints Manager will decide if information received through a complaint may more appropriately be investigated by the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board; or if a complaint should actually be part of a service area appeals process – i.e. the fostering service.

5.0 Non Social Care Complaints received by the Children's Services Complaints Team

5.1 In conjunction with the Customer Services Manager the Complaint's Team also investigate and respond to Corporate Children's Services complaints regarding issues such as special educational needs assessments and provision, home to school transport, awards, school admissions and premises etc.

During 2009/10 the Complaints Team investigated and responded to 15 stage 1 and 4 stage 2 corporate complaints in respect of issues including home to school transport, foster carer deregistration, noise from XL Youth Villages, increase in nursery fees and closure of city learning centre. This compares to 17 stage 1 and 2 stage 2 complaints during 2009/10

5.2 The Complaints Team also provide advice to complainants on the school complaints procedure and liaise with the relevant school or Governor's Support Team when school complaints are received directly by the Complaints Team.

During 2010/11 the Complaints Team provided advice on 51 school related complaints. This compares to 32 for the financial year 2009/10.

5.3 It should be noted that figures included in this report in relation to non social care complaints relate to those complaints received directly by the Children's Services Complaints Team. This does not give an accurate reflection of the actual number of complaints received in

relation to non social care complaints as the majority of these complaints are directed straight to the school, governor's support team or corporate complaints section.

6.0 Learning from complaints to shape service improvement – identifying trends and themes

- 6.1 Processes are in place to ensure that lessons learned from all complaints are used to identify gaps in services, highlight poor practice/procedure or recurrent problems and identify staff training requirements. Complaints data is presented to the Children's Services Leadership Team on a quarterly basis as part of their regular performance meetings.

More detailed information is also presented to the Safeguarding Senior Management Team meeting on a monthly basis. This includes discussions concerning the implementation of recommendations from Stage 2 Complaint Investigations and Stage 3 Review Panels (see appendix 6).

7.0 Publicity and Information

- 7.1 Children's Complaints Procedure leaflets are provided to all carers, providers and service users. They are also displayed in all Children's Services (Social Care) reception areas.

All Looked After children and children classed as being in need are informed of their right to make a complaint and are given a copy of the recently updated age specific young person's complaints leaflet at the onset of service provision. They are also advised of their right to advocacy (see below).

Corporate Complaints leaflets, which also give details of how to make a social care complaint, are displayed in all local authority public areas.

As part of a current review of Complaints information available and centralisation of all Complaints personnel updated information, including copies of all leaflets and links to relevant procedures, will be included in a newly designed web page on the Sunderland.gov.uk web site.

- 7.2 Complaints can be received in a number of ways, including:-

- By approaching staff responsible for the provision of a service
- By contacting the Complaints Team by telephone, letter or email
- By completing a web form on the Sunderland.gov.uk web site
- Via councillors
- Via the Customer Services Team
- Children and young people in need or those who are being Looked After can complete a young person's complaint form

- Through Independent Reviewing Officers as part of the statutory review process
- Through an independent advocacy service
- Freepost service
- SMS text requesting call back

8.0 Advocacy

8.1 Children and young people who are Looked After, or classed as children in need are informed of their right to ask for independent advocacy support to help them make a complaint or representation.

8.2.1 Advocacy is commissioned by tender and this service is currently provided by Action for Children. In previous financial years this service has cost between £25,000 - £30,000 but an agreement was reached at the beginning of this financial year to reduce this to a fixed block payment of £2,500 plus an hourly fee.

In 2010/11 there were 13 requests for advocacy support from Action for Children. This compares to 12 requests in 2009/10 and 20 requests in 2008/09.

Please note that not all advocacy referrals result in formal complaints being submitted as the advocacy service will often aim for informal resolution with relevant service area in the first instance.

Information concerning the advocacy service is presented to the Corporate Parenting Board on a quarterly basis.

9.0 Training & Development

9.1 Plans are in place to ensure that the topic of Good Complaint Handling is included in the Children's Services staff induction programme. This will be a brief overview of what constitutes a complaint, how to keep on the right track in dealing with them and early resolution.

9.2 The Local Government Ombudsman provides training on Effective Social Care Complaint Handling for staff dealing with the later stages of complaints. This focuses on investigation, providing remedies and learning from complaints. This training was last provided in November 2008 but due to numerous staffing changes in Case Management another course is to be arranged for senior managers new to post.

9.3 To satisfy Children's Home Ofsted requirements the Complaints Team have provided training for the homes on good complaint handling, the statutory complaints procedure and more specific children's homes complaints procedure

9.4 Total Respect training is available to all practitioners. This course is run in conjunction with young people from the Change Council and

highlights what young people expect from a complaint procedure and making a complaint.

- 9.6 The Complaints Manager attends the quarterly Northern Regional Complaints Managers meetings which provide an easily accessible benchmarking forum.

10.0 Summary of Complaints information

- 10.1 Tables and appendices at the end of this report sets out various comparative data for 2007/8, 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

11.0 Compliments

- 12.1 Compliments are a valuable way of monitoring services, as well as providing information on how services are performing. A compliment can be accepted in any format (i.e. verbally, in writing, by telephone or electronically) and every effort is being made to ensure those received from service users or external agencies are being recorded. Compliments are acknowledged by the relevant senior manager and then collated and recorded by the Complaints Team.

- 12.2 During 2010/11 the Complaints & Feedback Team were informed of 42 formal compliments. Please see appendix 7 for full details of complaints received

This compares to 42 compliments being highlighted to the Complaints & Feedback Team in 2009/10, 17 compliments in 2008/9 and 6 in 2007/8.

Managers are regularly reminded of the importance of informing the Complaints Team of all compliments and positive feedback.

12.0 Service Improvement Plans 2011/12

- 12.1 The following initiatives have been included in the 2011/12 Service Improvement Plan for the Complaints and Feedback Team to improve the performance of the Children's Service Complaint's Team in managing representation, complaints and compliments during 2010/11:

- As part of the Sunderland Way of Working an integrated Complaints Team has been in operation since 1st October 2011 incorporating Children's Services, Health, Housing and Adults and Corporate Complaints personnel. Although staff will retain their areas of specialism it is envisaged that this centralised team will provide better office cover for service users wishing to make complaints.

- A centralised recording facility is now in operation with improved reporting methods able to produce quality comparative data.
- Training in dealing with complaints is currently being revised. This will now include an e learning module for all members of staff as well as bespoke workshops for front line members of staff and those involved in social care cases. In addition, Local Government Ombudsman Training is ongoing for all managers who will be involved with investigating and responding to complaints.
- Children's Services will continue to ensure that Stage 2 complaint Investigating Officers are sourced internally as an efficiency saving.
- The Children's Services Complaints Manager will ensure that consortium arrangements with neighbouring local authorities are fully utilised regarding the provision of independent persons and panel members

13.0 Equality and Diversity monitoring

13.1 In December 2009 the Complaints team started to collate equality and diversity monitoring information as part of the post complaint satisfaction survey. This survey also asks for the complainants opinion on how they felt their initial complaint had been dealt with by the Children's Services Complaints team.

For the period 1.4.10 to 31.3.11, 13 post complaint satisfaction questionnaires were returned yielding the following information:

- All of the surveys returned were from adults
- Of the 13 returned, 10 were from females and 3 were from males
- None were classed as registered disabled
- 12 were of White British origin, 1 was White American
- Of the 13, 10 complainants indicated that they were very satisfied by the service provided by the Children's Services Complaints Manager and Officer. The other 3 complainants indicated they were satisfied with the service provided.

14.0 Summary

14.1 The management of Children's Services Complaints is continually reviewed to ensure compliance with the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure and DfE guidance on getting the best from complaints.

14.2 Procedures are now in place to ensure that lessons learned from complaints and feedback is used to highlight poor practice, identify training requirements and therefore improve service delivery and the overall experience for service users.

14.3 At the heart of the process is the need to listen to the views of children and young people, provide them with good support in the form of advocacy and to respond quickly.

Embedded in this process is the realisation and acceptance that failure to respond effectively to complaints can lead to:

- Increased possibility of more or larger compensation payments
- Increase in costs related to Stage 2 investigations & Stage 3 Review Panels
- Increased possibility of maladministration findings by the Local Government Ombudsman
- Reduction in customer/service user engagement due to lack of trust or respect

16.0 Recommendations

16.1 Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- (i) Accept the annual report
- (ii) Offer comments, suggestions or recommendations in relation to the data included in the annual report with particular consideration of any increased role of Scrutiny Committee in the complaints process

17.0 Background Papers

- Getting the Best from Complaints (Social Care Complaints and Representations for Children, Young People and Others) 2006, DfES
- The Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
- Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (ASCL) 2009
- Complaints about Schools (England) Regulations 2010

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APPENDIX 1 – COMPARATIVE DATA

Table 1 - 'At a glance' data

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Social Care complaints – Stage 1 (resolution at service area level)	46	66	122	127
Social Care Complaints – Stage 2 (complaint investigation)	7	20	22	19
Social Care Complaints – Stage 3 (complaint review panel)	1	4	2	3
Local Government Ombudsman Investigations	5	4	3	8
Referrals for Advocacy support	N/k	20	12	8
Stage 2 complaint elements – upheld	No details	No details	46/118	31/112
Stage 2 complaint elements – not upheld	No details	No details	52/118	47/112
Stage 2 complaint elements– partly upheld	No details	No details	16/118	18/112
Stage 2 complaint elements – not proven etc	No details	No details	4/118	16/112
Cost of Social Care Stage 2 investigations & Stage 3 panel hearings	No details	£35,041	£40,931	£41,914
Compensation/remedy payments	No details	£17,405	£24,767	£11,950
Corporate Complaints – Stage 1 & 2	No details	7	17	19
School Complaints advice	No details	23	32	51
Compliments (Social Care only)	6	17	42	42

Table 2 - Social Care Complaint Comparison – Complaints received & response times (Stage 1)

	Complaints received	Response <10 working days	Response <20 working days	Overdue
2006 – 2007	132	41 (31%)	18 (14%)	73 (55%)
2007 – 2008	62	8 (13%)	9 (15%)	45 (72%)
2008 – 2009	66	26 (39%)	23 (35%)	17 (26%)
2009 - 2010	122	60 (49%)	41 (34%)	21 (17%)
2010 – 2011	127	46 (36%)	57 (46%)	24 (18%)

Table 3 - Reason for Stage 1 complaints (Social Care complaints only)

Reason	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Conduct/attitude of staff	42	34	21	39	27
Delay in service provision/assessment work etc	7	0	1	9	12
Lack of services/resources/support	11	16	6	19	15
No data	7	3	0	0	0
Quality issues & data protection	65	9	1	9	9
Action taken by Children's Services	not recorded	not recorded	20	30	31
Lack of communication	not recorded	not recorded	6	6	19
Financial Assistance etc.	not recorded	not recorded	7	0	5
Contact arrangements	not recorded	not recorded	4	10	9
TOTAL	132	62	66	122	127

* N.b. It should be noted that this may not be a totally accurate reflection of the exact nature of complaint as in the majority of cases complaints are about more than one topic (see appendix 4 for details)

Appendix 2 – Case Studies to highlight positive outcomes for complainants

Example 1 – Complaint from Children’s Home resident #1

A resident of a Children’s Home accidentally left the taps on in a bathroom causing water damage to the bedroom on the floor below and damage to another young person’s personal belongings. As a result of the complaint, and due to the fact that this was not the first time the taps had been left on, it was decided that the room underneath the bathroom should no longer be used as a bedroom. The young person was also compensated for damage to his belongings.

Example 2 – Complaint from Children’s Home resident #2

A 17.5 year old children’s home resident complained that his room had been allocated to someone else when he had been assured that there would be a place there for him until he was 18. This had been due to the fact that the resident concerned was very rarely at the home preferring to spend time living with his friend and the room had been required for an emergency placement. It was accepted that there had been a lack of communication with the resident about the need to use his room so apologies were issued. In addition, the children’s home staff arranged a ‘leaving do’ for the resident at a Chinese restaurant and assured the young person concerned that he would be able to drop in to the home as often and for as long as he liked and that staff would continue to offer support and guidance. The young person concerned later submitted a letter of gratitude to the home thanking them for all their continued support and for helping him with some personal problems he had been experiencing.

Example 3 – Complaint from resident of supported accommodation

A resident of Burlington Close supported accommodation project complained that she felt bullied and intimidated by another resident and that the staff were doing nothing to stop this problem. The subsequent complaint investigation revealed that this was 2 way bullying and that although the staff were aware of this problem it did not happen in front of them so there was little they could do to prevent it. An independent mediation session was held involving both parties and members of staff. This resulted in a ‘code of conduct’ being agreed between the residents and tenancy rules being revised.

Example 4 – Complaint from parents of disabled child

The parents of a disabled child complained that a recent Occupational Therapy assessment in respect of their physically disabled daughter had recommended that the family bathroom should comprise of a wet room with walk in shower rather than a bath with a hoist. The parents stated that they wanted a bath with a hoist as this would suit the needs of the entire family and especially those of their other child who had severe ADHD and liked a bath as his parents felt it calmed him. As a result of the complaint it was agreed that the assessment report would be amended and a bath with hoist would be provided.

Example 5 – Complaint from parent of victim of young offender

A complaint was received from the parent of the victim of a young offender stating that they had been booked to go on holiday to Flamingo Land but had discovered that the young offender was being allowed to holiday there at the same time. The complainant was assured that, as a result of his complaint, steps had now been put in place to ensure Youth Offending Service Managers were consulted by prison governors regarding special licence arrangements including holidays etc. In addition, the perpetrators exclusion zone was extended to cover the victim’s school and the victim was offered a mentor to help build his confidence and become involved in activities in the local community.

Appendix 3 – Breakdown of Stage 1 complaints received 2010/11

Service Area key:

CM – Case Management
 EY – Early Years
 LC – Leaving Care

SLAC – Services for Looked After Children
 SDC – Services for Disabled Children
 YOS – Youth Offending Services

S&QA – Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Unit
 YPS – Young Peoples Services

Complaints shown in **bold** are those received directly from children or young people. This accounted for 12 (9%) of the 127 Stage 1 complaints received

Ref	Service Area	Brief details
MF/0410	CM	Social Worker bias & non notification of changes to supervised contact arrangements
JD/0410	CM	Attitude and advice of Social Worker when requesting access to files
NM/0410	CM	Social Worker attitude
MR/0410	SLAC	Delay in producing, and information contained in kinship assessment report. Change to supervised contact arrangements
DW/0410	CM	Social Workers failure to check referral information with school before carrying out initial assessment
CD/0410	CM	Inaccuracies in assessment reports and attitude and actions of Social Worker
CR/0410	CM	Lack of Social Worker visits, non attendance at Core Group meetings and changes to contact arrangements
JM/0410	CM	Social Worker attitude
DP	YOS	Actions and attitude of YOS staff
Total	April 10	9
PG/0510	CM	Attitude of Social Worker and failure to provide information concerning child protection processes
KG/0510	LC	Refusal to overturn 'no unsupervised contact' order for 17 year old boy
ED/0510	CM	Social Worker rearranging birth planning meeting to date that complainant could not make then refusing to rearrange
KH/0510	CM	Non discontinuation of child protection plan
An/0510	CM	Children's Services failure to safeguard children
TS/0510	CM	Lack of information provided to foster carer, failure to collect child's belongings at end of placement, information in report to BANYA
TE/0510	SM	Changes to contact arrangements following child protection conference plus breach of confidentiality
SJ/0510	CM	Social Worker attitude
CR/0510	CM	Social Workers failure to return calls or respond to messages
GP/0510	CM	Social Worker home visit exacerbating situation with parents at home
Total	May 10	10
RR/0610	CM	Delay in case transfer to Gateshead and non allocation of Social Worker since April 10
CH/0610	SLAC	Unhappiness in current foster care placement and failure to deliver personal belongings
TW/0610	SLAC	Complaint from local resident re children's home failure to deal with persistent bullying perpetrated by a resident
LS/0610	CM	Social Worker attitude
LC/0610	CM	Delays in risk assessment work following initial child protection conference
MW/0610	CM	Social Worker persistently failing to attend core group meetings
LA/0610	CM	Content of reports supplied to Durham CC as part of case transfer process, supervised contact arrangements and lack of support
AG/0610	CM	Lack of support from Children's Services and lack of intervention in private fostering arrangement

Ref	Service Area	Brief details
JW/0610	CM	Inaccuracies in content of initial assessment report and conflicting advice and information provided by Social Worker
CP/0610	SLAC	Discharge from Children's Home without consultation and damage to personal belongings
SY/0610	CM	Delay in dealing with referral to Initial Response Team, misinformation provided and poor communication
KH/0610	CM	Attitude of Social Worker dealing with Section 47 enquiry
NC/0610	CM	Contact sessions being cancelled and appointments being missed without prior notification
ML/0610	CM	Social Workers failure to effectively facilitate looked after child's transition from primary to secondary school
JW/0610	SDC	Amendments to care plan and changes to payments
Total	June 10	15
KW/0710	CM	Lack of support and delay in assessment work and progressing case
MM/0710	CM	Lack of support from Social Worker and breach of confidentiality
SD/0710	CM	Failure to respond to solicitors letters
RC/0710	CM	Actions of Social Worker in allowing child to return to family home when no unsupervised contact allowed
MH/0710	LC	Lack of care and support from Leaving Care service for foster child
JF/0710	SLAC	Decision to transfer complainant from one children's home to another
SH/0710	CM	Breach of confidentiality by Social Worker
AG/0710	YOS	Actions of YOS worker in making a child in need referral to Children's Services
HH/0710	CM	Lack of support from Children's Services and attitude of Assistant Childcare Worker
KA/0710	CM	Lack of support from and attitude of Social Worker during Section 47 child protection enquiry
NG/0710	CM	Lack of communication from Social Worker and failure to attend core group meetings
AM/0710	SDC	Reduction in leisure link support hours for disabled daughter
NM/0710	CM	Lack of support and communication from Social Worker during Section 47 enquiry
MS/0710	CM	Foster carers treatment of complainants birth children plus failure to invite complainant to children's looked after reviews
MW/0710	CM	Lack of support and communication from Children's Services
GD/0710	SLAC	Complaint from foster carers re decision not to support their application to adopt current foster child
JP/0710	YOS	Offender being allowed to holiday at Flamingo Lane at same time as his victims family were there
Total	July 10	17
PC/0810	SDC	Misinformation and lack of communication from Quest/Sea View Road
RG/0810	CM	Social Worker attitude and lack of information
EB/0810	CM	Breach of confidentiality re referral to Children's Services made by housing landlord
KS/0810	SDC	Delay in processing access to files request, inaccuracies in assessment reports, breach of confidentiality during Section 47 enquiry
KO/0810	CM	Lack of communication/contact from Social Worker
GP/0810	CM	Instigation of child protection proceedings and delay in completing risk assessment work
JB/0810	CM	Handling of case by previous Social Worker including lack of communication and delay in completing required assessment work
Total	Aug 10	7
JD/0910	CM	Attitude of and lack of support from Social Worker and Family Support Assistant
JE/0910	CM	Failure to provide information about looked after daughter to birth parent
MP/0910	CM	Lack of support from Children's Services

Ref	Service Area	Brief details
JB/0910	CM	Incorrect information in assessment reports
DP/0910	CM	Lack of support or contact from Children's Services after complainant agreed to provide emergency placement for non relative child
JP/0910	CM	Lack of information from Children's Services re DNA testing and possibly being the father of a service user
KH/0910	CM	Feeling of being harassed by Social Worker
NT/0910	CM	Incorrect information and advice given by Social Worker
LR/0910	CM	Delay in assessment work, lack of information and contact from Social Worker, failure to return calls or respond to tel messages
DW/0910	CM	Non completion of care plan and failure to provide advice to family re work required
JH/0910	CM	Delay in assessment work, need for supervised contact and attitude and actions of Social Workers
AB/0910	CM	Children's Service failure to safeguard child, lack of information provided by and attitude of Social Worker
BJ/0910	CM	Lack of support from Children's Services and failure to assist in processing benefit claim
HH/0910	CM	Discrepancies in assessment reports
Total	Sept 10	14
CB/1010	CM & LC	Premature closure of case, lack of intervention by Children's Services, failure to act on information from parent
AH/1010	CM	Reason for child protection plan and delay in case transfer to another local authority
AT/1010	CM	Delay in intervention by Children's Services
BB/1010	CM	Lack of communication and delay in arranging meetings
CK/1010	CM	Failure to deliver correct number of supervised contact hours with daughter
CT/1010	CM	Failure to invite complainant to core group meetings, actions, attitude and comments of Social Worker and Asst Child Care Worker
TM/1010	CM	Implementation of child protection plan, lack of progress information re grandchildren placed for adoption
NW/1010	CM	Attitude and actions of Social Worker during home visit
LE/1010	CM	Loss of placement in Children's Home and breakage of personal possessions
Total	Oct 10	9
TS/1110	SDC	Delay in assessment & review process for disabled child
CN/1110	CM/S&QA	Implementation and non discontinuation of child protection plan plus actions of Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer
CR/1110	SDC	Lack of communication and consultation from Services for Disabled Children
LW/1110	CM	Lack of communication and pressure exerted by Social Worker regarding supervised contact arrangements
NE/1110	CM	Social Worker attitude and lack of contact from Social Worker
CB/1110	CM	Lack of intervention by Children's Services re failure to progress numerous contacts to referral
JG/1110	SLAC	Children's Home staff entering bedroom without permission when complainant was suspected of smoking in bedroom
ML/1110	CM	Social Worker attitude and actions
DH/1110	SLAC	Children's Home resident complaining of feeling victimised by particular member of staff
Total	Nov 10	9
BC/1210	CM	Lack of contact and communication from Social Worker
DP/1210	SDC	Occupational Therapy assessment (under SLA with Children's Services) recommending wet room rather than bath with hoist
KI/1210	SLAC	Conflicting information provided by Adoption Officer
JL/1210	CM	Content of assessment report and delay in taking action
PJ/1210	YPS	Staff at Burlington House (supported accommodation) not following own procedures to deal with bullying

Ref	Service Area	Brief details	
Total	Dec 10		5
EH/0111	YPS	Lack of support from Social Worker and attitude when looking for accommodation	
AP/0111	CM	Failure to follow guidance and procedures for Initial Child protection Conference	
ET/0111	CM	Lack of supervised contact provision	
EM/0111	CM	Lack of contact/communication from Social Worker	
JL/0111	CM	Lack of support and information from Children's Services and failure of Social Worker to return tel calls or respond to messages	
MC/0111	CM	Lack of contact from Children's Services in respect of Special Guardianship application	
DV/0111	CM	Lack of Social Worker involvement and failure to provide information and guidance	
Total	Jan 11		7
SC/0211	CM	Minutes of Child Protection meeting being inaccurate and reflecting badly on complainant	
BC/0211	CM	Lack of supervised contact. Failure to provide minutes of meetings or carry out police checks	
MJ/0211	CM	Breach of confidentiality and inappropriate discussion between Social Worker and complainants daughter	
SM/0211	CM	Non allocation of Social Worker, lack of communication and contact with children	
Total	Feb 11		4
NG/0311	CM	Lack of contact from Social Worker	
LM/0311	CM	Failure to deal with historic child protection allegation, breach of confidentiality, lack of contact with and attitude of Social Worker	
LJ/0311	SLAC	Water leaking into bedroom from bathroom above in Children's Home causing damage to personal belongings	
CB/0311	CM	Social Worker attitude and lack of consideration	
IS/0311	LC	Lack of placement funding to enable foster child to continue with further education	
KO/0311	CM	Incorrect information included in adoption panel report	
DW/0311	CM	Cancellation of home to school taxi provision without notification or explanation	
JR/0311	CM	Non payment of foster carer mileage claims	
DB/0311	CM	Social Workers non attendance at initial core group meeting	
AM/0311	CM	Lack of contact with Social Worker, location and state of contact venues, cancellation of appointments without prior notice	
JS/0311	CM	Actions of SW and IRO in not following CP procedures and failure to take into consideration fact that complainant is disabled	
SM/0311	CM	Social Worker attitude and actions, change of Social Worker and amendments to contact arrangements	
JT/0311	CM	Social Worker failing to make regular visits and failure to return telephone calls or respond to messages	
DK/0311	CM	Lack of support from Children's Services when husbands 3 children from previous relationship moved in with them	
DL/0311	SLAC	Children's Home staff getting too involved in residents relationship with underage girl	
MB/0311	CM	Inappropriateness of Social Worker on visits and incorrect information contained in letters	
CC/0311	SLAC	Actions of another Childrens Home resident resulting in lock down situation and fear of reprisals	
SS/0311	SLAC	Conditions in Children's Home and failure of staff to take appropriate action regarding bullying within the home	
GM/0311	CM	Failure of Social Worker to make contact or return calls and cancellation of visits without notice	
MF/0311	CM	Change to contact arrangements and of contact workers plus lack of progress with care plan	
AJ/0311	CM	Social Worker attitude, cancellation of meetings without prior notice, lack of information or communication	
Total	March 11		21
TOTAL	2009/10		122

Appendix 4 - Stage 2 Complaints investigated 2010/11 and outcomes

1. JDu/1011/St2		
1	Council has taken steps to limit & control contact with children	Withdrawn
2	Council officer was rude and made untrue and derogatory comments about complainant	Withdrawn
3	Council refused to consider complaint	Withdrawn
2. PL/1011/St2		
1.	False allegations of mistreatment of foster child	Unable to proceed
3. MMcC/1011/St2		
1	Disclosure of confidential information by Social Worker no. 1	Not upheld
2	Disclosure of confidential information by Social Worker no. 2	Upheld
3	False statement made by Social Worker	Unsubstantiated
4. MMcM/1011/St2		
1	Lack of support from Children's Services	Not upheld
2	Lack of visits by Social Worker following discontinuation of child protection plan and implementation of child in need plan	Partially Upheld
3	Lack of acknowledgement from Children's Services that complainant had come forward for help himself	Not upheld
4	Incorrect unverified information contained in child protection reports	Partially upheld
5. KO/1011/St2		
1	Lack of communication from Social Worker	Upheld
2	Lack of contact with grandson	Upheld
3	Problems experienced during sibling contact session	Not upheld
4	Failure to feedback kinship assessment results to son	Not substantiated
5	Timings of meetings and lack of notice provided	Not upheld
6	Information being communicated by Early Years Worker instead of Social Worker	Partially upheld
6. DP/1011/St2		
1	Tone of pre sentence report compiled by Youth Offending Service	Not upheld
2	Poor relationship with previously allocated youth worker	Not upheld
3	Inappropriate referral to Kaleidoscope which complainant felt labelled son as sex offender	Not upheld
4	Failure to fully explain services that could be offered by Jigsaw	Upheld
5	Poor follow up and communication from staff after court hearing	Partially upheld
7. KR/1011/St2		
1	Lack of communication from Children's Services	Not upheld
2	Failure to explain matters fully to service user or family	Not upheld
3	Failure to work cooperatively with the family	Not upheld
4	Failure to conclude commitments given at conclusion of previous complaint	Upheld
5	Looked After Reviews not being properly managed	Upheld

8. RR/1011/St2		
1	Failure to follow recommendation of Child Protection Conference to proceed to Public Law Outline	Upheld
2	Delay in case transfer to Gateshead County Council	Upheld
3	Wrong advice given by team manager re need to take independent legal advice	Partially upheld
4	Poor service delivery as result of temporary/agency Social Workers and Team Managers	Not upheld
9. KS/1011/St2		
1	Delay in dealing with access to files application due to Social Worker	Upheld
2	Inappropriate disclosure made by Social Worker to young child re paternity	Partly upheld
3	Incorrect information in initial assessment reports	Unsubstantiated
4	Differences in two versions of minutes for same planning meeting	Upheld
5	Decision to allow partner to be present at medical examination yet not complainant	Upheld
10. KW/1011/St2		
1	Delay in allocating a Social Worker	Upheld
2	Delay in completing Section 37 reports resulting in court hearing being postponed 3 times and impacting on contact with daughter	Upheld
3	Failure to deal with Stage 1 complaint in timely manner or address issues	Upheld
4	Allocated Social Worker being biased towards ex partner (who was previous member of staff) and breach of confidentiality	Not upheld
5	Allegation that ex partner had access to information due to the fact that she still had friends within Social Services	Not upheld
6	Failure to inform complaints that allocated Social Worker was on extended sick leave or to provide a replacement	Upheld
7	Concerns that Team Manager, who knew ex partner, should not have had anything to do with this case	Not upheld
8	Team Managers failure to respond to telephone calls or messages	Upheld
9	Social Workers failure to respond to telephone calls or messages plus lack of communication in general	Upheld
10	Out of Hours workers failing to respond to urgent messages	Upheld
11	Children's Services failure to inform complainant that his daughter had been admitted to hospital	Not upheld
12	Failure to take into consideration concerns complainant had about ex partners sister during child protection process	Upheld
13	Failure to take into consideration information from the Police or complainants solicitor during Section 47 CP investigation	Not upheld
14a	Failure to inform complainant of outcome of Section 47 child protection enquiry	Upheld
14b	Sharing of the above information with Durham Council without informing complainant	Not upheld
15	Incorrect information contained in child protection reports including child's incorrect surname	Upheld
11. JG/1011/St2		
1	Young persons general dissatisfaction with support received from, or decisions made by Children's Services	Unable to proceed
12. CB/1011/St2		
1	Lack of information recorded by Children's Services	Not upheld
2	Frustration caused by not being able to get in touch with Social Worker and their failure to return calls	Partially upheld
3	Lack of intervention by Children's Services	Not upheld
4	Not being invited to meeting to discuss complainants concern of to inform complainant of outcome of meeting	Not upheld
5	Failure to respond to request for information from Court for residence order hearing	Not upheld
6	Delay in referral for a Common Assessment Framework	Partially upheld
7	Misinformation regarding meeting at school	Not upheld

8	Events at joint visit to home address by Social Worker and the Police	Not upheld
9	Grammar and spelling mistakes in various reports together with factual inaccuracies	Upheld
10	Children's Services failure to investigate historic allegations of abuse dating back many years	Not investigated
13. GE/1011/St2		
1	Failure to ensure that an occupational therapy assessment was carried out on a disabled child in a reasonable timescale	Partially upheld
2	The Occupational Therapy assessment failed to account for disabled daughters total needs	Not upheld
14. LR/1011/St2		
1	Confusion and lack of clarification over birth arrangements and inaccurate information in letters	Upheld
2	Refusal to agree to arrange a meeting with complainant to discuss outcome of core group meeting	Not upheld
3	Delay in arranging assessment visits, cancellation of assessment visits and non notification of a change in Social Workers	Upheld
4	Failure to arrange or insist on a paternity test when grandchild's paternity had always been in question	Not substantiated
5	Social Worker bias at court hearings – choosing to sit with one party and not another	Partially upheld
6	Lack of information	Not upheld
7	Failure to arrange contact sessions for complainant in her own right rather than expecting her to attend daughters sessions	Not investigated
8	Failure to inform complainant to seek legal representation to become party to court proceedings	Not substantiated
9	Social Worker bias	Not substantiated
10	Failure to arrange appointment with GP quickly when grandchild was suffering from severe nappy rash	Not upheld
15. KA/1011/St2		
1	Children's Services failed to safeguard child by placing her with an unsuitable family who were unsafe	Upheld
2	Lack of information provided regarding child protection procedures or processes, legal proceedings etc	Partially upheld
3	Reports were not shared prior to Child Protection conferences or reviews	Partially upheld
4	Gore group meetings were not held over the summer holiday period	Not upheld
5	Written records/minutes of meetings were not provided	Upheld
6	Written invitations to child protection conferences were not received	Partially upheld
7	Child protection plan not being fully implemented especially as there was no social worker involvement over the summer period	Upheld
8	Inaccurate, incorrect and uncorroborated information contained in various reports	Upheld
9	Poor Communication including failure to respond to telephone calls and messages	Partially upheld
10	Complainant feeling that she was being fobbed off when asking for information regarding her daughters safety in placement	Not upheld
11	Social Workers poor communication skills with young person	Inconclusive
12	Several changes in Social Worker resulting in non continuity of care and daughters non engagement with workers	Upheld
13	Lack of preparation by Social Workers who would visit the family without knowing or understanding background to case	Inconclusive
14	Family were still not – at time of complaint – receiving the appropriate support	Not upheld
15	Conduct of Team Manager in core group meeting in that it was offensive and inappropriate	Unable to prove
16	Highly confidential documentation (statement of complaint) being sent to the wrong address	Upheld
17	Complainants address being wrongly amended at doctors surgery due to notification from Children's Services	Not upheld
16. JDo/1011/St2		
1	Delay in processing access to files request and failure of Social Worker to advise complainant on how to submit request	Not upheld
2	Social Workers without sufficient knowledge of the case attending legal meetings resulting in unacceptable delays	Not upheld
3	Children's Services intervention in ensuring that complainant was not allowed school reports etc in respect of one of her children	Not upheld

4	Misleading information given regarding use of an advocate at legal meetings etc.	Not upheld
5	Decisions made at meetings not being actioned in a timely manner and relevant people not being invited to meetings	Not upheld
6	Children's Services failure to provide support by referral to multi agency practitioners/services	Not upheld
7	Supervised contact arrangements not being properly maintained	Not upheld
8	Inaccurate responses in Stage 1 complaint response letter	Not upheld
9	Children's Services failure to respond to correspondence from solicitors	Not upheld
17. EB/1011/St2		
1	Non allocation of a Social Worker for an extended period of time	Not investigated
18. KH/1011/St2		
1	Attitude and actions of Social Worker	Not investigated
19. VH/1011/St2		
1	Lack of support given to prospective adopters with no prior experience of caring for children	Partially upheld
2	Lack of support services provided to foster child including failure to provide music lessons and osteopathic treatment	Not upheld
3	Poor care received whilst in foster care	Partially upheld
4	Delay in arranging Looked After reviews and patronising and aggressive attitude displayed by Independent Reviewing Officer	Partially upheld
5	Children's Service failure to secure appropriate educational placement	Not upheld
6	Lack of Social Worker visits and failure to provide training for current foster carer	Partially upheld
7	Children's Services failure to arrange regular visits with sibling	Not upheld
8	Access to files request being refused	Not upheld
9	Children's Services refusal to provide support in taking legal action against complainants father	Not upheld
10	Contact with mother being refused	Not upheld
Upheld - 31 (28%)		Not upheld - 47 (42%)
Partially upheld - 18 (16%)		Not proven/unsubstantiated or inconclusive - 9 (8%)
Unable to be investigated/withdrawn - 7 (6%)		

Appendix 5 – Identifying trends & themes, consideration of recommendations & lessons learned from Stage 2 investigations

Ref	No. recommendations made	No. considered/ implemented to date	Brief details of salient recommendations/implementation
JDu	0	N/a	No recommendations held due to fact that complaint was withdrawn after onset of investigation
PL	0	0	N/a – investigation ceased due to implementation of legal proceedings
MMcC	3	3	Apology issued plus compensation totalling £2500 for relocation expenses and distress
MMcM	2	2	Apologies issues and child in need plan for child reviewed
KO	8	8	Resulted in ensuring that more notice is given for meetings and staff were reminded of the importance of ensuring minutes are completed and distributed quickly.
DP	4	4	Main recommendation was to offer apologies for elements of complaint upheld or partially upheld
KR	4	4	Recommendations included an assurance that consideration would be given to issuing minutes by email once a secure email facility was in place together with agreement that Social Workers should discuss level of contact and communication service users should expect at the onset of service provision
RR	6	6	Complainant offered £500 for loss of earning and distress. Apologies issued and assurance that case transfer procedures would be embedded with relevant staff
KS	5	4	Apologies issued and staff reminded of the policy around requesting access to files. Managers also asked to ensure that case file supervision in child protection cases is robust
KW	6	6	Apologies issues, factual inaccuracies in child protection reports amended and assessment work commenced without further delay
JG	1	1	Complete management review undertaken of case
CB	14	14	Apologies issued, contact made with GP to discuss possible problems concerning referrals to Children's Services, case recording for out of hours visits reviewed and improved, agreement to consider informing estranged parents of common assessment framework (CAF) referrals
GE	5	5	Recommendations included reviewing the service level agreement between Children's Services and Adult Services regarding the provision of occupational therapy services plus compensation for delay
LR	9	8	Apologies issues, birth arrangements process reviewed and staff reminded of the need to communicate legal processes with service users and to ensure court reports are properly formatted with the required highly confidential marking on front
KA	17	15	Apologies and acknowledgement of poor practice issued, consideration to be given to issuing written invitations for reconvened child protection meetings, review of management oversight involved in this case, factual inaccuracies in reports amended, workers reminded of importance of providing notes of minutes or meetings, compensation of £750 offered for time, trouble, delay & distress
JDo	0	0	No recommendations made – no elements of complaint upheld
EB	3	3	Agreed that complainant (young person) is immediately allocated an advocate without question when requested, taxi transport reviewed to ensure reliable punctual service was being delivered.

KH	0	0	No recommendations – complaint withdrawn after commencement of investigation
VH	3	3	Apology issued for upheld elements of complaint, compensation of £300 offered for lost belongings and Independent Social Worker/Advocate asked to discuss implications of access to files with young person concerned

Appendix 6 – Compliments received 2010/11

Compliment from:	Compliment to:	Details:
Sandra Moffatt - CAFCASS	Lisa Strother, Social Worker	Compliments on the very high standard of court statement and Care Plan
Susan McCabe-Solicitor	Sarah Clark- Social Worker	Appreciation for professional approach to case and standard of reporting.
Mrs G – service user	Aiming High project-Hendon	Thank you card for provision of specialised bicycle for disabled daughter
Mrs Y – service user	Aiming High project-Hendon	Thank you card for fabulous time experienced by daughter on skiing trip for disabled youngsters
Mr T - service user	Complaints Team	Rang Executive Director of Children's Services PA to ask her to pass on thank for Complaints Team dealing with concerns so efficiently and quickly
Mrs T - parent	Broadway Junior School	Thank you for the excellent way in which school staff have helped her out during various family emergencies
Wardhadaway Solicitors (Jonathan Flower - partner)	Members of the Change Council (Looked After Children forum)	Content (thought provoking) and quality of 'Young People in Care - Changing Lives' course hosted by Northumbria Family Justice Service but with the involvement of young people reps from the Change Council.
Impact Family Services (Hazel Brunton - CX)	Members of the Change Council	Young peoples involvement in 'fantastic training event'. So impressed wished to requested the assistance of 6 young people for planned CAFCASS event
Simone Common	CAST/RAP/ISSP	Simone thanked workers for their support in identifying and supporting young people to access the Community Transformation Team residential programme.
Mother of service user	Wilf Garbutt-RAP Worker	Thank you letter stating, <i>'My reason for writing is to pass on my gratitude to Wilf for his support and over & above the bounds of his duty care of the young person over the last few months. The young person has faced some tough times over the past few weeks and Wilf has been there come rain or shine supporting both the young person and me in our time of need.'</i>
Young Person	Stan Hedley-ISSP and other YOS staff	Thank you card from a young service user thanking ISSP and YOS staff for their time.
Impact Family Services (Sharon Kane)	Members of the Change Council	Letter from Ms Kane stating she had been pleased to work with the young people involved in a recent training event who 'did themselves proud'. Stated she had gained a lot from the course
CPW – service user	Staff at Monument View - especially Barney Young, Liz and Sue Metcalfe	Letter of thanks from ex resident for all the help and support received whilst at Monument View .
Sgt 344 Bruce Clifford	ISSP	ISSP team were thanked for the part they played in the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). Sgt 344 Bruce Clifford on behalf of Northumbria Police said <i>"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Julie & the ISSP team for their professionalism, interest and service they have provided over the past twelve months"</i> .
Revelstoke Road	Julie Simpson-Snr Practitioner/Andy Lamb-Youth Advocate	Julie Simpson, Andy Lamb and the ISSP team received a thank you card from the Revelstoke Road staff. They said, <i>"Thank you for all the support that was provided to their team and a young person whilst he lived at Revelstoke Road. At times the ISSP team went way above and beyond their roles to ensure a continued level of support and it was greatly appreciated"</i> .
CHANCE	Mark Simpson-Restorative Justice Worker	Mark Simpson received a thank you letter from Community Help and Neighbourly Care for Everyone (CHANCE) thanking the young people for clearing the ivy from the crèche grounds. They said, <i>'We really appreciate this work, as a small charity this has enabled us to have a safe environment in which the children can play'</i> .

Not stated	Tom McKelvie-YOS	Tom McKelvie will be supporting trading standards in some test purchasing work. Young People on Tom's case load will be completing this work as part of their intervention work to understand the legality of underage sales. Wear Kids were thanked for their support with this work.
Not stated	Rebecca Webb/Tom McKelvie-YOS	Rebecca Webb and Tom McKelvie have been completing some work on behalf of social care. They have been doing follow up visits as part of IRT work to ensure families were offered appropriate exit strategies and were linked into the wider CAF intervention work where appropriate. Thanks were received for the support they have provided.
Allan Wallace, Sunderland Carers Centre	Ian Rossiter, Social Worker	Thank you for Ian's professional manner and reassurances re confidentiality.
Service user and family	Staff at Sea View Road	Thank you for the help and support provided to disabled son
Young Person	Stan Hedley-ISSP	Thank you card from a young person, the card read, <i>'Thanks for everything you've done for me, if it weren't for you I would have been back in jail. I'm gonna miss you and I know you only get on to me cause you know I'm worth more than this life. I appreciate everything you've done for me'</i> .
Young Person	YOS	Card to YOS stating <i>"I just wanted to say thank you for putting up with me all these years, hope ya's had fun"</i> .
District Judge	Michael Edwards-Support Worker	The Judge presiding at Sunderland Youth Court on 29.7.10 commended Michael Edwards reports on two young people, and described them as "excellent".
Independent Living	Restorative Justice	The team carried out some work for Independent Living and received a thank you card saying <i>"To all the young guys whom cut our grass, pulled the weeds out and trimmed all the bushes-thank you so much"</i> .
Gerry Armstrong-Solicitor	Mark Graham-Senior Practitioner-ISSP	Mark received the following compliments from Court-Gerry Armstrong-who complimented Mark on the quality and contents of his Pre Sentence Report and the Judge said that he could not add any more to the sentencing recommendations.
Young People-Community Support Questionnaires (x23)	Support Workers	Questionnaires completed by Young People in respect of their support workers, overall service provided rated as excellent
Parent/Carer- Community Support Questionnaires (x19)	Support Workers	Questionnaires completed by Parents/Carers in respect of the support workers, overall service provided rated as excellent
Ms A – service user	Aiming High project - Hendon Young Peoples Project	Thank you for the support from all the staff at the project and comfort that son can be left for a few hours with the staff
Service user and family	Aiming High project - Hendon Young Peoples Project	Card received from family saying how much the children have enjoyed Sunningdale Summer Scheme and to say thank you for the work of the Aiming High project
Parent	Bev Boa, Complaints Manager and Margaret Watson, SEN Manager	Thank you letter for arranging for son to have continuation of home tuition
Service user	Deborah Atkinson, Aiming High Participation Officer	Email to Cllr Pat Smith with compliments for the work Deborah had done with son and how it had improved his quality of life
Gerry Armstrong-Solicitor	Mark Lancaster-YOS Social Worker	Compliment in relation to a young persons Pre Sentence Report on 29.7.10. Gerry complimented Mark on the quality and contents of his PSR and the judge said that he could not add any more to the sentencing recommendations.
Independent Social Worker	Linda Hope-Horizons	Letter of thanks to Linda and the team for the help and support in the case of a specific family. Letter stated that the Family Intervention Project was a great resource without which a successful outcome would not have been reached.

Ryhope Community Association	Simon Smart-Restorative Justice Manager	Simon received a letter from the RCA thanking him for his support and actions carried out within Ryhope. Letter stated that <i>'the swift response to the projects that were identified by the forum was much appreciated and has made a real difference to the appearance of the area'</i> .
Women's Project Service User	Victoria Malone-RAP	A thank you card which read "Thank you very much for supporting me over the last couple of months, you are very kind and also very good at your job".
Sunderland Age UK	Mark Simpson-Restorative Justice Worker	A letter thanking Mark and the Young People for attending the premises and tidying the garden area at the Bradbury Centre. Letter stated 'It was very much appreciated by both staff and our service users, so please pass on our thanks to those young people who helped out'.
Service User	Mandy Crossley, Children's Services	Letter of thanks for the love, care and good work Mandy had completed with 2 of service users sons
Foster carer	Kim Roberts – Independent Reviewing Officer	Praise and thanks to Kim Roberts for her support, advice and consistent approach towards foster children in role of IRO
Service user	Robin-Support Worker (CST)	Thank you card for all of Robin's help and support throughout her time working with the family, also to pass on thanks to Sylvia and Joanne
Support Manager, Silksworth Sports Complex	Mark Simpson & Restorative Justice Team	Thank you for litter picking at Silksworth Sports Complex – letter stated <i>'the work that your team did made a noticeable difference, and as always, your support and cooperation is much appreciated'</i> .
Parent	Bill Oakley Youth Advocate	The parent said <i>"Bill was and incredible support to the young person and throughout the Order he was very easy to talk to and more importantly he was available 24/7"</i> .
Parent	Blue Watch Youth provision	Email thanking staff at Blue Watch centre for help in building daughters confidence and her self help skills
Judge-Newcastle Crown Court	Mark Graham-Senior Practioner-ISSP	The judge stated that a young person would have lost his liberty had it not been for the contents of the PSR prepared by Mark. The Barrister also commended the PSR, citing that it was one of the best reports that he has ever seen.
Groundwork	Restorative Justice Team	Thank you for their support over the past months with regards to the development of their community allotment programme in Sunderland.
Young Person & parents	Bill Oakley ISSP Youth Advocate	<i>'We are very grateful for the help and support we received from you and your team over the past 5 months'</i> .
Children's Services Managers	Judith McMeiken	Both thanked Judith McMeiken for her support in completing a referral form for a placement with Wilderness Care in respect of a young person. Judith willingly helped out at short notice, demonstrating an excellent example of joint working between the YOS and Childrens Social Care.
Service user and family	Carole Young, Social Worker	<i>Hope you're well, just a short note to wish you all the very best for Christmas. X is doing extremely well and since the court hearing seems to have really settled down. I picked his passport up last week which he seemed to really pick up on as an identity event. Hope is all ok with you and your family and you manage to spend lots of family time with them over the festive period. Thanks again so much for all your fantastic work with X, we really appreciate all the great things you do, in such a challenging role. Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2011!!</i>
Northumbria Police	Mark Simpson/Community Payback Team	Mark received a thank you email from Northumbria Police for the Community Payback team cleaning up Blakeney Woods. The Police said they have received very positive feedback from local residents
Parent	Stuart Rouse & Wear Kids	Letter from young person's parent said <i>'I want to thank you all so much for the time spent and commitment shown to both my son and myself – your help has made a vast difference to quality of life for both of us.'</i>

Biddick Broadsheet	Community Payback Team	<i>Thank you for them helping to clear snow from footpaths around bungalows in the Roche Court in Glebe and Wenlock, Biddick both earlier in the year and recently. The teams hard work had enabled some residents, who would have otherwise been housebound, to get out and about.</i>
Brian Chapman, Solicitor	Sue Gardham-Police Officer	Brian commented on Sue Gardham's Pre-Sentence Report stating, 'It was a very good report'.
Val Shield-Head teacher	Yvonne Errington-Social Worker	<i>"This is only the second time that I have felt the Social Worker I was dealing with was really driving things forward. Hopefully the case will be closed very shortly, more progress being made in the last couple of months since Yvonne took over than in the last year".</i>
Marie Bainbridge-Connexions	Su Kaur-Social Worker	<i>I would like to say Thank You for a well informed assessment. I feel all the information we need is within the assessment and this has saved valuable time.</i>
Janet Murray-Assistant HT	Ian Toby- Grasswell House	Letter of compliment stating "On behalf of Sunderland Virtual School I would like to express our appreciation for the help and support that Ian, and other staff members at Grasswell House, have shown towards the education and progression of one of our students during a difficult time in his life".
Parent of young person	Sue Gardham-Police Officer	Thank you for Sue's work with young person and the progress he has made.
Magistrate	Sue Gardham-Police Officer	Sue was commended on a pre sentencing report she had compiled
Young person and family	Paul Brown-Youth Advocate	<i>"Thank you very much for looking after our son with his order, you will be greatly missed".</i>
Parents	Stan Hedley-ISSP Youth Advocate	<i>"Stan went above and beyond the call of duty, he was like a surrogate father and supported young person through this very difficult time for all of us. Thank you". "I'd like to thank Stan for the brilliant support given to YP and me. He has always been there for us and helped YP throughout his order. YP is now an apprentice bricklayer and loving it".</i>
Northumbria Police	Mark Simpson-Restorative Justice Worker	Thanks for all Mark's help and stating that it has been a pleasure working with someone so professional. Letter also thanked the young person who attended to clean the grassed area in Houghton stating the work was appreciated.
Emma Patterson-Education Inclusion Officer	Staff team at Colombo Road	<i>"Thanks for providing service user with the stability and encouragement that has enabled her to re-engage with education"</i>