

# **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

## **LAW & GOVERNANCE**

### **Annual Report**

### **Complaints & Feedback Team**

### **For the period 2015 - 2016**

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## Introduction

The complaint function for the council is provided by a single team based within Commercial Development Directorate. The Complaint & Feedback Team, made up of six staff, sits within the Law & Governance function of the council.

This report is the fourth joint report of the Team and covers all complaints and representations made to the council under the three processes: Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure, the Children's Services Complaints Procedure and the Corporate Complaints Procedure. It covers the period April 2015 – March 2016.

We publish this report to keep people informed about the procedures and the sort of complaints and compliments we receive. We also publish the report to inform people about how the process works and to report on how we use the information we get from complaints and other comments to make improvements to services.

Our aim is to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, and to people's satisfaction wherever this is possible. However, council staff are increasingly involved in difficult areas of work and at times people do not welcome our involvement in their lives. There are also situations in which we cannot provide people with the resolution they want. Sometimes the council may simply get things wrong. In light of this it is therefore inevitable that we receive complaints. Like all other organisations, we would always want to get things 'right first time'. When this does not happen we want to feel that we have an accessible, open and fair way of dealing with peoples' concerns.

One important aspect of complaints is making sure that any lessons learned are transferred into service planning and from there into service improvements. Increasingly, we are able to identify where improvements have occurred entirely or partly as a result of complaints. The report also outlines how we use our complaints to identify and implement service improvements across a range of our activities.

We also provide information on the compliments that have been received by the council. Complimentary comments are not only good for staff morale and motivation, they also tell us a lot about what people like best about the service they get and what works well for them. We can use this information to build more of those features into our services and so improve the levels of satisfaction of our customers.

We are always pleased to hear comments about any aspect of our work, including the format and presentation of this report. We hope it is interesting and informative and thank you for taking the time to read it.

# **PART ONE**

## **THE COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK TEAM**

### **Management and Operation of the System**

The Complaints & Feedback Team is responsible for the co-ordination and management of the three main complaints processes within the council:

- Adult's Health & Social Care Statutory Process
- Children's Statutory Process
- Corporate Process

The team maintains the council's log, recording all investigations. It monitors quality and speed of performance in responding to complaints, and makes sure that, lessons learned from feedback and complaints investigations are systematically captured and analysed with the findings reported to Directorates and senior management.

The Assistant Head, Law & Governance Manager has overall responsibility for the progressing of any complaint and can intervene at any stage including determining in exceptional cases that the complaint be referred immediately to her for investigation.

Local Authorities are required to designate an officer to assist in the co-ordination of all aspects of statutory social care complaints. The Complaints Manager – Adult Services and the Complaints Manager – Children's Services undertake these roles in Sunderland. These managers have responsibility for the implementation and operation of the statutory complaints procedure on a day to day basis.

Whilst officers within the team have traditionally dealt with complaints within a single area of expertise, the combined arrangements give us the ability to expand officers' knowledge base and deal with complaints for all service areas. Not only does this enhance officers' capability, the single team also allows us to provide a better service ensuring someone is always available to speak to complainants in person or on the telephone.

### **Working with Partners**

- **Northern Regional Complaint Managers Group**

Sunderland Council is an active member of the Northern Regional Complaints Officers Group. The aim of the regional group, which meets quarterly, is to provide a forum, where peer professionals can discuss and learn about regional and national issues in respect of statutory adult and children's complaints.

- **Joint Health and Social Care Networking Group**

Links have also been made between Adult Services and Health colleagues to ensure that joint working can be readily progressed. A joint protocol has been drawn up to formalise this arrangement. This protocol covers the handling of complaints that impact on more than one Health and Social Care organisation in the South of Tyne area. The group meets on an ad hoc basis to help support the protocol, develop working relations and to share good practice in respect of complaints made about adult health and social care.

- **Safeguarding Boards**

The Adult Services and Childrens Services Complaint Managers also work in close liaison with the Sunderland Safeguarding Adults and Childrens Boards which involves multi-agency partnership working with colleagues in Police, Probation, Health, Education, and voluntary bodies.

## Publicity

The Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure is publicised in all adult services information for service users. Our leaflet “*Something to say about Adult Social Care*” asks our customers to give their views; let us know when they are pleased with what we have done and also who to contact if they are unhappy and want to make a complaint.

In respect of the statutory Children’s Complaints Procedure, leaflets are made available to all carers, providers and service users. 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.

The Corporate Complaints Procedure is publicised on the council’s website with appropriate links, including contact information such as web forms and telephone numbers for complaints and compliments.

## Accessibility

We promote accessibility to our complaint procedures by ensuring that complaints can be received in a number of ways, including:-

- By approaching staff responsible for the provision of a service
- By contacting the Complaint and Feedback Team by telephone, letter or email
- By completing a web form on the Sunderland.gov.uk web site
- Via Councillors/MPs
- Via Customer Services Advocates working in the Customer Services Network
- 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
- An accessible pictorial complaint form is available for those with a learning disability.

## Advocacy and Special Needs

### Adults

Whilst advocacy support is not a statutory requirement of the Adults Health and Social Care Procedure, we do support vulnerable complainants to have advocacy support if they wish. Voiceability, are the lead provider of the Total Voice Sunderland Service, and is contracted by the council to provide independent, individual advocacy support and representation to service users from all client groups including those subject to detention under the Mental Health Act

The take up of official advocacy help is low for adult services complaints, with no complaints recorded this year as having used this service. 1% of complaints were made to the council via a solicitor. However it is significant that 83% of complaints were made by someone other than the service user, usually by a family member or close friend.

### Children’s

Children and young people, who are looked after, or classed as children in need, have a statutory right to advocacy. We inform children and young people of their right to independent advocacy support to help them make a complaint or representation. Advocacy for children and young people has been commissioned as part of a consortium arrangement with Gateshead, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Hartlepool, Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, Darlington, North Tyneside, Redcar & Cleveland Councils from North Yorks Advocacy Service (NYAS).

Requests for Advocacy Support	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
	3	6	17	6

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

### **Learning from Complaints**

Across all three procedures the team is well aware that resolving a complaint is not the end of the process. It is vital that as a council we learn from complaints and ensure that any mistakes do not recur.

We use information from complaints in a number of ways;

- It helps us provide feedback about the services we commission
- It can influence services and help shape how they are formed in the future
- Intelligence acquired by the council in its work with service providers is collated to identify themes and trends.
- The Complaint & Feedback Team uses this information to promote improvements relating to key issues identified

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.

### **Contacts:**

For all queries relating to the Adult's Health and Social Care Complaint Procedure

#### **Marie Johnston, Complaints Manager – Adult Services**

Complaints & Feedback Team, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, SR2 7DN

Tel: 0191 561 1078

Marie.johnston@sunderland.gov.uk

For all queries relating to the Children's Statutory Complaints Procedure

#### **Karen Taylor, Complaints Manager – Children's Services**

Complaints & Feedback Team, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, SR2 7DN

Tel: 0191 561 1941

Karen.taylor@sunderland.gov.uk

For all queries relating to operation of the team, the Corporate Complaints Procedure, any issue in respect of complaints made to the Ombudsman

#### **Rhiannon Hood, Assistant Head: Law & Governance**

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## **PART TWO**

### **THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

#### **Legislation & Regulations**

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 provides for a single complaints process for all health and local authority **adult social care services** in England.

#### **How the Procedure works**

##### **One Stage - Local Resolution by the council**

Local resolution is about the council trying to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source as possible. We acknowledge complaints within three working days and make arrangements for an appropriate manager to consider the issues and provide a response to the complainant.

##### **Local Government Ombudsman**

Most complaints can be dealt with and resolved satisfactorily at local resolution. However, if this is not the case, any unresolved concerns can be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

##### **Complaints about a Commissioned Service**

The council recognises its responsibility as a commissioner of services to the public and we want to hear people's comments and feedback about the service they receive, whether it is positive or negative. The regulations effectively allow for the council to investigate complaints about the services it has commissioned.

##### **Safeguarding Adults Concerns**

When dealing with complaints, situations often arise that may indicate issues of potential harm or neglect. These issues are shared with colleagues from the Safeguarding Adults Team. Once the elements relating to safeguarding are concluded, any outstanding issues of complaint can then be addressed through the complaints process.

##### **General Issues – Adult Services**

During this period 13,403 requests for support from new customers were actioned. This number does not include those already in receipt of a service and so does not truly reflect the number of contacts undertaken on a daily basis with service users.

Given the high number of contacts, adult services received a total of 87 statutory complaints. The figure is down on last year which is a continuing trend.

Below is a table showing complaint numbers since 2010.

Year	Number of Statutory Adult complaints
2015-16	87
2014-15	115
2013-14	133
2012-13	176
2011-12	171
2010-11	125

It is important to note that the complaints process is not simply about numbers received. It is about effectively resolving concerns, learning lessons from those concerns and taking action to ensure the same complaints do not re-occur. The numbers do not reflect the high level of complexity presented with complaints having multiple elements or health involvement which require a greater level of liaison on behalf of the complainant

The continuing drop in figures could be attributed to the fact that staff do continue to successfully resolve complaints on an informal basis. Nevertheless, we must ensure that complaints are properly recorded so that themes and trends can be identified.

### **Timescales/Performance Measures**

We aim to acknowledge complaints within three working days of receipt. However, there will be some times where this is not possible and for the period 2015-16 we achieved a rate of 85% which is a drop from previous years. The regulations do not have prescriptive timescales; however we have set our own internal performance measures for adult statutory complaints. We aim to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source of the complaint as possible. This is supported by regulations which highlight that complaints can be considered to be immediately resolved if they are done so within two working days.

For the period 2015-16 we recorded 13% of complaints as immediately resolved, which is the same as last year.

51% of all complaints received were responded to within 15 working days, significantly short of our own internal performance target of 80%. This is a disappointing drop from last year's 60% which had followed on from a period of steady improvement with 54% in 2013-14 and 49% in 2012-13.

Sometimes it is not possible to offer a response to a complaint within 15 working days for a number of reasons. In these cases we aim to offer a response within 30 working days or in exceptional cases within 90 working days. In all cases the investigation into the complaint will be proportionate to the circumstances of the case, taking into account the risk, seriousness, complexity or sensitivity of events and cost efficiency.

### **Formal Investigations**

Whilst under the new procedure there are no defined stages, there are still those complaints that are more serious or complex, which warrant more formal investigation. Five formal investigations were undertaken in 2015-16 which equates to 6% of all complaints received during this period. This compares to eight formal investigations undertaken the previous year.

Wherever possible the council operates an internal investigation procedure in respect of adult social care complaints. However, during this period this in-house protocol has become increasingly unsustainable. This has been due in part to workload capacity issues of the managers tasked to carry out investigations and also the increasingly serious and complex nature of complaints received. This had led us during this period to appoint independent investigators from outside the Local Authority.

Three investigations were undertaken by independent Investigating Officers and the costs for these amounted to £8884.08.



## **PART THREE**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES STATUTORY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

#### **Legislation & Regulations**

Statutory regulations were introduced by the Department for Education in 2006 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 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.

The regulations and guidance cover 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 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'.

Separate procedures exist in relation to most school or academy complaints. Parents/carers must pursue these through the school or academy's published complaints procedure.

#### **How the Procedure works**

In accordance with DfE statutory requirements, Children's Services has adopted a three stage statutory complaints procedure that seeks to resolve dissatisfaction in respect of social care complaints. Any other non social care but Children's Services related complaint is dealt with in accordance with the two stage Corporate Complaints procedure.

#### **Stage One**

The emphasis of the first stage of the statutory 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 three 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 two of the complaints procedure.

#### **Stage Two**

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response made at stage one, or if there has been a delay, they can request progression to stage two of the complaints procedure. A stage two complaint investigation can be undertaken by a service manager who has had no prior involvement with the case or the complaint or by an external investigating officer. Following previous resource issues with the use of service managers as in house investigators, stage two investigators are now commissioned externally.

There is a requirement to provide an Independent Person to oversee all stage two complaint investigations. Again these are commissioned externally.

Stage two 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 investigation, which may include the offer of redress or compensation, in conjunction with the Complaints Manager.

### Stage Three

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 two Investigating Officer and Independent Person, the Head of Safeguarding, the Complaints Manager along with 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 Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Safeguarding and the Complaints Manager.

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

### Complaint outcomes

#### Stage One

In 2015-16 there were 176 stage one complaints. This is a drop of 22% from the previous year and reflects the work being undertaken to improve the quality of responses to complaints made to Children's Services. We hope to see this continuing pattern of improvement continue over the coming year and will report on this in next year's report. The Complaints Manager will continue to work with the service to ensure that the work done to date in improving responses is embedded and built on, to ensure continuation of this trend in improvement.

The table below shows how this compares to previous years:

Year	Number of Stage One Complaints	Number resolved at Stage One		Number made by children or young people	
<b>2015-16</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>
2014-15	225	202	90%	9	4%
2013-14	170	163	96%	14	8%
2012-13	117	112	96%	7	6%
2011-12	133	119	89%	19	14%
2010-11	127	118	93%	12	9%
2009-10	122	101	83%	22	18%

Of these 176 complaints 87% were resolved at stage one. This is a drop on previous years but we hope to improve on this in the coming year as part of the on-going work to improve the quality of stage one responses.

Only 59 (34%) of these 176 complaints were responded to within the statutory timescale of 10 working days.

## Stage Two

In 2015-16 there were 23 requests for a Stage Two complaint investigation which is the same as last year. Whilst there has been no increase in the numbers at Stage Two it should be noted that this remains a significantly high level.

Whilst we have witnessed a reduction in the overall rate of complaints made to Children's Services it is concerning that the number of complaints progressing to Stage Two has remained high and is the same as the previous year. This is not entirely surprising following the publication of the negative Ofsted Report; the significant changes that have needed to be undertaken within Children's Services in order to improve services; and that the quality of the stage one responses have not always been adequate. In the coming year we hope to see the improvements that have been put in place within Children's Services having an impact on the numbers of complaints progressing to further stages.

	<b>Number of Stage 2 Investigations</b>	<b>% increase/decrease</b>
2015-16	23	0%
2014-15	23	229%
2013-14	7	40%
2012-13	5	-70%
2011-12	14	40%
2010-11	10	

The cost of commissioning independent Investigating Officers and Independent Persons for Stage Two complaints in 2015-16 has risen to £75,073.43. This figure does not include a number of Stage Two complaints that were still ongoing at the end of March 2016. These costs will be included in figures for 2016/17 and as a consequence next year's figures are anticipated to remain high.

This compares to previous years as follows as set out in the table below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost of commissioning independent Investigating Officers and Independent Persons</b>
2015-16	£75,073.43
2014-15	£53,195.36
2013-14	£17,480.26
2012-13	£35,705.91
2011-12	£5,740.89
2010-11	£41,912.41

The Complaints Manager-Children's Services has been working with the Council's Commissioning Service to look at how best the procurement of IO and IPs can be provided in future, and in line with current regulations.

The reason for the decrease in 2011-12 was as a result of an emphasis on the use of internal investigating officers rather than those appointed externally on a spot purchase basis. Unfortunately this was not sustainable due to workload capacity issues of the managers tasked to carry out investigations, concerns regarding the quality of some of the reports produced and concerns voiced by complainants alleging bias.

### **Stage Three**

In 2015-16 there were twelve complaints which progressed to a Stage 3 review Panel an unprecedented increase on the previous year of 1110%. These cost a total of £ 20,182.01 to administer (cost of Panel Chair, Panel Members and other attendance fees). This compares to £2,183.35 last year.

The rise in the number of Stage 3 Review Panels is not surprising given the number of complaints that progressed to Stage 2 over the course of the past two years.

Year	Number of Stage 3 Review Panels
2015-16	12
2014-15	1
2013-14	2
2012-13	3
2011-12	3
2010-11	2

### **Complaints about a Commissioned Service**

Stage One complaints concerning independent service providers commissioned by Children's Services are investigated by the relevant independent provider. Stage Two and Stage Three complaints are managed by the Children's Services Complaints Manager. The Complaints Manager informs 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, such as Ofsted for concerns relating to registration issues and so on.

The Complaints Manager will consider if information received through a complaint should more appropriately be investigated by the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board; or if a complaint should actually be part of a service area appeals process.

## PART FOUR

### CORPORATE SERVICES COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

We try to make sure that all of the complaints we get are looked into under recognised and published procedures. The Corporate Complaints Procedure covers all other eligible complaints made to the council that fall outside the statutory Adults or Children's social care procedures.

Experience indicates that we should adopt a flexible approach based on the scale and complexity of the complaint, and aim to settle all areas of dissatisfaction quickly, comprehensively and smoothly. This is also the approach the Ombudsman wishes local authorities to take.

In 2014 the council changed the way it received corporate complaints, with all new issues been channeled through the Customer Services Network. Refresher training was issued to advocates in how to identify a complaint. Consequently complaint numbers increased dramatically with matters previously simply addressed as a request for service now being correctly identified and dealt with as a complaint. This improved way of handling complaints provides the information the council needs to identify the underlying issues where there are areas of customer dissatisfaction and helps the council address the cause rather than the effect.

#### How the Corporate Procedure works

##### Stage One

These are dealt with by the Directorate. Most issues are straightforward and resolved promptly but where the complexity of the matter dictates an investigation is required, our aim is to address the complaint comprehensively at this stage through investigation by a trained complaints investigator within the service, whose role is to investigate and prepare a response.

Any investigation should be completed within 15 working days. If further time is required to prepare a satisfactory reply, the customer will be kept informed. All responses will advise the complainant that if he or she remains dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint back to the Complaints and Feedback Team for review.

In exceptional circumstances the Complaints and Feedback Team Manager may decide to remove the complaint investigation from the directorate and arrange for it to be undertaken by a member of the Complaints and Feedback team. Generally however if the complaint relates to more than one service area a suitable lead complaints investigator will be appointed to allow for a coordinated and comprehensive response. Lead responsibility will be allocated by the Complaints and Feedback Team.

During the year 2015-16 there were 5817 stage one complaints an increase of 30% on the previous year's figure of 4463. However this is the first **full** year's statistics. 2014/15 included over three months of recording using the previous system so the figures are largely comparable.

Year	Stage 1 Corporate Complaints
2015-16	5817
2014-15	4463
2013-14	809
2012-13	854

## **Stage Two - Review**

Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint they can request a **review** be undertaken by the Complaint and Feedback Team. On referral the Complaints Team Manager will consider what further action is to be taken. In most cases a review of the complaint is required and the Complaints Team will carry this out.

The aim is to finalise the review within 15 working days. If further time is required, the customer is kept informed. Complainants are advised in the final response that should they remain dissatisfied, they can ask the Ombudsman to look into their complaint

During 2015-16 there were 64 complaints received for review but only 21 were eligible compared to last year's total 32. Of these 5 were upheld, 4 were partially upheld, 11 were not upheld and 1 was withdrawn.

## **Themes & Trends**

Again, as in previous years, the services reaching all residents receive the highest volume of complaints (for example refuse and streetscene). However these complaints are normally resolved immediately and rarely escalate to the review stage or to the Ombudsman. In this period, one complaint, in respect of the conditions of a local park, did escalate to the review stage. Nonetheless only one element of this complaint was upheld.

Complaints involving Planning are generally complex and technical, and are not normally suited to an informal resolution and often escalate to the Ombudsman. An external investigator, with a planning background, is frequently used to assist with these types of complaints.

Multi Service complaints (covering two or more service areas) are continuously monitored to ensure all elements of the complaint are addressed.

## **PART FIVE**

### **COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE OMBUDSMAN**

#### **Introduction**

The Local Government Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local councils. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through the council's complaints procedure and the customer remains unhappy.

Dissatisfied complainants can ask the Ombudsman to investigate further, and the Ombudsman's procedures will apply. While an Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the council has done something, they cannot normally question what a council has done simply because someone does not agree with it.

#### **The Picture in 2015-16**

The Ombudsman writes to council's annually to feed back on their performance in dealing with complaints that the Ombudsman has received about them. The aim of the letter is to provide the council with information to help it improve complaint handling, and to inform the improvement of local services for the public.

While the annual letter is generally received in June, at the time of this report the Ombudsman's letter has not been received by the council. The Complaints Manager will ensure that information in respect of the Ombudsman's letter is provided to the next available scrutiny meeting following receipt of it.

## **PART SIX - COMPLIMENTS**

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction. Receiving compliments is also good for staff morale and motivation. Compliments are now logged centrally through the Complaints and Feedback Team.

### **Statutory Adult Services**

30 compliments were made about statutory Adult Services in 2015-16 which is a drop from last year's figure of 51.

*A big thank you for everything you have done for my mam we could not have wished for better.*

#### **Older Persons Team**

*May I say that it doesn't matter what department I deal with at Sunderland city Council I always get great support and assistance.*

#### **Adult Services**

*Both workers were very helpful to me and my mother. One worker even rang me on her day off. Both workers were organised and calm ensuring the right services were in place for her.*

#### **Occupational Therapy Service**

### **Statutory Children's Services**

23 compliments were made about statutory Children's Services in 2015-16. This compares to 37 compliments made in 2014-15.

*A compliment from a local school thanking staff for all of the great work they had done on a case.*

#### **Looked After Service**

*The home was class and the best place he has ever lived.*

#### **Children's Home**

*You have always gone above your role and are committed and dedicated to your profession.*

#### **Child Protection Team**

### **Corporate Complaints**

574 compliments were made about the non-statutory services during 2015-16 compared to 368 the previous year.

*'.....was extremely helpful in his willingness.....pro-activeness (and that of you Planning Department as a whole) is a positive and refreshing approach to the planning process.....'*

#### **Development Control**

*I would like to thank you, your team and everyone involved in the process. We are grateful – and of course, delighted with our new space!*

#### **Property Services**

*'Customer would like to thank blue refuse crew - she is an elderly lady and was confused with the days for her collection with the Christmas holidays. Customer brought it back in as she thought this had been missed and the refuse crew have kindly come onto the property and emptied it then put it back. Customer is very grateful for this and would like to say thanks'*

#### **Refuse**



## PART SEVEN - STATISTICAL INFORMATION

**Table 1 – All complaints received by monthly breakdown**

Month	Statutory Adult	Statutory Children (all stages)	Corporate (all stages)
Apr	8	10	758
May	9	12	478
Jun	6	20	585
Jul	7	20	477
Aug	10	16	490
Sep	8	13	604
Oct	9	10	520
Nov	6	18	446
Dec	5	20	416
Jan	7	13	386
Feb	4	12	379
Mar	9	12	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>5890</b>

**Table 2 – How we received complaints**

	Statutory Adult	Statutory Children (St 1 only)	Corporate (all stages)	Total
Email	23	37	119	<b>3%</b>
Face to Face	3	3	6	
Letter / Complaints Form	19	15	12	
Telephone	28	119	-	<b>2%</b>
Accessible Form	1	-	-	
Customer Service Network	9	1	5115	<b>83%</b>
Online Form	5	1	637	<b>10%</b>
Fax		-	1	
	<b>88</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>5890</b>	

**Table 3 – Outcome of statutory complaints**

	Statutory Adult	Statutory Children (St 2's only – of 110 elements of complaint)
Upheld	20	27
Partially Upheld	15	24
Not Upheld	19	23
Not Eligible	8	1
Other	15	1
Unsubstantiated	-	1
Withdrawn	4	22
On-going	7	11
	<b>88</b>	<b>110</b>

## Compensation Payments and Write Offs made during the period 2015-16

Date of Payment	Service Area	Costs/Value Of Works	Reason for payment/Works
<b>Total Adult Services</b>		<b>£ nil</b>	
<b>Total Children's Services</b>		<b>£22,550.00</b>	
01.04.15	Looked After Children	£3,500	Failure to pursue an updated assessment of the birth mother's parenting capacity to consider the potential for rehabilitation of the young person back to their care.
13.05.15	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	£500	Delays in the assessment process and not keeping the complainant informed.
29.09.15	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	£500	Failings in the way restrictions in contact were imposed
07.10.15	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	£3,000	Failure to carry out assessments and upset and distress caused.
14.01.16	Child Protection Team - Washington	£10,200	Procedures were not fully followed with regard to the child protection process. The compensation also recognised the delay experienced which may have also contributed to additional court costs.
14.01.16	Looked After Children	£5,000	Failures in the way a child protection matter was handled, which caused unnecessary distress, uncertainty and upset.
31.03.16	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	£350	Delays on the part of the Local Authority resulted in the complainant losing out on contact with their grandchildren, in the way they had done previously.
<b>Total Corporate Complaints</b>		<b>£104,612.09</b>	
Apr 2015	Council Tax	£57.15	50% refund following repayment of full amount into a joint account
Apr 2015	Planning	£200	Delay in notifying customer of decision that enforcement action would not be taken against their neighbour
June 2015	Leisure	£50	Customer misinformed re special offer – general poor communications and lapses in standards
June 2015	Planning	£500	Failure to deal properly with an application for prior approval for complainant's extension
Nov 2015	Planning	£1,250	The impact on the neighbours of the council failing to deal properly with the above application
Nov 2015	Planning	£150	Delay in enforcing a planning condition at a neighbouring development
Staggered Payments throughout 2015/16	Planning	£102,404.94	Incorrect pre-application advice given about the acceptability of a wraparound extension. The complainants did not build exactly what was proposed, nonetheless a subsequent guidance document issued by the Government showed that the council's interpretation of what was permitted development was flawed and part of the completed extension had to be removed and made good.

## Statistics – Adults Statutory Health & Social Care Procedure

	Informal Resolution	Formal Investigation
Apr	6	2
May	8	1
Jun	6	
Jul	7	
Aug	10	
Sep	8	
Oct	8	1
Nov	6	
Dec	4	1
Jan	7	
Feb	4	
Mar	9	
	<b>83</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>Adults Table 2. Distribution of complaints by Service Area</b>		
Benefits & Assessments	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>
Commissioned Services	<b>8</b>	<b>9%</b>
Customer Property & Affairs Team	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>
Hospital SW Team	<b>3</b>	<b>4%</b>
Learning Disabilities Teams	<b>8</b>	<b>9%</b>
Mental Health Teams	<b>5</b>	<b>6%</b>
Occupational Therapy Service	<b>7</b>	<b>8%</b>
Older Person & Physical Disability Teams	<b>45</b>	<b>51%</b>
Safeguarding Adults/DoLs	<b>7</b>	<b>8%</b>
Strategic Commissioning	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Number of complaints responded to within 15 working days [target 80%]	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
	<b>51%</b>	60%	54%	49%	74%

<b>Adults Table 3. Distribution by nature of complaint</b>		
Actions/Attitude of staff	<b>31</b>	<b>36%</b>
Assessment Issues	<b>9</b>	<b>10%</b>
Care Practice Issues	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>
Communication/not kept informed	<b>5</b>	<b>6%</b>
Delay	<b>12</b>	<b>14%</b>
Equipment Issues	<b>4</b>	<b>4%</b>
Finance	<b>5</b>	<b>6%</b>
Lack of choice	<b>6</b>	<b>7%</b>
Quality Issues	<b>13</b>	<b>14%</b>
Taking wrong action	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Statistics – Children’s Services Statutory Complaints Procedure

<b>Children’s Table 1. How statutory children’s complaints were handled</b>			
	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>
Apr	4	6	-
May	11	1	3
Jun	17	3	-
Jul	18	2	2
Aug	15	1	-
Sep	12	1	-
Oct	7	3	-
Nov	13	5	1
Dec	20	-	-
Jan	12	1	2
Feb	12	-	3
Mar	12	-	1
	<b>153</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>

## Statistics - Corporate Services Complaint Procedure

	Stage 1	% Responded to within timescale	Stage 2 Review Received
Apr	755	46	3
May	467	94	8
Jun	580	94	4
Jul	469	94	6
Aug	485	96	5
Sep	600	94	3
Oct	515	93	5
Nov	441	94	5
Dec	407	90	8
Jan	379	87	7
Feb	373	86	5
Mar	346	59	5
	<b>5817</b>	<b>85.33%</b>	<b>64</b>

**Corporate Table 2.**  
**Distribution of corporate complaints by Directorate**

Directorate	Stage 1	Stage 2 Review Completed
Commercial and Corporate Services	5181	7
Office of the Chief Executive	414	9
People Services Directorate	171	4
Multi Directorate	32	
Not allocated	92	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5890</b>	<b>20</b>