



Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)

Time and Date

1.00 pm on Tuesday, 20th January, 2015 (Please Note Time)

Place

Committee Room 2

Public Business

1. **Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interests**

3. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider whether to exclude the press and public for the item (s) of private business for the reasons shown in the report(s).

4. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 4)

(a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October, 2014

(b) Matters Arising

5. **Options to Increase the Number of Looked After Children Accessing Council Apprenticeships** (Pages 5 - 12)

Report of the Executive Director of Resources

6. **Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24** (Pages 13 - 26)

Report of the Executive Director of People

7. **Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2013/14 - Children's Social Care Services** (Pages 27 - 44)

Report of the Executive Director of People

8. **Outstanding Issues Report** (Pages 45 - 48)

Report of the Executive Director of Resources

9. **Any Other Public Business**

To consider any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

10. **Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24** (Pages 49 - 62)

Report of the Executive Director of Resources

(Listing Officer:- P. Fahy, Tele: 024 7683 3555)

11. **Any Other Private Business**

To consider any other items of private business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Monday, 12 January 2015

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services, Tele: 02476 833072

Membership: Councillor: E Ruane (Cabinet Member)

By invitation Councillor Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

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OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

Suzanne Bennett

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Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) held at 2.00pm on Wednesday, 15th October, 2014

Present:

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ruane

Shadow Cabinet Member: Councillor Lepoidevin

Other Members Present: Councillor Innes

Employees (by Directorate):

People: Y. Corden, B. Dhammi, J. Sembi

Resources: S. Bennett, J. Newman

Public Business

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Progress Report on Route 21 Care Leavers Service and Proposed Finance Policy for Care Leavers

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director, People, which provided an update on the Route 21 Care Leavers Service, which was formulated by integrating the former 15 plus Social Work Team and the Shaftsbury Personal Advisor Service which was de-commissioned in March 2013. The service restructure, which was implemented in December, 2013, had enabled the Council to move forward with an integrated service for Care Leavers, which is more efficient and effective in fulfilling the Council's responsibilities as a corporate parent, providing a consistent level of care and support, and improving outcomes for Care Leavers.

The report also sought approval of the revised Care Leavers Finance Policy which sets out the rationale for the offer provided to Looked After Children and Care Leavers during their transition to adulthood. The Policy had been updated through consultation with young people, internal and external partners and stakeholders. This should provide the service and young people with clarity about how the Council will support both Looked After Children and Care Leavers approaching the transition into adulthood in respect of their entitlements and other financial support.

The Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member questioned officers on a number of aspects of the report, including the use of supported accommodation for Care Leavers; Pathway Plans and how young people's aspirations are met; how progress and performance management are monitored; and work undertaken to encourage local firms to provide apprenticeships and job opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Officers were requested to provide a Briefing Note detailing information regarding the routes young people have taken once they have left care over the last few years.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People):-

- (1) Notes the progress being made**
- (2) Approves the financial policy**
- (3) Requests that letters be sent from the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) to the Chair of the Coventry Local Enterprise Partnership and appropriate private sector companies with a view to encouraging them to give primary consideration to Looked After Children and Care Leavers in relation to apprenticeships and appropriate employment**

7. Coventry Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) Annual Report 2013-14

The Cabinet Member considered the Annual Report of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board 2013-14 which detailed the activity and performance of the Board over the year from April 2013 to March 2014. A copy of the draft report was reviewed by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) at their meeting on 21st July, 2014 (Minute 3/14 refers)

The report provided detailed information on work in following areas during the past 12 months:-

- Governance and Accountability Arrangements
- Core Local Safeguarding Children Board Business
- Effective Challenge in Specific Safeguarding Circumstances

The report also identified the priorities for the CSCB during 2014/15.

The Cabinet Member sought assurances in relation to the implementation of all previous recommendations from the CSCB and requested that a Briefing Note be prepared detailing how the Health and Police contributions to the budget are formulated and how they compare to contributions to other comparative Local Authorities.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) notes the annual report of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board and the Business Plan.

8. Outstanding Issues

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Executive Director, Resources that identified those issues on which further reports had been requested and were outstanding, so that progress could be monitored.

9. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at: 3.40pm)



Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

20 January 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Resources

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Options to Increase the Number of Looked After Children Accessing Council Apprenticeships.

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Council currently has a well-established apprenticeship programme in place. This report makes recommendations as to how the Council can adopt measures to encourage and support the participation of current and former Looked After Children (LAC) in the programme.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is requested to approve the following recommendations:

1. The Council will aim to increase the overall number of Looked After Children applying for Council apprenticeships to 20% by 2017 with an interim target of 10% by the end of 2016.
2. The Council currently runs an Access to Apprenticeship programme. The Council will expand the programme to include experience placements up to 2 months in length and additional education components. Looked After Children will be supported to apply for the programme. This will enable them to gain knowledge and skills to support their application to access a Council apprenticeship.
3. The Council will introduce a 'Buddy System' where Looked After Children who have successfully completed six months of their apprenticeship programme, can be given the opportunity to become a 'Buddy' to a new Looked After Child starting on their apprenticeship.
4. All Looked After Children will be given a full financial assessment, before starting their apprenticeship. A 'Hardship Fund' to be set up to support Looked After Children in an emergency, where other financial options are not available, enabling the individual to

carry on with their apprenticeship. The payments would be made on a loan basis. To set aside £5,000 from the Apprenticeship Strategy to cover this.

5. The Council will develop an apprenticeship talent pool, that will enable Looked After Children, who have successfully completed their Access to Apprenticeship programme to register their interest for future apprenticeship vacancies across the Council.
6. The Council will improve its communication strategy surrounding its apprenticeship programme with particular focus on increasing the number of Looked After Children joining the programme.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

- Coventry City Council's Apprenticeship Strategy 2011 - 2014
- Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan.
www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps
- Care Matters: Time for Change – Department for Education and Skills.

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Options to Increase the number of Looked After Children (LAC) accessing council Apprenticeships.

1. Context

- 1.1 The Council developed its apprenticeship programme in 2011. Over a number of years discussions have taken place as to whether the Council should take measures to try to increase the number of Looked After Children accessing apprenticeships within the Council. Nationally there has been an on-going debate about increasing the number of Looked After Children applying for and accessing apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.2 The Council currently has 102 apprentices on its Apprenticeship programme of which 6% have LAC status.
- 1.3 Since the Council adopted its Apprenticeship Strategy in 2011, 17 Looked After Children have accessed the Council's apprenticeship programme. Of those 17, 6 are currently on the programme, 6 have completed the programme and gained jobs within the Council, 2 have completed the Apprenticeship programme but were unsuccessful in gaining employment with the Council and 1 progressed onto Higher Education.
- 1.4 For any young person the transition from education to employment is challenging. For Looked After Children they often face additional challenges such as lack of confidence, motivation and career aspirations. There is also an apprenticeship requirement for minimum entry grades in Maths and English which can be a challenge for those Looked After Children who may not have been successful in school. 'Soft Skills' such as poor communication and interview skills have also proved to be barriers for Looked After Children. In common with other young people, lack of experience in a workplace means that care leavers can have a general lack of understanding of the types of behaviour that are considered acceptable.
- 1.5 The Council's Entry to Employment Team work in partnership with Route 21, CSWP, Careers Guidance and other agencies to promote the benefits of the Council's apprenticeship programme to young people. To support Looked After Children in gaining apprenticeships the Entry to Employment Team has developed a pre-apprenticeship training programme called, 'Access to Apprenticeships'. This programme currently runs for two weeks and focuses on employability skills, confidence building, motivation, and aspirations.
- 1.6 To improve new ways of working the Entry to Employment Team have also started a Twitter account to increase communication with younger people. With high youth unemployment in the City it is essential that every opportunity is taken to increase the number of young people accessing programmes.

2. Options considered and recommended proposals

- 2.1 The Council wants to increase the number of Looked After Children accessing apprenticeship programmes. The Council will implement a phased approach to reaching its 20% target of all apprenticeship applications to its scheme being from Looked After Children. By 2015/16 the aim is that 10% of Council apprentice applications will come from Looked After Children and by 2016/17 the Council is aiming to reach its target of 20%.
- 2.2 Financial security for Looked After Children is one of the major challenges when considering education or work experience opportunities. Department for Education guidance requires all local authorities to have a policy in place to support care leavers undertaking vocational learning, work experience and apprenticeships. This policy 'must allow the local authority to assess whether the young person requires additional financial

assistance, so that they benefit fully from taking part in a broad range of training opportunities or employment'. Work with Route 21 and Social Workers will be able to ensure that financial assessments are completed in full and as a result bursaries can be given to Looked After Children who require this support.

- 2.3 A full financial assessment will be completed for a Looked After Children when they apply for a work placement or an apprenticeship. An option is to ring-fence £5,000 from the Apprenticeship Strategy Fund to develop an Apprenticeship Hardship Fund. This Fund would have clear criteria for claims. Any financial assistance provided to a Looked After Child would be to cover a one-off emergency only. In addition to any financial assistance the young person would also be offered support to access financial advice which would aim to reduce the chances of the same incident reoccurring. This payment would be on a loan basis.
- 2.4 The Entry to Employment Team sends a survey to all apprentices that exit the programme. The team will review the experiences and challenges faced by existing Looked after Children during their time on placement and establish clear reasons as to why they may have been absent or considered dropping out. The team will offer all Looked After Children the opportunity to complete a questionnaire seeking their views for future development of the Council's apprenticeship programme.
- 2.5 The option to extend the 'Access to Apprenticeship programme' was considered enabling a lengthier work experience placement of up to 2 months with additional educational components. Looked After Children will be supported and encouraged to gain a place on this programme as part of the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibility. The programme will also include full recruitment and selection process for each individual providing relevant experience and knowledge in readiness for making an apprenticeship application. The programme will also include sessions in Maths and English to enable our Looked After Children to gain the required access levels for an apprenticeship programme.
- 2.6 As part of a wider apprenticeship communication strategy consideration has been given to how we communicate and who we communicate with. To promote the apprenticeship programme we need to enhance communication with Schools, Social Workers and their teams, Foster Carers, and Young People.
- 2.7 To increase the opportunity for Looked after Children to be informed about vacant Apprenticeship posts. Develop a Talent pool, where individuals can register their interest and then the Entry to Employment Team will inform all registered young people of each vacancy.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The full consultation which will include discussions with Looked after Children already on programme and other stakeholder will be completed by end of February 2015.
- 4.2 All other areas of development within the Apprenticeship Programme will be implemented by April 2015.

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.2 To Ring-fence £5,000 of the Apprenticeship Strategy funding to support the recommendation of a hardship fund.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 young people who are Looked After Children are not given a protected status in terms of selection for employment as an apprenticeship. The Council would therefore be open to legal challenge should it set a quota for the number or percentage of its apprentices who are present or former Looked After Children and recruit on this basis as doing so may disadvantage other young people who do have a protected characteristic under the Act such as disability or race.

5.2.2 Work experience is not usually classed as employment because there is no mutuality of obligation and financial reward is limited to expenses alone. The 'Access to Apprenticeship' programmes may be considered to be further or higher education courses and if this is the case selection onto them cannot give preference to a Looked After Child if this discriminates against a young person with a protected characteristic such as race or disability.

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The recommendations being made will aim to increase the number of Looked After Children on the Council's apprenticeship programme and reduce youth unemployment. This action will support the Council in achieving its Corporate Parenting responsibility.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

No risks identified

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact on the organisation would be a positive one and would assist the Council in ensuring that it is able to grow its own talent and succession plan for the future which forms part of the Council's wider Workforce Planning Strategy.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

An increase in the number of Looked after Children on the Council's apprenticeship programme will support the reduction of Youth unemployment. When recruiting to the programmes outlined in this report the Council will offer support and guidance to Looked After Children in its role as a corporate parent.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None highlighted

6.6 Implications for partner organisation

None highlighted

Report author(s):

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Carolyn Prince	Lead Accountant	Resources	05/01/2015	
Legal: Gillian Carter	Senior Solicitor	Resources	05/01/2015	07/01/2015
Assistant Director: Shokat Lal	Assistant Director	Resources	05/01/2015	
Members: Councillor Ruane	Cabinet Member	Children and Young People	05/01/14	08/01/14

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Appendices

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A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains details of financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The grounds for privacy are that it refers to the identity, financial and business affairs of an organisation and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services.

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

20th January, 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Children and Young People - Councillor Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Supported Accommodation is the term given to the support the City Council provides to young people aged 16-24 including Care Leavers, young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, Children in Need, Looked After Children, young people at risk of or involved in offending and Teenage Parents who are pregnant or have children. The City Council has a statutory duty to provide accommodation to persons under 18 who have been assessed as requiring accommodation or because they are owed a duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and duties towards homeless young people under the Housing Act 1996.

In 2013, following a period of lengthy consultation with all stakeholders, the City Council tendered for seven Supported Accommodation contracts to meet the varying needs of these young people. The contracts were implemented in December 2013 with the exception of one of the lots (referred to as Lot 7) that was not awarded due to bids not being received at an acceptable cost.

The contracts introduced significant changes to how this area of service operated; changes included the introduction of a single point of access and the differentiation of different levels of service to correspond with the different levels of need presenting.

Through the tender process capacity was commissioned for 160 people in accommodation and 70 with floating support. However, since contract commencement demand has been significantly more than available supply which has resulted in a number of people being placed in alternative accommodation including Bed and Breakfast, with some additional contracting taking place in order to provide capacity to meet this demand. This has placed significant financial and service demands on this area and, as a result, the expenditure has been in excess of the allocated budget. Statutory guidance confirms that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not suitable for under 18 year olds.

Recently one contracted provider has informed the City Council of their intention to terminate their contract from 31 January 2015. In order to continue to provide viable Supported Accommodation services beyond this date a number of arrangements for additional capacity have been made. The fact that one contract is being terminated, plus contract Lot 7 not being awarded presents an opportunity to consider what is now required from Supported Accommodation for high level needs in order for the City Council to meet its statutory duties within the available resources.

This report contains actions and proposals to achieve short term stability post 31 January 2015 and a longer term more robust service model for those with high needs within available resources.

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member is recommended to approve:

1. The extension of existing short term contracts to 31 March 2016 to provide service capacity in respect of young people with high level needs in order to ensure the City Council can continue to discharge its statutory responsibilities.
2. The development of a revised model for those requiring Supported Accommodation that have high level needs in order to ensure that available resources and service models are appropriately focussed and that people are supported to be fully independent.
3. The varying of the existing Homelessness contract between Coventry City Council and the Salvation Army to provide accommodation with support for 16-24 year olds.
4. That, on delivery of recommendation 3, if approved, that bed and breakfast accommodation is only used for people eligible for supported accommodation aged 18 – 24 on a short term basis where the alternative would be street homelessness.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) Report, Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 18-24, 1 September 2014

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The City Council provides supported accommodation and floating support to a range of service users aged 16-24. This support has historically been provided through a range of contracts administered by the Children’s Services and Housing elements of the People Directorate. In February 2013 a tender process was approved for six block contracts for accommodation and support plus a call-off contract to give capacity to manage fluctuations in demand above block contracted levels. Following completion of the tender new contracts were implemented in December 2013.
- 1.2 The commissioning of Supported Accommodation services presents challenges across a number of local authorities. Many local authorities are facing difficulties either due to capacity and quality in their local markets, providers being unable to provide services within available financial envelopes or insufficient local housing stock restricting the practicalities of service delivery. Some local authorities i.e. Camden, are considered to have a well-developed model for Supported Accommodation but this has been under development since 2007.
- 1.3 The new Coventry service was intended for care leavers, young people who would previously have accessed the Supporting People service, and young people who had previously been receiving a service from the Housing Department because they were homeless. Supported Accommodation is not a regulated service.
- 1.4 The service was designed to:
 - Increase the choice and flexibility for young people by expanding the different types of accommodation available;
 - Improve outcomes and increase placement stability by reducing the number of evictions;
 - Drive up quality by setting out clear expectations through the specification;
 - Enable an overview of numbers and need;
 - Reduce the need to use Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- 1.5 The contracts were based on three levels of need - low, medium and high - which derived from analysis of the range of needs which young people in the group presented with. This work was encapsulated in the ‘Commissioning Strategy and Service Model, Stakeholder Consultation Document’ October 2012.
- 1.6 Following completion of this needs analysis a tender process commenced, as a result of this process contracts were awarded as follows:

Lot	Type of Service	Numbers	Provider
Lot 1	Foyer-type accommodation: low to medium needs	63 (accommodation)	Midland Heart
Lot 2	Supported accommodation: low, medium, high needs	27 (accommodation)	Cyrenians
Lot 3	Supported accommodation: low, medium, high needs	27 (accommodation)	Cyrenians
Lot 4	Supported accommodation: low, medium, high needs	27 (accommodation)	Cyrenians
Lot 5	Floating Support	45 (floating support)	St Basil’s
Lot 6	Accommodation and Floating Support for Teenage Parents	16 (accommodation) 25 (floating support)	Valley House

1.7 There was also a seventh lot that was not awarded due to tenders not being received at an acceptable cost. This lot was a call-off contract to give additional capacity should this be required in the event of block contracted capacity being insufficient to meet demand.

1.8 Alongside the tender process a number of operational changes were made. A single point of access was introduced that required all referrals and placements to go through a central point. The ability for providers to take direct referrals into contracted capacity was also removed.

1.9 Local Authority Responsibilities

1.10 The local authority has a range of responsibilities that are dealt with, in part, through the provision of supported accommodation. These are outlined below:

1.11 Care Leavers

Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 the City Council is responsible for Care Leavers up to the age of 21 and the age of 24 if in full time education. This Act supplements the Children Act 1989 and places a duty on the Local Authority to financially support and meet the housing needs/costs of care leavers until their eighteenth birthday, and to maintain contact with them thereafter, providing advice, assistance and support. This responsibility includes the provision of suitable accommodation if they are eligible and have a need for the suitable accommodation to be provided. The City Council manages this responsibility primarily through the 'Route 21' team and where accommodation is required for Care Leavers this is provided through the Supported Accommodation contracts.

1.12 The level of need of the care leaver in question will determine the type of Supported Accommodation offered. In September 2014 the total number of care leavers was 371 with 90 care leavers having gone into Supported Accommodation. Those not going into Supported Accommodation as a Care Leaver go into other forms of accommodation such as their own tenancy, university accommodation or remain with former foster carers under the Staying Put scheme. Regardless of the accommodation setting the Care Leaver remains the responsibility of the Route 21 team until either their 21st or 24th birthday if in full-time education.

1.13 The average monthly number of care leavers in supported accommodation was 64 with the highest being 83 and the lowest number being 42.

1.14 16-17 Year Olds

Under the Children Act 1989 the City Council has a statutory duty to provide accommodation for people who are 1) under the age of 18 who are still Looked After Children and 2) and/or have reached 16 and whose welfare is likely to be 'seriously prejudiced' should accommodation not be provided, and they consent to becoming Looked After Children.

1.15 As at 31 October 2014 the total number of 16 and 17 year olds that accessed a supported accommodation service since the start of the existing contracts is 211. Of these, 62 were care leavers, 25 were still legally in care, and 124 were homeless young people whose welfare was likely to be seriously prejudiced if accommodation was not provided. The average monthly number of people supported was 36 with the highest being 64 and the lowest number being 18.

1.16 Statutory Homelessness

The Housing Act 1996 identifies the groups of people that have a priority need for accommodation; this includes:

- 16-17 year olds (also covered under the Children Act 1989)
- 18-20 year olds who were previously in care,
- those who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, the armed forces or prison,
- those that are vulnerable as a result of having to flee their home because of violence or the threat of violence.

1.17 As at 30 September 2014 the total number of 18-24 year olds that accessed a supported accommodation service due to meeting the interim homeless duty since the start of the existing contracts is 127. The average monthly number of people supported was 68 with the highest being 95 and the lowest number being 34.

1.18 In addition to the above categories Local Authorities can decide the extent to which they provide housing-related support to a variety of people in different circumstances. The 'Supporting People' programme was the overarching programme that delivered this housing related support. The ringfence on Supporting People funding was removed from 1 April 2009. Support is provided, across a range of groups including young people, homeless, people with mental ill health or disabilities, people with learning disabilities and older people. The City Council hold a number of contracts to provide this support for people aged 18 and over. As the group of people that generally benefitted from Supporting People funding support was those who did not meet other Local Authority criteria for services this is an area that has been significantly reduced as local authority resources have decreased.

1.19 Under the current arrangements, supported accommodation is provided to young people over 18 who qualify for a homelessness assessment under Housing legislation and require support to meet other needs. The Council has no statutory obligation to provide supported accommodation to young people that do not meet one of the specific areas of responsibility identified in 1.11 to 1.16 above. However, the broader definition was adopted following the previous consultation on the basis that providing support could reduce the probability of long term homelessness and would provide young people with support to enable them to gain employment. The application of this broader definition does need to be considered in the context of the resources available to deliver supported accommodation services. The Council would still be responsible for providing emergency accommodation for these young people and for carrying out a homelessness assessment.

1.20 Levels of Need Within Existing Contracts

1.21 The current contracts for Supported Accommodation were let against three levels of need, these being low, medium and high. The threshold for Supported Accommodation was set at Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Level 3 i.e. young people's life chances will be impaired if they are not supported. The age range covered by Supported Accommodation is up to 24 whereas CAF levels of need apply to children and young people (up to age 18).

1.22 The needs analysis and consultation identified that the three levels of need – low, medium and high - would present in indicative proportions of 56%, 32% and 12% respectively. These amounts were indicative guidelines in the tender documentation.

However, a much greater proportion of higher needs people are presenting for services across some of the contacted 'lots'.

- 1.23 In addition to levels of need there is also a consideration in terms of levels of risk. Some accommodation is within a group environment and therefore the past histories and presenting needs and behaviours of individuals need to be considered in the context of the other people placed in that accommodation. The on-site staffing levels plus access to other support to manage vulnerabilities of some young people are key factors in a provider's ability to manage risk.
- 1.24 There are also behavioural issues with some of the people placed in Supported Accommodation, on occasion this is to such an extent that young people are evicted from the accommodation and moved elsewhere. There is no mechanism currently in place for young people to be excluded from accessing Supported Accommodation due to their own behaviour. A clearly defined process is being developed to support the providers in addressing behavioural issues within the supported schemes in order to prevent vulnerable young people simply being moved when they become problematic.
- 1.25 Overall, the numbers of placements made under each of the Local Authority duties against each of the levels of need identified in the Supported Accommodation contracts since the contracts began are shown in the table one below.
- 1.26 *Table One: Levels of Need compared with different responsibilities since contract commencement*

Responsibility	Low	Medium	High	Pre-contract	Total
The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000	20	41	21	8	90
The Children Act 1989	70	49	23	7	149
Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 Interim Duties	48	44	18	17	127
TOTAL	138 (38%)	134 (36%)	62 (17.%)	32 (9%)	366 (100%)

1.27 Current Position

- 1.28 As at November 2014 demand for supported accommodation places was 222. The number of contracted places is 209 units of accommodation with 100 people being supported through floating support. This includes capacity awarded following the tender process plus additional capacity purchased on a short term or spot basis. In addition, a mediation project has been commissioned from St Basil's which seeks to return young people home and prevent homelessness. The breakdown of the current contracted provision is shown in the Table 2 below.
- 1.29 These levels differ to the tendered contracts due to the requirement to provide capacity to meet the needs of the numbers presenting for supported accommodation.

Table 2: Current Contracted Provision

Provider	Block Contract Capacity	Average Occupancy since contract start	Average Spot Usage 14/15	Contract End Date
Midland Heart	63 (accommodation)	57		30 Nov 2017
Coventry Cyrenians	81 (accommodation)	62		31 Jan 2015
Valley House	16 (accommodation)	16		30 Nov 2017
Valley House	25 (floating)			30 Nov 2017
Key Two	34	34	14	31 Mar 2015
Elysian Field	15	15	12	31 Mar 2015
St Basils	75 (floating)			30 Nov 2017 (45) 31 Mar 2015 (30)
St Basils Positive Prevention				31 Mar 2015

- 1.30 One of the contracted providers, Coventry Cyrenians, has mutually agreed with the City Council to terminate their contract on 31 January 2015 placing additional demands on the provision of Supported Accommodation. Coventry Cyrenians will continue to operate as a charity providing accommodation to homeless people within the City. Due to the low level of needs and risks associated with some of the people currently in their provision, they have indicated that they will be able to continue to provide support to 30 of the 42 young people placed with them as at end of November 2014 without a City Council contract. The 12 that will need alternative accommodation will be placed at the Foyer (Midland Heart), with Key Two or Elysian Field, or with St Basils through their Fair Chance programme.
- 1.31 Once Cyrenians exit the contract on 31 January 2015 there will be no provider that as a result of the tender process is delivering supported accommodation to people with high needs. Although both Key Two and Elysian Field provide supported accommodation to people with high needs, this is on a short term contractual basis, until 31 March 2015.
- 1.32 An additional factor in relation to Supported Accommodation is that Acorn House, an independent service for Teenage Parents closed on 31 December 2014. Following this closure it is possible that there may be an increased demand for accommodation for pregnant teenagers, the majority of which would be dealt with through priority housing although some additional demand may present for Supported Accommodation.
- 1.33 Since the supported accommodation contracts commenced a number of people have been placed in bed and breakfast. The average placement in bed and breakfast has been 18 days. In mid-December 2014, 22 people were placed in Bed and Breakfast that would otherwise have been in Supported Accommodation. All people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation receive floating support from St Basils.
- 1.34 From 1 April 2014 Salvation Army were awarded a contract for the delivery of supported accommodation and floating support service for single homeless service users (aged 25+) families and ex-offenders (aged 18+). An update on the progress since implementation was provided to Joint Cabinet Members (Cabinet Member Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise and Cabinet Member Policing and Equalities) at their meeting on 14 November 2014. The support provided within this contract typically includes support with developing domestic/life skills, developing social skills/behaviour management, emotional support, counselling and

advice, and helping to find other suitable accommodation. Due to the nature of the support there are a number of similarities between the support provided by the Salvation Army and that provided through Supported Accommodation contracts although Salvation Army do not specialise in working with young people.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Option One – Preferred Option.

The delivery of effective Supported Accommodation services is challenging due to the variability of the size of the client group and the variation in the needs they present with. As housing providers are key to delivery their requirements also need to be managed in order to deliver sustainable services.

2.2 The work on Supported Accommodation prior to going to tender was extensive and included a consultation undertaken in three phases and the completion of a needs analysis. Therefore, the data used at the point of commissioning was the best available although data from previous purchasing arrangements on numbers of young people and levels of need was limited. It is however the case that there has been a greater level of demand and a greater level of need of individuals presenting than that which was anticipated. This has created the need for short term commissioning of additional capacity and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. In addition, the mutually agreed termination of the Cyrenians contract requires some short term actions to ensure sufficient capacity exists post 31 January 2015.

2.3 To provide capacity for young people requiring Supported Accommodation:

- Extend the current contact with Key 2 for 34 beds plus additional spot purchasing until 31 March 2016 with three monthly break clauses at a cost of £398 per bed/per week.
- Extend the contract with Elysian Field for 15 beds plus additional spot purchasing until 31 March 2016 with three monthly break clauses at a cost of £409 per bed/per week.
- Extend the contract for the St Basil's Positive Prevention project until 31 March 2016 with three monthly break clauses at a cost of £58,000 for high level needs.
- Extend the contract for the additional 30 floating support places with St Basil's until 31 March 2016 with three monthly break clauses at a cost of £57,000 for high level needs.

2.4 In order to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation it is proposed that the existing Salvation Army Homeless contract will be varied to include young people aged 16+ at a volume of 20 beds. 10 have already been identified at the Chace for an interim period until 31 March 2015 with further provision to be sourced to deliver the full 20. Services will be managed within this capacity from 1 April 2015.

2.5 In addition to 2.3 and 2.4 the following will also be progressed:

- A review of how young people with high support needs can be supported within Supported Accommodation. This will inform the appropriate contractual arrangements to replace the current Key Two and Elysian Field arrangements.

- How the use of bond schemes can be increased to enable young people to be more independent and not become reliant on Supported Accommodation services.
- The development of clear information for young people accessing Supported Accommodation, and young homeless in general to explain the City Councils obligations, their own obligations and the nature of the different choices people will be faced with to resolve their homelessness.

2.6 Other Options – Not Recommended

The position in terms of Supported Accommodation has changed from that which was used as the basis for commissioning. Therefore, although the Council has the option to re-tender for un-let contracts on a like-for-like basis without considering changes, this is not recommended as the City Council should consider the current position and respond accordingly.

3. **Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 As part of the commissioning process for Supported Accommodation a three stage consultation process was undertaken with current and prospective service providers and current and prospective service users. The consultation took place between November 2011 and November 2012.
- 3.2 Further consultation will be undertaken in respect of the issues identified in 2.5 above

4. **Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Any further tender work is scheduled to be complete 31 December 2015 and contracts will be scheduled to commence in April 2016 at the latest.

5. **Comments from Executive Director of Resources**

5.1 Financial implications

The total budget for this service area is £2.2m. This is the total of the former Care Leavers' budget (£0.9M) and the Supporting People and Homelessness budget (£1.3m). This budget pays for accommodation and support for people aged 16-24.

The 2014/15 quarter 3 forecast is expenditure of approximately £3.2m. This position is not affordable and not sustainable.

The contracts awarded for Lots 1 - 6, as described in section 1.6 have 160 accommodation places and provision for supporting 75 people with floating support. The annual value of the contracts awarded as a result of the tender is £0.9m.

The interim solution for Lot 7 is 49 block contracted placements with two organisations costing £1.0m, plus additional spot purchase provision forecast at £0.4m in 2014/15. In addition to this contracted spend placements have been made into bed and breakfast providers throughout the year at a forecast cost of £0.4m.

Other costs that are incurred against this budget is where supported accommodation for young people outside of the city is provided, and where additional funding is provided to for contracted providers due to the young people not being able to claim housing benefit (where they have no recourse to public funds). This is currently forecast at £0.3m in 2014/15.

In addition to service developments including improved referral processes and positive prevention and mediation, the recommendations included in this report to reduce use of Bed and Breakfast through use of the Salvation Army and the termination of the Coventry Cyrenians contract are expected to reduce the spend by approximately £500k in 2015/16.

At quarter 2 there was a forecast overspend across the People Directorate for 2014/15 of £4.5m. The ongoing resourcing of Supported Accommodation will be considered as part of the overall resourcing of Children's services within the People Directorate.

5.2 Legal implications

A number of duties may arise for the City Council in the provision of housing support to 16-24 year olds. These duties will depend on the individual needs and circumstances of the young person and may include leaving care support and homelessness duties.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The services commissioned support the City Council's objectives of supporting the most vulnerable and also contributes to the achievement of other objectives through supporting young people into sustainable accommodation, to improve educational outcomes and gain employment.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There are a number of risks associated with Supported Accommodation, both financial risks and risks in delivering the City Council's statutory duties to this group.

Further risk is lack of suitable accommodation in Coventry to be sourced by providers, including Salvation Army.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

As demand has increased the use of available staffing has been prioritised to manage this demand.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

An Equalities and Consultation Analysis was completed in January 2013 following the conclusion of the consultation process.

Positive impacts were identified in that through bringing together previously disparate services young people would have access to a range of services without artificial barriers in terms of who commissions across the City Council. The integrated approach was also expected to improve the life chances of vulnerable young people.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None identified

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Supported accommodation services are commissioned from a range of organisations in the voluntary sector. Continuing to work with these organisations to ensure the difficulties in managing high levels of demand within a limited resource will be essential to the long term success of this work.

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Public report Cabinet Member Report

20 January 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) - Councillor Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2013/14 – Children's Social Care Services

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The report provides details of the comments, compliments and complaints received during 2013/14, the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is asked to endorse and approve the publishing of this report on the Council's website

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 - Children's Social Care Services Comments, Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2013/14.

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2013/14 – Children's Social Care Services

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty, arising from the Children Act 1989, to have a system for receiving representations by, or on behalf of, children who use the social care services they provide or commission and to produce an Annual Report about the operation of the complaints procedure.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to endorse and approve the publishing of this report.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 No consultation was undertaken specifically about this report.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 If approved, the report will be published on the Children's Complaints page of the City Council's internet site by early February 2015.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are three different complaints procedures relating to local authority decisions:

- Complaint to the local authority under Children Act 1989, s26 (3) (support for families and children)
- Complaint in relation to children's homes or voluntary organisations within their procedure, or
- Complaint to the local authority under LASSA 1970 (matters not falling under Children Act s26).

In practice the procedures are likely to be administratively similar and merge.

The procedure for the local authority to deal with representations and complaints is contained within the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

The local authority must monitor arrangements made in accordance with the regulations by keeping a record of each representation received, and compiling a report every 12 months on the operation of its procedure.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Ensuring that children and young people are safe, achieve and make a positive contribution

Children, young people and others acting on their behalf, are encouraged to report any concerns about the care and services they are receiving so that these can be addressed quickly.

The feedback that is received from complaints and other representations is reported to managers on a regular basis to inform service planning and improvements.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

No risk has been identified.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

Local Authorities are required to monitor equalities information with regard to representations received. This is intended to provide an accurate picture of the use of the procedure by minority groups and to ensure that it is accessible to them and does not inadvertently discriminate against them.

The complaints service for Children's Social Care Services was the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment during 2010/11. This concluded that the service was having a positive equalities impact.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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Members: Councillor Ruane	Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)		06/01/2014	

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Appendices

1. Children's Social Care Services Comments, Compliments & Complaints

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**Annual Report
2013/14**

People Directorate

Children's Social Care Services Comments, Compliments & Complaints

**COMMENTS
& COMPLAINTS**

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

SECTION 2 SUMMARY

SECTION 3 RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

SECTION 4 IDENTIFIED ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

SECTION 5 RESULTANT ACTIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Local Authorities are required by law (Children Act 1989) to have a system for receiving representations made by or on behalf of children who use the social care services they provide or commission. These include: social work services, residential care, fostering, adoption and the provision of support to families, children with disabilities and young people in trouble with the law. Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

On 1 September 2006, changes were made to the Local Authority Social Services Complaints Regulations (1990) as a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. These changes aimed to improve the speed of response to representations, to enhance the level of independence in judgements made at Stages 2 and 3 of the procedure and to improve access to and learning from the representations process. The changes also required Local Authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager to oversee all aspects of the procedure. Other significant changes included extending the scope of the procedure to include services provided under other parts of the Children Act, certain Adoption Services and Special Guardianship Support Services. A time limit of one year for making representations was also introduced as were new timescales for responding to complaints at Stages 1 and 2.

Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. When this is the case, these are registered under the City Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints.

The People Directorate has a nominated officer assigned to the management of representations from children and others who present feedback on Children's Social Care Services.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use services are heard.
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and acknowledge good practice.
- Things that have gone wrong are put right.
- The organisation learns from both positive and negative feedback.
- The organisation sustains its customer focus.

As part of the Directorate's commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory procedures in relation to Children's Social Care Services, during the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

Particular reference is made to:

- *The range of representations received and responses to them.*
- *Specific trends and issues that emerged in the reporting period.*

SECTION 2: SUMMARY

During the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, Children's Social Care Services dealt with 6000 referrals, this represents a substantial increase from the previous year (4657). At 31 March 2014, Children's Social Care provided services to 4637 children and young people, compared with 3085 at the end of the previous year.

The total number of complaints received about Children's Social Care Services in 2013/14 was 102, a decrease from 133 in 2012/13. 85 compliments were received in the year, a substantial decrease compared with 126 in 2012/13.

A small number of complaints (six) were from children and young people themselves or from an advocate, the remainder were from adults.

Given the increase in social care activity in the year, it would be expected that complaints and compliments would increase by a similar factor. The fact that these have dropped year on year against a rise in activity suggests that customers are not fully aware of how to complain or compliment and we need to work on this in the coming year.

Three main themes could be identified as arising from the complaints by and on behalf of users in 2013/14.

- *Issues regarding poor communication with users.*
- *Concerns about standards of service provided.*
- *Criticism of professional conduct and how users were treated by some staff.*

Conversely, communication, staff helpfulness and standards of service were the three main reasons for compliments in the year.

35% of complaints were fully or partially substantiated in 2013/14, compared with 52% in 2012/13.

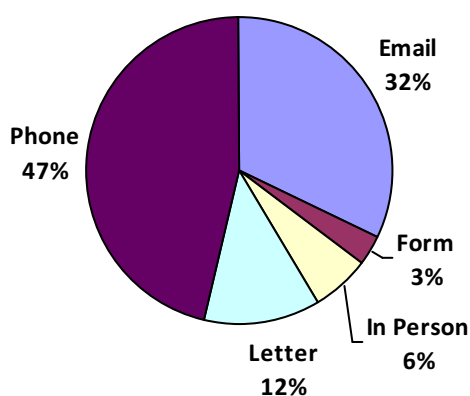
SECTION 3: RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Comments, compliments and complaints can tell us a great deal about the service users' experiences of service delivery, professional practice and the outcome of management decisions. Children's Social Care Services welcome this feedback and encourages children, their advocates and anyone who uses the service or who is affected by it, to make their views known.

3.1 Promoting Feedback

It is vitally important that the comments, complaints and compliments system is easily accessible. This maximises the opportunities for individuals to make their views known. Contact can be made by letter, telephone, fax, e-mail, in person, in the corporate "Getting in Touch" leaflet, by the Council's free phone number or the web-site link.

Contact methods for complaints were as follows



47% of complainants chose to complain via telephone, with a further 6% requesting a face to face meeting. 3% chose to use the council's "Getting In Touch" leaflet, while 44% chose to put their complaint in writing in their own format via letter or email.

Of particular importance is the need to inform children of their opportunity to make representations and to find methods that they can easily use. For the last eight years a "texting" facility has also been available so that children and young people can make their views known. Advocates from Barnardo's have also continued to make regular visits to the children's residential units in Coventry.

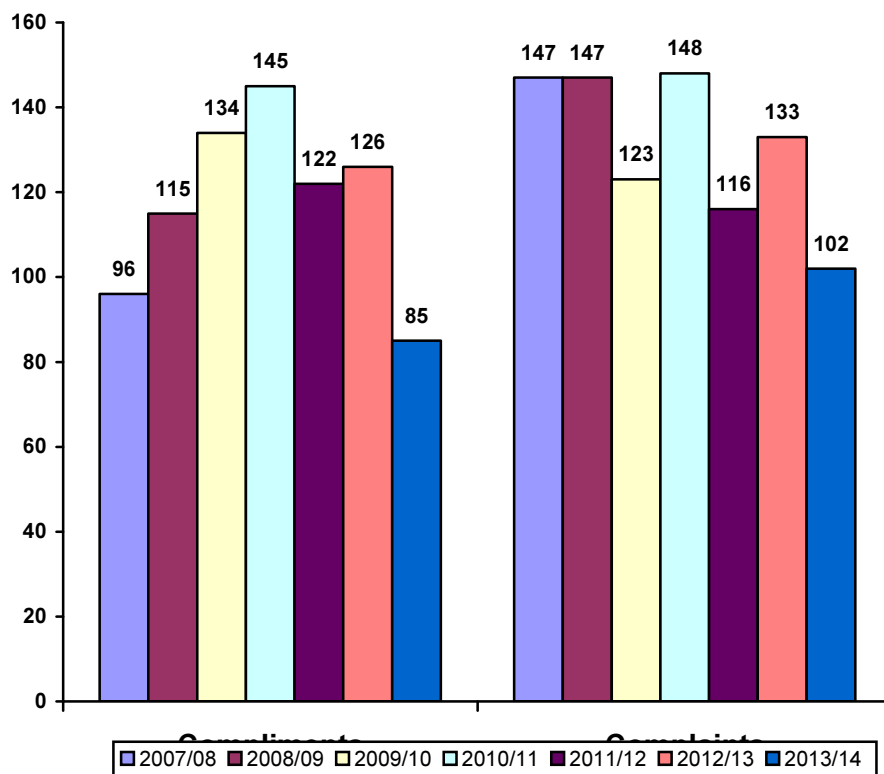
Having said this, there has been very little representation from children and young people themselves this year (six complaints and six compliments). This is lower than last year where there were 21 complaints and ten compliments. Children tended to submit their representation through the participation team or through an advocate. The Complaints Officer will liaise with the Local Authority's "Children's Champion" and the advocacy service over the next year in order to address the reduction in complaints from young people and to ensure that their voice can be heard.

3.2 Advocacy

Since 1 April 2004, the Advocacy Services and Representations Regulations 2004, have required Local Authorities to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy to children and young people making representations under the Children Act 1989. Of the six children and young people making complaints during the year, two decided to have an advocate to support them in making their complaint. Since April 2006, the advocacy service has been commissioned from Barnardo's.

3.3 Representations Received 2013/14

Comments	Compliments	Complaints
0	85	102



The total number of complaints received about Children's Social Care Services in 2013/14 was 102, a decrease from 133 in 2012/13. 85 compliments were received in the year, a substantial decrease compared with 126 in 2012/13.

3.4 Comments

Relatively few comments are received in comparison to the number of complaints and compliments in any year. They usually take the form of suggestions or criticisms and as such they can encourage action to improve quality of services. No comments were received in 2012/13 or in 2013/14.

3.5 Compliments

Compliments tell us what people appreciate about services and the way they are provided. Positive feedback also encourages and motivates staff and enables them to celebrate their good performance. Every compliment received is shared with the individual or team to whom it refers and copied to the relevant managers.

The reduction in total feedback this year has meant that fewer compliments have been received. There is a clear need to do more to promote the ability for service users to compliment workers, and for staff to share these compliments with the complaints officer when they are received.

3.6 Complaints

Listening to service users' complaints helps managers and individual workers to focus on service improvement and customer care. This helps to identify changes that are required. The statutory procedures offer a three-stage process, and the corporate procedures offer a two stage process, both of which aim to provide a satisfactory resolution to any complaint brought to the Directorate, preferably as quickly as possible. The lessons learned from complaints form the basis for improving services.

The reduction in complaints received this year cannot be seen as an improvement as we would have expected numbers to remain constant given the increase in activity. This therefore suggests there is more work to be done to ensure that individuals know how to complain.

3.6.1 Stage 1 - Local Resolution

The Directorate's aim within both the statutory and corporate procedures is to resolve problems, whenever possible, at Stage 1. At this stage, the complaint will usually be dealt with by the local manager who is responsible for the service provided. This is because local managers are in the best position to sort problems out quickly.

When things have gone wrong, an apology, an explanation and an indication of the action to be taken to put things right, has been provided in most cases. The majority of complaints were resolved at this stage including all of the complaints brought by children and young people themselves.

Where complaints are unsubstantiated, managers will usually respond with an explanation of the Directorate's policy or procedures and this alone can provide a satisfactory resolution in many cases. When complainants remain unhappy, they can take their complaint to the next stage of the Complaint Procedure.

A lower percentage (87%) of complaints were resolved at stage 1 of the complaints procedure in 2013/14 compared with 2012/13 (98%). The complaints process will be reviewed in 2014/15 in order to address this.

3.6.2 Stage 2 - Formal Investigation/Senior Management Review

In certain circumstances a formal investigation of the circumstances leading to a complaint is a more appropriate response, although this tends to be a lengthier process. This may be required when complainants remain dissatisfied with the conclusion reached at Stage 1 or when the complaint is particularly complex or involves a number of service areas. These investigations are always conducted by someone outside the direct line management of the service and the person about whom the complaint is being made.

During the year there were ten investigations carried out at Stage 2, compared with six in 2012/13. However, a higher proportion of these (70% in 2013/14 compared with 33% in 2012/13) were successfully resolved at this level. Three of the ten complainants were unhappy with the findings of the stage 2 investigation, two of which then requested a Stage three panel.

All the stage two investigations were undertaken by external investigators. At the conclusion of all Stage 2 investigations the Investigating Officers' reports are read by senior managers for them to consider and act upon before a response is sent to the complainant.

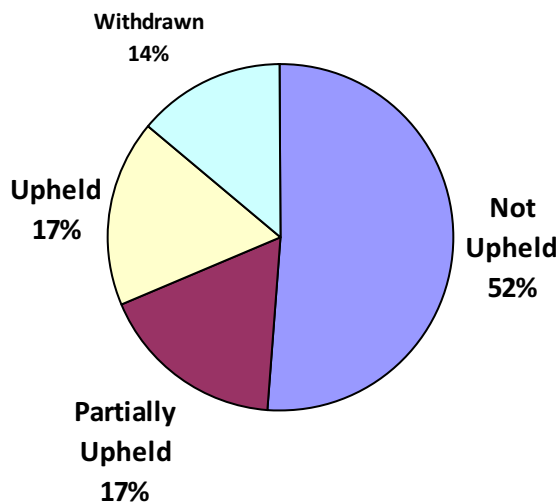
3.6.3 Stage 3 - Review Panel/Corporate Review

Within the **statutory** complaints procedure, where complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal investigation at Stage 2, they can request that a review panel of three independent people be convened to examine the investigation. Review panels can make recommendations to the Director if they conclude that the complaint is justified, or that more could be done to resolve the matter, or if they feel the Directorate should take action to prevent similar situations arising in the future. One complaint was considered by a Review Panel this year. The panel upheld the findings of the stage two investigations (the second review which went to stage 3 during the year has not been completed at the time of this report).

There is no stage three under the **corporate** procedure.

3.7 Outcomes

Of all the complaints:



17% of complaints were fully substantiated, 17% of complaints were partially substantiated and 52% of complaints were not upheld. 14% of complaints were either formally withdrawn by the complainants after being received or ended by the complaints officer due to lack of further contact from the complainant.

The same percentage of complaints were upheld in 2012/13, however the percentage of complaints that were partially upheld has halved, from 35% in 2012/13 to 17% in 2013/14

3.8 Time-scales

The legislation and corporate procedures set out timescales for dealing with complaints at each stage of the process. The timescales are:

	Legislation	Corporate
Stage 1	10 working days (can be extended to 20 working days)	10 working days
Stage 2	25 working days (can be extended to 65 working days)	20 working days
Stage 3	Within 30 working days of complainant's request	Not Applicable

However, the complexity of social care issues means that complaint resolution can sometimes be protracted and achievement of the time-scales can suffer as a result.

The Complaints Officer, therefore, undertakes rigorous monitoring of progress in relation to responding to complaints.

In 2013/14, the median average time to complete stage one complaints was 15 working days, compared to 16 working days in 2012/13. Adherence to timescales has been a challenge and so weekly meetings have now been introduced with the Assistant Director in order to ensure complaint timescales are adhered to.

Investigations of Stage 2 complaints under the statutory procedure often need to be extended beyond the 25 working days timescale due to the complexity of the issues being considered. In these situations the importance of keeping the complainant informed and securing their agreement to an extension of the time-scale, is recognised and addressed. As a result, all complaints dealt with at Stage 2 were all completed within a timescale agreed with the complainant.

The Independent Review Panels that considered the Stage 3 complaints were convened in accordance with the timescales and the Directorate's response to their recommendations were also completed within time.

3.9 The Local Government Ombudsman

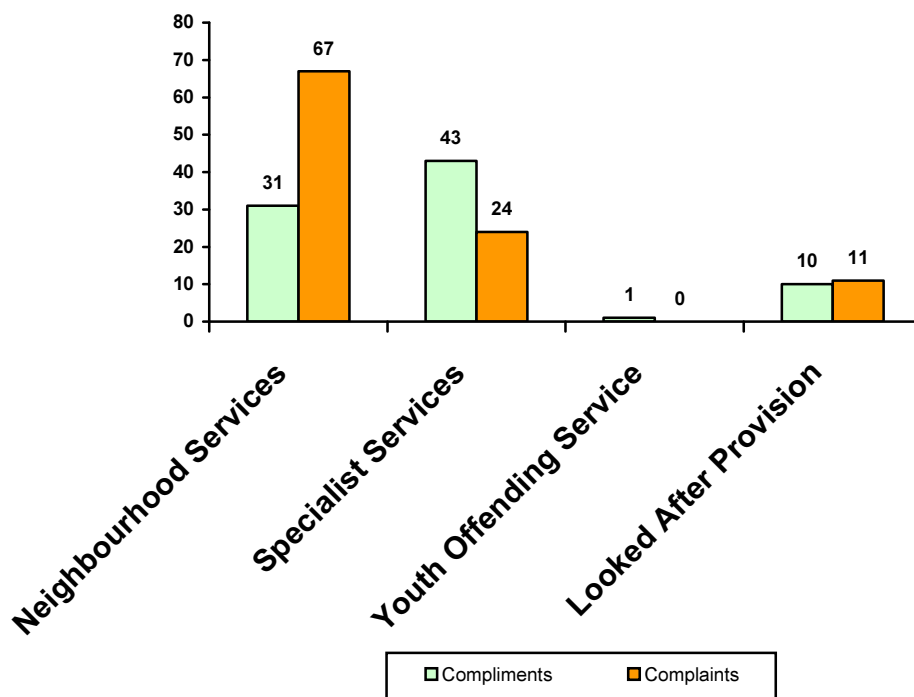
If the complainant remains unhappy following the outcome of the City Council's process, they have the option of taking their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

In 2012/13 just one representation was made to the ombudsman, however this was a small number compared to previous years.

Complainants made more use of the ombudsman's services in 2013/14 with twelve representations made during the year. The ombudsman considered that no further investigation was needed for nine complaints (75%). Three complaints were investigated and upheld by the ombudsman (25%).

SECTION 4: IDENTIFIED ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

4.1 Compliments and Complaints by Service Type



The majority of complaints received about Children’s Social Care are about the Neighbourhood Social Care Teams (65%). This is similar to previous years. More compliments were received than complaints for Specialist Services (e.g Looked After and Disability Social Care teams), and Youth Offending. There were no formal complaints in 2013/14 regarding the Youth Offending Team. Complaints and compliments about specific provision to looked after children (for example foster carers or residential care homes) are recorded separately under “Looked After Provision”.

4.2 Compliments and Complaints by Category

(Please note that compliments and complaints can cover more than one category)

Compliments	Total
Good Communication	35
Standards Of Service	32
Staff Helpfulness	22
Good Child Focus	17
Specific Provision	16
Good Partnership Working	11

Complaints	Total
Poor Communication	49
Standards Of Service	44
Staff Conduct	35
Financial Issues	8
Management Decisions	7
Confidentiality	4
Child Protection Issues	4
Discrimination	1

Communication and Standards of Service are the largest themes for both compliments and complaints.

4.3 Resolutions

(Please note that complaints can have more than one resolution)

	Total
Explanation	74
Apology	30
Improved Communication	4
Information Provided	12
Change of Worker	4
Compensation	2
Additional Monitoring Of Performance	3
Re-Assessment / Change of Decision	2
Change of Service Provider	1
Replacement of items	1

Even if a complaint is not upheld, there may still be resolution possible. For example further information can be provided or an explanation given.

4.4 Service Improvements

Upon completion of the complaint investigation, officers are asked to identify specific service improvements as a result of the complaint. Examples of some of these improvements are:-

- Further agency cover to prevent interruptions in case management across the team.
- Discussions with the teams regarding impact of too many Social Worker changes
- Reinforcement of Information Governance procedures
- A greater emphasis on ensuring service users know how their information will be shared.
- Work to improve timeliness of Care Plans and avoid drift
- Additional support to Foster Carers working outside of their usual age range.
- Ensuring stakeholders are involved at all levels.
- Teams to ensure better record keeping.
- More timely communication with respect to significant incidents.

SECTION 5: RESULTANT ACTIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

This report shows the clear need to improve the feedback processes for those receiving services for Children and Young People in Coventry. The Complaints process will be reviewed at regular intervals in 2013/14 in order to address the issues raised. Actions will include:

- The Introduction of a full time Complaints Officer post for the People Directorate
- Closer working with Barnardos and the Children's Champion to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard.
- Weekly complaint update meetings with the Assistant Director to highlight any issues with process or timescales.
- Complaints at Stage One to be checked and signed off by a head of service before they are sent to complainants.
- Regular meetings with teams to encourage engagement with the complaints and compliments process.
- Better communications with service users in order to increase awareness of the complaints and compliments procedures.



20 January, 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Resources

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Outstanding Issues Report

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

In May 2004 the City Council adopted an Outstanding Minutes System, linked to the Forward Plan, to ensure that follow up reports can be monitored and reported to Members. The attached appendix sets out a table detailing the issues on which further reports have been requested by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People so he is aware of them and can monitor progress.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is requested to consider the list of outstanding issues and to ask the Member of the Strategic Management Board or appropriate officer to explain the current position on those which should have been discharged at this meeting or an earlier meeting.

List of Appendices included:

Table of Outstanding Issues.

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report author(s):

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Name and job title:

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Directorate:

Resources

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Other members	Not applicable			
Names of approvers: (officers and members)				
Finance: Name	Not applicable			
Legal: Name	Not applicable			

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	Subject	Date for Further Consideration	Responsible Officer	Proposed Amendment to Date for Consideration	Reason for Request to Delay Submission of Report
*1	<p>Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 18-24</p> <p>Report deferred pending the submission of further information.</p> <p>(CM (CYP) – 1st September, 2014 (Minute 2/14 refers)</p>	October/ November 2014	Executive Director, People	Jan 2015	

*There is a report on this item on the agenda for the meeting.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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