

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

7 October 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Cllr Seaman

Director approving submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Children's services social care complaints and representations annual report 2018/19

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

There is a statutory duty for the Council to have a system for receiving representations by, or on behalf of, children who use the social care services they provide or commission; and for the Council to produce an annual report about the operation of the complaints procedure.

This report sets out the details of the comments, compliments and complaints for children's services in 2018/19, this includes both Statutory and Corporate Complaints which both follow a different process as outlined in the Complaints Handling Guidance 2018/19. It highlights the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

- (1) Approve publication of the annual report in relation to complaints and representations in children's services in 2018/19.

List of appendices included:

Appendix I – Children's services complaints and representations annual report 2018/19
Appendix II – Complaints handling guidance

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Young people's guide to making a social care complaint

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/37/childrens_social_care/625/

Complaints Managers' Group (May 2016) Good Practice guidance for handling complaints concerning adults and children social care services <https://www.adass.org.uk/media/5360/good-practice-guidance-final-09062016.pdf>

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Guidance for bodies in our jurisdiction to support good complaint handling <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/advice-and-guidance/guidance-notes>

Department for Education (September 2006) statutory guidance for local authority children's services on representations and complaints procedures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-getting-the-best-from-complaints>

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:**Children's services complaints and representations annual report 2018/19****1 Context (or background)**

- 1.1 There is a statutory duty for the Council to have a system for receiving representations by, or on behalf of, children who use the social care services they provide or commission; and for the Council to produce an annual report about the operation of the complaints procedure.
- 1.2 This report sets out the details of the comments, compliments and complaints for children's services in 2018/19. It highlights the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, there were 142 statutory complaints received about children's services. The number of statutory complaints has decreased from 156 in 2017/18. In addition, there were 56 corporate complaints and 5 informal issues raised.
- 2.2 78 compliments were received in the year compared with 64 in 2017/18 and 91 in 2016/17.
- 2.3 28 complaints were made by children and young people themselves or from an advocate, the remainder were from adults. There has been an increase of children and young people using an advocate – 11 during 2018/19, compared to 11 in 2017/18 and 15 in 2016/16.
- 2.4 Two main themes continue to be identified as arising from the complaints by and on behalf of users in 2018/19: complainants reported being dissatisfied with communication and the standards of service provided.
- 2.5 Themes from compliments were predominantly around the good standard of practice received from individual social workers and the overall standard of service received from teams. It is not currently possible to distinguish between compliments from children and young people themselves, or carers, or staff without manually going through every compliment. A selection of compliments from children and young people and families have been included in the appendix.
- 2.6 Appendix I sets out the children's services comments, compliments and complaints annual report for 2018/19, highlighting trends and the themes that has arisen from complaints and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.
- 2.7 Appendix II sets out the Council's guidance for handling complaints.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None identified or undertaken.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Areas for development and improvement have been included within the divisional and relevant team plans for implementation in 2018/19.

5 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**5.1 Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Financial remedies

resulting from any complaints are paid out of service budgets. All complaints relating to financial issues were investigated and rectified accordingly.

5.2 Legal implications

This report meets the legal requirement for the Council to monitor arrangements made in accordance with regulations by keeping a record of each representation received, and compiling a report every 12 months on the operation of the procedure.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council Plan?

This annual report sets out the progress made by the service towards the One Coventry Plan vision to be locally committed, by improving the quality of life for Coventry people, by contributing to the priority to protect our most vulnerable people, including our looked after children. 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.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There are reputational as well as financial risks when things go wrong. It is, therefore, important that the Council acts and learns from the outcome of complaints.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The co-ordination and management of complaints involves considerable officer time. Therefore, where things have gone wrong, it is important for the Council to put things right, learn from the experience and make the necessary improvements. The feedback that is received from complaints and other representations is reported to managers on a regular basis to inform service planning and improvements.

6.4 Equalities and equality and consultation analyses (ECA)

ECAs have been built into the delivery of work in children's services. As part of continuous improvement, the service will continue to review the integration of equality and diversity into operational practice and performance monitoring.

This year, the complaints officer began collecting data on complainants by protected characteristics such as ethnicity, sex and disability status. This will enable the Council to identify if its complaints policy is operating as intended, eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in line with the public sector equality duty. An insight into this data will be provided in the Children Services Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2019/2020.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Children's services may be delivered in-house, or by external agencies for instance partner organisations commissioned by the local authority. The responsibility remains with the Council even when services are delivered by external agencies or partner organisations. Therefore, it is important for the Council and partner organisations to learn from the experience when things go wrong, and work together to make the necessary improvements.

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

Ilius Ahmed
Complaints Officer

Directorate:

People

Contact:

CLYPCustomerRelations@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

26/09/2019 08:08:27

Contributor/ approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Si Chun Lam	Insight Development Manager (Place and Public Sector Transformation)	People	21/08/2019	04/09/2019
Neil Macdonald	Strategic Lead – Quality Assurance	People	10/06/2019	21/08/2019
Jaspal Mann	Equality and Diversity Officer	People	04/09/2019	18/09/2019
Paul Smith	Strategic Lead – Looked After Children	People	10/06/2019	21/08/2019
Rebecca Wilshire	Strategic Lead – Early Help and Protection	People	10/06/2019	21/08/2019
Usha Patel	Governance Services Officer	Place	04/09/2019	06/09/2019
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Rachel Sugars	Finance Manager	Place	04/09/2019	23/09/2019
Legal: Julie Newman	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Place	04/09/2019	05/09/2019
Gail Quinton	Deputy Chief Executive (People)	People	20/09/2019	23/09/2019
John Gregg	Director of Children's Services	People	10/06/2019	21/08/2019
Members: Cllr Pat Seaman	Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)		04/09/2019	17/09/2019

This report is published on the Council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings/