

Annual Complaints Report 2016/17 - Key Areas

- The complaints report is a **statutory report** which details the Complaints received about Children's Social Care over the last 12 months.
- There has been an 18% increase in complaints received in a year where referral rates have also dropped. There are mixed reports from other LAs – some seeing increases.
- There have been 52 informal complaints received into the complaints department; (a slight reduction on the 67 received last year), however this does not include those made directly to Social Work Teams.
- The vast majority of complaints are made from **parents**. The figures show that we have consistent numbers in the number of complaints this year via the Children's Rights Service who offer an **advocacy service** to support young people; this is due to a joint protocol and resolving "grumbles" at an earlier stage. .
- **Timescales** for responses have improved year. **48.72%** of complaints were responded to **within ten working days**, compared with 41.18% during the last financial year. The timescales for complaints responded to **within 20 working days** have also increased with **92.31%** of complaints being responded to within the 20 day timescale compared to 79.42% in the last 12 months. **Only 7.69%** of complaints were responded to outside of the statutory timescale; whilst this is a higher percentage than the last financial year (20.58%) – the numbers actually reduced from 7 to 3.
- The majority of complaints were received for the Safeguarding Team which is not surprising as they are one of our largest teams. There has been a marked decrease in complaints which have been investigated by the Advice and Assessment Team; which we feel is linked to the stable and permanent workforce.
- There has been an increase in Complaints received about the Children with Disabilities Team; there have been changes in the role of the team and in addition many families have moved to the direct payment scheme as outlined in paragraph 8.5
- Whilst we received a number of requests for **stage 2** of the complaints procedure, we were able to resolve these with mediation meetings. There was one investigation carried out at stage 2 at a cost of £420.
- This year, as with the previous 6 years I have reported on, we have had no complaints move to stage 3.
- We were asked to supply information to the Ombudsman regarding a number of complaints and the LGO then went on to investigate one of these. They subsequently carried out an investigation and the outcome of the report will be published in July 2016. The Council made a payment to the claimant of £500 as a result of the service offered by a third party provider.
- It is also pleasing that the department has continued to receive **compliments** from people who value the service and the staff.
- We have **learnt** from the complaints and procedures have been reviewed as a result of complaint investigations. Learning from complaints is shared within teams.