

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
DATE: 7JUNE 2011

ANNUAL REPORT – CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS
Chief Officer: Performance and Resources

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the annual report of the statutory Complaints function for Children’s Social Care – attached as Annex 1, for approval by the Executive Member for Children Young People and Learning. The report will then be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Children, Young People and Learning.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Executive Member approves the report.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 The Representations Procedure Regulations 2006 state that Complaints Services should produce an annual report for consideration.
- 3.2 The Complaints Service performs an important role in assuring the quality of response to children and young people or parents and carers who make complaints. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the service and learning from complaints.
- 3.3 The Annual Report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel following the approval of the Executive Member.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None considered

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The report informs the number and nature of complaints received by the department. The learning from those complaints is also taken forward to improve practice where appropriate.
- 5.2 Overall, there were 22 complaints received within Children’s Social Care during the period of 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, of these six were partially upheld, and one fully upheld, the remaining fifteen were not upheld.

The 22 complaints related to the following service areas:

- Four complaints were in respect of the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Service

- Fifteen complaints were in respect of the Safeguarding Service
- Three complaints were in respect of the Looked After Children Service.

5.3 The nature of the complaints included the following:

- Three were in respect of access to services.
- Six were in respect of service procedures
- Twelve were in respect of service standards.
- One was in respect of staff attitude/conduct.

5.4 A total of twenty two compliments were received by the Complaints Manager in the same period. Many of the compliments have remarked on the professionalism of Social Workers in carrying out duties and their clarity in explaining their role.

5.5 It is notable this year that there have been fewer complaints received than in the previous year, however a number of these have been more complex and two complaints have required the Complaints Manager to liaise effectively with external bodies [the General Social Care Council, and the Learning and Skills Council].

5.6 The Complaints Manager works closely with Children's Social Care to ensure any complaints are resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner. In order to ensure positive outcomes, the Complaints Manager has regular meetings with senior managers in Children's Social Care, and provides training for new Social Workers on the complaints process. Findings from complaints are considered in the development of policies and procedures and in the ongoing learning culture within Children's Social Care.

5.7 The Complaints Manager also attends and works within a regional complaints network so that good practice can be shared and there is a continuing focus on raising standards for complaints management practice across the region.

5.8 The Complaints Manager has developed an evaluation process to gain feedback from those who have been supported in complaints; this will be implemented for the 2011 / 2012 cycle.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Guidance is issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which requires local authorities in their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. As such the Guidance does not have statutory force but the authority should comply with it unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that there are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 Available upon request

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 None identified

Other Officers

6.5 None identified

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 None

Method of Consultation

7.2 Not applicable

Representations Received

7.3 Not applicable

Background Papers

The Statutory Complaint Procedure for Children's Social Care: 30 October 2007.

Contacts for further information

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