

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 OCTOBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2016 - 2017 FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR GAVIN	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SERVICE:	CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Children's Social Care recognises that there will be occasions when the service provided to children, young people and their families is not to a satisfactory standard or where the customer is unhappy with the service they have received and complaints are made. Complaints are an important source of information to help the Council understand where and why changes need to be made to improve the service provided.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of complaints activity and performance for Children's Social Care for the period from the 01st of April 2016 to the 31st of March 2017.
- 1.3 During this period the service received 132 statutory complaints, which is an increase of 45 (51.7%) over 2015/16. Of the 132 received:
 - 46 were resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by the Social Care Teams
 - 86 progressed to a formal investigation
- 1.4 During the same period 13 complaints progressed to a Stage 2 investigation.
- 1.5 The Customer Relations Team have continued to raise awareness of the complaints process and in accord with recommendations from OfSTED have in particular worked with operational teams to encourage children and young people to submit complaints where they are dissatisfied with the service they receive. Following the Ofsted inspection in 2015, their published report from August 2015 has rated Reading Children's Services as inadequate.

- 1.6 The 'Children's Social Care Complaints 2016/17 - Summary Report' attached at Appendix A provides an analysis of the data; it explains how complaints are managed and how the learning is used to improve services. This will also be made publicly available through the Council's website from the 16th of November 2017.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the report and intended actions to further improve the management of representations and complaints in 2017/18 for Children's Social Care.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the continuing work to raise awareness of the complaints process and encourage its use by children and young people.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The NHS & Community Care Act 1990, Children Act 1989, The Children's Act 2001 and Department of Health, and Department for Education and Skills Guidance & Regulations require that the Children's Social Care service sets up and maintains a complaints procedure. They also require that Local Authorities operate the procedure within specified time scales and methods of investigation and that a summary of statistical information on complaints and a review of the complaints process are included in the annual report.

4. ACTIVITY

- 4.1 The Council operates a 3-stage procedure in respect of statutory complaints about Children's Social Care made by 'qualifying individuals', as specified in the legislation. Qualifying individuals are defined in national guidance as the child or young person, their parent, carer or foster carer or 'anyone who could be seen to be acting in the best interests of the child'. The timescale for responding to complaints at Stage 1 is 10 working days, which can be extended to 20 working days in certain circumstances. The Customer Relations Manager, who is the designated Complaints Manager for the Council, also has to be aware of all complaints as they are being dealt with.
- 4.2 Reading Borough Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure gives an opportunity for those who are not 'qualifying individuals' under the social services legislation, to still be able to complain about Children's Social Care.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Complaints Service provided by the Customer Relations Team contributes to the Service's aims to enhance emotional wellbeing and deliver outstanding services for children in need and those needing protection. It does this by providing an impartial and supportive service to children and families who wish to complain or raise a concern and ensuring that there is learning from complaints.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Information about the complaints process is provided verbally to service users via the Social Care Teams and Independent Reviewing Officers as well as the

Customer Relations Team. Leaflets on the procedures are widely distributed and available in a variety of formats and languages on request. Approximately 920 compliments / complaints leaflets were distributed in 2016/17, compared to 1175 in 2015/16, 700 in 2014/15, and 880 in 2013/14.

- 6.2 In all Looked After Children's Care reviews and all Child Protection conferences, the Chair always specifically mentions the complaints process so that our most vulnerable children are regularly reminded of their right to complain and a leaflet is given out. Service users are also able to register a complaint via the web, text, Momo App, e-mail direct to the Customer Relations Team, in person, by phone and in writing or via an advocate.
- 6.3 The Children in Care website continues to have a direct link to the complaints service and the Customer Relations Team has published the details of the Customer Relations Manager and our advocacy provider with Care Matters, Voice and National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). These are organisations who all offer a free help line support to children in care.
- 6.4 Translation services are provided for complainants whose first language is not English and advocacy support is available for young people who wish to make a complaint.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Customer Relations Manager will ensure that the statutory complaints process is accessible to all customers regardless of their race, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.
- 7.2 The statutory complaints process is designed to ensure that any concern or issue faced by vulnerable children and their carers is addressed in a timely and impartial manner.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Statutory foundation for the Children's Social Care Services Complaints Procedures are The Local Authority Social Services Act (1970), The Children Act (1989), The Children Act (2001), The Human Rights Act (1998), The Adoption and Children's Act (2002) and The Children's Act 1989 Representations Procedure (2006).
- 8.2 It is a requirement of the Department of Health's Standards and Criteria for Complaints Management for Children's Social Care that an annual report on complaints activity is presented to a public meeting.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no Capital or Revenue implications arising from this report.
- 9.2 **Value for Money** - The Council's Customer Relations Team provides value for money in effectively discharging the complaints process for the Council by attempting informal resolution of complaints and also ensuring that most statutory complaints are resolved within the Stage 1 process so that expensive Stage 2 investigations and Stage 3 Panels are minimised.

9.3 **Risk Assessment** - There are no specific financial risks arising from this report.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 'Getting the Best from Complaints' Government Publication, August 2006

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS 2016/17 SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

This is a summary report of the data for Statutory complaints received by Children's Social Care for the financial year 2016/17 when the number of complaints received has increased compared to previous years. This report will also be made available to the public through the Reading Borough Council (RBC) website following agreement of the report at the Committee Meeting on the 5th of October 2017.

In addition to the quality of service provided there are many factors that can affect the number of complaints received such as satisfaction, customer expectations, awareness of the complaints process, and the extent of promotional activity. Therefore a high number of complaints should not be interpreted simply as meaning the Council is providing a bad service, whilst at the same time a low number of complaints should not be interpreted as meaning people are satisfied with the service.

When interpreting the meaning of the Statutory complaints statistics it is important to take into account not just the number received but the number and proportion that are upheld.

The Council welcomes feedback through the complaints process which, as well as providing the opportunity to identify where services have not been provided as they should be, also provides customer insight and helps identify any deficiency in practice, policies and procedures. It is from these that the Service and those who work within it can continue to learn and improve practice and service delivery.

Statutory Complaints Procedure

Complaints dealt with through the statutory procedure involve three stages.

At Stage 1, complaints are investigated and responded to by a manager in the relevant service area.

If the complainant feels that the issues they have raised remain unresolved, they have the right to progress their complaint to Stage 2. Consideration of complaints at Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an Investigating Officer and an Independent Person. The Independent Person is involved in all aspects of consideration of the complaint including any discussions in the authority about the action to be taken in relation to the child. At the conclusion of their investigation the Independent Person and the Investigating Officer prepare independent reports for adjudication by a senior manager (usually the Head of Children's Services).

Where Stage 2 of the complaints procedure has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, they are eligible to request a review of the Stage 2 investigation of the complaint by a Review Panel at Stage 3. The Panel must consist of three independent people.

The Statutory Children's Social Care Complaints process encourages the complainant and the Local Authority to consider Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) at every stage of the complaints process. This means resolving a complaint or concern informally through a face to face meeting or telephone discussion. Entering into ADR does not restrict the complainant's right to request a formal investigation at any stage. It is the complainant's right to request the presence of the Customer Relations Manager at any face-to-face meeting.

Summary of Compliments and Complaints Activity, Quality Assurance & Learning

There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints received compared to previous years. The reasons for this are believed to be the high turnover of staff across Children's Services from Social Worker to Independent Reviewing officers and Team Managers. The poor Ofsted rating has also encouraged customers to come forward and raise complaints.

The top three themes for these complaints are Service Provision, Staff Conduct and Communication.

Examples of complaints recorded as Service Provision are where actions on cases are not completed. These are often found to result from occasions where agency social workers have left the Service without completing actions on cases and without leaving a handover for the social worker taking over the case.

Staff conduct complaints are recorded as such when complaints are received around specific individuals, for instance not attending meetings or not completing assessments with factual information.

Communication complaints are mainly about the customer/young person not being notified in advance of their social worker changing, staff not returning telephone calls or responding to emails.

This report details information for the past year, analysis of the data, quality assurance and information on service developments as a result of learning from complaints.

Under the current monitoring system, information about complaints received directly by teams is reported to the Customer Relations Manager upon receipt. This is to ensure that the Customer Relations Manager is aware of all current complaints in order to monitor their progress and highlight cases that can be resolved through Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) to Team Managers and senior staff.

Quality Assurance

The Customer Relations Team carry out checks of all complaint responses to ensure the quality of the response and that the language and terminology used is made easy for the complainant to understand, particularly if the complaint is from a child or young person. Statistics indicate 100% of responses were checked by the Customer Relations Team before being sent out. The findings and recommendations are shared regularly with senior managers. The Customer Relations Manager and her Team are also available to the complainant and the investigator for advice on best practice during the complaint investigation, but remain impartial.

The Customer Relations Manager delivers training on investigating and responding to statutory Stage 1 complaints and also on the Corporate Complaints Procedure. The Customer Relations Manager also attends Team Meetings to provide training and advice to front line staff. Training is now available online also; this can be accessed by all social care staff through the Council's Training Department. Two half day face to face training sessions were offered to staff in 2015 and 2016. The number of staff taking this up was minimal mainly due to lack of time, having to prioritise their day to day work. We currently have no figures on the take up of the on-line course; however hope to have these for the 2017/18 report.

The Customer Relations Team promotes the Social Care complaints service. Promotional activity has included outreach work to external groups, publicity material for staff, children and young people and close links with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). This is the body which is currently providing advocacy support for children and young people wanting to make a complaint or representation. Parents or carers with learning difficulties or other needs will be signposted to local charitable advocacy providers.

The Customer Relations Team has also improved processes to ensure upcoming responses are discussed and monitored at weekly meetings. The Social Care staff are in more regular contact with the Customer Relations Manager and her team and are aware of their processes which has led to improved joint working for the benefit of the complainant.

Quarterly reports are prepared for the Council's Management Team (CMT), Head of Children's Services and their Senior Management Team on Social Care complaints received.

Support Network

The Customer Relations Manager participates in the Southern Region Complaints Managers' Group and National Complaints Managers Group. Both groups continue to support Customer Relations and Complaints Managers in sharing good practice, both nationally and locally. Where cases are complex the Customer Relations Manager often seeks advice and guidance from Legal Services and the Local Government Ombudsman's advice line.

Learning from Complaints

In 2015/16 these were the learning areas and below each one is noted the progress made on these actions:

- The restructure of Children's Services into a model that has increased the staffing of the MASH and Access and Assessment teams and transform the Long-term Area teams into specialist 'Safeguarding and Children in Need' and 'Court, Looked after Children and Leaving Care' Teams that serve the borough as a whole. *This is complete*
- Work around the Fostering and Adoption Service is currently under review. *This is complete with the management and staffing in the Fostering Service now strengthened and the Adoption Service is in the process of moving to the Regional Adoption Agency.*

- Evaluations planned for all child in care reviews with partners and Signs of Safety refresher training has been delivered to partners by Child Protection Chairs. *This is in progress and is an ongoing piece of work being overseen by the Head of Governance & Improvement.*
- Children in care have been part of the recruitment of Independent Reviewing Officers and are part of the interview panel. *This is in progress and is an ongoing piece of work being overseen by the Head of Governance & Improvement.*
- The Children's Commissioning service has been restructured. They ensure that outcomes are now measured regularly following reviews to ensure that Young People are having their needs met by providers. Young People's opinions are also requested at panel to ensure their voice is being heard. *This has been completed and the Access to Resources Team has been set up. - Thoughts and aspirations on where a young person wishes to move to - the referral form has been changed to ask the young person where they wish to be placed. Individual placement agreement with specific outcomes for the young person to be proactive when coming up to 16.*
- A Principal Social Worker post has been created and recruited into. *This post has been deleted and the work is now absorbed within the Head of Children's Services post.*
- Following an audit and analysis of 200 case supervisions, good practice guidance for supervision has been developed for managers. *A learning and improvement plan has been completed and work is ongoing in this area.*

1. Staff Training requirements for new and existing staff.

- The Trix system, this is accessible by all workers, with the link to procedures loaded directly onto their desktop. *This is complete*
- A comprehensive induction programme was launched in August 2016 which covers processes and policies from Early Help Services through to Family Placements. It is mandatory for all new starters (both permanent and agency). For our permanent workers, the induction will be for two weeks and for agency, one week. *This was completed and has been refreshed.*
- Each month there is a classroom based induction for cohorts of new starters where they are introduced to the 'Reading way', find about the teams, processes, learning and development opportunities as well as the fundamental policies and legislation which underpin social work practice with children and families. *This has been refreshed and is run as and when needed.*

- The Practice Mentor has been offering one to one support with new starters to help them with processes specific to their area of work. *There is also ongoing training to teams from Beyond Audit auditors.*

Complaints and concerns provide essential and valuable feedback from our clients and customers. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we have not got it right can reveal or highlight opportunities for improvement (for example, a deficiency in practice, communication or service delivery). Even if a complaint is not upheld, lessons can be learnt from that complaint with service developments and improvements as a result. The complaints process and the feedback gained is an integral part of the quality assurance process, which feeds into the development and monitoring of services.

Once a complaint is investigated, the Investigating Officer (IO) will complete a Learning Action Plan for complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and which may have recommendations to the services about improving services, these are collated by the Customer Relations Team for reporting purposes and shared with Children's Services senior managers.

Children's Services have undertaken significant steps to improve over the last year. The service is working at a pace to embed and sustain the changes already made and improve response and learning from complaints / compliments. The focus continues to be to improve understanding of the main causes leading to complaints by:

- Implementing the revised workforce strategy to stabilise the workforce and reduce the reliance on agency workers.
- Improving the quality and consistency of practice by continuing to progress through auditing and quality assurance, ensuring that learning is being fed back into practice
- Recruiting more foster carers and specialist carers to increase capacity to avoid far distanced and residential placements for more complex children and young people.

The DfES guidance asks for the Council to ensure that we report the learning and service improvements implemented as a result of complaints. Some learning was pertinent to individual workers and led to bespoke advice and training. Some learning was shared in reminder to all staff regarding good practice and some learning led to review of services and processes.

Some individual and staff learning included:

- Ensure that parents/carer are made aware of the content and reasons for our involvements
- Ensure formal complaints are responded to in a timely manner
- Ensure that only relevant information is shared as required and due diligence is given in regards to information sharing / data protection.

As a result of complaints services and processes were reviewed or strengthened including:

- Refresher training carried out in relation to Data Protection protocols

- Refresher sessions carried out by the Customer Relations Manager to the Children's Services Management Team

Complaints Activity Statistics

In the year 2016/17, Children's Social Care received 132 statutory complaints, which is an increase of 45 (51.7%) compared to the 87 received in 2015/16.

To give this some context, in 2016/2017, 3169 children in total were referred to Children's Social Care. The number of statutory complaints represents 4.16% of the total number of referrals for the service last year.

Of the 132 complaints received, 46 (34.8%) were resolved as representations informally through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by the Social Care Teams. This is a significant increase over the 25.3% resolved informally in 2015/16 and is positive as any dissatisfaction about the service is being dealt with and resolved early.

Timeliness

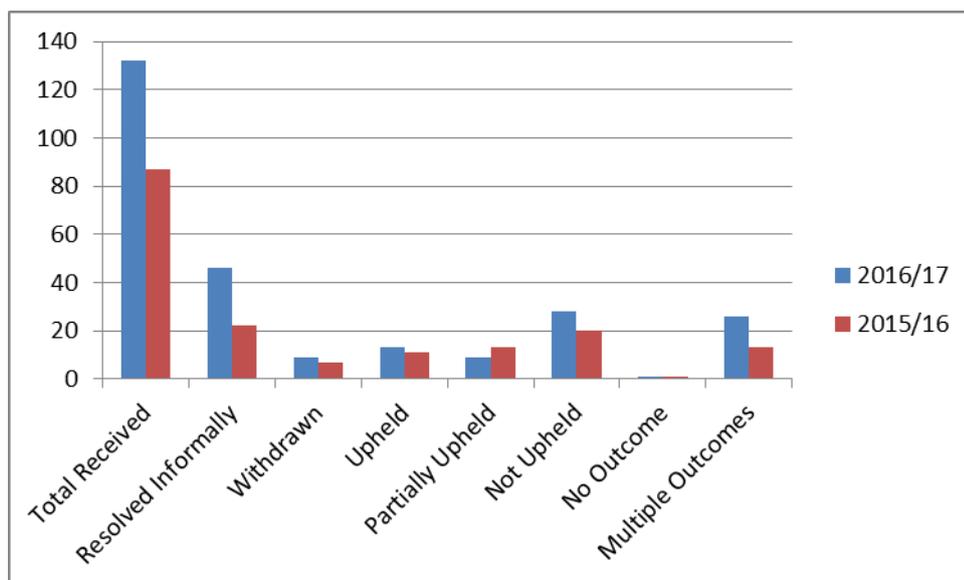
9 of the remaining 86 complaints were withdrawn by the complainant following a resolution with the service after the investigation had commenced, leaving 77 which were investigated to a conclusion at Stage 1.

Of the 77, 39 (50.6%) were responded to within timescale and 38 (49.4%) complaints were responded to over timescale. As a result of responding over timescale 1 complaint escalated to Stage 2 and then to Stage 3. The impact of this on the service has been the financial cost of an independent investigation at Stage 2 and the independent Stage 3 Panel along with a minimal amount in compensation for the delay in dealing with the complaint.

The decline in the timeliness of complaints responses is attributable in the main to the department being in a state of adjustment following structural and management changes. This had a knock on impact to responsiveness to complaints. This is an improving picture and one which should be maintained as the structural and management changes bed in.

Of the 39 complaints responded to within timescale, 22 (56.4%) were responded to in 10 working days or fewer.

Of the 77 complaints investigated to an outcome, 13 (16.9%) were recorded as Fully Upheld, 9 (11.7%) as Partially Upheld, 28 (36.4%) as Not Upheld, and 1 (1.3%) as having no recordable outcome. The remaining 26 (33.7%) were complaints with multiple strands where several outcomes were recorded.



Total number of Stage 1 complaints (including those resolved by Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and eventually withdrawn) received in the last 5 years and in compared to the number of referrals received.

Year	Number of complaints received	% Increase against previous year	Number of cases referred to Children's Services	% of complaints against referrals
2012/13	76	38	1681	5
2013/14	81	6.5	1698	4.77
2014/15	86	6.17	1489	5.78
2015/16	87	1.2	3078	2.83
2016/17	132	51.7	3169	4.16

Outcomes for those Investigated to a completion (excluding those resolved via ADR and those eventually withdrawn)

Outcome	Number	% of Total
Upheld	13	16.9
Partially Upheld	9	11.7
Not Upheld	28	36.4
No Outcome	1	1.3
Multiple Outcomes	26	33.7
Total	77	100

Timescales

Total Investigated to an Outcome	In Timescale	% of Total	Over Timescale	% of Total
77	39	50.6%	38	49.4%

The average response time for the 39 complaints responded to in timescale was 11.9 working days.

Of the 38 complaints responded to over timescale, 18 (47.4%) were responded to in under 20 working days. These are still deemed to be over timescale, as the agreed timescale for these was 10 working days. The average response time for the 38 complaints over timescale was 25.5 working days

The overall average time for responding to all 77 complaints was 18.9 working days, with the quickest response occurring in 3 working days, and the longest taking 85 working days.

Main Theme of ALL complaints received during 2016/17

(NOTE: This includes all complaints resolved informally and investigated at Stage 1, but DOES NOT include complaints investigated at Stages 2 & 3, as these themes are duplicates of Stage 1)

Theme of Complaint	Number	% of Total
Assessment	1	0.8%
Carers	1	0.8%
Child Protection Issue	3	2.3%
Communication	25	18.8%
Data Protection Issue	1	0.8%
Delays	1	0.8%
Financial Issue	4	3%
Lack of Support	5	3.7%
Safeguarding	1	0.8%
Service Provision	49	37.1%
Staff Conduct	41	31.1%
Total	132	100%

Who the complaint was received from

Who Made the Complaint	Number	% of Total
Adoptive Parent	1	0.8%
Advocate	4	3%
Child / Young Person	7	5.3%
Extended Family (Grandparents/Aunts & Uncles)	11	8.3%
Foster Carer / Care Provider	4	3%
Other	7	5.3%
Parent	98	74.3%
Total	132	100

The Access and Assessment, Safeguarding and the Looked After Children's services receive the highest number of complaints within Children's services. Mainly this can be attributed to the volume of their direct contact with the public, and the challenging circumstances in which they work.

The majority of complaints are from the birth parents who disagree with assessment outcomes or care plans and wish to challenge a professional decision. Complaints of this nature are inevitable, however high quality recordkeeping, clear communication with a clear distinction between fact and opinion reduces the opportunity for dispute.

Methods used to make a complaint

Method	Number	% of Total
E-mail	30	22.7%
Feedback Form	14	10.6%
In Person	4	3%
Letter	17	12.9%
MoMo App	2	1.5%
Telephone	48	36.4%
Via LGO	1	0.8%
Webform	16	12.1%
Total	132	100

The above demonstrates that the complainants have a number of methods they can use to contact the Customer Relations Manager with their complaints.

Demographic Information

Ethnicity	Number of complaints received	% of Total
Asian British	1	0.8%
Asian British / Asian Other	1	0.8%
Asian British / Bangladeshi / Bangladeshi British	1	0.8%
Asian British / Indian / British Indian	1	0.8%
Asian British / Pakistani	2	1.5%
Black African	3	2.3%
Black British / Black African	5	3.8%
Black British / Black Caribbean	6	4.4%
Black British / Black Other	1	0.8%
Black British / Caribbean	4	3%
Mixed Black	1	0.8%

Mixed Black / White	2	1.5%
Mixed Other	3	2.3%
Mixed White	2	1.5%
Mixed White / Black African	3	2.3%
Mixed White / Black Caribbean	3	2.3%
Mixed White / Caribbean	1	0.8%
Not Stated	16	12%
White British	72	54.4%
White Irish	1	0.8%
White Other	3	2.3%
Total	132	100%

For Equality Monitoring purposes in 2016/17 Officers have been encouraged to seek personal demographic information from people who make a complaint to help in assessing if there are groups of people who are proportionally complaining more or less and to explore the possible reasons.

The offer of the Translation Service and Easy Read versions of complaint responses are made available by the Customer Relations Manager to those complainants that need these.

Complaints from Young People Involving Advocates

Between the 1st of April 2016 and the 31st of March 2017, 6 complaints were received from Young People and, having been offered advocacy support by the Customer Relations Manager, 4 of them were referred to the advocacy provider. This compares to 11 complaints from Young People and 9 being referred to the advocacy provider in 2015/16. The Customer Relations Manager has regular contact with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and works closely with them to ensure the complaints process and advocacy provision is promoted to ensure that young people are aware of their right to submit a complaint.

NYAS has commended the Customer Relations Team on good complaint management process on behalf of young people.

The Customer Relations Manager also meets teams and managers to reinforce the importance of capturing verbal complaints. Staff are encouraged to record and analyze comments or concerns, as many children's and young people's issues are resolved this way rather than using the complaints process. If the young person is unhappy but does not wish to make a formal complaint the Customer Relations Team also offers to try to resolve matters informally.

We recognise that the number of young people accessing the complaints procedure is low. The Lead Officer for the Children-In-Care Council, which encourages young people in care to get involved with the Reading Youth Cabinet and encourages young people in care to work directly with the people who make decisions about their care, currently sits within the Directorate's Early Help Service. Children's Services are in discussion about how this role can be brought back to the statutory services as a way of strengthening the remit and direct link to Looked After Children. The Customer

Relations Manager will liaise with the Lead Officer for the Children-In-Care Council and attend Council meetings to promote the complaints procedure.

Local Government Ombudsman

Between the 1st of April 2016 and the 31st of March 2017 the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received 8 representations from dissatisfied service users for issues relating to Children's Services. This is an increase of 5 compared to the 3 cases which were received in 2015/16. Of these 8 cases, 5 were rejected by the LGO following their initial enquiries, 2 cases were investigated and the LGO found no fault. 1 case was referred back to the Council to investigate at stage 1 of the complaints procedure. The outcome of this was that the complaint was not upheld.

Of the 2 cases investigated the LGO identified no critical learning.

Compliments

The Customer Relations Team now own the logging of compliments for Children's Services and the directorate as a whole. Staff are reminded and encouraged to pass on all compliments to the Customer Relations Team's generic mailbox.

20 compliments were recorded within Children's Services between the 1st of April 2016 and the 31st of March 2017. These were received by the following Teams:

Access & Assessment	-	1
Children's Action Teams (CAT)	-	3
Children & Young Persons' Disability Team (CYPDT)	-	1
Early Years	-	3
Fostering	-	5
Leaving Care Teams	-	2
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	-	2
Pincroft & Cressingham	-	1
Safeguarding Teams	-	1
South Area	-	1

The number of compliments recorded is very low. There is good work being carried out across the Service and staff are encouraged to feedback compliments back. More will be undertaken with staff and Team Managers in this area during the next year.

Subject Access Requests

The Customer Relations Team assists Children's Social Care customers who have been in care through Reading Children's Services (closed cases) with this process and distributes leaflets on the procedure, which are available in a variety of formats and languages on request.

During 2016/17, 18 requests were received from individuals wishing to have access to their records. During the same period, 11 sets of records were prepared and shared with the requestor. All of these were completed within the agreed timescale.

Subject Access Requests from customers of current (open) cases are dealt with directly by the operational teams and the Customer Relations Team does not currently hold any data on these. As of April 2017 the incoming requests for the Council are being monitored by Legal Services. The data from recording this information will be available for 2017/18.

Contact Information: How to make a complaint

Some complaints can be sorted out by discussing your problem with your Social Worker or a manager. If you want to make a complaint, you can contact the Council by phone, letter, in person or by email. Telephone the Customer Relations Manager (Complaints & Representations) on 0118 937 2905 or e-mail: Complaints@reading.gov.uk.

If you wish to make your complaint to us in writing, our address is:
The Customer Relations Team,
Reading Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

You can also text us with your complaint, type SPKUP & your message to 81722. Your complaint will be recorded and if we can't sort out the problem immediately it will be passed for further investigation and action. The Customer Relations Team can take your complaint over the telephone and explain the complaints procedure in more detail or send you a leaflet explaining how to complain. The leaflet is also available in Council buildings or via the Council's website. You can also use these contact details to tell us if you have a concern (but do not want to make a complaint) or if you want to make a compliment about a service.