

# **Children's Services**

## **Complaints and Feedback Annual Report 2021-22**



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## Executive Summary

1.1 This report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

In total, 156 complaints were dealt with across all three stages of the statutory complaint's procedure during 2021/2022. This is an increase of 11.1 % on the previous year. In 2020-2021 we received 144 complaints.

1.2 17.9% of the 117 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 20-day statutory timeframe. Compared with 60.8% in 2020-21, this is a decrease of 71.89%

1.3 55.55% of the 18 Stage 2 complaints were completed within the 65-day statutory timescale.

1.4 33.3% of the 3 Stage 3 complaint panels were held within the statutory 30-day timescale.

1.5 191 Corporate Complaints were received and dealt with across the initial review and further review process.

1.6 2.6% of Initial Reviews (Stage 1) were responded to within the 10-day timescale. (152 received)

1.7 7.6% of Further Reviews (Stage 2) were responded to within the 20-day timescale. (39 received)

1.8 Children's Social Care informed us of 224 compliments, which is a big increase on the previous year. From 106.

1.9 Across the Complaints service and Children's Director's Office we resolved 335 concerns from customers (low level complaints, or enquiries). SEND service received the highest number of concerns.

1.10 There has been an increase in the number of enquiries from MPs to the Children's Social Care Director's Office (from 137 to 177). Enquiries from MPs are often made on behalf of constituents who are waiting for services, or have queries about their eligibility or concerns.

1.11 The number of formal Ombudsman investigations concerning Children's services was 10 and these were all upheld.

1.12 As last year, across all children's social care localities, the Family Solutions Services attracted the highest number of complaints with 75 complaints. This is to be expected, as these teams provide long-term support including Child Protection intervention.

## Statutory complaints

### Legislation and timescales

2.1.1 The report is produced in accordance with the statutory requirement to report annually on complaints activity within Children's Social Care Services.

2.1.2 Local Authorities are required to have in place a complaints procedure which operates in accordance with The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, The Children and Adoption Act 2002 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the accompanying guidance, 'Getting the Best from Complaints' (DfES Guidance 2006) for the management of children's social care complaints.

2.1.3 The complaint process is a three-stage process:

Stage 1: Complaints are investigated directly by the Team Manager or Service Manager of the team which is the subject matter of the complaint. Timescales are:

- 10 working days for response to complaint
- An extension of a further 10 working days can be agreed if the complaint is complex or more time is required to respond

Stage 2: If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, they can request a Stage 2 investigation. The Complaints Team will then appoint an external Investigating Officer and an external Independent Person if an internal investigating Officer cannot be sourced. Once the investigation team complete their investigation, their reports are passed to a senior officer in children's services for adjudication and response to the complaint. The timescale for addressing a complaint at this stage is up to 65 working days.

Stage 3: If a complainant remains dissatisfied following the findings and outcomes of the Stage 2 investigation, they can request that their complaint is reviewed by an independent panel which is made up of 3 persons. The complainant has the opportunity to present their case to the Panel, alongside the local authority. The Chair of the Panel will then send their decision to the complainant and the Director for Children's services within 5 working days of the panel hearing and the Director must respond to the complainant within 15 working days in respect of any recommendations that the panel have made.

2.1.4. Where possible, the Complaints Manager may suggest further meetings between the relevant Children's Social Care Manager and complainant after the completion of the Stage 1 complaint if it is felt that it could help to resolve the complaint. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.

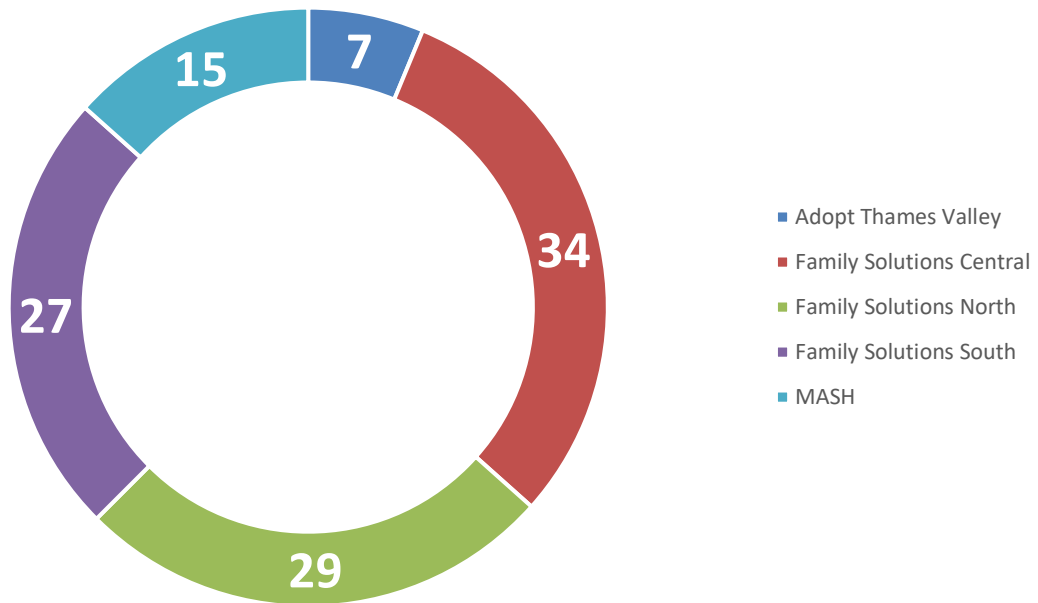
## Complaints by service/team area

2.4.1 The summary of all complaints dealt with through the complaints' procedure is detailed in the tables below. This includes all stages and both corporate and statutory complaints. Some of the figures for 2020-2021 in the table are shown as "not recorded" This is where team names may have changed over time or they are new teams that did not exist in this year.

Children's Social Care	Total for 2021-22	Percentage of cases vs cases received in total	Previous year 2020-21
Family Solutions Central	34	21.79%	35
Family Solutions North	29	18.59%	33
Family Solutions South	27	17.30%	32
MASH	15	9.61%	11
Children We Care For	12	7.69%	6
Disability Team	9	5.76%	8
Adopt Thames Valley	7	4.48%	4
LCSS	5	3.20%	3
Leaving Care	5	3.20%	5
Safeguarding conference team	4	2.56%	Not recorded
Fostering	2	1.28%	7
Moving into Adulthood	1	0.64%	0
Children Home	1	0.64%	0
Youth Justice & Exploitation Service	1	0.64%	0
Family Time team	0	0%	Not recorded
LADO	0	0%	Not recorded
Emergency Duty Team	0	0%	Not recorded
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>144</b>

Children's Education	Total for 2021-22	Percentage of cases vs cases received in total	Previous year 2020-21
SEND	141	73.82%	Not recorded
School Admissions	28	14.65%	Not recorded
School Transport	10	5.23%	Not recorded
Learner Engagement	8	4.18%	Not recorded
Early Help	3	1.57%	Not recorded
Virtual School	1	0.52%	Not recorded
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-</b>

Top 5 Social Care Complaints by Team 2021-22



2.4.2 The highest volume of complaints for Children’s Social Care in 2021-2022 was Central Family Solutions team with 29 complaints. The highest volume of complaints for Children’s Education in 2021 –2022 SEND Service with 141 Complaints and have the highest volume of complaints overall.

The service with the biggest increase following the previous year is Children we care for team with a 100% increase. The biggest decrease in complaints was the MASH team with 36.36% less cases than the previous year.

2.4.3 Complaints for the Family Solutions teams remain higher than those for other service areas, but this continues to be expected given they provide longer-term support to families and the involvements are sometimes more complex.

### Complaints by Issue

2.5.1 In order to understand the main causes leading to complaints, the Complaints team assesses the issues raised for each complaint received and where subsequent learning can be applied to help inform service improvements.

2.5.2 The top five complaint issues raised were: -

#### **Statutory**

- Staff Attitude/Behaviour/Conduct

- Disagreement with professional decisions
- Quality and accuracy of assessments and court reports
- Failure to protect
- Poor Communication with family

### **Corporate**

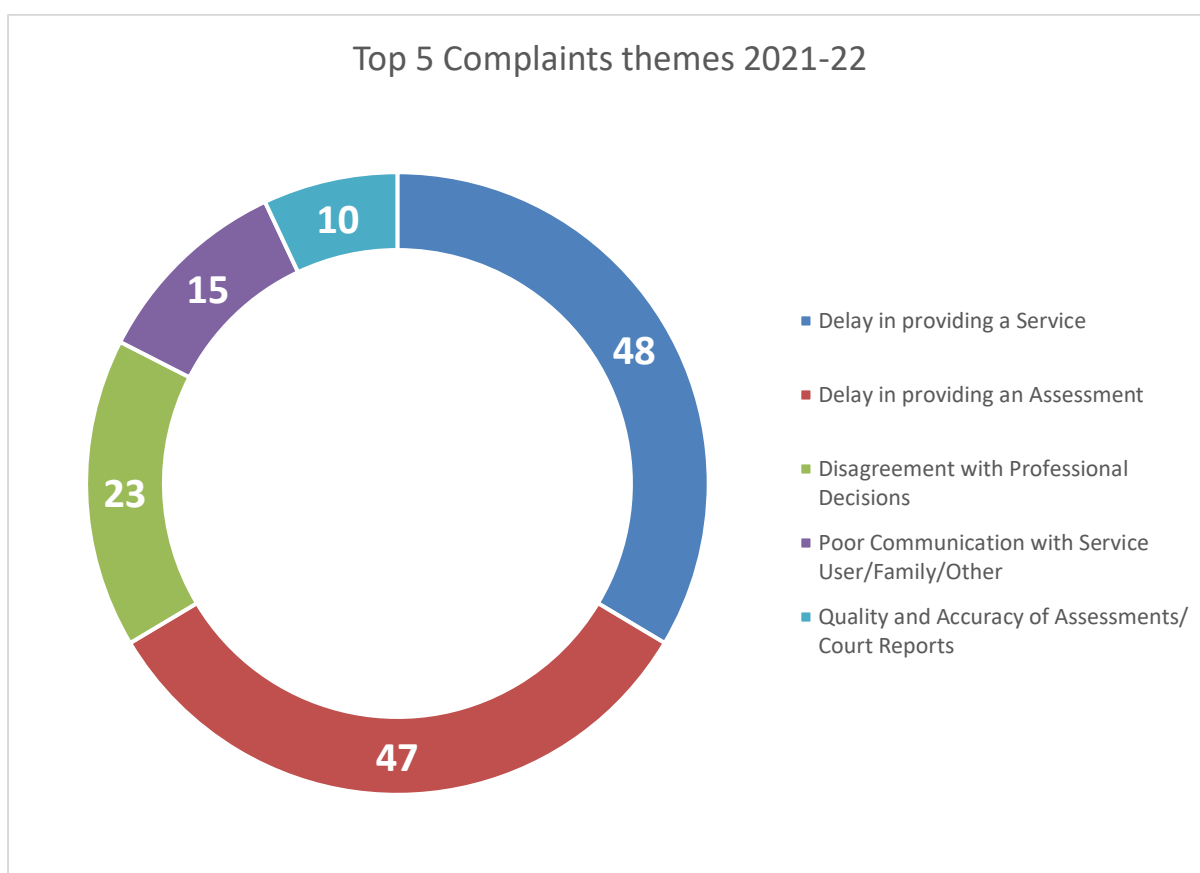
- Delay in providing a service
- Delay in providing an assessment
- Disagreement with Professional Decision
- Poor Communication with family
- Quality & accuracy of assessments/reports

Please note: There are more themes recorded than there are complaint cases, this is due to the fact that some complaints fit into several categories of theme.

<b>Themes of complaint - Statutory</b>	<b>Total Received 2021-22</b>	<b>Total Received 2020-21</b>
Staff attitude/behaviour/conduct	49	17
Disagreement with professional decisions	32	34
Quality and accuracy of assessments/reports	17	11
Poor communication with service user/family	15	26
Failure to protect	13	7
Confidentiality	10	8
Dissatisfaction with care plan	6	4
Recording errors	6	3
Delay in providing an assessment	4	3
Bias	3	5
Lack of involvement	3	5
Delay in providing a service	2	10
Disagreement with decision/assessment	2	4
Other	2	1
Equality & Diversity	1	2
Financial or funding issues	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>138</b>

<b>Themes of complaint - Corporate</b>	<b>Total Received 2021-22</b>	<b>Total Received 2020-21</b>
Delay in providing a service	48	44
Delay in providing an assessment	47	30
Disagreement with professional decisions	23	19
Poor communication with service user/family	15	8
Quality and accuracy of assessments/reports	10	7
Dissatisfaction with care plan	9	8
Staff attitude/behaviour/conduct	5	2
Disagreement with decision/assessment	4	2

Financial or funding issues	4	3
Confidentiality	2	1
Lack of Involvement	2	1
Equality & Diversity	1	1
Late reports/minutes	1	0
Poor communication between Teams	1	1
Transition	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>127</b>



2.5.3 Most of the categories are self-explanatory and give a clear idea about the overall areas of the service or aspects of work that receive the most complaints. Complaint themes from the previous year continue with the top 3 key issues we have received the most of being;

2.5.3 **Staff attitude/behaviour/conduct:** Although this is the most common complaint with 49 complaints received, out of 49 cases, 20 were found to be not upheld and 18 were partially upheld. 40.81% were not upheld which is positive to note and compared to last year's demand, there is only a small rise in number of cases partially upheld.

**Some of the key trends coming out of complaints that has been recognised through learning this year:**



- Ensuring that every customer feels they have been treated fairly by social care services and that the child's voice is heard through every step of the process.
- Treat customers as an individual person, and always be mindful that customers have different needs and handle their emotions differently, staff should be mindful to adapt their response and tone to meet their needs.
- Ensuring the assessment process is consistent and social care staff maintain professional assessments and that personal opinion does not develop within reports.

It is important we consider the viewpoint of other's even if it was not our intention to cause upset. It is how other's perceive information. In doing this we can reflect on how we can communicate differently to improve practice and to ensure young people feel safe and supported, especially when they are estranged from their own family. Due to the nature of the work, the service can be viewed as intrusive into family life, which can lead to complaints about individual staff members involved in delivering a service.

#### **2.5.4 Disagreement with professional decisions:**

**Some of the key trends coming out of complaints that has been recognised through learning this year:**

- Taking the time to ensure customers understand the reason and rationale behind a decision.
- Ensuring customers are involved wherever possible with making decisions to ensure their feedback is incorporated into the decision.

#### **2.5.5 Delay in service:**

**Some of the key trends coming out of complaints that has been recognised through learning this year:**

- Keeping customer informed where there is a delay
- Keeping customers informed where there is a change to the team dealing with their case.
- Ensuring smooth transitions to new social workers/teams is completed in a timely and structured way. Ensuring that the young person and family are kept informed of next steps, to help lessen any anxiety or worries that changes can bring in this situation.

#### **2.5.6**

## Service User Groups and Advocacy

Service user group	Number of cases 2021-22
Child in need	62
Looked after child	22
Child Protection Plan	15
Care Leaver	0
Risk of sexual exploitation	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>

2.6.1 This continues last year's increase in the number of complaints which relate to a Child in Need, representing over half of all complaints received.

2.6.2 6 complaints were received directly from young people this year. Highest demand was from Parents. (64.13%)

Complainant	Number of complaints 2021- /2022
Mother	125
Father	86
Other	45
Grandparent	38
Advocate (for young person)	18
Foster Carer	5
Adopter	3
Parents	3
Self (young person directly)	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>

2.6.3 28.5% of complaints were from families with children known to be from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Background from data that was captured.

Ethnicity	Number of cases 2021-221
White – British	153
Not known	52
Mixed – White and Asian	42
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	35
White – Any other background	28
Mixed – White and Black African	10

Black or Black British – African	4
Mixed – Any other mixed background	2
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1
White – Gypsy/Roma	1
White – Traveller or Irish Heritage	1
Any other black background	0
Any other Ethnic group	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>

## Compliance with timescales

This table below shows compliance with corporate and statutory timescales. Recommendations for improvement are shown at 12.2.4.

Stage of Complaint	Total number of cases overall	Number of cases	Percentage (%) of cases
Statutory Stage 1 – Within 10-day timescale	117	34	29.05%
Statutory Stage 1 - Outside of 10-day timescale	117	83	70.94%
Statutory Stage 1 extension – Within 20-day timescale	83	13 – excludes the 83 within 10 days	17.9%
Statutory Stage 2 – Within 65 working days timescale	18	10	55.55%
Statutory Stage 2 – Over 65 working days	18	8	44.44%
Statutory Stage 3 - Within 50-day timescale	3	1	33.33%
Statutory Stage 3 - Over 50-day timescale	3	2	66.66%
Corporate Stage 1 – Within 10-day timescale	153	68	44.44%
Corporate Stage 1 – Outside of 10-day timescale	153	85	55.55%
Corporate Stage 2 – Within 20-day timescale	40	12 – excludes the 68 within 10 days	30%
Corporate Stage 2 – Outside of 20-day timescale	40	28	70%

## Costs incurred 2021-22

Complaint Stage	Total cost 2021-22	Total cost 2020-21	Total cost increase from previous year %
Stage 2	£35,962	£26,201	+26.7%
Stage 3	£7,150	£4,600	+115.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£45,002</b>	<b>£30,801</b>	<b>+46.1%</b>

This table above shows the cost of stage 2 and 3 investigations. There has been quite a large increase in stage 2 investigations with 7 more than last year (11). Analysis shows that there is a common theme of delays to avoidable escalation with stage 1 complaints and therefore the customer has escalated to the next stage in the process. Another common theme is the initial response has not been adequate to address the complainants issues.

This table below shows the remedy payments made to customers, this could be for numerous reasons such as delays to their complaints or avoidable stress or financial loss. This cost is incurred by the Complaints team.

Remedy Payments Paid	Total 2021-22	Total cost 2021-22	Total cost increase from previous year %	Total 2020-21	Total cost 2020-21
Remedy Payments	3	£750	0	0	£0

- 2.7 The Complaints team continues to assess each Stage 2 request and if felt that it would be helpful, offers either a further response from Managers or suggests face-to-face meetings between complainants and Managers. This helps to restore relationships and aid resolutions. While not part of the formal complaints process, this can be a more successful means of achieving resolution, particularly in areas where complaints relate to misunderstandings or where explanations of processes may be helpful.
- 2.8 We have had successful response to tackling avoidable escalation. This is includes engaging more at the initial stages of a complaint with complainants. Setting up meetings where possible and appropriate to try and overcome issues together through restorative approach. We have seen that customers have welcomed this approach, often wanting to resolve issues quickly rather than waiting for a written response.

This works in the interests both of staff members and complainants as the Stage 2 and 3 processes can be lengthy and at times due to service capacity an internal investigating Manager cannot be sourced and there is the need to use external resources to carry out investigations which is not a cost-effective solution. However, this does not mean that we do not then offer Stage 2 or 3 if complainants remain dissatisfied after these initial attempts to resolve the issues have not been successful.

## Learning from complaints and customer feedback

2.9.1 The Complaints team recognises and promotes complaints being a valuable source of information to identify learning opportunities and is committed to promoting a culture of positive complaints attitude across the organization. The team encourage and promote a proactive approach to dealing with complaints, encouraging teams to deal with complaints in the first instance at the closest level to the complainant where possible, promoting the importance of managing customer expectations and not keeping customers in the dark.

The team also regularly identify trends in themes which can help us quickly spot specific service issues for swift resolution. The Complaints team views complaints as an important source of information to improve and inform services and improve staff learning and enhance professional and personal development of staff.

2.9.2 Managers across services are asked to consider learning outcomes when they are investigating and responding to a complaint and to include these within their response. The team are committed to promoting this approach to reassure service users that their complaint issues are taken seriously and that the appropriate actions are carried out to ensure future repeated instances are avoided. The team acts on learning outcomes by recording learning, identifying, and reporting on trends and following through with individual Managers to ensure any action from learning is carried out in a timely way.

We are working on our reporting requirements to enable detailed analysis of figures and learning and this is reported across all levels across the organisation. Serious and complex complaints learnings are reported through governance boards and are fed into wider service plans where significant change is required.

2.9.3 Examples of learning recorded and identified in 2020-21 for Children's Social Care Services are as follows:

Outcome from response
As a team we will ensure that communications are acknowledged at the earliest opportunity.
That there is a response at the earliest opportunity to confirm receipt of communication and provide a response in a timely manner.
Secondly, that referrals are made to relevant agencies in a timely way where a need is recognised, and consent has been provided.
Tangible actions identified and taken away:
Improved communication is needed where there are unavoidable delays between visits or between reports being written and shared.

X to be supported to think about how best to manage difficult meetings at the end of social care involvement.

Outcome from response

Kinship Carers need to be made more aware of the social care processes when they are looking after a Child cared for by the Local Authority living with them in a timely manner which is clearly explained.

All social worker will be reminded of their responsibility in team meetings.

Social worker will be reminded to use appropriate language when meeting with parents and carers in personnel supervision and team meetings.

Tangible actions identified and taken away:

That parents are provided with a summary of the Viability Assessment process when they suggest potential carers for their children.

Social worker's will be reminded at team meetings about the use of appropriate language, this will be monitored going forward as part of quality assurance.

Outcome from response:

In relation to the aspect of your complaint regarding how felt let down by the local authority when you were younger, following our meeting I emailed my line manager regarding your concerns, and asked for advice on how we should proceed.

I am currently seeking further advice in regards to how we can adapt your experience to ensure learning for children's social care moving forwards.

As I am still in the process of exploring this with senior managers, I am unable to offer a final outcome to this aspect of your complaint, however, I am offering on-going communication moving forward.

Tangible action taken away:

Social Workers within the team have been briefed to remind them that it is best practice for parents to be informed wherever appropriate and safe to do so, when strategy meetings are taking place about their children.

## Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Complaints team are committed to raising awareness across the organisation of implications if complaints are not handled correctly, including training staff on likely outcomes from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and working with services to take approaches that will prevent these implications.

Ombudsman Investigations 2020-21	Number of investigations 2020/21	Number of investigations 2020-21
Ombudsman Children's Investigations	10	3
Number of upheld Investigations	10	2

Out of 20 Ombudsman Investigations across all services in 2020-21 there were 10 decisions made relating to Children's Social Care with 10 upheld. All were found to be avoidable distress.

There were 3 key themes identified in these Ombudsman cases which are set out below: Common themes were around delays to complaints and issues with Special education needs (SEND)

The Complaints service is committed to improving timescales and have recently introduced a new case management system that will ensure robust processes are in place to ensure any potential delays are identified early on, and data quality is robust. Conversations are ongoing with services to understand and how we can further align process and remove any barriers.

Last year the Complaints service was moved from the Law and Governance directorate to be part of the Voice of the Customer Team and wider customer experience function within the Customer Services Directorate. The purpose of The Voice of the Customer Team will be to look at the whole customer experience and will include customer engagement and insight. This will enhance our service delivery but will also give us the opportunity to reflect on customer feedback, ensuring there is a constant feedback loop and the customer's voice is cooperated into services development and plans.

The themes identified were:

- Delays to EHCP
- Handling and delay Complaints
- Failure to meet special education needs of child

Below are a couple of common decisions and outcomes identified from the Ombudsman investigations and what we agreed to do to put it right.

### The Decision

The Council was found at fault as failed to deliver the EHCP plan for X. The delay in the ECHP also meant a delay to the right to appeal.

## **Outcomes**

Although the Council delayed issuing the EHCP it didn't cause X to miss out any schooling provision. The complainant did not appeal so although it delayed her right it did not cause her an injustice. The delay in issuing the EHCP did however cause distress to both Complainant.

The complainant has also experienced time and trouble bringing her complaint to the ombudsman.

## **Outcomes**

Within one month of my final decision the Council agreed to:

- Pay X £200 for the distress it caused her.
- Pay The complainant £300 for the distress, time and trouble it caused.

Within two months of final decision the Council agreed to:

- Review its practice for SEN officer attendance at annual reviews prior to transition.
- If an SEN officer is unable to attend the review meeting it should be able to evidence how it will ensure it does not repeat the faults in this case.

## **The Decision**

Mr X complained to the Council at the end of July/ beginning of August 2020, the council considered the complaint under stage one of the statutory complaints procedure and responded within the same month. Within days, Mr X asked the Council in writing to progress the complaint to stage 2. The Council should have completed this stage in no later than 13 weeks, but instead the response was over 30 weeks late.

### **Outcome:**

Within one month of the date of this decision, the Council agreed to:

- Complete its stage two investigation and write to Mr X to inform him of the outcome, ensuring it provides him appropriate information about his rights under the process.
- Offer to make a payment to Mr X of £250 to remedy the time and trouble he has gone to pursuing the complaint and to reflect the 31 week delay in the Council dealing with his complaint.

## **Compliments**

2.10.1 Positive feedback about staff or service delivery is a way in which the Children's Social Care service can see what is working well and can be used as a learning



tool for their service. It is also important to recognise and celebrate the good quality social work taking place within teams. Staff do receive compliments from families and are encouraged to forward to the Voice of the Customer team. Capturing this data consistently across the organisation is an ongoing priority for the complaints team exploring opportunities to share and celebrate positive feedback more widely across the organisation.

- 2.10.2 In 2021-22, 224 compliments were received about Children’s Services. This is 118 more than the previous year (106) and is an indication that why complaint volumes have gone up, there is also a lot of positive work that is being done across the service, making a difference to young peoples lives.
- 2.10.3 The majority of compliments that we received were from Internal colleagues, service users and partners we work with.

In the last year we have worked on celebrating the positive work that our services achieve and have improved the way in which we record our compliments. We record our compliments on a form which links to an interactive and engaging dashboard for Senior Managers, which highlights themes, areas, teams & detail and this is reported in real time enabling quicker recognition responses to the teams and staff member complimented. We have started including what DTFT values are displayed in the behaviour of our colleagues and how this is attributes to the positive customer feedback we are receiving.

Origin	Total
Court/Barrister	24
Parent	1
School/Education Provider	21
Other Health professional	6
Foster Carer	3
TVP	6
Another LA/professional body	5
Service User	38
Internal colleague	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224</b>

We received most compliments on our working practice. ‘Social Worker’ is a protected title and practice is defined through the SWE Professional Standards and the BASW Code of ethics. This aligns to our Practice framework, our values, and behaviours.

The term ‘working practice’ sets out how we describe ways in which our social workers meet or exceed the expectations set out in these standards in their day-to-day work with children and families.

Theme	Total
Working practice	150
Support given	74
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224</b>

2.10.4 A selection of compliments is set out in Appendix 1.

## Concerns

- 2.11.1 Where possible, the Complaints team tries to resolve simpler complaints quickly (within 48 hours where possible) outside the formal complaints process and each complaint is assessed on receipt to decide if this is the most appropriate way forward. This approach is in line with the 'Getting the Best from Complaints, 2006, the Department for Education and Skills (DfE) guidance for local authorities on implementing the complaints procedure laid out in the Children Act 1989.
- 2.11.2 There were 335 Children's Services concerns raised in 2021-22 where we sought to manage the concerns raised as an informal local resolution.
- 2.11.3 This approach requires active support and proactiveness from team Managers in the children's social care service, with them responding promptly to queries or concerns raised. Concerns may be resolved by offering an apology, arranging a meeting, providing an explanation, or outlining the actions which will be taken and manage customer expectations efficiently, creating a timescale for an action to resolve to take place.
- 2.11.4 Where it is not possible to achieve resolution informally, the Complaints team can take concerns forward under the statutory complaints process (or via the Council's corporate complaints policy if a complaint does not meet the requirements of the statutory complaints process).

## MP Letters

- 2.12.1 The Complaints team also records the number of MP enquiries about Children's Social Care services. These are managed by the Director's office directly. They often raise questions or highlight problems with services for an individual and MPs often advocate on behalf of their constituents.
- 2.12.2 There were 177 MP Children's enquiries in 2021-22. This is a significant increase (29.19 %) from 2020-21 when there were 137 MP enquiries.

Work being undertaken to align process – detailed categories

## Complaints Improvements delivered:

2.12.3 Over the last year, significant changes have been made to the complaints service. Not only has the service moved to the customer experience arena but we have reviewed our processes to ensure they are fit for purpose and continue to work to improve these and we now part of a wider continuous improvement team who can help us continue to enhance and grow our service.

We have recently implemented a complaint case management system, and this has meant that our data quality has improved, and audit trails are more robust. We are looking to increase our ability in the system function, looking at where we can align processes across the organisation to allow us one view of the customer. This means we will be able to see the complete customer journey and provides opportunity to join our approaches up.

We have reviewed the way we record data and enhanced our reporting to provide more valuable reporting to key stakeholders in the organisation, empowering them to make decisions based on customer feedback we are receiving and to take accountability and encourage colleagues to see complaints as a valuable source of feedback.

## Recommended actions for 2022/23:

2.12.4 There have been some key recommendations identified through the analysis of data in this report:

- It is recognised that complaint compliance needs to be improved. Customers should not have to wait longer than policy timescales for complaints responses. Complaints should be extended within reasonable time if necessary and this should be the exception; it is imperative that customer expectations are managed if complaints do need to be extended.
- An objective has been set to reduce Children's Services complaints by XX in the next year and complaint waiting times by XX
- It has been identified that Family Solutions service account for the overall majority of complaints regarding staff Attitude/conduct/behaviour with 75.51% of cases.
- SEND have received the majority of complaints regarding delays to assessments and delays to service with a high upheld rate (75.78%). It is recommended that further deep dive analysis is undertaken to understand why demand is disproportionate in these areas.
- Align the complaints process with the escalated communications process, (including MP enquiries and concerns) to provide consistency to approach resulting in a better customer experience.

- Align the compliments process, compliments should be recorded in one place to avoid duplication.
- Review stage 2 and 3 complaint processes including reviewing external investigator and service capacity to deal with increasing demand.
- Deep dive analysis to understand why demand is increasing in stage 2's and 3s.
- 
- Further enhance our system development to ensure an inclusive and dynamic process between the Complaints team and the service, creating one view of the customer and ensuring accountability.

## APPENDIX 1 – Sample of compliments received for Children’s Social Care staff.

**Names have been removed for data protection purposes.**

Thank you so much for your time, effort and energy which really helped us get the support for all aspects that have been really positive, both for the kids and ourselves. Your own personal help and time with the kids have been great and helped them a lot, they say they will miss your talks and advice. For us it was good to have your inputs, and the TAKE3 gave us a needed chance to talk to other “parents of teenagers”, something we do not have in our own network of friends, but which clearly is as crucial as the parent and baby groups were back all those years ago.

Hope you see your workload ease as we move into summer and the world post-COVID hopefully becomes more normal for people.

Many thanks and it was a real pleasure getting to know you,

I just want to bring to your attention the exceptional piece of work X has done in the MASH. Not only has she managed to effect a real change for the family, which has significantly reduced the risk to mother and her children, she has also done this in the least invasive manner and without the need to progress the matter to a statutory assessment. The family therefore had the right support at the right time at the right level.

This is an excellent piece of work and she is a real asset to the team.

Following X review I just wanted to thank you for your work – it seems as if plans are coming together for her and there was a very different feel to the meeting to that all of the previous reviews for this care episode. X has had a number of different social workers so it has helped that you have been able to build a relationship with her and navigate through – hopefully this move will be a positive one for her.

Just wanted to formally acknowledge your work and effort in supporting X!

I’m a governor at St Barnabas School in Jericho, Oxford. I was impressed to hear the praise that was being heaped on you for being really helpful and knowledgeable.

I hope we will meet at some stage. In the meantime – thank you very much for all you are doing!

Thank you so much X.

We are so thankful for your kindness, your time and your helpfulness the other day. It was wonderful to know X is listened to and cared for and supported. A blessing.

With thanks and warm wishes

X approach to the conference allowed the parent to be open and honest within the forum. She was professional but approachable, and her kindness was very much appreciated - I feel her tone enabled the conference to be productive and allowed the parent to feel comfortable enough to express themselves in the best way they could. Thank you X for your hard work and efforts to ensure the conference held the children at the centre, but allowed the parent to feel listened to and heard.