

# **CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**21 October 2014**

**8 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 1 - 18)**

Report attached.

**8A LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT COMPLAINTS REPORT (Pages 19 - 28)**

Report attached.

**Andrew Beesley  
Committee Administration  
Manager**

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# **CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21 October 2014**

**Subject Heading:**

Children Adults & Housing(Children  
and Young People's Services)  
Annual Complaints and Compliments  
Report 2013/14

**Report Author and contact details:**

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Officer

**Policy context:**

Tel: 01708 433589  
Service Quality and Customer  
Relationships

## **SUMMARY**

The Children & Young People's Services Complaints Annual report, attached as Appendix 1 provides information about the numbers and types of complaints handled by the Children and Young People's Service during 2013/14, as well as Members' correspondence and how they were dealt with.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Members note the contents of the attached report and the continued efforts made by the service to learn from complaints with the increasing demands on the service through various challenges.
2. That Members note the actions identified to improve and feedback to services and to monitor to ensure these are implemented to evidence service improvements.

<b>REPORT DETAIL</b>
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3. Appendix 1 shows that complaints at Stage 1 decreased slightly in 2013/14 from 2012/13 by 2% and Stage 2 remained at the same level as 2012/13, while enquiries increased. Although Stage 2 complaints remained at the same level as in 2012/13, it should be noted that the requests to progress to Stage 2 were double in 2013/14 and of those 30% were resolved through face-to-face meetings and did not progress to an independent investigation.
4. Within the Under 12's and Triage/MASH & Assessment Teams there have been increases in the number of Stage 2 complaints, although there have been decreases in Stage 1 complaints across the board.
5. Many of the complaints received were from parents as opposed from children directly and the main reason for complaint was around 'behaviour of staff'. This is linked mainly to the Triage/MASH & Assessment and Under 12's Team which had the highest complaints in relation to 'behaviour of staff'. However these were mainly around decisions made by social workers within very emotive situations e.g. children going into care/child protection.
6. Outcomes of complaints highlighted the need for improved information and better explanation needed, as the main outcomes were apology given and explanation. It can also be said that where decisions are made within very emotive situations, that there is an added need to ensure that parents are very clear about the implications. The complaints team will be looking at improving recording on outcomes.
7. Response times to Stage 1 complaints were 48% for those responding to within 10 working days with 40% responded to within 20 working days. Within the statutory framework this does meet the required timescale by 88% for Stage 1 complaints which allows for 10 working days with an extension of a further 10 working days.
8. Requests for Stage 2 complaints had doubled in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13. However with the continued efforts of resolving complaints, face-to-face meetings have been successful which led to three out of the five not progressing to independent investigation. Those that progressed to independent investigation were mainly regarding parent dispute about child's welfare.
9. The main outcomes/recommendations at Stage 2 were around improving communication/contact between complainants, family and the local authority and highlighted the need for improved recording.

10. Response times at Stage 2 showed 40% were responded to within the statutory timeframe of up to 65 working days. Delays may be caused by availability of staff for interviews, delays caused by the complainant.
11. There was one Stage 3 Review Panel for 2013/14.
12. Corporate complaints decreased in 2013/14 by 16%. The high volume in 2012/13 was due to the closure of certain groups within Children's Centres. The highest number of corporate complaints for 2013/14 was in relation to Children's Centres. However it should be noted that complaints that do not fall within the statutory framework are recorded as corporate complaints.
13. Expenditure for 2013/14 totalled £9,652.90, which was broken down into costs for independent investigators and publicity/leaflets of £9,203.40 and £449.50 respectively.
14. Email was the most preferred method of contact followed by telephone for those either making a complaint or a compliment.
15. Complaints relating to children between the ages of 0-5 and 6-9 have increased. Monitoring information needs to be looked at in terms of disability and ethnicity as there is a high number of those not declared especially under disability.
16. Members' correspondence has dropped by 56% in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13 with 67% being responded to within the 10 working day timescale.
17. Compliments have slightly decreased by 9% from 2012/13 to 39 in 2013/14. Members of staff were thanked for their support and practical advice, as well as being kind, helpful and understanding with commitment and professionalism.
18. The format of the report has changed to better highlight the information and contextualise it, as requested by Members previously. Unfortunately information in relation to complaints against Wards could not be provided for this report, but aiming for this to be available for the report for 2014/15. Children & Young People's Services complaints recording will be moved to the new CRM system and the Complaints, Information & Communication Team will need to look at how best to capture information in order to provide the detailed areas reported within this report.
19. Recommendations and actions identified as a result of complaints will be monitored to ensure that they are implemented and reviewed to see how these will lead to improvements in the service where required.

<b>IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS</b>
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**Financial implications and risks:**

There is a Complaints, Information and Communication team within the Directorate. This team addresses complaints received and manages associated resource implications, which are funded from within overall service budgets. There are no new financial implications or risks arising from this report, which is for information purposes.

**Legal implications and risks:**

There are no apparent legal implications from noting this Report. The complaints process is governed by the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

The Children's Services department have identified actions to be followed through with the qualified workforce to ensure that the learning from the complaints received is firmly embedded into the training and supervision of social work staff and also addressed through the Council's Performance Development Review (PDR) process

**Equalities implications and risks:**

The report demonstrates that there is a transparent and structured (both informal and formal) route for concerns or complaints, including those relating specifically to bullying, harassment, unfair treatment and/or discrimination against young people, guardians, parents or carers, to be registered for review and action where required. The Council monitors the diversity profile of complainants and service users against relevant protected characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, etc. This data is captured on the CRM system and forms part of the Complaints Annual Report.

In line with the Council's corporate policy on translation and interpreting services, this service also offers information in other languages and alternative formats on request.

We will continue working towards raising awareness on equality and diversity related issues and improving the access to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments policy and procedure.

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
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None

## APPENDIX 1

# Children, Adults & Housing: Children and Young People's Services

## Annual Report 2013 – 2014 Complaints and Compliments

**Prepared for:**

**Joy Hollister, Group Director – Children, Adults & Housing**

**Kathy Bundred, Head of Children and Young People's Services**

**Prepared by: Veronica Webb, Senior Complaints & Information Officer  
Natalia Knock, Complaints & Information Officer**

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## **Executive Summary**

Children & Young People's Services had a restructure during 2013/14, resulting in the establishment of a Triage/MASH & Assessment Team which is the initial contact team for all children's enquiries. This was part of a London wide agreement between Directors of Children's Services with the Metropolitan Police to improve information sharing for the better protection of children. Many serious case reviews over the years have identified poor inter-agency information sharing as a risk factor for children. The multi-agency hub (MASH) brings together police, health and other partners with Children's Social Care.

It was highlighted that the Children's report structure and format needed changing by Members from the previous year's Children's Annual Complaints report and has noticeably changed and has provided a level of information to inform the service. Although this has been provided for this report, it has been noted that this level of information may not be available to Children & Young People's Services through the new CRM system which children's and adults complaints will be transferred over to. However the Complaints, Information and Communication Team will try and aim to provide this if not available through other means.

There have been areas identified through the report for Children & Young People's Services to take on board, and most of these areas, e.g. improvement of recording is already in the process of being actioned by way of regular auditing and feedback, team level reporting of data and continued support for staff on the use of the CCM recording system.

## 1. Ombudsman referrals

Of the three Ombudsman cases, one was referred back to the local authority as premature, one not investigated and one the investigation was discontinued.

	Apr13- Mar14	Apr 12- Mar13	Apr11 -Mar12
Maladministration			
No maladministration after investigation			1
Ombudsman discretion			1
Investigation with Local settlement		1	
Outside Jurisdiction	1	1	3
Investigation Discontinued	1		3
Premature/Informal enquiries	1	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>

## 2. Total number of complaints

The total number of complaints received during 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 was 90. This is a slight increase of 16% from 2012/13 which totalled 82.

The number of Stage 1 decreased slightly in 2013/14 by 2%. The number of Stage 2 complaints was the same as in 2012/13. However it should be noted that there were 10 requests for Stage 2, with only five progressing to independent investigation.

	Enquiries	Stage 1	Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	Direct Stage 2	Stage 2 withdrawn	Stage 2 dealt with internally	Stage 3 Requests	Stage 3 Review Panel's	Total
2013/14	36	42	5	-	2	3	1	-	90
2012/13	27	43	5	-	-	-	1	1	82
2011/12	29	48	2	1	1	1	-	1	93

### 2.1 Enquiries

There has been a significant increase in enquiries this year and these have mainly related to issues outside of the statutory framework, e.g. outside of timescale.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Enquiries	36	27	29
Enquires escalating to a Stage 1 Complaint	0	5	0

## 3. Stage 1 Complaints

The majority of complaints were made by parents and only 4 were made by children/young people directly. This will need to be looked at in terms of whether young people are being informed about making complaints directly themselves through the advocacy service.

### 3.1 Service Areas

There have been decreases in complaints across the board, however within the Under 12s Team and Triage/MASH & Assessment Team these have significantly increased. It should be noted that before the restructure these two teams were previously the Children in Need Team and Duty and Assessment Team respectively. Fostering complaints have been shown for the first time in 2013/14 following attendance to each of the Children's Teams by the Complaints Team which identified particular areas of fostering along with special guardianship complaints that did fall under the statutory procedure.

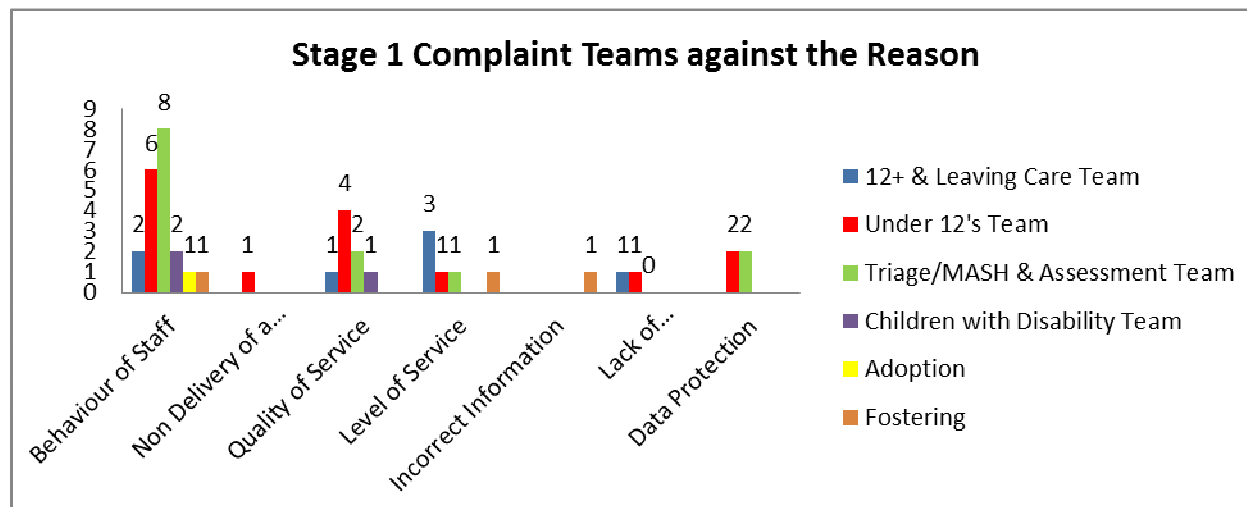
<b>Service Area's</b>	<b>Apr 13 – Mar 14</b>	<b>Apr 12 – Mar 13</b>
Under 12's (Children in Need Team)	11	5
Family Link	-	1
Triage/MASH & Assessment Team (Duty and Assessment Team)	13	8
Children with Disabilities Team	2	4
Leaving Care (now 12+ Team)	7	9
Looked After Children Team (now Permanency Team)	4	9
Intensive Family Intervention Team	-	3
Safeguarding & Service Standards Unit	-	2
IFIT/ DAAT	-	1
St Kilda's Children Centre/ DAAT	-	1
Adoption	1	-
Fostering	3	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>

### 3.2 Reasons

The main reason for complaint was 'behaviour of staff' which increased significantly during 2013/14 than in 2012/13. However quality of service reduced significantly from 2012/13 by 43% and this may be a result of the change in recording.

	Quality of Service	Behaviour of Staff	Level of Service	Lack of Communication	Data protection
<b>Apr 13 – Mar 14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Apr 12 – Mar 13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
	Dispute decision	Welfare Concerns	Incorrect Information	Incorrect assessment	Delay to implement a Service
<b>Apr 13 – Mar 14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Apr 12 – Mar 13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

The main reason for complaint 'behaviour of staff' was highest within the Triage/MASH & Assessment Team and the Under 12's team. It should be noted that these were usually linked to unhappiness about decisions made by social workers within very emotive situations. However, it also highlighted that complainants did not feel they were given clear information/explanations about processes.



### 3.3 Outcomes

The main outcome for 2013/14 was an apology given with explanation. This was linked with acknowledging how complainants felt about the experience they may have gone through and providing a clearer understanding for the complainant about the process. The Complaints Team will be looking at recording of outcomes to see how this information can be better captured.

### 3.4 Response times

Of the 42 complaints received, 48% were responded to within the 10 working days timescale, 40% were responded to within 20 working days, 2 outside the timescale. 3 complaints withdrew. Where complaints were responded to within 20 working days, or went outside of timescale the complaints team sent out relevant holding letters.

	Within 10 days		11-20 days		Over 20 days		Withdrawn		Rolled over to 2013-14	
	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13
Stage 1	20	24	17	20	2	4	3	2	-	3

## 4. Stage 2 Complaints

There were a total of 10 Stage 2 complaint requests for 2013/14. Of these 5 progressed to independent investigation and had escalated from Stage 1, 3 were resolved through face to face meetings with the complainant and 2 were withdrawn. There have been continued efforts to resolve complaints by meeting with complainants which has been successful, resulting in some complaints not progressing to an independent investigation. The majority of the complaints at this stage involved disputes between one parent and another about the welfare of the child.

## 4.1 Outcomes/Recommendations

Of those Stage 2 complaints investigated, the recommendations were mainly around improving contact/communication between the complainant/family and the local authority, while ensuring that the wishes and feelings of the child are taken on board. Also highlighted was information recorded in particular assessments/child protection plans and that these need to be clear and identify between facts and opinion and information accurately recorded.

## 4.2 Response times

The Stage 2 complaints investigated were complicated cases and only two of these were completed within the 65 statutory timescale, while three were outside of the timescale. It should also be noted that where investigations cut through particular holiday periods, such as Easter and Summer that this has had an impact.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Within 25 Working Days	-	1	-
Within 65 Working Days	2	-	-
Outside of Timescale	3	2	4
Withdrawn	2	-	2
On-going	-	2	3

## 5. Stage 3 Review Panels

There was one Stage 3 Review Panel during 2013/14.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Stage 2 request for a Stage 3 with no Review Panel	-	1	-
Stage 3 Review Panel	1	-	1

## 6. Corporate Complaints

There was a decrease of 16% in the number of corporate complaints received during 2013/14 compared to 2012/13. The spike in 2012/13 was due to the closure of certain groups within Children's Centres. Complaints within the Children and Young People's Services that do not fall within the statutory procedure are recorded under the corporate procedure.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Corporate Complaints	15	49	8

A breakdown of corporate complaints is given below. It should be noted that there is a difference between the overall figure given above and the breakdown of the complaints below and this is as a result of complaints that have been recorded under Children's Services via another service area incorrectly.

	Children's Centres	Fostering & Adoption	Under 12's	Triage/MASH & Assessment
Total	7	3	2	1

## 7. Expenditure

Expenditure for independent investigations is held within the Complaints, Information & Communication Team, which holds a small budget of £14,460. Although there were a total of five complaints requiring an independent investigation, one investigation was paid via the service. One payment for an independent investigation was made in this period which rolled over from 2012/13. There were no compensation payments made during 2012/13.

	Publicity/ leaflets	Independent investigators	Total
April 2013 – March 2014	£449.50	£9,203.40	£9,652.90

## 8. How Complaints & Compliments were received

Emails and telephone are the preferred method of contact with emails the most preferred. Telephone contact has increased from 2012/13; however the use of complaints leaflets decreased quite significantly.

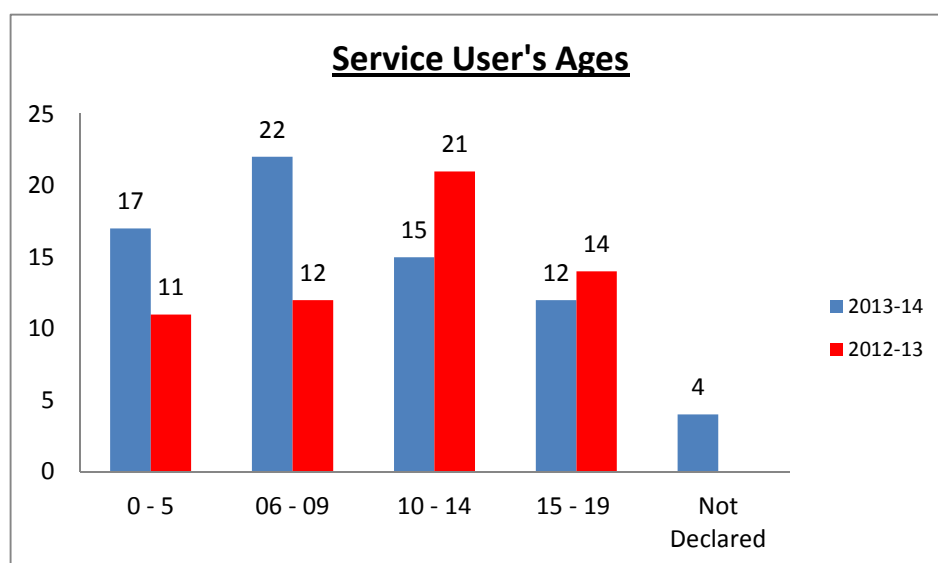
	Letter	E-mail	Complaint Form	Fax	Telephone	In Person	Online	Thank You Card	Evaluation Form
2013-14	25	50	5		30	3	1	13	1
2012-13	13	54	19	1	21	1	2	7	1

## 9. Monitoring Information

The monitoring information that follows includes all siblings within the family unit involved in the complaint.

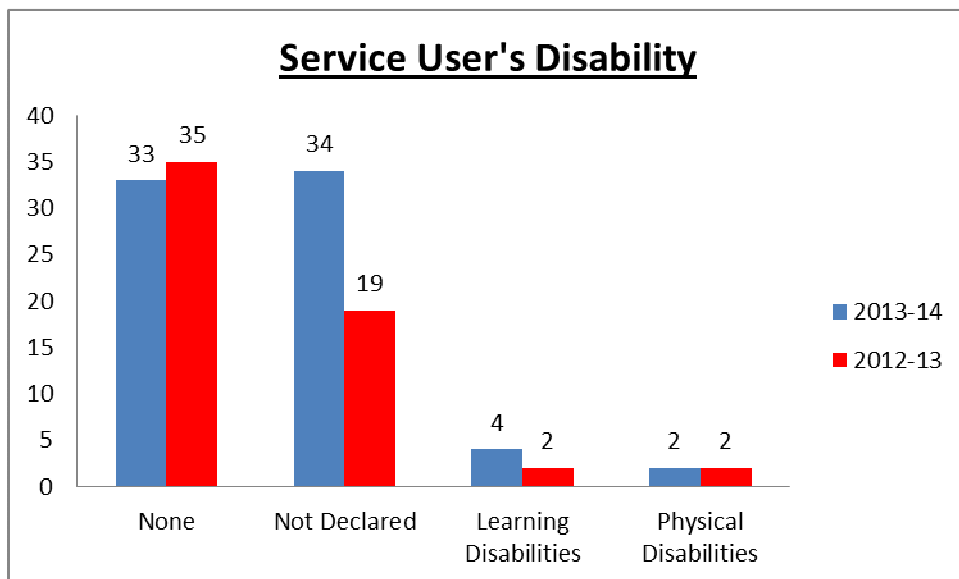
### 9.1 Age

Complaints relating to children between 0-5 and 6-9 years have increased significantly during 2013/14 from 2012/13 by 55% and 65% respectively, while complaints relating to children between 10-14 and 15-19 have decreased. The rise in younger children complaints correlates to a rise in care proceedings and child protection plans.



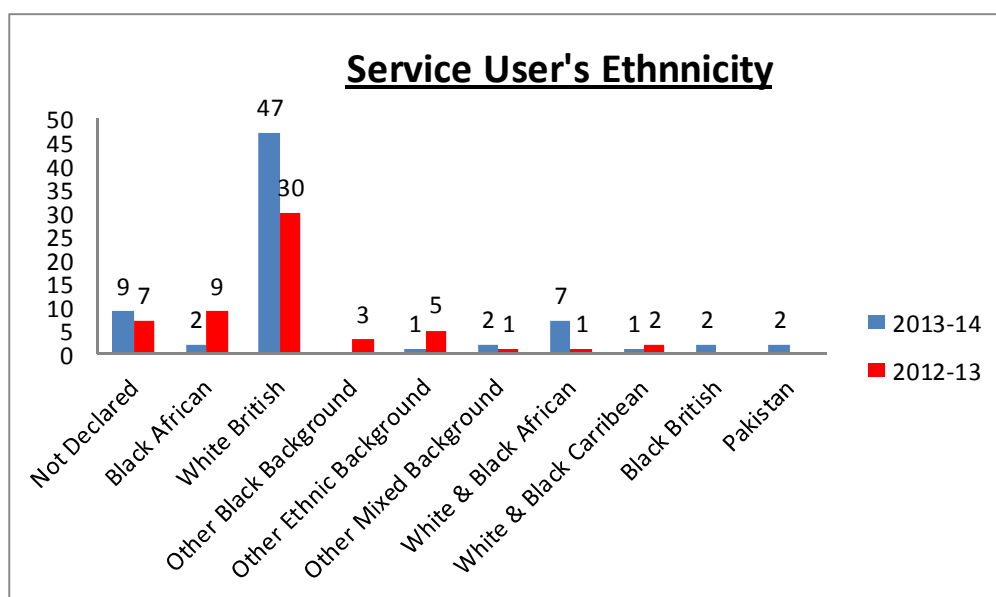
## 9.2 Disability

There is a high number that disability has not been recorded during 2013/14. This may need to be looked at in light of the changeover of the database system being used for children's records.



## 9.3 Ethnicity

Within Havering 87.6% are white British, with 4.8% being from an Asian/Asian British background, 4.8% Black/African/Caribbean/British background, 2.1% from a mixed background and 0.5% from other ethnic background. The breakdown of ethnicity in relation to children does appear reflective of this. It should be noted that 'not declared' has increased slightly and will need to be looked at to ensure information is captured.



## 10. Members Correspondence

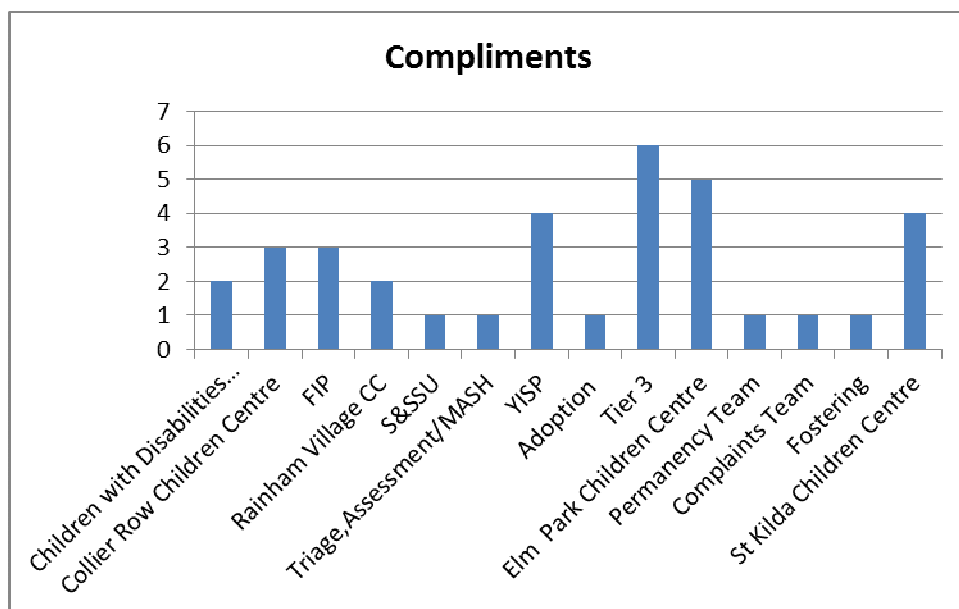
The number of Members correspondence in 2013/14 has dropped by 56% compared to the previous year 2012/13. Of the members correspondence received, 67% were responded to within the 10 day timescale.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Members Correspondence	27	46	36

## 11. Compliments

In 2013/14 39 compliments were received, compared to 43 in 2012/13. This has decreased only slightly from last year by 9%. This also can include professionals complimenting staff members. The type of compliments received were around supportive and practical advice, being helpful, kind and understanding and staff's hard work, commitment and professionalism.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Compliments	39	43	34



## 12. Conclusion

The format of this report has changed to help highlight the areas of information and context for complaints within the Children & Young People's Services. There are particular areas of concern highlighted, in particular, behaviour of staff. However when taking this in context it is clear that where decisions are made about children, i.e. where a decision needs to be made about whether a child stays with one parent over another, or that a child is seen to be at risk and placed in care, these are very emotive situations and many occasions the complaint is because a parent(s) is/are not happy with that decision. Although this can be justified, it also highlights the need for better communication/information from social workers at the outset to try and alleviate some of the anxieties and trust issues associated with these decisions.



Those complaints that were not escalated through the face to face meetings have been effective and should continue. Where possible and practical, face to face meetings may be looked at from an earlier stage as an effective means of preventing complaints escalating. What has been noted is the number of complaints received directly from young people has increased slightly from two in 2012/13 to four in 2013/14; this will need to be explored. It may be that with the new advocacy service that concerns are being dealt with in an effective way; however this information should be captured to evidence this.

There will be changes in the way that Children's complaints will be recorded and this may affect the level of recording that is available, once these are moved over to the new CRM database; however the Complaints, Information & Communication Team will aim to capture similar information as in this report. This will help the service to identify areas for improvement as they go forward.



## 9. Complaints Action Plan

Issues Identified	Lessons Learnt	Action to be taken	Department	Timescale	Review
S20 – parents not clear about process and implications	clear explanation/ information on possible implications needs to be given at early stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social workers to be reminded to provide concise and clear information.</li> <li>Managers to ensure that communication is addressed through the PDR process.</li> </ul>	Triage/MASH & Assessment	On-going	
S47 – parents not given sufficient information about process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determination of S47 needs to be consistent.</li> <li>Clear explanation/ information about process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process already in place that two senior managers sign off S47s.</li> <li>Social workers to give clear and concise information about process</li> </ul>	Triage/MASH & Assessment	On-going	
Important information is not always recorded appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information leading to an action/decision should be recorded in detail.</li> <li>Information needs to be recorded accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is already being undertaken to look at improved recording across the service.</li> <li>Assessments to identify clearly fact from opinion and identify the source of the information.</li> </ul>	All	On-going	
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## CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER 2014

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Children, Adults & Housing: Learning & Achievement Annual Complaints Report 2013/14
<b>CMT Lead:</b>	Joy Hollister
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Veronica Webb, Senior Complaints & Information Officer Mercury House, Mercury Gardens Romford RM1 3SL Telephone: 01708 432589
<b>Policy context:</b>	Service Quality and Customer Service

### SUMMARY

1. The Learning & Achievement report attached as Appendix 1 provides information on the complaints received during 2013/14 and how these have been handled. It should be noted that these complaints exclude schools admissions and exclusion appeals and also that maintained schools and academies have their own complaints procedure and that these are dealt with through the governing body.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Members note the contents of the attached report for information.

### REPORT DETAIL

3. There was one Ombudsman complaint during 2013/14 and this related mainly to a lack of physiotherapy provided by health providers, although fault was also found with the Council which resulted in a compensation payment of £480.00.

4. The number of complaints received during 2013/14 totalled 41, which included 27 complaints and 14 enquiries. The majority of these complaints related to education and schools and therefore were referred to the relevant school to take through their complaints procedure. Providing greater clarification of the local authority's complaints process related to schools is being addressed.
5. Of those complaints regarding education/schools, this ranged from parents complaining about bullying/incidents within the school, child being excluded or the school placement. A few complaints were in relation to the environment. It should be noted that complaints were across a range of schools.
6. Within the current CRM system there are limited reports available and therefore Complaints, Information & Communication Team will be looking at changing how some information on complaints are recorded to help provide more reflective information on monitoring data and outcomes. However where we were able to identify outcomes, these were mainly related to further explanation being given.
7. Learning & Achievement responses to complaints were very good during 2013/14 with 93% being responded to within the 10 day timescale. Also with Members' correspondence this has also a high response rate of 95%.
8. Compliments have increased significantly from 2012/13 by 79% and this may have resulted from visits to various teams within Learning & Achievement to talk about complaints and to encourage compliments to be sent to the Complaints, Information & Communication Team.
9. Through the report it has recognised the need for improved recording especially around outcomes/recommendations and using complaints information as a tool to inform the service.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

There are no financial implications or risks arising from this report.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no apparent legal implications from noting this Report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no HR implications or risks arising from this report that can be identified at present.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

The report demonstrates that there is a transparent and structured (both informal and formal) route for concerns or complaints, including those relating specifically to bullying, harassment, unfair treatment and/or discrimination against pupils, guardians, parents or carers, to be registered for review and action where required.

The Council is working towards improving the monitoring of the diversity profile of complainants and service users against relevant protected characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, etc., in order to improve the performance of the service. However, as explained in the report, most Learning & Achievement complaints that are received, are referred back to schools. This means that they are taken through the individual school's own complaints procedure.

In line with the Council's corporate policy on translation and interpreting services, this service also offers information in other languages and alternative formats on request.

We will continue working towards raising awareness on equality and diversity related issues and improving the access to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments policy and procedure.

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>
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None

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## APPENDIX 1

# Children, Adults & Housing: Learning & Achievement

## Annual Report 2013 – 2014 Complaints and Compliments

**Prepared for:**

**Joy Hollister, Group Director – Children, Adults & Housing**

**Mary Pattinson, Head of Learning & Achievement**

**Prepared by: Veronica Webb, Senior Complaints & Information Officer**  
**Natalia Knock, Complaints & Information Officer**

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## Executive Summary

Complaints information for Learning & Achievement has been difficult to determine in light of the majority of complaints received being referred back to schools to be taken through their own complaints procedure. Although this has been recognised as a gap and that there should be some mechanism for obtaining this information, particularly around maintained schools, in exploring this it is clear that local authorities have a limited role and that information would either need to be obtained through governing body minutes or through the Ofsted Parent View which details parents views on each school..

What has also been highlighted is the need for improved information to ensure that parents/carers are aware of where they need to be directed for complaints in relation to schools/education and the complaints the local authority would be responsible for i.e. curriculum/collective worship and safeguarding. The Complaints, Information & Communication Team will be liaising with Learning & Achievement about ensuring the relevant information is given in the right way for the service.

It is notable that Learning & Achievement have been very impressive in terms of their response times and it is good to see such a high achievement in this area and that this will continue.

As with any service with the continued increasing demands and pressures, along with the reduction in budgets the forthcoming changes around education, in particular Special Educational Needs (SEN), may impact on the service. With any changes this sometimes will lead to an increase in complaints and it will be even more important to ensure that the information captured is reflective of what the service needs in identifying the areas requiring improvement.

## 1. Ombudsman referrals

There was one Ombudsman complaint in 2013-14. This was a joint investigation with the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). However no fault was found with two points, one point of fault was found but the Ombudsman agreed with the Council's remedy.

Within 2013/14 Learning and Achievement incurred compensation totalling £480.00 compared to £300.00 in the previous financial year 2011/12. .

	Apr13- Mar14	Apr 12- Mar13	Apr11 -Mar12
Maladministration			
No investigation		2	
No maladministration after investigation			1
Ombudsman discretion			
Investigation with Local settlement	1	1	
Outside Jurisdiction			
Investigation Discontinued			
Premature/Informal enquiries		2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

## 2. Total number of complaints

The total number of complaints received during 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 was 27, with 14 enquiries. The majority of complaints received for schools are referred to the schools complaints procedure.

There has been a significant increase of 30% in complaints from 2012/13 to 2013/14, with the number of enquiries decreasing from 20 to 14 in 2013/14.

	Corporate Complaint	Enquiry	Total
2013/14	27	14	41
2012/13	8	20	28
2011/12	20	11	31

### 2.1 Service Areas

As mentioned above, many of the complaints received were in relation to education and schools. Most of these would be referred back to the school to be taken through their own complaints procedure which would involve escalation to the Governing Body. Feedback from these complaints are not given by the school and therefore Learning & Achievement are not aware of how these are resolved. Recording of these types of complaints may be misleading and this will be explored by the Complaints, Information & Communication Team in liaison with the Head of Service.

Service Area's	Apr 13 – Mar 14	Apr 12 –Mar 13
Education and Schools	23	5
School Admissions	2	1
Special Educational Needs		1
Attendance, Behaviour & Traveller Support Service	2	
Early Years		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1.2 Reasons

The main reasons for complaints were from parents unhappy with particular decisions made within the school with regard to their child. These included where a child is excluded, being bullied, or the school placement of a child. It should be noted that the complaints were across a range of schools.

## 1.3 Outcome

As highlighted above, the majority of complaints involving schools were referred to the school to be taken through their complaints procedure. However from the information available to the local authority, we are able to identify that those that were dealt with through the local authority the main outcome was 'explanation given'. Other outcomes were 'action taken', 'information given' and one complaint was withdrawn.

## 1.4 Response times

The response times for Learning & Achievement have significantly improved from 2012/13 with 93% being responded to within the 10 day timescale.

	Within 10 days		Outside of timescale	
	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13
Corporate Complaints	25	6	2	2

## 3. Members' Correspondence

Members' correspondence in 2013/14 increased slightly from 2012/13 by 19% and has steadily increased over the past three years.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Members Correspondence (from MP's & Cllrs)	62	50	49

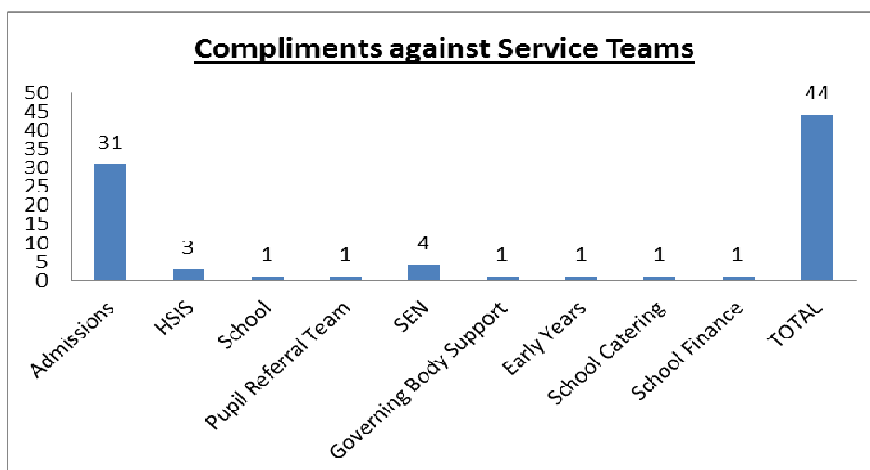
Of the 56 received, 95% of members' correspondence was responded to within the 10 day timescale. This is a 29% improvement from 2012/13 and a very good response rate.

	Within 10 days		Outside of timescale	
	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13	Apr13-Mar14	Apr12-Mar13
Members correspondence	59	42	3	8

## 4. Compliments

In 2013/14 47 compliments were received, compared to 10 in 2012/13. The reason for the significant increase in compliments is twofold. Firstly during 2013/14 a total of 24 parents recorded their compliments on the e-admissions website. Secondly, the Complaints, Information & Communication Team attended various team meetings within Learning & Achievement to talk about complaints and also to raise the profile of compliments. This resulted in an overall increase of 79%.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Compliments	47	10	1



## 5. Conclusion

The report has highlighted the need for better information around outcomes; however where complaints involve schools within the borough, as explained earlier this would be difficult for the local authority to obtain. However, it should be noted that discussions around how complaints are recorded need to take place to ensure that figures are reflective of what is occurring within the service and separating this information from what is occurring within schools. What should be noted is that guidance has been recently issued in August 2014 for schools to have a better understanding of how to deal with complaints and the learning from them.

Complaints information is a very good tool to identify where there is a need for improvement and hopefully with improved reporting this will help to identify those areas, as well as identifying good practice through compliments.