

APPENDIX 1

Children's Services - Education Services

Annual Report 2016 – 2017 Complaints and Compliments

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	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Pages</u>
	Executive Summary	3
1	Ombudsman Referrals	3
2	Total Number of Complaints	3
2.1	- Service Areas	4
2.2	- Reasons	4-5
2.3	- Outcome	5
2.4	- Response Times	5-6
3	Members Correspondence	6
4	How complaints were received	6
5	Compliments	6-7
6	Conclusion	7

Executive Summary

Education Services (previously Learning and Achievement) went through structural changes during 2016/17, resulting in changing senior management arrangements, and the restructuring of some teams. This has impacted on the high rate of response which has shown a slight decrease, not only across complaints, but also member enquiries.

The reduction in the number of complaints also shows that when major changes occur, as in 2015/16 with the school expansion programme and the embedding of the new SEND process, this does reflect on the number of complaints received.

It is important for Education Services to continue to encourage staff to report compliments received, as this has also shown a slight decrease from the previous year.

1. Ombudsman referrals

There was one Ombudsman enquiry for 2016/17, which was closed after initial enquiries.

	Apr 16 Mar 17	Apr 15 Mar16	Apr14- Mar15
Closed after initial enquiries no further action	1		
Maladministration			1
No investigation		1	
No maladministration after investigation			
Ombudsman discretion			
Investigation with Local settlement			
Outside Jurisdiction			1
Investigation Discontinued			
Premature/Informal enquiries		2	2
Total	1	3	4

2. Total number of complaints

The number of complaints has decreased by 40% for 2016/17 from 31 in 2015/16 to 18. As identified in 2015/16's annual report, the high level of corporate complaints in that year was due to the school expansion programme, which included some controversial proposals.

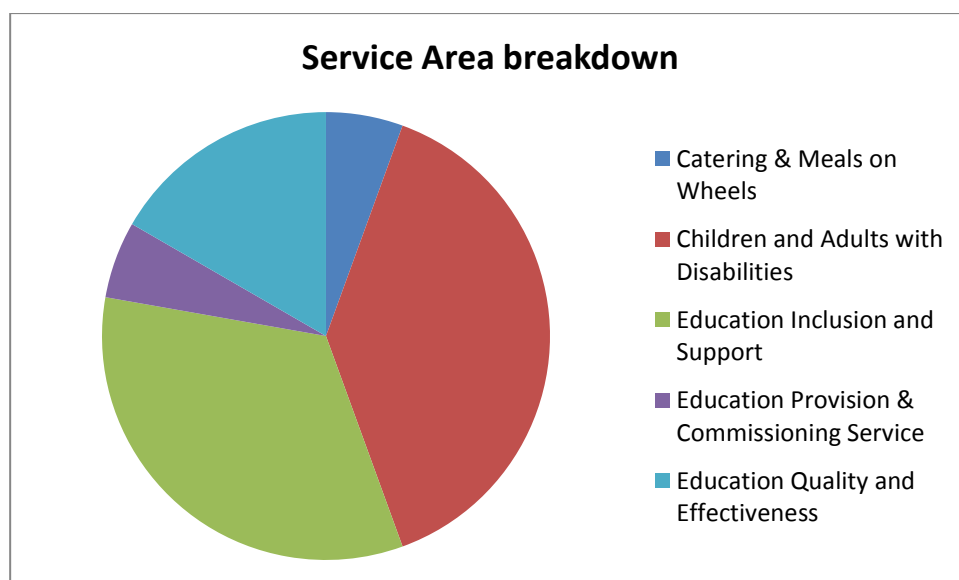
The number of enquiries shown below has increased in 2016/17 to 42 compared to 35 in 2015/16. These relate to complaints received through the local authority relating to schools, which are redirected to be taken through the appropriate school or college complaints procedure. This data is captured to identify the type of complaints that are being made about school and college provision.

	Corporate Complaint	Enquiry	Total
2016/17	18	42	60
2015/16	31	35	69
2014/15	13	48	61

2.1 Service Areas

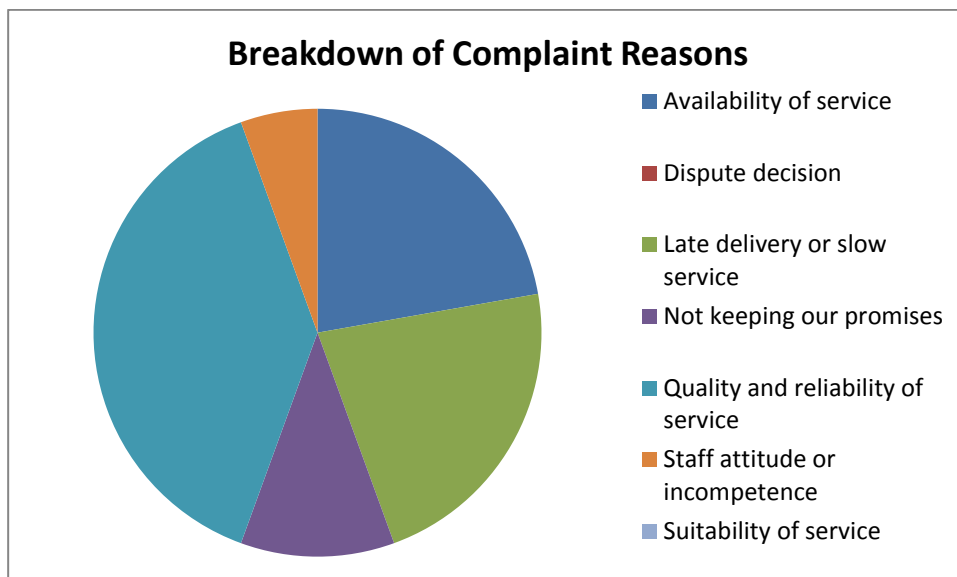
The Children and Adults with Disabilities Team (CAD) had the highest number of complaints in 2016/17 relating to EHCP Plans and SEN provision. However, the total number of complaints for CAD has almost halved compared to the previous year, from 13 in 2015/16 to 7 in 2016/17. This could be reflective of the structure changes being embedded in the service. Education Inclusion and Support had the next highest number of complaints (6) for 2016/17 relating to attendance and alternative provisions. Complaints received for Education Quality and Effectiveness Service were mainly general concerns regarding a school or college.

	Catering & Meals on Wheels	Children and Adults with Disabilities	Education Inclusion and Support	Education Provision & Commissioning Service	Education Quality and Effectiveness
16/17	1	7	6	1	3
15/16	2	13	6	7	3

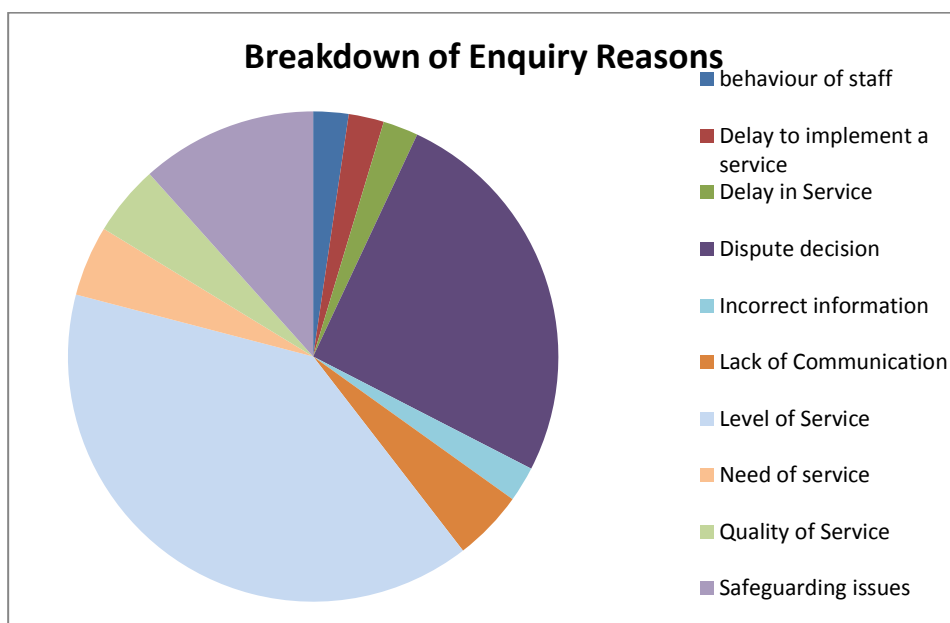


2.2 Reasons

The main reasons for complaints are related to the 'quality and reliability of the service', 'late delivery or slow service' and 'availability of service'. The main concerns centred on Educational, Health & Care Plans (EHCP), and in particular the delays in completing EHCPs and actioning provision identified. Placements at special units/schools, general concerns about a school or college, in particular penalty charges incurred for non-attendance, and the withdrawal of funding from a nursery were the type of complaints received.



Below shows the breakdown of the reasons of enquiries referred to either schools or colleges. The highest number of enquiries related to 'level of service' mainly covering concerns from parents on the way they felt their child was treated in school, or how a school dealt with a particular issue. The next highest was 'dispute decision' which included parents disputing the exclusion of their child or attendance resulting in penalty fines.



2.3 Outcome

The majority of complaints, 13, were not upheld of those recorded for 2016/17, with 5 complaints being partially upheld.

2.4 Response times

There were 18 Corporate complaints received during 2016/17, in which 13 (72%) were responded to within timescale, down from 97% in 2015/16. This could be attributed to the structure changes within Education Services during the year.

	Within 15 days		Outside of timescale	
	Apr 16- Mar 17	Apr15- Mar16	Apr 16- Mar 17	Apr15 – Mar16
Corporate Complaints	13	30	5	4

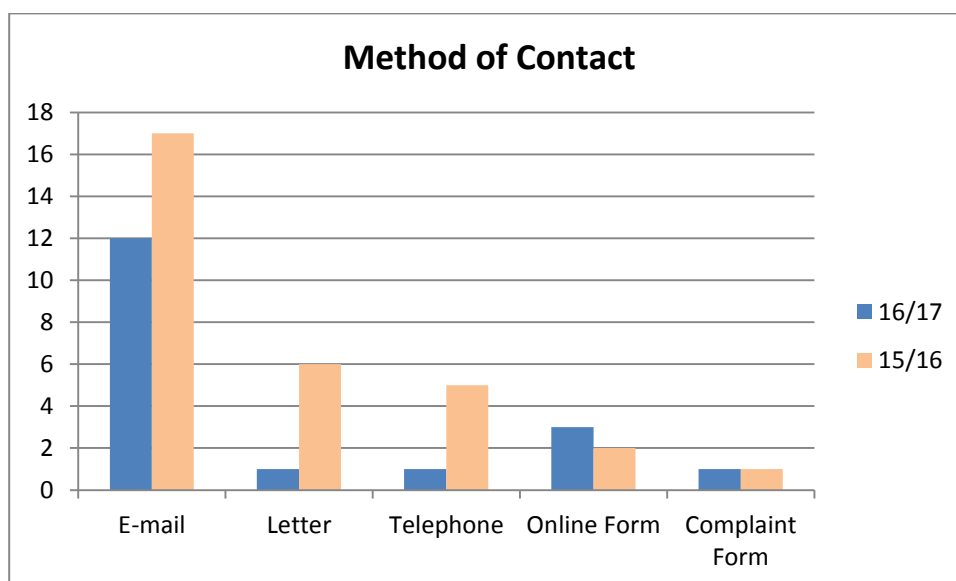
3. Members' Correspondence

Members enquiries have decreased slightly in 2016/17 to 49 (9%) compared to 54 in 2015/16, with 84% being responded to within timescale. This is slightly down from 2015/16 where 93% were responded to within timescale.

	2016/17	2015/16
Members Correspondence (from MP's & Cllrs)	49	54

4. How Complaints were received

Complainants preferred method of contact is email, followed by online form, which has steadily increased over the last few years. Although there has been a significant decrease across all methods during 2016/17, this is due to the reduced number of complaints, compared to 2015/16.



5. Compliments

Compliments have decreased slightly to 16 (30%) in 2016/17 compared to 23 in 2015/16.

Some examples of compliments received are as follows:

A satisfied customer writes 'thanks for all your help in this matter. We have been very impressed by your service **(Catering)**

A mother writes in about a member of staff who 'has been so helpful and understanding...your service so far has been wonderful and you have really helped put my mind at rest... .' **(Education, Inclusion & Support)**

A parent writes 'thank you very much. I am very impressed with the prompt responses I am getting from this office. Thumbs up for efficiency and diligence.' **(School Admissions)**

When staff go above and beyond – 'a grandparent that was collecting at 3pm from Little Rascals, took to the garden to sit. He was very sick and was holding his chest.' Staff at the pre-school called an ambulance aided to the grandfather and arranged the collection of his grandchildren. With their '....quick reactions and rapid response meant others were safe and the grandchildren did not see their grandad suffering. What a fantastic pair.' **(Little Rascals pre-school)**

6. Conclusion

Structure changes impacted on response times in 2016/17, however with the stabilising of the service, this should see a return to the very high response rates seen in previous years. The Complaints & Information Team will need to liaise with and support managers and staff to help the Service achieve this going forward.

Complaints data is to be encouraged in relation to those relating to schools, as this can identify particular areas or themes that may be arising within schools and should continue to be collected.

Recent changes in the way that local authorities should respond to complaints about maintained schools and academies will require the current processes to be reviewed, but this should improve response rates as there are now a limited range of areas that the local authority can intervene in.

The main areas of complaint during 2016/17 involved EHCPs during 2016/17 and the delays in completing these, along with general concerns from parents about schools.

Any future structural changes within Education Services, it will need to be considered how complaints data will be reported on in future.