



CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE, 9 JULY 2019

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| Subject Heading: | Children's Services Annual Complaints Report 2018-19 |
| SLT Lead: | Tim Aldridge |
| Report Author and contact details: | Veronica Webb, 01708 432589 Veronica.webb@havering.gov.uk |
| Policy context: | An annual report is required as part of the remit of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006' |
| Financial summary: | There are no financial implications as this report is for information purposes and is required as part of the statutory complaints regulations |

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Communities making Havering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Places making Havering | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Opportunities making Havering | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Connections making Havering | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SUMMARY

The Children's Services Complaints Annual report for 2018-19, attached as Appendix 1 provides information about the numbers and types of complaints handled by the Children's Service during 2018-19, as well as Members' correspondence. It is a requirement under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 that the complaints annual report be published. Education falls under the responsibility of Children's Services, however these complaints are reported corporately. Children and Adults with Disabilities and enquiries relating to schools are incorporated within the Children's Services Complaints report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members note the contents of the attached report and the continued efforts made by the service to learn from complaints and enable young people to engage with the complaints process.
2. That Members note the recommendations identified from complaints and continued monitoring of these to ensure that actions are implemented to evidence service improvements.
3. That Members note the positive feedback to services received through compliments, highlighting good practice.

REPORT DETAIL

4. The number of Stage 1 complaints increased in 2018-19 by 15% from 90 in 2017-18 to 106 in 2018-19 with an increase in Ombudsman enquiries from 3 in 2017-18 to 9 in 2018-19. Complaints made directly by young people decreased from 18 in 2017-18 to 9 in 2018-19. Enquiries have dropped significantly from 50 in 2017-18 to 15 in 2018-19, however are not included in figures in the report. There were six escalations from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and no Stage 3 Reviews during 2018-19.
5. The Triage/MASH & Assessment Team received the highest number of complaints during 2018-19, which has almost doubled from 2017-18, with Intervention & Support Services second highest. These are reflective of the type of complaints received from parents around the unwelcomed intervention or decisions made regarding their children.
6. Complaints regarding attitude/behaviour of staff rose by 78% from 11 in 2017-18 to 49 in 2018-19. However, the majority were where parents were unhappy with the social worker and the content of the information within assessments which tended to be where parents were no longer together and had an acrimonious relationship. Inaccurate information was the second highest and reflects some of the reasons regarding attitude/behaviour.
7. There were 14 complaints withdrawn during 2018-19, 40 were not upheld, with 34 being partially upheld and 18 upheld. Of those upheld, resulted in mainly an apology with information/explanation being the next highest.
8. Complaints received from young people have dropped in 2018-19 and related to the level of support, particularly when leaving care.

9. Response times, although improved slightly need to be better, however escalations to Stage 2 also increased. The Social Care Complaints Team and managers need to work closely to ensure complaints are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.
10. Expenditure was incurred for 2018-19 for costs for Stage 2 and time and trouble payment of £5,546.45.
11. Monitoring information relates to all children within a family where a complaint is made. There was an increase of those 18+ with a decrease across all other age ranges. Male children being the highest amongst age ranges 10 and over. The majority of children had no disability across all age groups, and for those with a disability, the main category was 'autism/aspergers syndrome'. 'White British' is the highest reflecting the demographics of the borough, however decreased slightly in 2018-19 with increases for 'African', 'Caribbean', 'White-Black other' and 'Asian other'. 'No religion' is the highest with 'Christianity' second highest.
12. Member enquiries have decreased from 63 in 2017-18 to 47 in 2018-19 with 78% % being responded to within timescale.
13. The number of compliments is still low but has increased from 10 in 2017-18 from 19 in 2018-19, with Children and Adults with Disabilities and Learning & Achievement receiving the highest number (5). Staff will need to be reminded to send compliments to the Complaints & Information Team to be logged.
14. Children's Services continue to deliver services in line with their vision for children and young people, with an openness to learning and making improvements. This was reflected in the recent Ofsted inspection in which inspectors found improvements across all service areas. The Ofsted report identified that opportunities for workforce learning are well established and this has been pivotal in driving improvements. The report also identified that leaders in Havering are proactive in responding when issues are identified and learning from reviews and audits is well publicised.
15. Education complaints are reported corporately, however enquiries relating to schools, academies or colleges have dropped from 42 in 2017-18 to 25 in 2018-19, as these are referred to the relevant educational establishment to be taken through their own complaints procedure. There were no Ombudsman enquiries in 2018-19.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There is a Complaints & Information 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. It should be noted however that any material increase in investigations following on from complaints could result in additional costs to the authority, which is being managed as part of the overall financial management responsibilities of the service.

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 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. The missing categories not reported within the 2017-18 report will be reported on in future reports.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.