



# Havering

L O N D O N B O R O U G H

## CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE AGENDA

7.00 pm

Thursday  
20 January 2022

VIRTUAL MEETING

Members 9: Quorum 4

**COUNCILLORS:**

Judith Holt (Chairman)  
Robby Misir (Vice-Chair)  
Sally Miller

Carol Smith  
Gillian Ford  
Tony Durdin

Tele Lawal  
Reg Whitney

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

**Statutory Members  
representing the Churches**

Lynne Bennett, Church of  
England  
Jack How, Roman Catholic  
Church

**Statutory Members  
representing parent  
governors**

Julie Lamb, Special Schools  
Vacant - Primary Schools

Non-voting members representing local teacher unions and professional associations:  
Ian Rusha (NEU)

**For information about the meeting please contact:**

**Taiwo Adeoye - 01708 433079  
taiwo.adeoye@onesource.co.uk.**

## **Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of the London Borough of Havering**

Members of the public are entitled to report on meetings of Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.

Reporting means:-

- filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;
- using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if the person is not present.

Anyone present at a meeting as it takes place is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report. This is to prevent the business of the meeting being disrupted.

Anyone attending a meeting is asked to advise Democratic Services staff on 01708 433076 that they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively.

Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand.

### **What is Overview & Scrutiny?**

Each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements. Each overview and scrutiny sub-committee has its own remit as set out in the terms of reference but they each meet to consider issues of local importance.

The sub-committees have a number of key roles:

1. Providing a critical friend challenge to policy and decision makers.
2. Driving improvement in public services.
3. Holding key local partners to account.
4. Enabling the voice and concerns to the public.

The sub-committees consider issues by receiving information from, and questioning, Cabinet Members, officers and external partners to develop an understanding of proposals, policy and practices. They can then develop recommendations that they believe will improve performance, or as a response to public consultations. These are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and if approved, submitted for a response to Council, Cabinet and other relevant bodies.

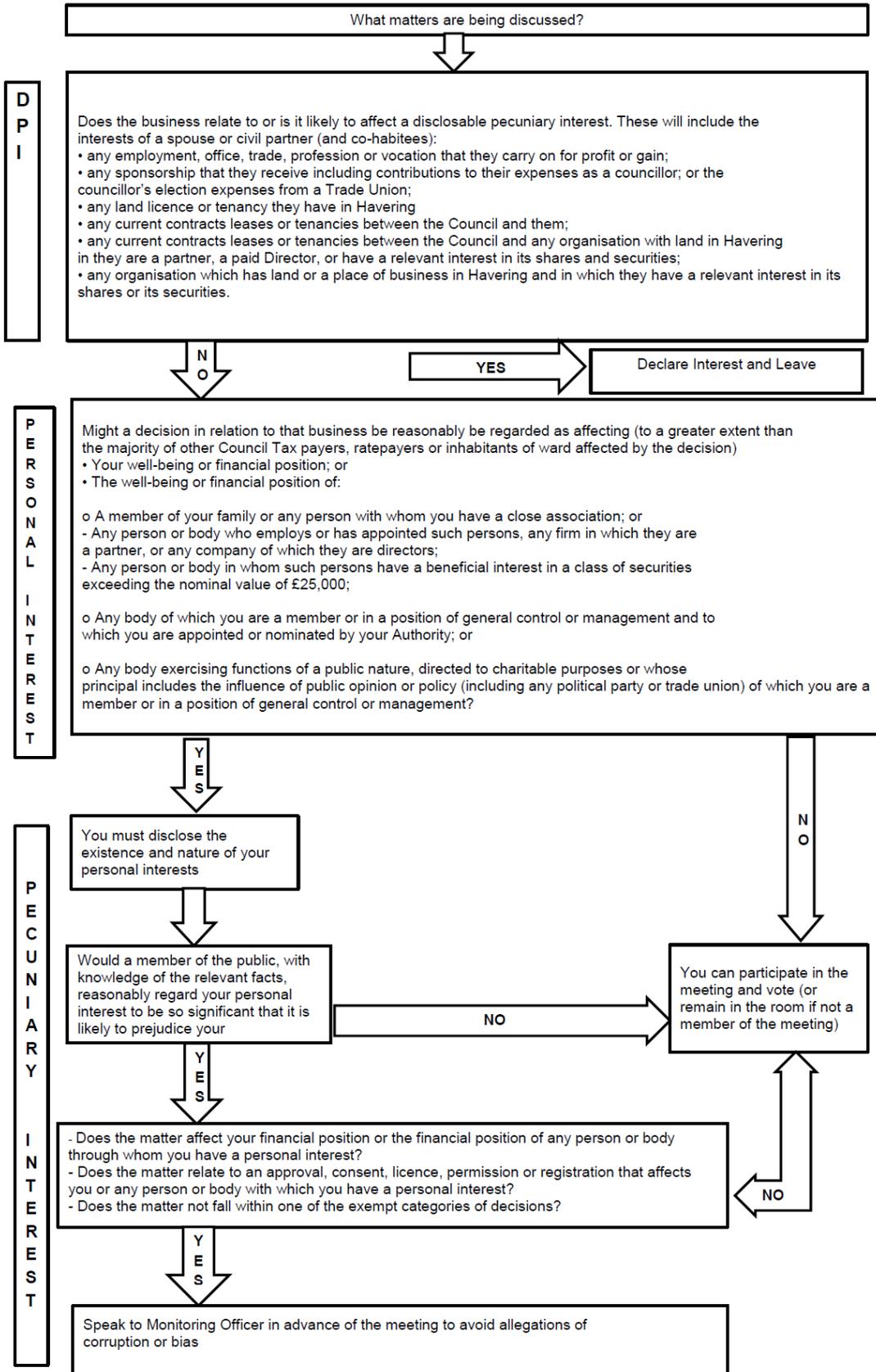
Sub-Committees will often establish Topic Groups to examine specific areas in much greater detail. These groups consist of a number of Members and the review period can last for anything from a few weeks to a year or more to allow the Members to comprehensively examine an issue through interviewing expert witnesses, conducting research or undertaking site visits. Once the topic group has finished its work it will send a report to the Sub-Committee that created it and will often suggest recommendations for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to pass to the Council's Executive.

## **Terms of Reference**

The areas scrutinised by the Committee are:

- Pupil and Student Services (including the Youth Service)
- Children's Social Services
- Safeguarding
- Adult Education
- Councillor Calls for Action
- Social Inclusion

**DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF**



## AGENDA ITEMS

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(if any) - receive.

**2 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members are invited to disclose any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

**3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

**4 MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 23 November 2021 and authorise the Chairman to sign them.

**5 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2020-21 (Pages 9 - 28)**

Report attached

**6 SCHOOL ADAPTATIONS DUE TO COVID AND COVID RECOVERY ON SEND CHILDREN AND MORE ABLE CHILDREN (Pages 29 - 32)**

Report attached

**Zena Smith**  
**Democratic and Election Services Manager**

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE  
Town Hall  
23 November 2021 (7.00 - 9.05 pm)**

**Present:** Councillors Judith Holt (Chairman), Carol Smith and Gillian Ford

Co-opted Members:  
Julie Lamb

Church Representatives:  
Lynne Bennett and Jack How – Attended Virtually

Non-voting Member: Ian Rusha

Apologies for absence were received from,  
Councillor Robby Misir, Councillor Sally Miller BCAC,  
Councillor Reg Whitney and Kathy Freeman

The Chairman advised those present of action to be taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building becoming necessary

**66 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There was no disclosures of interest at the meeting.

**67 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**68 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION - QUARTER TWO**

The Sub-Committee received a report and presentation that updated on the Quarter Two 2021/22 (April to June 2021) performance information.

The report provided an overview of the service performance against the 13 performance indicators that have been selected for monitoring by the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that 7 of the indicators have been given a Red Amber Green status; RAG status. Five (71%) have a status of Green and two (29%) have a status of Red.

The presentation highlighted the following areas of strong performance and potential areas for improvement.

The report detailed that in the academic Year 2019/20, there were 9 inspections in Havering schools between September 2019 and March 2020, before the first COVID-19 lockdown. All seven primary schools that were inspected retained their 'Good' outcomes and the two secondary academies inspected improved from 'Requires improvement' to 'Good'. Members were informed that this resulted in Havering's overall percentage of providers being judged to be Good or Outstanding by OFSTED. There was an increase by 2 percentage points, which was 5.2 percentage points above the national figure.

The percentage of primary phase providers judged to be Good or Outstanding by OFSTED reduced by 0.1 percentage point when compared with last quarter, due to the merging of one Infant and one junior school into a Primary. The percentage of pupils attending a Good or Outstanding provider remains above target for both phases, and for Primary is better than the London average.

The report explained that the rates of both fixed term and permanent exclusions in Havering have remained below the rates for England as a whole and better than London - both for primary and secondary schools - based on the latest available published data.

It was stated that the percentage of looked after children aged under 16 who have been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years and living in the same placement for at least 2 years have improved in the second quarter of the year to 65.2%, which was in line with the average for Outer London and just below the overall London average, based on the latest available data.

The Sub-Committee noted that Havering had a higher proportion of children in care experiencing 3 or more placements within a 12 month period, and the previously identified rise in placement moves has continued in the second quarter.

It was noted that there were a cohort of older children who were presenting with complex mental health/emotional needs, which was challenging for placement stability. It was explained that in order to understand the reasons for the high number of placement moves, an active working group including the Assistant Director were using a constructed audit tool to identify causation, themes and areas for improvement.

The report outlined the following areas that required improvement:

It was explained that the percentage of looked after children who ceased to be looked after as a result of permanency (Adoption and Special Guardianship Order) was below target at the end of the second quarter, with 3 Adoption Orders and 2 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) granted in April to September 2021. The report detailed that the national figures for children ceasing to be looked after as a result of adoption peaked in 2015 with a total figure of 5,360 children. The latest national figures available were for 2020, when 3,440 children of a total children in care population of 80,080 (4.3%) ceased care for adoption.

The Sub-Committee was informed that Havering set a higher target of 6% of children in care leaving care for adoption and this was being achieved.

It was noted that there was a significant turnover of staff over the summer period and which has impacted on the percentage of Children in Care with 2+ changes of social worker in the last 12 months. The service have 36 agency staff covering posts, and 2 vacant posts. It was explained that adverts are being placed in December for some of the social work posts covered by agency workers.

The Sub-Committee was provided with an update on staff recruitment, 11 new foster carers have been recruited. It was also mention that the service was about to launch a new campaign to fill vacant post with fulltime staff.

Officer were asked to provide future performance update that had been benchmarked with the statistical neighbours in order for Members to have a better indication of the performance indicators.

A breakdown of the exclusion figure was requested in order to determine how many were children with an Educational Health Care Plan were. It was noted that there had been 49 request by schools for exclusion but following officer intervention 44 were withdrawn.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report and presentation

## 69 **ADOPT LONDON EAST ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received the annual report of the Adopt London East the regional adoption agency, hosted by Havering; providing adoption services for Havering, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham.

The report fulfils the statutory requirements to report to the executive body on an annual basis providing information on Adopt London East business, performance, successes and challenges in 2020/2.

The report is the second Annual Report of Adopt London East and provides information on service development and performance in 2020/21. Appendix 1 of the report provided information on adoption performance in Havering throughout 2020/21 based on the Adoption and Special Guardian Leadership Board (ASGLB) data returns.

It was explained that Adopt London East has been successful in increasing overall numbers of children placed for adoption and in improving timeliness of placement. The number of matches per Local Authority in Adopt London East was significantly higher than matches in all other London Regional Adoption Agencies.

The Sub-Committee noted from the report that Adopter recruitment had a small downturn following the transition period. Covid restrictions added further challenge to recruitment and assessment work. The agency have worked hard to address challenges and the numbers of adopters approved and assessment has grown steadily since

The report detailed that the number of families supported by Adopt London East have grown markedly. Adopters express a high level of satisfaction with the service. Partnerships with other organisations including 'We are Family' an adopter peer led organisation helping to deliver on-line support creatively.

The Havering led on the Adopt London response to Covid was supported by a substantial grant that was used to engage 13 different providers who offered support to adoptive families and families with a Special Guardianship Order. The support offered included a help-line, therapeutic interventions, training and group work. An independent evaluation of the service rated it as outstanding. Members were informed that a recent government paper commented positively on the work in partnership.

The Sub-Committee requested that going forward that annual report to provide benchmarked information compared with other London agencies. In addition further information was sought of the membership of the adoption board.

It was also suggested that future report outline the areas for improvement in the service.

The Sub-Committee wish to put on record it appreciation to the Head of Adopt London East (Sue May) who it was announced would be retiring next year.

The Sub-Committee noted the annual report.

## 70 ADAPTIONS DUE TO COVID AND COVID RECOVERY

At the request of the Sub-Committee, a report that outlined adaptions due to Covid and Covid Recovery was presented to Members.

It was stated that since March 2020, schools have been required to make huge changes to their operations in all areas. They have made many adaptions to both the content of their curriculum and most notably to the delivery of the curriculum.

It was outlined that the adaptions were in four phases. During the first lockdown from March 2020 through to summer 2020, autumn term 2020, interrupted education, when schools had many pupils self-isolating and many class and year group bubbles closing, second lock down from January 2021 through to the summer term 2021. Finally the last phase from summer 2021 and continuing, the Covid Recovery phase.

It was explained that as yet no definitive date when we will be able to say “we have recovered”, as the impacts are wide and various.

The following key points were highlighted:

The report informed that members of the Havering School Improvement team have had regular conversations with school leaders as every school was allocated a lead officer. It was explained that conversations with schools throughout this time indicated a rapid advancement in both staff and pupils’ capabilities to engage with remote teaching and learning and rapid learning about utilising new technologies in a positive way.

Schools have played a major role and are continuing to play a role in community and family support and well-being.

There has been much discussion regarding the difficulties involved and the pupils who have suffered detriment, but our schools also talk about the positive gains made and the impact these would have on delivery in the future and some transformative teaching.

Schools have responded to the challenges in many different and unique ways as there is no single response as they have sought the best often bespoke options for their communities and circumstances.

Members commended staff for their work during the difficult times.

It was suggested that officers provide additional information to the report relating to children with Special educational needs and disabilities and More Able pupils.

The sub-committee received the following responses from officer at the meeting.

1. Elected Home School

The numbers electing to home educate their children has grown since the start of the pandemic, and was 242 at the last count in October. This has grown from 151 in 2018/19. There has been a spike in applications in the last two September's due to anxieties around Covid-19 and schools, but the LA ensures that parents/carers are clear about their responsibilities before allowing any children to be removed from the roll of their previous schools. This was critical at the start of the pandemic as many parents/carers mistook EHE for remote learning, and expected the same level of support from their previous schools.

2. Funding for Catch up programme

Due to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on school attendance nationally, some local schools have reported that the levels of catch-up funding are not sufficient to meet demand. Many are having to use existing budgets to fund tutors, or have to look at other more cost-effective support.

3. How many schools have received Air Funding

Not sure how many schools have received their complement of CO2 monitors from the Department for Education (DfE), as this is being managed between the DfE and individual schools. However, we understand anecdotally that some schools are yet to receive them, but every LA maintained school has been supported to complete a ventilation risk assessment, and have identified the high risk rooms within their site.

4. Teacher support from Head Teachers

No issues have been raised, either direct or through the regular Union meetings, but school staff have previously expressed concern about the amount of 'Public Health' activities they have been engaged in, such as contact tracing and administering Covid-19 testing.

5. Measurement on the impact of the intervention

Service area regularly monitors impact through the volume of referrals being made for services, and through the social care 'front door'.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

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**Chairman**



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## CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2021

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Children's Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2020-21
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Robert South
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Veronica Webb, 01708 432589 <a href="mailto:Veronica.webb@havering.gov.uk">Veronica.webb@havering.gov.uk</a>
<b>Policy context:</b>	As part of the remit of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006'
<b>Financial summary:</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However adverse performance against some performance indicators may have financial implications for the Council.

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

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

Local authorities have a statutory requirement to set up a complaints process which is set out in section 26 Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and to publish an Annual Report.

The Children's Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report for 2020–21, attached as Appendix 1, sets out Children's Services statutory complaints and compliments received during this period, as well as Members' correspondence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members note the content of the Children's Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2020-21 attached as Appendix 1.
2. That Members note the continued learning from complaints and the recognition of good practice through compliments.

## REPORT DETAIL

1. Complaints in 2020-21 increased by 9% (87) compared to 2019-20 (80). The number of enquiries increased significantly in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, by 46%. There continues to be a steady number of complaints escalating to Stage 2 investigations in 2020-21 (6) and is at the same level as in 2019-20. There was one complaint escalated to stage 3 which then escalated to the Ombudsman.
2. There has been a significant increase (36%) in the number of complaints received by Triage/MASH & Assessment in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. A small increase in the number of complaints to Care Resources, and a decrease for Intervention & Support Services, with 'standard of service' being the highest reason.
3. The increase in complaints received by Triage/MASH & Assessment were primarily linked to allegations around child contact arrangements and concerns around domestic abuse. The number of contacts received by the service in this category in 2020-21 more than doubled in comparison in 2019-20, in line with national trends.
4. In 2020-21 complaints regarding 'attitude/behaviour of staff' decreased significantly by 50% 18 compared to 2019-20 (36) as a result of improved

recording and ongoing practice developed. However 'standard of service' has doubled in 2020-21, with significant increase also in 'inaccurate information'.

5. Throughout 2020-21 demand for children's services increased and this has continued into the current financial year. The number of contacts received in 2020-21 is the highest it's been since 2017/18, and the number of children entering care is the highest it's been since 2016/17.
6. The number of complaints upheld and partially upheld accounted for 39% (6) and (28) respectively of the total complaints. Those upheld or partially upheld resulted in an apology, linked to the need to provide explanation or further information about the reasons for intervention or particular parts of the process that initially may not have been clear. How information is given, and the consistency should be explored. Ombudsman recommendations have been actioned with refresher training being commissioned for safeguarding to ensure practitioners adhere to procedures.
7. Response times improved in 2020-21 with 31% (27) responded to within the 10 working day timeframe. Efforts will continue to improve response times, while recognising the increased complexities of cases and balancing the priorities of the service. Complaints continue to be received by email (57) as the preferred method with the next preferred method being online (18).
8. The cost of independent investigations decreased significantly in 2020-21, due to the withdrawal of three Stage 2 escalations, reducing to 6,087.95 from £19,531.65 in 2019-20.
9. Monitoring information is based on the child(ren) within the family unit in which a complaint was made. There were increases across age groups, 0-5-, 10-24 and 15-17, the highest increase being in the age group of 0-5. Male children were higher across all age groups except 6-9. Children recorded with a disability was low across all ages, and diagnosed with mainly Autism or Aspergers Syndrome. 'White British' children highest representation and reflects the borough's population make up with 'Caribbean' and 'Any other Mixed Background' increasing in 2020-21. Complainants declaring no faith significantly increased in 2020/21(49), compared to 2019-21(6). 'Catholic and 'Christian' faiths showed a slight increase in 2020-21.
10. The number of compliments received in 2020-21 is lower than we would like (22) however shows an improvement from 2019-20 (3). Continued efforts to encourage staff within Children's Services to share compliments so these can be logged to reflect more accurately the good work being done.
11. The Complaints and Compliments action plan has been refreshed and will be monitored at quarterly meetings between the Social Care Complaints and Information Team, and the Children's Services Senior Management Team

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

**Financial implications and risks:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However adverse performance against some performance indicators may have financial implications for the Council.

All service directorates are required to achieve their performance targets within approved budgets. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is actively monitoring and managing resources to remain within budgets, although several service areas continue to experience significant financial pressures in relation to a number of demand led services, such as Children's Services. SLT officers are focused upon controlling expenditure within approved directorate budgets and within the total General Fund budget through delivery of savings plans and mitigation plans to address new pressures that are arising within the year.

**Legal implications and risks:**

As stated in the Report the Authority has a duty to set up a representations process under s 26 (3) Children Act 1989.

There are no legal implications in noting the content of the Annual Report.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

**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, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

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. The policy contains a breakdown of complaints received.

## Children's Services

### Annual Report 2020 – 2021 Complaints and Compliments

Prepared for: Robert South, Director Children's Services

Prepared by: Veronica Webb Complaints & Information Team Manager

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Complaints.....	4
1.1 Ombudsman Referrals.....	4
1.2 Total number of complaints.....	4
1.3 Stages.....	5
1.4 Teams.....	5
1.5 Reasons.....	5
1.6 Outcomes & Learning.....	6
1.7 General Themes and Trends 2020-21.....	7
1.8 Response times.....	7
1.9 Expenditure.....	8
1.10 How Complaints were received.....	8
Monitoring Information.....	8
2.1 Age and Gender.....	8
2.3 Disability.....	9
2.4 Ethnicity.....	9
2.5 Religion.....	9
Members Correspondence.....	10
Compliments.....	10
Conclusion.....	12
Complaints and Compliments Action Plan.....	14

## Executive Summary

Children's Services complaints fall within the remit of 'The Children Act 1989' and 'The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006' which includes the requirement to publish an annual report. This report covers the period April 2020 to March 2021.

The number of complaints received during 2020-21 increased slightly with the same level escalating to Stage 2. However through successful virtual meetings and resolutions, two were not progressed. Complaints highlighted that during this period that communication was not as good as it should be, and this may be part due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulties and restrictions at the time. It also highlighted the wider picture nationally where there was an increase in Domestic Violence cases and reflected with increases shown in 2020-21 for complaints related to safeguarding/welfare concerns. This is also reflective of the overall increase in demand, and the increase in the number of children and families requiring help and protection.

As the Covid-19 pandemic took hold, this led to increased pressure across all services within the Council. Resources were redirected to help support the Covid-19 efforts and focused on ensuring that the most at risk or vulnerable children were still seen and low income families were supported with food and care packages. The availability and capacity of staff over the last 18 months has been a challenge. This has been due to staff being unwell, following isolation rules or an increase in social workers leaving the profession. This is the case for many local authorities nationally and is not exclusive to Havering.

Throughout 2020-21 we saw demand increase and this has continued into the current financial year. The number of contacts received in 2020-21 is the highest it's been since 2017/18, and the number of children entering care is the highest it's been since 2016/17. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many residents is complex and ongoing. We are seeing many families requiring support that have not accessed services before, and may not have done so had it not been for the adverse effects of the pandemic. As with almost all London boroughs, the most common assessment factor in Havering remains 'domestic abuse against the parent', with this increasing year on year. We have also seen an increase of assessments identifying mental health as a factor, as well as increase in contacts relating to neglect.

Alongside this, since children returned to school post-lockdown we have seen an increase in behaviour support requests from schools (42% increase in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20) as well as an ongoing increase in children receiving Education, Health and Care Plans. We are working with our safeguarding partners and third sector colleagues to respond to a decrease in children being 'school ready' as well as a reduction in identification of Young Carers due to a lack of visibility.

Children's Services have continued to use learning from complaints and compliments to help shape services and the increase in compliments are a welcomed shift to acknowledge the good work carried out by those within Children's Services. The 2021-22 complaints action plan identifies how Children's Services will respond to the areas of improvement identified in this report and continue to utilise good practice examples to showcase what works well.

## Introduction

The 'Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006' govern complaints, representations and compliments received about Children's Services.

There are three stages covered within the regulations as follows:

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution

Response times are 10 working days with a further 10 working days if required. If a young person requires an advocate this should be sought for them. If the complainant is not happy with the response at Stage 1 they can request to progress to Stage 2 within 20 working days of receiving the response.

- Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

Response times are 25 – 65 working days. An Independent Investigator and Independent Person are appointed at this stage. The Independent Person must be external to the organisation. Following the independent investigation, the investigation report will be sent to the complainant, along with the adjudication letter giving the decision of the Head of Service. If the complainant is not happy with the response at Stage 2, they can request their complaint to be heard by a Review Panel within 20 working days of receiving the response.

- Stage 3 – Review Panel

The Review Panel is managed independently of the Complaint & Information Team via Democratic Services. The Panel must consist of three independent people, one of whom is the Chair. The Panel must be held within 30 working days from request. Following the Panel Hearing, the recommendations will be issued to the complainant, independent people, advocate and Director within 5 working days. The Director must issue their decision within 15 working days of receiving the recommendations.

## Complaints

### 1.1 Ombudsman Referrals

The number of Ombudsman enquiries stayed at the same level in 2020-21 (6) compared to 2019-20 (6). Two found maladministration with injustice;

- One relating to delay in provision of suitable chair and complaint handling
- One due to failure to properly communicate with parent and partner local authority when considering safeguarding action.

	Apr 20-Mar 21	Apr 19-Mar 20	Apr 18-Mar 19
Maladministration (no injustice)			
Maladministration & Injustice	2	2	1
No maladministration after investigation	1	2	
`Ombudsman discretion			
Investigation with Local settlement			
Outside Jurisdiction			
Investigation Discontinued			
Premature/Informal enquiries	2	1	6
Closed after initial enquiries – no further action	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

### 1.2 Total number of complaints

There has been a slight increase of 9% in the number of complaints in 2020-21(87) compared to 2019-20 (80), however a significant increase in the number of enquiries of 46% in 2020-21(76) compared to

2019-20 (52). Enquiries do not fall within the remit of statutory or corporate complaints and are not included in any further data within this report.

	Enquiries	Stage 1	Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	Stage 3 Review Panel
2020-21	76	87	6	1
2019-20	52	80	6	

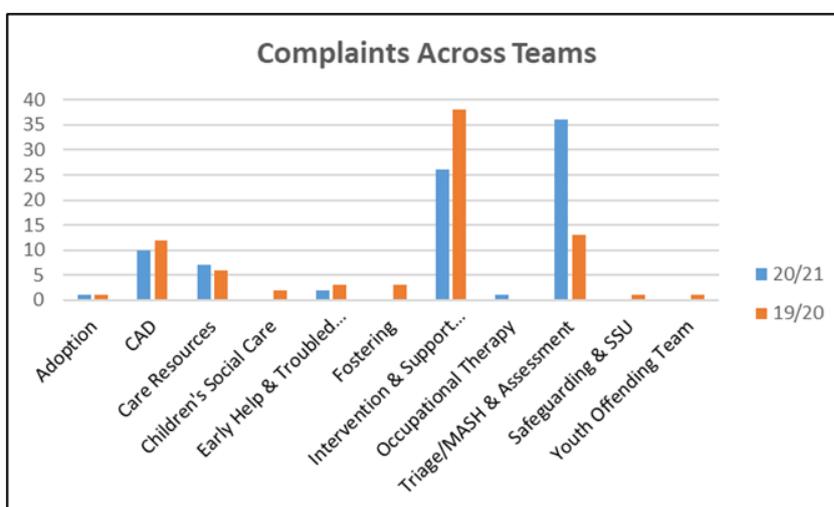
### 1.3 Stages

The number of Stage 1 complaints increased slightly in 2020-21, with the number escalating to Stage 2 at the same level in 2020-21(6) as 2019-20 (6). However, three of the six Stage 2 complaints were not progressed, one due to Court proceedings and two due to successful resolution of complaint. One complaint escalated to Stage 3 and subsequently the Ombudsman.

### 1.4 Teams

There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints received by Triage/MASH & Assessment which has risen by almost three fold in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20.

As a frontline team, the increase shown for Triage/MASH & Assessment were mainly complaints around referrals and allegations being made or child contact arrangements.



The overall number of contacts received by the service in relation to domestic violence more than doubled in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. During 2020-21 there was a national trend of an increase in domestic abuse concerns and research suggests this can be attributed to families spending more time together during the lockdown and increased pressures and anxieties during the pandemic.

The definitions of domestic abuse have also expanded to include non-violent behaviours including financial abuse, stalking and coercive / controlling behaviour with the case management system being updated to reflect this. Contact arrangements also became more complex for families during the lockdown, with isolation rules in place and residents managing their own anxieties about the transmission of the virus.

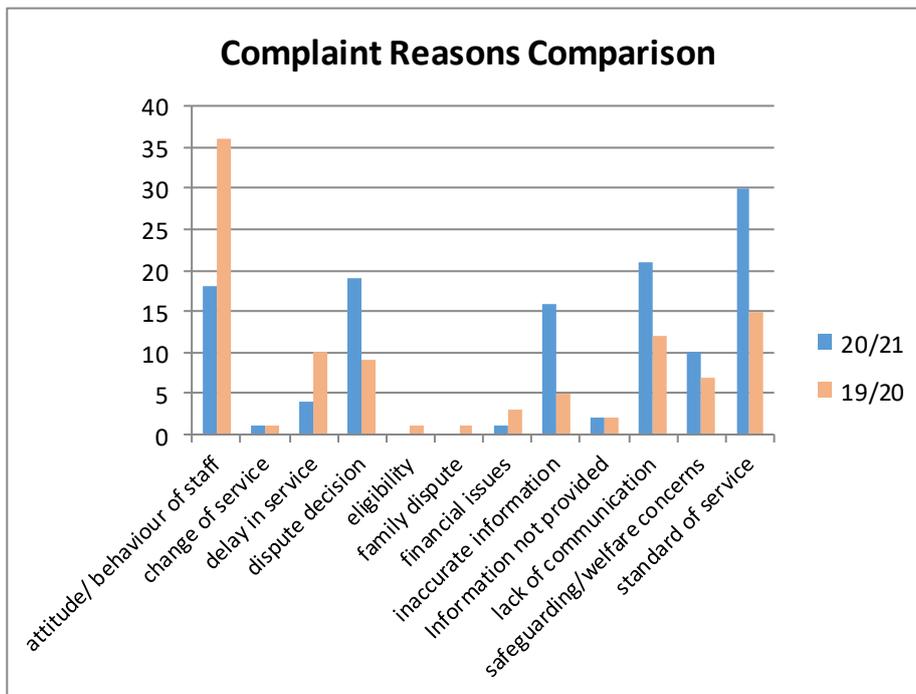
Care Resources saw a very slight increase of 17% in 2020-21(7) compared to 2019-20(6) and Intervention & Support Services saw a decrease of 32% in 2020-21(38) compared to 2019-20(26).

### 1.5 Reasons

'Attitude/behaviour of staff' has decreased significantly by 50%. It has been highlighted that the way this has been recorded previously may have contributed to the high numbers in 2019-20. This is being addressed through review on recording practices and training.

Many complaints giving 'attitude/behaviour of staff' were in relation to parents being unhappy about the decisions that had been made. This is linked to increases shown across 'disputing decisions' which more than doubled in 2020-21 and reflects partly on what could be seen as unwelcomed decisions.

'Standard of service' has doubled in 2020-21(30) compared to 2019-21(15), with 'inaccurate information' also showing an increase three times higher in 2020-21(16) compared to 2019-20 (5). Those relating to inaccurate information tended to be around not agreeing with information within reports/assessments. There was also an increase in 'lack of communication', which may have been impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic with face-to-face contact being restricted and staff resources being stretched. The increase in 'safeguarding/welfare concerns' reflect the increase shown in Triage/MASH & Assessment in relation to referrals.

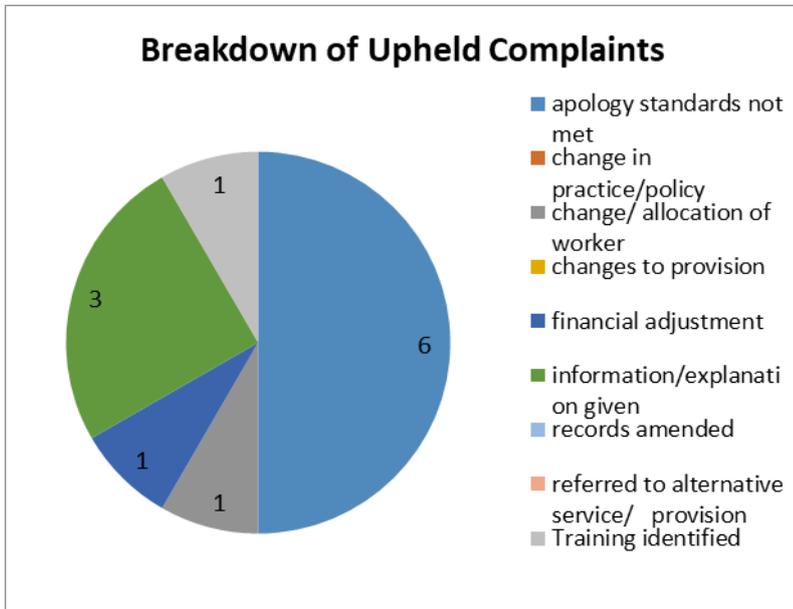


### 1.6 Outcomes & Learning

The number of complaints 'upheld' decreased by more than half, however those 'partially upheld' increased by more than double in 2020-21(28) compared to 2019-20(12). Complaints 'not upheld' rose slightly by 5% in 2020-21(40) compared to 2019-20(38).

For those complaints upheld or partially upheld these resulted in an apology, linked to further information or explanation being provided, as shown in the breakdown of upheld complaints below. This appears to be reflected in the increases shown in 'lack of communication' and 'inaccurate information'. Consideration needs to be given on how information is communicated to ensure this is given in a clear and concise way and that it is understood.

The recommendations from the Ombudsman, highlighted the need for improved cross-border communication and closer working with local authority outside of London and the need for refresher training on Safeguarding. As a result Safeguarding training was commissioned to take into account the learning from the complaint and to ensure practitioners and managers understood and adhered to the Pan London Child Protection Procedures. Cross-border communication with local authority was improved and joint meetings were held, with Head of Quality Assurance contacts being made available in the event of escalation being required outside their individual line management structure.



	upheld	not upheld	partially upheld	withdrawn
20/21	6	40	28	13
19/20	19	38	12	11

During 2020-21 the Covid-19 pandemic diverted Council resources to meet the crisis. It is acknowledged that with the Covid-19 pandemic, came changes to the way of working, with face-to-face contact being restricted, closures of schools and nurseries and the pressures put on families would have an impact.

Children's Services have reflected on these challenges and work is ongoing to refresh the Model of Practice, providing learning and support materials for staff online, including online webinars on Domestic Abuse. Children's Services are also in the process of undertaking a significant amount of work to improve the forms and processes on the case management system to improve accuracy and efficiency.

### 1.7 General Themes and Trends 2020-21

There is a continuation of the general theme regarding parents understanding of the reasons behind intervention from Children's Services. It has highlighted that parents are not always aware of either the legitimate reasons for intervention or the limitations of Children's Services to intervene where there may be discord among separated parents or family members in relation to children. Consideration may need to be given on how information is communicated to parents/families to ensure consistency and to provide awareness of the role of Children's Services when it comes to their intervention.

Inaccurate information showed an increase during 2020-21 and although the pandemic has caused pressures on staff resources, this will need to be revisited through quality assurance and the continued audits of case records. During 2020-21 Children's Services have developed Case Recording Standards which details the roles and responsibilities of all staff in the timeliness and accuracy of records. This is available to all staff and will be further developed as part of a Staff Handbook in 2021-22.

As much as the pandemic has provided accelerated progression in the use of technology in our working lives, it has become evident that the impact of face to face conversations cannot be replicated digitally. As soon as the restrictions allow, it will be the service position that all visits are undertaken in person, unless there is valid reason not to.

### 1.8 Response times

Stage 1 complaint responses within 10 working days improved in 2020-21(27) compared to 2019-20 (19), with a slight decrease of responses within 11-20 working days. 67% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days. With the change of priorities during Covid 19, this did affect response times and efforts will need to be made to improve this going forward.

	Within 10 days		11-20 days		Over 20 days	
	Apr 20-Mar 21	Apr 19-Mar 20	Apr 20-Mar 21	Apr 19-Mar 20	Apr 20-Mar 21	Apr 19-Mar 20
<b>Stage 1</b>	27	19	31	32	29	29
<b>%</b>	31%	24%	36%	40%	33%	36%

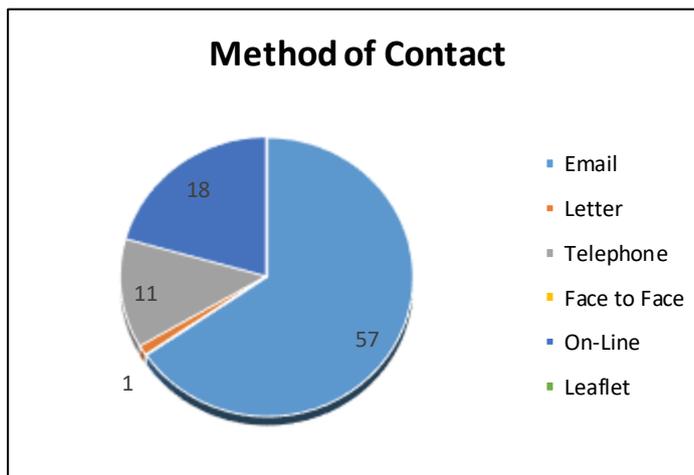
## 1.9 Expenditure

The cost of independent investigations decreased significantly in 2020-21, due to the withdrawal of three Stage 2 escalations. This resulted in a 78% reduction in spend year on year.

	Publicity/ leaflets	Independent investigators	Payments	Total
Apr 2020 – Mar 2021		£6,087.95		£6,087.95
Apr 2019 – Mar 2020		£19,531.65	£8,200	£27, 731.65

## 1.10 How Complaints were received

Email was the preferred method of contact during 2020-21, which increased by 50% compared to 2019-20. The number choosing to complain online has also increased, with a reduction during 2020-21 of those choosing the telephone.



	Letter	E-mail	Complaint Form/Leaflet	Telephone	In Person	Online	Social Media
2020-21	1	57	0	11	0	18	0
2019-20	3	38	2	22	2	13	0

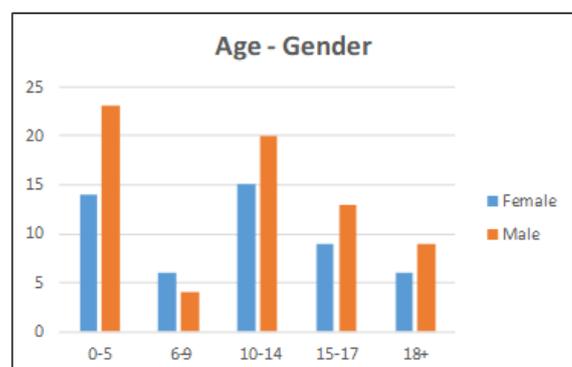
## Monitoring Information

### 2.1 Age and Gender

During 2020-21 there were noticeable increases across ages 0-5, and 10-14 with a slight increase of complaints involving children age 15-17.

It should be noted that data collected for the monitoring information will include all children within a family unit from which a complaint is made.

Across age ranges 0-5, 10-14, 15-17 and 18+ there were a higher number of males in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, with a higher number of females ages 6-9.



	0-5	6-9	10-14	15-17	18+
20/21	37	10	35	22	15
19/20	19	13	24	17	34

### 2.3 Disability

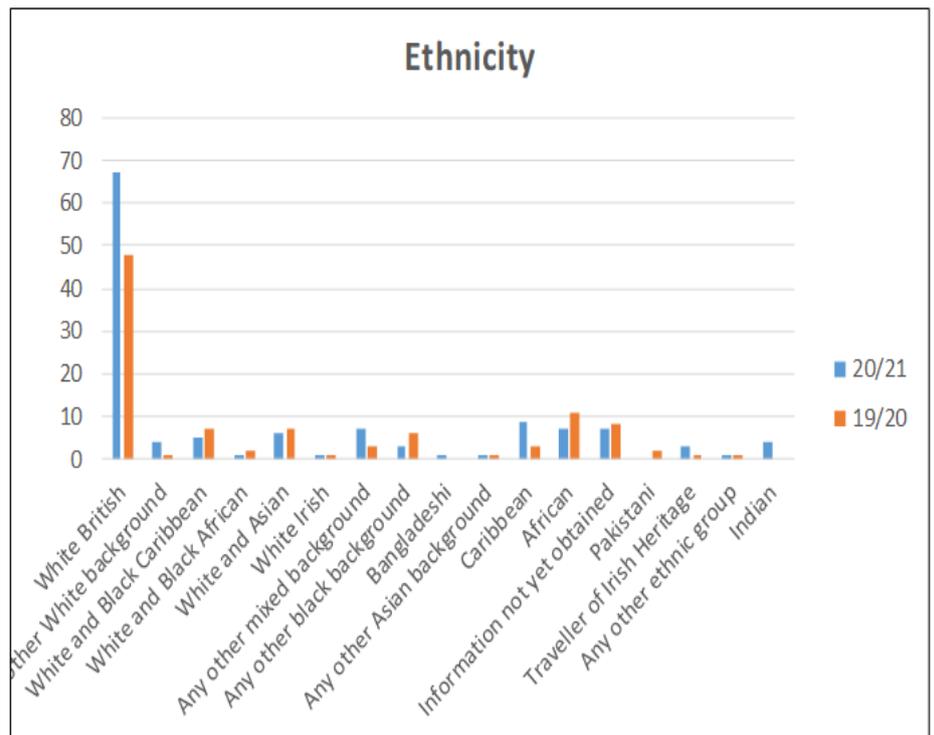
There are a low number of children that had a recorded disability, with the majority having Autism/Aspergers syndrome in 2020-21, which is similar to 2019-20. We know that overall we have low numbers of children accessing SEN Support in Schools, however the number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plan assessments has increased and we expect to see this continue in 2021-22.

Behaviour	Communication	Autism/Aspergers	Hearing
2	2	9	1

### 2.4 Ethnicity

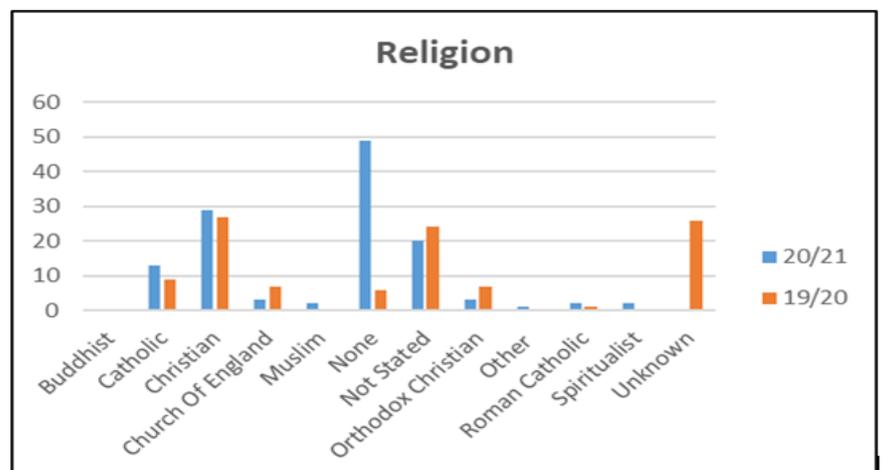
The high number of 'White British' continues to reflect the population within Havering however is not representative of the service users across Children's Services. There are representations across many ethnicities with slight increases shown across 'Any Other White Background', 'Any Other Mixed Background', 'Caribbean', 'Traveller of Irish Heritage' and 'Indian'.

As part of the work being undertaken by the service to understand the disproportionate representation of some BAME groups in our statutory services, we need to ensure that all families and young people feel able and empowered to complain or to share compliments and good news.



### 2.5 Religion

There is a significant increase in those recorded as having 'none' and this may be reflective of the number of children within age-range 0-5. Those recorded as 'Catholic' 'Muslim' 'Roman Catholic' and 'Spiritualist' have had a slight increase in 2020-21.



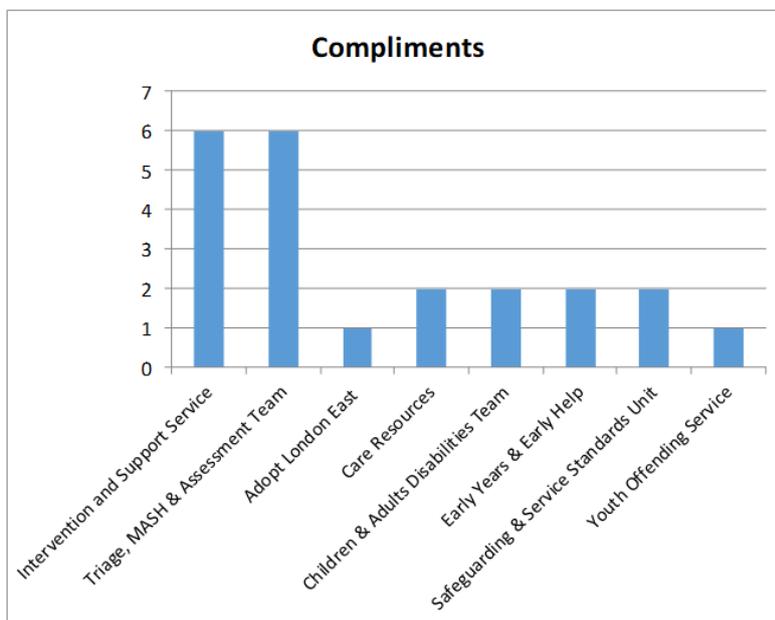
## Members Correspondence

The number of Members correspondence increased by 25% in 2020-21 (69) compared to 2019-20 (55) with 92% being responded to within timeframe.

	2020-21	2019-20
Members Correspondence	69	55

## Compliments

There has been a significant increase in the number of compliments in 2020-21(22) compared to 2019-20(3), which is encouraging with compliments being shared for recording purposes for Children’s Services. It is particularly encouraging to see that the Triage/MASH & Assessment Team received the highest number of compliments, and that even though received the highest number of complaints, that their good work was appreciated.



Some examples of the appreciation shown are given below:

1. A thank you card received from a young person to Independent Reviewing Officer (Safeguarding & Standards Unit)

*“Thank you so much”... “I am really sad that you will not be my IRO anymore” .....“I am really grateful for all the hard work you have done for me”.... “You are one of the most hardworking people I know who shows a true care the work they do”..... “You are the best ever”.*

2. Appreciation shown for a Social Worker (Intervention & Support Services)

*“Please be advised that I have found the Social Worker a breath of fresh air” ... “she heard my struggle”.*

*“I could articulate myself in a relaxed and open environment because she understood. I didn’t have to feel misunderstood or classified/judged”.*

*I was able to explain myself, pains and hurts in this country without judgement. She was extremely professional at all times, and seemed to sense when I am going through financial hardships”.... “I have struggled with asking for what might be considered handouts. She seems to pull this off with ease and tact”.*

3. Grateful parents express their gratitude (Early Help)

*"We just wanted to communicate what a great job we think you have done".*

*"We have been impressed with your management, knowledge and ability to pull all together, your constant attention to detail, your openness to considering all the options, your appropriate chasing of people to complete their tasks and by the date they said they would get it done, your identification of any missing things to be done or people that needed to be included (etc. - I could go on).*

*"We are grateful to you and wish you well for the future" –*

4. Parents express their appreciation (Children & Adults Disabilities)

*"I thought I'll drop you an email to let you know the exceptional service provided by XX.*

*"As a result of this me and my wife have some breathing space and my son is a happy child again".*

*"XX listened to our concerns, he followed it up, kept us on the loop about the progress and got things done. I'm lucky to have dealt with XX and I really was impressed with his professionalism and I'm extremely grateful for solving our problems".*

5. A care leaver showing appreciation for their key worker (Care Resources)

*"I wanted to send this email just to say thank you for all of your support throughout the years. I feel so lucky to have had such a lovely key worker, who never gave up on me, even when I made the most stupid decisions at times haha. Her help and support I was able to keep a roof over my head, become a good parent to my daughter and Finnish at university and give my little girl a mum to be proud of. You really made me feel cared for and was backing me 100 percent and helped me to believe in myself. You made me feel like I was worthy of a good life when my own parents didn't and you will never know how much that means to me".*

*"You gave me so much reassurance and made me feel like I was doing a good job. Thank you so much".*

*"Over the years I have been in care I have felt supported and managed to achieve my potential. Without all of your support I wouldn't be a registered nurse now. Thank you so much! "*

6. Parents thanking their Social Workers (Assessment Team)

*"XX and XX met the challenge with honesty and impartiality to matters that was very welcomed. Despite the logistical hurdles of the pandemic, they made active efforts to ensure the views of all parties involved were considered and ensured neutral observations could take place. When the dynamics involved changed, they quickly were able to arrange an additional observation - again this was greatly appreciated.*

*XX kept me apprised of progress during their routine checks and investigations which as a concerned parent helped to allay any concerns I had. I thank them both for their input in my own situation and wish them the best of success in their ongoing work. Being actively involved with my family for a year gave her unique insights into creative approaches to support us. This included a range of measures that sought the input of the various health and education professionals who were involved.*

*The final recommendation made by XX for a shared care pattern ..... initially seemed strange to me and I think the other parties involved. It quickly became apparent that this approach was both a beneficial and a long-sighted one. Due to the dynamics of my own situation, the .... pattern ensured consistent weekday and weekend time with our daughter, whilst not infringing upon the other parent's time-it was welcomed.*

*I would highly recommend this schedule/pattern of contact is trialled wherever it is possible and there is a similar history of parental differences and poor communication (whatever the cause) but both parents are logistically and evidentially able to care for the child/children.”*

## **Conclusion**

Although the number of complaints have increased in 2020-21, the number of Stage 2 investigations have stayed at the same level. Initial meetings with complainants did result in two cases be resolved which were not progressed. We will continue to advocate meetings and monitor the impact this may have on the number of Stage 1 complaints escalating.

Response times were affected during the pandemic, and we will need to improve this as the pressures of the pandemic lessen.

Complaints are playing an important role in service improvements and this is recognised by senior management. Liquid Logic the Social Care case recording system should prove a better tool to record and report complaints. As pressures from the pandemic ease for Children’s Services the use of the complaint module within Liquid Logic will be reviewed.

The recording and monitoring of complaints is continually being reviewed and it is recognised that performance in this area needs to be improved. Further training will be put in place and reviewed regularly. The Children’s Services Improvement Board looks at quality assurance and learning from complaints, while also linking to appropriate training and, going forward, quarterly meetings will be held with the Children’s Services Senior Management Team to review progress against the action plan and any complaints received in the preceding quarter.

Although Children’s Services may be receiving compliments, teams again need to be reminded to forward compliments for recording purposes, as the numbers may not be representative of compliments actually received and the recognised work being done within teams.

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## Complaints and Compliments Action Plan

	Task / Action	Owner	Intended Outcome / Impact	Target Completion Date	Quarterly Update
1	<p>Review and update process for receiving, allocating and responding to complaints within Children's Services including clear roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Development of a robust structure within the process, as to tasks that should be completed within the ten day response timescale e.g. phone call to complainant.</p>	Tara Geere	Response timescales will be improved with a clear process in place, and regular senior management oversight.	Revised process to be in place by <b>30.01.22</b>	
2	<p>Quarterly meetings between SCCI team and children's senior management team to be diarised.</p> <p>The purpose of this will be to review any complaints and compliments from the preceding quarter, discuss themes/learning and follow up on any current or overdue tasks</p>	Tara Geere	Improved management oversight of complaints will improve timeliness and quality of responses	First meeting to take place by <b>30.01.22</b>	
3	<p>Bi-annual practice week to include a 'lessons learned from complaints' session for all social care staff and managers.</p> <p>Purpose being to come to gather to consider themes and learning from complaints and compliments received in the preceding six months as well as learning from what happened at each stage to prevent escalation.</p>	<p>Lynne Adams / Candice Stephens</p> <p>Practice Development Manager</p>	Learning from complaints becomes a whole service task, with clear evidence for Ofsted as to how we feed learning from complaints back into the service	To be in place for Practice Week <b>March 2022</b>	
4	All managers to ensure that compliments are captured and shared with SCCI team for collation and reporting; to take responsibility for ensuring that a log of all compliments forwarded is kept up to date	All Heads of Service, Group Managers and Team Managers	Compliments are recognised and celebrated with the workforce and any learning from good practice is utilised.	On-going	

5	Children's Services Case Recording Standards to be a regular discussion item at service and team meetings, and case recording to be a standard item within the PDR for all case holding practitioners and managers.	All Heads of Service and Group Managers	Improved case recording should result in fewer complaints regarding improper or inaccurate recording of information.	To be in all PDRs for 2022/23	
6	Introduction of a more formal process for learning from local and national serious case reviews / rapid reviews to be shared consistently across the service	Kate Dempsey / Practice Development Manager	Practice development and learning is disseminated across the service to ensure positive changes occur as a result of serious incidents.	TBC	
7	Sufficient information about the purpose of S47 investigations, along with detail about the process and next steps to be shared with all relevant parents and children. To be evidenced as part of case recording and reviewed in supervision and quality assurance activity.	Sharon Richards/ Helen Harding/ Lynne Adams	Reduction in the number of complaints where families have not been provided sufficient information regarding a S47 investigation taking place	On-going	
Page 27	Process to be developed for families to be notified in writing of any significant changes to service delivery, and the reasons why e.g. new social worker or any significant decisions made (for example, contact arrangements, change of care plan or end of intervention)	Sharon Richards / Helen Harding	Improved communication regarding significant changes should result in fewer complaints regarding poor communication	Process to be in place by <b>March 2022</b>	
9	All managers to be responsible for ensuring compliance with data protection regulation (GDPR) within key documents such as assessments and care plans before they are shared; to be checked through quality assurance processes	All Heads of Service, Group Managers and Team Managers	All information shared is relevant, proportionate and compliant with our duties under data protection regulation, therefore reducing the likelihood of complaints in this area.	On-going	
10	All staff to undertake annual refresh GDPR training, with this included as part of the PDR			To be in all PDRs for 2022/23	





## **CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 20 JANUARY 2022**

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Adaptions due to Covid and Covid Recovery - Appendix
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Robert South, Director of Children's Services
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Trevor Cook, Assistant Director, Education Services; 01708 431250; trevor.cook@havering.gov.uk
<b>Policy context:</b>	Education
<b>Financial summary:</b>	None immediately arising from this report

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

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

### **SUMMARY**

1. In November 2021, the Children and Learning Overview & Scrutiny sub-committee received a report on the adaptions schools made to both the content of their curriculum and most notably to the delivery of the curriculum in response to the impact of COVID-19.
2. This report provides a further update on the specific impact on pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and more-able pupils.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Members of the OSSC are asked to note the content of the report.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **Pupils with SEND**

4. The impact on children with SEND has been significant. Schools have had to be flexible in their approach to remote learning when it was necessary, and there have been many examples of providing homework packs tailored to individual children's needs.
5. Schools, particularly the special schools, supported families with outreach work, providing support to the whole family and lending equipment for use at home, delivering activities, and even shopping particularly at the height of the pandemic.
6. Getting children back into school following the various periods of lockdown and remote learning was done gradually, ensuring the anxieties of both children and parents were managed.
7. Transport arrangements were changed to ensure social distancing and this necessitated changes in times and in some cases travel by taxi instead of bus.
8. At times, impact on staffing levels due to COVID illness amongst staff was significant. This was mitigated by putting all special school staff forward for vaccination at the earliest opportunity. Uptake was good, but staffing levels and need for self-isolation continues to affect the levels of attendance at school.
9. There have been situations where children's progress has regressed, and a focus of schools has been to support children to regain skills and knowledge they have lost whilst being out of school. However, schools report that children have been remarkably resilient.
10. Support from the Local Authority consisted of support and training for schools regarding health and wellbeing, and managing anxieties. In addition, the Educational Psychology service ran a parent helpline which was well received. Regular support for SENDCos has been provided individually and through borough wide SENDco forums, to answer questions, share good practice to support school in maintaining their offer to children with SEND.
11. Short breaks provision was difficult to keep going during the pandemic, due to providers not being able to deliver and holiday clubs not open. This led to

families being under increasing pressure and the escalation of behaviours that challenge in children.

12. There was an increased direct payment offer where parents employed their own Personal Assistants, and an agreed amount of £300 was also allocated from existing Direct Payments for families to buy toys/garden equipment to help support their child. These measures helped, but long periods of being out of school without usual support has had significant impact on the parents of children with SEND in Havering, and we are seeing increasing numbers requesting support from children's social care.
13. Schools worked hard to provide face-to-face education for SEN pupils in mainstream during the pandemic. Attendance was below the national average as many parents were particularly nervous due to the complex medical conditions and vulnerabilities of their children. Where they attended school, they were in the main taught in a bubble and through on-screen activity as classes were mixed age/and ability with some LAC pupils and some key worker children.
14. Pupils were supported in the main by Teaching Assistant's, as teachers were in the main providing remote teaching from home. TA's were made fully aware of any special needs and delivered work was set by teachers. Where pupils did not attend the face-to-face offer, TA's supported pupils by attending virtual classes with them and through online support.
15. Schools included pupils with SEND in all their welfare call and welfare visits, enabling additional pastoral support to be provided where necessary.
16. It is nationally documented that pupils with SEND or additional needs fell further behind in many cases during the pandemic, and our (anecdotal) evidence from our schools suggests that this pattern is also true for Havering schools. This was because they had both lower online/face-to-face attendance rates than others, and often they were in families that are more economically challenged, resulting in parents struggling to provide the support for home learning. They also had issues such as sharing technology with siblings, although schools worked very hard to mitigate these factors, as evidenced in the previous report.
17. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils were often slower to return to school following the various periods of lockdown and remote learning. In this initial 'recovery' phase, schools put on additional intervention groups to attempt to make up for lost ground where pupils had fallen behind. Many of the pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils were included in these interventions as schools focused their resources on pupils who were significantly below age-expected norms.
18. Many pupils with SEND also have social and emotional additional needs, and again the impact of long periods of isolation has had a significant reported detriment to these (though not solely these) pupils. The initial recovery in many schools focused on these aspects before moving into academic recovery, as detailed in the previous report.

## **More-able Pupils**

19. Whilst no specific enquiries were made into the impact of more-able pupils, we do know that many schools provided a core curriculum and additional challenges which would have enabled more-able pupils to take subjects and topics further. We know that take up was variable and not completely restricted to more-able pupils.
20. The schools report, particularly in secondary schools, that some pupils, particularly boy, related very well to the flexibility of remote learning and did well, making good progress, and in a small number of cases probably better than usual progress.
21. More able pupils generally had better remote learning attendance, and better work completion rates (as perhaps might have been predictable), therefore seem to have suffered less loss of learning.
22. The attendance rates/completion rates varied across schools, and also the methods used for accounting these varied, as previously reported, and we are not aware of any national/regional benchmarking for any of this.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

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

23. There are no direct financial implications from this report, as it is for information only. However, the teams responsible for undertaking the quality assurance functions identified above are funded from DfE grants and core Council funding.

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

24. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

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

25. There are no direct human resources implications from this report.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

26. There are no direct equalities implications from this report, and an Equalities Assessment has not been completed as this report is for information only.