

APPENDIX 1

Children, Adults & Housing: Learning & Achievement

Annual Report 2013 – 2014 Complaints and Compliments

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

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	
Total	1	5	1

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
TOTAL	27	8

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

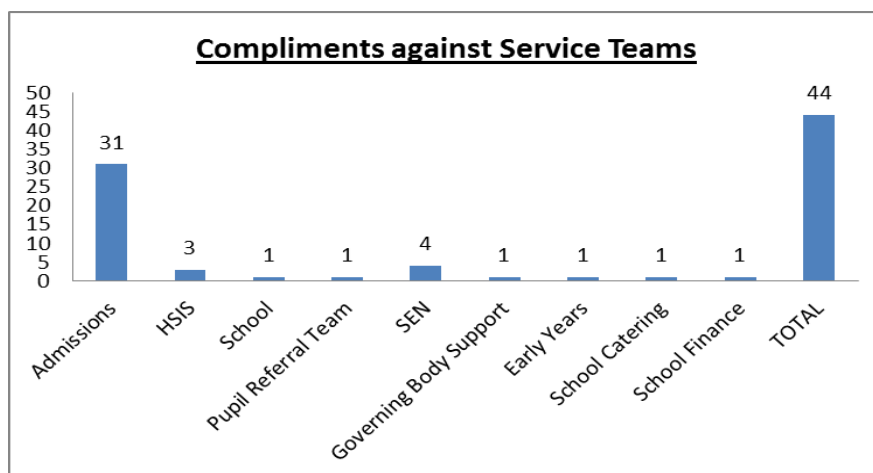
Of the 56 received, 95% of members' correspondence was responded to within the 10 day timescale. This is a 29% improvement from 2012/13 and a very good response rate.

	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.