



## Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee 19 November 2013

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

Children Adults & Housing(Children and Young People's Services) Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2012/13

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

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### SUMMARY

The report provides information about the numbers and types of complaints handled by the Children and Young People's Service during 2012/3 and how they were dealt with to minimise the impact of justifiable concerns and to reduce the likelihood of future complaints.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To note the content of the report and the attached appendix 1 that sets out the position for 2012/13.

**REPORT DETAIL**

1.0 Introduction

The separate Appendix 1 contains the summary report on the position regarding service complaints handled in relation to the Children and Young People's Services during the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It also shows the compliments received.

2.0 Key Issues

The reason for reporting complaints on Children and Young People's Services separately is because they are handled under specific regulations that individually define the statutory process into 3 formal stages (Stage 1, 2 and 3). Havering introduced an informal Pre Stage 1 process in 2005 to support a better complaints practice and avoid complaints escalating to statutory processes.

Some of the key messages that arise from the report during 2012/13 are that:

- The overall number of complaints are around 180 and within this figure 46 matters raised by MP's and Councillors
- The Pre Stage 1 process (27) has been very successful in resolving many initial concerns, with 5 escalating to the formal stage 1 process.
- Matters raised through a Councillor or MP are monitored through their own individual corporate processes (page 5 of appendix 1, see table 1 on page 10).
- The overall number of Stage 1 complaints has decreased by 5. There has been a consistent approach with complaints made by the Children's Advocacy Service (pages 6-7 of appendix 1, see table 1 – 4 on page 10 - 12).
- The number of Stage 1 complaints, that escalated to a Stage 2 complaint had increased in 2012/13 by 1 (page 7 of appendix 1, see tables 1, 2, 3 and 4).

- There was one Stage 3 complaint for the financial year 2012/13 This Stage 3 complaint will roll over into 2013/14 (page 8 of appendix 1, see tables 1 – 3 on page 10 -11).
- For 2012/13 43 Compliments were received, these are in relation to the good work Children and Young People's Services have carried out (page 9 of appendix 1 and tables 1 and 7 on page 10 & 13).
- 5 complaints were submitted to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The outcomes from these complaints were: 2 referred back as a premature complaint and investigated locally as a statutory Stage 1 complaint. 1 outside LGO jurisdiction, 1 informal enquiry, 1 complaint was investigated by the LGO with local settlement.
- Most complaints are initiated by parents and very few by children and young people.
- The majority of complaints relate to the quality of service, alleged behaviour of staff and disputed decision (on appendix 1, page 6 provides examples).
- A number of future actions have been identified as a result of the Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2012/13. These are set out on page 10 of the appendix 1. Most are continuous development matters, but with one or two specific new actions. Key is the continuation of a staff training programme.

### 3.0 Future Arrangements

Currently, the Council has a corporate complaints model that captures non social care complaints, principally education, children services activity. Attached to that are separate regulated processes, for the Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care (inc. health aspects) Service. These complaints systems are statutory and have separate defined and differing regulated processes.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **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:**

There are no new HR implications or risks arising from this report.

**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.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 attached which draws on the electronic and paper recording systems held within the Social Care and Learning Directorate.