
**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 3 2018-19**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 3 report covers complaints and representations from 1st October 2018 through to 31st December 2018.

Introduction

3. The current Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations came into being on 1st August 2014.
4. The procedure places the emphasis on the initial local resolution stage – Stage 1 - with complainants being offered a discussion to resolve the matter. The second formal stage (Stage 2) provides for independent investigation. If the outcome of Stage 2 does not satisfy the complainant s/he has recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
5. Citizens making complaints have a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively. Children's Services emphasis is on listening to concerns and using this learning to improve services for everyone who uses them.
6. Complaints should be handled in such a way that the complainant is the focus, not the process, and that the particular circumstances of the complainant are taken into account (including their age or disability). Where the complaint relates to a looked after child, a child in need or a care leaver the local authority has a duty to provide an advocate as required. All children or young people who make

complaints are offered a meeting and all children and families will receive a written response to the concerns they have raised.

7. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 devotes Part 10 to complaints and this reflects Welsh Government guidance and regulations and Council procedures. The Council is mindful that the Act will further promote people's rights and collaborative working will be actively encouraged.

Summary of Complaints Activity During the Period

8.

Item	Q3 2017-18
Number open at start of period (30.06.17)	2
Number received (qtr. 3)	40
TOTAL complaints	42
Number received directly from children and young people	4
Number closed	29
Number outstanding at end of period (31.12.18)	13
% acknowledged within 2 working days	100%
% concluded within 15 working days of acknowledgement	50%

9. During this quarter the number of complaints received by Children's Services was exactly the same as Q2 in which there were also 40 complaints.
 - a. Of the 40 complaints received, 30% 12 of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received a decrease from Q2. 7.5% 3 of the complaints received were in relation to finance, a slight increase from Q2. 12.5% 5 of the complaints received were in relation to contact, a significant increase from Q2. A new category 'Lack of Communication' has identified 5% 2 complaints. The remaining 45% (18) of complaints were in relation to other issues including decision making and foster carer.

- b. 11 Complaints were received about the Intake & Assessment Service, which is a slight increase from 7 in Quarter 2. 16 Complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service a large increase from 5 in Q2 (4 from young people) none were received from young people in Q2. 10 Complaints were received about the Looked after Children Service compared with 4 in Quarter 2. The remaining 3 complaints were in relation to Safeguarding and one for Data loss.

Examples of complaints concluded during the quarter are:

A complaint where we were able to put things right

A young person who was previously looked after was unhappy when informed that a social worker would need to accompany him to purchase a new mobile telephone. This complaint was resolved with an apology and a bank transfer for the amount provided was given.

A complaint where we had no case to answer

A child's relative felt that the allocated social worker was failing to safeguard the child. The social worker had spoken to the relative at length whilst the assessment was being undertaken. A safety plan was put in place to minimise any future risks. The relative was fully aware of the plan and was updated on a regular basis.

Stage 2 Independent Investigations

10. If complainants remain unsatisfied at the conclusion of the informal Stage 1, they are entitled to seek a formal Independent Investigation under Stage 2 of the procedure.
11. 2 stage 2 complaints were resolved during Quarter 3.
12. There were no S2 complaints initiated during Q3

Ombudsman Investigations

13. There was no Ombudsman activity in relation complaints during this quarter.

Learning from Complaints

14. Action Plans are initiated after each Stage 2 investigation to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, lessons are learned and themes recognised.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

15. Quarterly complaints reports are shared with managers so any emerging themes can be considered and actions can be taken to improve practice.

16. During this quarter there was an increase in contact from Advocacy on behalf of children and young people, who contacted Childrens Services to discuss new complaints or complex issues in regards to a complaint.

Update on Progress from Themes Identified in Previous Periods

17. The previously noted issue of social workers not returning calls continues to be highlighted to all Social Services staff.

Early Resolution

18. Children's Services place an emphasis on resolving issues at the earliest possible opportunity, and where these concerns are dealt with immediately they are not opened as a formal complaint. During this quarter there were 22 enquiries, the issues in these were brought to the attention of the relevant Team or Operational Managers who acted promptly to address the issues raised to the satisfaction of the individual. This prevented 22 complaints being formally opened as stage 1 complaints and resolved the issue for the complainant at the earliest opportunity.

Summary of Compliments

19. Teams are more readily sharing the compliments they receive from a variety of sources, e.g. service users and professionals, although it is recognised that further work is required to ensure that all compliments are captured and reported.

20. 32 compliments were received in Quarter 3, which is an increase of 19 compliments in Quarter 2. A breakdown of compliments by team is provided below. This will help Children's Services build upon positive work and could identify improvements

Team	No. of Compliments
Targeted Services	22
Specialist Services	6
Other	4

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

21. A local councillor for Cardiff sent a compliment to a Social Worker who assisted his constituents with their child by intervening at a time of considerable stress. The situation improved and was resolved

Summary for Quarter 3

22. As at the 31st December 2018, the service were working with 2,717 children and young people and of these:

- a. In total, we received 40 complaints, of which, 4 related to Looked after Children (10%). One was directly from the young person.
- b. Two of the Looked after Children complaints related to communication with the social worker which were upheld and full apologies were provided and accepted. One complaint related to contact visits being increased. The other was a looked after child wanting to return to Mothers care.
- c. In total, we received 32 compliments

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

23. 18 AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry letters were received by Children's Services during the quarter. An example of these enquiries is a request 'wishing to gain child arrangements order for the five children in the family'.

Subject Access Requests

24. A Subject Access Request is a request from an individual to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them, or their children. These requests should be responded to within 40 calendar days of receipt. Some types of personal data are exempt from the right of subject access and so cannot be obtained by making such a request. On receipt of the request work is undertaken to ensure that individuals are only provided with information that they are entitled to receive.

25. Children's Services undertook the following activity in relation to Subject Access Requests in Quarter 2 2017-18:

- a. 10 were responded to on time.
- b. 2 were completed outside of the statutory time frame.
- c. 11 were closed because no identification was received or fee was not paid.
- d. 1 request was withdrawn
- e. 1 new request is in process at the time of writing.

26. In addition to this, Children's Services received:

- a. 37 requests from the Police under the 2013 Protocol and Good Practice Model re: Disclosure of information in cases of alleged child abuse and linked criminal and care directions, an increase from 29 in Qtr 3 (18-19).
- b. 67 requests were processed in relation to access to requests from other Councils, Probation, Solicitors or Insurance, an increase from 35 in Qtr 3 (18-19)

Financial Implications

27. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

28. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

29. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Deborah Driffield
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15th March 2019