

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 1 2019-20**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 1 report covers complaints and representations from 1st April to 30th June 2019

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	Q1 2019-20
Number open at start of period (01/04/2019)	14
Number received (qtr. 1)	39
TOTAL complaints	39
Number received directly from children and young people	5
Number closed (30/06/2019)	37
Number outstanding at end of period (30/04/2019)	2
% acknowledged within 2 working days	100%

9. During this quarter, the number of complaints received by Children's Services was 39, a decrease of 17 from Q4.
 - a. Of the 39 complaints received, 20 of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received, an increase from Q4. 1 complaint related to placements and 4 regarded a lack of communication, 3 were in relation to contact, a slight decrease from Q4. 11 were about decision making.
 - b. 7 complaints were received regarding the Intake & Assessment Service, which is a decrease from Q4. 14 complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service, a slight decrease from Q4. There was 1 complaint regarding the PA service, 1 for Safeguarding and 15 complaints were

received regarding the Looked after Children Service compared with 18 in Quarter 4. There was 1 corporate complaint.

Examples of complaints concluded during the quarter are:

A complaint where we were able to put things right

We received a complaint from a foster carer who felt that they were not getting the support they needed for their foster child.

The Operational Manager discussed the issues with the foster carers. An assessment was planned with a specialist assessment in relation to the emotional and psychological wellbeing of the child.

A request was made to Health and Education for an assessment of needs to ensure that the correct provision was in place regarding the child's additional needs. The Social Worker also arrange regular respite for the family.

A complaint where we had no case to answer

We received a complaint from a parent who was unhappy about the number of times their family had been referred to Children's Services.

We explained that, while we are aware that being referred to Children's Services can be distressing, Children's Services are required by law to act on all referrals that are made to them regarding the wellbeing of a child.

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.

11.3 Stage 2 complaints were initiated during Quarter 1.

Ombudsman Investigations

12. There was 0 Ombudsman activity in relation complaints during this quarter.

Learning from Complaints

13. Action Plans are initiated after each Stage 2 investigation to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, lessons are learned and themes recognised. Issues about staff conduct are sent to an Operational Manager to consider.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

14. Quarterly complaints reports are shared with managers so any emerging themes can be considered and actions can be taken to improve practice. Outside of this avenue the Complaints Manager can highlight issues to an Operational Manager (as above).

15. There were no specific themes that emerged during this quarter.

Update on Progress from Themes Identified in Previous Periods

16. In Quarter 4 there was an increase in complaints from young people via advocates. This theme did not continue in Quarter 1, there were just 5 complaints from young people.

Early Resolution

17. 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 27 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 27 complaints being formally opened as stage 1 complaints, resolving the issue at the earliest opportunity.

Summary of Compliments

18. 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.

19.25 compliments were received in Quarter 1. A breakdown of compliments by teams is provided below. This will help Children's Services build upon positive work and can assist in identifying improvements

Team	No. of Compliments
Targeted Services	16
Specialist Services	6
Other	3

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

From Llamau to Personal Adviser

Recently we have been working with XX XXX (PA) supporting a YP at our Fields Park Road project. I would like to make you aware how impressed I have been with XX and the way that she has worked in partnership with Llamau. I thought it was important to highlight good practice and it is a great example of how multi agency works to support a YP at a time of crisis.

Summary for Quarter 1

20. As at the 30th June 2019, the service were working with 3,103 children and young people and of these, we received:

- a. 39 complaints. 5 were directly from the young person, a decrease from Q4 when 10 were recorded.
- b. 25 compliments.

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

21.21 AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry letters were received by Children's Services during the quarter, an increase of 7 from Q4.

22. Requests for Information from statutory agencies:

- a. 177 requests were received and responded to on time, this compares to 156 received in Q4.
 - b. 0 were completed outside of the statutory time frame.
 - c. 0 requests were withdrawn
 - d. There are no new requests in process at the time of writing.
23. The turnover has to be rapid due to the nature of the enquiries. Of these:
- a. 90 requests were from the Probation Service asking if there are children living in a household with individuals who have been bailed or will be etc. and wanting background information
 - b. There were 23 requests from different Council's Children's Services Departments
 - c. 64 requests were received directly from other services such as HMRC, Education and Health Services.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

26. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Deborah Driffield
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12 November 2019