

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 2 2020-21**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 2 report covers complaints and representations from 1st July 2020 to 30th September 2020.

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 | Q2 2020-21 |
|---|------------|
| Number open at start of period (01/07/2020) | 7 |
| Number received (during quarter 2) | 30 |
| Number received directly from children and young people | 3 |
| Number closed during quarter 2 | 20 |
| Number outstanding at end of period (30/09/2020) | 17 |
| % acknowledged within 2 working days | 86.7% |

9. During this quarter, the number of complaints received by Children's Services was 30, an increase of 17 from Q1 when 13 were recorded. However, it should be noted that Q1 (perhaps due to the COVID-19 pandemic) was a quieter period as far as complaints are concerned. As a comparison, Children's Services were recording an average of 36.5 complaints a quarter during 2019-20, compared to the 21.5 so far this year.
 - a. Of the 30 complaints that were received, 16 were regarding multiple factors. For example, a complainant may wish to complain about their relationship with a social worker *and* a delay in providing service. 9 complainants mentioned the relationship with their social worker as a key reason for making their complaint.

- b. Where it was possible to identify a team (i.e. where the complaint has been about a specific person or team rather than overall service) 7 complaints were received regarding officers in the East locality and 3 complaints each were received about officers in the North and South localities respectively. 8 complaints were regarding the Intake & Assessment Service and / or MASH and this has remained relatively static when compared to previous quarters.

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.

11.1 Stage 2 complaints was initiated during Quarter 2.

Ombudsman Investigations

12. There were 0 Ombudsman investigations in relation to 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.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

14. Going forward, quarterly complaints reports will be shared with senior management 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.

15. There were no specific themes that emerged during this quarter, other than those mentioned at point 9.

Summary of Compliments

16. 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.

17. 41 compliments were received in Quarter 2, an improvement on previous quarters and, by way of comparison, 101 compliments were received for the whole of 2019/20.

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

To a social worker from a mother of three children that the social worker had worked with

“Thankyou for everything you have done for me and the kids I’d hate to think where we would be if you never came along and helped to make me realise and change our lives I am so grateful that u believed in me and never gave up at my lowest points”.

Summary for Quarter 2

18. During Quarter 2, we received:

- a. 30 complaints. Though this is an increase from Quarter 1, it is still a decrease when compared to the average number of complaints received per quarter during 2019/20 (36.5)
- b. 41 compliments, a noticeable increase on previous quarters. As mentioned previously, 101 compliments were recorded for 2019/20 as a whole.

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

19. 23 AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry letters were received by Children’s Services during the quarter.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

22. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Deborah Driffield
Assistant Director Children's Services
11 November 2020