

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE: 15 NOVEMBER 2022

CHILDREN'S SERVICES, CONTROL ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AGENDA ITEM: 7

Reason for this Report

1. This report has been produced in response to the Governance and Audit Committee's request for an update on the Children's Services control environment.
2. The Governance and Audit Committee has requested this update in respect of its role to:
 - Monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
 - Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
 - Consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risk and priorities of the Council.
 - Consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
 - Review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
 - Review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations
 - Review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively, and make any associated reports and recommendations.

Background

3. Local authorities have a statutory obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk and can provide a wide range of services to children and their parents or carers, usually within the own home environment and co-ordinated by a social worker. The level and type of support offered can vary, depending on the circumstances of the case. The list below contains examples of the types of circumstances in which a local authority may become involved with a child or a family in order to provide support and assistance:
 - Following a request for assistance from a person (or person on their behalf) at a time of stress or to seek assistance or support of a type that is unavailable from schools, GPs, other health services, or other community-based services.
 - By the provision of assistance and support to a child who is disabled or to a disabled adult who cares for a child, or a relatives or carer of such a person, including the provision of "short break" services.
 - Following becoming aware of child protection issues in respect of any child, including cases where violence between adults could result in harm to a child.

- Following a request for temporary placement of a child in foster care or residential care, whether as a result of an emergency or to provide a planned break or series of short breaks.
- Where a child is taken into care following intervention by a local authority or the police.
- Where a child is placed for adoption, sometimes at the request of a parent, but more often following a court order when the child is already in the care of a local authority.

Working during the pandemic

4. The onset of the pandemic created challenges for the Directorate in terms of the way it operated; initially reverting to a virtual operating model for all but the highest risk children almost overnight.
5. A system was put in place to ensure that children known to Children's Services were RAG rated so the highest risk children were identifiable, and the latest position and contingency plans were available should the information be required in the absence of the allocated social worker.
6. Throughout the pandemic, the Children's Management Team met daily (twice daily initially) to ensure oversight of the Directorate with a focus on ensuring essential service delivery of frontline services and safeguarding of children and young people.
7. The initial response of the Directorate was to focus on risk relating to individual children – targeting service provision for those most in need and closely monitoring staffing levels in the context of high levels of COVID-19 related absence.
8. All non-essential work was initially stood down while we focussed on this and plans were put in place for how services would be managed if staffing levels were to drop as low as the initially anticipated 25%.
9. Fortunately, this did not transpire, but the operating model was kept under regular review to ensure controls were in place and in response to changes in Welsh Government guidance and legislation. This heightened level of oversight from the Children's Management Team enabled us to manage the unprecedented crisis and ensure that priority was given to safeguarding and child protection at all times.
10. Face to face visits to the children who most needed them were maintained, however, at the times when the COVID-19 risks were at their highest risks we reverted to virtual visits where it was safe and appropriate to do so.
11. Going forward, we will retain this hybrid model of working that enables us to safely meet the needs of children and their families whilst ensuring the most appropriate and efficient use of resources.

Services

12. Services provided by Children's Services include:
 - **Support4Families** (within the Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service) – early help service working with families below the threshold for statutory Children's Services, e.g., supporting families with direct delivery of a range of evidence-based family programmes.
 - **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub** - first point of contact for safeguarding referrals from professionals.

- **Intake & Assessment**, including child protection investigation, intervention and support.
 - **Interventions Hub:**
 - **Adolescent Resource Centre** – intensive support for young people aged 11-16 years of age, who are at risk of becoming looked after.
 - **Family Intervention Support Service (FISS)** – support to prevent family breakdown and reduce risk of significant harm.
 - **On Call FISS** - support out of hours to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and daytime services.
 - **Rapid Response** - provide an immediate response to families in crisis to prevent accommodation or where there is a high risk of harm.
 - **Integrated Family Support Service** – supporting the needs of vulnerable families in crisis.
 - **ThinkSafe!** – work with children at greatest risk of exploitation to reduce risk and increase protective factors.
 - **Locality Services** – case management including reunification, child protection, Court work, children looked after and children receiving care and support.
 - **Child Health & Disability Service** – case management for children with disabilities including child protection, Court work, children looked after and children receiving care and support.
 - **Substitute Family Care** –placement finding, in house fostering and residential, Connected Persons, When I Am Ready, supported lodgings, National Fostering Framework, Young Person’s Gateway link, commissioning and contract management.
 - **Personal Adviser Service** – supporting care leavers.
 - **Youth Justice Service** – prevention of anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending by young people.
 - **Service Improvement & Strategy** –corporate safeguarding, Regional Safeguarding Board business unit, quality assurance, participation / children’s rights, advocacy, practice leads programme.
 - **Safeguarding** – Reviewing Hub, education safeguarding, professional concerns.
 - **Performance and Resources** – business support, performance and planning, projects, correspondence, CareFirst / Eclipse, strategy, Health & Safety, workforce training and development, COVID-19.
13. Robust performance management arrangements are in place across Children’s Services with performance management being led by senior managers. The Children’s Management Team receive regular reports in the form of PowerBi and scorecards to support them to monitor and manage performance. The information is kept under review and is regularly adapted to meet both statutory requirements and the changing needs of the service. It is acknowledged that it has been challenging to fully embed the Personal Review process across the Directorate and a plan is in place to improve the timeliness and quality of the Personal Review process. The Directorate has been developing a process to evidence compliance with the requirement outlined in the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care for all social workers to receive regular professional supervision. As a next step the service needs to ensure that the Personal development plans are embedded, and clear links are made with the Children’s Services Strategy and Directorate Delivery Plan.

14. The Director and Management Team lead on governance, risk management and internal control to ensure there is oversight of issues and that links are made with the quality assurance framework. This ensures that lessons learned are fed back so processes and systems are subject to continuous improvement. Examples of these systems are outlined in this report along with an explanation of how they are managed. Key areas include, but not limited to:
- Risk Management – Corporate and Directorate Risks (see paragraph 15)
 - Internal Audit Assurance (see paragraph 22)
 - Senior Management Assurance Statements (see paragraph 32)
 - External Assurance (see paragraph 47)
 - Value for Money (see paragraph 51)

Issues

(a) Risk Management

15. Risks relevant to the Directorate are managed on an ongoing basis alongside the Directorate Delivery Plan and reported on a quarterly basis via the Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers. Escalated Directorate and Corporate Risks for which the Directorate holds responsibility are reviewed by the Council's Senior Management Team and subsequently reported to Cabinet and Governance and Audit Committee.

Corporate Risks (see Appendix A for full detail)

16. Corporate Risks that are owned / contributed to by Children's Services relate to corporate safeguarding and the increase in demand for services. Recently escalated risks are workforce issues, an increase in insurance claims under the Human Rights Act and referrals to the Official Solicitor resulting from failure to remove children at risk and significant harm experienced while being looked after, and sufficiency of accommodation for children looked after and care leavers – including the subsequent increase in the number of children placed in homes operating without registration, and the duration of these placements.
17. As reported to Governance and Audit Committee via the quarterly Corporate Risk Management reporting process, all the above risks are mitigated through a variety of controls, actions and policies in order to ensure the current (residual) rating is reduced from the inherent rating and is acceptable in respect of the Council's risk appetite. Whilst the objective is to have targeted further reductions in all risks, the priority over the last two years has been to at least maintain the current residual risk level in the face of increasing levels of demand for services and complexity and co-morbidity of issues faced by children, young people and their families.

Directorate Risks (see Appendix B for full detail)

18. The Directorate Risk Register (DRR) is a strategic document and is directly aligned with the Directorate Delivery Plan, Corporate Plan, relevant Capital Ambition objectives and Children's Services Strategy, as well as capturing any other key risk perspectives, such as:
- Financial
 - Legal and regulatory
 - Service delivery
 - Reputational

19. There are a number of identified Directorate inherent risks, of varying severity which are reviewed regularly for assurance on actions undertaken and their impact on the residual risk and any target risks that are in place. In considering the contents of the risk register the focus is on ensuring that all risks are identified with a clear connection to the current and proposed actions being undertaken to reduce or manage the impact / likelihood of the risk. All red residual risks within the Risk Register have been escalated and the following red / amber residual risks are being closely monitored:
- Care planning for children and young people – ensuring that plans are outcome led and implemented without drift.
 - Transition to adult life / independence – ensuring that young people (including disabled young people) have the necessary support to ensure a smooth transition.
 - Issuing of care proceedings and subsequent compliance with Court Orders – ensuring compliance in the context of capacity issues in the service impacting on ability to meet demand and undertake required work in a timely manner.
 - Children looked after – securing stable, fulfilling and happy lives for children looked after.
 - Adoption records – ensuring that historical records are accessible following issues with corrupted microfiche files and avoidance of a data breach in the process of resolving the above risk.
 - Youth Justice Service – ensuring the service fulfils its statutory (and non statutory) functions.
20. The risk appetite for the Directorate is such that red / amber residual risks reflect the significant external challenges within which it operates and that the fact that the worst-case scenario consequence may involve the death of, or serious injury to a child. Risk management at an individual child level underpins all the work undertaken by the Directorate in order to mitigate this risk.

(b) Internal Audit Engagement and Response

21. The Directorate works closely and meets on a regular basis with Internal Audit to ensure robust management of internal audits and actions arising. This includes providing key supporting information to Internal Audit on audits to be undertaken and reports to the Children's Management Team on the schedule, outcomes and progress made.

Internal Audit Assurance

22. The Directorate currently has 4 audits with open recommendations, with 8 outstanding actions (3 red, 3 red / amber and 2 amber / green) and 1 action to be closed pending provision of evidence. The Directorate response to some of the recommendations has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and this has led to some delays in closing recommendations.
23. It is noted that 4 of the recent audits resulted in assurance ratings of "insufficient with major improvement needed". These audits were helpful in supporting the Directorate to confirm where the issues were, clearly identify what improvements were needed, and to refresh systems to address the issues.
24. The nature of the services provided by the Directorate, combined with current difficulties being experienced in relation to market sufficiency issues, clearly influenced the outcome of audits relating to contracts and commissioning - with the Directorate currently having a high proportion of off contract spend. This has helped us to successfully make a business case for establishing a dedicated Commissioning Team within Children's Services. The posts for the team have been established and recruitment is currently ongoing. We are confident that

having this team in place will enable us to have more robust oversight of the commissioning process, bring more spend within contracts and improve contract monitoring systems.

25. The table below summarises the position with respect to Internal Audit recommendations and paragraphs 26 to 31 provide some narrative commentary.

Audit	Report Status	Assurance Rating	Outstanding Actions	Completed Actions	Total Actions	Implementation Status
2021/22						
Child Health & Disability	Final	Effective with opportunity for improvement	0	9	9	All actions completed
Payments to Care Leavers	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	2	15	17	2 recommendations requiring input from other Directorates;
Contract Monitoring and Management	Final	No opinion assigned (sampled as part of wider corporate audit)	3	2	5	2 recommendations due 31.03.23 1 recommendation to be closed on provision of evidence
Pre-Contract Assurance	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	1	0	1	1 recommendation due 31.03.23
2020/21						
Children's Residential Placements	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	3	0	3	3 recommendations due 31.12.22
Commissioning and Procurement - Social Services	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	0	5	5	All actions completed

Child Health & Disability (CH&D)

26. All recommendations have been implemented and the audit is closed. Examples of improvements made as a result of the audit include the CH&D Needs Panel process and use of PowerBi for performance management.

Payments to Care Leavers

27. 2 recommendations remain outstanding – both of which are pending input from other Directorates – in relation to safe insurance levels and provision of VAT guidance for staff. Examples of improvements made as a result of the audit include reinforcement of the need to ensure digital payments are made where possible and a review of safe contents procedures.

Contract Monitoring and Management

28. 3 recommendations remain outstanding - 1 of which will be closed on receipt of evidence. The remaining 2 recommendations will be progressed when the Commissioning Team is in place – Children's Services have not previously had a Commissioning structure in place and require the resource to progress the recommendations. The recommendations are on target to be completed by the due date of 31st March 2023.

Pre-Contract Assurance

29. 1 recommendation remains outstanding, which, as above, will be progressed when the Commissioning Team is in place. The recommendation is on target to be completed by the

due date of 31st March 2023. As a result of this audit a piece of work is being undertaken to review off contract spend and understand the reasons for it, to ensure that future spend is contracted.

Children's Residential Placements

30. 3 recommendations remain outstanding and are due to be delivered by 31st December 2022. These include the development of written procedures and a process around the use of scanned signatures.

Commissioning and Procurement - Social Services

31. All recommendations have been implemented and the audit is closed. In response to this audit a system has been put in place to request regular review of the GR/IR account, with provision of training for staff regarding the process that needs to be followed.

(c) The Wider Control Environment

Senior Management Assurance

32. The Children's Management Team continues to engage in the review of Senior Management Assurance Statements (SMAS). The Directorate considers application of all areas of the statement, taking account of progress made since the previous statement. Due to the ongoing response to the pandemic, completion of the SMAS for 2021/22 was led by the Director, and informed by the close oversight of all areas of the Directorate that resulted from daily meetings of the Children's Management Team.
33. The Directorate position in 2021/22 was primarily assessed as "strong" application (20 items) with 1 item assessed as "embedded" (planning delivery) and 7 items assessed as "mixed application". To support progression from "mixed" to "strong" application, improvement actions are identified and linked to the Directorate Delivery Plan wherever possible to ensure ongoing monitoring of progress.
34. The Directorate has also recently completed a self-assessment relating to COVID-19 recovery.
35. Delivery of services to improve outcomes for children and achieve corporate objectives requires a partnership approach between Children's Services and key partner agencies, both internal to the Council and external. Robust governance arrangements are integral to ensuring that collaboration with our partners works well and supports the delivery of key services to children and young people. Partnership and governance arrangements are in place across our multi-agency initiatives – including the Regional Partnership Board, Regional Safeguarding Board, Youth Justice Board and Starting Well Partnership, to name a few. Work to align internal delivery mechanisms with partnership programmes is ongoing.
36. In terms of senior management assurance, the key issue for the Directorate at present is budget management.

Budget Management

37. The budget position at month 4 was projecting an £8.95 million overspend primarily as a result of two risk areas. These are in relation to placements and bespoke support arrangements for children looked after and the appointment of agency social workers to cover permanent social worker vacancies. Work to monitor the budget position is considerable and ongoing and

includes regular meetings of the service accountant with Operational Managers and detailed oversight of the impact of key areas of spend in the Children's Management Meeting.

38. As mentioned in paragraph 16 above, the Directorate is currently faced with considerable challenges in relation to sufficiency of placements for children who need to be looked after. This has resulted in an increasing number of children being placed in high-cost placements, and an increase in the number of children in placements that are operating without registration being maintained by high cost bespoke support packages.
39. The position with respect to Children's Services has resulted in the establishment of an urgent programme of work with support from corporate colleagues to seek to reduce spend and deliver improvements across a range of services linked specifically to the issue of external placements. Progress is reported to a new weekly Improving Placement Options Board that is chaired by the Director of Social Services. This work is being dovetailed with our implementation of The Right Place Model in Cardiff, based on the North Yorkshire Model and our work to develop our accommodation portfolio – for in house placements and bases for staff. The number and complexity of cases coming through combined with the inability of the market to provide placement solutions is unprecedented at this time. The position stated includes a number of high cost bespoke placements that are currently being reviewed and any step downs or changes once confirmed will be reflected in future monitoring reports. The action being taken to mitigate the position includes focussed work on:
 - a. Managing placement requests
 - b. Maximising the current placement options
 - c. Looking at options for move on
 - d. Developing the support market in Cardiff
 - e. Developing Foster Care options to meet complex needs
 - f. Addressing specific issues around unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
 - g. Improving data reporting and financial analysis arrangements
 - h. Maximising opportunities for additional grant funding and appropriate partner contributions
40. In terms of further monitoring of the Children's Services financial position, future periods will continue to reflect outcomes from the work being undertaken currently. The position also currently assumes no external grant funding is receivable and again this will be adjusted if, as in previous years, grants are made available by Welsh Government to support pressure in this area.
41. In relation to point c above, succession planning is taking place for individual children and young people to ensure that plans for moves to independence are in place, freeing up their current placements for other children who need them. This planning also takes account of financial projections so the impact on our budget can be closely monitored at an individual child level, improving our financial controls. It is important to note that all of these decisions must first and foremost take account of the needs of the child and be in the best interest of the child, and not financially motivated.
42. As mentioned in the points above, we are also working to develop our in-house fostering service and have set out ambitious plans to develop our accommodation portfolio to increase residential accommodation provision in Cardiff. One particular achievement to date is the development of a 6-bed provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in partnership with the Salvation Army.
43. These arrangements are monitored in detail by the Children's Management Team on a weekly basis as we strive to reduce our projected overspend whilst ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded.

44. In relation to workforce, we continue to implement our workforce strategy to reduce our reliance on agency social workers. The national issue with recruitment of experienced social workers means that we cannot simply recruit permanent social workers to fill vacancies. As a result, our workforce strategy is predicated upon a prudent approach to social work, whereby we ensure that social workers only do what only social workers can do. As example of this is the use of short-term monies from Welsh Government to pilot the use of Social Worker Resource Assistants as a proof of concept. These staff undertake tasks that previously fell to social workers, such as arranging and minuting core group meetings, although they do not require a social work qualification. We have, however, in tandem continued our work to recruit and retain social workers by working closely with local universities, developing our induction process and putting additional supports in place to improve quality and consistency across the service.
45. In the context of current demand for services, and the complexity and co-morbidity of issues being faced by the children for whom we provide care and support, there is significant pressure on the Children’s Services budget. To this end we are continuing to look for new and innovative ways of working that will support us to meeting this demand / need, and to do so with ever increasing efficiency. In addition to the workstreams set out above, we are looking at implementing the NEST (Nurturing, Empowering, Safe and Trusted) trusted adult concept using key workers who don’t necessarily need to be social workers. This approach dovetails with our prudent social work approach and recognises the importance of having a trusted adult so children and young people have an adult in their life who understands them and who they can turn to when they are feeling sad, worried or angry.
46. The Children’s Services budget is monitored by the Policy, Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee as part of the overall Council budget position.

External Assurance

47. External assurance is an important consideration for the Directorate and key external assurance activity is summarised in the table below.

External Audit / Inspection Area	Provider	Report Date	Rating Opinion /	Number of Actions	Completed Actions	Management Comments
Children’s Services	Care Inspectorate Wales	November 2020	N/A	12	5	Implementation of work in relation to the 2020 report is ongoing and monitored regularly.
Youth Justice Service	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation	February 2022	Requires improvement	7	0	7 actions from HMIP – 4 for the Youth Justice Board, 3 for the Youth Justice Service. A wider updated action plan is in place and monitored regularly.

48. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales. They are responsible for registering, inspecting and taking action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales. Inspections are followed up with reports setting out good practice and areas for improvement that are fed into Directorate planning processes to ensure that required improvements are made. Inspectors meet with senior managers on a regular basis to review and challenge performance. Representatives from CIW meeting with the Director of Children’s Services on a regular basis and The Local Authority Social Services Annual Report is a key source of information for CIW.
49. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook a full follow up inspection of the Youth Justice Service in March / April 2022. The report was published in August and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) have since confirmed that, as a result of the finding, Cardiff Youth Justice Service should no longer be considered a priority status service. This complete de-escalation is in recognition of the progress that has been made over the course of the last

few years, and demonstrates the confidence that the YJB have in operational management and senior leadership within Cardiff to continue to deliver improvement and positive outcomes for children.

50. Completion of a survey in relation to Care Planning for Children and Young People Subject to the Public Law Outline (pre-proceedings) is ongoing to feed into a thematic review being undertaken by CIW. This will be followed up with fieldwork activity being undertaken in 6 of the 22 Welsh local authorities – confirmation of whether Cardiff will be one of these local authorities is pending.

Value for Money

51. As referenced in paragraph 24 above, work to respond to market sufficiency issues is ongoing – this should also help us to better achieve value for money – both in year and long term. Our implementation of recommendations in relation to contract / commissioning audits will support us to achieve value for money. For example, our review of off contract spend, mentioned in paragraph 24 above will support us to improve controls in this area by bringing spend within contracts. We have also implemented an Interventions Hub which brings together all of our in house support services. A process is in place to ensure that the potential for in house support is explored before agency support is procured – this will also help us to reduce spend in this area and will achieve value for money by maximising use of in house resources.
52. The implementation of The Right Place model and work to address market sufficiency is intrinsically linked to the initiative to embed not-for profit models in our commissioning arrangements that are tailored to the needs of young people in our city and are able to meet the level of demand we are experiencing. Meetings have taken place with local small / medium enterprise providers in relation to the not-for profit objective and models are being considered. An example of use of this model that we have implemented this year is our work with the Salvation Army to open a new 6 bed unit specifically for unaccompanied asylum seeking children mentioned in paragraph 42 above.
53. In terms of workforce, we also expect our prudent approach to social work (as set out in paragraph 44 above) to deliver value for money as staff such as Social Work Assistants and Resource Assistants can be recruited at lower grades than social workers as a qualification is not required. Agency social workers continue to be engaged where required and their work is monitored via the performance management and supervision processes outlined in paragraph 13 above in order to ensure that they are performing at the level expected, given the cost of engaging these workers. It is our aim to reach a position whereby agency social workers are only used to cover posts on a short term basis.
54. A hybrid approach to working resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has improved value for money in terms of reducing travel time, reducing printing costs and increasing use of hybrid mail.
55. The Directorate is acutely aware of the difficulty in balancing the often competing priorities of meeting the needs of children with achieving value for money from the public purse. We will continue to strive to do so and will ensure adherence to the recently issued corporate guidance relating to managing and monitoring spend in the context of the current budget situation.

Complaints Handling

56. Further to the above information, Governance & Audit Committee has also requested assurance in relation to complaints handling within Children's Services. This is set out in the paragraphs below.
57. In October 2021 Social Services complaints were split to become separate teams for Children's and Adult Services. This provided us with an opportunity to review and redesign our processes to ensure that they best support the Directorate in responding to and learning lessons from complaints. A Complaints Officer is in post to manage the complaints and representations process with support of a lead Operational Manager.
58. Following receipt of a Stage 1 complaint, the Complaints Officer shares it with the relevant Operational Manager and Team Manager. The concerns are reviewed by the managers who will provide the Complaints Officer with the information required for a response to be drafted. The draft response is checked by the Operational Manager before being sent to the Director for approval allowing for changes to be made if required before responses to complaints are issued.
59. All complaints are recorded and weekly updates / meetings are held between the Complaints Officer and Operational Managers to discuss open complaints. Throughout the process, holding responses are sent to the complainant if a delay is identified. The regulatory requirement for responding to Stage 1 complaints is 15 working days. The average time taken for Children's Services to respond in 2021/22 was 43 working days. The delay was in part due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic whereby responses to urgent child protection issues were being prioritised.
60. The Children's Management Team are provided with information regarding the open complaints on a weekly basis, providing a more in depth dive into complaints. This information is also used by Operational Managers on a weekly basis in their role in overseeing responses to complaints relating to their area of responsibility.
61. Where complainants are not happy with the response they have received at Stage 1, they are entitled to request a Stage 2 (formal) investigation. This is undertaken by an independent investigator outside of the Council who will meet with those involved, including the complainant and put together recommendations based on the outcomes of the investigation. Following this, complainants are entitled to contact the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.
62. An annual complaints report is produced and linked to the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report – setting out process, themes and lessons learned. Learning from complaints forms part of our Quality Assurance Framework and an action plan is in the process of being produced to ensure that learning is fed back into service development.
63. In order to further develop our systems, we will shortly be moving to the Halo Service Desk system for recording and monitoring complaints. Rollout is expected before the end of the financial year.
64. Children's Services also record compliments. Compliments can be received in any way and are shared with the Complaints Team for collation and so that themes can be identified and fed into lessons learned as per the complaints mechanism set out above. Children's services received 152 compliments in 2021/22.

Legal Implications

65. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Financial Implications

66. The financial implications (if any) arising from this report have been contained within the body of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

67. That the Governance and Audit Committee considers and notes the content of the report.

Deborah Driffield
Director of Children's Services

The following are attached:

Appendix A – Corporate Risk Register (Children's Services)
Appendix B – Directorate Risk Register (Children's Services)
Appendix C – Presentation