



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children’s Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8 March 2024
Subject:	Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2022-23

Summary:

This report introduces the Annual Complaints Report for Children’s Services. This is a statutory requirement and serves to update the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the performance of Children’s Services in relation to complaints. The report only addresses complaints relating to Children’s Social Care in line with the statutory requirement and does not contain any data relating to complaints about the wider Children’s Services.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and comment on the Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23 and note the low numbers of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld.

1. Background

The report attached at Appendix A provides the Committee with information on the complaints received by Children's Social Care for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

A total of 129 contacts were received in 2022/2023 from individuals wishing to complain about the service. Of these complaints, 27 were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, accounting for 21% of all contacts received. To put this into context, Children’s Services received 49974 contacts for social care, of which 7140 opened as referrals. 1.8% of all referrals led to a complaint being made. This is a reduction of seven complaints from the previous year.

With the resolution of 27 contacts outside of the complaints process, to the service users satisfaction, 2022/2023 saw an overall decrease of the complaints entering the formal process of 6%. The authority as a whole has seen a significant increase in the number of complaints recorded with the average increase across services being 19%. Children’s Services has continued to try and resolve concerns as early as possible despite the additional pressures seen over the course of the year.

Only seven of the 102 complaints were fully upheld which is a significant decrease from 29 upheld complaints in 2021-2022.

28 complaints were partially upheld. The main themes for full and partially upheld complaints are lack of communication, assessment errors and delays in service. The staff involved are provided with direct feedback, but lessons learned from complaints are actioned and disseminated in line with the Children’s Services quality assurance framework.

2022/2023 saw two complaints escalated to the second stage of the statutory complaints process. The main aspects of these complaints were disagreement with assessment outcome and lack of service.

2. Conclusion

It is reassuring that the on-going investment and work in resolving issues informally wherever this is possible continues to keep the number of complaints low. Children's Services, despite the difficult circumstances and current workforce pressures, has remained focused on achieving early resolution for individuals dissatisfied or concerned around what is being delivered. This is reflected in a reduction in the number of complaints entering the formal process, despite challenges.

In addition to the above, the Children’s Services focus on providing robust responses, addressing all concerns, at the first stage of the formal complaints process has seen only two cases enter the statutory stage two process. The area should continue to focus on the informal resolution of cases in early resolution in order to maintain the positive figures achieved.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Social Care Statutory Complaints Report 2022 to 2023

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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