

Open Report on behalf of Jo Kavanagh, Assistant Director - Early Help

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	18 October 2019
Subject:	Annual Review of Complaints for Children's Services

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 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:

Member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are requested to consider the Annual Report on complaints and endorse the priorities for 2019-20.

1. Background

Lincolnshire County Council is an authority that welcomes all feedback which may serve to increase understanding of the experiences of customers who receive services. With this in mind, the authority is keen to make use of complaints as a means of improving services for children and their families. It is anticipated that the speedy resolution of complaints will maximise the prospect of a good outcome.

This report is written in compliance with the statutory complaints guidance issued by the Department of Education – "Getting The Best From Complaints". The report deals with complaints by Children, Young People and their families received between the period of 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. This report is provided under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. This report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to produce a report.

This report seeks to outline the themes which arise from complaints received and identify any learning which may be required in order to improve service provision.

2. Conclusion

During 2018/19 there have been significant changes in relation to how complaints within Children's Services are managed.

The implementation of a restorative approach to complaints has altered the way in which complaints are dealt with. The impact of this has been that complaints from 2018-19 are the lowest they have been in ten years, down from 158 (2017-18) to 119 of which only 7 were substantiated. If a customer expresses dissatisfaction, there is an expectation that staff will discuss what they can do to address this, with the aim of resolving issues without the need for a formal complaint. There have been more meetings between complainants and the Complaints Manager and/or Children's Service Managers in an attempt to mitigate and resolve matters face to face when issues of dissatisfaction are raised. The policy and procedures have been updated to reflect these changes.

Additional practice changes in Children's Services have supported a more restorative way of working, for example the new Child and Family Assessment is done with children and families and the new care plan is also written with children and young people. Reports and assessments are starting to be written more frequently to children and young people and this is reflected in the Quality Assurance (QA) work that has been undertaken.

The Feedback Service has been brought back in house from March 2019. There have been additional resources deployed to support the service. This has improved frequency and value of the contacts between the Service and Children's Services. The Complaint Manager is scheduled to attend some locality events and Team Meetings to further raise the profile of complaints and the new service and procedures.

A comprehensive action plan has been collated to build on the improvements to date.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not required

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Annual Complaints Report 2018-19

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, who can be contacted on 01522730286 or carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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