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Christopher Potter

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Agenda

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Time	5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Members of the committee	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), S Ellis (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, R Downer, S Hendry, J Lever and N Stuart
Co-opted	Catherine Hobbs (Diocesan), Rob Sanders (Diocesan) Vacancy 1 (Parent/Governor), Vacancy 2 (Parent/Governor)
	Democratic Services Officer: Megan Tuckwell democratic.services@iow.gov.uk

1. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

To note any changes in membership of the Committee made in accordance with Part 4B paragraph 5 of the Constitution.

2. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 10)

To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To invite Members to declare any interest they might have in the matters on the agenda.



Details of meetings can be viewed on the Council's Committee [website](#). This information may be available in alternative formats on request. Please note the meeting will be audio recorded and the recording will be placed on the website (except any part of the meeting from which the press and public are excluded). Young people are welcome to attend Council meetings however parents/carers should be aware that the public gallery is not a supervised area.

4. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Committee regarding its workplan. Questions may be asked without notice but to guarantee a full reply, a question must be put (including the name and address of the questioner) in writing or email to democratic.services@iow.gov.uk, no later than two clear working days before the meeting. The deadline for submitting written questions is Monday, 4 September 2023.

5. **Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings**
(Pages 11 - 12)

To receive an update on the progress against the outcomes arising from previous meetings, and to provide an update on any outstanding actions.

6. **School Place Planning** (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive a verbal update on the current position with regards to school place planning, and to consider the next steps.

7. **Youth Provision** (Pages 15 - 16)

To hear from the Youth Council regarding youth provision and the problems with accessing provision on the Island.

8. **School Transport** (Pages 17 - 30)

To consider the trends in school transport activity and costs, as well as the plans and initiatives underway to try and manage these costs.

9. **Isle of Wight Start for Life and Family Hub Programme** (Pages 31 - 44)

To consider a report on the development of the Isle of Wight Family Hub offer and the delivery plan.

10. **Annual Complaints Report** (Pages 45 - 92)

To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented.

11. **Workplan** (Pages 93 - 96)

To consider any amendments to the current workplan.

12. **Members' Question Time**

A question may be asked at the meeting without prior notice but in these circumstances there is no guarantee that a full reply will be given. To guarantee a reply, a question must be submitted in writing or by email to democratic.services@iow.gov.uk no later than 5pm on Tuesday, 5 September 2023.

CHRISTOPHER POTTER
Monitoring Officer
Wednesday, 30 August 2023

Interests

If there is a matter on this agenda which may relate to an interest you or your partner or spouse has or one you have disclosed in your register of interests, you must declare your interest before the matter is discussed or when your interest becomes apparent. If the matter relates to an interest in your register of pecuniary interests then you must take no part in its consideration and you must leave the room for that item. Should you wish to participate as a member of the public to express your views where public speaking is allowed under the Council's normal procedures, then you will need to seek a dispensation to do so. Dispensations are considered by the Monitoring Officer following the submission of a written request. Dispensations may take up to 2 weeks to be granted.

Members are reminded that it is a requirement of the Code of Conduct that they should also keep their written Register of Interests up to date. Any changes to the interests recorded on that form should be made as soon as reasonably practicable, and within 28 days of the change. A change would be necessary if, for example, your employment changes, you move house or acquire any new property or land.

If you require more guidance on the Code of Conduct or are unsure whether you need to record an interest on the written register you should take advice from the Monitoring Officer – Christopher Potter on (01983) 821000, email christopher.potter@iow.gov.uk, or Deputy Monitoring Officer - Justin Thorne on (01983) 821000, email justin.thorne@iow.gov.uk.

Notice of recording

Please note that all meetings that are open to the public and press may be filmed or recorded and/or commented on online by the council or any member of the public or press. However, this activity must not disrupt the meeting, and if it does you will be asked to stop and possibly to leave the meeting. This meeting may also be filmed for live and subsequent broadcast via a hosted internet site (except any part of the meeting from which the press and public are excluded).

If you wish to record, film or photograph the council meeting or if you believe that being filmed or recorded would pose a risk to the safety of you or others then please speak with the democratic services officer prior to that start of the meeting. Their contact details are on the agenda papers.

If the press and public are excluded for part of a meeting because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, there is no right to record that part of the meeting. All recording and filming equipment must be removed from the meeting room when the public and press are excluded.

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Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date and Time	THURSDAY 15 JUNE 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), D Adams, R Downer, S Hendry, T Outlaw, N Stuart and D Andre
Also Present	Deborah Price, Sarah Philipsborn and Melanie White
Also Present (Virtual)	Stuart Ashley, Stephanie How and Natalie Smith
Apologies	Cllrs J Lever

11. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

Apologies given by Cllr Lever and Cllr Ellis. Cllr Ellis to be substituted by Cllr Outlaw.

12. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 be approved.

13. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Hendry declared he was a School Governor for Holy Cross and Queensgate Primary Schools

Cllr Stuart declared he was employed as a coach at various schools.

Cllr Quigley declared that he had a child in the EHCP process.

14. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

A written question was submitted in relation to school place planning by Simon Richards, Chair of Governors of Haylands Primary School (PQ32/23)

Sam Pickard asked a verbal question in relation to the proposals to consult on school closures and sought clarity around the process. He asked to know what process was followed and how this was handled, including how did the Hampshire

Officers advise and how did the council make its decision on the proposal, the timing and the subsequent U-Turn.

The chair confirmed that a written response would be given to both questions.

Further to the written responses the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills added reassurance that the next steps were going forward, and an update would be provided shortly to all interested parties.

Following the public question, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills gave an acknowledgment of there not being enough information on the process and assured this would be included in the update due shortly that would explain the process that was followed.

15. Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings

The Chairman reported on progress with actions agreed at previous meetings.

16. Performance and Budget

A report on the performance of Children's Services for Quarter Four 2022/23 was presented to the committee which highlighted the demand and actions across children's social care and early help.

Information was provided on recruitment and retention, caseloads, shortage of skilled foster carers, education health care plans (EHCPs) and school attendance figures.

Questions were raised regarding the proportion of schools on the Island that were rated good compared to the national average.

A further discussion took place around the numbers of home educated children who were in fact 'voluntary' exclusions and had been encouraged by the school to be home educated. The Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion said the local authority stated that exclusions of that nature were unacceptable, and that any such situations were taken very seriously. A request for comparative data for elective home education (EHE) children was put forward and the Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion explained that there was no national EHE register so it was not a straightforward task and would take a little time to obtain.

Questions were also focused on the Isle of Wight attendance figures. It was highlighted that the Island had managed to get above the national attendance figures just before covid, but unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, they had dropped back. To address the situation, a pilot scheme of sending parents of Y11 pupils a letter on the importance of school attendance was undertaken during the Christmas break, as getting pupils back in during the first week of term was crucial. This strategy saw significant increases in attendance rates and would be repeated with other year groups.

Ofsted was discussed as were EHCPs. It was explained that many more parents put in for EHCPs than did teachers. It was felt that the number of plans was nowhere near the threshold, and of those instigated by parents and refused, 97% got accepted on appeal.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Performance and Budget report be noted.

17. **Fostering Annual Report 2022-2023**

The Service Manager presented the Fostering Annual Report 2022/23. The report provided an update on the Isle of Wight Council's fostering service in line with the fostering services statutory regulations and guidance.

The report explained the marketing drives and actions that the council had undertaken to recruit more foster carers and there was a target to recruit 10 new fostering households in 2023/24. Targets, however, for the recruitment of foster carers had fallen short and not been met in previous years, though this was a trend mirrored in other local authorities and was influenced by higher costs of living, the war in Ukraine and adjustments to life post lockdown.

The committee was shown statistics regarding foster carer and timelines of household reviews, supervised visits and unannounced visits.

It was concluded that the fostering team had continued to work well and had been able to demonstrate a greater level of compliance across all areas of work, the exception being unannounced visits and household reviews. Strategies had already been put in place to address performance in these areas over the coming year.

Questions were asked regarding the challenges facing staffing and the recruitment of foster carers.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Fostering Report be noted

18. **Adoption Annual Report 2022-23**

The Service Manager, Children in Care presented Adopt South Annual Report 2022/23 with reference to the Isle of Wight Council Highlights. Adopt South is a regional adoption agency which includes the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local authorities.

The report gave an executive summary of the performance of Adopt South for the financial year looking at comparisons on activities since the launch in April 2019.

There were no questions fielded regarding this report.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Adopt South Annual Report be noted.

19. **Children's Social Care Review**

The Area Director Children's Services (Children and Families) presented a report on transforming social care for children and families with a special focus on family help.

The publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC) report in May marked a significant point in time, as it sought to create generational change across children's social care.

The Government's response 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' encompassed 6 key pillars for areas of change was shared with the committee.

It was explained to the committee how the role of family practitioners had been developed within the context of statutory and legal requirements, but also with the desire to lead in new and innovative ways of working.

The early help available on the Isle of Wight was highlighted with options of how the new and existing roles could knit together.

Questions were asked about outcomes with regards to caseloads and performance, and what could be quantitatively and qualitatively measured over the period of a year.

It was explained that the family practitioners had a positive impact on monitoring caseloads and that lower caseloads had a cost benefit.

Questions were also raised around recruitment and retention against the cost of agency staff. The committee were advised that once staff were settled and had lower caseloads there would be a cost benefit resulting from a reduction in agency workers.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Children's Social Care Review report on Family Help be noted.

20. **SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022**

The Advisor to the Isle of Wight SACRE presented the SACRE annual report 2021/22 to the committee.

It was stated that the law required religious education to be taught in schools, though RE was not part of the National Curriculum but a local responsibility. Every local educational authority was required to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education to support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools.

The actions and training of the SACRE were explained to the committee with a focus on the adoption and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus – Living Difference IV.

The Professional Advisor to the SACRE highlighted the advice and the support given to schools regarding the delivery of a quality religious education provision and a quality collective worship experience.

Questions were raised about how much time was spent on the teaching of the different religions in schools and the content of the syllabus. The committee were advised that each school would decide the amount of time dedicated to each religion.

Discussion also took place on the resources available to teachers.

RESOLVED:

THAT the SACRE Annual Report be noted.

21. **Committee's Work Plan**

The Committees work plan was shared for comment.

22. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Stuart asked a question regarding school place planning. It was suggested that the school places didn't match with what the Island needed and that a working party was needed to consider place planning in depth.

Cllr Downer asked about the works at Wroxall Primary School and why was it undertaken 5 years after the works were agreed. The Director of Children's Services advised that the short answer was that Officers were unable to action anything without permission from Cabinet, but a more detailed response would be provided.

The Chairman concluded that the subject of school place planning needed immediate action and that he was expecting to see something more concrete at the next meeting in September.

CHAIRMAN

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Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Committee - Progress on Actions & Outcomes

Meeting Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Update	Actioned
Outstanding Actions				
Actions Completed (Since Last Meeting)				
15 June 2023	Members Questions Cllr Downer raised a question on the works at Wroxal Primary School and was advised a written response would be received	Director of Children's Services	Response has been circulated to the committee	Jun-23

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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Topic	SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

BACKGROUND

At the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills on 1 September 2022, representatives from headteachers and school governors made a submission that highlighted the issue of school place planning, its impact upon the education of children and over-sufficiency of primary school places.

It was resolved that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills be requested to submit a report on school place planning, together with the statements from Isle of Wight Primary Headteachers and Primary Chairs of Governors, to Cabinet for consideration and identification of options regarding the future provision of primary education on the Island.

A report was due to go to Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in June 2023 but was withdrawn ahead of the meetings.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- What is the current situation with regards to school place planning?
- What are the next steps with regards to the strategic plan for school place planning?

APPROACH

A verbal update to be provided.

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer,
☎ 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk

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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Topic	YOUTH PROVISION ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

BACKGROUND

Following from Full Council on 19 July 2023 where the following public question was asked from the Youth Council: *'Does the Isle of Wight Council plan to support youth provisions by providing subsidised or more accessible transport, such as minibuses, to and from activities especially considering the financial strains placed upon families alongside the need to reduce isolation and loneliness in young people.'*

Alongside this Cllr Lilley submitted a motion that:

'IW Council resolves:

That every child and young person on the Isle of Wight should have accessible out of school youth service/provision that is of a consistent quality wherever they live on the Island. That the Council as the Unitary Authority works with every parish, community and town council, youth organisations, and voluntary sector to ensure every child and young person has equality in access to a youth (out of school) service across the Island.'

It was determined that to delve into the topic further it should go to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills, with representation from the Youth Council, to hear the voice of the Islands youth and understand the issues and challenges in accessing provision.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- What provision do young people want to be able to access and are unable to?
- What do the Youth Council see as the problems with accessing provision?
- What solutions can be put in place to aid in young people accessing provision?

APPROACH

Verbal representation to be received from members of the Youth Council.

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
☎ 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk

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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Topic	SCHOOL TRANSPORT

BACKGROUND

As part of the Education Act 1996 the authority must make suitable travel arrangements to facilitate an eligible child's attendance at school. These can include parents taking their child to school and receiving reimbursement for mileage, dedicated school buses, a pass for use on public buses or a seat in a taxi where more individualised arrangements are necessary.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 created new duties on the IWC to provide free transport for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Statutory guidance requires the local authority to review its Home to School Transport arrangements regularly to ensure that they provide the most cost-effective service.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- What current school transport policies are in place and when were they last reviewed?
- What are the trends in school transport activity and what are the associated costs?
- What plans and initiatives are underway to manage these costs?

APPROACH

A committee report to be received.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

Appendix 1 - Cost Increases for School Transport Report

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
☎ 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk

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Committee report

Committee	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Title	COST INCREASES FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORT
Report of	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the factors influencing Isle of Wight Council's (IWC) school transport cost pressures over the past 10-year period (2012/13 – 2022/23). Many local authorities have reported the growing concern regarding school transport cost pressures.¹
- 1.2 The overall cost of providing School Transport has increased from £3.6M in 2012/13 to £4.3M for 2023, whilst the number of children receiving school transport reduced from 2,317 to 1,614.
- 1.3 This report explores the differences in costs between transport for IWC mainstream, Special Education Needs (SEN) and Post 16 children and young people (CYP).
- 1.4 This paper tracks costs since 2012/13. This is because, in 2014, significant reforms to the legislation² applicable to SEN children came into operation. As a proportion of these children are eligible for transport assistance, these changes have had an impact on costs.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are 16,667³ pupils attending primary, secondary and SEN schools on the Island and 1,614 (9.7%) are eligible for school transport. The cohorts of pupils are broken down by the following: 1,111 mainstream pupils travel to school on buses under the Southern Vectis contract, providing the most cost-effective form of travel and 503 SEN pupils travel on a mix of small vehicles (taxi and minibus provision) that are at a higher unit cost due to the complex needs of the pupils.

1 As reported by the County Councils Network, 25th March 2022.

2 Education & Healthcare plans (EHCP) replaced Learning & Difficulty Assessments in 2014 and extended the rights of children & young people from 18 up to 25 for special education provision to meet their needs.

3 As informed by Summer 2023 Census.

- 2.2 The Education Act 1996 places a duty on Local Authorities (LA) to provide free home to school transport for all eligible children, which includes children with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND), those living outside of the statutory walking distance, or they cannot walk because of their special education needs or disability and those parents in receipt of free school meals or are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit.
- 2.3 The Department for Education (DfE) published revised school transport statutory guidance⁴ for all local authorities that came into effect from June 2023. The revision to policy includes considering parental preference of SEN school provision when assessing transport eligibility. This has the potential to increase SEN transportation costs as a parental preferred school could be a further distance compared to their nearest suitable school to their home address.
- 2.4 The number of mainstream children who are provided with school transport has fallen by 44% since 2012/13 from 1,992 to 1,111, total costs reduced from £2.9M to £1.9M over the same period. The reasons for the decline are outlined in section 3.

Figure 1: Number of Mainstream Pupils Provided by School Transport 2012/13 - 2023

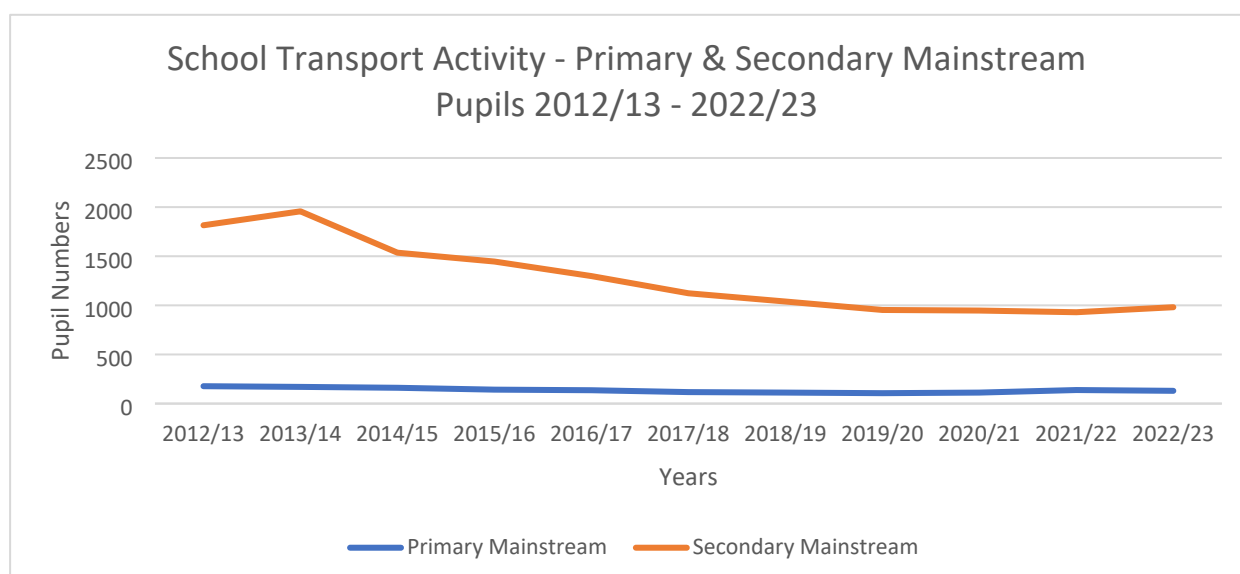


Table 1: Costs of Mainstream School Transport – 2012/13 – 2023

Transport Type	2012/13	2022/23	Change	% Change
Primary Mainstream	£251,047	£221,859	(£29,188)	(11.63)
Secondary Mainstream	£2,640,199	£1,674,179	(£966,020)	(36.59)
Total	£2,891,246	£1,896,038	(£995,208)	(34.42)

⁴ Revised DfE School Transport Statutory Guidance for children of compulsory school age came into effect on 29th June 2023.

2.5 The number of SEN children (excluding Post 16) on transport has more than doubled over the same period, increasing from 169 to 352, and total costs increased from £448,622 to £1.7M during this period.

Figure 2: Number of SEN Pupils Provided by School Transport 2012/13 - 2023

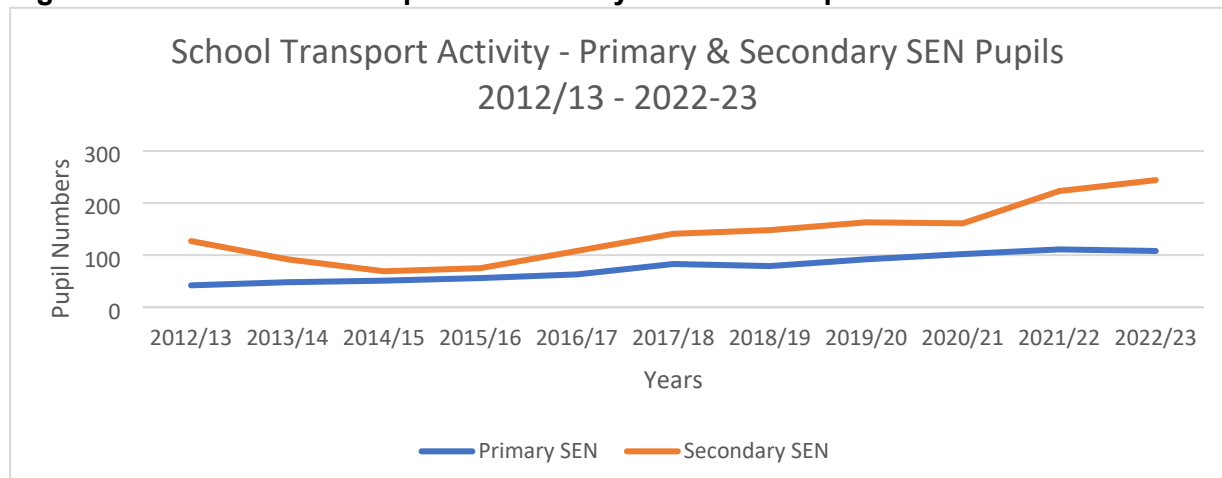


Table 2: Costs of SEN School Transport – 2012/13 – 2023

Transport Type	2012/13	2022/23	Change	% Change
Primary SEN	£111,492	£524,679	£413,187	370
Secondary SEN	£337,130	£1,185,386	£848,256	251
	£448,622	£1,710,065	£1,261,443	

2.6 Post 16 pupil numbers have increased by 44% from 105 to 151 during 2012/13 – 2022/23 period whilst costs have increased by over 160% from £278k to £733k.

Figure 3: Number of Post 16 Pupils Provided by School Transport 2012/13 - 2023

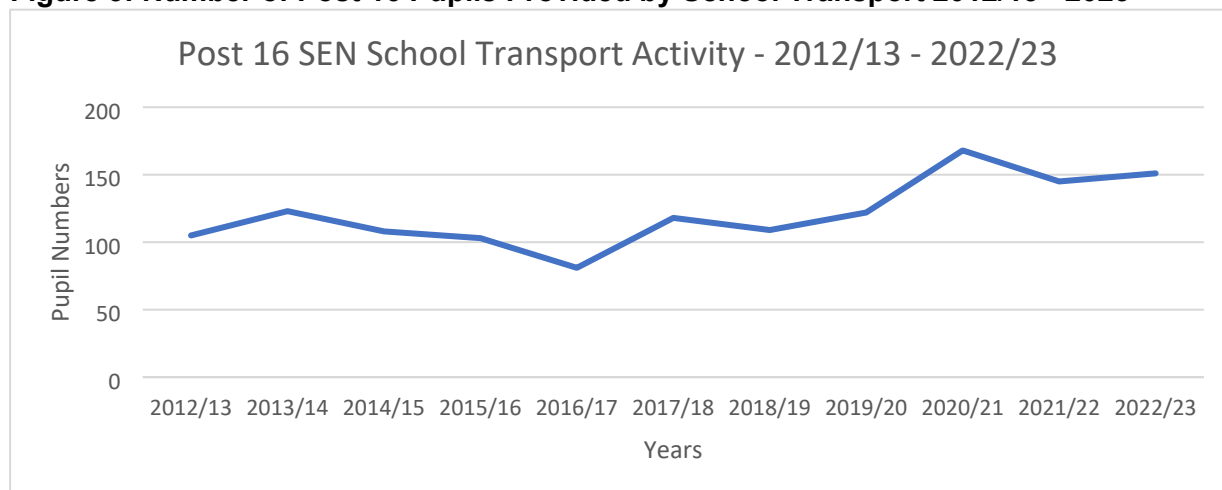


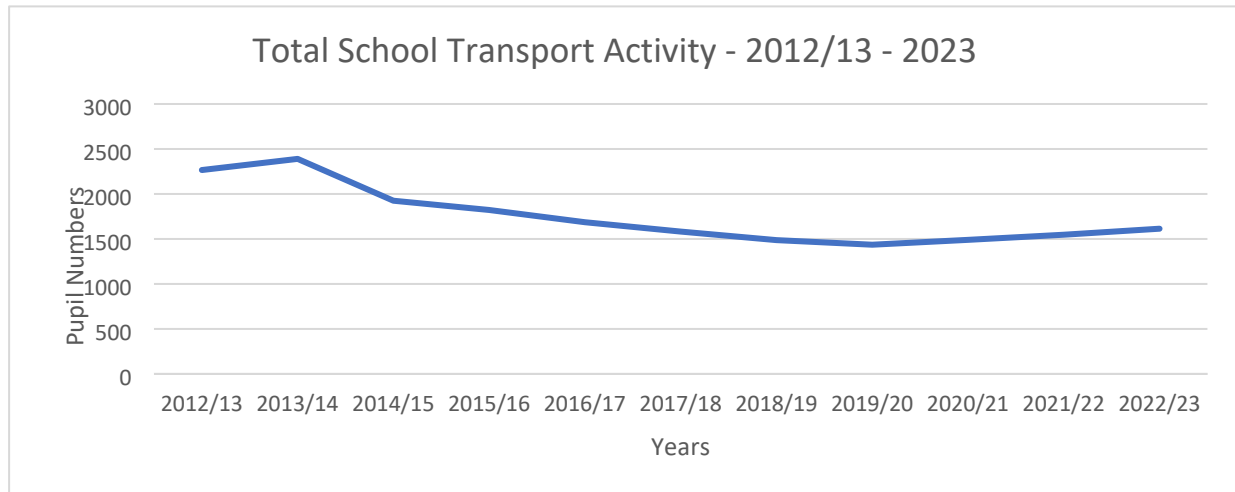
Table 3: Costs of Post 16 Transport – 2012/13 – 2023

Transport Type Post 16	2012/13	2022/23	Change	% Change
Total	£278,730	£733,579	£454,849	163%

3. Pupil Numbers by Cohort

3.1 Since 2012/13, the total number of children receiving School Transport has decreased from 2,317 to 1,614.

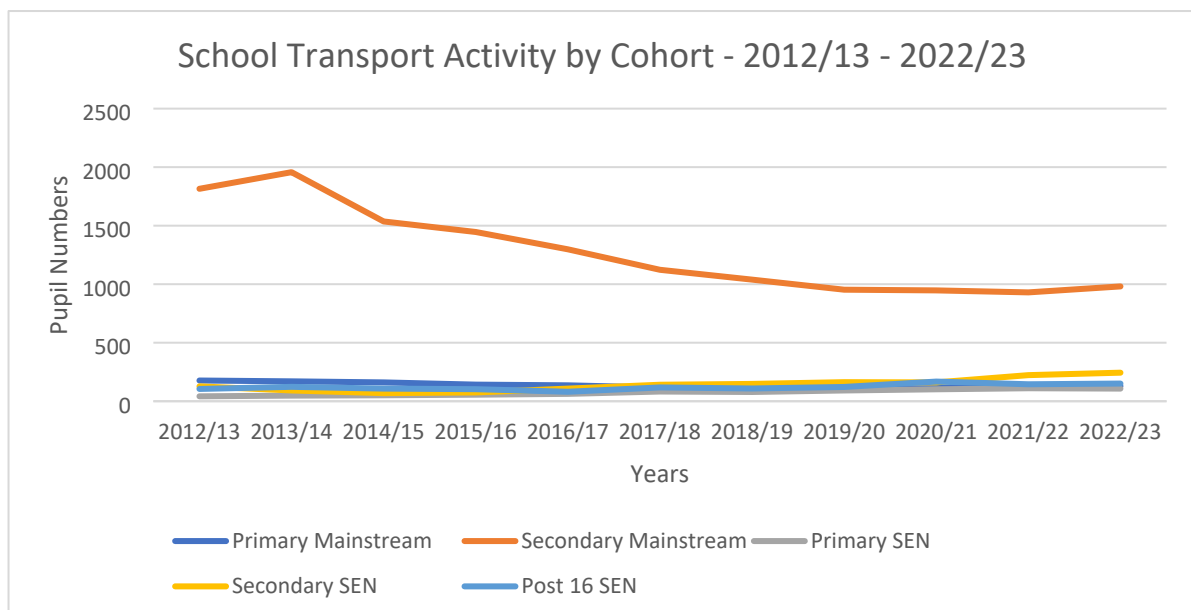
Figure 4: Total Number of Children receiving School Transport



3.2 This overall decrease reveals very different trends when comparing the numbers for mainstream and SEN transport provision.

3.3 The number of mainstream children receiving school transport has decreased from 1,992 to 1,111 (44%) since 2012/13. This includes a steep decline in transport for secondary children reducing from 1,815 to 981 (46%). This was a result of the combination of the removal of catchment areas in 2015/2016 and the DfE agreement for the Island Free School (IFS) to be opened in Ventnor. Prior to this, hundreds of children across South Wight (i.e., Ventnor and surrounding areas) were eligible for transport to Newport schools.

Figure 5: Number of Children receiving School Transport by Cohort



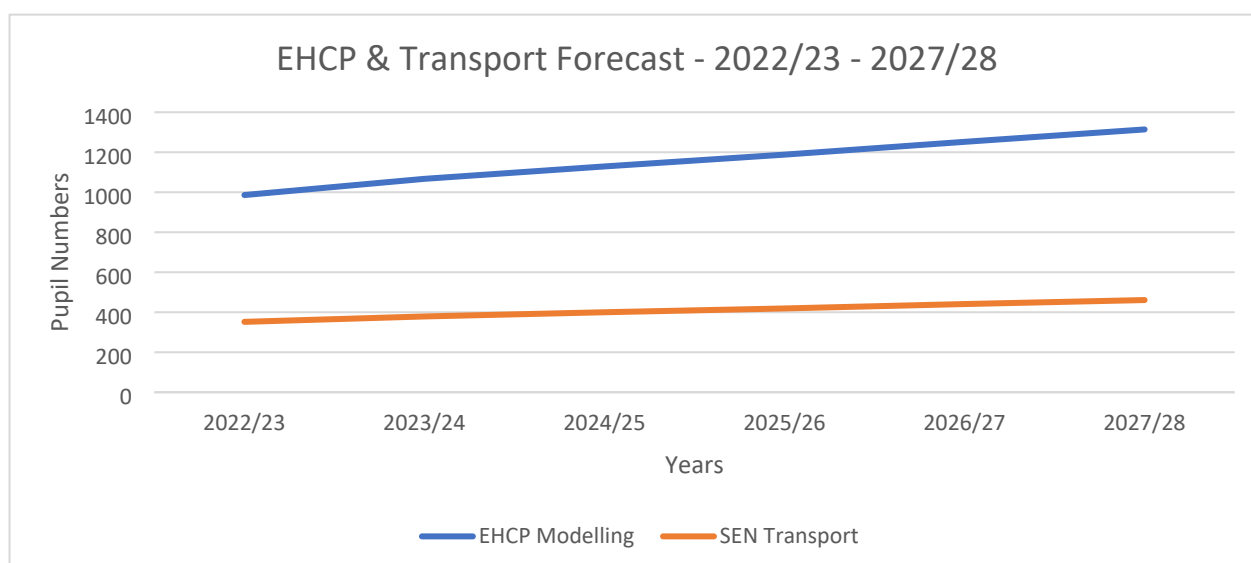
- 3.4 Over the same period, the number of SEN children receiving transport has increased from 169 to 352 (108%). Demand modelling⁵ indicates that this could increase to 461 by 2027/28.
- 3.5 The pressure on increased pupil numbers has been driven by SEND reforms introduced in 2014, where the rights of children and young people who required support for special education provision was extended from 18 up to 25. The reforms placed additional burden of requests for school transport beyond compulsory school age for 19–25-year-olds, who previously wouldn't have been eligible.

Table 4 – EHCP & SEN School Transport Forecast – Primary & Secondary

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
EHCP Modelling	986	1,067	1,129	1,188	1,252	1,314
SEN Transport	352	379	400	419	441	461
Ratio (average)	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%

Source: EHCP modelling at high mid-point based on safety valve growth/trend data coupled with flattening of population data (Census 2022/23).

Figure 6: SEN EHCP & Transport Forecast – 2022-23 – 2027/28



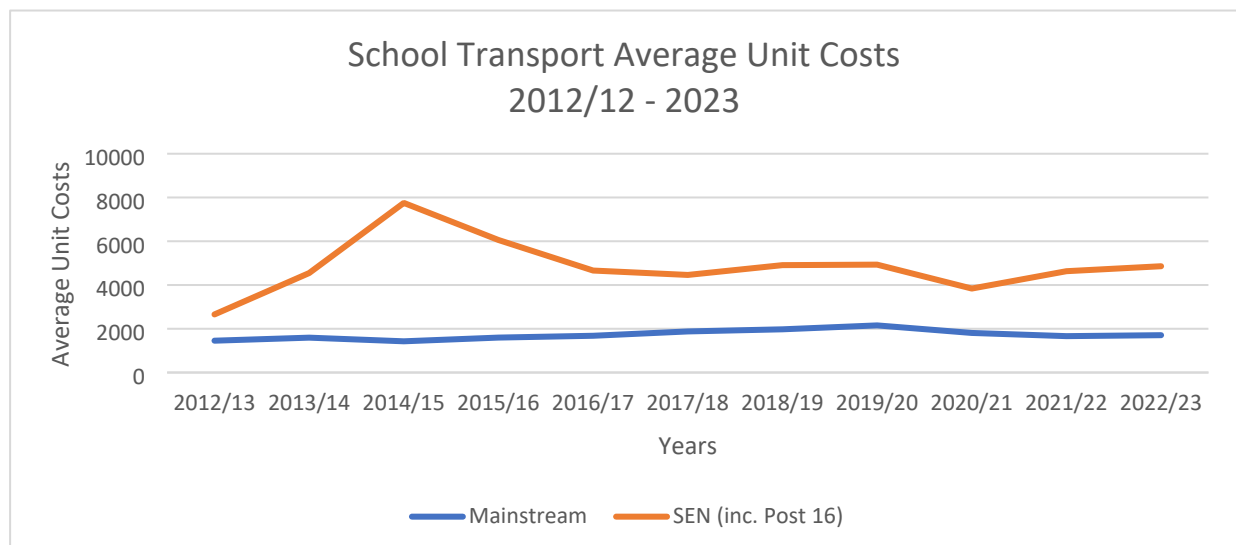
4. Cost of Transport by Cohort

- 4.1 Since 2012/13, the “unit cost” (the average cost of providing transport to each child) has risen for both mainstream and SEN cohorts.

⁵ Transport Data: Capita One reports were used as source data; Model assumes that the same percentage of SEN (pre-16) children receiving transport remains the same at 36% and represents an average for primary and secondary SEN, as per the 2022/23 academic year.

4.2 In the same period, for children travelling to mainstream schools, the unit cost rose by 17% from £1,451 to £1,707 per annum. Containing the increase over this period has been a significant achievement when considering the rate of inflation over this period. The increase is attributed to eligible pupils qualifying for Network passes to travel to and from school on public bus routes. The spend on Network passes rose by 23% in the academic year 2022/23 which included a 9.2% inflationary increase. A review of network passes will take place to establish whether further capacity can be found on more cost-effective contracted school transport.

Figure 7: School Transport Average Unit Costs – 2012/13 – 2023



4.3 In the same period, costs for SEN Children have increased, the comparable unit cost increased by 83% over the same period and average per child from £2,655 to £4,858 per annum. The demand for taxi arrangements has increased over the past 3 years by 80% from 67 contracts in 2020/21 to 119 in 2022/23 which is a significant contributing factor to the increased costs, along with the rise in eligible children.

4.4 For eligible children attending a mainstream school, the numbers of children travelling, and the total cost has decreased over time. It was £2.9M in 2012/13 and is £1.9M in 2022/23. The main reasons for the decline in mainstream pupils travelling is described in paragraph 3.3.

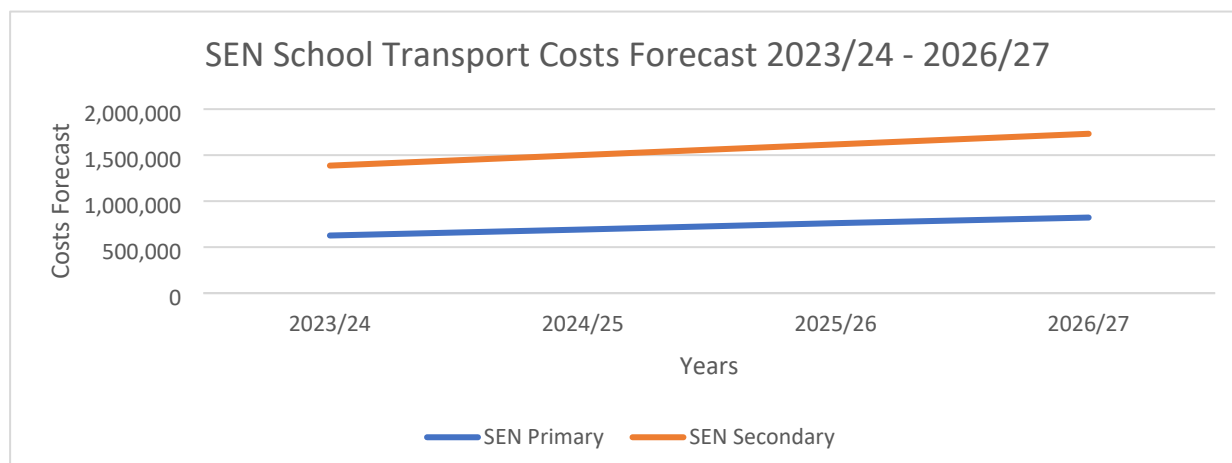
4.5 Over the same period, total SEN transport (excluding Post 16) costs have increased by 281%, from £448,622 to just over £1.7M, although children receiving transport has just over doubled. In 2012/13, SEN Transport accounted for 13% of the total transport spend, now it is 39%. The impact on SEND reforms has been covered in paragraph 3.5, further potential causes of this are outlined in section 5 of this report.

Table 5 – School Transport Proportion of Spend – 2012/13 - 2023

Type	2012/13	2012/13 Proportion	2022/23	2022/23 Proportion
Primary Mainstream	£251,047	6.91%	£221,859	5.11%
Secondary Mainstream	£2,640,199	73%	£1,674,179	38.5%
SEN Primary	£111,492	3%	£524,679	12%
SEN Secondary	£337,130	9.3%	£1,185,385	27.3%
Post 16/FE	£278,730	7.7%	£733,579	16.9%
Total	£3,618,597	100%	£4,339,681	100%

4.6 If current trends in the growth in numbers of SEN children continue (unmitigated),⁶ and the cost of transport for those children continue to rise, transport spend and activity for this cohort could increase to £2.6M by 2026, taking into account estimates of inflation. The total spend on school transport for all cohorts of children could reach £5.7M by 2026/27 based on current forecasts and trends.

Figure 8: SEN School Transport Cost Forecast – 2023/24 – 2026/27



5. Potential Reasons for the Rise in Costs

5.1 There is a shortage of places at dedicated SEN schools on the Island⁷, coupled with the number of children with an EHCP rising by 115% since 2014.⁸ Whilst not all children with an EHCP attend a special school, the rise in numbers creates extra pressure on places. The knock-on effect for transport is that when

⁶ This refers to no reduction in EHCP growth.

⁷ As referenced within the Safety Valve programme.

⁸ EHCP data from Capita One SEN Reporting suite.

a suitable place is found for a child, it can be further away and therefore the transport costs more.

- 5.2 Market factors: there is a lack of capacity in the transport provider market (taxis/minibuses) who are registered with the IW Council's Dynamic Procurement System (DPS). There are 40 licenced taxis registered on the DPS. With under-supply in the market, prices are driven up as a result of the lack of competition. There is also a lack of competition on the Island in regard to large vehicles/buses, with Southern Vectis being the main provider.
- 5.3 The narrow road structure on the Island results in the need for smaller vehicles to be used, which in turn increases the cost of transport. Smaller vehicles tend to be more expensive per mile than larger minibuses or buses. For example, the children travelling to St Catherines School, an independent non-maintained school (INMSS) are unable to travel by a larger vehicle due to the road layout. Instead, these children are currently distributed across 5-8 seat taxis and 4-seater taxis.
- 5.4 The Island has the 5th highest number of pupils with EHCP's across England⁹ and there is an increased demand in requests for specialist provision. To meet the shortfall in provision, more INMSS schools, and a range of education providers, based both on and off the Isle of Wight are used, to accommodate pupils and their learned needs.
- 5.5 Children with SEND are more likely to require an adapted vehicle or a Passenger Assistant, both of which are in short supply, or travel solo in a car. All of these factors increase the average cost of providing transport. For example, a current contract for a solo taxi provision in Newbury costs £39,000 per annum for two trips weekly, with a passenger assistant.
- 5.6 Inflationary pressures driven by the cost-of-living and fuel price increases have created pressures on operators to increase driver pay, this accounts for a proportion of smaller vehicles transporting 1-4 children. Of 93 taxi and minibus contracts in place across 2021/22 and 2022/23, 46 of these saw an increase in cost of over 10%.

6. Post 16 Transport

- 6.1 Transport to schools and to college/sixth form for students over 16 years old are not statutory requirements. The DfE statutory guidance allows local authorities to exercise discretion in this area. The Isle of Wight Council withdrew subsidised transport for mainstream Post 16 students in September 2017. The Council provides fully funded transport to Post 16 students with an EHCP, if deemed eligible. Post 16 students attending St Georges, as their named school will qualify for funded transport, providing they live over the 3-mile rule. The same entitlement applies to Post 16 institutions and colleges.

⁹ As referenced in the Safety Valve application.

The school transport policy states that if a child has been in receipt of home to school transports due to their EHCP requiring it for their school education (4 – 16-year-olds), the presumption is that such arrangements will continue.

- 6.2 Post 16 transport shares features with SEN transport, as the needs of the students are similar. However, as there are even fewer suitable placements, travel distances are further on average; most of the Post 16 provision is in the Newport area.¹⁰ Due to smaller numbers, it is also less likely that several students will be travelling on a similar route. Both these factors increase the costs.
- 6.3 Between 2012/13 - 2022/23, the number of Post 16 children with an EHCP receiving free of charge transport has risen by 44%, from 105 to 151 pupils. Total costs for post 16 transport in 2022/23 were just over £733k, based on 151 pupils travelling, an increase of 160% from £278k in 2012/13. The unit cost for post 16 travel has increased from £2,655 to £4,858 per annum over the same period. Forecasting suggests that this could increase to approximately £900k by 2026/27.¹¹

Table 6: Post 16 SEN Transport Growth

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
EHCP Modelling	412	422	423	420	418	420
Post 16 SEN Transport	151	156	156	156	156	157
Ratio	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%

Source: EHCP modelling at high mid-point across SEN & Post 16 based on safety value growth/trend data coupled with flattening of population data (Census 2022/23). Data includes Post 16 & 19 students.

7. Summary of Financial Position, Savings Achieved and Future Plans

- 7.1 A £154k cost pressure has been reported in Q1 of the 2023/24 financial year due to increased demand for SEN transport provision.
- 7.2 Following the retender exercise of the main Southern Vectis contract in September 2020, and wider review of transport provision, the service met formal savings targets of £321k in 2020/21 and £374k in 2021/22.
- 7.3 Strong supply chain management has kept mainstream cost increases below inflation.
- 7.4 Route optimisation activity has helped reduce cost pressures, for example, the removal of a higher cost taxi provision and pupils accommodated on existing

¹⁰ Due to smaller numbers of pupils travelling and different timetabling to their education settings when travelling from different areas of the Island. A spend to save scheme is to be investigated at one of our Post 16 providers.

¹¹ Assuming the same percentage of post 16 SEN children receiving transport remains at 36%, as per academic year 2022/23.

SEN small bus transportation reduced annual travel costs by £29k per annum (2022/23).

7.5 In order to address the cost pressures, a number of areas where savings and efficiencies may be possible:

- Optimised Route Planning: more efficient planning that enables transport routes to be consolidated and combined maximising vehicle capacity and cost effectiveness.
- Spend to Save Scheme: investigating the feasibility of providing minibuses to schools for their own use, on the condition that those schools use the vehicles to transport children to and from school using their own staff as drivers. This replaces the need for higher cost, operator lead, contracted transport.
- Parental Mileage Allowances: continuing to offer parents a mileage allowance to support them taking their own children to school, only if this is more cost-efficient than transport commissioned through contracted operators.
- Process efficiencies: reviewing and ensuring the strict application of the school transport policy, in particular higher cost SEN transport decision making.
- Personal Transport Budgets: exploring the viability of developing and offering personal transport budgets to parents and families that replace high cost commissioned transport. If viable this option would require an update to the transport policy.
- Funding has been secured for a new 75 place SEN school and has been identified to be situated on the Old Carisbrooke College site. This provision would support children with special education needs from 2026/27 and could reduce overall transport costs depending on the geographical area for current and future children and young people eligible for transport.
- There is also the potential to reconsider eligibility for post 16 transport and only offer a statutory minimum service by introducing a parental contributory to the overall costs of transport. This would be subject to consultation.
- To review all discretionary elements of the policy in line with updated DfE guidance. Currently the IWC school transport policy includes a number of discretionary entitlements including homeless entitlement,¹² looked after children (moving from placements)¹³ and Year 10 & Year 11 (house move during GCSE's).¹⁴

12 For those families who may experience homelessness free transport will be provided for a maximum period of six months for the children of families who have been relocated to a different area but have registered a request with the Housing Department to return to their previous area when permanent accommodation becomes available.

13 For children in the care of the Local Authority free transport (limited to a bus pass only) will be provided to children who move family placement but wish to remain at their current school.

14 If a pupil attending their nearest secondary school and qualifying for free transport moves house nearer to a different secondary school, the Council will provide free transport to the original school, where this is requested by parents, provided that the pupil has attended for one academic term and that the move takes place while the pupil is in years 10 and 11 (GCSE) only. The service to the original school will normally only be provided by public service bus pass.

8. Changes that could reduce Transport Cost Pressures

- 8.1 The containment of increasing costs and demand is out of the control of the Local Authority without changes to statutory policy. However, as outlined in this report, the increases in school transport expenditure on the Island are driven by SEN and Post 16 demand.
- 8.2 If central government were to delegate responsibility for setting school transport policy to local authorities, such policies could take into account local demography, infrastructure and deprivation. This could facilitate:
- Through means testing, asking those families who can afford to pay, to make a contribution to the cost of school transport. Administration overheads charges would need to be factored into means testing which would be offset by income generation.
 - Amending the eligibility criteria and placing greater emphasis on parents' responsibilities to get their children to school. For example, children would only become eligible if they live further than the statutory distance and where their parents can demonstrate that they are unable to get them to school.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The report has analysed school transport costs over the past 10 years.
- 9.2 Overall costs of school transport have increased by 20% from £3.6M (2012/13) to £4.3M (2023). Cost containment has been a significant achievement given prices have increased on average by 36% over the same period.¹⁵
- 9.3 Through robust commissioning costs have been contained, the renewal of the mainstream transport contract achieved a £321k in 2020/21 and £374k in 2021/22. Overall increase in costs through the 10-year period has been contained to 17%.
- 9.4 The main drivers of cost pressures in school transport are SEN and post 16 transportation. This is due to rising demand and costs that are significantly beyond inflation. These factors are outside of the service's control and difficult to influence.
- 9.5 The revised school transport statutory guidance may further impact SEN transport costs as parental preference must be taken into consideration with naming a school within the student's EHCP. A parental preference school may be further away from the pupil's home address potentially increasing costs.
- 9.6 The rise in school transport costs and demand can only be curbed by a statutory change to policy.

¹⁵ As reported by Bank of England using Office for National Statistics inflation data based on CPI.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Pursue proposals that help reduce cost pressure within the school transport service. These include route optimisation that helps consolidate the number of routes and existing vehicles required to transport pupils to and from school, promotion of parental mileage allowances that negate the need for higher cost contracted transport and investigation of spend to save schemes with colleagues on the Island.
- 10.2 Review of Network bus pass provision, assessing opportunities for contracted operator led transport solutions where this provides greater cost effectiveness.
- 10.3 Research and development of a Personal Travel Budget that provides families with flexibility and control over their child's journey to school whilst reducing the Council's reliance on higher cost contracted transport.
- 10.4 Continued robust contract management ensuring tender and pricing offer best value coupled with ensuring there is sufficient small operator led transport registered on the DPS.

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STUART ASHLEY
Director of Children's Services

CLLR DEBBIE ANDRE
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services,
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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Topic	START FOR LIFE AND FAMILY HUB PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

The Children's Services Management Team contacted the Scrutiny Officer to put forward the item for a future meeting. Family Hubs are centres which ensure families with children and young people aged 0-19 receive early help to overcome a range of difficulties and build stronger relationships. Effective early intervention can improve children's wellbeing, educational attainment, and life chances, reduce family poverty, improve mental health and lead to lower crime, unemployment, and other negative outcomes. The Start for Life and Family Hub programme commenced in December 2022 and the programme concludes on the 31st of March 2025. The Isle of Wight was successful in their programme sign-up in October 2022 and received confirmation of their successful Trailblazer application in December 2022. The purpose of the item is to provide overview and assurance that the Isle of Wight's Start for Life and Family Hub programme is progressing well and within the timescales provided by the DfE.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- In what way is the Family Hub programme expected to improve existing provision on the Isle of Wight?
- What island geographic considerations have been considered when developing the programme?
- What lessons learned have been taken from other authorities Family Hub models when developing the programme?
- What governance is in place to monitor the delivery of the programme across the different bodies?
- What engagement and support would be provided from schools for the Family Hub programme?

APPROACH

A presentation to be provided.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

Appendix 1 – Start for Life and Family Hub Programme, Isle of Wight Overview

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, ☎ 821000 ext 8876
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Start for Life & Family Hub Programme

Isle of Wight overview

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Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills

7th September 2023

Appendix 1

Levelling Up

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“The UK Government will invest **£300m** to build the network of Family Hubs and transform Start for Life services for parents and babies, carers and children in **half of local authorities in England**”.

What are Family Hubs?

Family hubs provide families with a single access point to integrated family support services for early help with social, emotional, physical and financial needs.

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Each family hub is bespoke to its local community while incorporating three key delivery principles:

access, connection, relationships.

Implementation timeline

April 2022

Isle of Wight
were 1 of the
75 pre-
selected LAs

**8th
September
2022**

Submission
of
programme
sign up form
and
Trailbazer
application

**End of
September
2022**

Notification
of first wave
of
programme
funding and
outcome of
Trailblazer
application

**Autumn
2022
onwards**

Commence-
ment of the 3
year
programme
until March
2025

March 2025

Programme
complete –
ongoing
governance
and
development

Programme update

Rebranding & Relaunch

The main Hub site designs are in progress and due to be completed by mid September

The launches will take place in September and October

Start for Life publication

The offer is now live, with new content being reviewed and added regularly

Start for Life Ministerial visit and Thematic Review

Completed in June and August 2023

Expansion of the wider strand network

An ongoing focus on integrating a wider cross sector partnership, with a focus on co-location and production

Core programme strands

Ongoing focus on the Delivery Plan outcomes for the core strands

Core strands

Strand	Lead
Programme Spend	Programme Delivery Team
Capital Spend	
Parenting Support (with Trailblazer enhancement)	Barnardo's
Home Learning Environment	Barnardo's & Public Health/0-19 service
Parent-Infant Relationships and Perinatal Mental Health	Integrated Care Board & Public Health/0-19 service
Infant Feeding Support	Public Health/0-19 service & Barnardo's
Publishing Start for Life Offers Parent Carer Panels	Programme Delivery Team Aspire, Ryde

Wider programme strands

- Activities for children aged 0-5 years
- Birth registration
- Debt and welfare advice
- Domestic abuse support
- Early Childhood Education and Care and financial support (tax free childcare etc)
- Health Visiting
- Housing
- Intensive targeted family support (Supporting Families)
- 0-19 Public Health Services

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- **Mental health services**
- **Midwifery**
- **Nutrition and weight management**
- **Oral health**
- **Supporting Parent Relationships (Reducing Parental Conflict)**
- **SEND support and services**
- **Stop smoking support**
- **Substance misuse support**
- **Support for separated or separating parents**
- **Youth Justice services**
- **Youth services – universal and targeted**

Current Family Centre (Hub) sites

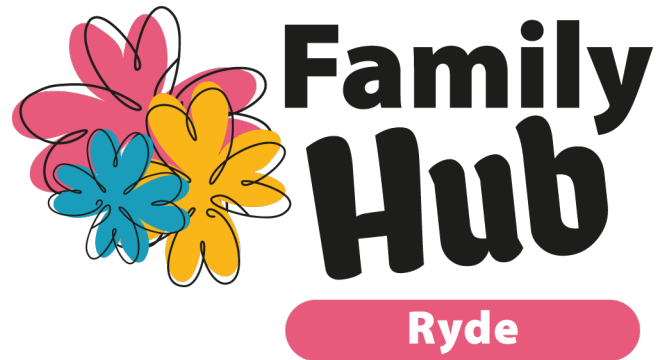
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Branding



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Launch



Tuesday 19th September

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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 SEPTEMBER 2023
Topic	ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022-23

BACKGROUND

The Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills receives the Children's Services Complaints Report on an annual basis to ensure that service improvement is being driven through lessons learnt.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- How does the Isle of Wight Council compare against the national averages for Children's complaint statistics?
- Is the way that the Council handles Children's complaints leading to improvements in service delivery? Are there any examples?
- What progress has been made with the five recommendations put forward in the 2021-22 annual report?
- What learning outcomes and actions have come out of the 2022-23 year?

APPROACH

A committee report to be received.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

Appendix 1 - Annual Report on Compliments, Complaints and Representations
2022/23

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Children's Services Directorate

Annual Report on Compliments, Complaints and Representations

2022/23



Introduction

The Children's Act 1989 requires all local authorities with social services responsibilities to have a formal complaints procedure for Children's Social Care (CSC) complaints. [Getting the Best from Complaints](#) (statutory guidance issued by the DfE, 2006) provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the complaint process for social care complaints made in relation to Children's Services.

This Annual Report is produced in line with national guidance (relevant section provided in Appendix 1) and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public. For completeness, although not required by the statutory guidance, this report also includes corporate complaints pertaining to Children's Services.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) work in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) and the statutory role of Complaints Manager is fulfilled by the same individual within both authorities. Corporate complaints are managed by the IWC's corporate services.

This report looks to follow the national guidance but to support with the flow of the report, headings have been shortened and combined where relevant.

The core data supporting this report can be found in Appendix 3, with this report providing context and analysis.

The report covers the IWC's Children's Services Directorate's formal feedback and representations for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The Report details the compliments and complaints formally recorded by the Children's Services Directorate's Complaints Team (CSCT) and IWC's corporate services. In addition to annual reporting, internal reporting takes place on a quarterly basis, with more regular monitoring reports for services issued on request. This regular monitoring of formal feedback enables ongoing improvement.

Key terms and their definitions to support in the reading of this report can be found under Appendix 2.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Annual Compliments, Complaints and Representations Report is a public document, providing a mechanism by which the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services Directorate (the Directorate) can be kept informed about the operation and effectiveness of its complaints procedure and support learning from complaints. This document covers the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

1.2. The key findings with the report can be summarised as:

- A total of 114 representations were received by the CSCT in this reporting period. This is an increase of 37.4% (31) from 83 in the 2021/22 period.
- 48.2% (55) of representations were considered in accordance with the CSC statutory guidance. Of this total, 92.7% were managed as complaints.
- 13.2% (15) were considered in accordance with the corporate complaints process. Of this total, 100% were managed as complaints.
- With regards to CSC complaints, 'parents' continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services at 63%.
- The highest category for the reason (nature) why CSC complaints are made has changed and is now 'Quality of Service', totalling 19 (38%).
- The second and third reasons (natures) for CSC complaints are 'Conduct of Worker' and 'Poor Communication' with 17 (33%) and 5 (10%) respectively.
- Corporate complaints saw the number one reason (nature) of complaint remain related to 'Childs EHCP'.
- 100% of the actual outcomes achieved during the reporting period for CSC stage one complaints were either 'Apology & Explanation' 24 (47%) or 'Explanation' 27 (53%).
- 88% of all CSC complaints upheld had some form of remedial action completed, however there is an expectation this number should be 100%.
- During 2022/23, the average time taken to investigate and respond to new CSC Stage One complaints was 13 working days.
- For corporate Stage Two complaints, the average response time was 24 working days.

1.3. This report identifies a number of recommendations for CSCT, the wider directorate and/or corporate services within IWC to implement and monitor. They are as follows, with further details provided in section 12:

- Communication strategy update within the Children & Families Branch,
- All of the Children's Services Directorate to take a strengths-based approach to resolution of complaints,
- Chasing of actions agreed,
- Remedial action for complaints upheld,
- Reducing work categorised as 'ad-hoc',
- To further increase the use of the e-form,
- Increase timescale compliance,
- Policy on nepotism.

DRAFT

2. Representations made to the local authority

- 2.1. A total of 114 representations were received by CSCT in this reporting period. This is an increase of 37.4% (31) from 83 in the 2021/22 period. The type of representations have been broken down in Table 1 below.
- 2.2. A representation is defined as a piece of correspondence, requiring an action by the CSCT. For example, to log and process a complaint, to signpost individuals to an alternative process or to reject a complaint, to name a few examples. Some representations can create significant amounts of work over several months, whilst others may require one short email, all instances are logged as one representation.
- 2.3. It is also important to acknowledge that social care contacts have risen from 14,167 in 2021/22 to 16,309 in 2022/23, an increase of 15%.
- 2.4. Whilst there was an increase of 37.4% in representations in 2022/23, it is important to also factor in an increase in demand for services.

Table 1: Type of Representation by Reporting Period

Type of representation	Reporting Period			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Complaint	35	20	29	28
Pre-complaint (to Statutory Stage 1 Complaint)	15	10	3	2
Case Concern (to Statutory Stage 1 Complaint)	1	0	0	0
Joint complaint	0	0	0	0
Refused	4	3	3	8
Withdrawn	0	1	0	0
Case Concern	0	2	3	9
Total CSC representations	55	36	38	47
Complaint	15	16	-	-
Pre-complaint (to Corporate Stage 1 Complaint)	0	0	-	-
Pre-complaint (to Corporate Stage 2 Complaint)	0	0	-	-
Refused	0	0	-	-
Withdrawn	0	0	-	-
Corporate Stage 1	0	0	-	-
Total corporate representations	15	16	-	-
Area initiated complaint	0	0	0	0
Pre-complaint	11	10	11	5
Professional to Professional Complaint	0	2	1	0
HSCP	0	0	0	0

LGSCO	5	4	5	4
Local Response	0	0	2	2
Compliment	0	0	2	0
HantsDirect handoff	0	0	0	0
GDPR, FOI or SAR	0	7	3	4
Request for info	0	0	0	0
Ad Hoc	27	8	2	10
Call back requests	1	-	-	-
Total other representations	44	31	26	25
Total representations	114	83	64	72

Pre complaints are initial queries which do not have all the mandatory information required for processing. In these circumstances the information is requested, and no response received so they remain logged as 'pre-complaints'.

Case concerns are pieces of feedback handled more informally and therefore not being logged as a formal complaint, but still requiring a response from the relevant service.

LGSCO are the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related queries.

Ad hoc is a capture all category for anything outside of the before mentioned categories, such as safeguarding, school matters and queries relating to other Local Authorities.

- 2.5. 48.2% (55) of representations were considered in accordance with the CSC statutory guidance, compared to 43.4% in 2021/22. Of this total, 92.7% were managed as complaints.
- 2.6. 13.2% (15) were considered in accordance with the corporate complaints process, compared to 19.3% in 2021/22. Of this total, 100% were managed as complaints.
- 2.7. 38.6% (44) of the representations relate to matters recorded as 'other representations'. The most significant element within that being 'ad-hoc' representations, which are a variety of queries such as safeguarding, school matters and topics relating to other Local Authorities. All matters that the CSCT are unable to meaningfully support with. These make up 61.4% (27) of that type of representation and 23.7% of all representations. In 2021/22, 'ad-hoc' equated for 25.8% of those recorded as 'other representations' and 9.6% of all representations.
- 2.8. No compliments were recorded in this period, which is the same as in the reporting period 2021/22.
- 2.9. This is the first reporting period where 'call back requests' have been an option for complainants, introduced as part of the new online complaints form, used by the public to submit complaints (the e-form). This was created by the CSCT and introduced in late 2022.
- 2.10. Call back requests were introduced following feedback from complainants that whilst they were dissatisfied, they did not want to have to formally complain to speak to somebody.

- 2.11. In 2022 a project was undertaken to transfer the online complaints form (e-form) to a more user friendly and flexible platform; Microsoft Forms (MS Forms). The significant benefits of doing so are detailed in section 9.
- 2.12. When completing the new e-form and after advising they wish to make a complaint, complainants are asked for their own and their child(ren)'s details. The form then asks if, rather than make a complaint, they would instead prefer a phone call from an appropriate colleague.
- 2.13. If 'yes' is selected the request is processed and no formal complaint is processed. If 'no' is selected the complainant can progress with the form and log their formal complaint.
- 2.14. Of the 27 entries made using the new e-form, 11 (40.7%) individuals opted for a 'call back request' in place of making a formal complaint.
- 2.15. As well as the significant work undertaken to improve the Council's complaint responses, this subtle adjustment to the e-form, following feedback from complainants, has prevented a significant number of complaints being logged.
- 2.16. Further analysis of this new option of communication is in section 9 of this report.

3. The number of complaints at each stage and any that were considered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

3.1. Referrals

- 3.2. The number of referrals received via the LGSCO (3) during the reporting period stayed static compared to the previous period (3).
- 3.3. 100% of the referrals related to 'Education/Non-Social Care' complaints.
- 3.4. When the LGSCO find fault, the ombudsman makes recommendations to remedy the complaint and/or identify learning for the Council in terms of practise and processes.
- 3.5. The LGSCO Assessment Team will sometimes make enquiries in relation to the 'status' of a complaint to establish if it has gone through the Council's complaint process before deciding whether to investigate. These enquires sometimes result in the LGSCO deciding a complaint is 'premature' and it is returned to the Council for investigation and response.
- 3.6. Similarly, after having sight of the Council's complaint responses, the LGSCO may conclude that they are unlikely to come to a materially different conclusion and therefore choose not to progress their investigations.

3.7. Outcomes

- 3.8. Within this reporting period, three cases were closed after initial enquiries. In the previous reporting period, there were no cases closed in this way.
- 3.9. The three other outcomes were:
- Upheld – LA to apologise, make payments to complainant for distress and training for staff;
 - Upheld – LA to make payment to complainant; and
 - No fault by the Local Authority.
- 3.10. The total number of outcomes may differ from the total number of referrals received as the LGSCO can log more than one type of referral or outcome for a single complaint.

4. Which customer groups made the complaints

- 4.1. With regards to CSC complaints, 'parents' continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services at 63%. In 2021/22, 'parents' made up 70% of all complaints.
- 4.2. Still in regard to CSC complaints, the two most popular methods for making a complaint, accounting for 92% of the total, continue to be by 'e-mail' and 'e-form' with 22 (53%) and 16 (39%) respectively. In 2021/22, 'email' and 'e-form' equated to 94% (67% and 27% respectively) of all complaints (excluding young persons as a subset).
- 4.3. The use of the e-form has increased from the previous reporting period from 27% to 39%. It should also be noted that 'call back requests' are made via the e-form but are not counted in this data. The implementation of call back requests is detailed in section 9.
- 4.4. Complaints made via the e-form are significantly more likely to include all the mandatory information necessary to enable investigation and therefore increases the likelihood of the complaint being processed more effectively. Therefore, efforts have been made to encourage use of the e-form and ensure both a smoother process for complainants and a reduced workload for CSCT.
- 4.5. Complaints made via letter remained static (at 2) and saw a minor reduction in percentage share from 6% in 2021/22 to 5% in 2022/23.
- 4.6. Data pertaining specifically to Young Peoples' complaints (as a subset) is included in Appendix 3.
- 4.7. A further breakdown of who made complaints and how they were submitted can be found in Table 5 within Appendix 3.

5. The types of complaints made

5.1. Children's Social Care (CSC) Complaints

5.2. The highest category for the reason (nature) why CSC complaints are made has changed and is now 'Quality of Service', totalling 19 (38%). This is an increase from zero recorded in the previous period.

5.3. The second and third reasons (natures) for CSC complaints are 'Conduct of Worker' and 'Poor Communication' with 17 (33%) and 5 (10%) respectively.

5.4. Whilst still in the top three reasons, 'Poor communication' has seen a positive decline from 19% to 10%.

5.5. The last reporting period saw 16% of complaints made regarding 'Insufficient support from CSD', however this period saw that reduce by 6, with 1 (2%) being logged in 2022/23. This is a direct result of CSCT's service improvement activity to fully understand complaints and acquire specific information at the point of the complaint being made. Previous reporting periods have seen complaints accepted without all the details being known and therefore logged as 'Insufficient Support from CSD'. By working in this way complaints are better understood and therefore responses can be more meaningful and bespoke. It also means reporting, and therefore the identification of lessons, is more specific and meaningful.

5.6. Corporate Complaints

5.7. Corporate complaints saw the number one reason (nature) of complaint remain related to 'Childs EHCP'. In the period 2021/22, the predominant reason (nature) was 'Provision in EHCP not being implemented' with 6 (37.5%), similarly in 2022/23 the number one reason was 'Child's EHCP' with 11 (73%).

5.8. All other complaints recorded one instance only, with two relating to SEN matters ('SEN panel member' and 'Lack of SEN school places') and the remaining two being one off occasions ('Holiday activity fund' and 'Household support voucher not valid').

5.9. The SEN service continues to receive the most corporate complaints with 87% of the total share. The total number of complaints about the SEN Service has increased, although only minimally year on year, from 10 to 13.

5.10. A further breakdown of the nature of complaints made and the services involved can be found in Tables 6 and 7 within Appendix 3.

6. The desired outcome of complaints

- 6.1. When making a complaint, complainants are asked to state what outcome they are seeking. This provides a useful indication to the responding manager about what potentially would resolve the complaint and also provides comparative data in relation to the actual outcome i.e., the outcome of the investigation.
- 6.2. For CSC stage one complaints, the predominant outcome sought remains as 'complaint issues investigated' with 13 (25.5%) in the period, a minimal increase of two from 2021/22 (11) however the percentage share remains consistent (25.6% in 2021/22). The next two highest identified categories are 'Not specified/Implied' with 12 (23.5%) and 'apology and explanation' with seven (13.7%).
- 6.3. For corporate complaints no sought after outcome recorded more than three instances. The top two, both recording three (20%), were 'EHCP to be finalised, provision to be put in place' and 'other'. In the previous reporting period, 'EHCP to be finalised, provision to be put in place' recorded one entry (6.3%) and 'other' none.
- 6.4. It is important to note that whilst 'EHCP to be finalised, provision to be put in place' saw a 200% increase year on year, this equates to a total of just two more complaints.
- 6.5. Complaints relating to EHCPs account for 26.7% (four) of the outcomes sought.

6.6. The actual outcome of complaints

- 6.7. Having identified from the complainant the outcome they are seeking, the actual outcome achieved is recorded from the response letter.
- 6.8. 100% of the actual outcomes achieved during the reporting period for CSC stage one complaints were either 'Apology & Explanation' 24 (47%) or 'Explanation' 27 (53%). This is consistent with 2021/22, with the exception of two complaints recorded with an outcome of 'No investigation possible'.
- 6.9. The actual outcomes for corporate Stage Two complaints in 2022/23 saw none recorded more than twice, therefore making analysis from a total of 13 of little value.
- 6.10. Across both complaint processes, over 45.3% of complaints required just an 'explanation' and no apology or remedial action. Where services are able to explain process, or actions taken to resolve complaints, it is clear preventative opportunities exist and services should consider how they can

be more forthcoming with whatever information was initially unknown to the complainant.

- 6.11. Table 2 below shows the status of CSC complaints that completed stage one summarising what decision was concluded.

Table 2: CSC Complaints received.

Investigation Outcome	Number	Percentage
Not Upheld	25	50%
Partially Upheld	17	34%
Upheld	8	16%
Total	50	100%

- 6.12. 88% of all CSC complaints upheld had some form of remedial action completed, however there is an expectation this number should be 100%. In all instances where remedial action was not completed, the outcome was recorded as 'explanation'. It is expected that as a minimum an apology is always appropriate when upholding a complaint. An action is listed in section 12.
- 6.13. A summary of the nature of complaints for CSC and the associated outcomes is listed in table 3.

Table 3: CSC Complaints received.

Nature of complaint	Investigation outcome	Percentage
Quality of service	Not upheld	55.6%
	Partially upheld	27.8%
	Upheld	16.7%
Conduct of worker	Not upheld	46.7%
	Partially upheld	46.7%
	Upheld	6.7%
Poor communication	Not upheld	50%
	Partially upheld	25%
	Upheld	25%

- 6.14. A further breakdown of the actual outcome of complaints made can be found in Table 9 within the Appendix 3.

7. Details about advocacy services provided under these arrangements

7.1. The Getting the Best from Complaints statutory guidance advises the following regarding advocacy;

“If a child or young person wishes to make a complaint, local authorities are required to provide him with information about advocacy services and offer help to obtain an advocate...”

7.2. There was one instance of a child/young person making a complaint in 2022/23. When communicating with a child/young person it is important that their right to advocacy is made clear and this is achieved with the sharing of a flyer, which includes advocacy information. On this occasion, the topic of advocacy was referred to in the body of the email, however due to an administrative error, the flyer was not shared. Further analysis of the complaint does not raise concerns, as it was resolved with a meaningful and clear outcome.

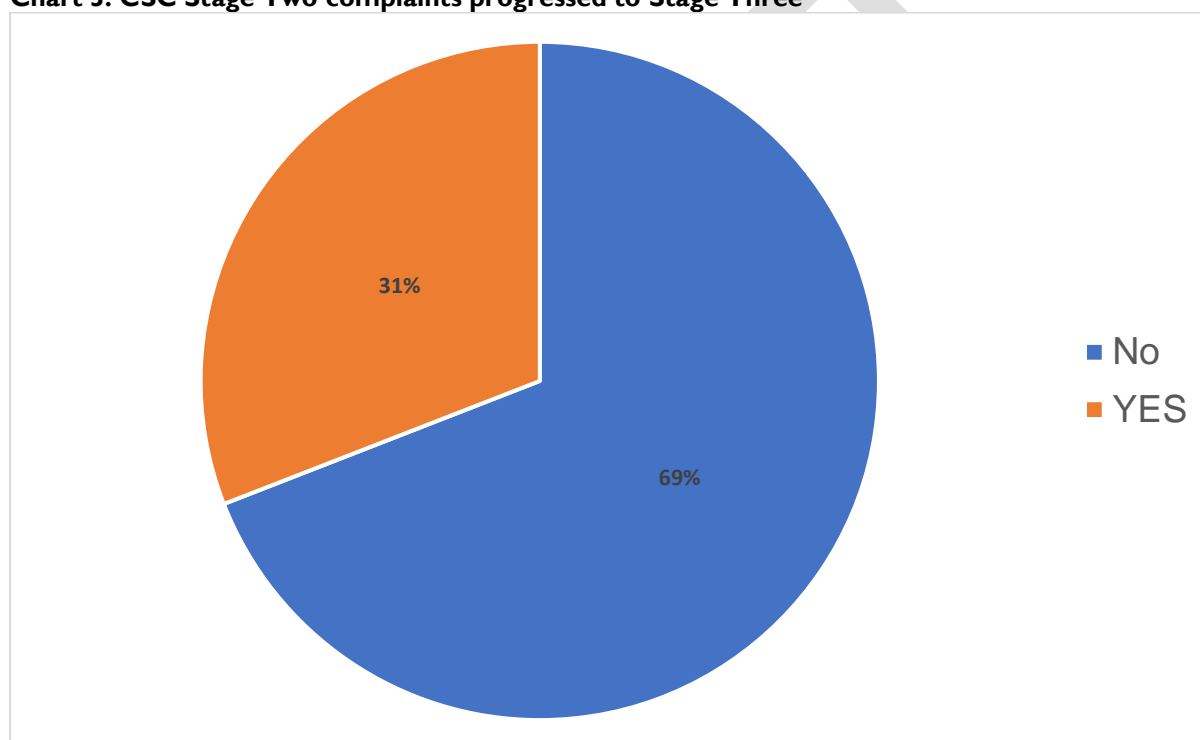
8. Compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale as agreed

- 8.1. During 2022/23, the average time taken to investigate and respond to new CSC Stage One complaints was 13 working days. This is an increase of 1 working day on average compared to the previous reporting period.
- 8.2. The average working days taken to respond to CSC stage one complaints remains well within the permissible 20 working days. Further analysis has concluded that the new change of handling complaints with an initial meeting/phone call and then a written response is the cause for an increase. The logistical reality of finding an agreeable time to speak with complainants means there is a delay, when compared to previous years when only written responses were provided. However, the success of this way of working significantly outweighs the slight increase of 1 working day to respond, particularly as it's well within the permissible time limit.
- 8.3. However, it is worth noting that whilst 20 days is permissible according to the statutory guidance, the same guidance does suggest that the target should be 10 working days. On all occasions, CSCT asked the service to respond within the 10 working days before chasing a response. Therefore, work can still be done to reduce response times.
- 8.4. The CSCT used to process complaints within three working days but have improved their processes to see that reduce to one working day in the vast majority of cases. This has helped to also ensure most complaints are within timescales and that complainants receive acknowledgement swiftly.
- 8.5. 40% of CSC complaints were responded to within 10 working days at stage one, this is in line with the 41% recorded in 2021/22. 44% were responded to between 10-20 working days, compared to 59% in 2021/22 and 7% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit. This total was zero in 2021/22.
- 8.6. For corporate Stage Two complaints, the average was 24 working days, which reflects a significant decrease (10 working days) from 34 working days recorded in 2021/22. This is an excellent achievement, to reduce the response time by as much as this, however work needs to continue to improve on 24 working days and ensure swift responses to Corporate Stage Two complaints.
- 8.7. 13% of corporate complaints were responded to within 10 working days at Stage Two (equal to 2021/22); 27% between 10-20 working days (56% in 2021/22) and 60% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit (31% in 2021/22).
- 8.8. For CSC Stage Two complaints, 7 (46%) complaints exceeded the maximum 65 working day timescales.
- 8.9. CSC Stage Three review panel meetings were few and far between in previous periods due to the delay in progressing Stage Two cases, with only five taking

place between April 2019 and March 2022 across Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council. However, in 2022/23, 27 Stage Three Review Panel Meetings took place, with four in relation to the Isle of Wight Council.

- 8.10. As Chart 3 illustrates, 31% of Stage Two CSC complaints have progressed to Stage Three. CSCT predicts that a factor in this number being as high as it is, is due to the complainants' dissatisfaction at the delay to Stage Twos previously mentioned. As Stage Two complaints are now being allocated within the Ombudsman's expectations, it is anticipated this number will significantly reduce.
- 8.11. For the Isle of Wight specifically, the total percentage of complaints escalating to Stage Three is 21%.

Chart 3: CSC Stage Two complaints progressed to Stage Three



Data for Hampshire County Council & Isle of Wight Council

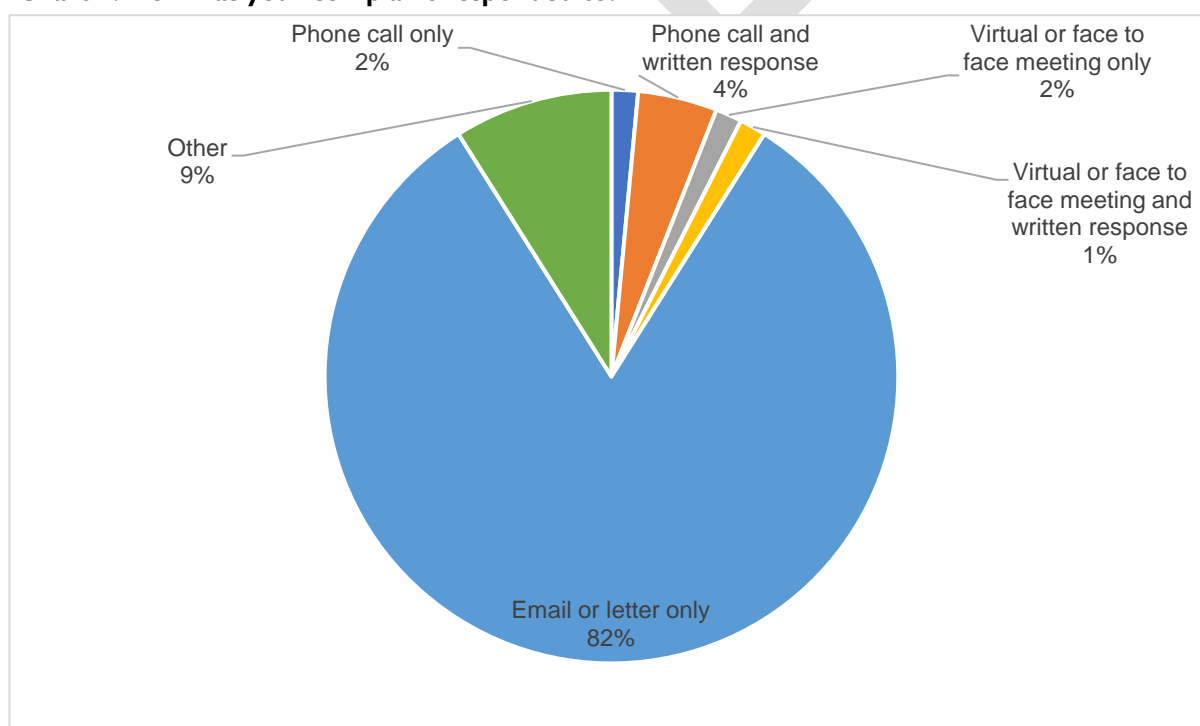
9. Learning and service improvement

- 9.1. The following recommendations were put forward, within the 2021/22 report, for completion by the CSCT and/or directorate service areas during the 2022/23 reporting period:
- 9.2. ***Recommendation 1 – CSC Stage Two Recovery Plan. Develop a forecast model of how the CSCT intends to return CSC Stage Two complaints to a more manageable level, setting out clear timescales for delivery.***
- 9.3. A significant and thorough recovery plan was initiated in June of 2022 with the following key elements:
- More Investigating Officers (IOs) from senior management to be trained and support with the outstanding Stage Two caseload.
 - More Independent Persons (IPs) on the books, but also the current cohort cross skilled to be able to fulfil more roles.
 - Clarity on procedure, e.g., court matters, agreement of the Statement of Complaint.
 - 2 x dedicated IOs within CSCT.
- 9.4. The deadline to achieve the recovery plan and have the entire outstanding caseload completed or allocated was April 2023. This was achieved ahead of schedule in December 2022. The early delivery was predominantly achieved due to the above changes being implemented more quickly than anticipated.
- 9.5. For example, by being able to recruit an internal Council employee as the second dedicated IO, their recruitment and training plan was completed sooner than had they been external.
- 9.6. Equally, more IPs were recruited than was anticipated and the standard of those within the pool was exceptional. These IPs also received training that had been improved following feedback from the previous IP pool, making it more effective at preparing them to be self-sufficient and able to take on more cases.
- 9.7. It is also important to note the support from across the Directorate enabling more internal senior managers to be able to take on a complaint than originally forecast. This allowed more complaints to be allocated per month bringing the completion date forward.
- 9.8. Finally, great efforts were and continue to be taken to improve our initial stage one responses. The successful changes made, such as calling complainants and focussing on resolution, saw the number of complaints escalating to Stage Two reduce. Where the recovery plan anticipated escalations to remain as they were, the decrease resulted in fewer requiring allocation and therefore the completion date coming forward.

- 9.9. All CSC Stage Two complaints since January 2023 have been allocated within one calendar month as is expected.
- 9.10. **Recommendation 2 – Financial Resilience.** *There is a requirement for additional permanent resourcing to ensure longer term stability of the service. A report is to be developed to set out the additional resources being sought corporately to ensure new ways of working can be implemented, both as part of the recovery plan and also to ‘right size’ the CSCT to prevent future backlogs re-occurring in the longer term. Report to be submitted to Financial Resilience Group in June 2022.*
- 9.11. This report was completed and additional funding was provided. Temporary resource was agreed to support CSCT in clearing the outstanding caseload and additionally, ongoing permanent funding was provided to right size the team for the future, accounting for the fact demand on the service and the number of complaints are currently on trend to increase year on year, as a result of sustained increases in demand for Children’s Services.
- 9.12. **Recommendation 3 – Service Improvement.** *To support the CSC Stage Two recovery activity and to contribute to the stabilising of the CSCT in the future, a range of operational improvements have been identified. These include:*
- *Measures to reduce escalation of CSC complaints from Stage One to Stage Two;*
 - *Improvements to correspondence with complainants;*
 - *Improvements to guidance provided to officers for responding at Stage One for CSC Complaints;*
 - *Introduction of templates;*
 - *Process improvements (to be identified via a workshop);*
 - *CSC Stage Two document preparation;*
 - *Optimised use of technology such as power automate to increase efficiency;*
 - *Staff training;*
 - *Management structure and oversight;*
 - *Monitoring and reporting to support operational effectiveness and decision making within CSCT and wider Branch Management Teams; and*
 - *Training and support to IOs and Adjudication Officers.*
- 9.13. All of these elements were implemented with great success. More so than others is the new strength-based approach to initial complaints within both the CSC process and corporate complaints process. Whilst this method of working is still yet to be fully rolled out to all of the Children’s Services Directorate, early indications are very positive. This is explained in sections 9 and 10 of this report.

- 9.14. Services who took part in the strengths-based approach trial were given complaints training with an emphasis on contacting complainants via a phone call or in a meeting to seek resolution. This was then followed up with a letter, so an audit trail existed. Other changes were made, for example removing language such as 'upheld' or 'not upheld' and giving services discretion with regards to their approach.
- 9.15. When escalating their complaints more recently, complainants are now asked to advise how their complaint was responded to. As Chart 4 below demonstrates, just 9% of escalations come after the service have spoken to complainants, either by phone or in a meeting.
- 9.16. The vast majority (82%) of escalations are made after responses are provided in writing only, proving it is not a successful method of resolution.
- 9.17. A recommendation to reflect this information is provided later in section 12 of this report.

Chart 4: How was your complaint responded to?



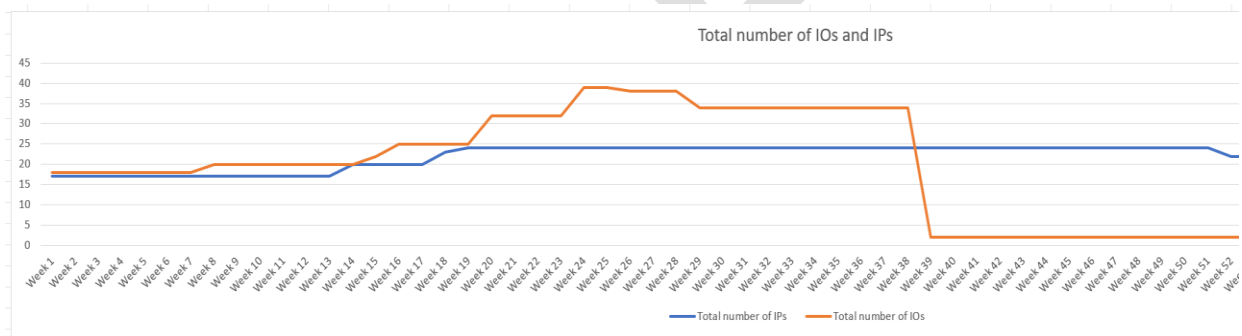
Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council Social Care data

- 9.18. ***Recommendation 4 – Continue to increase capacity within the Independent Person (IP) pool and the Investigating Officer (IO) pool. This will be an ongoing action across the 2022/23 reporting period.***
- 9.19. This action was completed and is now at an appropriate level, with 22 IPs available to CSCT. Work continues to upskill these IPs so some may fulfil other roles where resilience is weaker, such as to act as Chair and/or sit on

Stage Three panels.

- 9.20. Contrary to the IP pool increasing, the IO pool was decreased, but deliberately so. Where previously there were over 30 IOs in the pool, they were predominantly senior managers across HCC and IWC who were asked to take on an investigation on top of their usual day roles.
- 9.21. As a result of clearing the backlog, the Dedicated IO (DIO) role being trialled within CSCT was made permanent and a second full time DIO was recruited into the team, taking the total number of DIOs to two. By having two DIOs within the CSCT multiple cases can be allocated to each individual ensuring continued compliance against the Ombudsman’s allocation expectations, but they are also the subject matter experts in the process and therefore require less support from the wider CSCT.
- 9.22. Chart 5 below gives an example of how IO and IP numbers changed throughout the reporting period.

Chart 5: Total number of IOs and IPs



- 9.23. **Recommendation 5 – Continue to work with the appropriate Departmental service lead to confirm what is recorded within the Department’s Children’s Social Care Case Management System, when a complaint is made. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2023.**
- 9.24. This action has been superseded by the implementation of the new Children’s Social Care Case Management System (Mosaic) project, which is currently ongoing and will include this action within it.

10. Learning and Service improvement from the 2022/23 reporting period

10.1. As a result of the Complaints Manager quality assuring every CSC Stage Two report and personally sitting in attendance at every CSC Stage Three review panel meeting, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of themes and trends has been possible.

10.2. In 2022/23, there were a total of 18 of these two stages combined. With this detailed insight and from regular analysis of the data, the following steps have and are being taken to ensure the Council continues to learn from and prevent future complaints.

10.3. Communication

10.4. Poor Communication was a theme in 2021/22 and continues to be a part of the feedback provided in this reporting period. This includes complainants feeling their expectations of communication are not being met, alongside more general feedback that policy and procedure was either not understood or explained. This is illustrated in such a high number of complaint outcomes (54) being recorded as including an 'explanation' provided.

10.5. Where complaints are not upheld and no apology or remedial action is required, there are still lessons to be learnt and potential opportunities for the prevention of similar complaints in the future.

10.6. Where complaints have been resolved with just an explanation of policy or procedure, it is important to reflect on how such a complaint could have been prevented and various initiatives are being explored.

10.7. Through analysis of the complaints relating to communication and where an explanation helped to provide a resolution, a number of themes emerge:

10.8. Nepotism

10.9. Whilst there is no evidence or upheld complaints regarding the issue of nepotism, there is certainly a perception that it exists within the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services. When asked to answer accusations of nepotism, various Investigating Officers have all commented that procedure is well followed and all staff are able to articulate controls in place well. However, a lack of a specific policy on the topic does lead some complainants to be dissatisfied and enforces their view that nepotism exists.

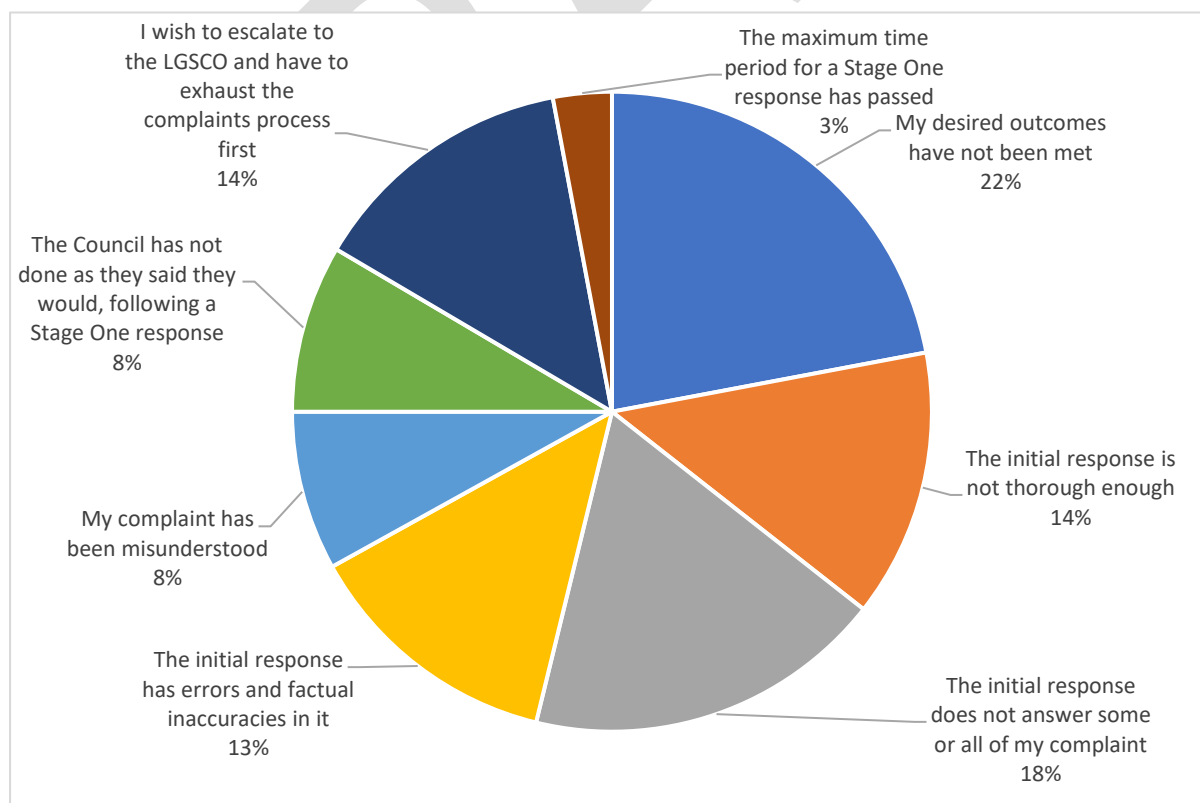
10.10. A recommendation is provided in section 12 of this report.

10.11. **Individuals without Parental Responsibility (PR) expecting the same amount of access to information, social workers and Children's Services as those with it.**

- 10.12. There have been examples of those without PR being dissatisfied with the level of communication they receive. These predominantly include family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles and new partners of those with PR, who have influence in the child(ren)'s life.
- 10.13. In many instances, when the relevant service was able to explain the limitations of communicating with an individual without PR, combined with the reality of Social Workers being allocated to the child(ren) and not the adult(s), complaints were resolved.
- 10.14. A recommendation is provided in section 12.
- 10.15. **Non-resident parents feeling out of the loop, regarding the care of their children, and for males, accusations of gender bias.**
- 10.16. Analysis also found that there is a pattern of non-resident parents feeling 'out of the loop' and/or excluded from discussion and decisions regarding their child(ren)'s care. There is a perception that Social Workers focus too much on the resident parent and exclude non-resident parents as a result.
- 10.17. Complainants refer to examples where social workers will visit the resident parent's premises, but not theirs, or that communication regarding the child(ren) is disproportionately with the resident parent.
- 10.18. On the occasions these types of complaints have been investigated, no accusations of bias have been upheld, however, there remains opportunity to prevent these types of complaints and reduce dissatisfaction, even if it is only as a result of a perceived injustice.
- 10.19. Similarly, to the previous point regarding communication, a key message in resolving these complaints is that Social Workers are assigned to the child(ren) and not the adult(s).
- 10.20. A recommendation for preventative measures is provided in section 12.
- 10.21. A key observation from this theme is how lacking this trend is within the data. Specifically, the number of 'Non-resident parents' recorded as making a complaint was very low at one (2%). Further analysis of the data suggests that many individuals logged as 'Parents' are better described as 'Non-resident parents'. However, at the point of logging, this information is not readily available to CSCT and to seek clarification would cause disproportionate delay to the complaint progressing. This illustrates the importance of continuing to take both a qualitative and quantitative approach to analysing the complaints data.
- 10.22. **Changes of Social Workers**

- 10.23. A number of complaints were made to include dissatisfaction that Social Workers were changing, for reasons such as internal changes and individuals resigning, but that parents were not made aware. Feedback for this period was that on many occasions it was not until a new Social Worker contacted them that they were aware of such a change.
- 10.24. A recommendation for preventative measures is provided in section 12.
- 10.25. **Faceless communication**
- 10.26. Particularly when CSC complaints were escalated to Stage Two, when Investigating Officers (IOs) were conducting meetings with complainants, the feedback was often *"you're the first person I've spoken to since complaining"*. This led to further feedback that complaint responses were too corporate, considered faceless and lacking in empathy. Analysis shows this was part of the motivation to escalate to Stage Two as complainants had felt their complaint was misunderstood or not fully answered.
- 10.27. As Chart 6 shows, the reasons for escalation are varied. Within the reasons given, 54% relate to the content of the initial response being inadequate, such as 'The initial response does not answer some or all of my complaint'. This is further evidence that talking directly to complainants via the phone or in a meeting is imperative to ensuring as many successful resolutions as possible.

Chart 6: Main reason for escalating?



Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council Social Care data

10.28. **Service Improvements**

10.29. In response to the above areas of communication improvement, and in line with good practice, a number of successful initiatives have been introduced, as follows:

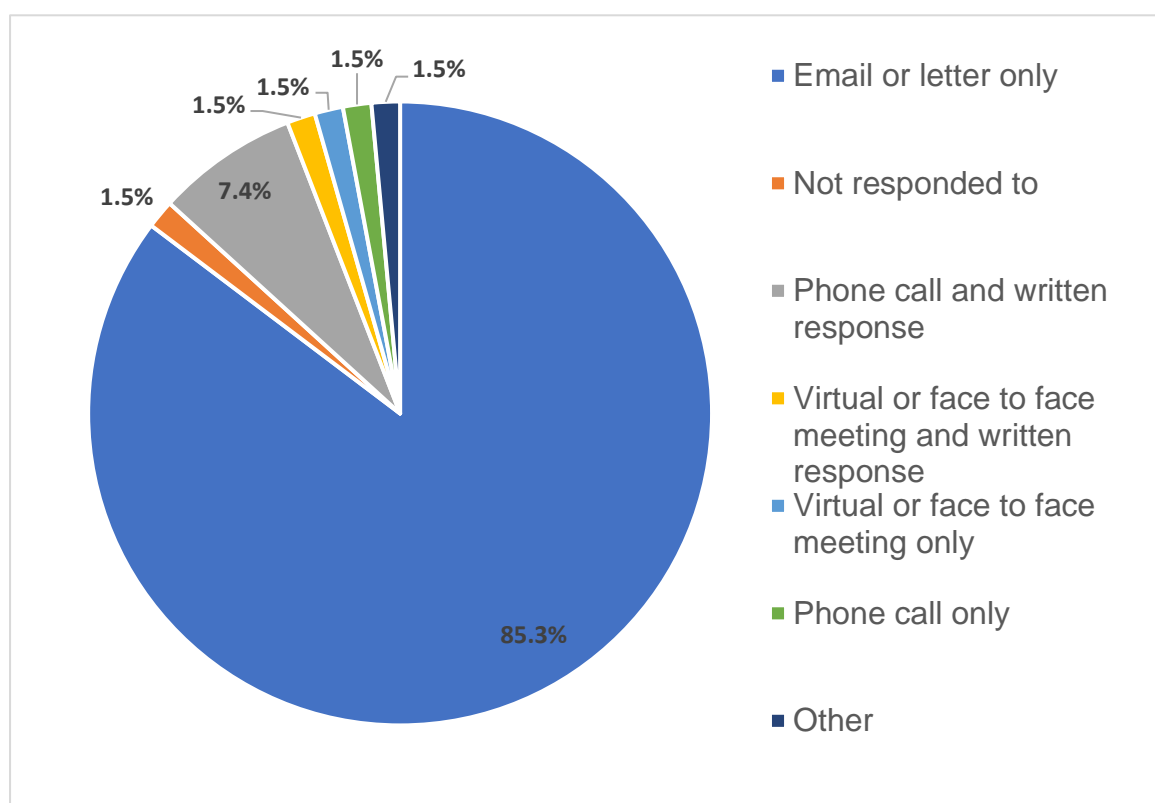
10.30. **Complaint responses**

10.31. As previously mentioned, the use of telephone calls and meetings at the early stages have been introduced, giving opportunity for discussion and resolution early on. This has been very well received and is reducing previous concerns of written responses not understanding the complaint fully, leading to avoidable escalation.

10.32. When escalating a complaint from the initial stage, complainants are asked to complete the escalation e-form. Through this e-form, data is captured such as 'how was your complaint responded to?' and 'what is the main reason for you escalating your complaint?'. On all occasions, the answers are multiple choice and complainants can answer as they wish, either selecting from pre-written answers or by providing their own response under 'other'.

10.33. Chart 7 below provides evidence that the majority of the complaints that escalate from the initial stage have not had a phone call or meeting organised to seek resolution. Just 10.4% of complainants who used the e-form, suggested that a call or meeting was arranged. The remaining 89.6% were only contacted in writing, or suggest they had no response whatsoever. In the instance where it is alleged no response was provided, further investigation shows a response was provided within timescales.

10.34. It is important to note that this data is reliant on complainants correctly completing the form and therefore allowances should be made with regards to the data confidence. It is also a combination of all HCC complaints and IWC Social Care complaints.

Chart 7: How was your complaint responded to?

Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council Social Care data

- 10.35. At the end of the current reporting period, the top five answers in response to 'what is your main reason for escalating your complaint?' were:
- My desired outcomes have not been met (21%).
 - The initial response does not answer some or all of my complaint (19%).
 - The initial response has errors and factual inaccuracies in it (14%).
 - The initial response is not thorough enough (13%).
 - I wish to escalate to the LGSCO and have to exhaust the complaints process first (13%).
- 10.36. The new way of resolving complaints with phone calls and/or meetings, it is hoped, will continue to reduce escalations as well as addressing the reasons complainants give for doing so.
- 10.37. Further detail regarding escalations to the LGSCO is included under section 11.
- 10.38. **Call back requests**

- 10.39. Where communication was a clear theme of complaint in the latter part of 2022, a new method of communication was introduced. When completing the e-form individuals are asked, rather than making a formal complaint, would they rather request a call back from the appropriate manager (screen shot below).

Compliments, Complaints and Data Protection form

* Required

Request a call back

We are dedicated to resolving, listening and learning from any feedback we receive and aim to do so as swiftly as possible at a local level.

9. Before making a formal complaint would you like to request a call back from an appropriate manager?

Call backs will be made as quickly as possible and no later than two working days after the request. Please be aware calls will most likely take place within working hours (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm).

Yes

No

Back Next

- 10.40. If they respond 'yes' to this, the submission is recorded as a 'call back request' rather than a formal complaint and the appropriate manager is asked to organise a call back. This does not remove the individual's right to submit a formal complaint at a later stage if still dissatisfied.
- 10.41. This approach has proved very successful with 40.7% (11) of those completing the form responding 'yes' when asked if they wish to have a call back, rather than make a complaint.
- 10.42. **Compliments, Complaints and Data Protection form**
- 10.43. Continuing on the subject of the complaints e-form, in 2022 a new version was introduced which is accessible via the website. The new e-form, built with Microsoft Forms (MS Form) and automated with the use of Power Automate, is a more user friendly version of the previous form.
- 10.44. By being an MS Form the CSCT have direct access to its content and are able to make instantaneous edits and improvements if any are identified.

- 10.45. The form also uses 'branching'. This is a capability within the MS Form that allows the form to intuitively only ask questions relevant to the submission. For example, if an individual is making a complaint on behalf of a child, both their details and the child's are requested. If, however, they are making a complaint on their own behalf, secondary details are not required and therefore not requested. This helps to reduce the time spent completing the form, potential duplication and ensure all information received by the relevant team is of value.
- 10.46. With the help of Microsoft software called Power Automate, the triaging of all submissions via the e-form is now automated. This means that whilst the individual completing the form has a seamless experience of completing only the relevant sections to their submission, CSCT only receive the information relevant to them, saving them time in not having to identify specific complaint elements that require action.
- 10.47. **Ad-hoc work**
- 10.48. The 'Ad-hoc' category makes up 23.7% of all work received by the CSCT, which is higher than is desirable. 'Ad-hoc' representations are pieces of correspondence covering a variety of queries such as safeguarding, school matters and topics relating to other Local Authorities. All matters that the CSCT are unable to meaningfully support with.
- 10.49. A project is in place to further analyse why this is the case, what elements should have gone somewhere originally and how these can be better signposted to reduce unnecessary workload within the team.
- 10.50. A recommendation regarding this is provided in section 12.

11. A review of the effectiveness of the complaints procedure

11.1. 13% of complainants advise they only use the complaints process in order to be able to approach the LGSCO, implying resolution is not possible by the Local Authority. The CSCT predicts that, on average, Independent Person costs alone for a single Stage Two complaint costs an average of £1k and a single Stage Three panel £2k. It is important to also factor in the time of senior managers and the administration required, which also come at a significant cost.

11.2. It is the view of this report that the national CSC complaints process has significant room for improvement in areas such as the following:

- The process is written for children and young people but fails to acknowledge the vast majority of those who use it are parents.
- The process disproportionately restricts early referrals to the LGSCO, often insisting on completing the entire complaints process before doing so. A significant number of resources have as a result been diverted from key front-line services, which could have been prevented.
- The statutory guidance is outdated and lacking in detail, making it unclear for Local Authorities and complainants. Where steps have been taken to give further guidance, there is a lack of specific information and guidance from the LGSCO. It is the view of this report that more needs to be done to ensure decisions are consistent, or that discretion is made explicit for decision makers.
- The Stage Three review panel meeting provides very little value to the process and is an expensive meeting for taxpayers to fund. The significant majority of cases see no change following a Stage Three review panel meeting, putting in to question its value to all parties and furthermore its cost effectiveness.

12. New recommendations

12.1. Recommendation 1: Comms strategy within the Children & Families Branch

12.2. In response to the lessons identified in the previous section, a communication strategy should be designed and implemented. This strategy should include workstreams on:

- The management of expectations with regard to general communication by Social Workers.
- Communication with those who do not have Parental Responsibility (PR).
- Communication with non-resident parents.
- The way in which the change of a social worker is communicated.

12.3. This should be produced as a joint document by Children's and Families colleagues and the CSCT ready for use by 1 April 2024. Once in place, any lessons learnt will be considered for replication and/or expansion across other services within the Children's Services Directorate.

12.4. Recommendation 2: All of the Children's Services Directorate to take a strengths-based approach to resolution

12.5. Following the success of those services who have adopted a strength-based approach and opted to call or meet complainants at the early stages of their complaint, it is this reports recommendation that all of the Directorate adopt this approach as soon as possible.

12.6. This is best done by re-introducing stage one of the corporate complaints process.

12.7. This report recommends that CSDMT approve such an approach to be rolled out across all of the Directorate by 1 September 2023. Ownership of this action, should it be approved, would be with the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager.

12.8. Recommendation 3: Chasing of actions agreed

12.9. The CSCT should embed the practice of recording all actions from complaints made and monitoring actions to ensure they are completed as agreed.

12.10. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 1 September 2023.

12.11. Remedial action for complaints upheld

12.12. Services within the Directorate should be reminded of their ability to take remedial action in order to resolve complaints and prevent escalation.

12.13. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 1 September 2023.

12.14. Reducing work categorised as ‘ad-hoc’

12.15. Analysis of the category ‘ad-hoc’ should be completed and work undertaken to reduce this influx of work.

12.16. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

12.17. To further increase use of the e-form

12.18. Efforts should be made to increase the total of those using the e-form, to ensure mandatory information is captured at the first point of contact.

12.19. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

12.20. Increase timescale compliance

12.21. Efforts should be made to increase timescale compliance, with analysis of specific pain points and how they can be alleviated to improve response times.

12.22. With regards to corporate complaints, CSCT should return to advising complainants they will receive a response within 20 working days but requesting a response from the service in 10 working days. CSCT will then chase from day 11 onwards.

12.23. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

12.24. Policy on nepotism

12.25. As previously mentioned, this report and the wider CSCT have seen no evidence that such a culture exists, however there is a perception of it amongst some complainants. Therefore, a public facing policy, to provide reassurances to those who may have concern is recommended.

12.26. To be actioned by the Deputy Director of Children’s Services by 1st April 2024.

APPENDIX 1

The relevant section of the guidance for this annual report is copied below;

5.6 Annual report

5.6.1 Local authorities must each financial year publish an Annual Report (regulation 13(3)). This should draw upon the information already gathered under section 5.1 for recording purposes. However, this Annual Report is a separate requirement and should not contain personal information that is identifiable about any individual complainant.

5.6.2 The Annual Report should be arranged by the Complaints Manager and should provide a mechanism by which the local authority can be kept informed about the operation of its complaints procedure. The report should be presented to staff, the relevant local authority committee and should be made available to the regulator and the general public. It should provide information about:

- *representations made to the local authority;*
- *the number of complaints at each stage and any that were considered by the Local Government Ombudsman;*
- *which customer groups made the complaints;*
- *the types of complaints made;*
- *the outcome of complaints;*
- *details about advocacy services provided under these arrangements;*
- *compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale as agreed;*
- *learning and service improvement, including changes to services that have been*
- *implemented and details of any that have not been implemented;*
- *a summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity of complainants; and*

a review of the effectiveness of the complaints procedure (see section 5.7 on Monitoring and Quality Assurance).

APPENDIX 2

Key terms:

Children's Services Complaints Team (CSCT) – The team within the Children's Services Directorate responsible for processing all IWC CSC complaints.

Representation - A representation is a piece of work requiring action by the CSCT, regardless of whether or not it is processed as a complaint. A representation could trigger a single and simple piece of work lasting a matter of minutes, a large piece of work over many months with numerous activities or anything in between.

Children's Social Care (CSC) Complaints: These complaints follow the Council's CSC Complaints Procedure for Children's Services (Stage One – local resolution; Stage Two – investigation; Stage Three – complaint review panel). When a complainant has exhausted the three stage complaints process, they can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) to consider their complaint. Complainants are also able to refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any point in the formal process, however, if the complaint is still being considered by the local authority the LGSCO may deem the complaint premature and direct the complainant back to complete the local authority's complaint process.

Corporate Complaints: The majority of the remainder of complaints for Children's Services fall under the IWC's corporate complaints procedure, ensuring compliance with the Local Government Act 1974. For example, these may be complaints about the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service, School admissions, a support service or administrative process rather than children's social care. This process is managed entirely by IWC and is not a part of the current partnership agreement.

Children's Services Directorate

Annual Report on Compliments, Complaints and Representations

2022/23

Appendix 3 – Data Tables



Representations Received

Table 1 - Complaint Refusals Breakdown

Refusal Reason	Financial Year			
	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019/20
Children's Social Care (CSC) Refusals				
Best Interest of Child / YP	1	0		
Court Proceedings	1	3		
Criminal Proceedings	0	0		
No PR	0	0		
Not in Best Interest/Age of Child/YP	0	0		
Out of Time	2	0		
Outside of Remit	0	0		
Repeat Complaint	0	0		
Total CSC refusals	4	3		
Corporate Refusals				
No PR	0	0		
Not in Best Interest/Age of Child/YP	0	0		
Out of Remit (Appeal)	0	0		
Out of Time	0	0		
Repeat Complaint	0	0		
Tribunal	0	0		
Total corporate refusals	0	0		
Total Refusals	0	3		

Timescale compliance

Table 2 – Timescale Compliance

	Stage	Financial Year							
		2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021		2019-2020	
CSC Complaints	Stage 1								
	Total number of complaints	51		29		32		35	
	- in 10 working days	23	40%	12	41%	10	31%	23	66%
	- in between 10 and 20 working days	25	44%	17	59%	21	66%	9	26%
	- in over 20 working days	3	7%	0	-%	1	3%	3	9%
	- average time to complete (days)	13		12		11.9		13.4	
	Stage 2								
	Total number of complaints (completed)	14		4		0		2	
	- in 25 working days	0	-%	0	-%	-	-%	0	-%
	- in between 25 and 65 working days	2	20%	0	-%	-	-%	0	-%
	- in over 65 working days	7	46%	4	100%	-	-%	2	100%
	- Received but not progressed	0	-%	4		7		2	
	- Withdrawn	5	33%	1		0		0	
Stage 3									
Total number of complaints (completed)	4		0		0		1		
- in under 50 working days	3	75%	-	-%	-	-%	-	-%	
- in 50 working days	0	0%	-	-%	-	-%	-	-%	
- in over 50 working days	1	25%	-	-%	-	-%	1	100%	
Corporate complaints	Stage 2								
	Total number of complaints (completed)	15		16		-		-	
	- in 10 working days	2	13%	2	13%	-	-%	-	-%
	- in between 10 and 20 working days	4	27%	9	56%	-	-%	-	-%
	- in over 20 working days	9	60%	5	31%	-	-%	-	-%
- average time to complete (days)	24		34		-		-		

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Who make complaints and how are they submitted?

Table 3 - CSC Stage One Complaints - How Received

Method	Financial Year							
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021		2019-2020	
Complaint Form	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
E-Form	16	39%	8	27%	12	38%	4	13%
Email	22	53%	20	67%	15	47%	16	53%
Email via DCS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Letter	2	5%	2	6%	5	16%	7	23%
LGSCO (via)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Telephone	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	41	100%	30	100%	32	100%	30	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 4 - CSC Stage One Complaints - Method Used to Make Complaints Young People's Complaints

Method	Financial Year							
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021		2019-2020	
Complaint Form	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
E-Form	1	100%	0	0%	3	60%	0	0%
Email	0	0%	1	100%	1	20%	2	100%
Letter	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	1	100%	5	100%	2	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 5 - CSC Stage One Complaints - Who Makes Complaints - Received from

Received from	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Parent/Adopter						
Parent	26	63%	21	70%	24	75%
Non-Resident Parent	1	2%	4	14%	0	0%
Adopter	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Ex-Partner	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partner	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Step-Parent	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Parent/Adopter	27	66%	25	84%	24	75%
Non-Parent Relative						
Grandparent	5	12%	2	7%	1	3%
Sibling	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Relative	2	4%	1	3%	1	3%
Total Non-Parent Relative	8	19%	3	10%	2	6%
Foster Carer/Prospective Foster Carer						
Foster Carer	2	4%	0	0%	1	3%
Private Foster Carer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Prospective Adopter/Foster Carer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Prospective Foster Carer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Foster Carer/ Prospective Foster Carer	2	4%	0	0%	1	3%
Service user						
Service user (adult)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Service user (young person)	1	2%	0	0%	2	6%
Total Service User	1	2%	0	0%	2	6%
Advocate	0	0%	1	3%	3	9%
Miscellaneous						
Birth Parent of Adopted Child	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Friend/Neighbour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Miscellaneous	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Total	41	100%	30	100%	32	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Nature and Service

Table 6a - CSC Complaints - complaint nature

Nature	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Assessment Outcome	2	4%	2	5%	2	3%
Assessment Process	3	6%	1	2%	1	3%
Bruising Protocol	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Change of Placement Decision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Child Protection Conference Process	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Conduct of Worker	17	33%	13	30%	6	19%
Contact Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
CSD Acted Unlawfully	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
CSD Failing in Duty of Care	0	0%	5	12%	0	0%
CSD Provision / Service Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Decision to Change Placement	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Decision to Change S/W	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Delay/Failure to Keep Informed	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
Delay in Provision of Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Eligibility for Funding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Finance	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Funding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient Support from CSD	1	2%	7	16%	10	28%
Non-Fulfilment of Duty	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outcome of Decision/Assessment	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%
Personal Budget Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Placement Dispute	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
Policy Dispute	0	0%	2	5%	1	3%
Poor Communication	5	10%	8	19%	4	13%
Quality of Service	19	38%	0	0%	0	0%
Refusal of Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Respite Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Safeguarding	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Welfare Concerns Not Acted Upon	0	0%	1	2%	3	9%
Total	51	100%	43	100%	32	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 6b – Corporate Complaints - complaint nature

Nature	Financial Year				
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21
Chillerton and Rookley consultation	0	0%	6	37.5%	
Child not given EHCP	0	0%	3	18.75%	
Provision in EHCP not being implemented	0	0%	6	37.5%	
SEN tribunal decision disregarded	0	0%	1	6.25%	
Childs EHCP	11	73%	0	0%	
SEN panel member	1	7%	0	0%	
Lack of SEN school places	1	7%	0	0%	
Holiday activity fund	1	7%	0	0%	
Household support voucher not valid	1	7%	0	0%	
Total	15	100%	16	100%	

Table 7a - CSC Complaints - service involved

Service	Financial Year					
	2022-23		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Adoption	1	7%	1	4%	0	0%
Care Leavers	1	7%	1	3%	2	6%
CAST	37	73%	27	87%	19	59%
Child in Need	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Children Looked After	1	7%	1	3%	2	6%
Disabled Children's Team	2	4%	0	0%	6	19%
Early Help Hub	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Family Placement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Family Support	3	6%	0	0%	0	0%
Fostering	4	4%	0	0%	1	3%
Independent Reviewing Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
MASH/CRT	0	0%	1	3%	2	6%
Not receiving a service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown / Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	51	100%	31	100%	32	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 7b - Corporate Complaints - service involved

Nature	Financial Year				
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21
SEN	13	87%	10	62.5%	
Strategic Development	0	0%	6	37.5%	
Holiday activity fund	1	7%	0	0%	
Household support	1	7%	0	0%	
Total	15	100%	16	100%	

Table 8 - CSC Stage One and Corporate Stage Two Complaints - outcome sought

Outcome Sought	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	CSC	Corp	Total	CSC	Corp	Total	CSC	Corp	Total
Agreed Service Implemented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology	0	0	0	3	0	3	1	0	1
Apology & Explanation	7	0	7	0	0	0	3	0	3
Apology and consultation rendered null and void	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0
Assessment / Reassessment	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assurance of Non-Reoccurrence	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Best Practice Learning - Individual	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Better Communication	2	2	4	4	0	4	5	0	5
Case/Decision Review	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2
Change Made to Contact Arrangements	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Change of Placement Decision	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Change of Social Worker / Worker	4	0	4	6	0	6	1	0	1
Child Returned to Family	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Child to receive OT	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Compensation	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Complaint Issues Investigated	13	0	13	11	0	11	4	0	4
Contact Arrangements Finalised	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
CSD Involvement Ceased	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EHCP for child	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0
EHCP for child and meeting with school staff and SEN officer	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
EHCP outcomes to be met, acknowledgement and increase in communication	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
EHCP to be finalised, provision to be put in place	0	3	3	0	1	1	0	0	0
EHCP to be updated	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Emotional/Educational/Psychological needs met by CSD	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
EOTAS package put in place and explanation	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Explanation	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Explanation and cease proposals to review future of school	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Explanation of delay and meaning of comment, and clarification re future	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Financial Reimbursement	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Follow a different process	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Increase support from CSD	1	0	1	3	0	3	4	0	4

Outcome Sought	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	CSC	Corp	Total	CSC	Corp	Total	CSC	Corp	Total
Meeting Request	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Assessment	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Not Known	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Not Specified / Implied	12	0	12	7	0	7	4	0	4
Other	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal Budget	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy/Procedure Review	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Request Fulfilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S/W to Remain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SLT and OT for child and explanation	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Stop consultation and do not close school	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	51	15	66	43	16	59	32	0	32

Table 9 - CSC and Corporate Complaints – actual outcome

Actual Outcome	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		Total	2021-2022		Total
	CSC	Corp		CSC	Corp	
Acknowledgement of mistake	0	0	0	0	1	1
Apology & Explanation	24	2	25	13	0	13
Assessment / Reassessment	0	1	1	0	0	0
Change of Social Worker / Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0
EHCP process started	0	0	0	0	2	2
Explanation	27	2	29	28	6	34
Explanation and meeting offered	0	0	0	0	1	1
Explanation and mistake acknowledged	0	2	2	0	1	1
Explanation and OT appointment offered	0	2	2	0	2	2
Financial Reassessment / Review	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Reimbursement (Actual)	0	1	1	0	0	0
Linked amended	0	0	0	0	1	1
Meeting Offer	0	1	1	0	0	0
No Investigation Possible	0	1	1	2	0	2
Request for EHCP to be updated	0	0	0	0	1	1
Request for provisions to be put in place	0	0	0	0	1	1
Request Fulfilled	0	1	1	0	0	0
Service to Continue	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supportive Work with YP	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	51	13	64	43	16	59

Young People's Complaints

Table 10 - CSC Complaints – nature

Nature	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Change of Placement Decision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Delay in Provision of Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient Support from CSD	0	0%	1	100%	1	20%
Non Fulfilment of Duty	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Policy Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Poor Communication	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Professional Conduct	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Quality of Service	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	1	100%	5	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 11 - CSC Complaints - service involved

Service	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Care Leaver	0	0%	1	100%	2	40%
CAST	1	100%	0	0%	2	40%
Children in Care	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Child in Need	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Help Hub	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
MASH/CRT	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	1	100%	5	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 12 - CSC Complaints - outcome sought

Outcome Sought	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Agreed Service Implemented	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Apology	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Better Communication	0	0%	0	0%	2	40%
Change Made to Contact Arrangements	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Change of Placement Decision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Change of Social Worker / Worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Complaint Issues Investigated	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Explanation	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Financial Reimbursement	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
Increase Support from CSD	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
New Assessment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Specified / Implied	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Known	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Policy/Procedure Review	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Request Fulfilled	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	2	100%	1	100%	5	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 13 - CSC Complaints - actual outcome

Outcome Sought	Financial Year					
	2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021	
Apology & Explanation	1	100%	0	0%	1	20%
Change of Social Worker / Worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Explanation	0	0%	1	100%	3	60%
Meeting / Offer of a meeting	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No Investigation Possible	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Service to Continue	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Supportive Work with YP	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Request Fulfilled	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100%	1	100%	5	100%

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Profile of complainants

Table 15 – CSC complaints - disability

Disability	Number of representations		
	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021
Not Stated	44	25	23
No	11	3	7
Yes	1	2	2
Total	56	30	32

Table 16 – CSC complaints - gender

Gender	Number of representations		
	2022-2023	2021-2023	2020-2021
Not Stated	45	22	22
Male	3	6	4
Female	8	2	6
Male & Female	0	0	0
Total	56	30	32

Table 17 – CSC complaints - age

Age	Number of representations		
	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021
0 - 16	0	0	0
16 - 19	1	0	2
20 - 24	0	0	0
25 - 59	10	7	7
60 - 64	0	0	0
65 and over	1	0	1
Not known/Stated	44	23	22
Total	56	30	32

Table 18 – CSC complaints - ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of representations		
	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021
Not Stated	29	23	7
Not Asked	15	0	15
White British	12	5	9
Other White	0	1	1
Asian/Asian British	0	0	0
Black/Black British	0	0	0
Mixed	0	1	0
Other Ethnic Group	0	0	0
Total	56	30	32

LGSCO Complaints

Table 19 - Complaints received by Children's Services from LGSCO

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints		
LGSCO Referrals Received	2022/23	2021/22
Number of referrals received by CSCT from LGSCO in period	3	3
Number of final decisions received from LGSCO in period	3	2
Number of final decisions received when referral was received outside of period	3	2
Type of LGSCO referral		
Education / Non Social Care (LGSCO Complaint)	3	3
Social Care (LGSCO Complaint)	0	1
LGSCO – Assessment (referred back for local resolution)	0	3
Not Known	0	0
Outcome		
There was fault in the delay in issuing the decision following the annual review	0	1
Upheld – LA to apologise, make payments to complainant for distress and training for staff	1	2
Upheld – LA to make payment to complainant	1	0
Upheld – Maladministration – no injustice	0	0
Injustice remedied during LGSCO consideration	0	0
Closed after initial enquiries	3	0
No fault by LA	1	0
Awaiting outcome	0	3

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Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills Workplan 2022-25

The committee assists Cabinet in the development and implementation of key plans, policies and activities set out in the Corporate Plan relating to the delivery of relevant services, including:

Children's Services
(including safeguarding)

Corporate Parenting

Special Educational Needs
and/or Disabilities

Early Help

Education

Apprenticeships

Adult Learning

Date	Agenda Items	Description & Background	Lead Officer/Cabinet Member
7 September 2023	School Place Planning	The committee to receive an update on the current situation with regards to school place planning and consider the next steps.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Youth Provision	To hear from the Youth Council regarding youth provision and the problems with accessing provision on the Island	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	School Transport	To consider the trends in school transport activity and costs, as well as the plans and initiatives underway to try and manage these costs.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Isle of Wight Start for Life and Family Hub Programme	To consider a report on the development of the Isle of Wight Family Hub offer and the delivery plan	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Annual Complaints Report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
20 September 2023 - INFORMAL	Children with Disabilities	To consider the range of provision on the island and understand the challenges that are faced such as recruitment and retention	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills

30 October 2023 - INFORMAL	TBC		
7 December 2023	Performance & Budget	To consider current performance trends and budget 2023/24	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Youth Services	To consider the Isle of Wight Councils contribution to youth services on the Island	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	IW Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report	To consider the safeguarding boards annual report	Chairman of the Board
	Children's Health & Wellbeing	To explore what actions can actively be done to improve children's health and wellbeing to positively impact upon attendance and attainment.	Director of Public Health Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health and Homelessness
	Annual Children in Care Report	To receive the annual Children in Care report that links into an update from the Corporate Parenting Board.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	SACRE Annual Report 2022-23	To consider the work of the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
5 February 2024 - INFORMAL	TBC		
7 March 2024	School Attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Safety Valve - Update on Progress	To be advised on the progress of implementation of the Safety Valve programme	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report	The committee to receive an overview of Early Years childcare sufficiency on the Isle of Wight.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills

	School Attendance & Exclusions	The committee to consider the latest position on attendance and exclusions.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
June 2024	Performance & Budget	Current performance trends and budget 2024/25	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Fostering & Adoption Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Social Worker Recruitment & Retention	To consider steps being taken to assist in the recruitment and retention of social workers within Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
September 2024	Annual Complaints Report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
December 2024	Performance & Budget	Current performance trends and budget 2023/24	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	IW Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report	To consider the annual report	Chairman of the Board
	SACRE Annual Report	To consider the work of the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Annual Children in Care Report	To receive the annual Children in Care report that links into an update from the Corporate Parenting Board.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills

March 2025	School Attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills
	Safety Valve - Update on Progress	To be advised on the progress of implementation of the Safety Valve programme	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills