

Children's Services Department

Annual Report on Complaints and Representations

2020/21



1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Annual Complaints Report (ACR) is a public document, providing a mechanism by which the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services Department (the Department) can be kept informed about the operation and effectiveness of its Children's Social Care complaints procedure and support learning from complaints. Non-Children's Social Care Complaints are responded to by the Nominated Complaints Officer within the Isle of Wight Council. These types of complaints are not included in this report. This document covers the reporting period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.
- 1.2 The key findings within the report can be summarised as:
- 1.2.1 A total of 64 representations were received by the CSCT in the 2020/21 reporting period. This represents a reduction of 6% from 2019/20. A glossary of key terms can be found in Appendix 2.
 - 1.2.2 55% of representations were considered in accordance with the children's social care statutory guidance (83% were accepted and managed as statutory complaints) and 44% were 'other' complaints/representations. On average, the Department receives 5.3 representations per month, a 0.2 reduction on 2019/20.
 - 1.2.3 During 2020/21, the average time taken to investigate and respond to new children's social care stage 1 complaints was 11.9 working days (a decrease of 1.5 working days on 2019/20).
 - 1.2.4 31% of social care complaints were responded to within 10 working days at stage one (35 percentage point decrease on the previous reporting period); 66% between 10-20 working days (40 percentage points increase on the previous year) and 3% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit (six percentage point reduction on the previous year).
 - 1.2.5 'Parents' continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services (75% of Stage 1 social care complaints). There has also been an increase in complaints made by 'Advocates' on behalf of Young People from none in 2019/20 to three in 2020/21.
 - 1.2.6 The three most popular methods for making a complaint continue to be by 'email' (47%), 'letter' (16%) and 'e-form' (38%).
 - 1.2.7 The three highest category for the reason (nature) why children's social care complaints are made are 'Insufficient Support from Children's Services Department' (28%), 'Conduct of Worker' (19%) and 'Poor Communication' (13%). Although 'Conduct of Worker' has been a

reason for complaints in recent reporting periods, 2020/21 has seen a drop of eight percentage points from the 2019/20 reporting period. 'Insufficient Support from Children's Services Department' has seen a second period of increase (from two in 2019/20 to nine in 2020/21). Complaints around 'poor communication' have also increased, having reduced in 2019/20 (four in 2020/21, compared to one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19).

- 1.2.8 For children's social care, the predominant outcome sought is 'Better Communication' (16%); tied for second are 'Complaint Issues Investigated' and 'Increase Support from Children's Services Department' (13% each); with 'apology and explanation' now joint third (with a 25% reduction on 2019/20) with 'Change Made to Contact Arrangements' (9% each).
- 1.2.9 In 2020/21, five young people made a complaint, an increase from previous years (only two in 2019/20), making up 16% of Statutory Stage One complaints (compared to only 7% in 2019/20).
- 1.2.10 There were also five Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints received within the reporting period (compared to four in 2019/20).
- 1.3 The report also identifies six recommendations for CSCT or the wider department to implement or monitor, as appropriate, during the 2021/22 reporting period:
- **Recommendation 1** – Develop an Implementation Plan and ensure delivery of the service improvements identified within the Children's Services Transformation Practice's review of Children's Services Complaints.
 - **Recommendation 2** – Working alongside the Children's Services Performance Manager, continue to incorporate the benefits of the new Complaints Case Management System through the capturing of evidence to support learning, by updating the format of the Annual Complaint Report (ACR) to include this additional detail.
 - **Recommendation 3** – Establish the ongoing team structure arrangements for the Children's Services Complaints Team, confirming the ongoing approach to the statutory Complaints Manager position.
 - **Recommendation 4** – Increase capacity within the Independent Person (IP) pool to ensure successful increases within the Investigating Officer (IO) role are not impacted by a lack of availability of IPs to support investigations.

- **Recommendation 5** – The observations identified within the 2020/21 ACR recommendations, to be further explored to identify any viable pattern/trend that could lead to learning/practice improvements.
- **Recommendation 6** – 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.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The report covers the Children's Services Department's formal feedback and representations for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The report details the compliments and complaints formally recorded by the Children's Services Complaints Team (CSCT). In addition to annual reporting, service 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.
- 2.2 The Children's Act 1989 requires all local authorities with social services responsibilities to have a formal complaints procedure for social care complaints. 'Getting the Best from Complaint' (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 and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public.
- 2.3 Children's Social Care complaints follow the Council's Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure for Children's Services (Stage 1 - local resolution; Stage 2 – investigation; Stage 3 – 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.

3.0 Representations Received

- 3.1 A representation is the term used to describe the first instance of contact with the CSCT that requires an action. Only the first contact is counted in reporting tables, but all contact is recorded within the case management system. A glossary of terms can also be found under Appendix 2.
- 3.2 A total of 64 representations were received by CSCT in the 2020/21 reporting period. This represents a reduction of 4 representations (6%) from 2019/20. Table 1.1 below shows the breakdown of how these numbers compared to previous reporting periods.

Table 1.1: Total Representations

Type of representation	Financial Year				
	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Statutory					
Complaint	29	28	27	29	31
Pre-complaint to Statutory Stage 1 Complaint	3	2	0	2	0
Area initiated complaint	0	0	1	2	1
Refused	3	8	0	6	1
Total statutory representations	35	38	28	39	33
Other					
Pre-complaint	11	5	0	3	0
HSCP	0	0	0	0	1
LGSCO	5	4	5	0	2
Case Concern	3	9	6	12	6
Compliment	2	0	0	0	0
Non Statutory Complaint	2	2	0	0	0
Professional to Professional Complaint	1	0	0	0	0
GDPR, FOI or SAR	3	4	0	0	0
Ad Hoc	2	10	10	21	17
Total other representations	29	30	21	36	26
Total representations	64	68	49	75	59

3.3 Within the reporting period, as can be seen in Table 1.1 above, there were:

- 29 'other' types of enquiries (two were recorded as Ad Hoc) making up 45% of representations (a one percentage point increase on the previous reporting period);
- two 'compliments' were recorded; and
- 35 statutory representations of which 32 were accepted into the statutory complaints process.

3.4 55% of representations were considered in accordance with the children's social care statutory guidance (83% of these were accepted and managed as statutory complaints) and 45% were 'other' complaints/representations (a one percentage point increase on the previous reporting period). On average, the Department receives 5.3 representations per month.

3.5 11 pre-complaints were received in the reporting period. A pre-complaint occurs when a representation is made but there is insufficient information included to allow the Department to respond. The individual concerned is contacted by CSCT and asked to provide the necessary detail. Where this happens, the

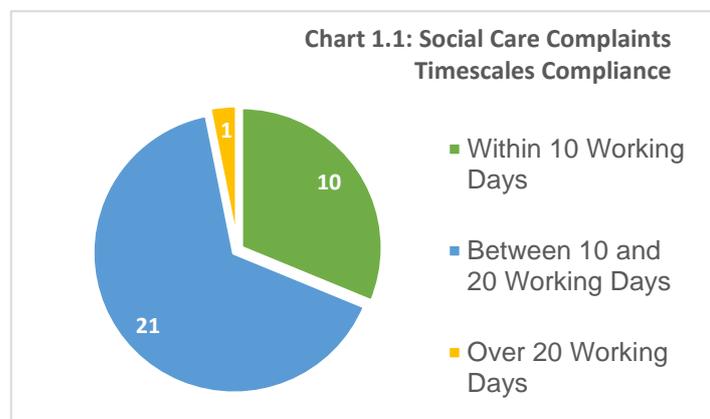
representation is then brought into the formal complaint process (pre-complaint to complaint).

- 3.6 A total of three complaints were refused, a reduction of 63% from the previous reporting period. These were all due to Court matters, which also made up 50% of refusals in 2019/20. A breakdown of the reasons for these refusals can be found in Table 1, within the supporting Data Appendix.
- 3.7 CSCT also coordinate complaints, relating to Child Protection Conferences, that fall within the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership complaint process. During the reporting period no complaints were received relating to this process.
- 3.8 'Professional to Professional Complaints' are complaints received from other professionals and not made on behalf of service users. During the reporting period, one complaint was relating to this process compared to none received during the 2019/20 reporting period.
- 3.9 Within the reporting period, the Council received two 'compliments', the first submissions recorded across the past five reporting periods. Both submissions were from partner agencies - one from Isle of Wight NHS Trust's Mental Health Team and one from Hampshire Constabulary's Public Protection Department. No compliments were received directly from service users, as has been the case in previous years.

4.0 Timescale Compliance

- 4.1 During 2020/21, the average time taken to investigate and respond to new children's social care stage 1 complaints was 11.9 working days (a decrease of 1.5 days on 2019/20).

- 4.2 As can be seen in Chart 1.1, 31% of children's social care complaints were responded to within 10 working days at stage One (a 35 percentage point reduction on the previous reporting period); 66% between 10-20 working days and 3% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit.



4.3 A further breakdown of timescale compliance can be found in table 2 within the supporting Data Appendix.

5.0 Who makes Complaints and How are they Submitted?

5.1 'Parents' continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services (75% of Stage 1 social care complaints). There has also been an increase in complaints made by 'Advocates' on behalf of Young People from none received in 2019/20 to three in 2020/21.

5.2 The three most popular methods for making complaint continue to be by 'email' (47%), 'letter' (16%) and 'e-form' (38%). Data pertaining specifically to Young Peoples' complaints (as a subset) is included later in the report (see section 10).

5.3 A further breakdown of who made complaints and how they were submitted can be found in tables 3 and 5 within the supporting Data Appendix.

6.0 Nature and Service

6.1 The three highest category for the reason (nature) why children's social care complaints are made are:

- 'Insufficient Support from Children's Services Department' (28%);
- 'Conduct of Worker' (19%); and
- 'Poor Communication' (13%).

6.2 Although 'Conduct of Worker' has remained prominent across recent reporting periods, 2020/21 has seen a drop of eight percentage points from the 2019/20 reporting period. 'Insufficient Support from Children's Services Department' has seen a second period of increase (from two in 2019/20 to nine in 2020/21). Complaints around 'poor communication' have also increased again, having reduced in 2019/20, reaching the highest number for the past three reporting periods (four in 2020/21, compared to one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19).

6.3 In previous reporting periods, the data has shown that complaints are generally spread across services, although some types of service are more likely to result in feedback leading to complaints than others. In 2020/21, in relation to children's social care, CAST continue to receive the highest number of complaints and make up over half of all Children's Social Care complaints (59%), an increase on the 2019/20 reporting period (19 in 2020/21 compared to 10 in 2019/20).

6.4 The remaining complaints do continue the general pattern of being shared across services, with:

- 'Disabled Childrens Teams' receiving 19% of Children's Social Care complaints (a reduction of one on 2019/20);
- services to 'Children Looked After' (which had a 71% decrease on 2019/20) and 'Care Leavers' (who increased from one complaint in 2019/20 to two in this reporting period), along with 'MASH/CRT' (no change on 2019/20 in terms of numbers but did reduce its share of complaints by 1% point in this reporting period), each receiving 6% of Children's Social Care complaints in 2020/21; and
- 'Fostering' receiving 3% (an increase of one complaint compared to none in 2019/20).

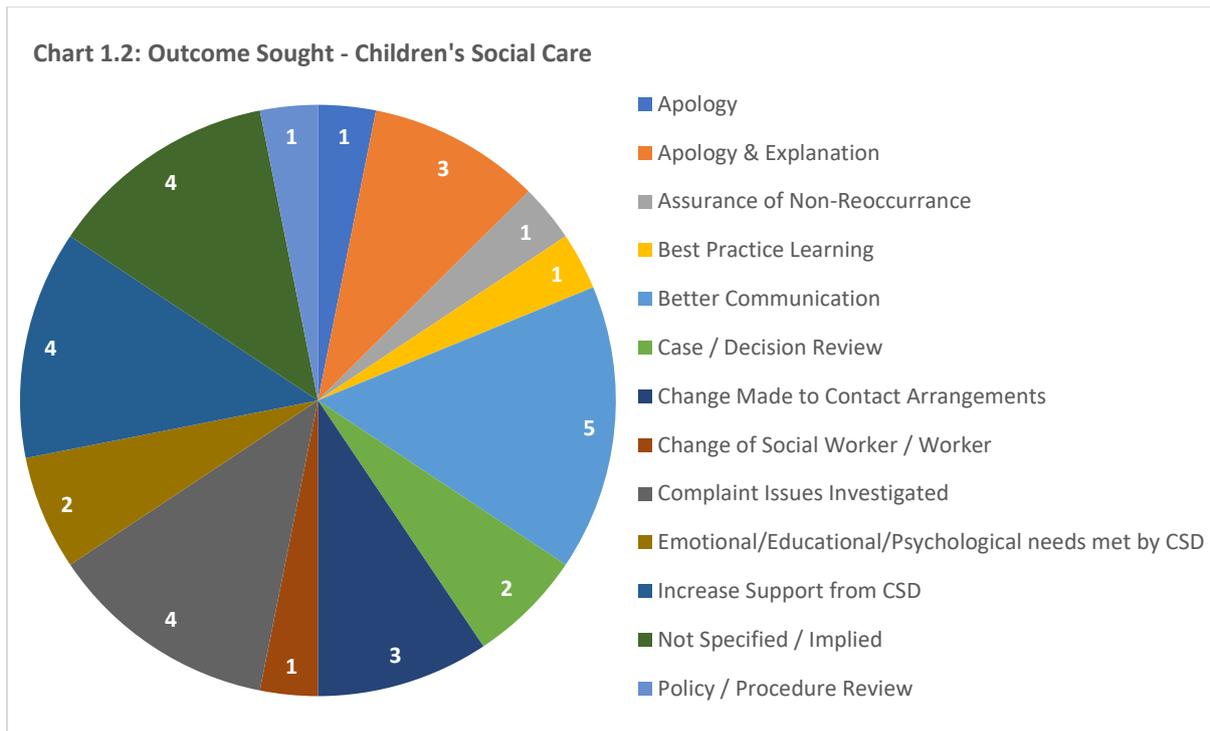
6.5 As noted in previous reporting periods, given the primary function of Children's Services Department's social care responsibilities, this is not surprising.

6.6 A further breakdown of the nature of complaints made can be found in Table 6 within the supporting Data Appendix.

7.0 Outcomes Sought

7.1 For Children's Social Care complaints, the predominant outcome sought is 'Better Communication' (16%), as can be seen in Chart 1.2 below.

7.2 Tied for second are 'Complaint Issues Investigated' and 'Increase Support from Children's Services Department' (13% each); with 'apology and explanation' now joint third with 'Change Made to Contact Arrangements' (9% each).



7.3 The desire for an ‘apology and explanation’ reduced by 25% in 2020/21 compared to the 2019/20 reporting period, alongside ‘explanation’ now making up none of the ‘outcomes sought’ having previously made up 10% of this reporting category.

7.4 Alongside the decrease in ‘talkative/clarification’ style responses identified under 7.3 above, the 2020/21 reporting period has also seen an increase in the number of complainants wanting outcomes that could be grouped under a more specific action/something to be done description, now making up half of all complaints (50%), compared to the 2019/20 reporting period (17%). This includes:

- Complaint Issues Investigated (13%);
- Increase Support from the Children’s Services Department (13%)
- Change Made to Contact Arrangements (9%);
- Case/Decision Review (6%);
- Emotional/Educational/Psychological needs met by the Children’s Services Department (6%); and
- Policy/Procedure Review (3%).

Observation –The change in numbers identified under 7.4 could suggest that complainants are becoming more assertive in their desired outcome, moving away from an accommodating attitude where they will be satisfied by an apology and/or explanation.

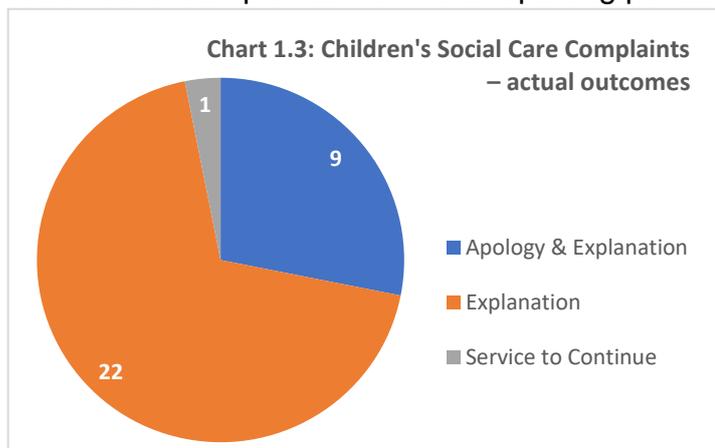
7.5 The 2020/21 reporting period has also seen the number of complainants seeking an outcome of ‘Complaint Issues Investigated’ double compared to the 2019/20 reporting period (2).

Observation –The change in numbers identified under 7.5 could suggest that some services/teams/individuals are either not looking into concerns being raised at the informal stage; not providing a response of suitable quality/quantity; or if linked to the ‘better communication’ outcome being sought that the complainant is feeling that they are possibly not being listened to. If this is the case, then remedying this approach could potentially contribute to situations being resolved earlier and without having to enter the formal complaints process.

8.0 Actual Outcomes

8.1 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. The actual outcome achieved is taken from the complaint response letter. The correlation between outcome sought and the actual outcomes identifies ‘Better Communication’ as the highest outcome sought and ‘Explanation’ the highest actual outcome (69%). ‘Apology and Explanation’ (28%) and ‘Meeting Offer’ (3%) were the other actual outcomes for children’s social care complaints within the reporting period.

8.2 Chart 1.3 provides a summary breakdown of ‘actual outcomes’ for Children’s Social Care Complaints within the reporting period.



8.3 Despite complainants seeking more specific outcomes from their complaints (as set out under section 7.0), 97% of actual outcomes provided by the Council were either an ‘explanation’ or ‘explanation and apology’.

Observation – The large difference between what is being sought by the complainant and the outcome being provided by the department, within the 2020/21 reporting period, could support the position that complainants are possibly not being listened to or that managers have decided on a response and are not willing to adjust from that position. On the other hand, it could also be suggested that what is being requested by the complainant is not realistic or deliverable and the service are trying to manage the expectations of the complainants and clarify what the situation is, providing an apology where they believe this is appropriate (28% of complaints).

Observation – The increase in the number of outcomes including an apology (nine in 2020/21 compared to four in 2019/20) could be an indication that services are more willing to recognise that there has been fault or an acceptance of the difficulties and/or impact of a situation on a complainant. This could be of potential benefit to both parties especially if there is likely to be ongoing interaction between the child(ren) and parent(s)/carer(s), in terms of trying to repair, maintain or establish a working relationship.

8.4 Table 1.2 below details the status of statutory complaints that completed stage one during the reporting period.

Table 1.2: Children’s Social Care Complaints received

Investigation Outcome	Number	Percentage
Not Upheld	21	66%
Partially Upheld	11	34%
Upheld	0	0%
Total	32	100%

8.5 Within the current reporting period, CSCT was also able to identify for the data set out within Table 1.2 above, the following observations relating to ‘actual’ outcomes for Children’s Social Care complaints:

- 'Explanation' made up 69% of complaint outcomes.
- Where 'Explanation' was the outcome, 20 of the 22 complaints (91%) were 'Not Upheld' (compared to seven of nine in 2019/20), with the remaining two being 'Partially Upheld' (the same number as in 2019/20).

9.0 Learning from Complaints

9.1 Complaints can provide both opportunities for learning and indications that Children's Services practice is appropriate. In some instances, specific areas for service improvement are identified.

9.2 General learning points and service improvements identified from social care complaints received in 2020/21 were comparable to previous periods, particularly around the importance of good communication. Ensuring agreed

actions are completed, such as minutes etc sent in keeping with CSD's own policies and procedures is still observed and therefore a continued requirement to keep reinforcing this message.

9.3 The learning from individual complaints is, as a point of good practice, usually included in the response letter to the complainant by the senior manager, who also implements and monitors any required action.

9.4 Some examples identified (but adjusted to ensure anonymity) during the reporting period included:

- **Social care stage 1** – A complaint was received at Stage One from a mother with Parental Responsibility (PR) about the Children's Social Worker (SW). The complaint loosely involved several different agencies although the main focus was about the Social Worker (SW).

The complaint stated that the SW's actions and inactions directly affected her and the children effectively causing the family breakdown as it is now:

"The Senior Manager responding to the Complaint recognised the importance of having effective communication within the initial contact. The Senior Manager set out in the response an action to ensure that their staff are aware of how important effective communication is."

- **Social Care Stage 1** – A complaint was received at Stage One from a mother with PR claiming that they had been left out all of all communication from the department:

"The Senior Manager responding to the Complainant addressed this with the social work team involved as the actions had fallen below the standards expected."

The Senior Manager put in place steps to ensure moving forward that the complainant was consulted and kept fully updated in respect of their child and was to be invited to all meetings."

- **Social Care Stage 1** – A complaint was received at Stage One from a mother about her experience with the department since a Child Protection Plan (CPP) had been in place.

The complaint largely related around the SW's alleged poor communication, alongside the belief that the family had not been effectively supported throughout the Child Protection process:

“The Senior Manager responding to the complaint took on the action to discuss the incident with the team manager about the need to ensure that when families are subject to a child protection plan it is vital not just for them to be given information but for checks to be undertaken, to ensure that this information is understood, helping to avoid misunderstandings. These actions aimed to ensure improved communication but also reemphasising the involvement of relevant parties in the process, as required.”

These actions were confirmed as having been completed.

10.0 Young People’s Complaints

10.1 In 2020/21, two complaints were made directly by young people, with a further three complaints submitted on a young person’s behalf by an advocate. This is an increase from the previous reporting period (only two complaints were made directly by young people), though none of the complaints made directly by young people or via an advocate were upheld, with 60% not upheld.

Observation – 16% of Statutory Stage One complaints were made directly by young people, an increase on the previous reporting period (7% in 2019/20).

Observation – 60% of complaints made by young people were made via an advocate possibly suggesting that the young person was not in a position to make the complaint themselves.

Observation – None of the outcomes sought by young people were achieved with .

10.2 A breakdown of young people’s complaints can be found in Tables 10 to 13, within the supporting Data Appendix.

11.0 Social Care Complaints Escalation

11.1 There remains a high level of resolution at Stage One, however, seven complaints were escalated to Stage Two (compared to four in 2019/20). All seven complaints were ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

11.2 No complaints were escalated to Stage Three within the reporting period, compared to one in 2019/20.

12.0 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

12.1 The number of complaints received via the LGSCO during the reporting period has increased by one compared to the 2019/20 reporting period. All five LGSCO complaints were also closed within the reporting period with:

- Three complaints upheld, with one complaint resulting in a Public Interest Report; and
- Two complaints closed after initial enquiries.

13.0 2019/20 Recommendations – Progress

Recommendation 1 – Review the effectiveness of the Internal Investigating Officer process. This is a continuation of the recommendation made in the 2018/19 annual complaints report. A review to be undertaken in the final quarter of the reporting period (2020/21), on the use of appropriate level managers from Children's Services Department branches (other than from within the children and families branch) to fulfil the Investigating Officer role for complaints concerning Children's Social Care. The review will identify the risk and benefit of the approach to inform the decision on the future suitability of the model.

Progress – COMPLETED. A report was submitted to the Children's Services Departmental Management Team (CSDMT) on 09th April 2021, which provided an update on the current complaints position, including proposals on the approach to fulfilling the Investigating Officer role for complaints concerning Children's Social Care. A number of the proposals put forward were approved, including the trialling of two dedicated Investigating Officers for six months who will be based within the Children's Services Complaints Team, alongside additional actions around increasing capacity to support the Stage Two investigation process through the continued use of appropriate level managers from Children's Services Department branches.

Recommendation 2 – Incorporate the benefits of the new Complaints Case Management System through the capturing of evidence to support learning, by updating the format of the Annual Complaint Report (ACR) to include this additional detail.

Progress – ONGOING. This action continues to progress as the new Complaints Case Management System is fully embedded and its full capabilities taken advantage of. The new interim Complaints Manager has been tasked with continuing to progress this action forward through the 2021/22 reporting period.

Recommendation 3 – In relation to the specific observation made in the report:

- *of the seven case concerns received (between 01/10/2019-31/03/2020) none progressed to statutory complaints.*

a) This should be reported on in detail in the next ACR as it suggests that social care matters managed as case concerns (informal complaint) lead to a high level of resolution.

- *during the reporting period no compliments were formally recorded.*

b) This should be reported on in detail in the 2020/21 ACR to identify if compliments are being made but not recorded or are not being made and what significance, if any, the latter should be given if that is the situation.

Progress – PART A: ONGOING. This will be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 reporting period, providing three years' worth of data to establish any patterns or trends.

PART B: COMPLETED. The identification of a consistent lack of compliments being submitted was fed back through the children and families management team with service leads raising greater awareness within children's social care services of the importance of ensuring that compliments are fed through to the Children's Services Complaints Team for inclusion within the Annual Complaints Report. This communication appears to have had the desired affect with compliments being reported through and appearing within this report (see section 3.9).

Recommendation 4 – 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 2021.

Progress – ONGOING. As identified under recommendation three above, the change in Complaints Manager has impacted on the ability to fulfil certain actions. Therefore, this recommendation will be rolled forward.

Recommendation 5 - The following observations indicate potential trends beginning to form and should be further explored in the next ACR to identify any viable pattern/trend that could lead to learning/practice improvements:

- *The new recording configuration has shown that for social care complaints compliance was higher in the first six month period.*
- *Only 3% of complaints relating to Children in Care and a further 3% relating to Care Leavers services, were received directly from young people.*

- *Two young people made a complaint. This is a significant decrease from previous years and specifically a percentage decrease of 50% from last year.*

Progress – ONGOING. This will be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 reporting period, providing three years' worth of data to establish any patterns or trends.

14.0 2020/21 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Develop an Implementation Plan and ensure delivery of the service improvements identified within the Children's Services Transformation Practice's review of Children's Services Complaints. All actions identified with a potential delivery date falling within the 2021/22 reporting period to be included. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2022.

Recommendation 2 – Working alongside the Children's Services Performance Manager, continue to incorporate the benefits of the new Complaints Case Management System through the capturing of evidence to support learning, by updating the format of the Annual Complaint Report (ACR) to include this additional detail. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2022.

Recommendation 3 – Establish the ongoing team structure arrangements for the Children's Services Complaints Team, confirming the ongoing approach to the statutory Complaints Manager position. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2022.

Recommendation 4 – Increase capacity within the Independent Person (IP) pool to ensure successful increases within the Investigating Officer (IO) role are not impacted by a lack of availability of IPs to support investigations. Proposal to be completed by 31 October 2021 but monitored ongoing through the 2021/22 reporting period.

Recommendation 5 – The observations identified within the 2020/21 ACR recommendations, to be further explored to identify any viable pattern/trend that could lead to learning/practice improvements. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2022.

Recommendation 6 – 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 2022.

Appendix 1 – Data Report

The supporting data tables can be accessed through the following link:

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Appendix 2 - Glossary

Complaint

Getting the Best from Complaints, DfES 2006 defines a complaint as:

‘an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet, in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response’.

Case Concern

The definition of a case concern, as developed by CSCT, is:

‘An operational / case issue which is current, has a ‘here and now’ impact and requires a ‘same day’ intervention.’

This is in contrast to complaints which will nearly always have a historical element and, whilst significant, do not require immediate intervention. Correctly identifying representations as concerns enables them to be passed swiftly to the appropriate team for action. The option to have their concern dealt with as a complaint is explained and remains an option at any point.

Pre-complaints

Representations received by the complaints team that could become a formal complaint in the future, or where further clarification is needed from the originator before the matter can be responded to, are recorded as pre-complaints.

Area Initiated

Complaints which are managed at a local level, that CSCT become aware of, and may have some input into.

Enquiries

The complaints team is also involved with enquiries received by the Director’s Office, from MPs, Councillors, and the Department for Education (DfE).

Miscellaneous

Representations received by the team that do not fall within its remit are recorded on Respond under ‘miscellaneous’. These include disciplinary issues, non-Children’s Services complaints, complaints about other agencies and local authorities.