
4 September 2012

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) - Councillor O'Boyle

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Children Learning and Young People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2011/12 – Children's Social Care Services

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The report provides details of the comments, compliments and complaints received during 2011/12, the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is asked to endorse and approve the publishing of this report.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 - Children's Social Care Services Comments, Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2011/12.

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2011/12 – Children's Social Care Services

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty, arising from the Children Act 1989, to have a system for receiving representations by, or on behalf of, children who use the social care services they provide or commission and to produce an Annual Report about the operation of the complaints procedure. The procedure used for receiving representations under the statutory procedure is linked to the corporate complaints process. The report covers representations dealt with under both procedures.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to endorse and approve the publishing of this report.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 No consultation was undertaken specifically about this report.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 If approved, the report will be published on the City Council's internet site on 1 October 2012.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are three different complaints procedures relating to local authority decisions:

- Complaint to the local authority under Children Act 1989, s26 (3) (support for families and children)
- Complaint in relation to children's homes or voluntary organisations within their procedure, or
- Complaint to the local authority under LASSA 1970 (matters not falling under Children Act s26).

In practice the procedures are likely to be administratively similar and merge.

The procedure for the local authority to deal with representations and complaints is contained within the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

The local authority must monitor arrangements made in accordance with the regulations by keeping a record of each representation received, and compiling a report every 12 months on the operation of its procedure.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Ensuring that children and young people are safe, achieve and make a positive contribution

Children, young people and others acting on their behalf, are encouraged to report any concerns about the care and services they are receiving so that these can be addressed quickly.

The feedback that is received from complaints and other representations is reported to managers on a regular basis to inform service planning and improvements.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

No risk has been identified.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

Local Authorities are required to monitor equalities information with regard to representations received. This is intended to provide an accurate picture of the use of the procedure by minority groups and to ensure that it is accessible to them and does not inadvertently discriminate against them.

The complaints service in the Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate was the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment during 2010/11. This concluded that the service was having a positive equalities impact.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None.

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Appendices



Coventry City Council

Annual Report
2011/12

Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate

Children's Social Care Services Comments, Compliments & Complaints

COMMENTS
COMPLIMENTS
& COMPLAINTS

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Local Authorities are required by law (Children Act 1989) to have a system for receiving representations made by or on behalf of children who use the social care services they provide or commission. These include: social work services, residential care, fostering, adoption and the provision of support to families, children with disabilities and young people in trouble with the law. Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

On 1 September 2006, changes were made to the Local Authority Social Services Complaints Regulations (1990) as a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. These changes aimed to improve the speed of response to representations, to enhance the level of independence in judgements made at Stages 2 and 3 of the procedure and to improve access to and learning from the representations process. The changes also required Local Authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager to oversee all aspects of the procedure. Other significant changes included extending the scope of the procedure to include services provided under other parts of the Children Act, certain Adoption Services and Special Guardianship Support Services. A time limit of one year for making representations was also introduced as were new timescales for responding to complaints at Stages 1 and 2.

Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. When this is the case, these are registered under the City Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints.

In Coventry, the Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate has a dedicated Children's Complaints Officer assigned to the management of representations from children and others who present feedback on Children's Social Care Services.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use services are heard.
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and acknowledge good practice.
- Things that have gone wrong are put right.
- The organisation learns from both positive and negative feedback.
- The organisation sustains its customer focus.

As part of the Directorate's commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory and corporate procedures in relation to Children's Social Care Services, during the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012.

Particular reference is made to:

- ***The range of representations received and responses to them.***
- ***Specific trends and issues that emerged in the reporting period.***

SECTION 2: SUMMARY

During the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, Children's Social Care Services dealt with 3,793 referrals and at 31 March 2012 were providing services to 2,652 children and young people.

The total number of complaints received about Children's Social Care Services in 2011/12 was 116. This represents 3% of the numbers of referrals received and 4% of the number of children receiving a service. There was one comment made and 122 compliments were also received. This latter figure represents 3% of the numbers of referrals received and 5% of the number of children receiving a service.

There was an overall reduction of 54 in the combined numbers of comments, compliments and complaints compared to the previous year. The number of compliments reduced by 23, while the number of complaints reduced by 32. 2011/12 is the first year in which the number of compliments received has exceeded the number of complaints.

The majority of the representations received (75%), were about social work services. Approximately half of the complaints were in relation to children and young people who were being looked after by the Local Authority.

The complaints received tended to refer to matters affecting the individual, rather than a number of complaints being received about the same issue or a specific service.

Nevertheless, five main themes could be identified as arising from the feedback by and on behalf of users in 2011/12.

- *Criticism of professional conduct and how users were treated by some staff.*
- *Concerns about standards of service provided.*
- *Unhappiness with decisions and how they were made.*
- *Issues regarding poor communication with users.*
- *Appreciation of the way that individual members of staff had carried out their duties and the positive difference their actions had made.*

SECTION 3: RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Comments, compliments and complaints can tell us a great deal about the service users' experiences of service delivery, professional practice and the outcome of management decisions. The Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate welcomes this feedback and encourages children, their advocates and anyone who uses the service or who is affected by it, to make their views known.

3.1 Promoting Feedback

Accessibility to the system is of vital importance if the Directorate is to maximise the opportunities for individuals to make their views known. Promoting contact details and the methods by which people can give feedback has been a priority for the Children's Complaints Officer. Contact can be made by letter, telephone, fax, e-mail, in person, via freepost forms contained in leaflets specifically produced for children and in the corporate "Getting in Touch" leaflet, by the Council's free phone number or the web-site link.

Of particular importance is the need to inform children of their opportunity to make representations and to find methods that they can easily use. Accessibility for children is undergoing continuous development. The Children's Complaints Officer has publicised the service widely and specific information leaflets have been produced for use by children under 10 years and by teenagers. Letters have been sent to all looked after children aged over 10 years explaining the role of the Children's Complaints Officer and making them aware of the advocacy service provided by the Barnardo's Children's Rights Project. Advocates from Barnardo's have also continued to make regular visits to the children's residential units in Coventry. For the last seven years a "texting" facility has also been available so that children and young people can make their views known.

As a result 31 representations were received from children themselves this year (30 complaints and 1 compliment). This is consistent with the number received last year (32), although the breakdown is significantly different (22 complaints and 10 compliments in 2010/11). Children tended to present their feedback by letter or in person. Family members and other adults generally made contact by telephone or by email. Details of methods of contact used can be found in Section 5: Statistical Data.

3.2 Advocacy

Since 1 April 2004, the Advocacy Services and Representations Regulations 2004, have required Local Authorities to make arrangements for the provision of advocacy to children and young people making representations under the Children Act 1989. Of the 30 children and young people making complaints during the year 9 decided to have an advocate to support them in making their complaint.

Prior to the implementation of the Regulations, the Directorate already had a well-established arrangement for the provision of advocacy services to children and young people through the NCH Children's Rights Project. Since April 2006, this service has been commissioned from Barnardo's and 8 of the complainants who used an advocate had the service provided from this source.

3.3 Representations Received 2011/12

Comments	Compliments	Complaints
1	122	116

3.4 Comments

Relatively few comments are received in comparison to the number of complaints and compliments in any year. They usually take the form of suggestions or criticisms and as such they can encourage action to improve quality of services.

3.5 Compliments

Compliments provide a perspective on satisfaction and they tell us what people appreciate about services and the way they are provided. Positive feedback also encourages and motivates staff and enables them to celebrate their good performance. Every compliment received is shared with the individual or team to whom it refers and copied to the relevant managers.

3.6 Complaints

Listening to service users' complaints helps managers to focus on service improvement and customer care, increasing the Directorate's capacity for identifying changes that are required. Both the statutory and the corporate procedures offer a three-stage process which aims to provide a satisfactory resolution to any complaint brought to the Directorate, preferably as quickly as possible. The lessons learned from complaints form the basis for improving services. More detail regarding the sort of action taken this year is given in Section 4: Messages, Learning Points And Service Improvements.

3.6.1 Stage 1 - Local Resolution

The Directorate's aim within both the statutory and corporate procedures is to resolve problems, whenever possible, informally at Stage 1. At this stage, the complaint will usually be dealt with by the local manager who is responsible for the service provided. This is because local managers are in the best position to sort problems out quickly.

When things have gone wrong, an apology, an explanation and an indication of the action to be taken to put things right, has been provided in most cases. The majority, 102, (88%) of complaints were resolved at this stage including all of the complaints brought by children and young people themselves.

Where complaints are unsubstantiated, managers will usually respond with an explanation of the Directorate's policy or procedures and this alone can provide a satisfactory resolution in many cases. When complainants remain unhappy, they can take their complaint to the next stage of the Complaint Procedure.

3.6.2 Stage 2 - Formal Investigation/Senior Management Review

Within the **statutory** procedure, a formal investigation of the circumstances leading to a complaint is, sometimes, a more appropriate response, although this tends to be a lengthier process. This may be required when complainants remain dissatisfied with the conclusion reached at Stage 1 or

when the complaint is particularly complex or involves a number of service areas. These investigations are always conducted by someone outside the direct line management of the service and the person about whom the complaint is being made. During the year there were seven investigations carried out at Stage 2, six of these had progressed from Stage 1. All the investigations were undertaken by external investigators. To date, two have been successfully resolved and three complainants have requested progression to Stage 3. At the conclusion of all Stage 2 investigations and after the response has been made to the complainant, the Investigating Officers' reports are read by the Director of Children, Learning and Young People as well as being passed to other senior managers for them to consider and act upon.

Under the **corporate** procedure, complaints can be progressed to Stage 2 if the complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving a response at Stage 1. In these cases, the relevant head of service or their nominee will review the outcome at Stage 1 and provide a formal response to the complaint. This year no complaints progressed to the second stage of the process.

3.6.3 Stage 3 - Review Panel/Corporate Review

Within the **statutory** complaints procedure, where complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal investigation at Stage 2, they can request that a review panel of three independent people be convened to examine the investigation. Review panels can make recommendations to the Director if they conclude that the complaint is justified, or that more could be done to resolve the matter, or if they feel the Directorate should take action to prevent similar situations arising in the future. One complaint was considered by a Review Panel this year.

Under the **corporate** procedure, complainants can request that their complaint is progressed to Stage 3 if they are unhappy with the response they receive at Stage 2. In these cases, a review of the complaint will be undertaken either by the Director of Children, Learning and Young People or the Chief Executive of the City Council. This year no complaints were dealt with in this way.

3.7 Outcomes

All of the complaints received this year had been responded to by the time this report was prepared. In 17 cases (15%), the complaint was fully substantiated, in 43 (37%) the complaint was partially substantiated and in 47 (41%) the complaint was not upheld. 8 of the complaints (7%), were withdrawn by the complainants after being received.

As a comparison, in 2010/11, 20% of complaints were fully substantiated, 32% were partially substantiated and 37% were not upheld.

3.8 Time-scales

The legislation and corporate procedures set out timescales for dealing with complaints at each stage of the process. From 1 September 2006 these became:

	Legislation	Corporate
Stage 1	10 working days (can be extended to 20 working days)	10 working days
Stage 2	25 working days (can be extended to 65 working days)	20 working days
Stage 3	Within 30 working days of complainant's request	20 working days

However, the complexity of social care issues means that complaint resolution can sometimes be protracted and achievement of the time-scales can suffer as a result.

The Children's Complaints Officer, therefore, undertakes rigorous monitoring of progress in relation to responding to complaints.

This year performance in relation to completion within timescales was encouraging. 82 (77%) of the Stage 1 complaints were responded to on time, as compared to 48% last year. Investigations of Stage 2 complaints under the statutory procedure often need to be extended beyond the 25 working days timescale due to the complexity of the issues being considered. In these situations the importance of keeping the complainant informed and securing their agreement to an extension of the time-scale, is recognised and addressed. As a result, all but one of the complaints dealt with at Stage 2 were all completed within a timescale agreed with the complainant and within 65 working days. In the case where the timescale was not achieved, the complaint was particularly complex and 49 separate issues were raised by the complainants. As a result, they were advised at the start of the investigation that additional time would be required, which they understood and agreed. The Independent Review Panel that considered the Stage 3 complaint was convened in accordance with the timescales and the Directorate's response to its recommendations was also completed within time.

For details of the time-scale performance at each stage see Section 5: Statistical Data.

3.9 Equalities Monitoring

Since 1 September 2006, Local Authorities have been required to monitor equalities information with regard to representations received. This is intended to provide an accurate picture of the use of the procedure by minority groups and to ensure that it is accessible to them and does not inadvertently discriminate against them.

In Coventry, the majority of complaints are not made by service users themselves, but by others on their behalf. As a result, in respect of all representations received, a record is kept of the ethnicity of the service user and whether or not they have a disability, rather than recording these details in relation to the complainant.

The information gathered this year shows that, despite the overall reduction in the number of complaints, the proportion in relation to Black service users remained stable (8%). (Black service users account for 6% of the total users of Social Care services). However, whilst 8% of the number of total users of Social Care services were from an Asian background, only 5% of the complaints

received were in relation to users from this group. This is an increase from last year (3%) but remains an area where further developments are required to ensure better take up in the future. Use of the complaints procedure in relation to service users with a disability, however, is more common than might be anticipated.

More detail regarding equalities monitoring can be found in Section 5: Statistical Data.

3.10 Satisfaction with Complaints Handling

Satisfaction with how complaints are managed is measured by sending evaluation questionnaires to complainants about their experience of the process. This year, 22 questionnaires were sent to complainants but only 6 were returned. From these, we learned that 4 of the respondents felt they had been listened to and 2 were satisfied with the response they received. As the number of returns represented approximately 5% of the number of complaints received, this is perhaps an unreliable perception of the quality of the service. Nevertheless, the way in which complaints are dealt with will be reviewed and further consideration given to how to measure satisfaction levels to better evaluate performance in complaints handling.

3.11 The Local Government Ombudsman

If the complainant remains unhappy following the outcome of the City Council's process, they have the option of taking their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

During 2011/12 the Local Government Ombudsman decided four complaints regarding Children's Social Care Services in Coventry. In one the Ombudsman determined that he had no power to investigate as the matter was the subject of legal proceedings. In two cases the Ombudsman decided not to pursue an investigation and in the other, the investigation was discontinued on the basis that any injustice caused did not justify the public expense of pursuing the matter further.

SECTION 4: MESSAGES, LEARNING POINTS & SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Before they can put things right, investigating officers and managers have to determine if, where and how things have gone wrong e.g. whether there have been problems in communication, poor practice, failure to follow procedures or meet standards, delays etc. In order to help the Directorate monitor performance and improve its services to users, the nature of each complaint is categorised in relation to social work activities.

This section provides a general illustration of the views received, the conclusions drawn from the trends that emerged and subsequent action taken to bring about service improvements. Details of the numbers of complaints received and upheld can be found in Section 5: Statistical Data.

4.1 Communication and information

'The service my son was receiving ended in March. I was told someone would contact me in April to let me know if it would be continuing. It's now June and I'm still waiting for someone to speak to me'

'I am in care and my brother has been adopted. I last had contact with him 2 years ago but have never been told why contact stopped and whether I will be able to get in touch with him again'

'When I left care I was given no information about aftercare or the support I could expect to receive. I was told that as I had discharged myself, no support would be available but I now know they had a duty to support me'

'The young person I look after had little trust in Social Services but due to the worker's explanations, understanding and personality, she has built up his trust and formed a good relationship with him'

'She is very good at her job, always keeps me informed and is always on time'

'Had a great response today from your team. Our views and concerns were listened to and taken on board. Communication was great and we were kept updated'

'The worker has already made a difference by talking to both me and the children and trying to sort out counselling'

Effective communication and accurate information are essential to the social care task. Keeping service users and their families informed is a vital element of working in partnership.

This has been highlighted as an issue in previous years and is particularly important when working with families who may be unhappy that the Directorate is intervening in their lives.

This year, the number of complaints in this category has reduced to 23 from 42 in 2010/11. Nevertheless, failure to communicate information is an issue that continues to lead to a high number of complaints being received every year. 9 out of the 23 complaints were upheld either in full or in part.

Good communication, both verbal and written, can significantly improve the user's experience of the social work task. Whether it is about taking time to explain things, keeping people informed or making sure that details are accurate, when individual workers get it right, the outcome for the user is much more positive.

Action taken to address the issue of workers failing to keep service users and families informed, included reinforcement of the existing procedures that promote good communication and taking up the issue with individual workers through the supervision process. It is also planned to address this issue through training for staff.

4.2 Finance

'We have been looking after our niece for 10 months. The manager agreed we were entitled to a kinship allowance and this would be backdated to when she moved in but we have still received no money'

'I left care when I was 16 and went to stay with a friend. I received no money for a long time from either Social Care or Aftercare. As a result I owe friends and family a lot of money'

'We are foster carers and were told that we owed several thousand pounds for respite care the boys had received over the last year. We had no prior warning of this and it took us both by shock'

Prompt payment of allowances to foster carers and family members caring for children is essential as both a courtesy and as a practical necessity. Non-payment of allowances and errors in payments are issues that tend to attract complaints and comments.

This year, only 4 complaints were received compared to 10 in 2010/11. Of these, 3 were upheld either in full or in part.

Complaints can be avoided even when payments are reduced or ended by ensuring that notice and an explanation is given well in advance.

Social workers are regularly reminded of the need to ensure the accuracy of information on the computer system that triggers payments. When complaints are received, the circumstances are reviewed to identify the underlying reason for non-payment or the delay in payment. Any required changes to records that affect payments e.g. review or change of placement, are agreed between finance and operational staff to ensure future payment is timely and accurate.

4.3 Management and Decision Making

'I am living in a children's home in Merseyside and have been told I have got to move back to Coventry. I think it is a bad idea because I know I will get myself into trouble and I don't want that. I want to stay away from the people and things I get into trouble with'

'I have lived with my foster carer for 2 years. As the carer is moving to another agency I have been told I will need to move. I don't think this is fair as I am happy and settled here'

'My social worker said she would pay for my hair, dress and make up for my school prom but 2 days before the prom she told me she would not be paying for anything'

'For the past 2 years we have received help to enable our son to develop his social skills through his involvement in activities. This has now been stopped with no proper assessment of his needs'

The way that managers make decisions and the implications of these for service users are issues that rarely attract compliments but complaints are received on a regular basis.

This year, the number of complaints in this category reduced to 11 from 25 in 2010/11. However 6 were upheld either in full or in part.

Many of the complaints might have been avoided if service users and their families had been enabled to feel more involved in the decision making process.

In the main, issues about decisions made by managers were addressed through a review process. It is also planned to provide training for staff on the issue of increasing user involvement in decision making.

4.4 Professional Conduct

'It was lovely to hear how you continued to support the mother and cared for her over a most traumatic time. I commend and admire your sense of empathy and responsibility which was over and above the normal responsibilities of your job'

'The worker has always been there for us. He has been reliable, supportive and understanding – an absolute rock!'

'You made me realise that workers are here to support people to get their lives back on track. I can't explain how grateful I am for everything you have done for me and the kids'

'The Judge paid tribute to the social worker and said she had moved heaven and earth in her efforts on behalf of the children'

'Earlier today I received a call from a worker who was very rude and abrupt throughout'

'The worker I spoke to was not very helpful. He had a bad attitude and didn't seem bothered about the concern I was reporting'

'I would like a new social worker as I feel I have not got a good relationship with the one I have now. She lets me down and doesn't listen to me and I feel she doesn't always tell me the truth'

The manner in which individual workers perform their tasks makes a substantial impact on the way service users and their families feel about and the confidence they have in the service.

This category includes representations about workers' and foster carers' attitudes, standards of work and conduct.

This is the most common area for all feedback.

There was an extremely high number of compliments received (106) about the work of individual workers. These tell the Directorate as much as complaints do, about the way service users and their families like to be treated. The common messages that emerged again this year were that children and families need to feel respected as individuals of equal importance, to be treated fairly, in a courteous, polite and helpful manner and to have their needs and concerns recognised and acknowledged.

However, 30 complaints were also received about the conduct of staff. 14 (47%) of these were upheld either in full or in part; a reduction from 59% last year.

Where things have gone wrong, managers have addressed the issues through setting standards, addressing the issue with individual workers through the supervision process and, occasionally, disciplinary action. It is also planned to provide wider customer care training for staff.

4.5 Service Delivery

'The service provided has been totally unsatisfactory. Appointments have been cancelled at the last minute when I have taken time off work and we have been sent confusing letters by the worker'

'We are looking after our grandson and applied to Court last year for a Special Guardianship Order. This has still not happened because Social Care have not written the report that is required despite reminders from ourselves and the Court'

'We wish to voice our concern about the support our grandson is receiving. We feel he is not getting the right support from Social Care when they are supposed to be safeguarding his welfare'

'I can't stress what a difference the Short Breaks Service has meant to us. They have really helped my son as he's not afraid to join in and everyone running the activities has been so patient, understanding and encouraging'

'I cannot praise everyone enough. I just wanted to feedback how good your team is and what a difference they have made to our lives'

'I have found the Positive Parenting course extremely useful. I'm learning to implement all the tools you have given me and it's gradually working'

'I wanted to praise the exceptional level of care and support given to this young man and his mother. Without the input of your staff his future prospects could well have been very different'

Expectations about service entitlement and standards vary widely amongst users.

Despite the overall reduction in the number of complaints received this year, 31 complaints were received about service provision, an increase of 5 from 2010/11.

This was also the issue that attracted the highest number of complaints across the service.

Representations in this category provide feedback on eligibility to services, care plan issues, delays to receiving services and service standards. Sufficient numbers were substantiated (17) to warrant further attention being given to the issue.

16 compliments were received about service provision this year, compared to 19 in 2010/11.

Where expectations exceeded the service level available, explanations were given to clarify the situation. Resolution of other issues included reviewing and amending the services provided, re-assessment and the re-instatement of provision.

4.6 Child Protection

Protection of children is an area of work that requires good judgement, sensitivity and sound procedures to enable staff to work in an effective way.

3 complaints were received in this category. 1 suggested that social workers had failed to act on concerns about a child. This was investigated but was not upheld. The other 2 were partially upheld. These both involved allegations from young people in residential units that they were being bullied by other residents. The issues were addressed by staff through direct work with the young people involved.

4.7 Discrimination

Children's Social Care Services seek to provide fair and equal access to service provision and delivery and tackle discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, age or sexuality. No complaints were received this year regarding these issues.

4.8 Other issues

A number of complaints (11) could not be categorised using the standard groupings. These were mainly from young people in residential units, who were either concerned about the behaviour of other residents or the rules that they were expected to adhere to.

4.9 Learning and Improvements

Each year themes emerge from complaints which provide generalised areas for service improvement, such as better communication by social care staff, greater user involvement in decision making and concerns about staff attitudes and conduct. It is planned to address the area of decision making in a number of our training and induction areas. The two other common themes identified; poor communication in respect of how we ensure people are kept updated in a consistent and appropriate way and general professional conduct will be brought together into a very specific piece of training around how social workers engage with people and how they conduct themselves both in the community and in people's homes. This work will be linked very closely not only to our own corporate standards but to the GSCC Code of Conduct for Social Workers with the new national Capability Framework for Social Workers.

In addition, specific issues that have been identified for managers to work on are:

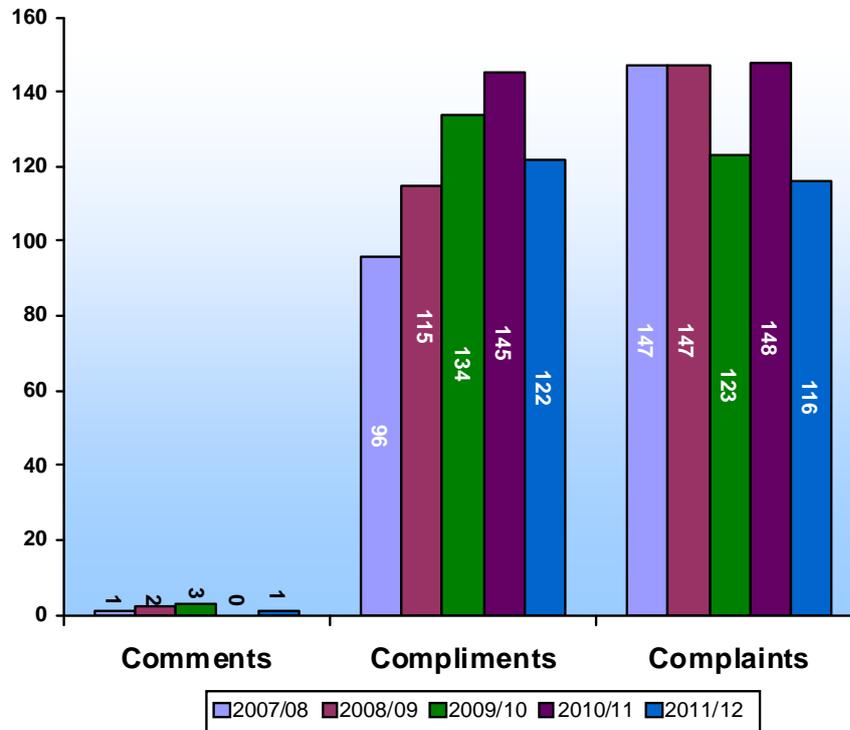
- Delays in relation to copies of court reports being provided to service users
- The need for requests for support from families to be responded to quickly and appropriately
- The need for all professionals to be contacted and invited to contribute to the Core Assessment process
- The need for families to be made aware when their social worker is leaving or a case is being closed
- The need for all case records to reflect the work completed and to be up to date, with all records being made on the electronic recording system
- Reviewing the transitions process for young people with a disability and ensuring managers chair transition meetings

- Avoiding delays in the approval of Pathway Plans
- Reinforcing the need to use interpreters with families for whom English is not their first language
- The need to produce written guidance for foster carers about the parameters for sharing information with birth parents
- The need to ensure that parents are offered the opportunity to have contact with their children if they are accommodated outside working hours
- The need to encourage social work staff to develop their awareness in relation to Asperger's Syndrome and Autism

SECTION 5: STATISTICAL DATA

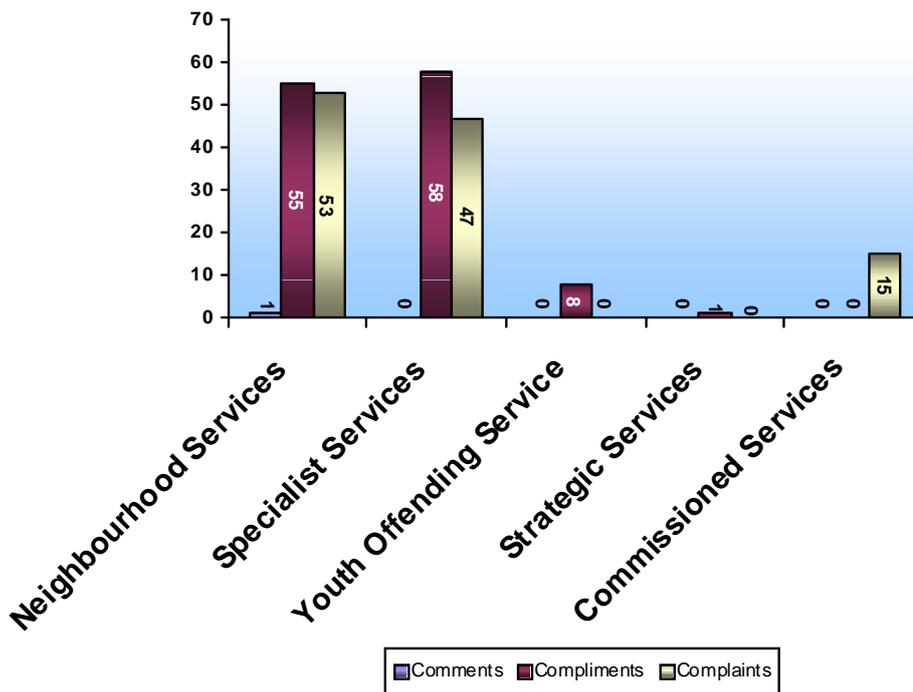
5.1 Year on year trends - Children's Social Care Services

The chart below shows the comparison of Comments, Compliments and Complaints over the past five years.



5.2 3Cs spread across Children's Social Care Services

The chart below shows the spread of Comments, Compliments and Complaints across Children's Social Care for 2011/12.



5.3 Detailed Information

5.3.1 Number of Compliments Received by Service

Neighbourhood Services	Specialist Services	Youth Offending Service	Strategic Services	Commissioned Services
55	58	8	1	0

5.3.2 Number of Complaints Received by Service and Who Made Them

	Neighbourhood Services	Specialist Services	Youth Offending Service	Strategic Services	Commissioned Services	Total
Children	3	13	0	0	14	30
Others	50	34	0	0	1	85
Total	53	47	0	0	15	115

N.B. In one complaint the service area involved could not be established

5.3.3 Number of Complaints Received by Service and by Category

	Neighbourhood Services	Specialist Services	Youth Offending Service	Strategic Services	Commissioned Services	Total
Communication	10	12	0	0	0	22
Finance	0	4	0	0	0	4
Management	4	7	0	0	0	11
Conduct	17	10	0	0	3	30
Service	19	11	0	0	1	31
Protection	1	1	0	0	1	3
Environment	0	1	0	0	2	3
Discrimination	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	2	1	0	0	8	11
Total	53	47	0	0	15	115

N.B. In one complaint about communication the service area involved could not be established

5.3.4 Complaint Outcomes by Service and by Category

	Neighbourhood Services				Specialist Services				Youth Offending Service				Strategic Services				Commissioned Services			
	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Upheld	Part upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn
Communication	1	3	3	3	0	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management	0	2	2	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conduct	0	6	8	3	2	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Service	2	6	10	1	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Protection	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Environment	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Discrimination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	0
Total	3	18	25	7	11	17	18	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	4	0

N.B. In one complaint about communication the service area involved could not be established

5.3.5 Number of Complaints Completed at Each Stage, Within the Required Time Scales and Who Made Them

a) Stage 1 Complaints – Local Resolution

	Neighbourhood Services		Specialist Services		Youth Offending Service		Strategic Services		Commissioned Services	
	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other
Responded To	3	44	13	32	0	0	0	0	14	1
Completed In time	2	32	8	26	0	0	0	0	13	1

N.B. In one complaint the service area involved could not be established

b) Stage 2 complaints – Formal Investigation

	Neighbourhood Services		Specialist Services		Youth Offending Service		Strategic Services		Commissioned Services	
	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other	Child	Other
Responded to	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Completed In time	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

5.3.6 Equalities Monitoring

Ethnic Origin	Number (All users at 31/03/12)	Percentage	Number of service users in complaints	Percentage
White	1844	70%	84	72%
Mixed	262	10%	10	9%
Asian	226	8%	6	5%
Black	156	6%	9	8%
Other Ethnic Group	49	2%	1	<1%
Not Stated	116	4%	6	5%
Total	2653	100%	116	100%

Disability	Number (All users at 31/03/12)	Percentage	Number of service users in complaints	Percentage
No	2365	89%	100	86%
Yes	288	11%	16	14%
Not Stated	0	0%	0	0%
Total	2653	100%	116	100%

5.3.7 Contact Methods Used

Method	Children		Others	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Form	6	20%	4	4%
Letter	8	27%	17	20%
In person	7	23%	8	9%
Email	6	20%	28	33%
Telephone	1	3%	29	34%
Text	2	7%	0	0%