

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**Report of the Acting Director of Children's Services**

**Annual Report for Complaints, Comments and Compliments for Children's Social Care Services 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present to Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, the Directorate of Children's Services Annual Report on Social Care Complaints and Compliments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. **Attached as Appendix 1**
2. To provide Members with information about the nature, number and outcomes of complaints and compliments received during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
3. To assist Members in reviewing the learning about service delivery, that is available from the monitoring of complaints and representations and the quality of the Directorate's response.

**Background**

4. The Children Act 1989; Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 requires that an annual report should be provided by each local authority to Members based within the Policy, Performance & Resources Division within the Directorate of Adult Community & Housing Services. The Complaints Team is based within the Policy, Performance and Resource Division within DACHS. The Team deliver the Service to Children's Services through a Service Legal Agreement.
5. All service users and people who request a service are provided with information on how to complain, make a compliment or comment.
6. Up to 10,000 Complaint and Compliment leaflets were distributed during the year either directly to service users or made available in public areas for people to use. They are the most used method for the public in raising issues of complaint, concern or praise.
7. All Social Care complaints and compliments are registered, monitored and reported on to senior managers, by the Quality and Complaints team. The information reported includes details of the number and nature of complaints, trends in the nature and location of complaints and compliments, and performance information about timescales for resolution, outcome and redress

8. **Complaints:-** The number of people receiving a children's social care service during 2010/11 was 5574, from that figure we received **104** formal complaints, a reduction of **7** compared to the **111** complaints received in 2009/10.
9. A further **45** informal complaints were registered in 2010/2011. Informal complaints are not necessarily minor issues; like complaints they need to be considered and responded to, not least because should the person who raises a comment be dissatisfied with the response they may then have the right to take the matter forward as a formal complaint.
10. The overriding number of complaints refers to individual areas of complaint rather than a series of complaints around a single issue or event. The attached report provides details of the complaints, and the issues involved.
11. **Compliments:-** There were **56** individual registered compliments for 2010/11 compared to **83** for 2009/10, a decrease of **27**; it is regularly apparent during training courses delivered by the Quality and Complaints Team that workers need to be reminded to forward compliments received about their work. The compliments received provide evidence of the quality services, high standards and performance delivered by members of staff throughout the service.
12. **Local Government Ombudsman:-** Dudley has worked closely with the Ombudsman in 2010/2011 on a number of issues and as has been the case for a number of years there have been no findings made against the Directorate.

## **Finance**

13. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with internally with no additional costs. A stage 2 complaint requires an independent investigation by an independent person.
14. The average cost of an external complaint is approximately £2,500 per case. In 2010/11 3 stage 2 investigations were undertaken. The funding for these investigations will be met from within existing resources.

## **Law**

15. The procedures for Children's complaints, are determined by legislation, predominantly involving the: -
  - Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
  - The Children & Adoption Act 2002 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
16. The Social Care procedure for Children's complaints falls within the "Children Act 1989; Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006".

Follow the link to:- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1738/contents/made>

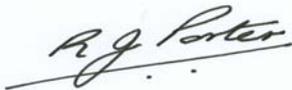
## **Equality Impact**

17. Equality & Diversity: All complaints are registered by the Quality & Complaints Team who gather details relating to a person's ethnicity, disability, age, and gender; this is done in order to evidence that the process is accessible and responsive to any person wishing to raise a complaint, comment or compliment and to assist in continually developing services to local people.

## **Recommendations**

18.

- 1) That the Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the information contained in the Directorate of Children's Services annual report on Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
- 2) Subject to the Annual Report being accepted; the Scrutiny Committee are asked to approve that this report is made available as a public document as required by Regulations and guidance.



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