
Directorate of Children Services. 16th September 2010

Select Committee on Children's Services

Annual Report 2009 – 10 Children's Statutory Social Care Complaints & Compliments.

Purpose of Report

1. To meet the statutory requirement to provide an annual report on the workings of the Children Social Care Representations and Complaints procedures. The 'Annual Report' is attached as appendix 1 and is a detailed account of complaint activity for this period.
2. To provide information about the performance of the Directorate of Children's Specialist Services in receiving, monitoring and responding to Children Social Care complaints and compliments.
3. Subject to approval by the Select Committee the annual report will need to be made available as a public document.

Background

4. There is a statutory responsibility placed upon Local Authorities to produce an Annual Report to Senior Managers and subsequently to Elected Members on the workings of the Children's Social Care complaints and representations procedures.
 - 4.1 The Annual Report for the period 1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010 is attached. It contains detailed information about Children's 'Social Care' complaints and compliments received.
 - 4.2 This report has been compiled by the Quality & Complaints Team who are responsible for the management and day to day operation of the statutory social care complaints procedure.

Finance

5. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Law


6. The requirement to provide an annual complaint monitoring report is contained in the Local Authorities Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations, 2006.

Equality Impact

7. The Statutory Complaint Procedure is open and designed to be accessible to all members of the Community. All Service users, their carer/representative can put their complaint in writing by letter, leaflet, email or fax, or in person to the services concerned. People wishing to complain are also entitled to direct access to the Quality & Complaint Service. The Quality & Complaints Team offers a service to the whole community who are requesting or receiving a social care service from Dudley M.B.C. Leaflets explaining our role are widely available and are circulated each year to local people. The information obtained from complaints activity assists in the development of genuinely diverse services.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that:-
 - 1] That the Select Committee note and comment on the information contained in the attached annual report on Children Social Care Complaints and Compliments for the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.
 - 2] Subject to the Annual Report being accepted; the Select Committee are asked to approve that this report is made available as a public document as required by the Regulations and guidance



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SUMMARY OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

- 1) Children's Specialist Services received **111** complaints from 103 young people or their representatives during 2009/10.
- 2) **69** of the complaints relating to services provided to children were made or led by parents or other relatives; **32** complaints were made by children or advocates.
- 3) The complaints guidance provided in 2006 the option of recording some adverse contacts as informal complaints; this is used in instances where a young person may wish to raise an issue without it being regarded as a complaint. **42** informal complaints were received in **2009/10**, compared with **50** in **2008/9**.
- 4] There has been **4** Stage 2 Formal complaint investigations conducted within 2009/10, and **1** detailed response provided in liason with the Ombudsman. Comparisons with neighbouring Authorities of comparable size indicate that fewer complaints in Dudley progress to the subsequent stages of the complaints procedures.
- 5) **No** Stage 3 Review Panels have been requested this year.
- 6) The majority of all complaints resolved at Stage 1 were acknowledged and concluded within the statutory timescale. All complaints received a response at Stage 1 this year.
- 7) There were **83** registered compliments for 2009/10 compared to **53** for 2008/09, an increase of **30**.
- 8) **5** children/young people making a complaint chose to have the assistance and support of an advocate during the complaint process. Government guidance requires that all young people making a complaint in their own right are provided with an Advocate; and Dudley has satisfactory arrangements to meet this requirement through the National Youth Advisory Service [NYAS]
- 9) Training for Managers, Social Workers and other relevant groups has been revised for 2009/10; three distinct sets of training will be provided to Managers and staff in 2010/2011
- 10) The new complaints leaflet for children has been widely circulated and is well used.
- 11) Protocols are in place with Health colleagues, and multi agency teams such as Flipside – a specialist multi agency fostering service.

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