

**Select Committee on Children's Services - 27 September 2006**

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

**Directorate of Children's Services Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2005-06**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide the Select Committee with information about the performance of the Directorate of Children's Services in receiving, monitoring and responding to social care compliments and complaints
2. To meet the statutory requirements to report on the workings of the Representations and Complaints procedures (Children Act 1989).
3. To ensure that the Select Committee is informed of the performance in delivering the service, to assist in continually improving standards.

**Background**

4. There is a statutory responsibility placed upon Local Authorities to produce an Annual Report to elected members on the workings of the Social Services complaints and representations procedures (Children Act 1989).
5. The work undertaken by Social Care agencies is complex and sometimes involves difficult decisions and interventions. It is vital therefore that Service User's should be able to comment formally on their experiences of using these services. Examples of the work undertaken by this Local Authority over the past year are:
  - 2,830 Children were the subject of referrals to the Directorate
  - 1,549 Children were assessed through an Initial Assessment
  - 389 Children were assessed through a more complex Core Assessment

6. The Annual Report for the period April 2005 – March 2006 is attached. It contains detailed information about compliments and complaints received initially by Dudley Social Services and later Dudley Children's Services following the establishment of this new Directorate. A vital function of the report is to enable the Directorate to learn from compliments and complaints and section 8 of the report gives examples from the past year of actions that have been taken in response.
  
7. Key issues contained in the report are:
  - 119 children's complaints were received; this was a small increase from the previous year for the number of complaints received, this is viewed as a positive sign that young people are able to access the complaint process.
  - The majority of all complaints (117 out of 119) were resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1 of the complaints process.
  - 87.5% of complaints resolved at Stage 1 were responded to within timescale.
  - A further 5.8% of complaints were resolved between 28 and 40 days.
  - 6.7% of complaints took over 40 days.
  - Training has been offered on a regular basis to all staff and has been tailored to suit their needs according to their responsibility within the complaints process.
  - Three complaints were dealt with at Stage 2 of the procedures one of which was considered too complex to be initially considered at Stage 1; no complaint went to a Review Panel.
  - There have been no findings of maladministration.
  - 29 compliments were received and registered.

## **Finance**

8. There are no extra financial demands placed upon the Directorate from this report.

### **Law**

9. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to report on the workings of the Representations and Complaints procedures under the Children Act 1989.

### **Equality Impact**

10. All service users who believe that they have a complaint are entitled to use the service. The information obtained from complaints activity assists in the development of genuinely diverse services.
11. The Quality and Complaints Team continues to work locally with both formal and informal organisations to improve links between disadvantaged sectors of the community and the Directorate.
12. Following discussion by this Committee, the Annual Report will be made available to the 'Just Say It' Group for discussion.

### **Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that:
  - the Select Committee comments as appropriate on the attached Annual Report
  - subject to the Annual Report being accepted, the Select Committee is asked to approve the publication of the Annual Report as required by legislation and guidance.



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John Freeman  
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:

Mark Felgate

Complaints Officer

Steve Rice

Quality & Complaints Manager

Telephone 01384 814724

Email [mark.felgate@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:mark.felgate@dudley.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01384 814723

Email: [Stephen.rice@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.rice@dudley.gov.uk)

**List of background papers**

1. **Annual Compliment and Complaint Report 2005/06**