

## **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

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

#### **Annual Report for Complaints, Comments and Compliments for Children's Social Care Specialist Services 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To present to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, the Directorate of Children's Services with the Social Care Complaints and Compliments annual report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. [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 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.
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.
5. In Dudley, all service users and people who request a service are provided with information on how to complain, or make a compliment. The Complaints Manager and team for Dudley Adult Social Care Services are based within the Policy, Performance & Resources Division within the Directorate of Adult Community & Housing Services. The Complaints team delivers a children's social care complaints and compliments service on behalf of the Directorate of Children's Service and is available for any member of the public to contact regarding a social care complaint, compliment or comment.
6. A complaint, or compliment can be made by:
  - Letter/Card
  - Leaflet
  - Telephone/Text
  - Email
  - In person to any reception area
  - To any member of staff

8. Complaint and Compliment leaflets are distributed annually 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.
9. 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
10. The number of people receiving a children social care service during 2011/12 was 5715, from that figure we received **111** formal complaints, an increase of **7** from the figure of **104** received in 2010/11 and a return to the **111** complaints received in 2009/10.
11. A further **28** informal complaints were registered in 2011/2012, these also received a full response.
12. The attached report provides details of the complaints, and the issues involved. As detailed within the report, the overriding number of complaints concern a diverse range of services and issues rather than any single issue or event.
13. Compliments:- There were **37** individual registered compliments for 2011/12 compared to **56** for 2010/11, a decrease of **19**; it is regularly apparent during training courses delivered by the Quality and Complaints Team that staff 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.
14. Local Government Ombudsman:- Dudley has worked closely with the Ombudsman in 2011/2012 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**

15. There are no direct financial implications concerning this report.

## **Law**

16. 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.

## **Equality Impact**

17. Equality & Diversity: all complaints and compliments 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. 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 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.
19. 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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