

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**9<sup>th</sup> November 2009

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**COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT**

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**SUMMARY REPORT****Purpose of the Report**

1. This is the second annual report on comments, compliments and complaints received and managed by Children's Services. The Council is required by law to have management arrangements in place for considering children's social care representations, including complaints, under the Children Act 1989.
2. The purpose of the report is to inform Members about the effectiveness of the procedure for managing complaints. Children's Service Department welcomes comments, compliments and complaints, as they are essential to the continuous improvement of service delivery to children, young people and their families.
3. There is a legal requirement for the Council to publish an annual report on children's complaints for consideration by Council members. This report covers the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009. It includes children's social care complaints as defined by the Children's Act 1989, together with other complaints which are handled under separate corporate complaints procedures.

**Summary**

4. Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009 the Children's Services Department received 45 complaints which were dealt with under the statutory children's social care procedure. Three other complaints were made under the corporate procedure. 92% of the complaints received were resolved at stage 1. The department also received 10 compliments.

**Recommendation(s)**

5. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**Murray Rose,  
Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

None

author : Julian Kenshole

Extension: 2071

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications with regard to S17 Crime & Disorder	
Health and Well Being	This report is not requesting a key decision, however, the nature of clients accessing Children's Services Compliments, Comments, Suggestions and Complaints and the resulting decisions and actions may impact on the health and well being of the children and young people of the Borough.	
Sustainability	There are no implications with regards to the environmental impact	
Diversity	This report is not requesting a key decision, however, the nature of certain clients accessing Children's Services Compliments, Comments, Suggestions and Complaints may impact on their ability to do so.	
Wards Affected	No particular wards are affected by this report.	
Groups Affected	No particular groups are affected by this report, however, Children's Services recognises the complex needs and delivery issues and the often daily changing circumstances of children and young people, and this is reflected within the policy and procedures.	
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework	
Efficiency	This report has no efficiency implications	
Key Decision	This is not a key decision	
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision	
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	No specific themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy are the subject of this report	

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. The table below shows comparative figures for children's social care complaints for 2007/08 and 2008/09

	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Compliments</b>	7	10
<b>Comments</b>	0	0
<b>Complaints</b>	17	48
<b>Suggestions</b>	0	0

7. The table below details complaints by service and the nature of the complaint.

<b>Children and family service</b>	<b>Nature of complaint</b>
Childcare Duty team	2 inaccurate assessment 1 treatment of parents 5 service provision 2 data breach
Care Planning Team	6 staff behaviour / attitude 4 service provision 2 safeguarding concerns 1 behaviour of children 1 contact facilities
Fostering	4 service provision
Looked After Children	3 service provision 3 treatment of services 1 behaviour of children
Children's Homes	6 staff attitude 2 service provision
Safeguarding	1 service provision
Adoption	1 service provision
<b>Total number of complaints</b>	45

8. The following table shows the outcome of social care complaints at each stage of the statutory process.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>
<b>Not upheld</b>	25	0	0
<b>Partially upheld</b>	8	2	1
<b>Upheld</b>	6	0	0
<b>Withdrawn</b>	4	0	0
<b>Outstanding</b>	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

9. The following table shows the response to those social care complaints upheld or partially upheld.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>
<b>Apology and explanation</b>	8	2	1
<b>Apology</b>	3	0	0
<b>Explanation</b>	2	0	0
<b>Policy / procedure reviewed or staff reminded</b>	2	0	1
<b>Provision of service</b>	3	0	0
<b>Alteration in service</b>	2	0	0
<b>Financial resolution</b>	0	0	0

\*Please note the above figures are not equal to the number of complaints processed under the procedure as more than one response may have been provided in resolving the complaint.

10. There were three complaints considered under stage 1 of the corporate procedure, one was resolved at the stage and two progressed and were considered at stage 2. The table below shows complaints by service and the nature of the complaint

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Nature of complaint</b>
Libraries and Adult Learning	2 course content and delivery
School Admissions	1 admission error
<b>Total number of complaints</b>	<b>3</b>

11. The following table shows the outcome of complaints processed under the corporate procedure.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>
<b>Not upheld</b>	2	0
<b>Partially upheld</b>	0	1
<b>Upheld</b>	1	1
<b>Withdrawn</b>	0	0
<b>Outstanding</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

12 The following table shows the response to those corporate complaints that were upheld or partially upheld.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>
<b>Apology and explanation</b>	1	2
<b>Apology</b>	0	0
<b>Explanation</b>	0	0
<b>Policy / procedure reviewed or staff reminded</b>	0	0
<b>Provision of service</b>	0	0
<b>Alteration in service</b>	0	0

<b>Financial redress</b>	0	1
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\*Please note the above figures are not equal to the number of complaints processed under the procedure as more than one response may have been provided in resolving the complaint.

### 13. Conclusion

Complaints provide a valuable indication of areas where services may need to be reviewed or improved. Some complaints highlight an error or concern that is specific to one individual or family. In other cases, complaints can highlight issues that impact many families across the service. These issues can be identified through detailed case reviews prompted by complaints, or identification of patterns and trends from a number of complaints.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

14. Not applicable

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