



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Young People's Scrutiny
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Compliments and Complaints

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1. Summary

This report summarises the complaints data in relation to the service areas covering Children's Social Care, Education and Skills for the year of 2014/15. This report should be used in conjunction with the complaints dashboard (appendix A)

2. Recommendations

To review this report and identify topics for further investigation.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Complaints could have implications for children who are supported by Council services. In turn, there may be significant financial, legal and reputational risk to the Council if the Council is at fault when delivering services.

Effective monitoring of complaints, learning and taking preventative actions provides the opportunity to manage risks and ensure that Children and Young People in Shropshire remain safe.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications, but presents service information to support decision making. Accountable officers, senior managers and key decision makers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.

5. Background

5.1 The Corporate Complaints team switched to the Customer Services Database, Darwin, in Oct 2013. The system has a limited reporting capability with a range of pre-built reports. These are not ideal for analysis purposes. In an attempt to improve reporting capabilities an Access Database has been developed (Mar 2015) which enables data to be extracted for manipulation.

A series of reports are currently being developed from this data. This work has highlighted a number of improvements that are required to improve; data capture, classification of records, system limitations and improve reporting capabilities.

6. Additional Information

6.1 Dashboard

Chart 1: The number of recorded cases for complaints for the year was 109. The majority of complaints, 98, are in relation to Children's Social Care and Safeguarding.

A single case may contain a number of elements which may be complaints about different aspects of the service or teams. These will be recorded as one case with a number of comments, complaints or compliments. This may result in a variance with the number of complaint reasons being more than the number of cases.

Chart 2. In addition to receiving complaints the service also receives other correspondence. Children's, Education and Skills also received 18 compliments and 9 MP enquiries on behalf of their constituents.

Chart 3. The nature of complaints is captured from a drop-down menu of pre-determined complaint categories. The nature of complaints can be varied and contains multiple factors. The volume of the nature of complaints exceeds the total number of complaints (cases) received; this reflects the multiple aspects of complaints.

Complaints are categorised from the comments received and are based on the customers perception. The main complaint theme is around the area of communications. 28% of complaints have an element of communication concerns. Whilst in some cases this is the primary concern in others there is a

combination of factors which have collectively have caused the customer to complain.

Within communication the main difficulty is with customers trying to contact staff. Several comments refer to leaving messages which go unanswered, or having to call several times. Other issues relate to a lack of understanding or miscommunication of information.

Chart 4. The time taken from receipt of a complaint to closure at stage 1 takes an average of 21 working days which is in line with service targets.

The range of days taken is from 1 day to 174 days

Of the 13 cases taking longer than 40 days the main reasons for the timescales are due to; complexity of cases, involvement with third parties and customers seeking additional information or clarification.

Chart 5 Outcomes of complaints at closure of stage one show that 55% were determined to be not upheld. Not upheld means that the service is not at fault for all elements of the complaint.

23% of complaints were partly upheld. Partly upheld means that the service is found at fault for some elements of the complaint, but not all elements.

20% of complaints were upheld. Fully upheld means that the service is found at fault for all elements of the complaint.

The proportion of complaint outcomes varies across the Council and is dependent on the nature of service provision. For comparative purposes the proportion of outcomes for the Council are shown below.

	All Council Services	Children's Education and Skills
Not Upheld	39%	56%
Partly Upheld	22%	25%
Upheld	33%	17%
Other	6%	2%

Chart 6 Examination of complaint outcomes by service team show varying percentages of complaints which are partly or fully upheld. Service areas should assess this variation and identify if there are particular causes for this preventative actions can be developed.

Chart 7 The learning point data is shows that the key learning points are associated with communication and information. This corresponds with the analysis which shows communication is a key cause of complaints being made.

Chart 8 Improvement actions are recorded to show what actions will be taken to resolve the complaint and prevent future occurrences. Actions taken following complaint decisions show that employee training and guidance is the main action to be taken.

The collection of learning point and actions data is currently being reviewed to further develop the capture of data and to improve reporting capabilities. This should improve the ability to check if proposed improvement actions have been implemented and the impact this makes on future complaints.

Chart 9 During the year, fourteen cases have progressed beyond stage one of the complaints process. Of these cases, two are currently open. Results of escalated cases show that the quality of decisions at stage one is high. One case has resulted in the decision being changed from partly upheld to upheld.

7. Conclusion

The change of system has limited the ability to produce longer term trend analysis. As more data is recorded it will become easier to compare performance over a period of time.

The main element of complaints relates to communication issues. This is an area provides an opportunity to deliver service improvement and reduce complaint numbers.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Ann Hartley
Local Member All Members
Appendices Appendix A – Complaints Dashboard