

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children & Young People Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	11th July 2017	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Children's Service Complaints and Representations Procedure Annual Report 2016-17	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 Annual Report 2016-17		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Children's Services Complaints and Representation Procedure Annual Report 2016-17 sets out the types of complaints and representations made to the Council and the outcome of these, including the lessons learned. It also seeks to raise awareness of the number of information requests made and compliments Children's Services have received during 2016-17 for its work.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel are asked to note the content of the report and make recommendations for any additional work areas to be focused on which are not included in the 2017-18 areas for development identified at the end of the report.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 None, however, the Panel are asked to note the significant increase in information requests.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 There is a statutory requirement to handle complaints in accordance with the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Council has systems and procedures in place to fulfil this duty. The provision of

an Annual Report is also a requirement. This report enables the Council to monitor the statutory requirements and discharge its duty.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The report sets out the number, categorisation, timeliness and response outcome to the complaints received during 2016-17. The report also sets out the different types of information requests made and some of the compliments the Service has received.
- 5.2 There has been a decline in the number of complaints in comparison to previous years however there has been an increase in the number of Stage 3 complaints received. Staff attitude remains the main reason for complaints being made at Stage 1 however 64% of these were not upheld. The Divisional Director works closely with the Services to look at cases which are upheld and try to ensure practice improvements are made – the Department take learning from complaints seriously. Progress on implementing lessons learned is reported at an internal Service Level Agreement meeting.
- 5.3 Timeliness of complaint handling remains a concern for all Stages and the Complaints and Data Protection team try to liaise with complainants to keep them informed about how their complaint is progressing and try to reduce the distress that can sometimes result from a delayed response.
- 5.4 One complaint was referred to the Local Government Ombudsman however they did not progress this because they stated it had been dealt with during a different process and was not within their remit.
- 5.5 Information sharing requests have risen significantly during the period and this is set out in point 7.8. The Complaints and Data Protection team are trying to respond in a timely way and whilst they were successful in 2016-17 there is now a backlog in quarter one. The team are speaking with other Council Departments to try and get additional capacity to help with this and are keeping the requestors informed.
- 5.6 The team collect and report compliments that are received about the Service. Table 5 captures a selection of the 41 received during the period. The team are confident that more compliments are received than are sharing with them but the number helps balance the number of complaints received.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 Not applicable

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 None

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 None however the report will be shared with the Senior In Care Council and Corporate Parenting Board for information.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 The risks related to the issues are discussed routinely with the Divisional Director and Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance at quarterly meetings. All complaints are taken very seriously by the Council.

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Background papers	None
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