

Children's Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback Report 2016-2017

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster, Director Children's Services

Author: Rebecca Martin, Service Manager – Customer Access & Experience

Contact Details: 01823 356257

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson, Cabinet member for children and families

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

1.1. Somerset County Council [SCC] has a statutory obligation to report on the operation of its complaints procedure in relation to Children's Social Care Services. The regulations require that an annual report is produced that includes; the number of complaints at each stage including those considered by the Local Government Ombudsman; the type, timescale and outcomes of complaints; which customer groups made complaints; learning and service improvements and a summary equality monitoring data. In addition to this, the annual report contains a summary of the compliments and comments received by the service.

This report A has been produced by the Service Manager – Customer Access & Experience and has been approved by the Director of Children's Services. It will be published on the Council's website. The key messages and findings from the report include:

- 426 pieces of customer feedback received during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. This comprised 267 complaints, 124 compliments, 16 comments and 19 member enquiries.
- Virtually all complaints were resolved at the initial stage (Stage 1) with only 4 cases escalated to Stage 2 and/or Local Government Ombudsman investigation.
- The average timescale for resolving a complaint during the year was 26 days. Whilst this exceeds our local 10 day target, it does represent improvement on the previous year (29 days).
- The main reasons for complaints is consistent with last year – communication, service provision and attitude/behaviour of staff. There has been an improvement from 29% to 15% in terms of complaints about attitude/behaviour of staff but complaints about communication have risen from 17% to 22%.
- Recommendations have been made to review the complaints

policy and associated processes with a view to improving communication with the customer and resolution timescales.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** The committee is asked to review and provide any appropriate comments on the information contained within the report.
- 2.2.** The committee is asked to make comment and suggestion regarding improvement actions in relation to the findings of this report.

3. Background

3.1. SCC and Customer Feedback

SCC is committed to encouraging and using customer feedback. All customer feedback is viewed positively as an opportunity to learn and improve customer experience.

SCC defines customer feedback as follows:

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction, which isn't resolved immediately, with the actions or inactions of the Council or its agents, either by a member of the public directly affected or by someone acting on their behalf.

A complaint can be made about any of the functions provided by the local authority under the Children Act 1989. For example, a complaint may arise as a result of:

- An unwelcome or disputed decision;
- concern about the quality or appropriateness of a service;
- delay in decision making or provision of services;
- delivery or non-delivery of services including complaints procedures;
- quantity, frequency, change or cost of a service;
- attitude or behaviour of staff;
- application of eligibility and assessment criteria;
- the impact on a child or young person of the application of a local authority policy;
- assessment, care management and review.

Compliment: An unprompted expression of satisfaction or praise regarding the services or actions of the Council.

Comment: A positive or negative remark or statement about the Council's services, policies and practices. Comments might make suggestions about the services being delivered or the ways in which they are delivered them.

SCC complies with statute and adopts a three stage complaints process for Children's Social Care complaints.

4. Implications

- 4.1.** The Authority has a statutory duty to establish and publicise its procedure for dealing with representations and complaints about its services.

5. Background papers

- 5.1.** The full Children and Young People's Services Customer Feedback Report 2016-17 is attached as Appendix A. Somerset's County Council's policy and procedural guidance referring to complaints, representation, compliments and comments for Children's and Young People's Services is also published on the corporate website:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>

Customer Service Charter is also available

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>

Customer Feedback policies can be found at

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.