

Standards Committee

20 November 2009



Children and Young People's Services: Annual Representations Report 2008/09

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1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report is to inform Standards Committee of the performance of Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) in the handling of Representations, as contained in the CYPS Annual Representations' Report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Publication of an Annual Report on Representations is a statutory requirement in accordance with the 1989 Children Act, which specifies requirements to publish details about representations, including comments/suggestions, compliments and complaints, received from service users, carers and their representatives during the year.
- 2.2 Legislation also requires that the Annual Report contains information about how CYPS has performed in its management and operation of the representations' procedures against national and local standards.
- 2.3 Corporate representations are covered by a separate regulatory framework. There is no legislative requirement to report these. However, as part of our commitment to providing an integrated system, information has been included in the overall report.
- 2.4 Complaints received from children, young people and their representatives about schools, are not dealt with by the CYPS Representations procedure. These are the responsibility of school governing bodies, which receive advice from the Authority's School and Governor Support Service. This report does not include information about these representations.

3.0 Reporting Procedure

- 3.1 The report was ratified by the CYPS Strategic Leadership Team on 23 September 2009; and by the Durham County Council Corporate Management Team on 7 October 2009; and is to be considered by Durham County Council Standards Committee on 20 November 2009, which is a requirement of legislation.

4.0 Content

- 4.1 This is the third annual report to cover performance of CYPS representations. The report brings together information gathered in relation to the activities involved with the receiving, handling and consideration of compliments, comments/suggestions and complaints from service users, carers and their representatives.
- 4.2 Information includes statistical data on performance against standards, key issues arising from investigations of complaints, in particular, and their impact on policy, procedure and practice, and any lessons learned across the Service.

5.0 Performance

5.1 This Annual Report indicates positive achievements in Children and Young People's Services' performance in the handling and consideration of representations during the year 2008/09.

5.2 In 2008/09, CYPS received a total of 666 Representations. This figure comprises:

- 77 Formal complaints (57 statutory, 20 corporate)
- 61 Complaints were informally resolved (26 statutory, 35 corporate)
- 100 Comments (of a negative nature, all statutory)
- 428 Compliments (148 statutory, 280 corporate)

5.3 During the reporting year performance was as follows:

- The overall number of statutory complaints reduced and the number of statutory compliments increased from 2007/08.
- The overall number of corporate complaints and compliments increased from 2007/08;
- 98.7% of all CYPS complaints received were acknowledged within the timescale of 2 working days;
- 98.3% of statutory complaints received were acknowledged within the timescale of 2 working days.
- 67.1 % of statutory complaints were responded to within the 20 working day timescale.

5.4 A comprehensive summary of CYPS Representations performance information for the three year period 2006-09 is shown at Appendix A of the Report.

6.0 Learning from Statutory Representations

6.1 The underlying message from the complaints received is that communication is vital to building and retaining the confidence of service users and their representatives, and in ensuring that barriers are broken down. However, the

relatively low ratio of statutory complaints to contacts suggests that the service is working hard to maintain good levels of communication with children, young people and their representatives.

7.0 Next steps

7.1 In order to further develop and improve the service given regarding CYPS Representations, the following developments are proposed for 2009/10:

- The development of a strategic action plan which will attempt to improve some of the underlying causes for complaint;
- Improved reporting to SLT through a quarterly strategic monitoring report based on the strategic action plan;
- Improved communication with Service Areas on trends monitoring and information regarding complaints, comments and compliments;
- Improved provision of reporting methods for service users;
- Improved liaison with other services and the corporate centre.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Standards Committee is requested to note the content of this report and the positive improvements, particularly relating to the performance of statutory complaints.

Attached Papers

CYPS Annual Representations Report 2008/09
Supporting Document to Report (Examples of Complaints and Compliments)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Local Government Reorganisation

None

Finance

None

Staffing

None

Equalities & Diversity

Consistent with national and local requirements. Representations Procedure will be reviewed and Equality Impact Assessed in 2009/10.

Accommodation

None.

Crime and Disorder

None

Sustainability

None

Human Rights

None

Localities & Rurality

None

Young People

Responsive to children and young people's needs. Will be exploring the need to ensure greater accessibility to the Representations Procedure for service users.

Consultation

This report has been ratified by CYPS Senior Leadership Team.

Health

Feedback from representations can improve services, leading to improved outcomes for service users.