



**Durham County Council**

**Children and Young People's Services**

**Annual Representations  
Report 2010/11  
(Compliments,  
Suggestions, Comments  
and Complaints)**

# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

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# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

## Executive Summary

### 1.0 Introduction

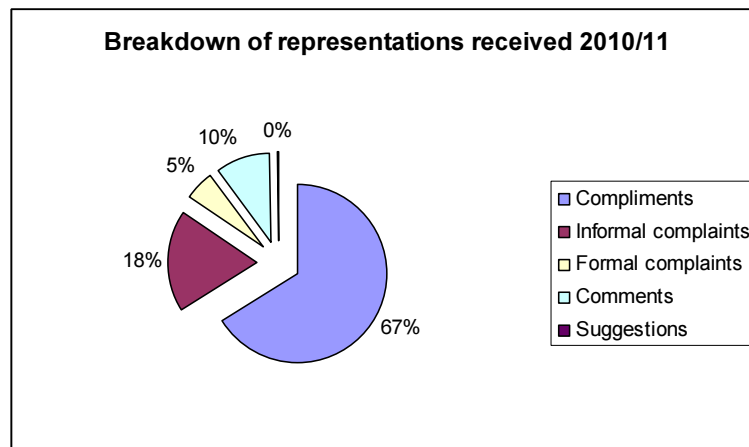
- 1.1 This is the fifth Annual Report detailing the performance of Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Services' (DCC CYPS) Representations Procedure. It covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Representations cover compliments, suggestions, comments and complaints made by children and young people who are service users; or by their carers and/or representatives on their behalf.
- 1.2 The aim of this report is to provide performance information in a concise manner. Detailed information, such as the aims of and procedures for handling complaints, can be supplied upon request.
- 1.3 It should be noted that CYPS Service Areas reduced from six to five, with some title changes, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The new Service headings will be reflected in next years' Annual Report.
- 1.4 Explanations of terms used can be found in Section 1, figure 1; and in the Glossary of Abbreviations at the end of the report.

### 2.0 Key findings

- 2.1 In 2010/11, a total of **625 representations** were reported as being received across CYPS:

		Informal	Formal	Total
Negative Representations	Complaints	114	34	148
	Comments	61		61
Positive Representations	Suggestions	2		2
	Compliments	414		414
Total				<b>625</b>

- 2.2 The diagram below clearly shows that approximately **two thirds (67%) of all representations received were compliments:**



2.3 The service area which delivers a high number of 'front line' services (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) received the highest proportion of formal complaints:

- 115 out of 148 complaints (**77.7%**) **were about social care services**

2.4 All complaints are taken seriously and investigated. This does not necessarily mean that all complaints, or even the majority, are upheld (justified)\*, as the figures for the reporting year show:

- **5.9% of formal complaints were upheld (justified)**
  - 44.1% of formal complaints were partially upheld (partially justified)
  - 38.2% of formal complaints were not upheld (not justified)
  - 3.0% of formal complaints were withdrawn
- (8.8% of formal complaints are ongoing at time of writing report)

\* (see Appendix A Glossary of terms and abbreviations)

2.5 The timescale for sending an acknowledgement of receipt of a complaint to the complainant is 2 working days from receipt of complaint.

**100% of formal complaints received in CYPS were acknowledged within 2 working days.**

2.6 The timescale for resolving complaints at Stage 1 is 20 working days from receipt for statutory complaints, and 10 working days for corporate complaints. During 2010/11, **51.6% of Stage 1 complaints received in CYPS were resolved within timescale, consisting of:**

- 25% (5 of 20) of formal statutory Stage 1 complaints\*
- 100% (11 of 11) of formal corporate Stage 1 complaints

\*These are about social care services and can involve numerous and complex issues.

2.7 Where formal complaints are received which are believed to be particularly complex, or when complainants have remained dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1 of the formal procedure, complaints are investigated at Stage 2, by a person who was not involved at Stage 1. During the reporting year **3 complaints were investigated at Stage 2** (2 statutory and 1 corporate).

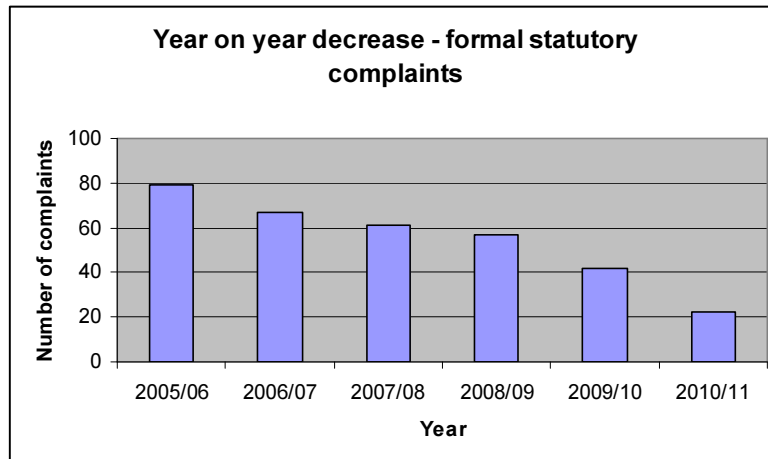
2.8 The timescale for resolving formal complaints at Stage 2 is 65 working days from receipt for statutory complaints, and 20 working days for corporate. During 2010/11, **none of the 3 Stage 2 complaints received in CYPS were resolved within timescale.** All 3 investigations were carried out outwith CYPS, by independent investigating officers.

### 3.0 Key messages

3.1 **The total number of representations has decreased by 38.6% from the previous year.**

3.2 **The overall number of negative representations (complaints and comments) has decreased by 30.6% from the previous year.** Statutory negative representations (complaints and comments) have decreased by 29.6% (from 228 to 176) during the same period; and corporate by 100% (from 71 to 35).

3.3 Additionally, this year has again seen a **decrease in the number of statutory complaints dealt with under the formal procedure**, as illustrated below:



3.4 **A higher number of complaints were resolved at first point of contact before entering the formal process in comparison to the previous year.** 77% of complaints received were resolved informally compared with 68% in 2009/10 and 42% in 2008/09.

3.5 The number of compliments received has decreased from the previous year; however **compliments received by the service as a percentage of all representations has remained on par with the previous year.** 66.2% of all representations received were in relation to compliments (an increase of 1% on 2009/10). The level of compliments recorded means that for every negative representation received there were almost twice as many positive ones.

3.6 **Performance in acknowledging formal complaints has improved over the past year.** 100% of all new formal complaints were acknowledged within 2 working days in comparison to 94.2% in 2009/10.

3.7 **Performance in resolving complaints in timescale has deteriorated.** Over the reporting year, 51.6% of Stage 1 complaints were resolved within timescale in comparison with 72.3% the year previously. 25% (5 out of 20) of statutory Stage 1 complaints were resolved within timescale of 20 working days, compared with 60% in 2009/10. However 100% of corporate complaints were resolved within 10 working days (compared with 92% in 2009/10). As detailed in Section 4.5.3, statutory complaints tend to be complex and the SaSS managers investigating them do so in addition to an already heavy workload.

3.8 Overall figures for CYPs show that **a perception of poor service accounted for 29.4% of formal complaints** in 2010/11, a decrease from the previous year's figure of 42.1%. However, **the majority of complaints (82.3%) were not upheld or only partially upheld.** Many complaints stem from the fact that families disagree with the decisions made by the service, which are made in the best interests of the child or young person. Nonetheless it is still concerning that service users have a *perception* of poor service, and actions to address this will be reflected in individual Service Area Plans.

- 3.9 It is pleasing to note that the percentage of formal statutory complaints regarding the **attitude and conduct of staff has again shown a decrease** (14.4%) from previous years (17.1% in 2009/10 and 26.1% in 2008/09).
- 3.10 It has also been noted that **complaints about services for disabled children and their families have declined over the past few years**, as a result of gradual improvements having been made over a period of time in the provision of services, partly as a result of the complaints which were formerly received about this service.
- 3.11 **The main theme that has been identified from complaints received during 2010/11 is 'poor communication'**. This is concerning as it has been an underlying message of complaints for the past few years. Heads of Service and senior managers will be recommended to note that improvements in communicating with service users are required when preparing their Service Area Plans, as well as cascading this message to their staff.

# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

## Section One - Introduction

- 1.1 This is the fifth Annual Report detailing the performance of Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Services (DCC CYPS) Representations Procedure. Representations cover compliments, suggestions, comments and complaints made by children and young people who are service users; or by their carers and/or other representatives on their behalf.
- 1.2 The aim of this report is to provide information in concise manner; therefore some of the detailed information which was included in previous annual reports, such as the aims of and procedures for handling complaints is not given within this report. However this information can be supplied upon request.
- 1.3 It should be noted that CYPS Service Areas reduced from six to five, with some title changes, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The new Service headings will be reflected in next years Annual Report.
- 1.4 A number of terms are used in this report which are explained below:

**Figure 1 – Explanation of terms used**

Term	Meaning	Notes
<b>Statutory complaint</b>	Complaints from children and young people (or their representative) about <i>social care services</i> are handled under the statutory complaints procedure. Throughout this report, these are referred to as 'statutory representations'.	This type of complaint can be made about Safeguarding and Specialist Services (SaSS). Some complaints about the Independent Reviewing Officers who chair Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews are dealt with via the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) complaint procedure.
<b>Corporate complaint</b>	<i>(Non statutory complaint)</i> . Any other complaint about Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), which is handled under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. This type of complaint can be about any of the 6 service areas of CYPS in existence during the period of this report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended Services</li> <li>• Achievement Services</li> <li>• Access and Inclusion</li> <li>• Finance Services</li> <li>• Strategic Commissioning</li> <li>• Safeguarding and Specialist Services (SaSS)</li> </ul>	Most complaints about SaSS would be taken through the statutory complaints procedure; however a few are actioned via the corporate procedure (for example, a citizen who is not eligible to complain on behalf of a child about the social care services received, but is unhappy with the way he was spoken to by a Social Worker, might make a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff of DCC under the corporate procedure). For matters where there is an Appeal process, a complaints may be made about the process, but not the decision.
<b>Informal complaint</b>	Where a complaint is resolved directly by the team involved, quickly and locally, and in collaboration with the complainant. Please see Section Three for further information.	The complainant will be informed of the result of the complaint; usually this is done verbally in the case of informal resolution.
<b>Formal complaint</b>	Complaints which are logged as formal complaints may not have been	When the complaint has been investigated, a formal written response

	able to be resolved informally, or the complainant may wish to make a 'formal complaint' which requires a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party / senior manager to become involved and carry out an investigation into what occurred and how it can be resolved.	is sent to the complainant.  Formal complaints are taken through different Stages, see below.
<b>Stage 1</b>	Formal complaints are usually taken firstly through 'Stage 1' of the appropriate procedure. An investigation is carried out by a senior manager of the team involved in the complaint.	For response timescales, see figure 2.
<b>Stage 2</b>	If the complaint is particularly complex, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, the complaint will be taken to 'Stage 2' of the appropriate procedure. The person carrying out the re-investigation or review of the complaint will not have been involved at Stage 1 and will be independent of the team involved in the complaint.	In the case of statutory complaints, the Stage 2 investigator will usually be from an independent agency, accompanied by an Independent Person (IP) whose role is to ensure the Stage 2 investigation is carried out in a fair and timely manner. For corporate Stage 2 investigations, the Council's Customer Complaints Unit (CCU) allocates an investigating officer.
<b>Comment</b>	Where service users give negative feedback about their experience of CYPS, this is recorded as a comment.	Most comments are received via satisfaction surveys sent out about SaSS.
<b>Compliment</b>	Where service users give positive feedback about their experience of CYPS, this is recorded as a compliment.	Compliments are received via a variety of media: satisfaction surveys, letters, e-mails, cards, and via the DCC website
<b>Suggestion</b>	Where service users offer an idea about how to change/improve services, this is recorded as a suggestion.	All suggestions are acknowledged and any changes made as a result are reported to Standards Committee.

- 1.5 Requirements on the procedures for handling and considering statutory representations in Safeguarding and Specialist Services (SaSS) are enshrined in statute; the various Acts set down the procedures that Local Authorities (LAs) with social care responsibilities must follow when a representation about social care services is made.
- 1.6 The same legislation requires the publication of an Annual Report to inform service users, their carers and/or representatives, elected members, staff, the general public and other statutory organisations such as Ofsted, about how the service has performed in meeting key national and local standards, in respect of handling complaints.
- 1.7 Although there is no legislative requirement for the reporting of corporate complaints, CYPS is committed to making such information available in order that there is integrity in the governance procedures and open and transparent communication with the people who use our services, the wider public and other partners. The Service also learns from *all* representations, both statutory and corporate. This report therefore provides information on the full range of representations made across the service.



1.8 There are various stages of the complaints process with specific timescales for each stage of the process. These are shown in figure 2 overleaf; the statutory and corporate procedures each have their own timescales, however, the ‘customer’ (service user / complainant) does not see any difference in the level of service offered.

**Figure 2 – Timescales for complaints**

	<b>Statutory</b>	<b>Corporate</b>
<b>Acknowledgment of complaint</b>	Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint	Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint
<b>Informal resolution</b>	Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint	Within 2 working days of receipt of complaint
<b>Stage 1 (formal) resolution and response</b>	20 working days from receipt of complaint	10 working days from receipt of complaint
<b>Stage 2 (formal) resolution and response</b>	Within 65 working days from agreement to commence Stage 2 investigation	Within 20 working days from agreement to commence Stage 2 investigation.
<b>Stage 3</b>	Review Panel convened within 30 working days of request	Not applicable (Stage 3 is to the Local Government Ombudsman)
<b>Stage 3 response</b>	Within 5 working days of panel meeting (from Legal Services)	Not applicable
<b>Stage 3 final response</b>	Within 15 days of final response (from CYPS Head of Service)	Not applicable

*For a more detailed overview of the CYPS representations procedures, the CYPS Representations and Quality Officer (RQO) can be contacted as detailed at the end of this report or further information can be accessed on the intranet.*

1.9 Whilst there are processes to be adhered to in the handling of complaints, the real issues that arise within people’s complaints are rarely reflected in statistical analysis. This report therefore reflects the quality of life issues for CYPS service users that have led them to complain about (or indeed compliment) the services they receive as well as providing data on measurable performance.

1.10 Lessons learned from the issues raised in complaints (and comments, suggestions and compliments) are used to inform service improvements, examples of which are detailed in Section Eight of this report.

1.11 It should be noted that complaints about school-based matters are dealt with directly by the school and governing body, in line with the School Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available from School and Governor Support Services (SGSS). Information about such complaints is therefore not included in this report.











# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

## Section Two – Overview of CYPS representations

### 2.1 Breakdown of CYPS representations by type 2010/11

2.1.1 As Figure 3 below shows, 625 new representations were made in relation to CYPS in 2010/11, a decrease of 241 from the previous year. Although the overall number of compliments has also decreased, it is pleasing to note that 66.2% of all representations received were in relation to compliments (in comparison to 65% in 2009/10 and 64% in 2008/09). 77% of complaints received were resolved informally compared with 68% in 2009/10 and 42% in 2008/09, indicating improved levels of staff skill in handling dissatisfied customers effectively. The high levels of compliments recorded mean that for every negative representation received (via a comment or complaint) there were almost twice as many positive ones (ratio 1:1.75).

**Figure 3 – overview of CYPS representations received 2010/11 (table)**

	Type of representation	2009/10	2010/11	DOT*
<b>Positive Representations</b>	Compliment about statutory services	189	85	
	Compliment about non-statutory services	376	329	
	Suggestion (all about non statutory services)	2	2	
<b>Negative Representations</b>	Comment (all about statutory services)	78	61	
	Informally resolved statutory complaints	108	93	
	Informally resolved corporate complaints	43	21	
	Stage 1 formal statutory complaints	40	20	
	Stage 1 formal corporate complaints	25	11	
	Stage 2 formal statutory complaints	2	2	
	Stage 2 formal corporate complaints	3	1	
	<b>Total number of CYPS representations</b>	866	625	

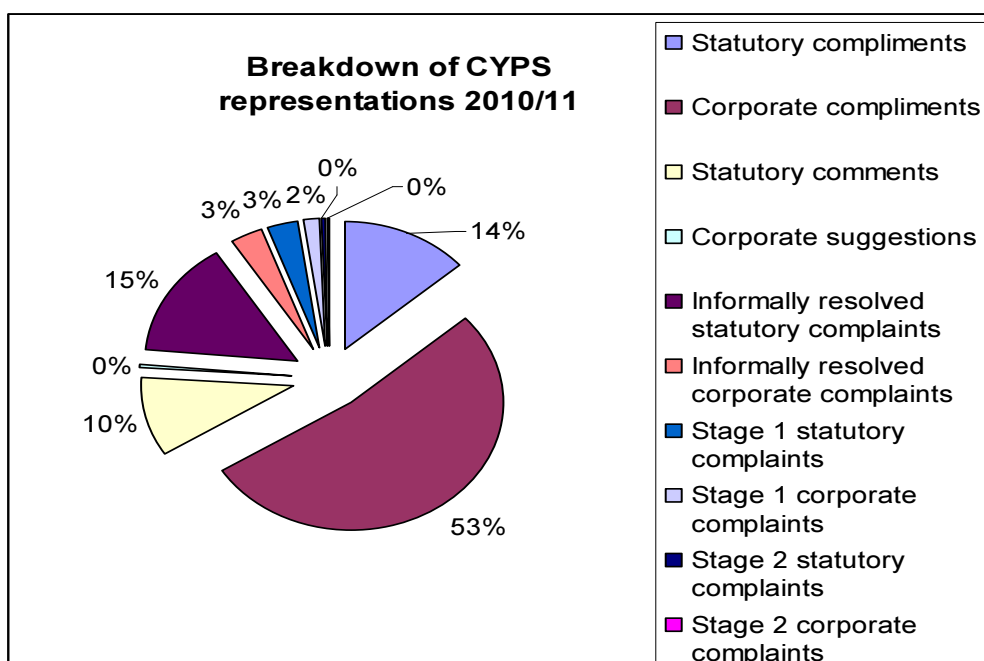
\* *Direction of Travel*

\*\* *11 corporate complaints logged as being formal on Customer Relations Management system (CRM) (see Section 5.1.4 of this report)*

2.1.2 The overall number of complaints and (negative) comments has decreased by 42.5% to 211 from 301 in 2009/10.

- 2.1.3 Statutory complaints and comments (combined) have decreased by 29.5% (from 228 to 176) since the previous year. Corporate complaints and comments/suggestions decreased by 100% (from 71 to 35).
- 2.1.4 Following year-on-year increases in complaints in recent years, these decreases are welcomed, and are believed to be result of service-wide improvements to the Service coming to fruition resulting in improved customer satisfaction. We are not complacent however, and we understand that there may be service users who are not satisfied with our services but who choose not to bring this to our attention.
- 2.1.5 We also realise that there is the potential for an increase in complaints during 2011/12 and beyond, as staff numbers and services begin to decline due to local government efficiency savings. In order to mitigate this, where there are proposed cuts, Equality Impact Assessments and Consultations are carried out to ensure that possible impacts to service users have been thoroughly considered.
- 2.1.6 In relation to statutory representations, a total of 261 were received, compared with 417 in 2009/10, 331 in 2008/09 and 89 in 2007/08. The previous year-on-year increase was in part due to a more robust recording system for compliments having been put in place. Whilst it is pleasing to note that the number of negative representations about social care services has decreased from 228 to 176, it is noted that there has also been a correlating decrease in the number of compliments about these services.
- 2.1.7 A total of 364 corporate representations were received during the reporting year, compared with 449 in 2009/10 and 335 in 2008/09. Compliments accounted for 90.4% of corporate representations, compared with 83.7% in 2009/10 and 83.6% in 2008/09.
- 2.1.8 Figure 4 below shows this information in a pie chart, clearly illustrating that compliments of a corporate nature make up 53% of all representations received, followed by statutory compliments at 14%.

**Figure 4 – overview of CYPS representations received 2010/11 (pie)**



# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

## Section Three – Informally Resolved Complaints

3.1.1 Over the past few years, efforts have been made for more complaints to be resolved 'informally' at a local level without the need for a formal investigation by a senior manager. This:

- improves service user relations and satisfaction;
- minimises the number of complaints initially actioned at a formal level, thereby potentially resulting in cost savings to the Service.

3.1.2 The table below summarises the numbers and percentages of complaints which were informally resolved during the reporting year:

	Number 2010/11	% of total complaints (148)	Number 2009/10	% of total complaints (221)
Corporate	<b>21</b>	-	43	-
Statutory	<b>93</b>	-	108	-
Total	<b>114</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	151	31.7%

3.1.3 Unless a complainant specifically request that their complaint is actioned as a 'formal complaint', every complaint is considered on a case by case basis to decide if it can initially be actioned 'informally' or 'formally' (directly at Stage 1).

3.1.4 All complaints are aimed to be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt. If an informal complaint cannot be resolved within 2 days of receipt, it will be logged as a 'formal' complaint to be investigated fully and formally under the appropriate Stage 1 procedure.

3.1.5 Informal resolution can provide greater service user satisfaction and gives the Service an opportunity to resolve matters before they are escalated into the 'formal' arena. Where a formal investigation is carried out, this will be by a senior manager of the service, and may be time-consuming if the complaint has reached such a point that there are numerous issues. It is therefore costly in terms of time and people resources; and this cost increases further if a statutory complaint is subsequently taken to Stage 2, which requires the LA to pay for an independent investigator.

3.1.6 As Durham has historically had fewer complaints taken to Stage 2 than neighbouring local authorities in recent years, the practice of trying to resolve more complaints 'informally' at the outset appears to be working.

3.1.7 Regardless of whether a complaint is resolved 'informally' or 'formally', all complaints are logged, and complainants are asked for their feedback about how the complaint was handled, and any learning points are noted. The learning actions detailed in Section Eight are from both informally and formally resolved complaints.

3.1.8 A few examples of complaints which were informally resolved during the reporting year are given overleaf:

- A complaint from a father about a Social Worker speaking to his children whilst they were at school. The Social Worker discussed this with the children's parents, reminding them that this had been one of the recommendations of a Review Child Protection Conference.
- A complaint from a mother who was unhappy that her disabled son's case was to be closed. A re-assessment of his needs was arranged.
- A carer complained about care planning meetings having been cancelled due to school closure and bad weather. An apology and explanation was given; re-arranged meetings had already been planned.
- The neighbour of a Children's Home complained about the behaviour of one of the young people who lived at the Home. The Home staff dealt with the young person (which included involving the Police) and apologised to the neighbour.
- A mother (who had been the victim of extreme domestic violence, necessitating her to move out of County Durham) complained that social care services had failed to inform her that her children's father was due to be released from prison. This was quickly discussed with Police colleagues and the complainant was contacted to be given an update on the situation.
- A father complained about what he considered to be a 'hoax' visit to his home by a non-uniformed Police Officer, following a referral to social care services. The referral turned out to be unfounded. It was quickly established that a risk assessment undertaken by the Emergency Duty Team had felt that a home visit was necessary, and this was carried out by the Police Vulnerability Unit (who are non-uniformed); the complainant was given a full explanation and the details of the Police complaints department in case he wished to pursue the matter.
- A complaint about a child having been charged for music lessons which had been cancelled due to teacher absence. The parent was informed that all paid for lessons would be honoured in subsequent school terms when the teacher was available.
- A complaint that a pregnant single mother was unable to arrange for her two children to be taken to different schools following her impending Caesarean section. Arrangements were made for an Education Welfare Officer to meet with the mother to help her to make temporary arrangements.
- A complaint from a mother that her daughter had not been allocated a school place since moving into County Durham to live with her father. Enquiries quickly revealed that a school place *had* been allocated and the Pupil Casework Team had been liaising with the father to ensure the child attended.
- Complaints received about schools *not* opening during the inclement weather of 2010/11, and also about health and safety concerns where schools *had* opened.

# CYPS Annual Representations Report 2010/11

## Section Four – Formal complaints







### 4.1 Formal CYPS Complaints by Service Area 2010/11

4.1.1 The table below summarises the numbers of complaints which were taken through a formal complaints process during the reporting year.

	Statutory	Corporate	Totals
Stage 1	20	11	<b>31</b>
Stage 2	2	1	<b>3</b>
Stage 3	0	N/A	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>

4.1.2 Figure 5 below illustrates that the vast majority of formal complaints (67.7%) were received in relation to Safeguarding and Specialist Services (SaSS) which is not surprising given the large number of front facing contacts made with children, young people and their families by this service area. This compares with 62.9% in 2009/10.

**Figure 5 – formal CYPS complaints by Service Area**

Service Area	Number 2009/10	Number 2010/11	DOT
Safeguarding and Specialist Services	44	23	
Access and Inclusion	14	3	
Extended Services	4	2	
Finance Services	2	0	
Achievement Services	4	4	
Strategic Commissioning	2	2	
<b>Total no. of formal complaints</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>34</b>	

4.1.3 Achievement Services received 4 out of 12 (33.3%) of formal corporate complaints; 2 of those were about school closures during the inclement weather in the winter of 2010/11.

## 4.2 Formal CYPS complaints made by service user group

4.2.1 Figure 6 highlights that, as in previous years, the greatest majority of formal complaints were made by the parents of a child or young person. Many complaints from direct service users (clients) are resolved informally at a local level, for example those housed in secure accommodation, in line with the good practice guidance for actioning statutory complaints, which suggests that Local Authorities should attempt to resolve complaints quickly and at the point of delivery.

**Figure 6 – formal CYPS complaints made by service user group**

Complainant	Number 2010/11	% 2010/11	Number 2009/10	% 2009/10
Parent	18	52.9	37	52.9
Client (child/young person)	2	5.9	6	8.6
Client (adult)	3	8.8	2	2.9
Relative (Non Parent)	4	11.8	5	7.1
Carer	0		2	2.9
Other	7	20.6	17	24.3
	<b>34</b>		70	

## 4.3 Formal CYPS complaints by theme

4.3.1 The broad nature of complaints received during the reporting year is illustrated in figure 7 below.

**Figure 7 - formal CYPS complaints by theme**

Main reason for complaint	No. received 2010/11	% of total	No. received 2009/10	% of total
Poor Service	10	29.4	30	42.9
Staff Attitude or Conduct	5	14.7	12	17.1
Staff Attitude and Poor Service	4	11.8	5	7.1
Decision regarding service	6	17.7	13	21.4
Decision regarding service and Staff Conduct	5	14.7	5	4.3
Other	4	11.8	5	7.1
Total no. of formal complaints	<b>34</b>		70	

4.3.2 It is pleasing to note that as well as a drop in the number of formal complaints, the percentage of complaints received in relation to poor service has decreased considerably since the preceding year. It is worth noting that 73.9% of complaints received were either not upheld or only partially upheld, so although service users complained that they had received poor services, in the majority of cases, investigations did not find evidence to support this.

4.3.3 In the case of statutory complaints, although the majority (6 out of 22) were about perceived poor service, this equates to 27.3%, which is an improvement when compared with 42.9% in 2009/10 and 30.6% in 2008/09. Many statutory complaints stem from highly emotive situations, often in cases where parents are unhappy that social care services have become involved in their children's lives; sometimes the children have been removed from their parents care as part of formal child protection proceedings. However, lessons can be learned from the perception of poor service which comes from all complaints, whether upheld or not; this is explored further in Section Nine of this report.

4.3.4 It is pleasing to note that once again the percentage of formal statutory complaints regarding the attitude and conduct of staff has shown a decrease from the previous year, at 9.1% (from 14.3% in 2009/10 and 26.1% in 2008/09).

#### 4.4 Formal CYPS complaints by outcome

4.4.1 The information in figure 8 shows the balance between the number of formal complaints received and investigated compared with the number where it was found that the service had acted inappropriately. Please refer to the glossary in Appendix A for full definitions.

**Figure 8 - formal CYPS complaints by outcome**

	No. upheld	No. partially upheld	No. not upheld	No. still outstanding**	No. withdrawn	Total no.
Statutory	2	10	6	3	1	22
Corporate	0	5	7	0	0	12
Total	2	15	13	3	1	34
<b>% of total (2010/11)</b>	<b>5.9%</b> (6.5%*)	<b>44.1%</b> (41.9%*)	<b>38.2%</b> (41.9%*)	<b>8.8%</b> (6.5%*)	<b>3.0%</b> (3.2%*)	
% of total (2009/10)*	23.1%	27.7%	46.2%	0	3.1%	

\*Stage 1 information only

\*\*outstanding at the time of writing this report (June 2011)

4.4.2 As figure 8 shows, 50% of all CYPS formal complaints received in 2010/11 were completely or partially upheld (justified). 38.2% were not upheld. For formal statutory complaints, 6 out of 22 (27.3%) were not upheld; and 7 out of 12 (58.3%) formal corporate complaints were not upheld.

#### 4.5 Performance indicators – timescales (Stage 1 complaints)

4.5.1 During the reporting year, 100% of all Stage 1 complaints received were acknowledged by the Service within the required timescale of 2 working days, which is an improvement on the previous year's performance of 93.8% acknowledgements within timescale.



4.5.2 As figure 9 below shows, 51.6% of complaints taken through the Stage 1 process were resolved within the target of 20 working days (statutory) and 10 working days (corporate). This performance is worse than that of the previous year (78.3). The system of informing complainants of any expected delay in writing or by telephone with the reason(s) why has continued during the reporting year.

**Figure 9 - Performance indicators – timescales (Stage 1 complaints)**

	No. 2009/10	% of total	No. 2010/11	% of total	DOT
Stage 1 statutory acknowledged in timescale	38	95.0%	20	100%	↑
Stage 1 corporate acknowledged in timescale	23	93.0%	11	100%	↑
<b>Total CYPS Stage 1 acknowledged in timescale</b>	61	93.8 %	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>	↑
Stage 1 statutory resolved in timescale	24	60.0%	5	25%	↓
Stage 1 corporate resolved in timescale	23	92%	11	100%	↑
<b>Total CYPS Stage 1 resolved in timescale</b>	47	78.3%	<b>16</b>	<b>51.6%</b>	↓

4.5.3 Performance for resolving corporate complaints within timescale fared better than that for statutory representations. As the percentage of complaints which are resolved informally rises (see Section Three), those complaints which are formally investigated tend to be the most complex ones, often involving a number of elements.

Such complaints are investigated by senior managers in addition to their usual caseload, which may result in complaint investigation being de-prioritised behind issues of a more pressing nature involving child safeguarding.

4.5.4 Reasons for the delay in resolving complaints within timescale are explored on a quarterly basis via the quarterly representations reports and senior managers' performance days. The continuing increase in the number of referrals to SaSS as a result of the Baby Peter case has continued to add to manager and staff workload pressures, resulting in less time for complaint investigation.

4.5.5 It is pleasing to note that 100% of corporate Stage 1 complaints were resolved within the 10 working day timescale. The managers and staff who respond to corporate complaints tend to be office based and are therefore often more able to quickly gather the information required for a complaint investigation. It is also noticeable that service users who make complaints about corporate services tend to be more articulate in expressing the exact nature and details of their complaint, which means that less time needs to be spent in trying to assess what the complainant is unhappy about, who s/he

is making a complaint on behalf of, and what outcomes they hope to achieve as a result of their complaint.

#### 4.6 Stage 2 complaints

- 4.6.1 Where formal complaints are received which are particularly complex, or when complainants have remained dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1 of the formal procedure, complaints are investigated at Stage 2, by a person who was not involved at Stage 1.
- 4.6.2 The procedures for statutory and corporate complaints taken to Stage 2 differ slightly in that for corporate Stage 2 complaints, the investigation is undertaken by staff within the LA; the Customer Complaints Unit (CCU) within Neighbourhood Services will allocate an appropriate senior manager to carry out the investigation.
- 4.6.3 For statutory complaints, an independent Investigating Officer (IO) is appointed, as well as an Independent Person (IP) who oversees the process to ensure it is carried out appropriately. The LA has a contract with North East Consortium (NEC), which is part of the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS), to supply IPs. The contract also allows the LA to spot-purchase IOs. This means that the LA can choose on a case by case basis whether to procure an IO from NEC, or to make alternative arrangements such as contacting trained IOs directly.
- 4.6.4 As figure 10 below shows, all complaints taken to Stage 2 were acknowledged within the target of 2 working days; however none were resolved in timescale (65 working days for statutory complaints, 20 working days for corporate).

**Figure 10 - Performance indicators – timescales (Stage 2 complaints)**

	<b>No. 2010/11 acknowledged in timescale</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>No. 2010/11 resolved in timescale</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Stage 2 statutory	2	100%	0	0%
Stage 2 corporate	1	100%	0	0%
<b>Total CYPS Stage 2 acknowledged in timescale</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

- 4.6.5 The corporate Stage 2 complaint investigation was carried out by the Corporate Complaints Team Leader. It took longer than 20 days as visits to the complainant had to be arranged to discuss the issues before a resolution could be reached.
- 4.6.6 One statutory Stage 2 complaint investigation is still ongoing at the time of writing. This investigation was re-commenced by NEC (at no cost to the LA) when they determined that the IO had failed to follow process correctly. The other statutory Stage 2 investigation went over timescale due to the complexity of the issues and the IO needing to carry out numerous meetings with the complainants and members of staff.

4.6.7 For full details of the Stage 2 procedures and information about Stage 2 complaints received during the reporting period, please contact the CYPS RQO as detailed at the end of this report.

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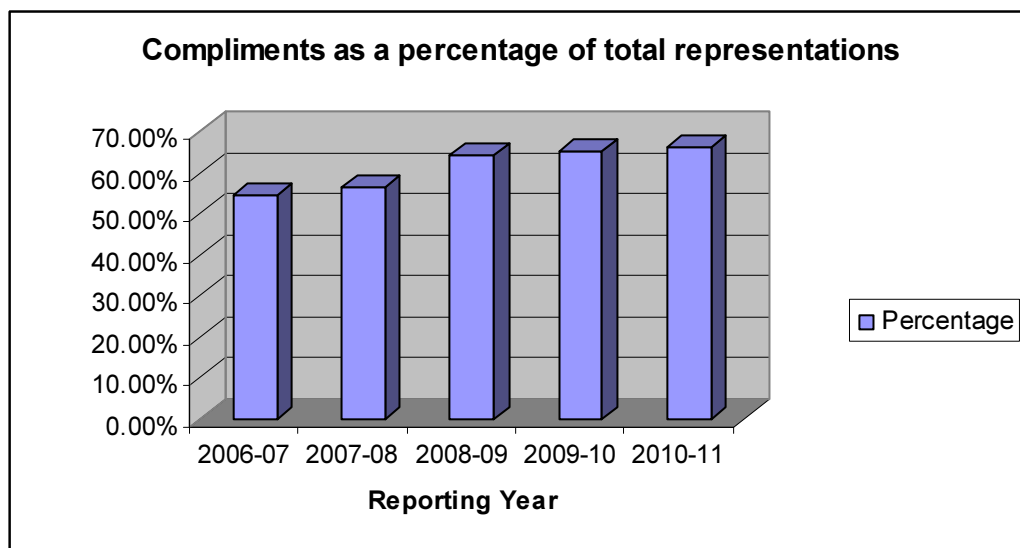
## Section Five – Compliments, Suggestions and Comments

### 5.1 Compliments

5.1.1 Paragraph 2.1 and Figure 3 (Section Two) shows that during the reporting year there were a total of 414 CYPS compliments (compared with 565 in 2009/10 and 328 in 2008/09) which can be evidenced in the form of letters, e-mails, cards and completed survey forms (customer service questionnaires). There were 85 compliments regarding SaSS and 329 regarding other CYPS services.

5.1.2 The number of compliments received has decreased from the previous year; however compliments received by the service as a percentage of all representations has shown a year on year increase, as illustrated in figure 11 below. In 2010/11, 66.2% of all representations received were in relation to compliments. The level of compliments recorded means that for every negative representation received there were almost twice as many positive ones.

**Figure 11 – Compliments as a percentage of total representations**



5.1.2 Copies of compliments received can be viewed on request, for up to one year after the reporting quarter. Compliments highlight that what service users appreciate includes:

- feeling respected, listened to and supported
- having decisions explained to them
- being kept informed
- professionalism, care and commitment of staff
- being able to contact staff easily

5.1.3 A few examples of the many compliments received across the service this year are given overleaf; further examples can be given upon request. (The first 9 examples are about Safeguarding and Specialist Services).

- The people who work for CYPs are really good. They do a brilliant job and they are very caring with other people. Thank you for all the support which you have given me and [child] at a very bad time.
- My dealings with your department have been excellent and all effort was made to visit us as quickly as possible.
- Thank you for your help and guidance along the way. We will never be able to thank you enough for making us a FAMILY.
- I have been impressed by [Social Worker's] hard work in a difficult and trying case with serious complexities. The father must not have been the easiest individual to work with....Often so much criticism is aimed at social workers and they never get to hear the positive comments...
- (from a young person)...I just want to say Thank You for always being there for me no matter what I said and did!
- (from a young person about her Key Worker) ...She has been lovely...she does things out of her own time to help me and she is good to talk to.
- My son aged 14 has severe learning disabilities and autism...the social services team have supported me 100%...it is good to know they are there to help and support when I need it. Durham County Council should be proud of their services for disabled children and families.
- ...I have always found the staff very helpful and friendly and have witnessed the excellent care given to the young people...
- (from a young person) Great staff, team always there for the young people, enjoyed my time here, they really helped me.
- ...Your involvement with pupils who have complex emotional and behavioural difficulties has benefited individual children....parents have also commented how your support and guidance has helped their child and changed the way the family behave towards each other...
- (to Education Welfare Service) Thank you so much for all your help and support to [child] and our family. As a parent I did not know that special people like you were available within school and cannot express my gratitude to you enough...
- (about Sure Start) We have loved coming to the sessions because the staff and facilities have been excellent....it's a brilliant socialising influence on my two children.
- ...the invaluable contribution which the EMTAS team makes to our school. As a result of the work they are leading within the school, we have seen the students they work with progress both personally and academically...
- (to Connexions) Thank you for all the time and trouble you've gone to and for showing you care.
- I want to tell you how hugely impressed I've been with [member of staff]. I cannot begin to imagine the volume of requests during this period of mass restructures....she has been the voice of clarity, common sense and reason....
- (from the Deputy National Director School Improvement)...The strategic leadership that you bring as a team to Durham is outstanding...It is clear to me that you have successfully communicated a high level of strategic priority for ensuring Durham schools are good schools....

## 5.2 Suggestions

5.2.1 During the reporting year, 2 suggestions were received from service users, both of which were about non statutory services, and were acknowledged and responded to:

- One suggestion, which was from a young person, was about the provision to work 'on-line' at home, for example during periods of inclement weather such as

that experienced during the winter months of 2010/11. The young person was informed that work was already being undertaken to try to make this an option for the future. Many County Durham schools are already using Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) where students can receive information and homework via their home PC or laptop.

- The second suggestion was about supply teachers in the Durham Supply Teaching Partnership being given passwords so they can access 'School to School' notices (for job opportunities) via the Extranet. This suggestion is being given serious consideration by Achievement Services; although it would require some work to set up initially, which would have a cost implication, this could potentially be recouped via a charge to supply teachers requiring this access, which could then generate income.

### **5.3 Comments**

5.3.1 CYPS actively seeks the comments of its service users, in order to inform service improvements and developments. The Planning, Quality and Research Team (PQRT) sends out a number of surveys to children, young people and their carers in relation to services provided by SaSS, to ask for their feedback about their contact experience with staff from that service area. (Positive feedback is recorded as a compliment.) In addition all service users are able to make a comment about any area of CYPS at any time through a range of communication channels.

5.3.2 During 2010/11, there were 61 comments of a negative nature received about SaSS ('statutory comments'), compared with 78 received in 2009/10 and 100 in 2008/09. Feedback in the form of negative comments is analysed and any themes are included in quarterly reports to senior managers.

5.3.3 The main themes from the negative comments received in 2010/11 are:

- Social Workers cancelling meetings and/or not returning calls
- Families don't understand why they need the intervention of social services
- Frequent change of Social Worker and/or family not kept informed that the worker had been changed
- Those service users who asked for help felt that they weren't given it/sufficiently/quickly enough
- Professionals didn't listen properly, and/or didn't treat parents/carers with enough respect

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## Section Six – Equality and Diversity information

### 6.1 Complainants' age and gender profiles

6.1.1 During the reporting year, formal complaints were made on behalf of the following service users (age and gender):

**Figure 12 – complaints made in relation to age and gender**

	Female 0-17	Female over 18	<b>Total female</b>	Male 0-17	Male over 18	<b>Total male</b>	<b>Other/ unknown</b>
Statutory	11	2	13	9	0	9	0
Corporate	4	1	5	3	0	3	4
Total	15	3	18	12	0	12	4
% of total (34)	44.1%	8.8%	<b>52.9%</b>	35.3%	0%	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

6.1.2 It should be noted that where complaints are made by parents/carers on behalf of children and young people, if there is more than one child in the family, the complaint details are recorded in the name of the eldest child. The figures and percentages above therefore do not give a full and true picture of the number and genders of children who were involved in making formal complaints.

6.1.3 One corporate complaint was received on behalf of an organisation (noted as 'other' in figure 12); two corporate complaints did not specify if the complaint was being made on behalf of a boy or girl, but simply referred to their "child". For statutory complaints, the precise details of the child or young person are required in order to be able to investigate the complaint.

### 6.2 Complainants' ethnicity profiles

6.2.1 Citizens who make a corporate complaint via the DCC website are asked for equality and diversity information; however this information is not yet subsequently recorded on the CRM (Customer Relations Management) system where all service user contacts with the Council are captured. Where complaints are made directly to CYPS, this information is not sought until the end of the process, when it is included in a satisfaction survey about the complaints process. However complainants may choose not to complete the form or the equality and diversity part. It is known that 2 of the 11 formal Stage 1 corporate complaints received during the reporting period were made on behalf of children of White British origin; the ethnic origin of the remaining 9 is recorded as 'unknown'.

6.2.2 Figure 13 overleaf shows that all 22 formal statutory complaints are recorded as being made by or on behalf of\* children or young people of White British origin. As the numbers are so low, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this information.

\* One complaint was from a young adult who had previously been a looked after child, therefore SSID shows that she is White British. One complaint was from a Foster Carer, made on her own behalf rather than for a child or young person.

**Figure 13 – Formal statutory Stage 1 complaints by ethnic group of service user**

	White British	Any other ethnic group
Female	13	0
Male	9	0
Total	22	0
% of total	100%	0%

### 6.3 Complaints regarding equality and diversity issues

6.3.1 During the reporting year no formal complaints were received about services users being unable to access any service due to their age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

6.3.2 Some complaints were received regarding children not being eligible for home to school transport to a faith school. Although such 'complaints' fall outside the remit of the corporate complaints policy (as the policy excludes complaints about Council policies, and as there is an Appeal process for disagreement with a decision about home to school transport) parents were nonetheless given responses which included a full explanation for the decision and information that the criteria in the home to school transport policy had been drawn up in agreement with the relevant church authorities, and had been found to be fair and relevant by the Ombudsman.



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## Section Seven - Local Government Ombudsman

### 7.1 Local Government Ombudsman letter 2010/11

7.1.1 At the time of writing (June 2011) the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) annual letter to Durham County Council had not been received, but provisional information sent by the LGO in April 2011 shows the following information about the numbers of complaints received about the County Council, regarding children and family services (SaSS) and education, in 2010/11 in each of the above categories, are shown below:

	<b>Children and family services (SaSS)</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Total for Council</b>	<b>CYPS complaints as a % of Total</b>
<b>Total 2010/11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>Total 2009/10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>11.4%</b>
<b>Total 2008/09</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35.0%</b>
<b>(Total 2007/08)*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>(Total 2006/07)*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\*Not directly comparable to subsequent years due to changes made in 2008/09 to the way the LGO operates.

7.1.2 Of the 9 complaints submitted to the LGO about 'Education & Children's Services':

- The Ombudsman discontinued her investigation because action was agreed by the Local Authority and accepted by the LGO as a satisfactory outcome for the complainant (3).
- The Ombudsman could find no, or insufficient, evidence of maladministration (3).
- Ombudsman's discretion was used not to pursue the complaint any further (usually because the Ombudsman can find no or insufficient injustice to warrant pursuing the matter further) (2).
- 1 was outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

7.1.3 Of the 8 complaints submitted to the LGO about 'Education':

- some were about home to school transport
- some were about school admissions
- 1 was about Special Educational Needs services

7.1.4 The Ombudsman also gave advice about 33 Durham County Council matters, 18% of which were in relation to 'Education and Children's Services'.

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## Section Eight - Learning from complaints

### 8.1 Strategic level - key messages

- 8.1.1 The annual report for 2008/09 identified two clear themes from complaints and comments received in that year: communication and culture; and in 2009/10 the major theme was poor communication. As Section Four shows, during 2010/11 the number of complaints about the service decreased from the previous year, and although perception of poor service was the main reason for the majority (29.4%) of complaints to CYPS, this was a decrease from the previous year's figure of 42.9%.
- 8.1.2 An analysis of complaints and comments received during 2010/11 shows that by 'poor service' complainants mean staff not answering or returning calls (particularly Social Workers) and service users feeling that they were not listened to or treated with respect.
- 8.1.3 As in previous years, from speaking to complainants and managing complaints throughout the reporting year, the CYPS RQO has identified that the majority of citizens who make a complaint 'on behalf of' a child are inherently unhappy with a decision that the Local Authority has made regarding the child(ren), be it about the school they are to attend, the refusal to supply transport, or the intervention of social care services, in some cases to safeguard the child(ren) concerned. From this inherent unhappiness there is a negative perception of CYPS, resulting in complaints about poor service and staff attitude, the majority of which are not upheld. Complainants still refer to 'social services' in a negative manner and believe them to be working against the wishes of families/carers, because where any intervention services to children are required, this can be of course be an emotive area with the potential for a conflict of interests. This is reflected by the fact that 82.3% of complaints received during 2010/11 were either not upheld or were only partially upheld.
- 8.1.4 In 2010/11 it appears that some of the same messages continue from the previous year; complainants have illustrated that they feel the Service has:
- either intervened unnecessarily in their child's life, or
  - not intervened enough, by failing to offer support and services which the family feel are required; and
  - moved children and young people to other placements when they did not wish to move;
  - failed to give a clear explanation of actions taken, sometimes at the appropriate level of understanding of the child/young person/representative; and
  - for various reasons, failed to answer calls and / or return messages, or keep appointments (without cancelling). In all cases, complainants felt frustrated (and in some cases, angry).
- 8.1.5 The over-riding theme is **poor communication**, a message which will be relayed to senior managers for inclusion in their Service Area Plans. Whilst some complaints could be avoided if the service was to offer a fuller and more detailed explanation of their role, what they are doing and what they can't do (and why), as mentioned above, some service users would inevitably remain dissatisfied simply because of having to deal with the service at all.

## 8.2 Operational level - recommended actions from complaints 2010/11

8.2.1 The system for recording actions resulting from complaints has continued during the reporting year. These actions may be

- recommended by the manager investigating the complaint, or
- recommended by the CYPS RQO, following analysis of the complaint and resolution, or
- recommended by an independent Investigating Officer.

8.2.2 All recommended actions are reported to senior managers on a quarterly basis for cascading throughout the Service. The identified actions are monitored within the Service Area(s) concerned.

8.2.3 A brief summary of some of the recommended actions from complaints resolved in 2010/11 is given below:

- Try to ensure that any concerns raised by other family members are listened to and taken into account in Social Worker reports to Court
- Make sure family contact rooms are kept warm and clean - including floors and toys
- Ensure that Core Assessments are written within appropriate timescales
- Initial Response Team should ensure that, where appropriate, referrers are made aware of action taken following the referral.
- Where Foster Carer Review reports say something about the Carers, they should be shared with Carers by their Supervising Social Worker, rather than being posted out.
- Where important and/or sensitive information is to be shared with family, this should be communicated via an appropriate means.
- Prior to Education development Service support and development visits, check that providers are aware of the purpose and remit of the visit.
- Where Nurseries are taken over by private providers, the process, including payments of fees, should be fully explained to parents.
- All staff should be made aware of the policy regarding use of Facebook and other social media; and should not publicise their place of work.
- Where 'template' letters are used, care should be taken to ensure details, including date, are correct for the particular recipient.

8.2.4 The following recommendations were made as a result of the one Stage 2 complaint which was completed during the reporting year:

- Consideration should be given to the active and appropriate involvement of young people in the Child Protection plan process. It is recognised however that the safety and welfare of children and young people is at all times paramount.

*This has been brought to the attention of the LSCB, which continually reviews its procedures. The recommendation was also discussed with the Manager of the Quality and Review service (the Independent Reviewing Officers who Chair Child Protection Conferences), who confirmed that the IROs will continue to advocate for children and young people. Social Workers are being reminded to be always mindful of the potential impact of their involvement on the children and young people they work with.*

- Social Workers should be given the opportunity to reflect on their practice in regular professional supervisions.

*Social Workers are, and will continue to be given the opportunity to reflect on their practice. This is through regular (monthly) Supervision sessions with their manager, 6 monthly Reviews and annual Appraisals. In addition, all Team Managers and Social Workers are now required to complete decision and discussion sheets when they are considering individual cases.*

- The Local Authority to promote the fact that services users have a right to access their files. They should also be aware of confidentiality in relation to stored information which is set out in County Durham's Access to Personal Social Care Records policy and is underpinned by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is supported in the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

*Following a recent review of the procedures for retention and destruction of information, the Local Authority is currently undergoing a review of access to records, led by the Caldicott Guardian (the person who has responsibility for information governance) for CYPS. The Caldicott Guardian was informed of this recommendation and has arranged to ensure it is incorporated into the updated process.*

- A written leaflet about the LSCB complaints process should be made available to family members. (Currently families are informed verbally about the process and are referred to the LSCB website for further information.)

*This has been raised with the LSCB, who have undertaken to complete this task.*

### **8.3 Gradual learning and improvements**

- 8.3.1 It has been noticed that very few complaints are received about services for disabled children and their families, whereas historically numerous complaints were received about this issue. As a result of the previous negative feedback from parents and carers, gradual improvements were made over a period of time in the provision of services, which have resulted in greater customer satisfaction and no formal complaints being received about the Disabled Children and Families service during 2010/11.

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### Section Nine – National and local developments relating to representations

- 9.1 On a national level, since May 2010 there have been numerous developments relating to various areas of national and local government; however there have been no changes during the reporting year which have affected the legislation around children's representations. There is an expectation that numbers of complaints may increase if services are cut or decreased, and this will be monitored and reported on in 2011/12. CYPS is endeavouring to minimise cuts to front-line services, but already during the early part of 2011/12 complaints have been received from looked after children and young people who are unhappy about being informed that their placement will be changed from IFA (private) Foster Carers to Local Authority employed Foster Carers; and comments have been received about possible cuts to school transport.
- 9.2 Learning from representations has now become an integral part of the representations process. Every complaint received, whether or not upheld, is viewed as an opportunity for learning, and is analysed for any themes or changes that could be made to service delivery. The results of this analysis are reported quarterly to both CYPS SLT and SaSSMT, for cascading to managers and staff, and for the strategic themes to be included in Service Area Plans.
- 9.3 The PQRT now gathers information on a quarterly basis about other service user feedback (not only that received via representations), for example comments received through organised programmes of consultation and service user surveys. This information is to be amalgamated with feedback from representations, to be included in one over-arching report to enable improved identification of themes and issues of importance to children, young people and families.
- 9.4 CYPS continues to be represented at a multi-service 'Learning from the Customer' complaints group to ensure that representations are captured and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner, regardless of which Council service they are about. During forthcoming months the group will be working together to update the CRM system which captures corporate representations, to make it more 'user friendly' for staff to input and extract representations information and data.
- 9.5 CYPS will be working with Adults Wellbeing and Health to carry out a 'moderation' exercise to ensure that complaints are handled similarly by both services. In the light of forthcoming Value for Money reviews, it will be useful to learn from the good practice of our counterparts in another service, who deal with similar kinds of representations, particularly social care (statutory) complaints. The results of this work will be shared with the wider multi-service group. This will enable future recording and reporting to services and Standards Committee to be more closely reflective of the types of feedback that are received from our service users.
- 9.6 In CYPS, a major development which has been ongoing for some time but which will come to fruition during 2011 is the creation of Integrated Teams, which will be housed in 10 locations across the County and will involve multi-agency professionals and support staff working closely together from the same 'base' to meet the needs of children, young people and families. This could have an impact upon representations, for example a family might complain to the Council about the team working with their child, and the team could include health colleagues. Therefore closer partnership working with health services' representations staff will be required.

- 9.7 The contract for Independent Persons (IPs) for statutory Stage 2 investigations comes to an end in March 2012, and there is no contract in place currently for the supply of independent Investigating Officers (IOs) (only on a 'spot purchase' basis). Representatives from Durham CYPS have been meeting regularly with colleagues from neighbouring authorities to explore future, value for money options for the provision of both of these statutory services.
- 9.8 The IP contract is currently held by North East Consortium (NEC), which is part of NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) and it is planned that this contract will be extended until 2014. However the quality of some of the IO reports provided by NEC has been poor. CYPS has worked closely with NEC senior managers to resolve the issues, but moving forward, work is in hand for a consortium of regional Local Authorities (led by Hartlepool Borough Council) to create an approved list of IO providers which complaints managers can draw upon to carry out statutory Stage 2 investigations.

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## Section Ten - Conclusion and Acknowledgements

- 10.1 CYPS receives a number of representations each year. This is predictable given the nature of the services, which are provided at difficult times in people's lives. Representations are a valuable source of feedback to inform service improvement. The number of representations is very small as a percentage of the total number of contacts made with children, young people and their representatives.
- 10.2 This Annual Report indicates positive achievements and improvements in performance in the handling and consideration of representations, including complaints, during the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, and also recognises the need to strive for continuous improvement.
- 10.3 Acknowledgements are made and thanks given to the following contributors to representations during the reporting year:
- All service users who have contributed to our service developments by making representations.
  - Staff and managers who have increasingly recognised the importance of addressing concerns responsively and been prepared to learn from the compliments and concerns of service users.
  - The National Youth Advocacy Service which provides invaluable support and advice to service users and enables concerns to be clarified and articulated.
  - The Systems Development Team who have enabled data to be more accurately recorded and collated.
  - Members of the Local Authority's Standards Committee who objectively scrutinise representations and ensure that trends are recognised and acted upon.
  - Counterparts in all service areas within DCC and in neighbouring Local Authorities for their advice and support throughout the reporting year.

## Appendix A - Glossary of terms and abbreviations and terms used

<b>CCU</b>	<b>Customer Complaints Unit</b>
<b>CRM</b>	<b>Customer Relations Management</b> (management information system for capturing service user contacts)
<b>CYPS</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Services</b>
<b>DCC</b>	<b>Durham County Council</b>
<b>E&amp;D</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>
<b>EMTAS</b>	<b>Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service</b>
<b>Extranet</b>	An internal website (an 'Intranet') for school staff, part of the Durham Learning Gateway
<b>IO</b>	<b>Investigating Officer (statutory complaints Stage 2)</b>
<b>IP</b>	<b>Independent Person (statutory complaints Stage 2)</b>
<b>LA</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
<b>LGO</b>	<b>Local Government Ombudsman</b>
<b>LSCB</b>	<b>Local Safeguarding Children Board</b>
<b>NEC</b>	<b>North East Consortium (part of NYAS)</b>
<b>NYAS</b>	<b>National Youth Advocacy Service</b>
<b>PQRT</b>	<b>Planning, Quality and Research Team</b>
<b>RQO</b>	<b>Representations and Quality Officer</b>
<b>SaSS</b>	<b>Safeguarding and Specialist Services</b>
<b>SGSS</b>	<b>School and Governor Support Service</b>
<b>upheld</b>	Where a complaint is ' <b>upheld</b> ', this means that, following investigation, CYPS agrees with the complainant's accusation; or that the complaint was justified.



## Appendix B - Summary of performance Trends over 5 year period 2006 - 2011

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	Change since last year
<b>Total Number of Representations</b>	160	170	666	866	<b>625</b>	<b>- 241</b>
Number of Formal Complaints	71	72	77	70	<b>34</b>	<b>- 36</b>
Number of Informal Complaints	-	-	61	151	<b>114</b>	<b>- 37</b>
Number of Compliments	87	96	428	565	<b>414</b>	<b>- 151</b>
Number of Comments / Suggestions	2	2	100	80	<b>63</b>	<b>- 17</b>
Formal Complaints as a % of total	44.4%	42.4%	11.6%	8.1%	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>- 2.7%</b>
Compliments as a % of total	54.4%	56.4%	64.3%	65.2%	<b>66.2%</b>	<b>+ 1.0%</b>
Comments as a % of total	1.2%	1.2%	15.0%	9.2%	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>- 5.8%</b>
<b>Total number of Statutory Representations</b>	89	89	331	417	<b>261</b>	<b>- 156</b>
Number of Formal Statutory Complaints	67	61	57	42	<b>22</b>	<b>- 20</b>
Number of Informal Statutory Complaints	-	-	26	108	<b>93</b>	<b>- 15</b>
Number of Statutory Compliments	22	26	148	189	<b>85</b>	<b>- 104</b>
Number of Statutory Comments	2	2	100	78	<b>61</b>	<b>- 17</b>
Formal Statutory Complaints as a % of total	76%	68.5%	17.2%	10.1%	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>- 1.7%</b>
Statutory Compliments as a % of total	22%	29.2%	44.7%	45.3%	<b>35.6%</b>	<b>- 9.7%</b>
Statutory Comments as a % of total	2%	2.3%	30.2%	18.7%	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>+ 4.7%</b>
<b>Total number of Corporate Representations</b>	71	81	335	449	<b>364</b>	<b>- 85</b>
Number of Formal Corporate Complaints	4	11	20	28	<b>12</b>	<b>- 20</b>
Number of Informal Corporate Complaints	-	-	35	43	<b>21</b>	<b>+ 8</b>
Number of Corporate Compliments	67	70	280	376	<b>329</b>	<b>- 47</b>
Number of Corporate Suggestions	0	0	0	2	<b>2</b>	<b>same</b>
Formal Corporate Complaints as a % of total	5.6%	13.6%	6.0%	6.2%	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>- 2.9%</b>
Corporate Compliments as a % of total	94.4%	86.4%	83.6%	83.7%	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>+ 6.7%</b>
Corporate Suggestions as a % of total	0	0	0	0.5%	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>+ 0.1%</b>
<b>Statutory complaints – Who complained?</b>						
% of male complainants	43%	45.9%	47.4%	30.0%	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>+ 5.3%</b>
% of female complainants	57%	54.0%	52.6%	70.0%	<b>52.9%</b>	<b>- 17.1%</b>
% of White British complainants	93.2%	96.7%	98.3%	97.5%	<b>100%</b>	<b>+ 2.5%</b>
Other ethnic origin/unrecorded	1.1%	3.3%	1.7%	2.5%	<b>0</b>	<b>- 2.5%</b>
<b>Main Causes of CYPS Complaints:</b>						
Conduct or Attitude of Staff	26.1% *	31.3% *	28.6%	17.1%	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>- 2.4%</b>
Poor Service	30.6% *	42.2% *	31.2%	42.9%	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>- 13.5%</b>
Decision regarding services		3.2%*	16.9%	21.4%	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>- 3.7%</b>
<b>Meeting Statutory timescales</b>						
Acknowledgement within 2 working days	-	86.4%	98.3%	95.0%	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>+ 5.0%</b>
Response to complaint at Stage 1 within 20 working days	63.8%	57.4%	56.2%	60.0%	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>- 35.0%</b>

\* Statutory complaints only

If you need this information summarised in another language or format such as Braille, large print, CD or talking tape, please call the number below.

إذا اردت معرفت ملخص هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية اتصل علي الرقم التالي

Arabic

আকারে এই তথ্যটি পেতে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন:

Bengali

假如您需要這份資料的中文摘要，請致電下面的號碼。

Chinese

यदि आप यह जानकारी का संक्षेप हिन्दी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निचे दिए हुए नम्बर में सम्पर्क करें ।

Hindi

Jezeli potrzebujesz streszczenia tych informacji w jezyku polskim zadzwon prosze na ponizszy numer

Polish

ਜਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਦਾ ਨਿਚੋੜ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਥੱਲੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ।

Punjabi

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات اردو میں درکار ہیں تو اس نمبر پر کال کیجیے۔

Urdu



(0191) 383 3981

**Any comments or queries about this report can be made to:-**

Gill Ward  
Representations and Quality Officer  
Planning, Quality and Research Team  
Early Intervention and Partnership Service  
Children and Young People's Services  
County Hall  
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Telephone: (0191) 383 3981  
E-mail: [cypscomplaints@durham.gov.uk](mailto:cypscomplaints@durham.gov.uk)