

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Self-Regulation Select Commission
2.	Date:	8 March 2012
3.	Title:	Children and Young People’s Comment, Compliments and Complaint – April to September 2011
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

This report outlines performance for complaints in Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS) for the period April to September 2011, along with comparison to 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

Between 1 April 2011 and 30 September 2011, 38 people made 217 complaint points which were dealt with at Stage 1, 2 people made 27 complaint points which were dealt with at Stage 2. No complaints were escalated to Stage 3.

6. Recommendations

The select commission receives and notes the contents of the report

7. Proposals and Details

This report provides details about the comments and complaints received between April to September 2011. The report highlights details of the performance in complaints and identifies areas where improvements are being made and where further improvement is required.

It also details other types of enquiries and feedback handled by the Complaints Team, including; enquiries from the Local Government Ombudsman and MPs; compliments and complaints about schools.

7.1 Complaints Received – Stage 1

- Between 1 April 2011 and 30 September 2011 we received 217 complaints from 38 people which were dealt with at Stage 1 of the Complaints process (See Table A).

This compares to 150 complaints received from 61 people in the same period last year; which suggests that the year on year increase in the number of complaints received, seen over the last 3 years, will continue in 2011/12.

- 108 (49.8%) of the complaints received between 1 April 2011 and 30 September related to the quality of service received; and a further 80 (36.8%) related to the actions of staff (Table B). This compares to similar figures for the previous year.
- More inconclusive than council-wide
- 72 (33.2%) of the complaints received between 1 April 2011 and 30 September were about Central Locality Social Work Teams and 55 (25.3%) were about South Locality Social Work Teams (Table C). This accounts for 137 (63.1%) of all complaints received.

7.2 Complaints Closed – Stage 1

- Between 1 April and 30 September 2011 we investigated, responded to and closed 214 complaints from 39 people (Table D).
- In Quarter 1, 65.9% (58 out of 88) of complaints were closed within timescales. This figure for Quarter 2 was 93.7% (118 out of 126) of complaints closed within timescales.
- Overall between April and September 2011, 82.3% (176) of complaints were closed within timescales. In comparison to performance in the previous year (2010/2011), 61% of complaints at Stage 1 were closed within timescales.

- The average number of days taken to investigate and respond to complaints in this period was 16.5 days. This compares to an average of 21.25 days for the previous 12 months.
- The above data represents a significant improvement in performance resulting from the introduction of a performance management approach in complaints handling.
- Almost half (49.5%) of all complaints were not upheld between April and September 2011 (Table E). 38.0% of complaints were partially or fully upheld and 12.6% were inconclusive.

7.3 Complaints and Comments from Looked After Children

- During the period 1 April to 30 September 2011, we received 4 complaints and 4 comments from Looked After Children.
- All of the complaints came from Looked After Children residing in Children's Homes.
- 3 out of the 4 complaints were about the quality of service and 1 complaint was about the actions of staff.
- Following investigation, 2 of the complaints were partially upheld, 1 was not upheld, and 1 was found to be inconclusive.
- 2 out of the 4 comments were from Looked After Children residing in Children's Homes and 2 were living in other placements.
- Comments from Looked After Children often include service requests or low level complaints which can be dealt with by their social worker or by the manager of the Children's Home.

7.4 Complaints Received - Stage 2

- Between 1 April and 30 September 2011, 27 complaints from 2 people were escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints process.
- These complaints relate to the South Locality Social Work Teams (22 complaints) and the Fostering Team (5 complaints).
- 16 of these complaints were about the quality of service received and 11 were about the actions of staff.

- These complaints have been investigated and are in the process of being adjudicated on. It is expected that all of these complaints will be closed in November 2011.

7.5 Comments and informal complaints

- Comments and informal complaints are recorded where the service is able to resolve the issue or problem which is raised and deliver a satisfactory outcome to the complainant, without having to utilise the formal complaints process.
- Between 1 April and 30 September 2011 we recorded 36 comments which were dealt with outside of the formal complaints procedure. This has decreased from 51 in the same period last year. It is likely that this relates to the complexity of complaints

7.6 Complaints about schools

- In addition to the comments recorded above, between 1 April and 30 September 2011 we were contacted by 44 people wanting to make a complaint about a school and provided guidance on school responsibilities in dealing with complaints.
- School complaints generally relate to bullying, incidents which have occurred within the school, and the level of support provided by the school to children with additional needs.

7.7 Compliments

- Between 1 April and 30 September 2011 we recorded 16 compliments from customers.
- These compliments relating to the following service or staff within the service:
 - Fostering Team x 5
 - Children's Disability Team x 2
 - Wentworth North Team 1 x 2
 - Access Team x 1
 - Education Psychology Service x 1
 - Looked After Childrens' Team x 1
 - Parent Partnership x 1
 - Resource and Access x 1
 - Rother Valley South Team x 1
 - Wentworth Valley Team 1 x 1
 - Safeguarding x 1

- 12 out of the 16 compliments were about the actions of staff, 3 about the quality of service and 1 compliment was about the quality of information provided.
- In the previous year we recorded only 37 compliments in total which suggests that there has not been recent improvement in this area and we still continue to record fewer compliments than other areas of the Council.

7.8 Local Government Ombudsman and Enquiries from Members of Parliament

- Between April and September 2011 we received 5 first enquiries from the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 3 of the enquiries received related to the School Admissions Service, 1 related to the Children's Disability Team and 1 to Central Locality Social Work Teams.
- 4 of these enquiries have now been closed with decisions having been made by the Ombudsman on 3 of the enquiries; 1 no maladministration, 1 settled locally, 1 premature complaint.
- In the same period we received 6 enquiries from Members of Parliament.

7.9 Learning from Complaints and Satisfaction Complaints Handling

- Service Improvement Officer have adopted a role within the complaints process which includes communication with the complainant following the completion of a complaint investigation to establish satisfaction with how the complaint was handled.
- A lessons learned template has been in use for over a year and enables more consistent approach to capture lessons learned and outcome information of all Stage 1 complaints.

7.10 Future Development

- In response and as a result of progress made in improving performance the following developments are planned to improve performance further, improve the quality of investigation and achieve better outcomes:
 - Further the development of the lessons learned template to ensure that we are making service improvements as a result of complaints and are increasing the satisfaction of customers.

- Revise the complaints training package and deliver to managers across CYPS with initial emphasis on staff in Children's Homes and Social Work Managers.
- Develop guidance for staff who may be involved in the complaints process and complaints interviews to ensure that they are aware of the process and understand their role; considering how this might be incorporated into the induction process for new staff.
- Work with young children and children with disabilities to improve access to complaints service
- Improve awareness and recording of complaints across all CYPS services.

8. **Finance**

- The salary of the Complaints Manager and Complaints Administration Officer, including on costs.
- There are also the additional costs of manager time which is spent investigating Stage 1 Complaints and the involvement of other staff in the investigation process.
- There are also costs of appointing Investigating and Independent Officers to investigate 6 Stage 2 Complaints was £22,541 in 2010/11.

9. **Risks and Uncertainties**

- It should also be noted however that the number of complaints continues to increase year-on-year.

10. **Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

- The decrease in performance over recent years has led to a strengthened performance management approach in 2011/12 in dealing with complaints.
- The Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting has taken on a proactive role within the complaints process, overseeing complaints relating to social care and ensuring that they are dealt with, within the permitted timescales.
- As a result, performance in relation to complaints has improved significantly in 2011/12.

11. **Background Papers and Consultation**

- Table A: Overview of the total number of complaints received at Stage1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 between April and September 2011.
- Table B: Total number of complaints received by category between April and September 2011.
- Table C: Total number of complaints received by team/service between April and September 2011.
- Table D: Overview of the total number of complaints closed at Stage1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 between April and September 2011.
- Table E: Overview of the total number of complaints closed at Stage1 between April and September 2011 by outcome.

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Table A: Overview of the total number of complaints received at Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 between April and September 2011.

		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Total
Stage 1	People	18	20	38
	Complaints	117	100	217
Stage 2	People	-	2	2
	Complaints	-	27	27
Stage 3	People	-	-	-
	Complaints	-	-	-
Total	People	18	22	40
	Complaints	117	127	244

Table B: Total number of complaints received by category between April and September 2011.

	Actions of staff	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Quality of service
Stage 1	80	1	8	10	108
Stage 2	11	-	-	-	16
Stage 3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	91	1	8	10	124

Table C: Total number of complaints received by team/service between April and September 2011.

	Number of complaints at Stage 1	% of complaints at Stage 1
Central Locality	72	33.2%
South Locality	55	25.3%
Safeguarding	26	12.0%
Looked After Children Team	22	10.1%
North Locality	15	6.9%
Fostering	11	5.1%
Children's Disability Team	6	2.8%
Youth Offending Service	4	1.8%
Out of Hours Team	3	1.4%
Children's Homes	2	0.9%
Total	217	100.0%

Table D: Overview of the total number of complaints closed at Stage1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 between April and September 2011.

		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Total
Stage 1	People	20	19	39
	Complaints	88	126	214
Stage 2	People	-	-	-
	Complaints	-	-	-
Stage 3	People	-	-	-
	Complaints	-	-	-
Total	People	20	19	39
	Complaints	88	126	214

Table E: Overview of the total number of complaints closed at Stage1 between April and September 2011 by outcome.

	Number of complaints	% of complaints
Upheld	39	17.8%
Partially upheld	41	19.2%
Not upheld	106	49.5%
Inconclusive	29	12.6%
Withdrawn	2	0.9%
Total	217	100.0%