



Complaints Annual Report

Children's Social Care Services

2021 / 22



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1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Social Care Services for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, it details the complaints and compliments that have been formally recorded during this period. This introduction and up to chapter 4 are unchanged from last year's report, there has been no changes to the legislation, policy or procedure when dealing with complaints.

The Children's Act 1989 require all local authorities with Children's Social Care responsibilities in England and Wales to have a complaints procedure. The aim of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure is for Children and Young People to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible by the people who provide the service locally. 'Getting the Best from Complaints' provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the Children's Act and defines a complaint as being:

A complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.

Statutory complaints relate to the provision of Children's Social Care and are handled in line with the national regulations referred to above, the key stages of which are set out in section 2 of this report: stage 1 - local resolution; stage 2 – investigation; stage 3 - review panel and section 4 - referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Complaints about Children's Social Care Services that do not fall under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure may be responded to under the local Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure which is set out in section 3 of this report. Some complaints may be addressed in accordance to internal HR procedures.

It is a requirement of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure for the local authority to have a designated officer who is responsible for the management of the procedure and who is independent of social care operational line management and of direct service providers. In order to contribute effectively to service development, the Complaints Management function is managed by the Principal Policy Officer based within the Policy, Provision and Performance Division in the Education, Inclusion & Provision Department.

There are other customer contacts which allow early resolution to prevent complaint escalation and this can include advice and guidance, signposting and problem solving direct with the customer. Another and very positive aspect is the recording and reporting of compliments and positive feedback received by the People (Children Services) Directorate.

This Annual Report is produced in line with national guidance and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public.

2. The Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Process

The aim of complaint procedures is to resolve any dissatisfaction promptly, effectively and transparently and to inform service improvements to prevent service users experiencing the same issues in the future. We cannot promise to deliver the outcomes that complainants want, but we do make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

STAGE 1 – the complaint will be allocated to the appropriate team manager who is asked to investigate the complaint. We always aim to resolve the problem as quickly as possible (within 10 working days) however, sometimes the complaint is complex so may take up to 20 working days.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response or investigation at Stage 1 and feels that the complaint is not resolved, they or their representative can request to go to Stage 2.



STAGE 2 - An external Independent Person is commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 working days in which to produce their reports. Once the reports have been finalised they are sent to the Adjudication Officer (usually the Head of Service) who will, after careful consideration of the reports, provide the complainant with a written response to their complaint.

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied with the decision/outcome following the independent investigation at Stage 2, they can ask to have their complaint reviewed by the Complaints Review Panel.



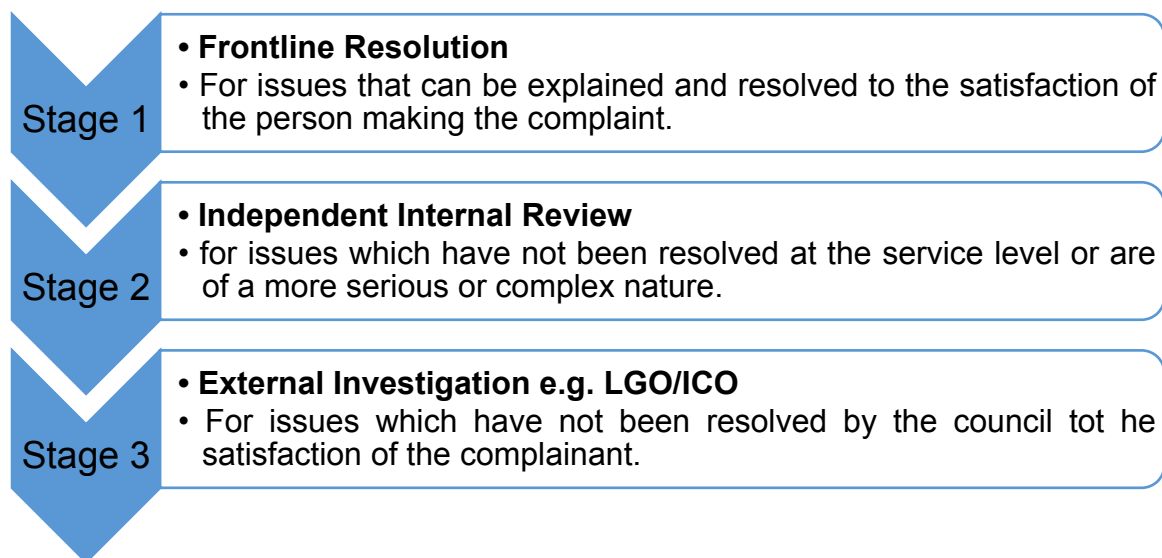
STAGE 3 -. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.



STAGE 4 – If a complaint cannot be resolved locally, it can be investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). A complainant has the right to self-refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any stage during the complaint process. However, the LGSCO normally allows the Local Authority the opportunity to process a complaint through every stage of the complaints procedure, before investigating it themselves.

3. The Corporate Complaints Process

The Corporate Complaints Procedure consists of a two stage internal process.



The Council try to respond to all Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt.

Where a Stage 2 review is undertaken the Independent Investigating Officer will aim to respond within 28 working days of receipt of the request.

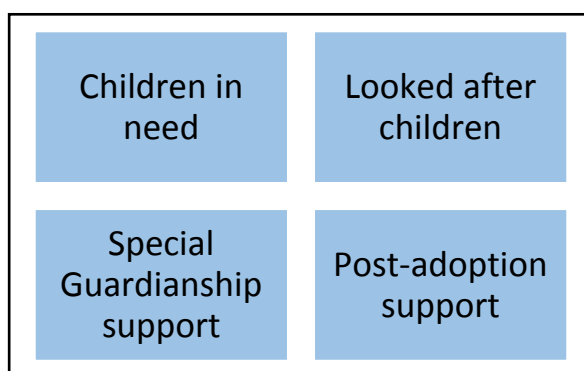
The following types of complaints cannot progress beyond Stage 1 of the Procedure.

- Complaints about a Council policy or decision rather than the way that the policy or decision has been carried out.
- Complaints against the conduct of individual employees. Should such matters need to be progressed, after a Stage 1 response has been provided to the complainant, this will be done through the Council's internal management procedures.
- A decision where regulatory powers are being exercised (such as licencing and planning) unless the complaint relates to the way the matter has been administrated.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal, a legal remedy, or where legal proceedings are ongoing.
- Matters that are of a general nature and do not relate to the provision, or lack of provision, of a service at an individual level.

4. Which Complaint Procedure should be used?

The statutory guidance, Getting the best from complaints, sets out which of a council's children's social care functions that can be considered under the procedure. The guidance should always be read alongside the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the associated regulations referred to in the guidance itself.

The procedure covers complaints about councils' actions under Part 3 and some of Parts 4 and 5 of the Children Act 1989, as well as some adoption and special guardianship services. Generally, assessments and services in the following areas should be considered under the Statutory Procedure:



Complaints about the following tend to be exempt:

- Early Help
- Child protection including S47 enquiries and conferences
- Assessments of potential foster carers and adopters
- Foster carer registration
- Section 7 and Section 37 court reports

While these may be excluded from the Statutory Procedure, this does not prevent councils investigating them, it is expected that councils assess each complaint on its own merits and apply other procedures, such as the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

As a Council we do receive complaints where there is an overlap between those areas which are inside and outside the scope of the procedure, for example a case may have been at Section 47 Child Protection Conference and stepped down to Child in Need or, a Section 47 investigation concluded finding no concerns of a safeguarding nature and was instead referred to Early Help services for support.

The guidance allows councils to use their discretion to consider all parts of a complaint in a single investigation and response. Complainants should not be disadvantaged by any overlap between complaint procedures. Councils should consider which procedure is likely to produce the best result for the complainant and the child or young person.

5. COVID – 19

In January 2021 the government announced the third national lockdown. Under step one of the Prime Minister's roadmap for leaving lockdown, children returned to school with schools reopening on the 8th March 2021. From that point on and throughout 2021 - 22 lockdown eased and over a period of time restrictions were lifted. On the 24th February 2022 all COVID-19 rules were removed in England as part of the country's plan to "live with the virus".

COVID-19 was a crisis that has changed our world. Since its emergence and the first lockdown in March 2020, COVID-19 has continued to affect everything. The COVID-19 pandemic placed us under unprecedented pressure and created the most severe economic, social and health crisis in living memory. The impact of COVID-19 has not ended with a vaccine, it is still there but hopefully at a level that will not cause significant disruption in our daily lives.

Throughout COVID-19, for Children's Social Complaints in Halton it was business as usual in terms of accepting and acknowledging the complaint. The Principal Manager's capacity to investigate and respond to complaints within timescales remained an issue but this was more to do with issues within the Children Social Care workforce and the Ofsted Focus Visit.

6. Children's Social Care Service

A focused visit to Halton children's services took place on 13th and 14th October 2021 (2 days of fieldwork contained within one week) with the findings released on the 17th November 2021. The Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need, including those who are subject to a child protection plan.

Ofsted's finding from this focused visit was that there had been a deterioration in the quality of social work practice for children in need of help and protection. Following this outcome the Local Authority was required to have an Improvement Plan that addressed the issues outlined in the focused visit and this has generated a great deal of work across the Children's Social Care workforce and, for those services that sit outside of that division that support them. Whilst Ofsted have identified improvements, the number of complaints and their nature have not changed, parents and carers will perhaps measure our performance on a different set of expectations, which are often personal to them.

There have also been significant challenges with staff recruitment and the retention of Social Workers in the department with a heavy reliance on agency staff. Management also had to step in to make up capacity to ensure children were safe.

In the previous year the Principal Policy Officer assisted managers greatly due to the impact of COVID-19 and their capacity to investigate and respond, this has continued through 2021-22 because of the above.

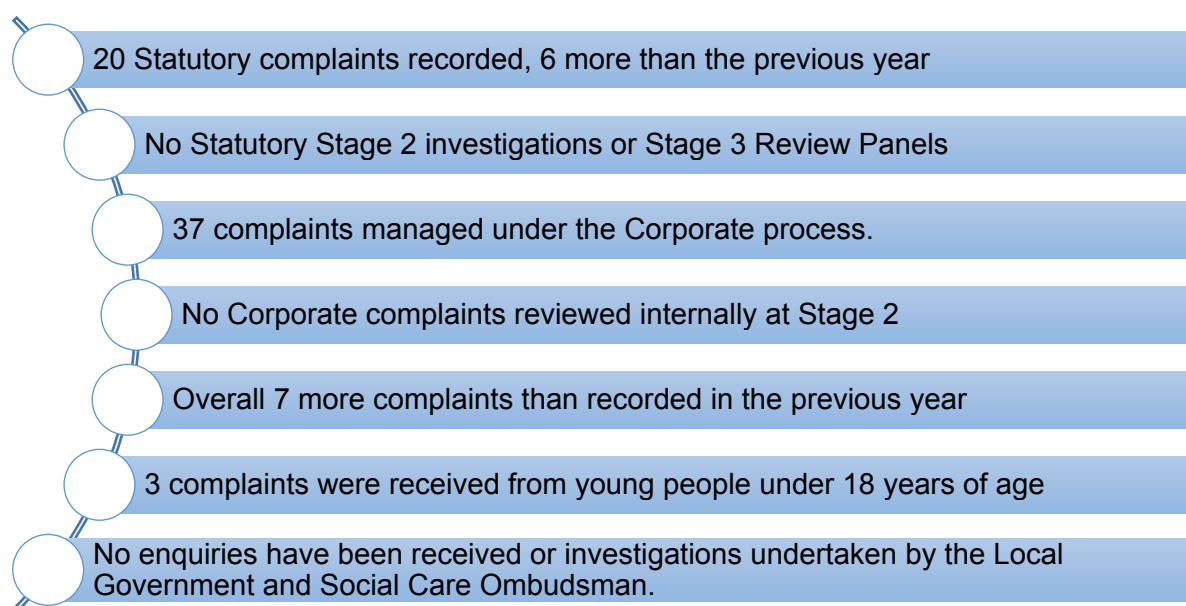
7. Key Messages up to here

One of our challenges is to make sure that we respond to and manage rising customer expectations and demands, but also recognise the opportunities this presents.

It is vital to continuous service improvement to know when things have gone right and when people are happy with the services they receive. However, on those occasions when things go wrong, complaints are equally valuable. They provide a chance to identify errors and to make sure the same mistake is not repeated in the future, we listen to feedback in order to continuously improve our services.

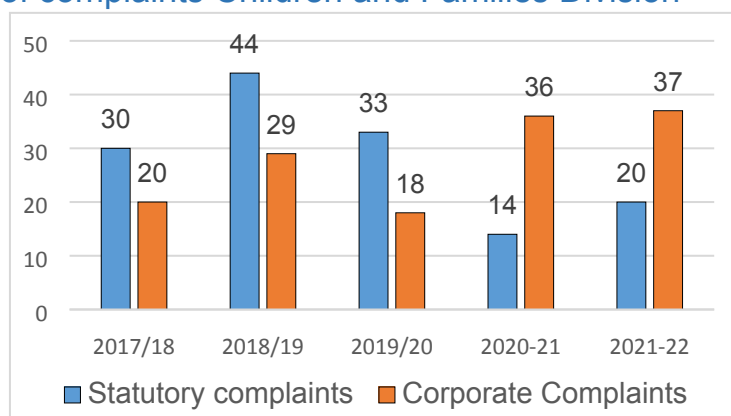
Feedback is around us all the time, every time we speak to someone we communicate feedback, it's impossible not to give feedback. For most of us in our day to day work there is that opportunity to pick up on those small signs of frustration, receive that feedback and address it there and then but sometimes regardless of best efforts or intentions they will escalate to a complaint.

Children's Social Care involvement is an emotive and worrying time for families and so managing their expectations can be a challenge.



8. Customer feedback data

8.1 Number of complaints Children and Families Division



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020-21	2021-22
Total Complaints	50	73	51	50	57

Overall the numbers of complaints received remain comparable to previous years.

The volume of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of a council's performance. High volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. Low complaint volumes can be an indicator that all is well but can also be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback. The important information however is the outcome, not necessarily the number received.

It is also not always a negative thing to have complaints increase, it can evidence that clients know how to complain, that they have confidence in the process and are willing to engage in order to achieve a fair explanation of the facts

Last year was the first year that that the number of complaints investigated under the corporate process exceeded those under the statutory process, this has coincidentally been the two years of COVID-19.

Whilst technically lockdowns ceased, the social distancing and the health and safety requirements continued. This in turn continued to affect the delivery of some services to families i.e. for part of the year some visits/meetings were undertaken by video conference and direct work took place outdoors.

The Children's Services Directorate is continuing to see an increased demand across all of its services when funding for some elements of the service are being reduced. The Council is facing these budget pressures at a time when children and young people, parents/carers, education providers are continuing to deal with the resultant and ongoing effects of COVID-19, and the challenges that brings. With this in mind we need to be aware of the likelihood in the increased number of complaints in the future.

8.2 The teams the complaints are made about

	Statutory	Corporate
CIN & CP	10	28
CICCL	8	1
DAAT		2
EDT		2
iCART		1
INGLEFIELD	1	
SAFEGUARDING		2
TRANSITION	1	
COMPLAINTS		1
	20	37

The greatest number of complaints continues to be in the Children in Need and Child Protection (CIN & CP) Division. The frontline service deals with a large number of cases with very difficult issues to address. Numbers are comparative to the previous year, just 3 less.

For the Children in Care and Care Leavers service (CICCL) the number of complaints received increased from 3 last year to 9 in this year.

8.3 Who is contacting us and how

Parents continue to be the highest majority when it comes to making complaints, 39 out of 57.

Halton Borough Council commissions the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to support Children in Care and Care Leavers. All young people in contact with the team are offered access to an advocate so that their voices can be heard, this is often at the point of service delivery where the matter can be resolved rather than progressing to a complaint. In this financial Year NYAS supported 9 complaints;

- 3 were from young people under 18 years of age
- 6 were in relation to supporting Care Leavers.

Of note is the fact that 3 of the 6 care leavers that NYAS supported were doing so in relation to their own children being open to the Child in Need service.

2 Complaints were in relation to young people with disabilities.

Halton continues to have a low ethnic minority. No complaints were received from someone in an ethnic minority.

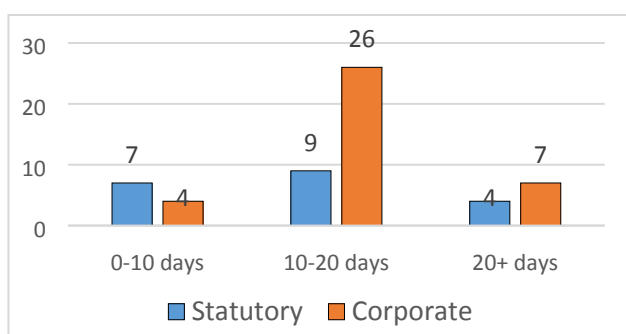
E-mailing complaints continues to be the preferred method to make a complaint, this is probably due to the ease of access on mobile devices and the desire for them to have their own written record. Due to COVID-19 these last two years, it has restricted movement in terms of post and access to Halton Direct Link offices and so this is also reflected in the increased emails.

	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
Email	19	43%	19	58%	43	86%	48	84%
Telephone	14	32%	8	24%	5	10%	7	12%
Complaint Form	5	11%	4	12%	2	4%	0	
Letter	6	14%	2	6%			1	2%
Meeting							1	2%

8.4 How quickly do we respond to complaints

In regards to statutory complaint timescales, there was a decline in responding within 10 working days and there has also been an increase in those taking longer than 20 working days. This may be reflective of the issues within the Children Social Care Service but also, some complaints are complex and involve multiple issues to respond to and therefore require comprehensive responses which can take significant time to compose. Social Workers have the right to respond to complaints made in respect of the work they undertake on the councils behalf and so other commitments such as their attendance at court hearings can impact on their availability.

Statutory	% within 10 days	% within 20 days	% over 20 days
2021-22	35%	45%	20%
2020-21	50%	35%	15%
2019-20	30%	67%	33%
2018-19	23%	66%	34%
2017-18	73%	91%	9%



Overall the number of Statutory and Corporate complaints responded to within 20 working days was 81%. A 1% increase from last year

Despite the challenges faced this year, the majority of complaints have been responded to in a timely manner. Responses that took longer were either complex, lengthy or due to staff capacity/availability.

8.5 Stage 2 investigations

No stage 2 external independent investigations took place under the statutory complaints procedure.

The Corporate Complaints team did review one complaint at Stage 2 and concluded that each of the matters raised had been fully and properly considered and that a detailed explanation had been provided. Where there are conflicting accounts of what occurred the Council is unable to objectively determine which account is correct.

8.6 Stage 3 Review Panels

No Stage 3 Review Panels took place under the statutory complaints procedure.

8.7 Complaint outcomes and themes

We record complaints under 3 main categories, 'service provision' is about how we have done things, and it's about how we have delivered it and the quality. 'Assessment and review' is about the process, have we done what we should have done in accordance to policy, procedure or regulations as well as challenges to the content of the assessment and the outcome of it.

The Complaints Procedures are not designed to deal with allegations of misconduct by staff and this is the third category however, they will be interwoven into the complaint. Complaints about staff conduct are often linked to the decisions they have made or the service they have provided and so for recording purposes we look at the context of the complaint. Complaints received about staff conduct do not necessarily mean that they are making poor decisions, rather, it can be an indicator that complainants do not agree with the rationale or policy on which the decision is based. Complainants will disagree with the social workers analysis of the information and the judgement made, this then leads to complaints about their conduct and these can be difficult to manage. Complaints of this nature would be responded to under Stage 1 of the Corporate Procedures only. Should any further action be required this would be dealt with in accordance to the organisations disciplinary procedures.

In the majority of cases, complaints have multiple issues that need responding to and that will cross over all three categories and so the Principal Policy Officer taking into consideration the main crux of the complaint, the desired outcome, and the complaint findings will determine the category. Of the statutory complaints received in 2021-22;

- 25% were categorised as Assessment / Review Process
- 56% as Service Provision
- 14% in respect of staff

In comparison to last year there has been a shift in the number categorised as Assessment and Review Process from 50% to 25% the difference therefore has shown as an increase in service provision and in respect of staff.

Once a complaint has been concluded it will be recorded as being

- Upheld - this means that the service made mistakes or provided a poor service that amounted to maladministration or service failure.
- Not upheld – the service acted correctly
- Partly upheld - where there are complaints with multiple issues there may be a mix of complaints that were up held and not upheld and so overall for recording purposes they will be recorded as partly upheld but, it can also be recorded as this if it is a single element where it was not wholly the fault of the service.

Statutory and Corporate	Upheld	Not upheld	Partly upheld	Total
Assessment / Review Process	0	14	3	17
Service Provision	4	21	7	32
Staff	0	7	1	8
Total	4	42	11	57

Previous Year Comparison

2020-2021 comparison	5	33	12	50
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There were 12 (21%) complaints were linked to Court cases in the Court arena, The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) can decide not to investigate because another body, such as Court as it is better placed to consider it, there is no such limit placed on Councils. The guidance allows councils to decide not to investigate a complaint if it would prejudice a concurrent investigation, including those in court proceedings. We do not refuse to accept a complaint because it is in the Court arena. Providing a response may aid clarification for families who are going through an already worrying time, following this they will be advised to challenge the content, views and analysis of the Social Worker in the Court arena. These matters are recorded under corporate complaints and at Stage 1 as there is no recourse to Stage 2 due to the legal proceedings.

The world of Children's Social Care complaints is unique, families often do not want Social Workers involved however, the statutory duty to safeguard requires them to be involved and so before any work commences, conflict can be there at the onset.

The theme of delay and communication is perhaps not surprising given the issues as identified in point 6 of this report i.e. challenges with staff recruitment and retention, reliance on agency staff.

The following table, provides a summary of those complaints upheld or partly upheld.

Issue complained about		Remedy, comment
Confusion around contact	Upheld	Apologies, contact rearranged
Delay in receiving copies of minutes	Upheld	Apologies, minutes were given
How they felt they were spoken to	Partly upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff
Refused financial assistance	Upheld	Apologies, financial assistance given
Social Worker did not cancel arranged appointment, unnecessary delay	Upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff member
Social Worker did not respond to messages left	Upheld	Apologies, advice given to staff member
Core Group meeting cancelled, drift and delay due to number of Social Workers within short period (4 left, 1 promoted).	Upheld	Apologies, permanent worker allocated to progress. Developing Workforce Strategy
Social work visit after case closed. Reason not communicated.	Upheld	Apologies and explanation i.e. outstanding action identified at case audit.
Speed of dealing with the issue.	Partly upheld	Apologies and explanation. Issue investigated by Independent Fostering Agency hence delay. Issue resolved.
Drift and delay in assessment, meetings and progress	Upheld	Apologies, staff absence/ shortage, case reallocated. Developing Workforce Strategy.
Not provided with report 3 days prior to meeting as per procedure. Not provided with copy of minutes from a meeting	Upheld	Apologies, meeting arranged for a later date. Copy given, system issue.
Not receiving documents in a timely manner	Upheld	Apologies, staff shortage service prioritising.
Did not respond to message left	Upheld	Apologies, oversight

The following table provides some themes of complaints made that were not upheld.

Not providing immediate response to text, calls or emails
Placement move
Staying put arrangement
Biased / discriminated in the other parties favour
Disagree with content of the report/assessments/information held in records
Attitude, tone, content of Social Workers response, feel intimidated
Contact with family
Children Social Care involvement, not necessary
Alleged Data Protection breach but was a safeguarding issue
Student Bursary for Care Leaver, was given but weren't aware progressed to university

Communication - the nature of Children's Social Care means that often workers carry out difficult conversations with families at a very emotive time and this can lead to complaints about communication when in is a difference in perception or recollection.

Statutory Duty - complaints are received disputing the need for Children Social Care to be involved in carrying out assessments, these are rarely upheld due to the statutory duty placed on the Local Authority to investigate children safeguarding concerns, the service recognises this to be a stressful and worrying time for families.

Factual accuracy – where there is a disagreement over the content of an assessment or report, it is important that we establish the detail as there is a difference between factual accuracy and the opinion or analysis made by the worker involved. We do also have to consider the arena for reports to be presented, reports requested by courts should be challenged in the court arena.

8.8 The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO)

During this financial year no enquiries have been received from the LGSCO in relation to Children Social Care.

Local Government &
Social Care
OMBUDSMAN

The Local Government Ombudsman published a focus report about the statutory complaints procedure in 2015. The common issues identified then remain the same today, failing to recognise a children's statutory complaint, choosing the wrong procedure, unnecessary delays in the procedure, refusing to complete all stages of the procedure. In March 2021 The LGO published a guide to share learning from their investigations about how councils should apply the regulations and statutory guidance and to address the most common questions they get asked in the hope that this guide would result in greater consistency for those who complain about the service they receive from councils.

8.9 Actions taken and learnings

Complaints are used by the Council as an opportunity to learn and improve, we try to ensure that the same issues do not reoccur. Everyone is capable of making a mistake no matter how well trained and motivated they are however, in the workplace the consequences of human error, an 'action or decision which was not intended' can impact on others, staff do not set out to get it wrong. No complaints were as a result of a deliberate deviation from a rule or procedure.

Whilst not as a direct result of a complaint received, complaints are a contributing factor to the development of the Social Work Practice Standards, this clarifies expectations from Social Workers when working with families i.e. visits and meeting timeliness, assessments, communicating these and case recording.

Child Protection Conference meetings being cancelled and rearranged are now challenged by the Head of Safeguarding. This has improved the timeliness of documentation/reports and resulted in fewer cancelled meetings.

The Children and Young People Service, Workforce Strategy was completed and work continues to progress to evolve the workforce. Its aim is to develop employees to be a confident, competent and skilled.

There are always complaints from customers in relation to not being able to get in touch with their allocated social worker immediately or directly and it is difficult to know how to prevent these long term. Of the complaints received about this, only 1 was upheld for failing to respond.

In last year's Complaints report we stated that as a result of an LGO report an assessment pack was developed and is given to families at the beginning of their involvement, it explains the processes and types of questions asked during the assessment, and ensures that families are consistently given the same information at the onset. It also captures some other themes raised in complaints such as the availability of staff when ringing and leaving messages so that they can understand why they may not get an immediate response as well as a section on 'frequently asked questions'. Within the pack it also contains information on how to make a complaint. This information is being received by families, there have been complainants who have referenced finding the contact/complaint information from this.

Learning from complaints is discussed by investigating managers with individual staff members and where appropriate their teams to inform practice, they are also shared with the relevant heads of service.

Local Government Ombudsman publish findings from cases they have investigated elsewhere in the country; they provide an opportunity to reflect on the consequences of processes not being applied, learn from them and develop our own practice. A selection of these reports are shared with the Senior Management Team to cascade to appropriate staff.

8.10 Complaints Training and Procedures

No training sessions took place in this financial year in part due to COVID-19 and the Ofsted Focus inspection both of which put the service under significant pressures. Training did occur for some new staff as part of their induction with emails being sent to staff to confirm the process.

The Principal Policy Officer will continue to work proactively alongside the workforce making enquiries and challenging findings in order to help catch issues quickly and resolve dissatisfaction locally to prevent unnecessary escalation. This in turn will enable the workforce to further develop their own complaint handling skills.

9. Compliments

A separate report is compiled that records all the positive comments received and so this is a snapshot.

Year	Total
19-20	67
20-21	92
21-22	73

A slight reduction in the amount of compliments and positive feedback recorded this year.

It is important to remember that all the Divisions, Team around the Family, Children in Need, Children in Care and the Safeguarding Unit work together to support families. As an example, a child on a Child Protection Plan could be open to the Child in Need Division and the Safeguarding Unit.

	19-20	20-21	21-22
CIN	25%	44%	26%
CIC	42%	14%	19%
TAF	33%	42%	53%
SG			2%

Email - *I met the Social Workers during the most difficult period of my life and during a time when my faith and trust in Social care had been completely shattered. I was incredibly wary of working with both social workers. However, in my opinion they both went above and beyond in their dedication to my family's case and worked with immeasurable integrity that I am extremely grateful for. Their actions provided me with a degree of closure and with hope for the future. I believe they are a credit to Halton social care and I just wanted to officially commend them for their actions. Kind regards. (Client)*

Card - *Thank you for helping me, you are the best social Worker in the world. (Client under 18ys)*

Card - *For a much loved and truly inspirational lady, a huge thank you, thank you for making a difference and being so supportive. (Client)*

Email - *Even though there is still a little way to go for him, I just wanted to thank you. You have been a help to us as a family and I don't think it would have been easy without you. You are the only person who has gained his trust outside of the family.* (Client)

Text - *We passed the fostering panel! Thank you for all your support and having faith in us.* (Client)

Email - *I just wanted to say I'm very grateful for all your help and support with myself, my children and partner too. You have been one of the most genuine social workers we have ever worked with. You have listened to us, gave us advice and brought in any outside support we have needed. You have always been at the end of the phone if we needed you and have made my children feel supported and listened too when they have felt concerned. Thank you for putting the time and effort into helping my family it means so much to me that I had you believing in me as a mum.* (Client)

Email - *Today we have been granted the SGO therefore we are handing in our 28 days' notice to fostering. Thank you for all our support and training, without your guidance and advice this could not have occurred. Thank you C for your friendship and belief in our abilities.* (Client)

Email - *A supervision order has been granted so we are no longer acting as friends and family foster carers. We are now acting as grandparents which is what we have always wanted. I would like to pass on my thanks to you for your help, kindness and support. It has always been given in a very warm and unobtrusive way and has been a godsend to us. I would also like to thank L and would like it known that she has done an amazing job and has always seen the positive and has given us so much help and support in getting us all to the happy place that we have strived to reach. I really can't express my gratitude enough and wish you the very best of wishes for the future. Thank you.* (Client)

Email - *I just wanted to email to thank you for your input into the meeting that was held with regards to my daughter's application to College, I found your input really helped. You may not remember but you had dealings many moons ago, it was yourself who explained how direct payment would work and you helped me put it all into place, where it has remained and has given me and family much needed respite. Thank you for your support it really was appreciated.* (Client)

This compliment is a good illustration of the long memories people have and just how much of an impact we have on the lives of people and children/adults we work with even when their lives are very demanding, we can do something quite small to make a difference.