



Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

29 July 2014

Title	Children's Services Annual Complaints Report 2013/14
Report of	Family Services Director Education & Skills Director
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	Appendix A: Annual Report for Family Services Delivery Unit complaints 2013-14 Appendix B: Annual Report for Education & Skills Delivery Unit complaints 2013-14
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Summary

This report and its appendices provide an overview of the complaints received in the Children's Service. The appendices include statistical data, commentary about the type of complaints, progress made and areas for development in each of the delivery units.

Recommendations

That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee note and comment on as appropriate the contents of the following report and appendices, and approve the content

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 To report on complaints made about the Children's Service, and the response of each Delivery Unit. This report also gives Committee members an update on improvements made during 2013/14 and the next steps proposed during 2014/15 to enable the continual improvement of services in line with customer feedback and to reduce the likelihood of complaints arising.
- 1.2 Having significantly improved the timeliness of our responses to complaints in 2013/14, we now need to focus on learning from the feedback received from our residents to inform service improvement.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the reports be noted, especially in terms of complaints from children and young people and Children Act complaints. This is to ensure that there is sufficient senior oversight and scrutiny of the way complaints are managed and learnt from.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

n/a

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

The proposed development activities during 2014/15 will be implemented.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

Responding appropriately to and learning from complaints made in relation to children's services contributes to the Corporate Plan priority 'To create better life chances for children and young people across the borough' as well as our commitment to excellent Customer Care by listening to, and learning from feedback we can improve the service that we deliver to our residents.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

None

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

This lays out a clear legal process for complaints made in relation to any decision made under the Children Act i.e. any child or family receiving social care, and referred to as 'Statutory Complaints' in the attached appendices.

5.3.2 All other complaints are dealt with in accordance with Barnet's Corporate Complaints procedure – referred to as 'Service Complaints' in the attached appendices.

5.4 **Risk Management**

Failure to investigate and deal with our residents' complaints in a transparent and timely manner risks legal challenge and loss of confidence by our residents. It also reduces opportunities to learn from complaints to improve services and to put plans in place to pro-actively reduce the likelihood of future complaints.

5.5 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.5.1 The main objectives of the complaints procedure are to

- recognise the rights of all service users to make complaints and representations and to have their views considered within a clear procedure as defined by law;
- ensure that council staff and all partner organisations work together so that every child facing problems and challenges, who wishes to make a complaint or representation, is well supported in reaching a satisfactory resolution
- analysis of previous years complaints data showed that there were proportionately very few complaints from our children and young people. As a result we have concentrated in the last year on ensuring that we have a process in place that this age group find engaging and accessible.

5.6 **Consultation and Engagement**

As part of our commitment to listen to children and young people, Appendix A (Annual Report for Family Services Complaints 2013-14) details how we have engaged with our children and young people to make the complaints process more accessible. This includes consultation with Children in Care via the Role Model Army, attendance at Barnet Youth Board and Speak Out day.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None