

	<h2>Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</h2> <h3>18 November 2015</h3>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Family Services Annual Complaints Report 2014/15</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Family Services Director</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A: Annual report For Family Services complaints, and compliments 2014/15</p>
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Summary

This report provides an overview of the complaints and compliments received in Family Services in the period 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015. It reflects the progress that the service has made in how complaints can be used to learn and improve service delivery. The appendix includes statistical data, commentary about the types of complaints and any trends, progress made since the last report and areas for further development.

Recommendations

That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding committee note and comment on the contents of the following report and appendix, and approve the content.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report is needed to report on complaints made about Family Services and its response. This report also gives Committee members an update on improvements made during 2014/15 and the next steps proposed during 2015/16 to enable the continual improvement of services in line with customer feedback and to reduce the likelihood of complaints arising.

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

- 4.1 Following the decision, the service will continue to use complaints to inform service improvement and further engages with young people.

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.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 states that the council, working with local, regional and national partners, will strive to ensure that Barnet is a place:

- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
- where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- where responsibility is shared, fairly
- where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer

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

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Complaints and compliments play a key part in driving service improvement and contribute to delivering services effectively to get value for money for residents.

5.3 **Social Value**

Family Services is currently undertaking an in-depth analysis of the impact of services that are delivered and this includes the views and perspectives of the people who use those services. Insight and information gained through complaints will contribute to this and will, in the long term, support Family Services to deliver more Social Value through improved services.

5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Children Act 1989 Representations 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.

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

5.3.2 As outlined in Annex A of the Constitution's Responsibility for Functions, the Committee is responsible for those powers, duties and functions of the Council in relation to Children's Services

5.5 **Risk Management**

5.5.1 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.

5.6 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic (as defined in the Act) and those without;
- promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race / ethnicity; religion or belief; gender / sex; sexual orientation; marital status (including civil partnership).

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

Our procedures ensure compliance with the council's equality policies and Strategic Equalities Objective.

5.6.2 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 or family facing problems and challenges, who wishes to make a complaint or representation, is well supported in reaching a satisfactory resolution
- make the complaints process more accessible to people who may not have easy access to information online. A new leaflet has been developed to support this.

5.7 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.7.1 The Complaints Officer consulted with young people on the development of the new complaints leaflet, and business card and will continue to consult with young people to further develop the service.

5.8 **Insight**

5.8.1 'Closing the Loop Group' comprises representatives from across the services who meet regularly to share good practice and learn from our complaints. The group looks at data and trends to improve outcomes and stop complaints escalating.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Family Services Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report
2014-15