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<p align="right"><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Family Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2020/21</b></p>
<p align="right"><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee</p>
<p align="right"><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="right"><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="right"><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="right"><b>Key</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="right"><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>Appendix - Annual Report 2020-21</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 2020 – 31 March 2021. It reflects the progress that the service has made in how complaints can be used to learn and improve service delivery.

## Officers Recommendations

1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note and agree the report.

## **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 2020/21 and the next steps proposed during 2021/22 to enable the continual improvement of services in line with customer feedback and to reduce the likelihood of complaints arising.
- 1.2 During this reporting period, Family Services formally received 134 compliments and 63 stage 1 complaints of which 22 were about Social Care provision.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the reports be noted, especially in terms of complaints processed under The Children Act 1989. 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**

- 3.1 Not applicable.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Following the decision, the service will continue to use complaints to inform service improvement and further engage with young people to ensure they have access to the complaints process.

## **5. Corporate Parenting**

- 5.1 The corporate parenting principles are seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, which are outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 5.2 The Complaints Team process complaints under the Children Act 1989 and Council's Complaints Procedure. The Team recognise their role as corporate parents, and take into account the corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions as follows:

- providing a clear and easy to access complaints procedure
- ensuring children and young people are made aware of their rights under the Children's Act through service promotional materials
- providing a range of means by which children and young people can express their views, wishes and feelings at every stage of the complaints process, such as by telephone, email or in writing
- sharing quarterly complaints reports with Team Manager and Heads of services to help children's views be taken into account and services delivered which meet their needs
- Providing challenge and following up complaint responses to ensure young people receive responses with timescales as much as possible

5.3 Through these processes, the Complaints Team promote the corporate parenting principles and provide services and support to children and young people through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **6.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

Responding appropriately to and learning from complaints made in relation to Family Services contributes to the Corporate Plan (2021 – 2025) priorities of 'Clean, Safe and Well Run' and 'Family Friendly Barnet', ensuring that we deliver excellent Customer Care and that families, children and young people are considered in everything that we do.

### **6.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, there is a cost associated with Stage 2 complaint investigations, which is managed within Children Services overall resources. Complaints and compliments play a key part in driving service improvement and contribute to delivering services effectively to get value for money for residents. Investing time in getting the response to complaints right at stage 1 of the process mitigates this as it prevents complaints escalating.

The service is sometimes advised by LGSCO to award financial compensation, which amounted to £2,300 in the last financial year

### **6.3 Social Value**

Insight and information gained through complaints will contribute to the development of Family Services and the journey of service improvement. This will provide social value to the families that we support.

### **6.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

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.

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

6.4.2 As outlined in Article 7 of the Council's Constitution's Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, the Committee's responsibilities includes:

- all matters relating to children, schools, and education
- to receive reports on relevant performance information on Delivery Units providing services under the remit of the Committee

## 6.5 Risk Management

6.5.1 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, as well as presenting a reputational risk. 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.

## 6.6 Equalities and Diversity

6.6.1 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 unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

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

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.

## **6.7 Consultation and Engagement**

The Complaints, SARs and FOI Manager consults with managers from teams across Family Services, the wider council and has links with Complaints Managers from other London Boroughs.

## **6.8 Insight**

The Complaints Team analyse data on a quarterly basis and produce a report which is distributed to senior managers across Family Services. Team Managers and Senior Managers are made aware of all complaints and compliments received for their service. The Complaints Team also attend the Business Management Meetings on a quarterly basis.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Family Services Complaints, Compliments and Comments 2019/2021