

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
6 NOVEMBER 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg, Executive Director of Childrens Services	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Jackie Allen, Cabinet Member for Childrens Services and Education	
Contact Officer:	Belinda Evans, Complaint Manager	Tel. 01733 296331

ANNUAL CHILDRENS SERVICES COMPLAINT REPORT 2022-23

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: John Gregg, Executive Director of Childrens Services	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the report and make recommendations for further scrutiny if deemed appropriate. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been requested as a recurring annual item for scrutiny.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 It is a regulatory requirement under the Children Act 1989 complaints procedures for children and young people for the council to prepare an annual report of Children's Statutory complaints and present it to the relevant committee for scrutiny.

2.2 This report is for Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

1. Children's Services including

a) Social Care of Children;

b) Safeguarding;

c) Children's Health and;

d) Targeted Youth Support (including youth offending).

2.3 The Children in Care Pledge includes a promise to give children in care information on how to make a complaint or to give a compliment. This report provides evidence that children in care are being given the required information as complaints are being received from children in care and are being satisfactorily resolved.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
---	-----------	----------------------------------	--

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Detail of Report contained in Appendix A – Annual Childrens Services Complaint Report 2022-23.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 Consider how the recommendation links to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report links to the following corporate priorities

Our Places & Communities

-Health and Wellbeing

Prevention, Independence & Resilience

-Children

Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 That the report will highlight areas for service review.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is a requirement under the Statutory complaints process for an annual report to be produced each year to enable the relevant Scrutiny Committee to consider the report and make recommendations for further scrutiny if deemed appropriate.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 Statutory Complaint investigations require the commissioning of Independent Investigators and there is an annual budget maintained for this purpose by the Finance Manager. There is a contract in place for this provision which is closely monitored by the Complaint Manager and the Finance manager. If complaints are not prioritised and properly considered at the first stage, they will escalate, and the budget could be exceeded. This is one amongst many reasons why Children's Social care managers must focus on early resolution of complaints to minimise the need for the commissioning of independent investigations.

Legal Implications

10.2 The processes used by the Complaints Team and Childrens Social care managers when investigating complaints need to fully comply with the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and the statutory guidance (link below) which has been issued by the DfE under the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 Processes used by the complaints service ensures that the service is accessible to all persons. The team make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all complainants can submit complaints via a method that they can access. Children and young people are also able to access Advocacy services to help them through the complaints process.
- 10.4 Childrens Social Care Statutory complaints process is aimed at ensuring that children in care and leaving care young people are supported to make complaints and that concerns they raise are comprehensively investigated. This report illustrates how the council performs against these requirements.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 Statutory Complaint process guidance - Children Social Care: getting the best from complaints:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-getting-the-best-from-complaints>

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Annual Childrens Complaints Report 2022-23.

This page is intentionally left blank