

For general release

REPORT TO:	Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Sub-Committee 12 March 2019
SUBJECT:	Q3 Statutory Children's Complaints Report
LEAD OFFICER:	Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care/Clare Davies, Complaints Manager
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care & Clare Davies, Complaints Manager

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ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item is contained in the Sub-Committee's work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To review the volume of Children's Statutory Complaints Received in October-December 2018

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a high level overview of the performance of the Statutory Children's Service, taking into account volumes, number within corporate service level agreements (SLA), number of complaints upheld and the themes and learnings from these. The way in which complaints are used to drive service improvements plays a key role in Croydon Council's drive to be an excellent authority which delivers both a positive resident experience and shows that we are a learning authority.

2. Annual Statutory Complaints Report

CHILD STATUTORY COMPLAINTS UPDATE - 2017/18

1. INTRODUCTION

This update provides a summary of the volumes of Statutory Complaints received in Q3 2018/19.

2. CHILD - STATUTORY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The complaints procedure for children's social care comprises of three stages. Stage 1 is managed by the service or services being complained about. Stage 2 is an independent investigation. Finally, Stage 3 is a Review Panel Hearing. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they can refer their complaint to the

Local Government Ombudsman.

2.2 Stage 1 is managed by the service or services being complained about. Stage 2 is a review by an independent investigator via the Complaint Resolutions Team on behalf of the Chief Executive.

Stage 3 is an independent Review Panel Hearing,

If the complainant remains dissatisfied they can refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

3. CHILD - STATUTORY COMPLAINTS

1. Introduction:

1.1 This update provides a summary of the volumes of Statutory Complaints received across the statutory children's service in **Quarter 3 October-December 2018**.

1.2 New operating model:

Please note: there have been significant structural changes across the organisation. These have now been updated on the complaints system. However, for some areas this may impact the reporting meaning that direct correlation at department level may be difficult due to changes at this level.

1.3 New Reporting Style:

The style of the quarterly complaints reports is changing. We understand that the reports need to be clear and concise and show the department what they want to see in a snapshot. Therefore the reports will become more visual, shorter and clearer with the use of Power Bi. This change will take effect at the next report (end of year).

2. Statutory Children's Complaint Comparisons: Quarter 3: 2016 -2019

Statutory Children's complaints 2018-19	Q2 17/18			Q3 17/18			Q1 18/19			Q2 18/19			18/19Q3		
	Total	Upheld	In Sla	Total	Upheld	In Sla									
Complaint - Stage one	26	6	16	28	6	22	18	1	9	40	4	11	51	7	23
Complaint - Stage two	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	5	5	0	5	4	0	0
Complaint - Stage three	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Complaint - Ombudsman	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2.1 Stage 1 Statutory Children's Complaints

- Complaints rose by **28%** in comparison to last quarter. (11 complaints).
- The rate upheld was **14%**, which is an increase compared to last quarter (increase of 3 complaints), where only 10% of complaints were upheld.
- The service has responded on time to **45%** of complaints. This is an improvement compared to just 27% last quarter, however work still needs to be done on this aspect, particularly when comparing this to other areas of the local authority, where we are responding within SLA to 90% of complaints.

2.2 Stage 2 Statutory Children's Complaints

Stage 2 complaints decreased by 1 compared to Q2. These are all still under investigation.

2.3 Stage 3 Statutory Children's Complaints

0 complaints escalated to stage 3 at quarter 3 this year.

2.4 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Statutory Children's Complaints

0 complaints have been escalated by the LGSCO this year for quarter 3.

3. Complaints by Service Team

Team	Volume	No in SLA	No Upheld
LAC	15	8	4 (50%)
Child Protection & Proceedings	12	3	1 (8%)
Assessments	9	6	0 (0%)
CIN	8	2	0 (0%)
Adolescent Support Teams	1	1	0
Adoption	1	1	1 (100%)
Early Help	1	1	1 (100%)
Disability	1	1	0
Single Point of Contact	3	0	0

4. Top Complaint Trends

- No communication/lack of support from social worker
- Unable to contact social worker
- Contents of assessments/unable to grant a request
- Social worker rude
- Delays (assessments/funding)

5. Learnings

- SW need to respond to all emails/contact within SLA and keep clients updated
- Ensure we respond and clearly explain to requests why they cannot be granted.
- SW to ensure they are professional at all times
- Ensure assessments or funding are actioned on time without delay
- Ensure social workers are contactable

Children's Complaint Trend commentary- Shaun Hanks-actions and improvements:

- SW to ensure they are professional at all times
- Ensure assessments or funding are actioned on time without delay
- Ensure social workers are contactable

The findings of this quarterly report were presented and discussed at the Quality Assurance Learning Loop meeting on 27th February 2019.

Actions arising from this report are:

- Poor communication:
 - Staff will be reminded of the SLA in terms of responding and the importance of keeping service users updated on progress.
 - The lack of business support to answer phones for staff who are out on visits / away has a significant impact on this area. The improvement team are working with Business Support to resolve this before the next financial year.

- Assessment timeliness is now monitored through Performance Clinics and during January 2019 achieved 79% on time (target 85%). The current performance does represent an improvement, but clearly needs to remain a focus.

- Sharing of reports with families before reviews and meetings, to confirm facts and explain omissions, is an area that we need to improve. Actions we will undertake:
 - For Child Protection conferences and Looked After Reviews the timeliness of sharing reports before meetings will be a focus of the performance clinics during March 2019, identifying poor performance (<90%) and setting clear targets for teams to improve.

- Closer engagement with the Complaints Team with the introduction of Department Complaints Officer (DCO) Training sessions to improve the quality of stage 1 responses and ensure that a 'customer service' culture is developed.
 - With the complaints team we will apply learning from services that are achieving 90% SLA.

6. Forward Plan

Preventing complaints and learning from what we are seeing every quarter is key in improving our service across the Council. This is why these reports continue to focus on the key themes for your service. We would like you to help focus on an action plan for your service, to help implement improvements to the service and what you are offering, based on these common trends. This is crucial to reducing complaints in the long term and the volume we are upholding. These actions will be taken forward by the Executive Director at DLT and will be re-visited at the next one. Let's all work together to ensure we are learning from the complaints from our residents, and provide a better service all round.

**Benchmarking data to be provided annually, and will be available on the end of year report.*

Contact Officer: Clare Davies, Complaints Manager

Background Documents: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 Children's Complaints Themes & Learnings