

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Report

<b>Panel:</b>	Children and Families Advisory Panel
<b>Date:</b>	11 October 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Annual Compliments, Complaints and Representations Report 2022/23
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The Children's Act 1989 requires all local authorities with social services responsibilities to have a formal complaints procedure for Children's Social Care (CSC) complaints. [Getting the Best from Complaints](#) (statutory guidance issued by the DfE, 2006) provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the complaint process for social care complaints made in relation to Children's Services.

This Annual Report is produced in line with national guidance and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public. For completeness, although not required by the statutory guidance, this report also includes corporate complaints pertaining to Children's Services.

The relevant guidance has been provided in Appendix 1.

This report looks to follow the national guidance but to support with the flow of the report, headings have been shortened and combined where relevant. The core data supporting this report can be found in Appendix 3, with this report providing context and analysis.

The report covers Hampshire County Council's (HCC) Children's Services Directorate's formal feedback and representations for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The Report details the compliments and complaints formally recorded by the Children's Services Directorate's Complaints Team (CSCT). In addition to annual reporting, internal reporting takes place on a quarterly basis, with more regular monitoring reports for services issued on request. This regular monitoring of formal feedback enables ongoing improvement.

Key terms and their definitions to support in the reading of this report can be found under Appendix 2.

## **Recommendation**

- 1.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the Annual Compliments, Complaints and Representations Report for 2022/23.

## **Recommendations for the Children's Services Directorate Management Team**

### **2. Recommendation 1: Comms strategy within Children & Families**

- 2.1. In response to the lessons identified in the previous section, a communication strategy should be designed and implemented. This strategy should include workstreams on:
  - i. The management of expectations with regard to general communication by Social Workers.
  - ii. Communication with those who do not have Parental Responsibility (PR).
  - iii. Communication with non-resident parents.
  - iv. The way in which the change of a social worker is communicated.
- 2.2. This should be produced as a joint document by Children's and Families colleagues and the CSCT ready for use by 1 April 2024. Once in place, any lessons learnt will be considered for replication and/or expansion across other services within the Children's Services Directorate.
3. **Recommendation 2:** All of the Children's Services Directorate to take a strengths-based approach to resolution.
  - 3.1. Following the success of those services who have adopted a strength-based approach and opted to call or meet complainants at the early stages of their complaint, it is this report's recommendation that all of the directorate adopt this approach as soon as possible.
  - 3.2. This is best done by re-introducing stage one of the corporate complaints process.
  - 3.3. This report recommends that CSDMT approve such an approach to be rolled out across all of the Directorate by 1 September 2023. Ownership of this action, should it be approved would be with the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager.
4. **Recommendation 3:** Chasing of actions agreed.
  - 4.1. The CSCT should embed the practice of recording all actions from complaints made and monitoring actions to ensure they are completed as agreed.
  - 4.2. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 1 September 2023
  - 4.3. Remedial action for complaints upheld.
  - 4.4. Services within the Directorate should be reminded of their ability to take remedial action in order to resolve complaints and prevent escalation.

4.5. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 1 September 2023.

5. **Recommendation 4:** Share and utilise URCCB and CBP.

5.1. The Unreasonable Contact and Customer Behaviour (URCCB) and Complainant Behaviour Policy (CBP) should be re-distributed to all staff within the Directorate and advice given on how and when to implement the policies.

5.2. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 1 September 2023.

5.3. Reducing work categorised as 'ad-hoc'.

5.4. Analysis of the category 'ad-hoc' should be completed and work undertaken to reduce this influx of work.

5.5. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

6. **Recommendation 5:** To further increase use of the e-form

6.1. Efforts should be made to increase the total of those using the e-form, to ensure mandatory information is captured at the first point of contact.

6.2. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

7. **Recommendation 6:** Increased timescale compliance

7.1. Efforts should be made to increase timescale compliance, with analysis of specific pain points and how they can be alleviated to improve response times.

7.2. With regards to corporate complaints, CSCT should return to advising complainants they will receive a response within 20 working days but requesting a response from the service in 10. CSCT will then chase from day 11 onwards.

7.3. To be actioned by the Customer Relations and Complaints Manager by 31 March 2024.

## Executive Summary

8. The Annual Compliments, Complaints and Representations Report is a public document, providing a mechanism by which Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Directorate (the Directorate) can be kept informed about the operation and effectiveness of its complaint's procedure and support learning from complaints. This document covers the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

8.1. The key findings with the report can be summarised as:

- A total of 1,640 representations were received by the Children's Services Complaints Team (CSCT) in the 2022/23 reporting period. This represents an increase of 1% from 2021/22.
- 24.4% (400) of representations were considered in accordance with the CSC statutory guidance, compared to 27.6% in 2021/22. Of this total, 60% were managed as complaints.
- 257 representations were initially logged as a pre-complaint and 16.3% of those progressed to formal complaints within either the CSC or corporate complaints processes.
- 24 compliments were recorded in this period, an increase of nine.
- The latter part of the reporting period saw the introduction of 'call back requests' and there are 65 recorded instances of this process being applied.
- With regards to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, 39 (55%) of the referrals related to 'Education / Non-Social Care' cases. A further 23 (32%) related to 'Social Care' cases.
- Parents continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services (86%). In 2021/22, parents made up 87% of all complaints.
- The highest category for the reason (nature) why CSC complaints are made has changed and is now 'Quality of Service,' totaling 125 (40%). This is an increase from six (1%) recorded in the previous period.
- The second and third reasons (natures) for CSC complaints are 'Conduct of Worker' and 'Poor Communication' with 55 (18%) and 35 (11%) respectively.
- 'Conduct of Worker' has seen a reduction from 119 (28%) in 2021/22 to 55 (18%) in 2022/23. 'Poor communication' has also seen a positive decline from 83 (19%) to 35 (11%).

- Corporate complaints also saw the predominant reason (nature) of complaint change. In the period 2021/22, the primary reason (nature) was 'Poor Communication' with 153 (33%), however in 2022/23 the number one reason was 'EHCP Process' with 124 (21%).
- The joint second top reasons were firstly 'EHCP Delay' with 64 (11%). This saw a decrease from 108 (23%) in the previous period and is a reflection of the steps taken within the SEN service to improve on this feedback. Also, with 64 (11%) was 'Poor Communication'. This saw a decrease from 153 (33%) from the previous period.
- The fourth largest complaint reason was 'Quality of Service' with 63 (11%). In the previous two reporting periods, this category has recorded zero entries.
- Of all Social Care complaints made, 14.9% were recorded as 'upheld.'
- Of all corporate complaints made, 29.6% were recorded as 'upheld.'
- Across both complaint processes, over 30% of complaints required just an explanation and no apology or remedial action.
- In 2021/22, 36 (11%) corporate complaints exceeded the 20-working day deadline, however a total of 310 (65%) were late in 2022/23. This is an increase of 274 (761.1%).

8.2. This report identifies a number of recommendations for CSCT or the wider Directorate to implement and monitor. They are as follows, with further details provided in section 12:

- Communication strategy update within Children & Families.
- All of the Children's Services Directorate to take a strengths-based approach to resolution of complaints.
- Chasing of actions agreed.
- Remedial action for complaints upheld.
- Share and utilize Unreasonable Contact and Customer Behavior (URCCB) and Complainants Behavior Policy (CBP).
- Reducing work categorized as 'ad-hoc.'
- To further increased use of the e-form.
- Increased timescale compliance.

## 9. Representations made to the local authority

- 9.1. A total of 1,640 representations were received by the Children's Services Complaints Team (CSCT) in this reporting period.
- 9.2. A representation is defined as a piece of correspondence, requiring an action by the CSCT. For example, to log and process a complaint, to signpost individuals to an alternative process or to reject a complaint, to name a few examples. Some representations can create significant amounts of work over several months, whilst others may require one short email, all instances are logged as one representation.
- 9.3. This is an increase of less than 1% (12) from 1,628 in the 2021/22 period. The type of representations has been broken down in Table 1 below.
- 9.4. EHCPs have increased from 12,720 in January 2022 to 14,583 in January 2023, an increase of 14%.
- 9.5. Social care contacts have increased from 153,033 in 2021/22 to 170,200 in 2022/23, an increase of 11%.
- 9.6. Whilst there was an increase of 1% in representations in 2022/23, as an overall proportion of demand, it can be demonstrated that there has been a decrease in complaints.

**Table 1: Type of Representation by Reporting Period**

Type of representation	Reporting Period			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Complaint	240	280	175	166
Pre-complaint (to Statutory Stage 1 Complaint)	50	73	20	13
Case Concern (to Statutory Stage 1 Complaint)	6	3	3	0
Joint complaint	0	0	0	0
Refused	17	37	16	38
Withdrawn	5	1	7	2
Case Concern	84	55	80	119
<b>Total CSC representations</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>338</b>
Complaint	477	355	180	231
Pre-complaint (to Corporate Stage 1 Complaint)	0	0	0	1
Pre-complaint (to Corporate Stage 2 Complaint)	1	73	5	2
Refused	4	4	0	13
Withdrawn	5	6	1	2

Corporate Stage 1	0	0	1	20
<b>Total corporate representations</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>269</b>
Area initiated complaint	2	13	13	23
Pre-complaint	215	213	164	105
Professional to Professional Complaint	4	24	33	28
HSCP	1	1	2	5
LGSCO	62	52	24	17
Local Response	16	10	18	32
Compliment	24	15	12	7
HantsDirect handoff	0	0	0	1
GDPR, FOI or SAR	15	112	67	39
Request for info	0	0	0	1
Ad hoc	349	273	245	168
Call back requests	65	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total other representations</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>426</b>
<b>Total representations</b>	<b>1640</b>	<b>1628</b>	<b>1066</b>	<b>1033</b>

**Pre complaints** are initial queries which do not have all the mandatory information required for processing. In these circumstances the information is requested, and no response received so they remain logged as 'pre-complaints.'

**Case concerns** are pieces of feedback handled more informally and therefore not being logged as a formal complaint, but still requiring a response from the relevant service.

**LGSCO** are the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related queries.

**Ad hoc** is a capture all category for anything outside of the before mentioned categories, such as safeguarding, school matters and queries relating to other Local Authorities.

- 9.7. 24.4% (400) of representations were considered in accordance with the CSC statutory guidance, compared to 27.6% in 2021/22. Of this total, 60% were managed as complaints.
- 9.8. 29.7% (487) were considered in accordance with the corporate complaints process, compared to 26.9% in 2021/22. Of this total, 97.9% were managed as complaints.
- 9.9. 45.9% (753) of the team's work relates to matters recorded as 'other representations'. The most significant element within that being 'ad-hoc' representations, which are a variety of queries such as safeguarding, school matters and topics relating to other Local Authorities. All matters that the CSCT are unable to meaningfully support with.
- 9.10. 'Ad-hoc' representations make up 46.3% (349) of that type of representation and 21.3% of all representations. In 2021/22, 'ad-hoc' equated for 36.9% of those recorded as 'other representations' and 16.8% of all representations.
- 9.11. In the period of this report, 257 representations were initially logged as a pre-complaint and 16.3% of those progressed to formal complaints within either the CSC or corporate complaints processes.

- 9.12. 24 compliments were recorded in this period, an increase of nine.
- 9.13. This is the first reporting period where 'call back requests' have been an option for complainants, introduced as part of the new online complaints form, used by the public to submit complaints (the e-form). This was created by the CSCT and introduced in late 2022.
- 9.14. Call back requests were introduced following feedback from complainants that whilst they were dissatisfied, they did not want to have to formally complain to speak to somebody.
- 9.15. In 2022 a project was undertaken to transfer the online complaints form (e-form) to a more user friendly and flexible platform; Microsoft Forms (MS Forms). The significant benefits of doing so are detailed in section 9.50.
- 9.16. When completing the new e-form and after advising they wish to make a complaint, complainants are asked for their own and their child(ren)'s details. The form then asks if, rather than make a complaint, they would instead prefer a phone call from an appropriate colleague.
- 9.17. If 'yes' is selected the request is processed and no formal complaint is processed. If 'no' is selected the complainant can progress with the form and log their formal complaint.
- 9.18. Of the 168 entries made using the new e-form, 65 (38.7%) complainants opted for a 'call back request' in place of making a formal complaint.
- 9.19. As well as the significant work undertaken to improve the County Council's complaint responses, this subtle adjustment to the e-form, following feedback from complainants, has prevented a significant number of complaints being logged.
- 9.20. Further analysis of this new option of communication is in section 10 of this report.

**10. The number of complaints at each stage and any that were considered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**

**10.1. Referrals**

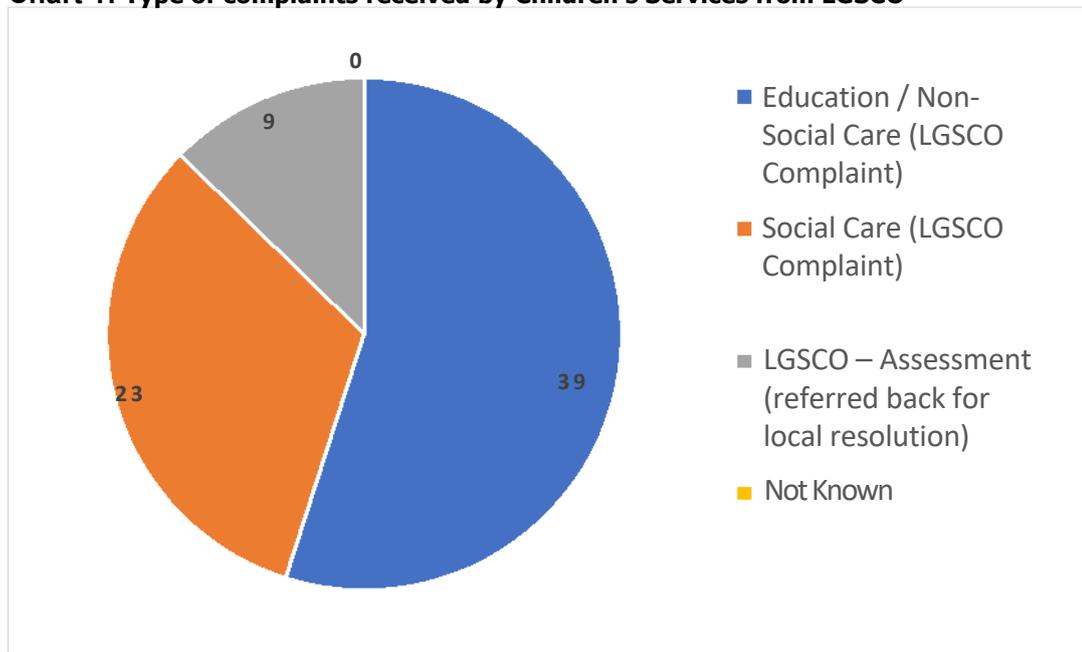
10.2. The number of referrals received via the LGSCO (62) during the reporting period increased by 19% compared to the previous period (52).

10.3. This is reflective of the backlog of complaints that were cleared in 2022/23 and it is important to recognise that the CSCT started the reporting year with a delay in delivery of 77 complaints at Stage Two, all with the potential to escalate to the LGSCO. Further analysis highlights that 70 of these complaints were reported in this period as a direct result of the delay. This will have affected the total number of referrals to the LGSCO and is demonstrated in the rise of nine from 14 Social Care complaints in 2021/22 to 23 in 2022/23.

10.4. As the new reporting period begins with no back log and no complaints carried forward from one year to the next, the adverse impact of the backlog causing an increase in LGSCO complaints is expected to not be a factor in 2023/24.

10.5. Chart 1 illustrates that 39 (55%) referrals related to 'Education / Non-Social Care' cases. A further 23 (32%) related to 'Social Care' cases.

**Chart 1: Type of complaints received by Children's Services from LGSCO**



10.6. When the LGSCO find fault, the Ombudsman makes recommendations to remedy the complaint and/or identify learning for the County Council in terms of practise and processes.

10.7. The LGSCO Assessment Team will sometimes make enquiries in relation to the 'status' of a complaint to establish if it has gone through the County Council's complaint process before deciding whether to investigate. These enquires sometimes result in the LGSCO deciding a complaint is 'premature' and it is returned to the County Council for investigation and response.

10.8. Similarly, after having sight of the County Council's complaint responses, the LGSCO may conclude that they are unlikely to come to a materially different conclusion and therefore choose not to progress their investigations.

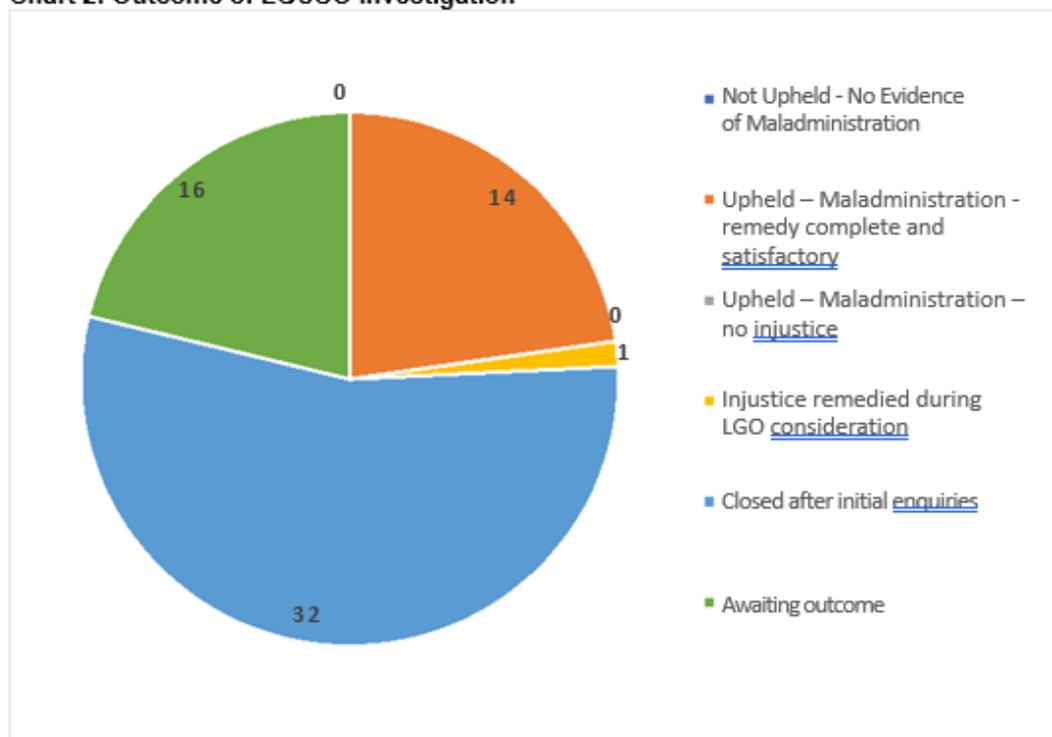
### 10.9. Outcomes

10.10. Within this reporting period, 68% (32) of cases with an outcome were closed after initial enquiries. In the previous reporting period, a similar percentage of 69% (18) were closed in this way. A further 16 cases are awaiting an outcome from the LGSCO and are not included in the percentages above.

10.11. Chart 2 illustrates that on one occasion, a remedy was achieved by the County Council whilst the LGSCO were considering the complaint. The remaining complaints, totalling 14 (30%), were upheld for maladministration, suggesting the LGSCO found fault which caused injustice. All associated remedies of the 15 complaints have, according to the LGSCO, been satisfactorily remedied within the reporting period.

10.12. The totals of charts 1 and 2 will differ as the LGSCO can log more than one type of referral for a single complaint.

Chart 2: Outcome of LGSCO investigation



10.13. Of the 15 complaints not closed after initial enquiries, 12 (80%) related to 'Education /Non-Social Care' complaints and were all marked as 'upheld due to maladministration'. The further three (20%) related to 'Social Care' complaints and were made up of 'upheld due to maladministration' and 'injustice remedied during LGSCO consideration'.

10.14. All LGSCO complaints relating to 'Education / Non-Social Care' complaints were in relation to the SEN service.

10.15. All LGSCO complaints relating to 'Social Care' complaints were in relation to the CAST services, however, the maladministration was always in relation to delays in processing the complaint.

## 11. Which customer groups made the complaints

- 11.1. Parents continue to be the group most likely to make a complaint to Children's Services (86%). In 2021/22, parents made up 87% of all complaints.
- 11.2. The two most popular methods for making a complaint continue to be by 'email' and 'e-form' with 482 (62%) and 287 (37%) respectively. In 2021/22, 'email' and 'e-form' equated to 79% (45% and 34% respectively) of all complaints (excluding young persons as a subset).
- 11.3. The use of the e-form has increased from the previous reporting period from 34% to 37%. It should also be noted that 'call back requests', of which there were 65, are made via the e-form but are not counted in this data. The implementation of call back requests is detailed in section 10.
- 11.4. Complaints made via the e-form are significantly more likely to include all the mandatory information necessary to enable investigation and therefore increases the likelihood of the complaint being processed more effectively. Efforts have been made to encourage use of the e-form and ensure both a smoother process for complainants and a reduced workload for CSCT. Complaints made via letter reduced significantly from 13% (83) in 2021/22 to 2% (15) in 2022/23, with complainants seemingly opting to submit complaints via the e-form or email.
- 11.5. Data pertaining specifically to Young Peoples' complaints (as a subset) is included in table four in Appendix three.
- 11.6. A further breakdown of who made complaints and how they were submitted can be found in table 5 within Appendix 3.

## 12. The types of complaints made

### 12.1. Children's Social Care (CSC) Complaints

12.2. The highest category for the reason (nature) why CSC complaints are made has changed and is now 'Quality of Service', totalling 125 (40%). This is an increase from six (1%) recorded in the previous period.

12.3. The second and third reasons (natures) for CSC complaints are 'Conduct of Worker' and 'Poor Communication' with 55 (18%) and 35 (11%) respectively.

12.4. 'Conduct of Worker' has seen a reduction from 119 (28%) in 2021/22 to 55 (18%) in 2022/23. 'Poor communication' has also seen a positive decline from 83 (19%) to 35 (11%).

12.5. The last reporting period saw 73 complaints (17%) made regarding 'Insufficient support from CSD', however this period saw that reduce by 56, with 17 (5%) being logged in 2022/23. This is a direct result of CSCT's service improvement activity to fully understand complaints and acquire specific information at the point of the complaint being made. Previous reporting periods have seen complaints accepted without all the details being known and therefore logged as 'Insufficient Support from CSD'. By working in this way, complaints are better understood and therefore responses can be more meaningful and bespoke. It also means reporting and therefore the identification of lessons is more specific and meaningful.

### 12.6. Corporate Complaints

12.7. Corporate complaints also saw the number one reason (nature) of complaint change. In the period 2021/22, the predominant reason (nature) was 'Poor Communication' with 153 (33%), however in 2022/23 the number one reason was 'EHCP Process' with 124 (21%).

12.8. The joint second top reasons were firstly 'EHCP Delay' with 64 (11%). This saw a decrease from 108 (23%) in the previous period and is a reflection of the steps taken within the SEN service to improve on this feedback. Also, with 64 (11%) was 'Poor Communication'. This saw a decrease from 153 (33%) from the previous period.

12.9. The fourth largest complaint reason was 'Quality of Service' with 63 (11%). In the previous two reporting periods this category has recorded zero entries.

12.10. The SEN service continues to receive the most corporate complaints with 60% of all complaints received into the team. The total number of complaints about the SEN Service has increased year on year from 257 to 312, however this reflects a decrease in percentage share of corporate complaints from 72% to the previously mentioned 60%. The change of overall percentage share is a direct result of a change in triaging by the CSCT, triaging more complaints via the corporate complaint process. Previously, the vast majority of complaints made regarding the County Council's Children and Families services were processed via the CSC complaints process. Whilst it is appropriate to triage them in this way, the County Council has discretion and is encouraged, as per the statutory guidance, to also utilise the corporate complaint process. By directing certain Children and Families Services complaints appropriately to the corporate complaint process, complainants still receive a local response and can escalate to the LGSCO.

However, significantly less resource is utilised within this process and therefore this is a saving to the County Council. The resource saving comes in the form of not requiring Independent Persons and Stage Three review panels, which are a significant financial cost as well as diverting County Council employees away from their day jobs.

- 12.11. Given the significant amount of resources required to deliver compliantly to the CSC complaints process, any complaints processed in that way will have a material impact on the County Council and steps have been taken to avoid this.
- 12.12. Complaints for CAST recorded as corporate complaints have increased from 13 (4%) in 2021/22 to 49 (9%) in 2022/23.
- 12.13. In 2022/23 there were 266 complaints relating to CAST (217 CSC complaints and 49 corporate complaints). This is an increase of 28 from 2021/22 which saw 238 complaints relating to CAST (225 CSC complaints and 13 corporate complaints).
- 12.14. This is an increase of 11.8% overall, however, because a larger proportion were handled via the corporate complaints process, significant resources and costs were saved as a result.
- 12.15. Another point to note is that, whilst all other teams remain static in their percentage share of corporate complaints, School Transport (previously known as Home to School Transport), saw their percentage share more than double from 7% since the last reporting period to 15% in 2022/23. The service received 28 complaints in the previous period and that increased by 49 to 77 in 2022/23. Whilst a rise in complaints is not something to be celebrated, it is important to note that this increase is largely down to the service improvements being put in place, which includes significantly better recording within the service. It is likely that previous figures, such as 7% in 2021/22, were in fact as a result of under recording of complaints.
- 12.16. In both the CSC and corporate complaint processes, the nature of complaints including 'Quality of Service' significantly increased.
- 12.17. Further analysis of this has found that the top reasons for the quality of the service being reported related indirectly to communication. The top reason for such complaints were:
  - Cases were closed or stepped down without a clear explanation as to why.
  - Social Workers changed without warning; and
  - Concerns were not listened to or responded to, to the complainant's satisfaction.
- 12.18. A further breakdown of the nature of complaints made can be found in Tables 6 and 7 within Appendix 3. The services involved are listed below and year on year comparisons can be found in tables 8 and 9 of Appendix 3.

- Adoption/Permanence
- Care Leavers
- CAST
- Child in Need
- Child Protection
- Children In Care
- Disabled Children's Team
- Early Help Hub
- Family Support Service
- Fostering
- HantsDirect / Out of Hours
- Independent Reviewing Service
- Intensive Support Service
- MASH/CRT
- Not receiving a service
- Occupational Therapy
- Out of Hours
- Reception & Assessment
- Safeguarding Team
- Services for Young People / YSS
- Specialist Residential Provision
- YOT

### **13. The desired outcome of complaints**

- 13.1. When making a complaint, complainants are asked to state what outcome they are seeking. This provides a useful indication to the responding manager about what potentially would resolve the complaint and also provides comparative data in relation to the actual outcome i.e., the outcome of the investigation.
- 13.2. For CSC stage one complaints, the predominant outcome sought remains as 'complaint issues investigated' accounting for 76 (24.6%) in the period, a decrease of 46 from 2021/22 (122). The next two highest identified categories are 'Not specified/Implied' with 69 (22.3%) and 'apology and explanation' with 41 (13.3%).
- 13.3. For corporate complaints, the same outcome was sought the most; 'complaint issues investigated', with 106 (20.3%) instances. This is an increase of 116.3% from 2021/22 where there were 49 instances recorded.
- 13.4. 'Better communication' was the second most sought outcome with 73 (14%), a 3% increase from the previous period. 50 (9.6%) instances of 'offer of a school place' made it the third most sought after outcome, with an increase of 13 (2%) on the previous reporting period. All complaints relating to 'offer of a school place' relate to the SEN team.
- 13.5. Of the outcomes related to EHCPs, of which there were 69 (12%), they are broken down into several categories such as 'amended', 'draft issued' and 'finalised'. In all instances but one, the outcomes sought in relation to EHCPs have reduced. The exception is 'EHCP amended' which has increased from 18 (5.6%) in 2021/22 to 27 (4.7%) in 2022/23.

### **13.6. The actual outcome of complaints**

- 13.7. Having identified from the complainant the outcome they are seeking, the actual outcome achieved is recorded from the response letter.
- 13.8. 89% of the actual outcomes achieved during the reporting period for CSC stage one complaints were either 'Apology & Explanation' (49%) or 'Explanation' (40%).
- 13.9. The actual outcomes for corporate Stage Two complaints in 2022/23 were the same two categories as for CSC stage one complaints: 'Apology & Explanation' (63.3%) and 'Explanation' (24%).
- 13.10. Across both complaint processes, over 30% of complaints required just an explanation and no apology or remedial action. This, when considered against the themes of complaint such as quality of service and communication, seem to be directly related. Where services are able to explain process, or actions taken to resolve complaints, it is clear preventative opportunities exist to be more forthcoming with whatever information was initially unknown to the complainant.
- 13.11. Table 2 below shows the status of CSC complaints that completed stage one summarising what decision was concluded.

Investigation Outcome	Number	Percentage
No action required	4	1.3%
Not Upheld	110	35.6%
Partially Upheld	142	46%
Upheld	46	14.9%
Unable to reach a decision	3	1%
Withdrawn	4	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100%</b>

13.12. Whilst the total number of CSC representations received is recorded as 400, it is only those processed as complaints that receive an outcome. That total was 240 and some of those complaints will have multiple elements, with varying outcomes, hence a total of 309 being recorded in Table 2.

13.13. 93% of all complaints upheld had some form of remedial action completed, however there is an expectation this number should be 100%. In all instances where remedial action was not completed, the outcome was recorded as 'explanation'. It is expected that as a minimum, an apology is always appropriate when upholding a complaint. An action is listed in section 12 of this report.

13.14. A summary of the nature of complaints for CSC and the associated outcomes is listed in table 3.

**Table 3: CSC Complaints received.**

Nature of complaint	Investigation outcome	Percentage
Quality of service	Not upheld	36.8%
	Partially upheld	47.2%
	Upheld	11.2%
Conduct of worker	Not upheld	31.2%
	Partially upheld	50.0%
	Upheld	18.3%
Poor communication	Not upheld	20.6%
	Partially upheld	58.8%
	Upheld	11.8%

13.15. Table 4 below shows the status of corporate complaints that completed Stage Two, summarising what decision was concluded.

**Table 4: Corporate Complaints received.**

Investigation Outcome	Number	Percentage
No Finding	17	3.3%
Not Upheld	105	20.2%
Partially Upheld	230	44.2%
Upheld	154	29.6%
Withdrawn	3	>1%
Other	11	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100%</b>

13.16. Whilst the total number of corporate complaint representations received is recorded as 487, it is only those processed as complaints that receive an outcome. That total was 477 and some of those complaints will have multiple elements, with varying outcomes, hence a total of 520 being recorded in Table 4.

13.17. 87% of all complaints upheld had some form of remedial action completed, however there is an expectation this number should be 100%. As is the case for CSC complaints, in all instances where remedial action was not completed for a corporate complaint, the outcome was recorded as 'explanation' and again it is expected that as a minimum an apology is always appropriate when upholding a complaint.

13.18. A summary of the nature of complaints for corporate complaints and the associated outcomes is listed in table 5.

**Table 5: Corporate Complaints received.**

Nature of complaint	Investigation outcome	Percentage
EHCP process	Not upheld	23.5%
	Partially upheld	55.9%
	Upheld	18.4%
EHCP delay	Not upheld	6.6%
	Partially upheld	53.3%
	Upheld	40%
Poor communication	Not upheld	6.9%
	Partially upheld	41.4%
	Upheld	46.6%
Quality of service provided	Not upheld	31.7%
	Partially upheld	38.1%
	Upheld	27.0%

13.19. A further breakdown of the actual outcome of complaints made can be found in Table 11 within Appendix 3.

#### 14. Details about advocacy services provided under these arrangements

14.1. The Getting the Best from Complaints statutory guidance advises the following regarding advocacy;

*“If a child or young person wishes to make a complaint, local authorities are required to provide him with information about advocacy services and offer help to obtain an advocate...”*

14.2. In all cases where a child or young person made a complaint except one, the CSCT were satisfied that a suitable advocate was already in place at the time of the complaint. In all these instances, CSCT were approached by the advocate with the young person having contacted them. Therefore, CSCT took no further action with regard to advocacy services for these complaints, other than to monitor progress closely and ensure an advocate remained in place.

14.3. In one instance, a young person made a complaint directly to CSCT without an advocate in place. Details about advocacy services were shared with the young person and the Social Worker was also made aware, so they could advise if they had concerns about the lack of an advocate. On this occasion, the young person did not wish to request the support of an advocate and progressed their complaint independently, as is their right to do so.

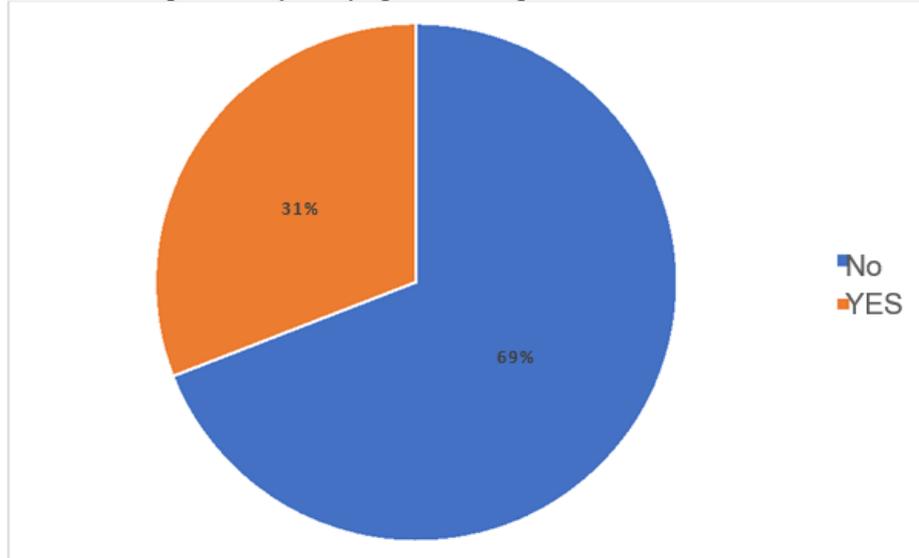
## **15. Compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale as agreed**

- 15.1. During 2022/23, the average time taken to investigate and respond to new CSC Stage One complaints was 12.1 working days. This is an increase of 2.5 working days on average compared to the previous reporting period.
- 15.2. The average working days taken to respond to CSC stage one complaints remains well within the permissible 20 working days. Further analysis has concluded that the new change of handling complaints with an initial meeting/phone call and then a written response is the cause for an increase. The logistical reality of finding an agreeable time to speak with complainants means there can be a delay, when compared to previous years when only written responses were provided. However, the success of this way of working significantly outweighs the slight increase of 2.5 working days to respond, particularly as it's well within the permissible time limit.
- 15.3. The feedback from services who have adopted this approach is that whilst the total number of working days has increased, the actual time spent handling the complaint has reduced.
- 15.4. The CSCT used to process complaints within three working days but have improved their processes to see that reduce to one working day in the vast majority of cases. This has helped to also ensure most complaints are within timescales and that complainants receive acknowledgement swiftly.
- 15.5. CSC complaints for this reporting period have seen very little change around timescales. 47% of CSC complaints were responded to within 10 working days at stage one (49% in 2021/22); 45% between 10-20 working days (46% in 2021/22) and 8% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit (5% in 2021/22). A 3% increase in the number of complaints responded to beyond 20 working days is disappointing, however this is in fact a change of four complaints from 16 in 2021/22 to 20 complaints in 2022/23. Whilst the percentage share has increased, the raw data demonstrates a change of limited impact year on year.
- 15.6. Further analysis has identified that the reason for going beyond the 20 working days was considered in the best interest of the complainant. Examples of where the timescale was exceeded include; complex investigations which the service were keen not to rush so the response was meaningful and thorough, information being slow to arrive from third parties, such as other agencies and where colleagues have been on annual leave or sick leave and their contributions have been considered so valuable the deadline of 20 working days should be exceeded.
- 15.7. For corporate Stage Two complaints, the average was 23.6 working days, which reflects a significant increase (9.6 working days) from 2021/22 (14).
- 15.8. Only 8% of corporate complaints were responded to within 10 working days at Stage Two (40% in 2021/22); 27% between 10-20 working days (49% in 2021/22) and 65% exceeded the maximum 20 working day limit (11% in 2021/22). A significant change was made during the reporting period to how corporate complaints were allocated, and analysis suggests this has had an adverse effect. To support in the management of expectations and to ensure the 20-working day deadline was not exceeded, previously CSCT would ask the service to respond within 10 working days, but inform the complainant that 20 working days is the

permissible time. This led to CSCT chasing responses and offering support from day 11, often resulting in the response being provided prior to the 20 working days. However, feedback from services was that if they were allocated the full 20 working days, responses would be more thorough and still be within timescales. Current reporting timescales, however, appear to demonstrate that the absence of CSCT involvement after the initial 10 working days has passed, has had a negative impact on timescale compliance. There is an action in section 12 of this report to reflect this lesson.

- 15.9. In 2021/22, 36 (11%) corporate complaints exceeded the 20-working day deadline, however a total of 310 (65%) were late in 2022/23. This is an increase of 274 (761.1%).
- 15.10. For CSC Stage Two complaints, 79 (67%) complaints exceeded the maximum 65 working day timescales. This is a result of the right sizing of the team and service improvement activity undertaken within the current reporting period by the CSCT, enabling the clearing of the outstanding cases from previous years and allocating the complaints at a time when they were already over that time period.
- 15.11. Clarification was sought from the LGSCO regarding timescales, and it was confirmed that the expectation is that a CSC complaint is allocated within one calendar month and the clock starts ticking once the Statement of Complaint (SoC) is agreed.
- 15.12. By January 2023, the list of outstanding CSC Stage Two complaints had been cleared and CSCT were allocating complaints within one calendar month and completing all newly allocated complaints within 65 working days. In previous periods, Stage Two complaints have been carried forward from one year to the next, with 2021/22 seeing 53 carried over. In 2022/23, there are no cases marked as 'received but not progressed', which illustrates the effectiveness of the service improvement activity undertaken by the CSCT to clear the outstanding caseload.
- 15.13. More details around this activity can be found in section 9 of this report.
- 15.14. CSC statutory Stage Three review panel meetings were few and far between in previous periods due to the delay in progressing Stage Two cases, with only five taking place between April 2019 and March 2022. However, in 2022/23, 23 Stage Three Review Panel Meetings took place.
- 15.15. As Chart 3 illustrates, the County Council is currently seeing 31% of Stage Two CSC complaints progress to Stage Three. CSCT predicts that a factor in this number being as high as it is, is due to the complainants' dissatisfaction at the delay to Stage Twos previously mentioned. As Stage Two complaints are now being allocated within the Ombudsman's expectations, it is anticipated this number will significantly reduce.

Chart 3: CSC Stage Two complaints progressed to Stage Three



## 16. Learning and service improvement

16.1. The following recommendations were put forward, within the 2021/22 report, for completion by the CSCT and/or directorate service areas during the 2022/23 reporting period.

16.2. **Recommendation 1 – CSC Stage Two Recovery Plan.** *Develop a forecast model of how the CSCT intends to return CSC Stage Two complaints to a more manageable level, setting out clear timescales for delivery.*

16.3. A significant and thorough recovery plan was initiated in June of 2022 with the following key elements:

- More Investigating Officers (IOs) from senior management to be trained and support with the outstanding Stage Two caseload.
- More Independent Persons (IPs) on the books, but also the current cohort cross skilled to be able to fulfil more roles.
- Clarity on procedure, e.g., court matters, agreement of the Statement of Complaint.
- 2 x dedicated IOs within CSCT.

16.4. The deadline to achieve the recovery plan and have the entire outstanding caseload completed or allocated was April 2023. This was achieved ahead of schedule in December 2022. The early delivery was predominantly achieved due to the above changes being implemented more quickly than anticipated.

- 16.5. For example, by being able to recruit an internal Council employee as the second dedicated IO, their recruitment and training plan was completed sooner than had they been external.
- 16.6. Equally, more IPs were recruited than was anticipated and the standard of those within the pool was exceptional. These IPs also received training that had been improved following feedback from the previous IP pool, making it more effective at preparing them to be self-sufficient and able to take on more cases.
- 16.7. It is also important to note the support from across the Directorate enabling more internal senior managers to be able to take on a complaint than originally forecast. This allowed more complaints to be allocated per month bringing the completion date forward.
- 16.8. Finally, great efforts were and continue to be taken to improve our initial stage one responses. The successful changes made, such as calling complainants and focussing on resolution, saw the number of complaints escalating to Stage Two reduce. Where the recovery plan anticipated escalations to remain as they were, the decrease resulted in fewer requiring allocation and therefore the completion date coming forward.
- 16.9. All CSC Stage Two complaints since January 2023 have been allocated within one calendar month as is expected.
- 16.10. ***Recommendation 2 – Financial Resilience.*** *There is a requirement for additional permanent resourcing to ensure longer term stability of the service. A report is to be developed to set out the additional resources being sought corporately to ensure new ways of working can be implemented, both as part of the recovery plan and also to ‘right size’ the CSCT to prevent future backlogs re-occurring in the longer term. Report to be submitted to Financial Resilience Group in June 2022.*
- 16.11. This report was completed, and additional funding was provided. Temporary resource was agreed to support CSCT in clearing the outstanding caseload and additionally, ongoing permanent funding was provided to right size the team for the future, accounting for the fact demand on the service and the number of complaints are currently on trend to increase year on year, as a result of sustained increases in demand for Children’s Services.

**16.12. Recommendation 3 – Service Improvement.** *To support the CSC Stage Two recovery activity and to contribute to the stabilising of the CSCT in the future, a range of operational improvements have been identified. These include:*

- *Measures to reduce escalation of CSC complaints from Stage One to Stage Two.*
- *Improvements to correspondence with complainants.*
- *Improvements to guidance provided to officers for responding at Stage One for CSC Complaints.*
- *Introduction of templates.*
- *Process improvements (to be identified via a workshop).*
- *CSC Stage Two document preparation.*
- *Optimized use of technology such as power automate to increase efficiency.*
- *Staff training.*
- *Management structure and oversight.*
- *Monitoring and reporting to support operational effectiveness and decision making within CSCT and wider Branch Management Teams; and*
- *Training and support to IOs and Adjudication Officers.*

16.13. All of these elements were implemented with great success. More so than others are the new strengths-based approach to initial complaints within both the CSC process and corporate complaints process. Whilst this method of working is still yet to be fully rolled out to all of the Children's Services Directorate, early indications are very positive. This is explained in sections 10 and 12 of this report.

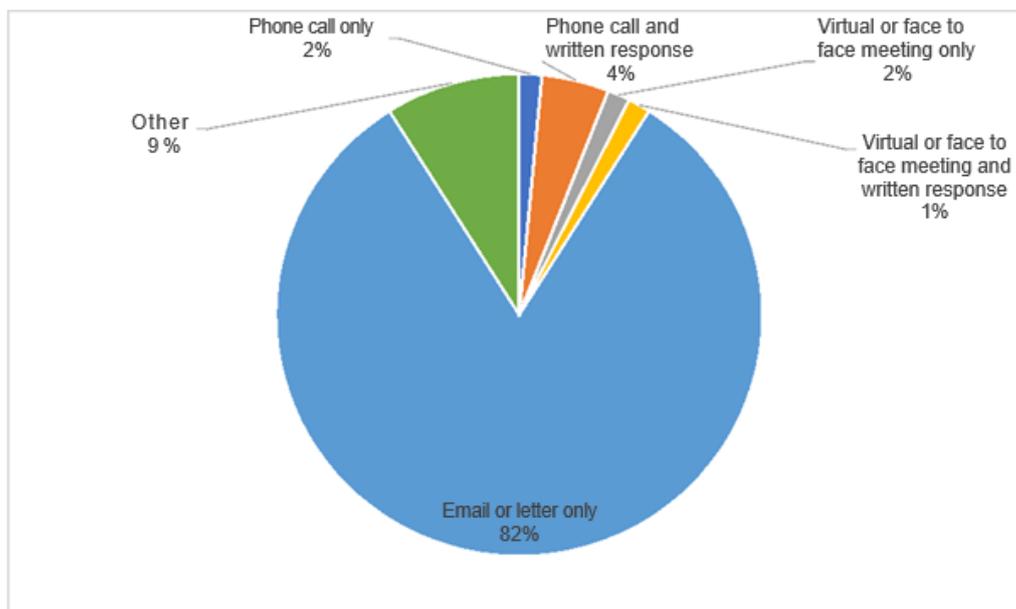
16.14. Services who took part in the strengths-based approach trial were given complaints training with an emphasis on contacting complainants via a phone call or in a meeting to seek resolution. This was then followed up with a letter, so an audit trail existed. Other changes were made, for example removing language such as 'upheld' or 'not upheld' and giving services discretion with regards to their approach.

16.15. When escalating their complaints more recently, complainants are now asked to advise how their complaint was responded to. As Chart 4 below demonstrates, just 9% of escalations come after the service have spoken to complainants, either by phone or in a meeting.

16.16. The vast majority (82%) of escalations are made after responses are provided in writing only, proving it is not a successful method of resolution.

16.17. A recommendation to reflect this information is provided later in section 12 of this report.

**Chart 4: How was your complaint responded to?**



**16.18. Recommendation 4 – Continue to increase capacity within the Independent Person (IP) pool and the Investigating Officer (IO) pool. This will be an ongoing action across the 2022/23 reporting period.**

16.19. This action was completed and is now at an appropriate level, with 22 IPs available to CSCT. Work continues to upskill these IPs so some may fulfil other roles where resilience is weaker, such as to act as Chair and/or sit on Stage Three panels.

16.20. Contrary to the IP pool increasing, the IO pool was decreased, but deliberately so. Where previously there were over 30 IOs in the pool, they were predominantly senior managers across the County Council who were asked to take on an investigation on top of their usual day to day roles.

16.21. As a result of clearing the backlog, the Dedicated IO (DIO) role being trialled within CSCT was made permanent and a second full time DIO was recruited into the team, taking the total number of DIOs to two. By having two DIOs within the CSCT multiple cases can be allocated to each individual ensuring continued compliance against the Ombudsman’s allocation expectations, but they are also the subject matter experts in the process and therefore require less support from the wider CSCT.

16.22. Chart 5 below gives an example of how IO and IP numbers changed throughout the reporting period.

**Chart 5: Total number of IOs and IPs**



**16.23. Recommendation 5 – Continue to work with the appropriate Departmental service lead to confirm what is recorded within the Department’s Children’s Social Care Case Management System, when a complaint is made. Proposal to be completed by 31 March 2023.**

16.24. This action has been superseded by the implementation of the new Children’s Social Care Case Management System (Mosaic) project, which is currently ongoing and will include this action within it.

## 17. Learning and Service improvement from the 2022/23 reporting period

17.1. As a result of the Complaints Manager quality assuring every CSC Stage Two report and personally sitting in attendance at every CSC Stage Three review panel meeting, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of themes and trends has been possible.

17.2. In 2022/23, there were a total of 146 of these two stages combined. With this detailed insight and from regular analysis of the data, the following steps have and are being taken to ensure the County Council continues to learn from and prevent future complaints.

### 17.3. Communication

17.4. Poor Communication was a theme in 2021/22 and continues to be a part of the feedback provided in this reporting period. This includes complainants feeling their expectations of communication are not being met, alongside more general feedback that policy and procedure was either not understood or explained. This is illustrated in such a high number of complaint outcomes (over 744) being recorded as including an 'explanation' provided.

17.5. Where complaints are not upheld and no apology or remedial action is required, there are still lessons to be learnt and potential opportunities for the prevention of similar complaints in the future.

17.6. Where complaints have been resolved with just an explanation of policy or procedure, it is important to reflect on how such a complaint could have been prevented and various initiatives are being explored.

17.7. Through analysis of the complaints relating to communication and where an explanation helped to provide a resolution, a number of themes emerge:

**17.8. Individuals without Parental Responsibility (PR) expecting the same amount of access to information, social workers, and Children's Services as those with it.**

17.9. There have been examples of those without PR being dissatisfied with the level of communication they receive. These predominantly include family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles and new partners of those with PR, who have influence in the child(ren)s life.

17.10. In many instances, when the relevant service was able to explain the limitations of communicating with an individual without PR, combined with the reality of Social Workers being allocated to the child(ren) and not the adult(s), complaints were resolved.

17.11. A recommendation is provided in section 12 of this report.

**17.12. Non-resident parents feeling out of the loop, regarding the care of their children, and for males, accusations of gender bias.**

17.13. Analysis also found that there is a pattern of non-resident parents feeling 'out of the loop' and/or excluded from discussion and decisions regarding their child(ren)'s care. There is a perception that social workers focus too much on the resident parent and exclude non-resident parents as a result. Complainants refer to examples where social workers will visit the resident parent's premises, but not theirs, or that communication regarding the child(ren) is disproportionately with the resident parent.

17.14. On the occasions these types of complaints have been investigated, no accusations of bias have been upheld, however, there remains opportunity to prevent these types of complaints and reduce dissatisfaction, even if it is only as a result of a perceived injustice.

17.15. Similarly, to the previous point regarding communication, a key message in resolving these complaints is that Social Workers are assigned to the child(ren) and not the adult(s).

17.16. A recommendation for preventative measures is provided in section 12.

17.17. A key observation from this theme is how lacking this trend is within the data. Specifically, the number of 'Non-resident parents' recorded as making a complaint was very low at three (<1%). Further analysis of the data suggests that many individuals logged as 'Parents' are better described as 'Nonresident parents'. However, at the point of logging, this information is not readily available to CSCT and to seek clarification would cause disproportionate delay to the complaint progressing. This illustrates the importance of continuing to take both a qualitative and quantitative approach to analysing the complaints data.

#### 17.18. **Changes of Social Workers**

17.19. A number of complaints were made to include dissatisfaction that Social Workers were changing, for reasons such as internal changes and individuals resigning, but that parents were not made aware. Feedback for this period was that on many occasions it was not until a new Social Worker contacted them that they were aware of such a change.

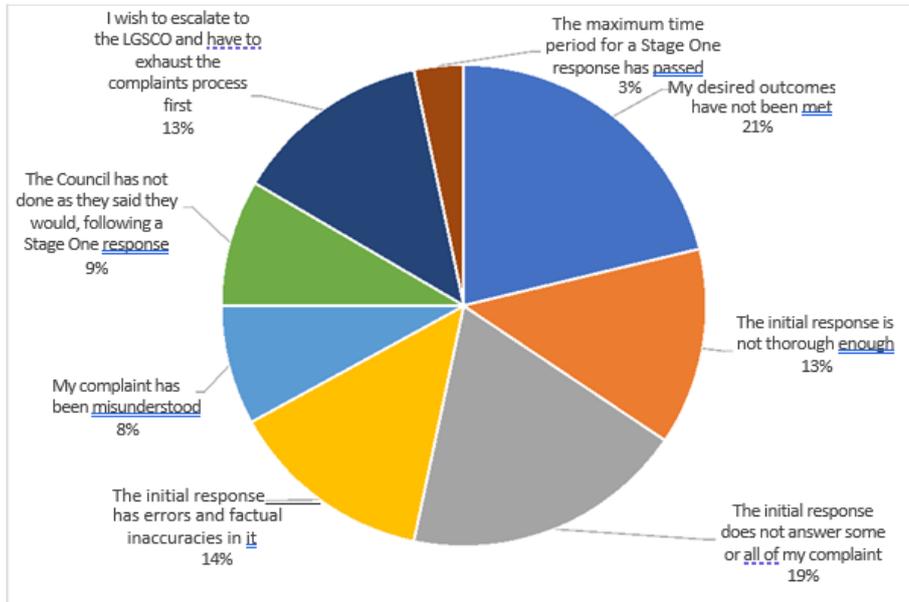
17.20. A recommendation for preventative measures is provided in section 12.

17.21. Faceless communication

17.22. Particularly when children's social care complaints were escalated to Stage Two, when Investigating Officers (IOs) were conducting meetings with complainants, the feedback was often "*you're the first person I've spoken to since complaining*". This led to further feedback that complaint responses were too corporate, considered faceless and lacking in empathy. Analysis shows this was part of the motivation to escalate to Stage Two as complainants had felt their complaint was misunderstood or not fully answered.

17.23. As Chart 6 shows, the reasons for escalation are varied. Within the reasons given, 54% relate to the content of the initial response being inadequate, such as 'The initial response does not answer some or all of my complaint'. This is further evidence that talking directly to complainants via the phone or in a meeting is imperative to ensuring as many successful resolutions as possible.

**Chart 6: Main reason for escalating?**



**17.24. Service Improvements**

17.25. In response to the above areas of communication improvement, and in line with good practice, a number of successful initiatives have been introduced, as follows:

**17.26. Complaint responses**

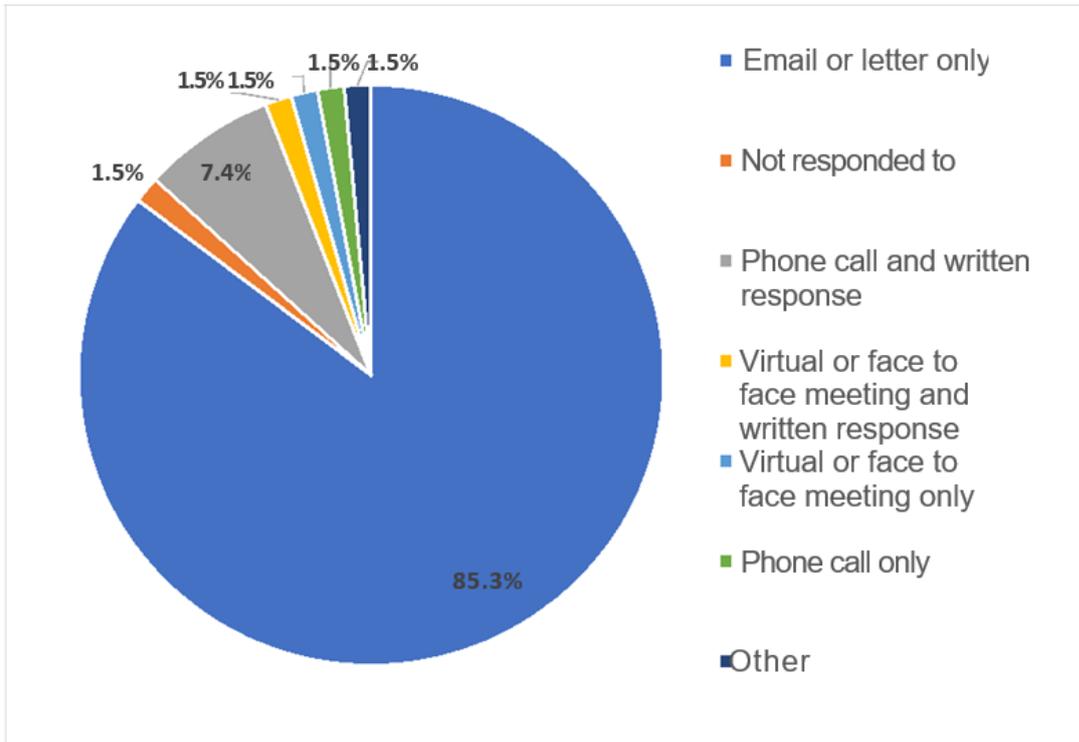
17.27. As previously mentioned, the use of telephone calls and meetings at the early stages have been introduced, giving opportunity for discussion and resolution early on. This has been very well received and is reducing previous concerns of written responses not understanding the complaint fully, leading to avoidable escalation.

17.28. When escalating a complaint from the initial stage, complainants are asked to complete the escalation e-form. Through this form, data is captured such as how was your complaint responded to? and 'what is the main reason for you escalating your complaint?'. On all occasions, the answers are multiple choice and complainants can answer as they wish, either selecting from pre-written answers or by providing their own response under 'other'.

17.29. Chart 7 below provides evidence that the majority of the complaints that escalate from the initial stage have not had a phone call or meeting organised to seek resolution. Just 10.4% of complainants who used this form, suggested that a call or meeting was arranged. The remaining 89.6% were only contacted in writing, or suggest they had no response whatsoever. In the instance where it is alleged no response was provided, further investigation shows a response was provided within timescales.

17.30. It is important to note that this data is reliant on complainants correctly completing the form and therefore allowances should be made with regards to the data confidence.

**Chart 7: How was your complaint responded to?**



17.31. At the end of the current reporting period, the top five answers in response to 'what is your main reason for escalating your complaint?' were:

1. My desired outcomes have not been met (21%).
2. The initial response does not answer some or all of my complaint (19%).
3. The initial response has errors and factual inaccuracies in it (14%).
4. The initial response is not thorough enough (13%).
5. I wish to escalate to the LGSCO and have to exhaust the complaints process first (13%)

17.32. The new way of resolving complaints with phone calls and/or meetings, it is hoped, will continue to reduce escalations as well as addressing the reasons complainants give for doing so.

17.33. Further detail regarding escalations to the LGSCO is included under section 11.

**17.34. Call back requests**

17.35. Where communication was a clear theme of complaint in the latter part of 2022, a new method of communication was introduced. When completing the e-form individuals are asked, rather than making a formal complaint, would they rather request a call back from the appropriate manager (screen shot below).

Compliments, Complaints and Data Protection form

\* Required

Request a call back

We are dedicated to resolving, listening and learning from any feedback we receive and aim to do so as swiftly as possible at a local level.

9. Before making a formal complaint would you like to request a call back from an appropriate manager?

Call backs will be made as quickly as possible and no later than two working days after the request. Please be aware calls will most likely take place within working hours (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm).

Yes

No

Back Next

17.36. If they respond 'yes' to this, the submission is recorded as a 'call back request' rather than a formal complaint and the appropriate manager is asked to organise a call back. This does not remove the individual's right to submit a formal complaint at a later stage if still dissatisfied.

17.37. This approach has proved very successful with 38.7% (65) of those completing the form responding 'yes' when asked if they wish to just have a call back, rather than make a complaint.

### 17.38. Compliments, Complaints and Data Protection form

17.39. Continuing on the subject of the complaints e-form, in 2022 a new form was introduced which is accessible via the website. The new e-form, built with Microsoft Forms (MS Form) and automated with the use of Power Automate, has a number of advantages over the previous version.

17.40. By being an MS Form the CSCT have direct access to its content and are able to make instantaneous edits and improvements if any are identified.

17.41. The form is also an amalgamation of the numerous requests received into the wider Information Governance and Business Support (IGBS) Service, including Subject Access Requests (SAR), Potential Data Incidents (PDI), Compliments, Right to Rectification (RtR) requests and Complaints. By incorporating all of this in to one form, there are a number of benefits.

17.42. Firstly, the individual completing the form is able to make several requests in one place, with each process being explained too. In the past, individuals were misusing processes to achieve outcomes not possible in that way. For example, individuals would raise formal complaints, but in fact be requesting a SAR, or in numerous instances, they would wish to make more than one request and only contact one team to do so, for example sending a PDI and complaint to just CSCT.

17.43. In both cases, this would result in time spent analysing requests and triaging them out to the various teams within HCC. This not only resulted in a significant amount of resource being spent by CSCT to ensure correspondence was correctly processed, but also confusing for complainants who received acknowledgements for several processes which they may not have any knowledge about.

17.44. When completing the MS form, the definition of the various processes is clearly outlined to support individuals in making their submission(s), as follows:

Compliments, Complaints and Data Protection form

\* Required

### Your submission

You will have opportunity to submit more than one of the options below

4. What type of submission do you wish to make? \*

**Compliment** - Positive feedback following a recent experience with Children's Services Department.  
**Right to Rectification** - A request to have perceived inaccurate or incomplete personal data corrected or completed.  
**Subject Access Request** - A request to access and receive a copy of personal data, and other supplementary information.  
**Complaint** - A desire to express dissatisfaction and seek a resolution.  
**Data incident** - Alert the Council to a data incident, such as incorrect information being shared, or to express dissatisfaction with how your data has been used.

Once you have completed the relevant information you will be asked if you wish to submit a second type of submission.

Compliment

Right to Rectification

Subject Access Request

Complaint

Data incident

[Back](#) [Next](#)

17.45. The form also uses 'branching'. This is a capability within the MS Form that allows the form to intuitively only ask questions relevant to the submission. For example, if an individual is making a complaint on behalf of a child, both their details and the child's are requested. If, however, they are making a complaint on their own behalf, secondary details are not required and therefore not requested. This helps to reduce the time spent completing the form, potential duplication and ensure all information received by the relevant team is of value.

17.46. With the help of Microsoft software called Power Automate, the triaging of all submissions via the e-form is now automated. This means that whilst the individual completing the form has a seamless experience of completing only the relevant sections to their submission, teams will only receive the information relevant to them. For example, if an individual completed the form to make both a complaint and a SAR, CSCT would receive only the elements relating to the complaint and the Children's Services SAR Team would only receive the elements relating to the SAR. By automating this part of the process, significant reductions in the time taken to triage submissions containing multiple parts has been achieved, whilst also informing the individual making a submission at the first point of contact, namely through the e-form.

#### **17.47. Unreasonable complainants**

17.48. The County Council has written a new Complainant Behaviour Policy (CBP) and been clearer on the application of our Unreasonable Contact and Customer Behaviour (URCCB) policy. This helps to protect colleagues' wellbeing and also prevent a disproportionate diversion of resources away from key front-line services, as a result of unreasonable behaviour.

17.49. 6% of the complaints made at CSC stage one and corporate Stage Two were from a group of just 12 complainants. In almost all occasions, these individuals have been identified as meeting the threshold for the URCCB policy, however on reflection this was applied later than it should have been. By delaying the application of the URCCB, not only is the best interest of the child potentially overlooked, but key front-line resources are disproportionately diverted, and County Council staff's wellbeing is impacted.

17.50. A recommendation regarding this is provided in section 12.

#### **17.51. Ad-hoc work**

17.52. The 'ad-hoc' category makes up 40% of all work received by the CSCT, which is higher than is desirable. 'Ad-hoc' representations are pieces of correspondence covering a variety of queries such as safeguarding, school matters and topics relating to other Local Authorities. All matters that the CSCT are unable to meaningfully support with.

17.53. A project is in place to further analyse why this is the case, what elements should have gone somewhere originally and how these can be better signposted to reduce unnecessary workload within the team.

17.54. A recommendation regarding this is provided in section 12.

## 18. A review of the effectiveness of the complaint's procedure

18.1. 13% of complainants advise they only use the complaints process in order to be able to approach the LGSCO, implying resolution is not possible by the Local Authority. The County Council predicts that, on average, Independent Person costs alone for a single Stage Two complaint costs an average of £1k and a single Stage Three panel £2k. It is important to also factor in the time of senior managers and the administration required, which also come at a significant cost.

18.2. It is the view of this report that the national CSC complaints process has significant room for improvement in areas such as the following:

- The process is written for children and young people but fails to acknowledge the vast majority of those who use it are parents.
- The process disproportionately restricts early referrals to the LGSCO, often insisting on completing the entire complaints process before doing so. A significant number of resources have as a result been diverted from key front-line services, which could have been prevented.
- The statutory guidance is outdated and lacking in detail, making it unclear for Local Authorities and complainants. Where steps have been taken to give further guidance, there is a lack of specific information and guidance from the LGSCO. It is the view of this report that more needs to be done to ensure decisions are consistent, or that discretion is made explicit for decision makers.
- The Stage Three review panel meeting provides very little value to the process and is an expensive meeting for taxpayers to fund. The significant majority of cases see no change following a Stage Three review panel meeting, putting in to question its value to all parties and furthermore its cost effectiveness.

## APPENDIX 1

The relevant section of the guidance for this annual report is copied below;

### **5.6 Annual report**

*5.6.1 Local authorities must each financial year publish an Annual Report (regulation 13(3)). This should draw upon the information already gathered under section 5.1 for recording purposes. However, this Annual Report is a separate requirement and should not contain personal information that is identifiable about any individual complainant.*

*5.6.2 The Annual Report should be arranged by the Complaints Manager and should provide a mechanism by which the local authority can be kept informed about the operation of its complaint's procedure. The report should be presented to staff, the relevant local authority committee and should be made available to the regulator and the general public. It should provide information about:*

- *representations made to the local authority.*
- *the number of complaints at each stage and any that were considered by the Local Government Ombudsman.*
- *which customer groups made the complaints.*
- *the types of complaints made.*
- *the outcome of complaints.*
- *details about advocacy services provided under these arrangements.*
- *compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale as agreed.*
- *learning and service improvement, including changes to services that have been.*
- *implemented and details of any that have not been implemented.*
- *a summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity of complainants; and*

*a review of the effectiveness of the complaint's procedure (see section 5.7 on Monitoring and Quality Assurance).*

## APPENDIX 2

Key terms:

**Children's Services Complaints Team (CSCT)** – The team within the Children's Services Directorate responsible for processing all complaints, with the exception of corporate Stage Three complaints.

**Representation** - A representation is a piece of work requiring action by the CSCT, regardless of whether or not it is processed as a complaint. A representation could trigger a single and simple piece of work lasting a matter of minutes, a large piece of work over many months with numerous activities or anything in between.

**Children's Social Care (CSC) Complaints:** These complaints follow the County Council's CSC Complaints Procedure for Children's Services (Stage One – local resolution; Stage Two – investigation; Stage Three – complaint review panel). When a complainant has exhausted the three stage complaints process, they can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) to consider their complaint. Complainants are also able to refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any point in the formal process, however, if the complaint is still being considered by the local authority the LGSCO may deem the complaint premature and direct the complainant back to complete the local authority's complaint process.

**Corporate Complaints:** The majority of the remainder of complaints for Children's Services fall under the County Council's corporate complaints procedure, ensuring compliance with the Local Government Act 1974. For example, these may be complaints about the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service, School admissions, a support service or administrative process rather than children's social care. Having invariably received an informal response to their complaint, most corporate complaints are investigated directly at Stage Two and if the complainant remains dissatisfied progressed to Stage Three of the Council's corporate complaints process, which requires review and response by the Corporate Information Governance Team based within the Corporate Services Directorate.

Appendix 3

# **Children's Services Directorate**

## **Annual Compliments, Complaints and Representations**

**2022/23**

### **Appendix 3 – Data Tables**

## Representations Received

**Table 1 - Complaint Refusals Breakdown**

Refusal Reason	Financial Year				
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Social Care Refusals</b>					
Court Proceedings	6	17	8	12	5
Criminal Proceedings	0	1	0	1	0
No PR	1	9	6	14	14
Not in Best Interest/Age of Child/YP	1	1	0	2	0
Out of Time	3	3	1	2	3
Outside of Remit	2	2	1	3	5
Repeat Complaint	4	1	0	4	0
<b>Total social care refusals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Corporate Refusals</b>					
No PR	0	0	0	1	3
Not in Best Interest/Age of Child/YP	0	0	0	0	0
Out of Remit (Appeal)	1	0	0	9	9
Out of Time	1	0	0	0	1
Repeat Complaint	1	2	0	0	0
Tribunal	1	2	0	3	1
<b>Total corporate refusals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Refusals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>

## Timescale compliance

**Table 2 – Timescale Compliance**

	Stage	Financial Year							
		2022-23		2021-2022		2020-2021		2019-2020	
Social Care Complaints	<b>Stage 1</b>								
	Total number of complaints	240		298		188		188	
	- in 10 working days	112	47%	145	49%	89	47%	75	40%
	- in between 10 and 20 working days	108	45%	137	46%	87	46%	82	44%
	- in over 20 working days	20	8%	16	5%	12	6%	31	16%
	- average time to complete (days)	12.1		9.6		12		17	
	<b>Stage 2</b>								
	Total number of complaints (completed)	118		8		5		9	
	- in 25 working days	5	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	- in between 25 and 65 working days	22	19%	0	0%	1	20%	2	22%
	- in over 65 working days	79	67%	8	100%	4	80%	7	78%
	- Received but not progressed	0		53		26		4	
	- Withdrawn	12	10%	3		0		2	
<b>Stage 3</b>									
Total number of complaints (completed)	23		2		2		1		
- in under 50 working days	19	82%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
- in 50 working days	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
- in over 50 working days	4	17%	2	100%	2	100%	1	100%	
Corporate complaints	<b>Stage 2</b>								
	Total number of complaints	477		320		189		228	
	- in 10 working days	36	8%	126	40%	89	47%	85	37%
	- in between 10 and 20 working days	128	27%	158	49%	95	50%	128	56%
	- in over 20 working days	310	65%	36	11%	5	3%	15	7%
- average time to complete (days)	23.6		14		12		13		

## Who make complaints and how are they submitted?

**Table 3 - Social Care Stage One and Corporate Stage Two Complaints - How Received**

Method	Financial Year									
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20		2018/19	
Complaint Form	1	0%	1	>1%	1	0%	8	2%	7	2%
E-Form	287	37%	233	34%	137	36%	148	36%	94	31%
Email	482	62%	293	45%	220	57%	203	43%	166	54%
In Person	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Letter	15	2%	83	13%	23	6%	46	11%	38	12%
Letter via DCS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%
LGSCO (via)	1	0%	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Telephone	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%	3	1%
Telephone via HantsDirect	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Email via HantsDirect	0	0%	39	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
YP Complaint Form	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4 – Method Used to Make Complaints; Young People’s complaints (Social Care Stage One Corporate Stage Two)**

Method	Financial Year									
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20		2018/19	
Complaint Form	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%
E-Form	5	55%	4	31%	2	22%	7	41%	3	60%
Email	4	45%	4	31%	4	44%	7	41%	1	20%
Email via DCS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Email via HantsDirect	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
In Person	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Letter	0	0%	3	23%	2	22%	2	12%	1	20%
Telephone	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Telephone via HantsDirect	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Email via HantsDirect	0	0%	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
YP Complaint Form	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 5 - Who makes complaints - received from (Social Care Stage One & Corporate Stage Two)**

Received from	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
<b>Parent/Adopter</b>								
Parent	674	86%	529	79%	331	86%	328	80%
Non-Resident Parent	3	0%	45	7%	2	1%	4	1%
Adopter	0	0%	1	>1%	2	1%	2	0%
Special Guardian (SGO)	0	0%	0	>1%	0	0%	3	1%
Ex-Partner	0	0%	0	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Partner	0	0%	1	>1%	1	0%	1	0%
Step-Parent	3	0%	4	>1%	2	1%	7	2%
<b>Total Parent/Adopter</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>Non-Parent Relative</b>								
Grandparent	16	2%	37	6%	13	3%	20	5%
Sibling	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
Other Relative	8	1%	4	>1%	4	1%	5	1%
<b>Total Non-Parent Relative</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Foster Carer/Prospective Foster Carer /Care Provider</b>								
Direct Payment Carer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Foster Carer	7	1%	7	1%	2	1%	9	2%
Private Foster Carer	1	0%	1	>1%	3	1%	1	0%
Prospective Adopter/Foster Carer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Prospective Foster Carer	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total Foster Carer/ Prospective Foster Carer</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Service user</b>								
Service user (adult)	5	1%	1	>1%	2	1%	0	0%
Service user (young person)	4	1%	5	1%	6	2%	18	4%
Service user (child 0-17)	15	2%	8	1%				
<b>Total Service User</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Professional</b>								
Head Teacher	0	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Health Staff	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Agency	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Principal Transport Officer (HCC)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other HCC Staff	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Professionals	4	1%	3	>1%	1	0%	6	1%
<b>Total Professional</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>&gt;1%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Advocate</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>&gt;1%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
Birth Parent of Adopted Child	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Friend/Neighbour	4	1%	1	>1%	1	0%	0	0%
Other	4	1%			5	1%	1	0%
<b>Total Miscellaneous</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&gt;1%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>
Unknown	31	4%	16	2%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

## Nature and Service

**Table 6 - Social Care Complaints - complaint nature**

Nature	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Adoption Allowance Dispute	0	0%	9	2%	1	1%	0	0%
Application of Policy	4	1%	5	1%	2	1%	0	0%
Assessment Outcome	8	3%	13	3%	5	3%	9	5%
Assessment Process	7	2%	11	2%	4	2%	12	7%
Bruising Protocol	1	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	1	1%
Change of Placement Decision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Change to Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Child Protection Conference Outcome	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	4	2%
Child Protection Conference Process	5	2%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Conduct of Worker	55	18%	119	28%	79	40%	54	30%
Contact Arrangements	3	1%	18	4%	7	4%	2	1%
Contact Dispute	5	2%	8	1%	1	1%	4	2%
CSD Acted Unlawfully	0	0%	1	>1%	1	1%	1	1%
CSD Failing in Duty of Care	1	0%	17	4%	10	5%	5	3%
CSD Provision / Service Withdrawn	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Decision - Change of Placement	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
Decision to Change S/W	0	0%	1	>1%	1	1%	0	0%
Delay/Failure to keep informed	7	2%	3	>1%	1	1%	0	0%
Delay in Provision of Service	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Direct Payment Dispute	1	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Discriminatory Application of Process	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Eligibility - Access to Service	0	0%	1	>1%	2	1%	1	1%
Eligibility for Funding	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Failure to Implement Agreed Actions	3	1%	1	>1%	3	2%	3	2%
Finance	2	1%	3	>1%	0	0%	2	1%
Foster Care Allowance Dispute	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Funding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
HTST Dispute	0	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient Support from CSD	17	5%	73	17%	38	19%	5	3%
Multiple Changes to Allocated Worker	0	0%	2	>1%	2	1%	0	0%
Non-adherence to Procedure	0	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	3	1%	7	1%	4	2%	0	0%
Outcome of decision/assessment	4	1%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Out of Education	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
Personal Budget Dispute	2	1%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Placement Decision - Change of Placement	3	1%	1	>1%	0	0%	4	2%
Placement Dispute	1	0%	8	1%	0	0%	2	1%
Policy Dispute	2	1%	3	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Poor Communication	35	11%	83	19%	23	12%	21	12%
Quality of Service	125	40%	6	1%	1	1%	28	16%

Nature	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Refusal of Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Respite Dispute	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	1	1%
Respite Provision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
S.47 Investigation Outcome	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Safeguarding	10	3%	7	1%	3	2%	4	2%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unwanted CSD Involvement	4	1%	3	>1%	0	0%	3	2%
Welfare Concerns not Acted On	3	1%	6	1%	2	1%	5	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 7 - Corporate Complaints - complaint nature**

Nature	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Access to Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Adoption Allowance Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Application of Policy	3	1%	10	2%	1	1%	3	1%
Assessment Outcome	1	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Assessment Process	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Change to Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Conduct of Worker	42	7%	21	5%	5	3%	9	4%
CSD Acted Unlawfully	0	0%	1	>1%	1	1%	0	0%
CSD Failing in Duty of Care	0	0%	1	>1%	1	1%	0	0%
CSD Provision / Service Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Decision - Change of Placement	6	2%	9	2%	1	1%	0	0%
Delay in Provision of Service	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	53	23%
Direct Payment Dispute	2	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	2	1%
Discriminatory Application of Process	1	0%	1	>1%	0	0%	1	0%
Education Provision Dispute	8	2%	3	1%	2	1%	8	3%
EHCP Delay	64	11%	108	23%	56	30%	51	22%
EHCP Process	124	21%	72	15%	44	24%	34	15%
Eligibility - Access to Service	0	0%	1	>1%	2	1%	0	0%
Eligibility for Funding	0	0%	1	>1%	1	1%	0	0%
Failure to Implement Agreed Actions	1	0%	4	1%	2	1%	1	0%
Finance	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Financial	9	2%	6	1%	5	3%	2	1%
Funding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Foster care Allowance Dispute	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
GDPR process	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
HTST Dispute	24	4%	17	4%	8	4%	0	0%
HTST Escort Provision	30	5%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
HTST Incident on Transport	2	1%	1	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient Support from CSD	0	0%	5	1%	3	2%	0	0%
Other	7	2%	5	1%	7	4%	0	0%
Out of Education	11	2%	16	3%	9	5%	5	2%
Policy	3	1%	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Poor Communication	64	11%	153	33%	32	17%	21	9%
Process Application/Delay	0	0%	0	0%	3	2%	0	0%
Quality of Service	63	11%	0	0%	0	0%	12	5%
Racial Incident	0	0%	2	>1%	0	0%	0	0%
Refusal of Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	2%
Safeguarding	2	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
SAR Delay	16	2%	18	4%	1	1%	0	0%
Special Guardianship Allowance Dispute	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Unknown	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Blank Data	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	16	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 8 - Social Care Complaints - service**

Service	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Adoption/Permanence	5	2%	3	1%	2	1%	4	2%
Care Leavers	4	1%	2	0.5%	0	0%	5	3%
CAST	217	70%	225	70%	139	70%	114	64%
Child in Need	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Child Protection	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2%
Children In Care	41	13%	45	14%	37	19%	33	18%
Disabled Children's Team	13	4%	16	5%	7	4%	9	5%
Early Help Hub	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Family Support Service	3	1%	2	1%	1	1%	3	2%
Fostering	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%
HantsDirect / Out of Hours	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Independent Reviewing Service	2	1%	1	0.5%	0	0%	1	0%
Intensive Support Service	1	0%	1	0.5%	0	0%	0	0%
MASH/CRT	21	7%	22	7%	9	5%	5	3%
Not receiving a service	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Occupational Therapy	0	0%	1	0.5%	0	0%	0	0%
Out of Hours	1	0%	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%
Reception & Assessment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Safeguarding Team	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Services for Young People / YSS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Specialist Residential Provision	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
YOT	0	0%	1	0.5%	1	1%	0	0%
Unknown / Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 9 - Corporate Complaints - service involved**

Nature	Financial Year							
			2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Adoption	2	0%	1	0.5%	1	1%	2	1%
Care Leavers	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
CAST	49	9%	13	4%	7	4%	8	3%
Children in Care	7	1%	1	0.5%	1	1%	2	1%
Child in Need	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Children's Services Complaints Team	19	4%	6	2%	6	3%	1	0%
Children's Services Data Protection Team	3	1%	1	0.5%	0	0%	4	2%
Children's Services Subject Access Request Team	17	3%	22	6%	4	2%	0	0%
Disabled Children's Team	5	1%	2	0.5%	1	1%	2	1%
Education	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Early Help Hub	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Years Services	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
EMTAS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Family Support Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Fostering (Family Placement)	3	1%	1	0.5%	1	1%	1	0%
HantsDirect / Out of Hours	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Home to School Transport	77	15%	28	7%	11	6%	11	5%
Inclusion Support Service	4	1%	6	2%	0	0%	4	2%
Independent Reviewing Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Intensive Support Service (ISS)	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
Joint Services	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
LADO	3	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
MASH / CRT	6	1%	3	1%	0	0%	2	1%
Non HCC	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not receiving a service	0	0%	6	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Paediatric Continence Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Portage Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Reception & Assessment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Safeguarding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
School Admissions	12	2%	10	3%	6	3%	5	2%
SEN	312	60%	257	72%	143	77%	186	80%
Services for Young People / YSS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Strategic Development	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other/Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

## Outcomes sought – social care and corporate complaints

**Table 10 - Social Care and Corporate Complaints – outcome sought**

Outcome Sought	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total
Acknowledgment of Impact on Child/ Family/ Individual	4	1	5	4	1	5	1	1	2
Agreed Service Implemented	1	3	4	0	2	2	0	1	1
Alternative Education Provision	0	5	5	0	1	1	0	1	1
Apology	6	13	19	4	8	12	2	0	2
Apology & Explanation	41	35	76	14	33	47	14	5	19
Assessment / Reassessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assessment Review	3	3	7	11	0	11	6	1	7
Assurance of Non-Reoccurrence	5	2	6	6	2	8	2	0	2
Backdated Payment	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Best Practice Learning - Individual	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Best Practice Learning - Service / Area	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Better Communication	19	73	101	40	82	122	14	23	37
Case / Decision Review	1	2	3	11	1	12	3	1	4
Change Made to Contact Arrangements	2	1	3	13	0	13	7	1	8
Change of Placement Decision	2	0	2	7	3	10	3	1	4
Change of Social Worker / Worker	29	12	44	51	3	54	30	3	33
Child Returned to Family	2	0	2	4	0	4	3	0	3
Compensation	2	2	6	3	4	7	0	0	0
Complaint Issues Investigated	76	106	197	122	49	171	21	4	25
Completion of SAR Disclosure	0	6	6	0	13	13	0	1	1
Consultation on / Input into CSD Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact Arrangements Finalised	1	0	1	9	1	10	4	0	4
Contact Arrangements Review	3	0	3	2	0	2	2	0	2

Outcome Sought	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total
Continuation of Child Protection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Convene an Emergency Meeting	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
CSD Involvement Ceased	1	2	3	1	0	1	2	1	3
Direct Payments / Personal Budget	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Disciplinary Action Against Staff	1	6	7	0	0	0	0	1	1
EHCP Actions Implemented	0	12	6	0	18	18	0	16	16
EHCP Amended	0	27	27	0	18	18	0	12	12
EHCP Draft Issued	0	9	5	0	34	34	0	13	13
EHCP Finalised	0	29	29	0	46	46	0	43	43
EHCP Needs Assessment Completed	0	2	2	0	13	13	0	11	11
EHCP Parental School Preference Named	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EHCP Process Implemented	0	4	5	0	14	14	0	3	3
Emotional/ Educational/ Psychological needs met by CSD	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	3	4
Employee Training or Guidance	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
EOTAS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Explanation	24	18	42	17	22	39	12	0	12
Financial Reimbursement	1	13	15	4	4	8	0	1	1
Foster Care Allowance	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
GDPR - RTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improved Practice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase support from CSD	1	2	3	27	4	31	15	0	15
Kept Informed by CS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meeting Request	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Assessment	5	1	6	10	0	10	1	0	1
Not Specified / Implied	69	17	100	66	36	102	19	4	23
Offer of a School Place	0	50	58	0	37	37	3	13	16
Other	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payment Correction	1	3	4	0	4	4	0	5	5
Payment Waived	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal Budget	0	5	5	0	1	1	0	1	1

Outcome Sought	2022/23			2021/22			2020/21		
	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total
Point of View Represented on CSD Record	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Policy / Procedure Review	0	1	0	4	4	8	4	2	6
Post Adoption Support (Adoptee)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reinstate Provision / Service	2	2	4	2	0	2	1	3	4
Remedial Action Taken	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Removal / Stepdown of Child Protection Plan	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	2
Request Fulfilled	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Request for Meeting	2	2	5	3	1	4	2	0	2
Request for Update	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Respite Provision	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
Safeguarding Action Taken (s.47)	2	0	2	3	0	3	0	0	0
Service Delivery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Worker to Remain	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Special Guardianship Allowance	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staff Access to Records Checked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transport Arranged	0	28	30	1	15	16	0	10	10
Not Known / Stated Not Known	1	8	2	12	7	19	10	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>377</b>

## Actual Outcomes – social care & corporate complaint

**Table 11 - Social Care and Corporate Complaints – actual outcome**

Actual Outcome	2022/23			2021/2022			2020/21		
	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total
Agreed Additional Support	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acknowledgment of Impact on Child/Family/Individual	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Alternative HTST Arranged	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology	1	3	4	8	26	34	0	9	9
Apology & Explanation	151	341	519	145	284	429	45	94	139
Assessment - Personal Budget	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Assessment / Reassessment for a Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assurance of Non-Reoccurrence	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	2
Assurance re. Staff Access to Records	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Best Practice Learning - Individual	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	17	29
Best Practice Learning - Service / Area	3	0	3	0	0	0	2	13	15
Better Communication	1	3	4	2	4	6	0	0	0
Case Closed	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Case Transfer	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Change of Social Worker / Worker	10	4	16	6	1	7	10	0	10
Child to be Received into Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaint Refused	2	0	2	1	0	6			
Complaint Withdrawn	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Complaint Withdrawn by Complainant	0	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0
Completion of SAR Disclosure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Change Made to Contact Arrangements	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Contact Arrangements Finalised	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
CPC Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Direct Payments/Personal Budget	1	0	1	1	0	1			
Discretionary Payment	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0
Discretionary SEN Package	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
EHCP Actions	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	1	1



Actual Outcome	2022/23			2021/2022			2020/21		
	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total	Social Care Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2	Total
Complainant (re. Behaviour)									
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>377</b>

## Young People's Complaints

Table 12 - Social Care Complaint – nature

Nature	Financial years							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Assessment Outcome	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Application of Policy	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Change to Service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Conduct of Worker	3	33%	5	20%	4	44%	7	44%
Contact Arrangements	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Decision to Change S/W	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Delay/Failure to Keep Informed	1	11%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
CSD Failing in Duty of Care	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Funding	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Foster Care Allowance Dispute	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient Support from CSD	0	0%	3	12%	2	22%	1	6%
Non-adherence to Procedures	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	1	11%	1	4%	0	0%	1	6%
Out of Education	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Placement Decision - Change of Placement	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	3	19%
Placement Dispute	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%	1	6%
Poor Communication	1	11%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Quality of Service	3	33%	1	4%	0	0%	2	13%
Welfare Concerns Not Acted On	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

Table 13 - Social Care Complaint – service

Service	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Care Leavers	2	22%	5	20%	0	0%	5	31%
CAST	4	44%	4	16%	3	33%	3	19%
Child in Need	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Children in Care	3	33%	14	56%	6	67%	8	50%
Disabled Children's Team	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Help Hub	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Intensive Support Service	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
MASH/CRT	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 14 - Social Care Complaint – outcome**

Outcome Sought	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/2022		2020/21		2019/20	
Apology & Explanation	4	36%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Assessment Review	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Assurance of Non-Reoccurrence	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%
Best Practice Learning - Individual	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Better Communication	1	9%	4	16%	0	0%	0	0%
Change of Placement Decision	1	9%	2	8%	3	33%	2	13%
Change of Social Worker / Worker	2	18%	1	4%	1	11%	3	29%
Child Returned to Family	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Complaint Issues Investigated	2	18%	5	20%	0	0%	0	0%
Contact Arrangements Finalised	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Continuation of Child Protection	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Financial Reimbursement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Explanation	1	9%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Increase support from CSD	0	0%	2	8%	1	11%	0	0%
Kept Informed by CS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Known / Stated Not Known	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Not Specified / Implied	0	0%	7	28%	1	11%	1	6%
Offer of a School Place	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%
Post Adoption Support (Adoptee)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Request Fulfilled	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

**Table 15 - Social Care Complaints – actual outcome**

Outcome achieved	Financial Year							
	2022/23		2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
Apology & Explanation	5	45%	3	12%	2	22%	3	19%
Assurance of Non-Reoccurrence	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Better Communication	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Complaint Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Change Made to Contact Arrangements	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Change of Social Worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Explanation	4	36%	18	72%	5	56%	4	25%
Meeting Offer	0	0%	2	8%	2	22%	2	13%
Other	2	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Request Fulfilled	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%
Supportive Work with YP	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%
Transition Plan in Place	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentage calculated to zero decimal places

## LGSCO Complaints

**Table 16 - Complaints received by Children's Services from LGSCO**

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints					
LGSCO Referrals Received	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Number of referrals received by CSCT from LGSCO in period	62	52	24	17	20
Number of final decisions received from LGSCO in period	47	23	35	15	N/K
Type of LGSCO referral					
Education / Non Social Care (LGSCO Complaint)	39	37	12	14	6
Social Care (LGSCO Complaint)	23	14	6	1	8
LGSCO – Assessment (referred back for local resolution)	9	8	2	2	6
Not Known	0	0	7	0	0
Outcome					
Not Upheld - No Evidence of Maladministration	0	0	1	7	2
Upheld – Maladministration - remedy complete and satisfactory	14	2	16	7	13
Upheld – Maladministration – no injustice	0	0	3	1	2
Injustice remedied during LGO consideration	1	6	1	0	0
Closed after initial enquiries	32	18	11	0	0
Awaiting outcome	16	10	0	0	3

## Profile of complainants

Table 17 – all complaints – disability

Disability	Number of representations				
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Not Stated	529	447	267	344	295
No	204	196	108	62	11
Yes	32	25	9	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>308</b>

Table 18 – all complaints – gender

Gender	Number of representations				
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Not Stated	563	482	266	287	220
Male	54	43	34	47	33
Female	146	141	84	77	48
Male & Female	0	2	0	1	7
Other	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>308</b>

Table 19 – all complaints – age

Age	Number of representations				
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
0 - 16	3	5	4	6	2
16 - 19	6	6	0	6	8
20 - 24	8	3	3	5	5
25 - 59	172	168	101	97	32
60 - 64	7	2	3	1	3
65 and over	4	4	1	1	1
Not Stated	565	480	272	296	257
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>308</b>

Table 20 – all complaints – ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of representations				
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Any other Asian background	1	1	1	0	0
Any other Mixed background	0	1	1	0	0
Any other White background	11	5	5	2	6
Asian/Asian British	1	1	1	1	1
Black/Black British	1	0	0	3	1
Chinese	0	0	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	1	0	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0	0	1	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0	0	0
Not Asked	0	0	0	1	0
Not Stated	566	478	277	298	269
Other Ethnic Group	2	1	2	1	0
White British	181	180	92	106	31
White Irish	1	1	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>308</b>

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	no

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

Not applicable.