

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2020

**REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES
ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR
HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between April 1st 2019 and March 31st 2020.
- 1.2 The report contains information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2019/20 and future developments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report (attached as Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014 that the Local Authority produce an annual report and that the report is considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Social Services has a statutory requirement to operate a complaints procedure that follows the legislative requirements of the regulations specified above. The

guidance requires an annual report to be produced relating to the operation of the complaints procedure.

4.2 The Social Services complaints procedure is available to:

- All service users or their representatives
- Any child with a care and support plan
- A parent of a child with a care and support plan.
- A local authority foster parent
- A person who the Authority consider to have sufficient interest in the child's/adult's welfare

It is based upon the principle that people have a right to complain; to have the complaint examined and resolved as quickly as possible.

4.3 The complaints process was amended in August 2014 in line with the new Complaints Regulations and Guidance issued by the Welsh Government and became a two stage process:

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving, whilst adhering to the 15 working days response time that has been imposed under the Regulations.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by the investigating officer appointed to the case. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 25 working days.

4.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two Investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

5. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2019/20

5.1 When analysing complaints, it is important to remember that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided. An increase might indicate the positive view we take towards complaints, together with the fact that people are well informed about how to make a complaint. Given the vulnerability of many people accessing services, it would be worrying if people felt unable to complain if they were dissatisfied with the services they received.

5.2 During the reporting period a total of 112 complaints were received requiring a response at stage one. This is an overall increase of 26 complaints when compared to the previous year with the increase being in Children's Services. The number of complaints received remains comparatively low in contrast to the number of people that come into contact with Social Services annually.

- 5.3 Across Social Services 42.5% of stage one complaint's were responded to within the required timescale, compared with 58% reported last year. This continues to be an area highlighted for improvement and processes have been introduced across both Children's and Adult Services to address both the quality and timeliness of responses to issues raised.
- 5.4 Of the 112 Stage one complaints received, 7 progressed to stage two. This figure included complaints that were made initially in the previous reporting year but that concluded in 2019/20. Whilst higher than in previous years the majority of people remain happy for the Council to deal with their complaints at a local level.
- 5.5 In 2019/20, 83 formal compliments were received which is a decrease on numbers recorded in 2018/19.
- 5.6 Further details and analysis about the number and causes of complaints and compliments and the service areas where these have been made are provided in Appendix 1. The annual report also outlines some of the achievements and developments undertaken by the Complaints Team during the year.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and/or diversity implications from this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report as it provides information on the operation of the Representation and Complaints Unit and direct feedback from service users in relation to how well services are delivered through the monitoring of complaints and compliments.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report and the Work of The Representation and Complaints Unit services is managed within the existing allocated budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The work of the Complaints and Representation Unit is underpinned by the requirements of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. This report has been produced in line with the legislative requirements contained within with in those procedures.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The function of the Complaints and Representations Team and the collation of service user feedback through both complaints and compliments

provide a quality assurance mechanism by which Adults and Children's Services can measure their performance against the corporate priorities to:

- Improve the experience of those using health and social care services;
- Engage with and use Customer Feedback to redesign our services.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure in line with the statutory requirements. Complaints are seen as providing valuable customer feedback, with the information from complaints providing valuable lessons learnt when planning and improving services to meet the needs of our customers.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014

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