



**People Directorate
Children's Social Care
Compliments and Complaints**

Annual Report

1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

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1. Background and Context

This report sets out information regarding compliments and complaints made by, or on behalf of children, young people and parents/carers who receive support or services from the Local Authority.

It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report which will be published on the Council's website.

The current legislation requires local authorities to appoint a 'responsible person' with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the following arrangements:

- Managing, developing and administering the complaints procedure
- Providing assistance and advice to those who wish to complain
- Liaising with services regarding the investigation of complaints where appropriate
- Supporting and training existing and new members of staff
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity

Staff will always try to resolve problems or concerns before they escalate into complaints and this ensures that investigations are kept to a minimum.

Bracknell Forest Council has set procedures for resolving complaints to ensure that: -

- The views and experiences of people who use the services are heard
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and highlight good practice
- We continually learn as an organisation and resolve things
- We can sustain a quality focus on our customers

Our aims are to:

- Resolve complaints quickly and where possible using formal measures
- Offer early resolution of complaints
- Reduce escalations in turn addressing cost implications
- Learn lessons from complaints

2. Bracknell Forest Children's Statutory Complaints Procedure

The complaints process aims to be as accessible as possible. Complaints may be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by email or using our online complaints form on the Bracknell Forest Council's public website.

Children's Statutory Complaints:

Bracknell Forest adopts a three stage process for dealing with complaints which is in line with statutory guidance, '*Getting the Best from Complaints*' (2006) setting out the following stages: -

- Stage 1 – Informal/Local Resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal Independent Investigation
- Stage 3 – Independent Review Panel Hearing

An independent advocate for children and young people is commissioned via Action for Children to ensure effective representation to support early and prompt resolution of complaints.

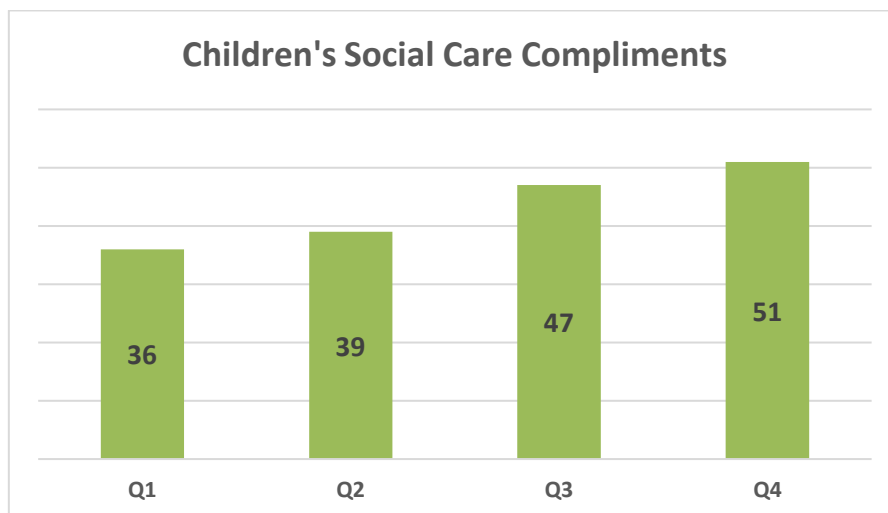
In the majority of cases if a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, an apology will be offered and information will be given to the complainant as to what action the service will take to ensure the situation does not arise again, for the complainant or future service users. The apology would be given by the manager on behalf of the service complained about.

Representations may be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) at any stage and any member of the public is able to complain to the Ombudsman if they feel there has been maladministration or injustice, however, the LGSCO will not normally accept the complaint until the Council has had a chance to complete all stages of the complaints procedure.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they can refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for consideration.

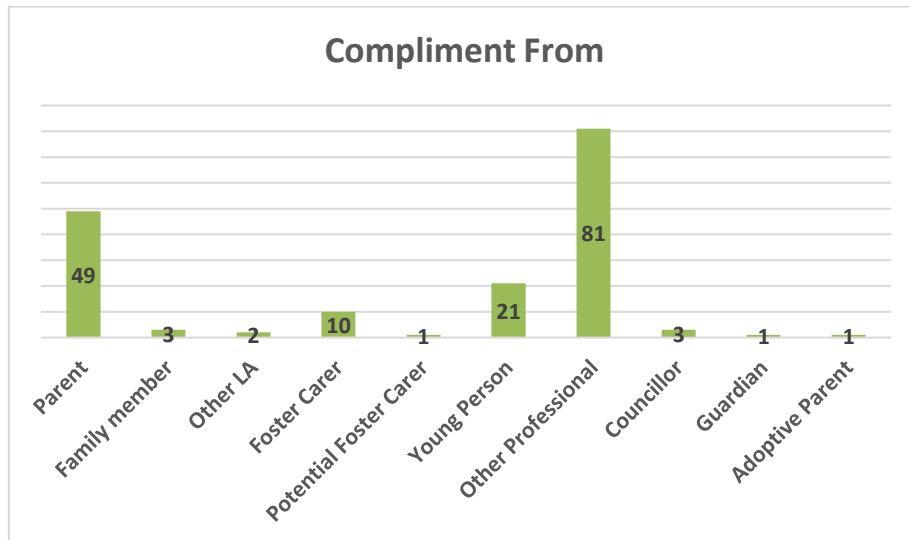
3. Children’s Social Care Compliments

Compliments are received from a wide range of sources across the different service, through the use of surveys, activity feedback and direct consultation exercises. All compliments received from external and internal professionals/agencies are sent to the individuals line Manager to support the appraisal process and personal development of employees.



During 2019/20 there were 173 compliments received which is higher than the previous year being 83 received in 2018/19.

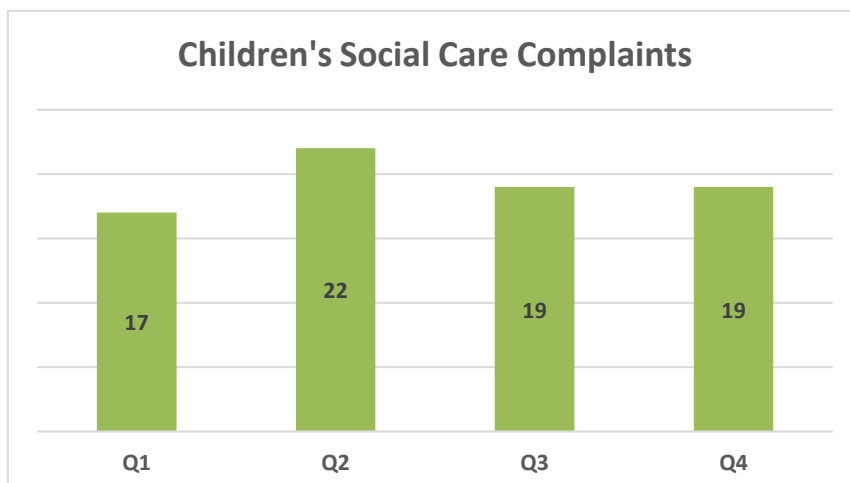
New feedback forms were created for the Children’s Social Care teams, which may have encouraged more feedback being given from families especially young people who now have a separate feedback form.



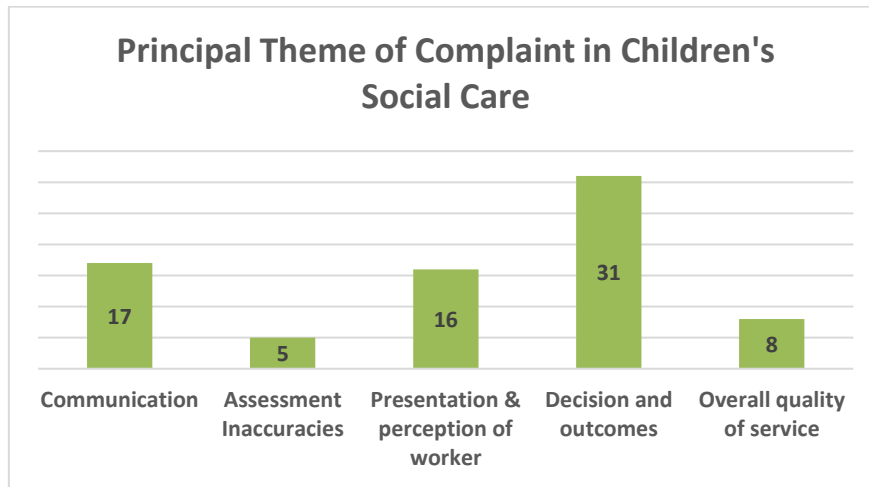
What are compliments saying?

- **Young Person** - Thank you card to SW thanking her for her support and being with him throughout his journey and is now with his forever family who love him loads
- **Parent** - SW never doubted me always there when I needed advice or help. She did absolutely everything to help me and my daughter
- **Young Person** - Thank you for being an amazing Personal Adviser. You’ve done a great job with me and I can only imagine what you’ve done for others
- **Parent** - Friendly, professional, understanding, fair and non-judgemental. Great!!
- **Other Professional** - You are inspirational you know! The children are lucky to have you looking after their interests and giving them their challenges

4. Complaints Handled within the year

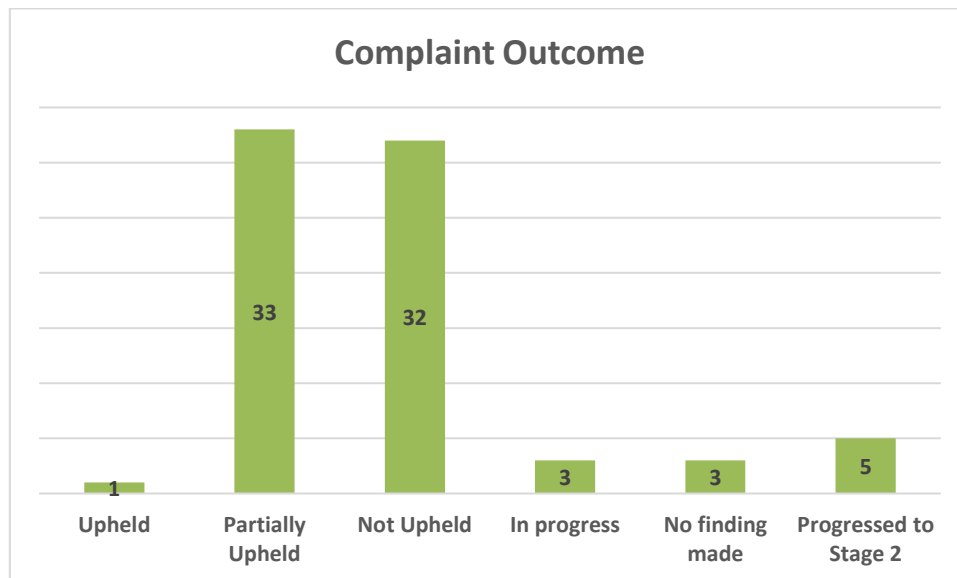


During 2019/20 there were 77 complaints received which is lower than the previous year being 107 received in 2018/19.



In 2018/19 Decision and outcomes was the most common complaint with 31 in total, this is the same as in 19/20. Decision and outcomes is a common theme of complaints within Childrens Social Care.

5. Analysis of Complaints

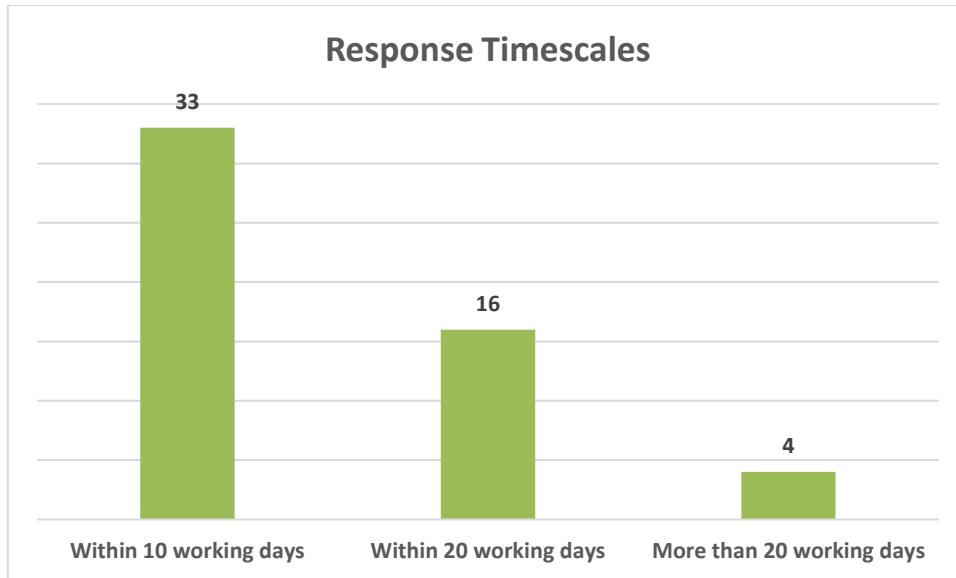


In total 1% of complaints during 2019/20 were upheld compared to 2.8% during 2018/19.

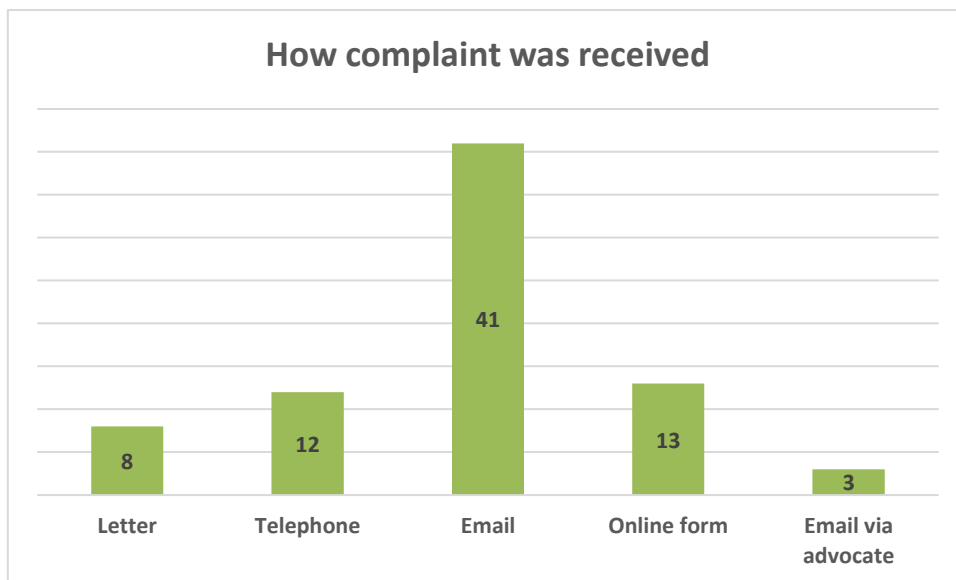
A further 42.8% of complaints are partially upheld compared to 30.8% during 2018/19

and 41.5% of complaints received were not upheld compared to the 52.3% in 2018/19.

6.4% of complaints escalated to the next stage of the Childrens Statutory Complaints procedure compared to 4.6% in 2018/19.



Whilst it is our aim to respond to most complaints within 10 working days, we do allow up to 20 working days for more complex complaints. We aim to work within these timescales, but sometimes the response can go over 20 working days if this involves meeting with complainants or further investigations are required.



The Childrens Social Care online complaints form went live during 2019 and appears to be working for the public. 13 Complainants accessed this form to pursue their complaint.

6. Cost of Complaints Service & Investigations

Children's Social Care has had two Stage 2 investigations completed this year, one of which was from the previous year. There has been one Stage 3 completed this year.

We have four Stage 2 investigations and one Stage 3 panel hearing to be completed later this year as these too were delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The average cost of a Stage 2 Investigation as well as a Stage 3 Panel Hearing in 2018/19 was £2.8k, the average during 2019/20 was £1.9k. Due to the delays some of the outstanding costs will be accrued to the 2020/21 financial year.

7. Training/Workshops

The Complaints Manager held quarterly induction training for all new staff during 2019/20. Training was also held for all staff involved with complaints, including Assistant Team Managers and Team Managers. This was well received by staff and further training will be commissioned during 2020/2021. The Complaints Manager is always at hand to offer advice and explain the policy and procedures to all members of staff.

8. Progress on 2018/19 Recommendations

1. Enhancing systems to ensure that we routinely learn from complaints and feed that learning into service improvement – ***Learning events are held quarterly.***
2. Improved training for all involved in the complaints process – ***this is being implemented***
3. Creating online forms for all services, to enable people to make complaints – ***online forms are available for all services and are received at a central point to ensure they go to the correct departments/services***

9. Recommendations

This review includes several recommendations which will be implemented during 2020/21.

Continued training for all involved in the complaints process to support effective

1. Continued training for all involved in the complaints process to support effective responses to complaints
2. Continue to learn from complaints to continue improving the service the council offer to support Bracknell families
3. Continue with creating action plans and start reflective/learning meetings following Stage 2 complaint investigation
4. Update the Childrens Statutory Complaints Policy
5. Respond to all complainants within the timescales