



Customer Services Annual Report

2019-20

SUMMARY

An overview of complaints, compliments, SARs activity and performance for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

AUTHORS

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TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	30 March 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	BfFC ANNUAL CUSTOMER SERVICES REPORT 2019-20		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TERRY	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SERVICE:	BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of complaints, compliments, SARs activity and performance for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Future annual reports will include freedom of information requests, to give a more complete picture of the company's customer service and customer relations.

Executive summary

This report outlines the work that Brighter Futures for Children (BfFC) and Reading Borough Council has carried out to improve customer relations. This report's main focus is on complaints and compliments, although other aspects of customer relations, including subject access requests (SARs) are also covered.

Children's social care, early help, education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in Reading are delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BfFC), the not-for-profit company wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council. Through a Service Level Agreement, Reading Borough Council's Customer Relations team handles the administration for complaints, compliments and SARs.

Complaints, particularly in the emotive arena of children's services, are inevitable. The way that they are handled, however, can help reduce the number of escalating complaints and can improve parental and family understanding of the need for intervention by children's services and the positive outcomes for children and young people.

BfFC recognises that there will be occasions when the service provided to children, young people and their families has not been of a satisfactory standard or where the customer is unhappy with the service they have received.

Complaints are an important source of information to help the company understand where and why changes need to be made to improve the service provided.

During this period the service received 92 statutory complaints, which is a decrease of 4 (4.17%) against the 96 received in 2018/19. In the same timeframe, 74 compliments were received and logged for BfC, an increase of 51 from the previous year when 23 were received.

Of the 92 complaints received:

- 16 were resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by the social care teams.
- The remaining 76 progressed to a formal investigation, although nine of these were subsequently withdrawn by the complainant once the investigation had commenced.

During the same period, nine complaints progressed to a Stage 2 investigation and a further two progressed to a Stage 3 investigation, although these were not all progressions of Stage 1 complaints received in the same period, as some related to Stage 1 and 2 investigations carried out in 2018/19.

Both the Customer Relations team, on BfC's behalf, and BfC's Communications & Marketing and HR/Training teams have continued to raise awareness of the complaints process for both staff and the public.

The 'Children's Social Care Complaints 2019/20 – Summary Report' attached at **Appendix A** provides an analysis of the data for statutory complaints; it explains how complaints are managed and how the learning is used to improve services. This will be made public through both Reading Borough Council's and Brighter Futures for Children's websites from 1 April 2021.

The council and BfC have worked closely to drive improvements in the services offered to children and young people and to signpost to information on advocacy, early resolution and the complaints procedures.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the timing of this report has been delayed and its contents are relatively historic. The 2020/21 report, which will be published by the end of the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year, shows a marked improvement in the handling of complaints and FOIs in particular, plus an increase in external compliments for services provided to children and young people and their families.

Nevertheless, BfC recognises there is much room for improvement and is actively working to better the services offered to its customers.

Recommendations

The Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report and intended actions to further improve the management of representations, particularly complaints, in children's services in Reading.
- Note the continuing work to raise awareness of all conflict resolution processes, including the statutory complaints process and encourage appropriate use by children, young people and their families.

Context

The NHS & Community Care Act 1990, Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, Department of Health and Department for Education Guidance & Regulations require that the children's social care service sets up and maintains a complaints procedure. They also require that local authorities operate the procedure within specified timescales, methods of investigation and that a summary of statistical information on complaints and a review of the complaints process are included in an annual report.

Activity

Brighter Futures for Children operates a 3-stage procedure in respect of statutory complaints about children's social care made by 'qualifying individuals', as specified in the legislation. Qualifying individuals are defined in national guidance as the child or young person, their parent, carer or foster carer or 'anyone who could be seen to be acting in the best interests of the child'.

The timescale for responding to complaints at Stage 1 is 10 working days, which can be extended to 20 working days in certain circumstances. The RBC customer relations manager, who is the designated complaints manager for BfFC, also has to be aware of all complaints as they are being dealt with. The head of communications & marketing has overall oversight, as the BfFC lead on this Service Level Agreement.

The corporate complaints procedure gives an opportunity for those who are not 'qualifying individuals' under the social services legislation, to still be able to complain about children's services and this route is used for all corporate and education (incl SEND) complaints.

Contribution to strategic aims

Customer relations contribute to both BfFC and RBC's aims to enhance emotional wellbeing and deliver outstanding services for children in need and those needing protection in Reading. It does this by providing an impartial and supportive service to children and families who wish to complain or raise a concern and ensuring that there is learning from complaints.

RBC's Customer Relations Team and the customer relations manager administer this service to Brighter Futures for Children, under The Service Level Agreement. BfFC provides oversight on service delivery and on lessons learned, as part of the company's strategic aim to improve children's services in Reading.

Community engagement and information

Information about the complaints process is provided verbally to service users via BfFC's children's social care teams and independent reviewing officers, as well as by the Customer Relations team. Full information is also on the website www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org. Leaflets on the procedures are widely distributed and available in a variety of formats and languages on request to the Customer Relations team or through the use of BrowseAloud on BfFC's website.

In all children looked after reviews and all child protection conferences, the chair always mentions the complaints process so that our most vulnerable children are reminded of their right to complain and a leaflet is provided. Service users are also able to register a complaint via the web, text, the Mind Of My Own App, email directly to the Customer Relations team, in person, by phone and in writing or via an advocate.

The Brighter Futures for Children website has a direct link to the complaints service and the Customer Relations team has published the details of the customer relations manager and the BfFC advocacy provider, Reconstruct. The Customer Relations team also work closely with Healthwatch Reading and other organisations that offer a free help line support to children in care and carers who may wish to complain and require assistance.

Translation services are provided for complainants whose first language is not English and advocacy support is available for young people who wish to make a complaint.

Equality impact assessment

The customer relations manager will ensure that the statutory complaints process is accessible to all customers regardless of their race, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.

The statutory complaints process is designed to ensure that any concern or issue faced by vulnerable children and their carers is addressed in a timely and impartial manner.

Legal implications

The statutory foundation for the children's social care services complaints procedures are the Local Authority Social Services Act (1970), The Children Act (1989), The Children Act (2004), The Human Rights Act (1998), The Adoption and Children Act (2002) and The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (2006).

It is a requirement of the Department of Health's standards and criteria for complaints management for children's social care that an annual report including complaints is presented to a public meeting.

Financial implications

There are no capital or revenue implications arising from this report. However, BfFC has an obligation to ensure the service provided by RBC's Customer Relations team is value for money, that the SLA is regularly monitored and that all complaints are handled in a restorative and timely manner to minimise the likelihood of legal costs associated with escalation of complaints that could have been better resolved earlier.

Value for money

The overriding aim of both BfFC and RBC is to work towards informal resolution wherever possible. BfFC works to the principle of a restorative and trauma informed approach and is keen for complaints to be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, at the earliest possible stage. The Customer Relations team works to this aim and ensures that most statutory complaints are resolved within the Stage 1 process so that expensive Stage 2 investigations and Stage 3 panels are minimised.

Risk assessment

There are no specific financial risks arising from this report.

Background papers

['Getting the Best from Complaints'](#) Government Publication, August 2006

Appendix A

Children's Social Care complaints for Brighter Futures for Children 2018/19

Summary report

Introduction

This is a summary report of the data for statutory complaints received by Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) for the financial year 2019/20, when the number of complaints received has decreased slightly compared to the previous year. This report will also be made available to the public through the Reading Borough Council (RBC) and BFFC websites.

In addition to the quality of service provided, there are many factors that can affect the number of complaints received such as satisfaction, customer expectations, awareness of the complaints process, and the extent of promotional activity.

A high number of complaints should not be interpreted simply as meaning that Brighter Futures for Children is providing a poor service, while at the same time a low number of complaints should not be interpreted as meaning people are satisfied with the service.

When interpreting the statutory complaints statistics, it is important to take into account not just the number received but the number and proportion that are upheld.

Brighter Futures for Children welcomes feedback through the complaints process. As well as providing opportunity to identify where services have not been provided as they should be, feedback can also provide customer insight and help identify any deficiency in practice, policies and procedures. It is from these that the service and those who work within it can continue to learn and improve practice and service delivery.

Statutory complaints procedure

Complaints dealt with through the statutory procedure involve three stages.

At Stage 1 complaints are investigated and responded to by a manager in the relevant service area.

If the complainant feels that the issues they have raised remain unresolved, they have the right to progress their complaint to Stage 2. Consideration of complaints at Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an investigating officer and an independent person. The independent person is involved in all aspects of consideration of the complaint including any discussions in the authority about the action to be taken in relation to the child. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent person and the investigating officer prepare independent reports for adjudication by a senior manager (usually the Director of Children's Social Care).

When Stage 2 of the complaints procedure has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, they are eligible to request a review of the stage 2 investigation, by a review panel at Stage 3. The panel must consist of three independent people.

The statutory children's social care complaints process encourages the complainant and BFFC to consider Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) at every stage of the complaints process. This means resolving a complaint or concern informally through a face to face meeting or telephone discussion. Entering into ADR does not restrict the complainant's right to request a formal investigation at any

stage. It is the complainant's right to request the presence of a customer relations manager at any face-to-face meeting.

Summary of compliments and complaints activity, quality assurance & learning

There has been a slight decrease in the number of complaints received compared to the previous year. The top three themes for complaints continue to be:

- Service provision
- Staff conduct and
- Communication

Examples of complaints recorded as **service provision** are where the parent or carer may disagree with the content of an assessment or care plan proposed for a child or young person, there has been concerns from parents or carers about contact arrangements with their child looked after or child or young person being unhappy about the move to a different placement.

Staff conduct complaints are recorded as such when complaints are received around specific individual members of social work staff.

Communication complaints are mainly about the customer/young person not being notified in advance of contact arrangements, staff not returning telephone calls or responding to emails.

This report details information for the year 2019/20, analysis of the data, quality assurance and information on service developments as a result of learning from complaints.

Under the current monitoring system, information about complaints received directly by teams is reported to the customer relations manager upon receipt. This is to ensure that the customer relations manager is aware of all current complaints in order to monitor their progress and highlight cases that can be resolved through alternate dispute resolution (ADR) to team managers and senior staff.

The process is overseen by BFFC's head of communications & marketing, who oversees this SLA for BFFC.

Quality assurance

The Customer Relations team carry out checks of all complaint responses to ensure the quality of the response and that the language and terminology used is easy for the complainant to understand, particularly if the complaint is from a child or young person.

Statistics indicate 100% of responses were checked by the Customer Relations team before being sent out. The findings and recommendations are shared regularly with BFFC's Senior Leadership Team and operational managers. The customer relations & information governance manager and the Customer Relations team are also available to the complainant and the investigator for advice on best practice during the complaint investigation but remain impartial.

The customer relations & information governance manager delivers training on investigating and responding to statutory Stage 1 complaints and also on the corporate complaints procedure to BFFC staff. The customer relations & information governance manager also attends team meetings to provide training and advice to front line staff.

Training is now available online also; this can be accessed by all social care staff through BFFC's training department. Take up of this on-line training has been very low. Two training sessions for

operational managers were arranged and the first was completed in November 2019. The second was held in February 2020.

The complaints procedure is promoted to external groups, publicity material is available to staff, children and young people and close links with Healthwatch Reading. Parents or carers with learning difficulties or other needs will be signposted to local charitable advocacy providers.

Processes have been improved to ensure upcoming responses are discussed and monitored regularly. BFFC 's senior managers get regular updates on all complaints which are live and under investigation. BFFC staff are in more regular contact with the customer relations manager and the team and are aware of their processes, which has led to improved joint working for the benefit of the complainant.

Monthly reports of the Service Level Agreement are provided to the BFFC contract manager. Quarterly reports are prepared for the BFFC Board and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and for the Council's Management Team (CMT).

Support network

The customer relations & information governance manager participates in the southern region Complaints Managers' Group and is the current vice chair of the group and also attends the National Complaints Managers' Group. Both groups continue to support customer relations and complaints managers in sharing good practice, both nationally and locally. Where cases are complex the customer relations & information governance manager often seeks advice and guidance from legal services and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's advice line.

Learning from complaints

In 2019/20 these were the learning improvements BFFC's services focused on children's social care:

- Including the distant parent in assessments – often the father
- Service managers to quality check content of Stage 1 response letters and sign these off before they go to Customer Relations team for full QA. This is to ensure accuracy of the response and reduce escalation to Stage 2
- Compulsory training for all managers in how to manage and respond to complaints
- Learning review and workshop carried out in respect to the learning when dealing with complaints from grandparents
- The Quality Assurance and Auditing Framework now seeks the views of parents and children, to ensure service delivery is impactful and makes a difference.

And the following learning for Special Educational Needs (SEN) services:

- Recruitment of a permanent Head of SEN (May 2019), plus a permanent SEN team manager and two permanent senior SEN case officers (July 2019).
- Following the recruitment of these permanent roles, individual SEN case officers received weekly case supervision with their senior SEN case officer, who, in turn, received weekly supervision from the SEN team manager. Decisions that caused delays are now taken to the Educational Health Care Panel by the SEN team manager for scrutiny and ratification.
- The SEND team reviewed its Standard Operating Procedures in July 2019, with new protocols and processes in place from September 2019.

The DfE guidance asks for the council or its representative - in this case BfFC - to ensure that we report the learning and service improvements implemented as a result of complaints. Some learning was pertinent to individual workers and led to bespoke advice and training. Some learning was shared in reminder to all staff regarding good practice and some learning led to review of services and processes.

Some individual and staff learning included:

1. Complaint (partially upheld)

Lack of communication from the social worker during the assessment process leading to factual inaccuracies within the assessment report.

Learning

- All BfFC staff to be reminded of the need to share copies of drafted or completed assessments with parents / carer at the earliest opportunity, in order to promote partnership working, transparency, and for parents / carers to be clear on the decision-making and outcomes following assessment.
- Views regarding factual inaccuracies with the previous assessments completed have been communicated in writing to BfFC by the parent, and as such, will be recorded on the children's file.

2. Complaint (upheld)

The complainant expressed dissatisfaction but how the child protection enquiry was undertaken following an allegation during contact and raised issues regarding the processes followed by the social worker.

Learning

- Mandatory training for all the contact supervisors and managers on how to report allegations, with reference to the process and procedures.
- The LADO has been asked to carry out a mandatory workshop with the fostering team and Family Intervention Service around the process for dealing with allegations.
- Additional to this training mandatory training is afforded to the Children Single Point of Access staff around handling difficult conversations.

3. Complaint (partially upheld)

Threatening language used by worker.

Request for support but not receiving support and or a service.

Learning

- Team workshop arranged in order to explain the intervention process carried out between social care and families and the potential impact of this upon families and social workers carrying out their duty to safeguard.

- Clarification of the role of the social worker and the appropriate use of language, tone and consent.
- Work to reinforce the importance of working in partnership with families will be addressed with all staff during team meetings.

Complaints and concerns provide essential and valuable feedback from our customers. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we have not got it right can reveal or highlight opportunities for improvement (for example, a deficiency in practice, communication or service delivery). Even if a complaint is not upheld, lessons can be learnt from that complaint with service developments and improvements as a result. The complaints process and the feedback gained is an integral part of the quality assurance process, which feeds into the development and monitoring of services.

Once a complaint is investigated, the investigating officer (IO) will complete a Learning Action Plan for complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and which may have recommendations to the services about improving services; these are collated by the customer relations team for reporting purposes and shared with BfFC senior managers.

BfFC recognises the need to improve the timescales for responding to complaints. Fortnightly reports have been provided to the head of communications & marketing who shares this with other senior managers and highlights deadlines and responses needed. This has allowed for better tracking of the timeliness of complaints. This remains a priority area to be improved.

Complaints activity statistics

In the year 2019/20, children's social care received 92 statutory complaints, which is a decrease of four (4.17%) compared to the 96 received in 2018/19.

To give this some context, in 2019/20, 2,564 children in total were referred to children's social care, so the number of statutory complaints represents 3.6%.

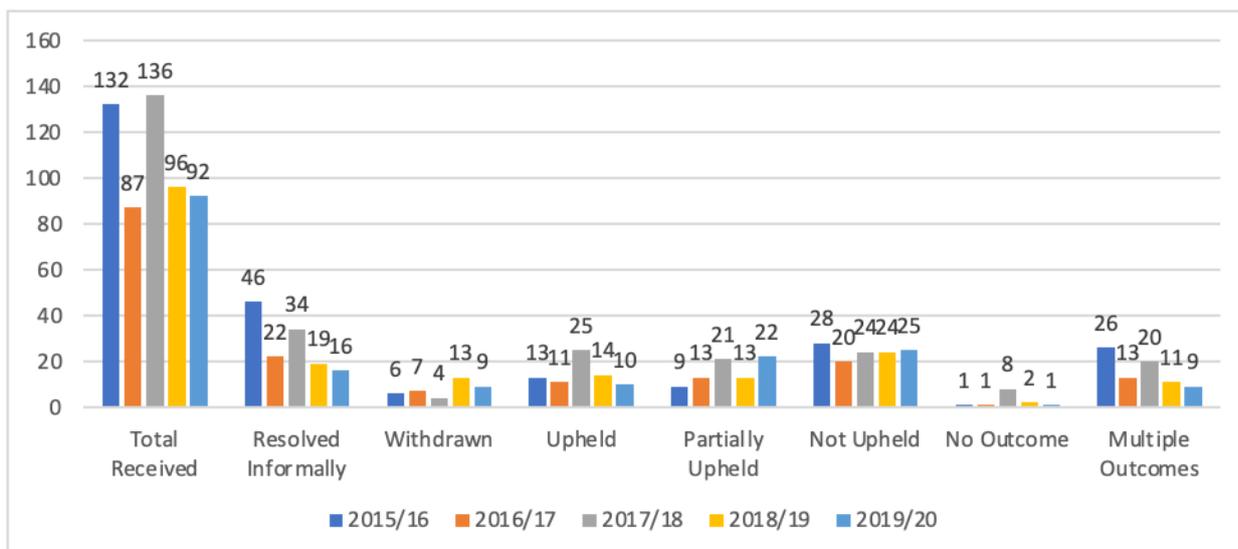
There were nine requests for a complaint to be progressed to Stage 2 during this period, and a further two requests for a complaint to be progressed to Stage 3. These complaints are not included in the reporting statistics for this report, as they are deemed to be duplicates of the Stage 1 complaint for reporting purposes.

Of the 92 complaints received:

- 16 (17.4%) were resolved as representations informally through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) (Stage 0) by the social care teams.
- Nine (11.8%) of the remaining 76 complaints were withdrawn by the complainant following a resolution with the service after the investigation had commenced, leaving 67 which were investigated at Stage 1 to an outcome.

Of the 67, 26 (38.8%) were responded to within timescale, with the remaining 41 (61.2%) complaints responded to over timescale.

Of the 67 complaints investigated to an outcome, ten (14.9%) were recorded as fully upheld, 22 (32.8%) as partially upheld, 25 (37.3%) as not upheld, and one (1.5%) as having no recordable outcome. The remaining nine (13.5%) were complaints with multiple strands where several outcomes were recorded.



Total number of Stage 1 complaints (including those resolved by alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and eventually withdrawn) received in the last five years.

Year	Number of complaints received	% Increase against previous year	Number of cases referred to Children's Services	% of complaints against referrals
*2015/16	87	1.2%	3,078	2.83%
*2016/17	132	51.7%	3,169	4.16%
*2017/18	136	3.03%	2,717	5.01%
*2018/19	96	-29.4%	2,765	3.47%
2019/20	92	-4.17%	2,564	3.6%

*Pre Brighter Futures for Children, which became operational on 3 December 2018.

Outcomes for those investigated to a completion (excluding those resolved via ADR and those eventually withdrawn)

Outcome	Number	% of Total
Upheld	10	14.9%
Partially upheld	22	32.8%
Not upheld	25	37.3%
No outcome	1	1.5%
Multiple outcomes	9	13.5%
Total	67	100

Timescales

Total Investigated to an Outcome	In Timescale	% of Total	Over Timescale	% of Total
67	26	38.8%	41	61.2%

Total Resolved Informally	In timescale	% of Total	Over Timescale	% of Total
16	6	37.5%	10	62.5%

Main theme of all complaints received during 2019/20

(NOTE: This includes all complaints received and resolved informally, withdrawn, and investigated to an outcome at Stage 1, but does not include complaints investigated at Stages 2 & 3, as these themes are duplicates of Stage 1)

Theme of complaint	Number	% of Total
Communication	4	4.3%
Data breach	1	1.1%
Financial issue	1	1.1%
Quality of service provided	69	75%
Staff conduct	17	18.5%
Total	92	100

Who the complaint was received from

Who made the complaint	Number	% of Total
Advocate	5	5.4%
Carer	3	3.3%
Child / Young Person	5	5.4%
Extended Family (Grandparents / Aunts & Uncles, Etc)	11	12%
Foster Parent	2	2.2%
Parent (Incl. Adopted Parents)	66	71.7%
Total	92	100

The majority of complaints are from the birth parents who disagree with social care involvement and outcomes from assessments, care plans and wish to challenge a professional decision. Complaints of

this nature are inevitable, however high-quality record keeping, clear communication with a clear distinction between fact and opinion reduces the opportunity for dispute.

Complaints received by team

Team	No of complaints
Access & Assessment Team	21 (22.8%)
Children Looked After Teams	30 (32.6%)
Children & Young Persons' Disability Team	9 (9.8%)
Children's Single Point of Access Team	1 (1.1%)
Court Team	4 (4.3%)
Family & Friends Team	1 (1.1%)
Family Intervention Teams	20 (21.7%)
Fostering Team	1 (1.1%)
IRO/QA Team	3 (3.3%)
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	2 (2.2%)
Total	92

The three areas which received the highest number of complaints were the Children Looked After teams with 30 (32.6%), the Access & Assessment teams with 21 (22.8%), and the Family Intervention teams with 20 (21.7%). This can mainly be attributed to the challenging circumstances in which these particular services work in and the volume of their direct contact with the customers.

Methods used to make a complaint

Method	Number	% of Total
E-mail	32	34.8%
In Person	1	1.1%
Letter	13	14.1%
Telephone	42	45.7%
Webform	4	4.3%
Total	92	100

The above demonstrates that the complainants have a number of methods they can use to contact the Customer Relations team with their complaints.

Demographic Information

Ethnicity	Number of complaints received	% of Total
Mixed Black African & White	1	1.1%
Not Stated	83	90.2%
White British	8	8.7%
Total	92	100

For equality monitoring purposes in 2019/20, staff have been encouraged to seek personal demographic information from people who make a complaint to help assess if there are groups of people who are proportionally complaining more or less and to explore the possible reasons. We have found that people who complain do not always wish to state their ethnicity.

The offer of the translation service and easy read versions of complaint responses are made available by the customer relations & information governance manager to those complainants who need these.

Complaints from young people Involving advocates

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, ten complaints were received from young people, of which five were received via the advocacy provider.

The customer relations information governance manager also meets BFFC teams and managers to reinforce the importance of capturing verbal complaints. Staff are encouraged to record and analyse comments or concerns, as many children’s and young people’s issues are resolved this way rather than using the complaints process. If the young person is unhappy but does not wish to make a formal complaint, the Customer Relations team also offers to try to resolve matters informally.

Local Government And Social Care Ombudsman

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) received five representations from dissatisfied service users for issues relating to BFFC. This is two more than the previous year. Of the five cases, the Ombudsman investigated four cases. One case was upheld, one case was not upheld and two cases were closed at the request of the complainant and due to lack of information from the complainant. The other case had not progressed through the complaints procedures so was rejected by the Ombudsman as premature.

In respect of the upheld complaint, the Ombudsman asked the council to apologise and provided financial redress.

The Ombudsman did not issue any formal reports finding maladministration by BFFC.

Benchmarking

Attempts to collate information from our statistical neighbouring authorities have proven to be difficult over the years. However, through the Southern Regional Complaints Managers Group which the customer relations manager is a member of, she has obtained the following information. This should not be used as a direct comparison as the size of the authority and the number of referrals to children’s services would differ to that of Reading. It is also worth noting that each authority records their data and report in different formats and Slough Borough Council/Slough Children’s Services Trust is not part of the southern regional complaints managers group.

Statutory complaints investigated & outcomes for other neighbouring authorities:

Local Authority (or company)	Number of complaints investigated	Number of Complaints upheld or partially upheld
West Berkshire	143	8%

Bracknell Forrest Council	77	1.29%
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	19	83%
Wokingham Borough Council	Requested but no provided.	
Slough Children's Services Trust	28	50%

Subject Access Requests (SARs)

The Customer Relations team processes all SARs requests for BFFC. These are open and closed children's social care cases (historical cases where paper and microfiche files are held at the records centre) and Special Education Needs (SEN) cases.

In 2019/20, the Customer Relations team received 21 requests for records relating to BFFC. Of these, seven were not progressed either due to no records being held or a lack of further contact from the requestor.

Of the remaining 14, two were processed within the 30-day timescale, and 12 were processed over timescale. The main reasons for the requests being processed over timescale were due to the size of the files the team had to redact, restricted access to historical cases where the paper files are kept at Darwin Close and the need for these to be copied from microfiche and scanned before redactions can be completed. In SEN cases, information is held on the EMS (Education) system as well as shared files and emails. These have to be searched, converted to PDF and redacted before the file can be shared with the requestor.

In all cases the Customer Relations team and the Information Governance team has kept in regular contact with the requestor to ensure they were kept up to date on the progress of their request.

Compliments

In the year 2019/20, 74 compliments were received and logged for BFFC. This is an increase of 51 from the previous year when 23 were received. They were received by the following teams:

- Multiple teams within children's services – 19
- LADO – 2
- Family Intervention – 12
- Early Years teams – 3
- Children Looked After team – 11
- School Standards – 1
- School Improvements – 1
- Access & Assessment – 10
- Community Adolescent Support team – 1
- Fostering team – 7
- Audit & Investigations – 1
- Youth Offending Service – 1
- Transformation Programme team – 2

- Options team – 1

The following are some examples of compliments received:

Family Intervention Team

I cannot articulate how much of a difference Tammy (allocated worker) has made to us in terms of support and guidance. She is simply brilliant!

Family Intervention Team

I am writing on behalf of the family and professionals regarding the excellent work that Barry has undertaken with this family and their situation. Before Barry became involved, we all felt we had reached a stalemate (due to lots of reasons which we understood but were still frustrated by!) and since Barry took over the case these issues have been worked on tirelessly and the family are now in such a good place that support can be withdrawn.

Early Years Team

I just wanted to thank you for arranging such a useful evening. It was clearly well organised and having Ofsted there to give us an overview of the consultation and what to expect from the new framework was really informative and proved just the right amount of information to process.

CLA Team

We want to say what a pleasure it is to work with Nadine and how effective she is in working in a joined up multiagency way to support the families we are working together with. Nadine keeps us informed and actively involved and utilises the specialist knowledge and skills our service can offer effectively.

Access and Assessment

Our social worker made me feel better and happy and make me have a better life since it started.

Appendix B

Contact information: How to make a complaint

Some complaints can be sorted out by discussing your problem with your social worker or a manager. If you want to make a complaint, you can contact the Customer Relations team, phone, letter, in person or by email. Telephone the Customer Relations & Information Governance Manager (Complaints & Representations) on 0118 937 2905 or e-mail: socialcare.complaints@reading.gov.uk.

If you wish to make your complaint to us in writing, our address is:

Customer Relations Team
Reading Borough Council
Floor 2 North Front
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

You can also text us with your complaint, type SPKUP & your message to 81722. Your complaint will be recorded and if we can't sort out the problem immediately it will be passed for further investigation and action.

The Customer Relations team can take your complaint over the telephone and explain the complaints procedure in more detail or send you a leaflet explaining how to complain. The leaflet is also available in council buildings or via the Brighter Futures for Children's website (www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org). You can also use these contact details to tell us if you have a concern (but do not want to make a complaint) or if you want to make a compliment about a service.