



London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	Annual Children's Statutory Complaints Report
Report to	Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Panel
Date of Meeting	30 th October 2023
Cabinet Member	Cllr Abdul Abdullahi
Executive Director / Director	Tony Theodoulou – Executive Director, People Anne Stoker – Director of Children's Services
Report Author	Will Wraxall – Complaints, MEQs and Corporate Functions Manager
Ward(s) affected	All wards
Classification	Part 1

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the annual report on Children's Statutory Complaints, as the Council is required to publish each year. The report provides insight into complaints received and upheld, identified themes in complaints, performance in responding promptly to complaints, and the actions proposed to improve experience for children and their families going forward.

Main Considerations for the Panel

2. During 2022/23, Enfield Council received a total of 29 Stage 1 Children's Social Care statutory complaints. This is a decrease in volume of 9 complaints compared to the previous year. There were two stage 2 investigations, and one stage 3 panel held.
3. Statutory complaint processes cover the care aspects of Children's Services, for which the complaints process which the Council must operate is laid out within legislation. It does not cover other aspects of Children's work outside the process of assessing and providing care, and it does not cover Education or Special Educational provision.

4. 17% of complaints were fully upheld, and 44% were partially upheld. The most common upheld element was staff conduct, with 5 upheld incidences. The addition of upheld statistics is a new aspect of the report facilitated by new complaint management software.
5. 73% of stage one complaints were responded to within the statutory timescale. This is below the Council's target of 95%. The late responses were due to cases being particularly complex and requiring additional time to investigate, and sometimes due to absence or leave of key officers relevant to the complaint investigation. Additionally, services have on many occasions reached out to customers to arrange meetings to discuss issues before providing a formal response. This can occasionally make responses late, however, the early evidence suggests that this approach can promote more mutually accepted resolutions, and reduce the number of complaint escalations.
6. Key learning themes were identified as:
 - a. Explaining processes effectively to customers;
 - b. Delays in stage 2 escalations;
 - c. Quality of response; and
 - d. Turnover of social workers for individual families

Actions are proposed in the report to address these areas and improve experience for families, with the aim to further reduce incoming complaints in future.

Background and Options

7. The Council is required to publish its annual report on statutory complaints. The report provides the Council with the opportunity to reflect on complaints that have been received, and how these can help the Council to identify ways in which the experience of children and families can be further improved and a better quality of service delivered. The actions proposed in the report are designed to address particular areas which the Council has identified as trends in complaints.

Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies

8. The Complaints report aids in improving the service delivered to families and children through the social care provision operated by the Council. It assists in assuring that the Council's services do not merely meet statutory requirements, but are delivered in a person-centred manner, with effective, quality care and resolutions for families.

Report Author: Will Wraxall
Complaints, MEQs and Corporate Functions Manager
will.wraxall@enfield.gov.uk
0208 132 1426

Appendices

Appendix A – Annual Children’s Statutory Complaints Report