

**To the Chair and Members of the
SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
PANEL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE – COMPLAINTS AND
COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Lead Member for Children’s Services Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Services to Families and support to Lead Member for Children’s Services)	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The local authority is currently implementing an improvement plan to improve the quality and consistency of service provision across Children and young People’s Services.

Progress has been made by almost halving the number of agency social workers and recruiting in place permanent staff with the ‘right attitude, vision and ambition’. In addition, management oversight and supervision has improved to ensure that work is progressed in a timely way.

Together, these key improvements are helping to provide a more stable workforce, and to support the quality and consistency of practice – improvements that are reflected in the current analysis of complaints and compliments received by the service.

In 2013/14, the number of complaints received reduced by 35% from 232 to 151, whilst the number of compliments increased from 11 to 29.

Furthermore, during this reporting period there has been a significant reduction in the number of investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) – from 11 cases in 2012/13 to six in 2012/13.

Of the six cases investigated by the LGO, four were closed with no further action as the LGO were satisfied with the actions taken by the Council to resolve the complaint.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an Exempt Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That the Children and Young People's Service – Complaints and Compliments Annual Report is accepted.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. In Children and Young People's Service it is recognised how important the developing of a culture in which complaints are viewed as positive and as a potential learning opportunity. It is the aim of the complaint team to carefully listen to the complainant and to recognise the importance of a swift positive and outcome focused response.

The theme of customer focus is prevalent within the social care complaints service. Work continues to improve the 'first contact' concept within the complaint service. The service remains committed to responding to customer feedback and customer satisfaction.

BACKGROUND

5. The Children's Social Care Statutory complaints procedure stipulates that an annual report must be produced for complaints made under the Children's Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The procedure further requires that the report should provide a mechanism by which the local authority can be kept informed about the operation of its complaints and representations procedure; should be presented to staff, the relevant management committee and be made available to the regulator and general public.

This report provides information about complaints made during the twelve-month period between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6. Not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

7. Not applicable.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

8.

Priority	Implications
<p>We will support a strong economy where businesses can locate, grow and employ local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
<p>We will help people to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
<p>We will make Doncaster a better place to live, with cleaner, more sustainable communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
<p>We will support all families to thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
<p>We will deliver modern value for money services.</p>	<p>To improve the quality and consistency of service provision</p>
<p>We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.</p>	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

9. Not applicable.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. Regulation 13 of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 requires all local authorities to monitor the arrangements they have made with a view to ensuring that they comply with these regulations in so far as they regulate the procedure for the consideration of representations under Section 26 of the Children Act 1989.

11. They must keep a record of each representation under Section 26 received, the outcome of each representation, and whether there was compliance within the time limits specified. Every local authority must as soon as possible after the end of each financial year, compile a report on the operation in that year of the procedure set out in the Regulations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS *(Insert where applicable – see guidance)*

13. Not applicable.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

14. Not applicable.

CONSULTATION

15. This report has significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement		Crime & Disorder	
Human Resources		Human Rights & Equalities	
Buildings, Land and Occupiers		Environment & Sustainability	
ICT		Capital Programme	

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. The Children and Young People's Service – Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2013-14 (attached).

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Featherstone, Business Manager
Telephone: 01302 736542
E-mail: peter.featherstone@doncaster.gov.uk

Eleanor Brazil
Director, Children and Young People's Service