

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Doncaster Children's Trust Annual Complaints and Compliments report 2015/16

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides oversight and analysis of the Children's Trust annual complaints and compliments report.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

2. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to:
 - Note and evaluate the performance information and the resultant analysis in the complaints and compliments report;
 - Question the Chief Executive of the Children's Trust on the performance and the implications this has, or may have, for the children and young people of Doncaster;
 - Use the information in this report, the areas for discussion identified at paragraph by the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills to support the challenge by the panel of the Children's Trust.
 - Acknowledge the compliments received and the good practice which this reflects;
 - Make requests for future further development of the report and follow up evidence where appropriate, in order to provide further assurance.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy. This is achieved through making robust recommendations, monitoring performance of Council and external partners and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

5. Production and publication of the annual complaints report is a statutory requirement of the Local Authority Social Services Children Act 1989 representations procedure (England) regulations (2006).
6. The submission of feedback, be it a complaint, compliment or comment, is an important means by which children, young people and families can make partnership organisations aware of their concerns and experiences. By the same token, it is important to know when things have gone well so that that good experience and learning can be shared and reinforced.
7. A 'complaint' may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation or its staff, affecting an individual customer, or group of customers.' A 'compliment' may be defined as an 'expression of admiration or praise'. A 'comment' may be defined as 'a remark, idea or suggestion about the availability, delivery or nature of a service, which are not criticisms, but which may require a response.'
8. Most significantly, complaints and compliments are an invaluable source of learning and as an (often undervalued) performance improvement evidence base and mechanism, for challenging poor practice, policies and procedure, which should lead to service improvement. This is, therefore, an area of immense importance for service development and in meeting the needs of inspectorates, such as Ofsted. A 'good' children's service delivery organisation will not only show that it has managed complaints efficiently and effectively, but more importantly, how it has used that information appropriately to change the way in which services are planned, commissioned and delivered, so as to optimise the needs of children, young people and families.

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR DISCUSSION ARISING FROM THE DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

9. The regulations prescribe a schedule of information which must be contained within the report, against which this report complies, save for the following: -
 - Which customer groups made the complaints
 - A summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity of complainants
 - Learning and service improvement including changes to services that have been implemented and details of any that have not been implemented;
10. It may be that the capacity constraints which the Trust has referenced have impacted on the delay in production of the report and in future years it may be that a commitment should be made to produce this report within 3 calendar months of the year end.

At Paragraph 4.7 is there a reason as to why 6 cases exceeded the 20-day time limit at quarter 4 and a higher proportion at stage 1 overall?

There is no year on year comparison of performance in the report; this may be due to the staffing changes referenced within the report. The staffing changes appear to have impacted on the completeness of the reporting for 2015/16. In addition, there appear to have been changes to the reporting methodology between this report and

the previous year's report. The Trust acknowledges that reporting was not sufficiently robust until Quarter 4 of the reporting year, however, this makes meaningful assessment of performance and any progress difficult and needs to be rectified in future reports. There is recognition in the report that this is an area for improvement.

There are no financial considerations in the report – with regard to the engagement of the Independent investigator at stage 2 and any settlements which were made to complainants, if none were made, this should be recorded.

Paragraph 7.2 identifies that there is an area for improvement at the interface between the Council's central contacts system and the Trust's own process – is this being captured by the revised service level agreement?

In paragraph 5 analyses of complaints are made, but this would benefit from more detail as to how the lessons learned have been translated in to changes to policy or practice and whether this has been embedded into supervisions and training and development with front line practitioners.

It is pleasing that the report recognises good practice in the compliments paragraph (No. 6) although there is no mention as to how good practice which is evident, is shared and embedded across the workforce and paragraph 7.10 suggests there may be some under reporting. In a similar vein, comments which are neither complimentary, or critical, of the service but which provide value as to future service development should be captured.

11. IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES

Outcomes	Implications
<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority – creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans • Mayoral priority: protecting Doncaster's vital services 	<p>The Council and the Trust as major partners in the Children and Families Partnership Board share the Children's Plan outcome that all children should achieve their potential – in removing barriers and developing good quality service delivery children will be able to access the benefits of a thriving economy and will themselves be participants in creating and sustaining the strength of the economy.</p>
<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our Communities • Mayoral priority: Bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Ensuring children and young people are free and feel from harm are key ambitions of both the Council and the Trust.</p>
<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our communities • Mayoral priority: bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Delivering against the service delivery contract between the Council and the Trust has clear implications for safeguarding communities, in reducing risk and exposure of risk to children; improved early help and thus better outcomes for families.</p>

Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance	Ofsted, in its inspection report, commented favourably on the relationship and governance arrangements between the Council and the Trust, recognising that formal arrangements for monitoring and challenge exceed the requirements set out in the contract between the two organisations.
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

12. Action taken to address complaints and compliments and lessons learned should further reduce the risk of underperformance leading to a material detriment for children, young people and families in the Borough.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The production of the annual complaints and compliments report is a statutory requirement under the relevant children's legislation.
The reporting of this report to the Scrutiny panel enables the panel to consider matters in the public interest.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

CONSULTATION

16. The Chief Executive of the Trust has been consulted on the content of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

17. Doncaster Children's Services Trust annual compliments and complaints report 2015 /2016 – Appendix 1

CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR

18. Paul Thorpe; Quality Assurance and Performance manger Commissioning and Business Development, Learning, Opportunities and young People. Directorate. 01302 862116

Background Papers

Service delivery contract between Doncaster Council and Doncaster Children's Services Trust

**Damian Allen, Director
Learning Opportunities and Skills (DCS)**