

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

Monday, 3 September 2018

10.00 am

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

NB. Members are requested to ensure that their Laptops/Tablets are fully charged before the meeting

John Tradewell
Director of Strategy, Governance and Change
23 August 2018

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 10 July 2018** (Pages 1 - 6)
4. **Quarterly Performance Update against Safeguarding Indicators** (Pages 7 - 10)

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care & Wellbeing
5. **Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Adult's Social Services Annual Report 2017/18** (Pages 11 - 48)

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care & Wellbeing
6. **Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Children's Social Services Annual Report 2017/18** (Pages 49 - 78)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
7. **Edge of Care Inquiry** (Pages 79 - 110)

Report of the Inquiry Group
8. **Work Programme** (Pages 111 - 118)
9. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

10. Child Sexual Exploitation - Learning From Reviews

(Pages 119 - 124)

(exemption paragraph 7)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Committee Membership

Ann Beech	Jason Jones
Mike Davies	Natasha Pullen
John Francis (Chairman)	Paul Snape
Syed Hussain	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Trevor Johnson	Mike Worthington

Note for Members of the Press and Public

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Scrutiny and Support Manager: Tina Gould Tel: (01785) 276148

Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on 10 July 2018

Present: Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Attendance	
Mike Davies	Natasha Pullen
Syed Hussain	Paul Snape
Trevor Johnson	Mike Worthington
Jason Jones	

Also in attendance: Mark Sutton and Alan White

Apologies: Ann Beech and John Francis

PART ONE

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

12. Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 8 June 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 8 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

13. Provision of Places of Safety under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had previously raised concerns over individuals being detained under Section 136 (S136) of the Mental Health Act (MHA) being taken to Police Stations and retained in police cells rather than a health-based Place of Safety. The Police and Crime Act 2017 made the use of Police Stations as Places of Safety a “never event”. Prior to this there had been a reliance on police stations to “hold” citizens awaiting a MHA assessment.

Staffordshire currently had two health based Places of Safety (PoS), one in Newcastle and one in Stafford, with a number of routes for individuals detained under S136. The main course of action would be for a Police Constable or Street Triage staff to bring the individual into the PoS.

The County Council has representation at S136 operational meetings. Through the Operational meetings it has been reported that, since December 2017, there has been no detentions under S136 in Police Custody Suites. There had been a reduction in the use of S136 over the last year, although there had been a slight increase in S136 for

under 18s. Members also heard that on 14 May 2018 there had been a Police And Crime Act (PACA) review, at which point there had been no adults or children detained under S136 at a Police Station since the commencement of PACA. The Select Committee received details of the number of assessments undertaken each month since the introduction of PACA.

The Select Committee were reassured with the work undertaken to ensure those detained under S136 were taken to health based PoS and were never routinely retained in Police Custody. They agreed that the Chairman should write to the PCC on their behalf to allay his concerns.

RESOLVED – That the Select Committee Chairman write to the Staffordshire PCC advising him of their reassurance in the work undertaken to ensure those detained under S136 of the MHA are taken to health based PoS and never routinely retained in police custody.

14. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan

[Robert Simpson, Customer Services Group Manager (Stafford Borough Council) and DCI Nicola Furlong (Staffordshire Police) also in attendance for this item]

The Select Committee has regularly received updates on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since 2014. CSE continues to be a priority for Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and its partners under their Child Sexual Abuse strategic priority. Members were updated on the work of the Child Sexual Abuse Forum (CSAF), its CSE Action Plan and the CSE Outcomes Framework and Risk Factor Matrix.

Policies and protocols for Staffordshire licensing authorities in terms of issuing taxi licenses had been agreed. This had included level 1 safeguarding training and enhanced DBS checks for all taxi drivers seeking a license within Staffordshire. A recent Staffordshire inter authority audit showed that all authorities were adhering to these policies and protocols. Some Councils were also requiring drivers to sign up to the CRB updating service, enabling information to be current rather than updated every three years. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group (SSRGB) were considering recommending that all Staffordshire licensing authorities make this a requirement.

Concerns were shared over Wolverhampton City Council taxi license charges. On average a license charge was between £190 to £220, however Wolverhampton were now charging £69. This had resulted in a significant increase in license applications to Wolverhampton, from 859 licenses last year to 9000 this year already. Concerns were raised as to whether the safeguarding standards and accountability were as stringent as those agreed within Staffordshire. There was an understanding that licenses were being awarded to drivers who may have a virtual base in Wolverhampton but who worked elsewhere. Representatives from Wolverhampton City Council were to be invited to the October meeting of the SSRBG to explain their licensing process and management. The Select Committee requested that they be informed of the outcome of this meeting. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People suggested that there may be an opportunity for the Local Government Association (LGA) to bring together some national

best practice guidelines which help address the concerns of inconsistency in licensing authority requirements. The Select Committee intends to write to the LGA outlining their concerns over the inconsistency of licensing protocols across the Country and suggest good practice guidelines would be beneficial.

Taxi drivers used for school journeys for vulnerable young people underwent enhanced DBS checks and were included on an accredited framework of drivers. Members queried whether drivers and/or passenger assistants were required to have first aid training. This was not currently a requirement, although first aid kits were carried on all licensed vehicles. Members requested that the advice and guidance with respect to the use of first aid by taxi drivers/passenger assistants be clarified and this detail be shared with Members.

Members also discussed the potential difficulties and anxieties for parents of vulnerable young people who use the school taxi service. In particular their possible reluctance to challenge a driver if they had concerns because of the possible consequences for their child. It was suggested that, where a parent felt uncomfortable, they should contact the school and they would be able to check/challenge the driver on arrival. Members also heard that the licensing authority undertook routine checks at the school gate to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the transport and/or driver. Parents/guardians were also advised to check that taxi drivers had ID badges displayed and the taxi should have a plate. Members were also concerned that taxi drivers could be exploited and receiving below the national minimum wage. The County Commissioner for Community Safety, Children and Families agreed to explore this.

On querying whether District and Borough Councillors undertook the level 1 safeguarding training Members were informed that part of the licensing policy was for all councillors on a licensing committee to have undergone this training. However concerns were shared that not all local councils felt there was a need to train all their councillors (ie those not on a licensing committee), with an example shared of Cannock Chase District Council choosing not to request their Members undertake this training. It was suggested that a possible way forward was through the Safeguarding Board, with the offer of a presentation to the Council or using the designated Safeguarding Officer to promote the importance and relevance of this training. District and Borough Councils also had representation on Safeguarding subgroups and these representatives could also be used to promote the importance of training and in particular its relevance to their community safety responsibilities.

Members heard about the work of the CSE Coordinator. This post was funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and worked across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. Examples of how this post was working well were shared with the Select Committee, including the "Loud Mouth" event and the follow-on work undertaken by Stafford College.

The Select Committee noted that due to the complexity involved in implementation of the CSE Outcomes Framework, a decision had been taken to implement this through a phased plan. There had been difficulties with the difference in computer systems and differences in data analysis. The information collated would now be simpler and provide an overarching picture of risk. A working group had been established to develop a more

manageable and meaningful framework. It was suggested that this could be shared with the Committee.

A gap had been identified in the local coordination of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in schools. The OPCC hoped for a more consistent approach to the delivery of areas of PSHE, including CSE. They had provided some funding and were piloting an approach to PSHE in two Districts with a view to the learning from this being rolled out across the County. Members were aware that PSHE had a broader remit than safeguarding and that schools already had developed programmes for their PSHE. It was important to work with schools to help develop the safeguarding areas of the PSHE curriculum. A possible way forward was to engage with the designated safeguarding teacher within each school to help promote this programme of work.

Members also discussed the work of the CSE Panels which had been in place for three years. They were consistently reviewed year on year to ensure they were working effectively. As awareness increased more incidents were being brought to the Panels which were a good forum for information sharing. The recent focused Ofsted inspection had recognised the good work of the Panels. The next stage was to look at broader vulnerabilities, not just CSE.

Changes to the way in which Staffordshire Police manage their CSE team was shared with the Select Committee. From 3 September 2018 there will be a dedicated Child Protection Team, with 42 detective constables, 5 sergeants, 2 detective inspectors as well as an on-line team of 1 sergeant and 7 detective constables. This enabled a joined up approach and would make it easier for close working relationships with partners. There would also be an on-call function, with a child protection officer on call at all times.

Members noted that a six-monthly data report was produced on CSE at high, medium and low levels. Members discussed whether this report should be shared with the Select Committee to help inform their overview of CSE. In general Members felt that they were happy with the current report format which gave an explanation of the work being undertaken and therefore there was less opportunity for raw data to be misinterpreted.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the Select Committee be updated on the outcome of the October SSRGB meeting to which Wolverhampton City Council representatives have been invited to explain their licensing process, accountability and management;
- b) following the update from the SSRGB, the Select Committee write to the LGA outlining their concerns over inconsistency of licensing authority practices and protocols and suggesting there is a need for best practice guidance, specifically with regard to safeguarding;
- c) the good work of the licensing authorities in Staffordshire be applauded; and,
- d) the advice and guidance with respect to the use of first aid by taxi drivers/passenger assistants be clarified and these details shared with the Select Committee.

15. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Select Committee of discussions at the 29 May Triangulation meeting and subsequent discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to develop the work programme and to manage items. A further request was made for details of post 18 transition services and it was agreed that a briefing note would be produced and shared with members on this issue in the first instance.

RESOLVED – That the amended work programme be shared with Members after the meeting and that a briefing note on post 18 transition services be requested.

16. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below

The Committee then proceeded to consider reports on the following issues:

PART TWO

17. Child Sexual Exploitation Learning from Reviews - Briefing Note

(exemption paragraph 7)

RESOLVED – That this item be deferred to the September Select Committee meeting.

Chairman

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee - 3rd September 2018

Quarterly Performance Update against Safeguarding Adults' Indicators

Recommendations

1. For the Select Committee to consider the Quarterly Performance Update against Staffordshire County Council's Safeguarding Adults' Indicators.

Report of Cllr Alan White, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing and Cllr Gill Burnett, Cabinet Support Member for Adult Safeguarding

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

2. The Select Committee is being asked to consider the Quarterly Performance Update against Staffordshire County Councils Safeguarding Adults' Indicators.

Report

Background

3. The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other public bodies should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
4. Local authorities have specific statutory duties in relation to Safeguarding Adults. These are:
 - a. Lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens
 - b. Make enquiries, or request others to make them, when they think an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse or neglect and they need to find out what action may be needed
 - c. Establish Safeguarding Adults Boards, including the local authority, NHS and police, which will develop, share and implement a joint safeguarding strategy.
 - d. Carry out Safeguarding Adults Reviews when someone with care and support needs dies as a result of abuse or neglect and there is a concern that the local authority or its partners could have done more to protect them
 - e. Arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support a person who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or review, if required.

Safeguarding Adults definitions

5. The following terms are used routinely:
 - a. **Safeguarding Adults Concerns.** These are the specific risks of abuse or neglect that have been included in a referral.

- b. **Safeguarding Adults Referral.** A referral is new information passed to the Council including to Safeguarding Adults concerns. Referrals are considered initially to determine whether the risks are sufficiently serious to require an Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.
- c. **Section 42 Enquiry.** A Section 42 Enquiry is initiated where an adult has care and support needs and is identified through the referral process as being at significant risk of abuse or neglect and unable to protect themselves. An Enquiry officer will work with the adult/advocate and other agencies to investigate the concerns and implement appropriate protective measures.
- d. **Safeguarding Adults Plans.** Plans are implemented following a Section 42 Enquiry if there is a continued risk of abuse or neglect of a medium or high risk. Plans are intended to ensure that the adult has appropriate support and guidance to mitigate the risks and can serve to assist both the adult, their representative or professionals in identifying what support can be accessed at points of crisis. Plans will remain in place for as long as is necessary and will be reviewed regularly as needed and at least annually, and then closed when the risk of abuse or neglect has been reduced to low or removed.
- e. **Safeguarding Adult Outcomes.** Achieving the desired outcomes for the adult is imperative to ensure that the Safeguarding process is being completed in line with the Making Safeguarding Personal Agenda. This is a sector led initiative which aims to develop an outcomes focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances. It is about engaging with people about the outcomes they want at the beginning and middle of working with them, and then ascertaining the extent to which those outcomes were realised at the end. The work is supported by ADSS, the LGA and other national partners. It can be that the protection from abuse or neglect may have an impact on the adults emotional wellbeing and so the balance of this needs to be carefully considered and the persons wishes must be central to the safeguarding planning. In some cases the outcomes that the adult wants to achieve are vastly different to those that professionals involved deem appropriate and sometimes the outcomes are unachievable due to reasons outside the control of professionals involved.
- f. **Safeguarding Adult Reviews.** A Safeguarding Adult Review is a multi-agency review process which seeks to determine what relevant agencies and individuals involved could have done differently that could have prevented harm or death of an adult with care and support needs from taking place. The purpose of a SAR is not to apportion blame but identify learning. The Safeguarding Adult Board is responsible for carrying out SARS and reporting on any findings

Safeguarding Adults Data

6. For the reporting year 2016/17:

	National	Staffordshire
Number of concerns of abuse or neglect referred	364,165	5,529
Trend in number of concerns of abuse or neglect referred	Increase of 6% on 2015-16	Increase of 18% on 2015-16

Number of individual adults subject to a Section 42 Enquiry	101,145	1,977
Number of Section 42 Enquiries commenced	151,160	2,495
Trend in number of Section 42 Enquiries commenced	Increase of 6% on 2015-16	Decrease of 22% on 2015 - 16
Breakdown	60% female	54% female
	63% aged 65 or over	66% aged 65 or over
	Most common type of risk was Neglect and Acts of Omission: 35% of concerns	Most common types of risk were Neglect and Acts of Omission: 26; and Physical Abuse: 26% of concerns
	Most common location of risk was the adults' own home: 44% of concerns	Most common location of risk was the adults' own home: 50% of concerns

7. Staffordshire figures are comparable to national data, nationally during this period the percentage of number of concerns raised that led to a Section 42 enquiry is 41.5 % and in Staffordshire the data shows that 45.1 % of alerts convert into a section 42 enquiry. Whilst in Staffordshire there has been a significant increase in rate of referrals (18%) and a significant decrease in the numbers converting to section 42 enquiry, this has led to our conversion rate being more in line with the national data. The adult safeguarding team has since changed recording and is signposting more referrals to more appropriate agencies. The development of an add on for Care Director will further reduce the incorrect recording of information as safeguarding and so should reduce the number of alerts Staffordshire reports and give a more accurate picture of the rate of abuse and neglect referrals in Staffordshire.

Safeguarding Adults Performance

8. The summary below highlights the progress that the Council is making in relation to Safeguarding plans, reviews and outcomes at June 2018.

Successes	
<p>SA4b - Percentage of people adult safeguarding who achieve the outcomes they want although this indicator has fallen slightly over the last three months overall performance has remained high at 82.2% and continues to be well above target.</p> <p>SA3 Timeliness of safeguarding plan reviews has improved again over the last month (up to 59.2% compared to only 20% a year ago) and although the numbers are relatively low the drive to record these reviews seems to be making progress.</p> <p>SA5 The rate of repeat referrals to safeguarding is falling; 17.9% compared to 25% a year ago.</p>	<p>Some of this improvement may be attributed to better recording where multiple referrals are received for the same allegation or concern.</p> <p>It is legitimate for a proportion of enquiries to remain open for a long period, particularly where police enquiries are taking place.</p>
Underperforming but Recoverable	

<p>SA6 The number of safeguarding referrals and enquiries that remain open after 12 months has begun to creep up again (50 from a 17/18 outturn of 28)</p> <p>Currently only 14.5% of safeguarding referrals result in a safeguarding plan, although this is an increase compared to the 10% figure this time last year.</p>	<p>The target for 2018/19 has been set at 20%.</p>
<p>Challenges and Difficulties</p>	
<p>Nothing to report</p>	

Lessons for future years

9. Nationally and locally there has been a recognised over referral of concerns about people’s personal living circumstances. In Staffordshire this has been a particular issue with the West Midlands Ambulance Service and Penal services. West Midlands Ambulance Service had been referring in concerns relating to prisoners living conditions, e.g. that a cell is not an appropriate setting and therefore the adult is being neglected. The Safeguarding Team Manager has been exploring this with the relevant organisations with a view to bringing their Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in line with our own.
10. There have also been discussions at the Safeguarding Adults Board about repeat referrals. The intention is to conduct an audit to identify repeat referrals and the underlying reasons, with a view to developing multi-agency guidance that will set thresholds for appropriate referrals. This will help to ensure that risks are being appropriately assessed prior to a Safeguarding Adults referral and that people are being directed to the most appropriate agency if necessary at the earliest opportunity.

Link to Children’s Safeguarding Board:

11. We are fortunate in that John Wood is the Chair of both the Safeguarding Adults and Children’s Safeguarding Boards and therefore has an overview and insight into safeguarding issues across all ages. There has been a request following a Safeguarding Adult Review for the Safeguarding Adults Service to have access to the Children’s Safeguarding records to facilitate more comprehensive information sharing—particularly when planning ahead for the Preparing for Adulthood Pathways.

Link to Staffordshire County Council Strategic Plan

12. Safeguarding Adults supports the people to be healthier and more independent, and to feel safe, happier and more supported in and by their community. Safeguarding Adults is one of the Council’s highest risks, legally and reputationally, and it is crucial that it is effectively managed.

Contact Officer

Name and Job Title: Jo Sutherland – Statutory Services Lead and Principal Social Worker
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Local Members' Interest
N/A

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee - 3 September 2018

Customer Feedback and Complaints Service Adult's Social Services Annual Report 2017/18

Recommendation

1. That the Committee consider the Annual Report of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Adults Social Services 2017/18, taking the opportunity for any comments on the content of the report.

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

The Select Committee is being asked to consider the Annual Report of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Adult's Social Services 2017/18, with the service taking the opportunity for any comments on the content of the report.

Report

Background

1. The appended report fulfils the Council's duty to publish an Annual Report on the activity of the Statutory Complaints and Representation Service on behalf of the Council. The operation of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was established under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Local Authority Act 1970. The report provides information about activity during twelve months between April 2017 and March 2018 in respect of statutory complaints relating to Adult Social Care.
2. The Annual Report, Customer Feedback and Complaints Services, Adults Social Services 2017/2018 is being submitted for scrutiny and endorsement.
3. The report contains information about the nature of complaints received, together with responses provided and their handling by the Council.
4. Organisational Learning remains at the heart of the legislation. This is reflected in the function of the Responsible Person and Actions Plans that ensure steps are taken to improve, where services may have failed to deliver to an acceptable standard.

Contact Officer

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Appendices/Background papers

Appendix A - Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Adult Social Services, Annual Report 2017/18

Delivering the Difference Together



Putting the people of Staffordshire first



COMPLAINTS TEAM
STATUTORY ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18
ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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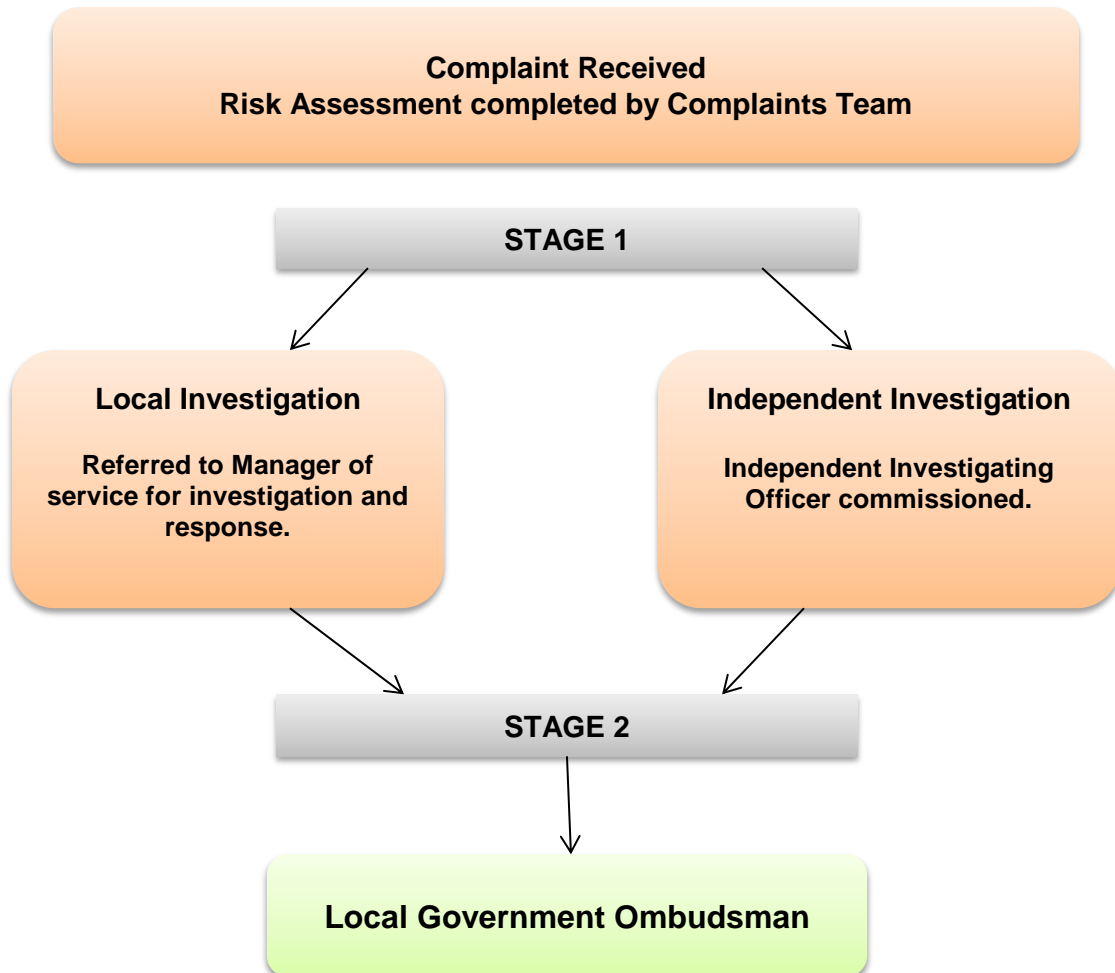
Introduction

This report provides information about complaints made during the twelve months between the 1 April 2017 and the 31 March 2018 under the complaints and representations procedures established under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Local Authority Act 1970.

From April 2012 Adult Social Care services were transferred over to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust now known as Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT). From April 2017 the Partnership Trust co-ordinates all statutory complaints which relate to Adult Social Care services that they are commissioned to provide. Complaint documentation is shared with the County Council's Complaints Team for reporting purposes and has been included in this year's Annual Report.

The Statutory Complaints Procedure

The Council has a statutory obligation to operate a complaints procedure concerning statutory provision for adults. This is in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. These regulations set expectations for the handling of complaints by Councils, NHS bodies, primary care providers and independent sector providers responsible for the provision of NHS and Social Care.



Criteria for Accessing the Statutory Complaints Procedure

Who can complain?

The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Local Authority Act 1970 places the following restrictions on who can access this procedure:

- Complaints under these procedures must be made by or on behalf of an eligible person and must be in respect of that person
- An eligible person is anyone for whom the Council has a power or duty to provide, or secure the provision of a service, and this need or possible need has come to the attention of the Council
- Complaints can be made on behalf of an eligible person where the eligible person lacks capacity to make the complaint themselves (In accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2008 or has given explicit and verified consent for the Complainant to act on their behalf).

Time Limit:

Section 12 of the statutory regulations advise that the complaint must be made no later than 12 months after the date in which the matter which is the subject of the complaint came to the notice of the complainant, unless the complainant has good reason for not making the complaint within this time limit.

Overview

Careful consideration is given to the operation of the Complaints Procedure to ensure an appropriate and proportionate response is provided. Communication, coordination and information sharing are critical and ensure that safeguarding measures are applied where necessary. In addition, liaison with the Council's Care Commissioning and the Care Quality Commission ensures a coordinated response to concerns about commissioned services. Similarly, dialogue with the office of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ensures that the Local Authority is able to take steps to resolve complaints locally where possible.

In line with the previous year, there has been a 28% increase in complaints received by Staffordshire County Council this year (2017/18). Consistent with last year this is due to the increase in complaints received regarding the financial re-assessments for non-residential care. The number of complaints investigated at the 'Independent Investigation' stage, has increased by 60%, with two complaints concerning the care provided by a home care agency and three complaints regarding residential care. The number of complaints investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has risen by 58% in comparison with the previous year. This is due to couple's financial re-assessments for non-residential care. The total amount of monies paid to complainants as an outcome of an Ombudsman investigation is £7,200; this is in recognition for the time and trouble in raising the complaint and any distress caused. Six complainants received a waiver or refund of care fees as a result of the Ombudsman's investigation.

The key themes investigated under Stage 1 of the complaints procedure this reporting year are regarding the change in domiciliary home care contracts. This resulted in a number of service users having to change to a different home care provider due changes within the Council's domiciliary care framework.

As in previous years, as a result of care charges not being discussed with service users prior to a care package/ respite being arranged, 20% of the complaints received resulted in charges being waived. This is slight increase in comparison to the previous year.

11% of the complaints received were in respect of the Brokerage Service. These were primarily in relation the length of time taken to source a care package or placement.

28% of complaints received by the Council related to the couple's financial re-assessment for non-residential charges which have taken place following the implementation of the Care Act 2014 and the changes made by the Council to how the rules are applied. This has resulted in an increased weekly contribution for home care services for some people.

'Lessons Learnt' from complaint investigations remain a key feature for the service and are always fed back to services and performance groups for action within the Council and Partnership Trust.

The Customer Feedback and Complaints Team continue to promote the early and effective resolution of complaints together with providing advice and support to those wishing to complain.

Local Investigation

Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, the Customer Feedback and Complaints Team received 208 complaints that have been directed for Local Investigation (160 County Council and 48 Partnership Trust).

Please note that from 1 April 2017, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust took over the responsibility of processing all complaints relating to adult social care services provided by the Trust (post April 2017). The Partnership Trust received **138** complaints which were handled via the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) instead of via the statutory complaint procedure.

Independent Investigations

Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 the Customer Feedback and Complaints Team undertook **5** Independent Investigations.

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, the Local Government Ombudsman received and considered **36** complaints which related to a service provided by Adult Social Care.

Comparison with Preceding Year

This year's figures indicate a 28% increase in the Local Investigation of complaints relating to Adult Social Care services provided by County Council compared to the previous year. There is also a 65% decrease in the Local Investigation of complaints regarding services provided by Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust. This is due to the introduction of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service providing a response to complaints in the first instance. PALS handled **138** complaints for Adult Social Care this financial year.

As with the previous year, the rise in complaints for services provided by the Council is due to an increase in complaints regarding the outcome of financial assessments for non-residential services following the implementation of the Care Act. However there has also been a rise in complaints due to the change in home care contracts which has resulted in some citizens care providers changing.

SCC Adult Social Care Services		
	2016-17	2017/18
Local Investigation	115	160
Independent Investigation	2	4
Local Government Ombudsman	12	28

Partnership Trust Adult Social Care Services		
	2016-17	2017-18
Local Investigation	135	48
Independent Investigation	0	1

Local Government Ombudsman	9	8
PALS	0	138

Staffordshire County Council Adult Social Care Services

Stage 1 – Local Investigation – Breakdown

The complaints procedure aims to resolve complaints at a local level within 10 days (with an extension to a further ten days where necessary). This is not a statutory time limit but a goal for effective complaints management. According to the complexity and needs for an effective investigation, this timescale can be extended by agreement with the complainant.

The current guidance suggests that the majority of complaints should be resolved locally, and frontline managers are encouraged to meet with complainants and attempt to address complaints in a swift and effective manner.

160 complaints were recorded under Stage 1 – Local Investigation during 2017/18.

Service	District (if applicable)	Number
Independent Futures		
	<i>Lichfield</i>	5
	<i>Stafford</i>	11
	<i>Cannock</i>	5
	<i>Moorlands</i>	1
	<i>Newcastle</i>	5
	<i>East Staffs</i>	3
	<i>Tamworth</i>	4
	<i>South Staffs</i>	6
	Total	40
Brokerage Service		18
Welfare Benefits Service – Financial Assessment's		45
Joint Finance Unit		
- (Residential and Non-residential Care)		23
- Debt Recovery		1
- Direct Payments Team		3
Extra Care Funding		
Care Commissioning;		
- Older People and Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment		22
- All Age Disability & Adult Mental Health		2
Domiciliary Home Care Agency <i>(external providers)</i>		3
Mental Health (Advanced Mental Health Practitioner)		1
Customer Feedback and		1

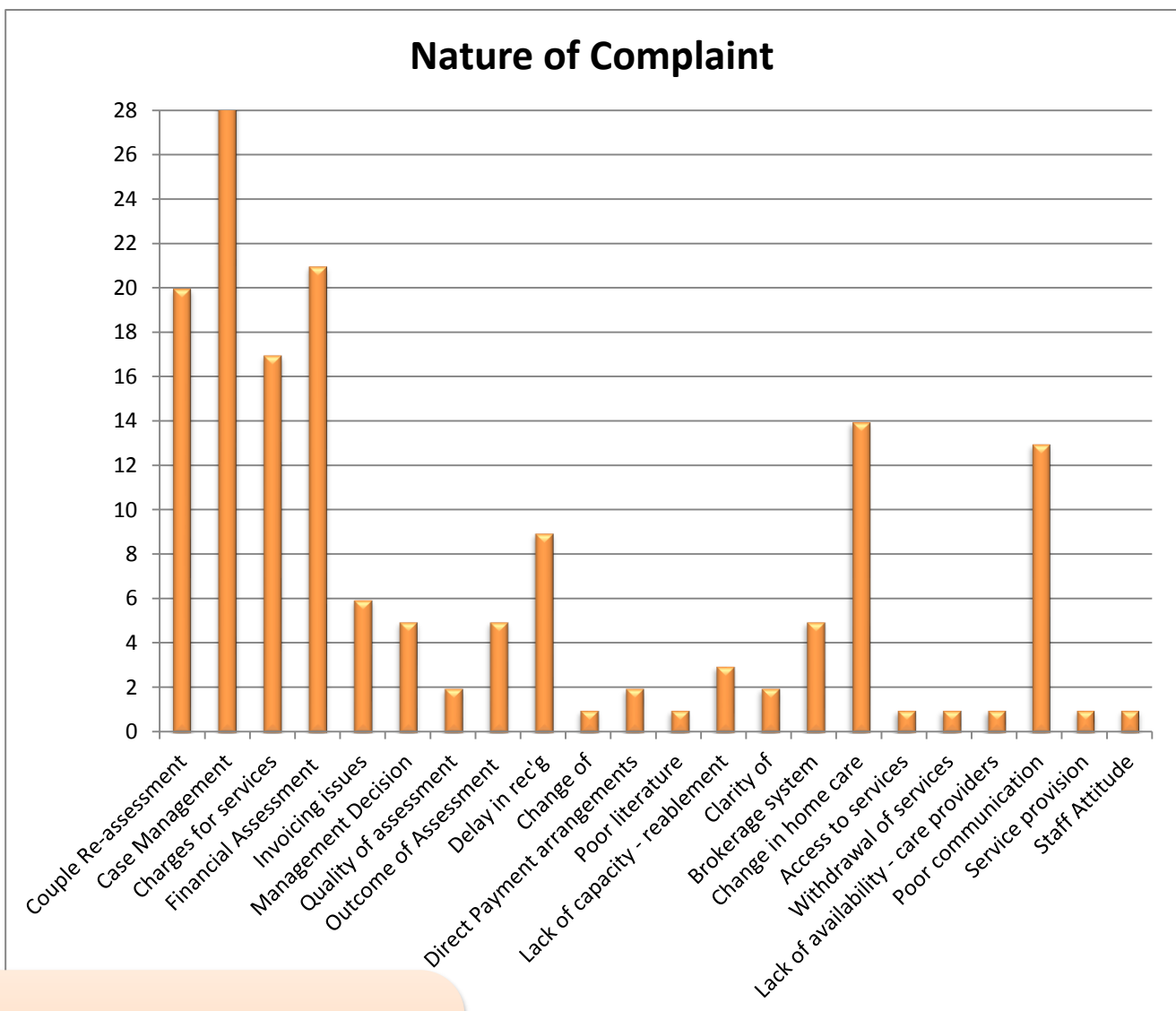
Complaints Team		
Legal Services		1
Total		<u>160</u>

Consistent with last financial year, 29% of the complaints received were in respect of financial assessment undertaken by the Welfare Benefits Services. This is following the change in policy following implementation of the Care Act 2014.

Care Commissioning have received an increase in Stage 1 complaints this year. This is due to the change in home care contracts which resulted in some citizen's care provider's changing.

Summary of Complaints Received – Adult Social Care (Council)

A total of 160 complaints were received concerning Adult Social Care services provided by the Council during the period 2017/18. The chart below provides an overview of the nature of the complaints received.

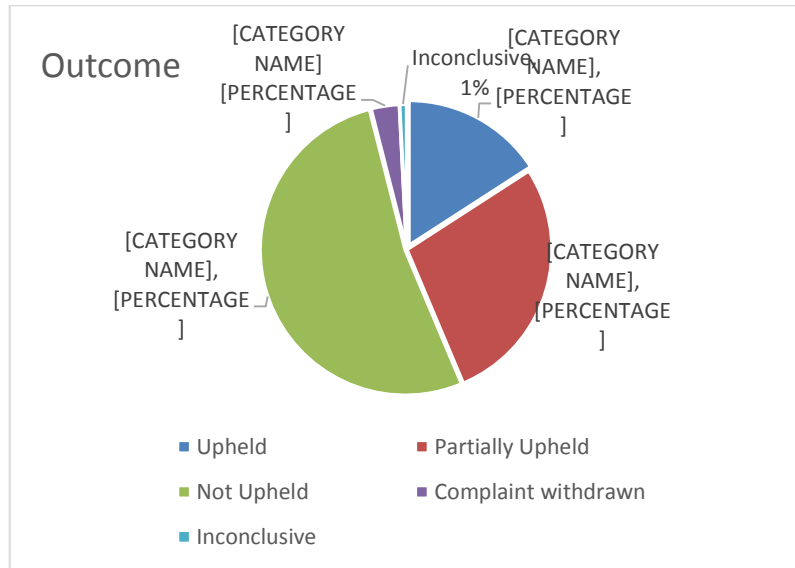


26% [top of page 5 says 28%?] of complaints received related to the financial contribution for non-residential care services following a financial re-assessment which had been undertaken in line with the Care Act 2014.

18% of complaints received related to Case Management (this is in respect of complaints which involve more than one concern and generally poor management of the service user's case). This is consistent with the previous year where complaints were received.

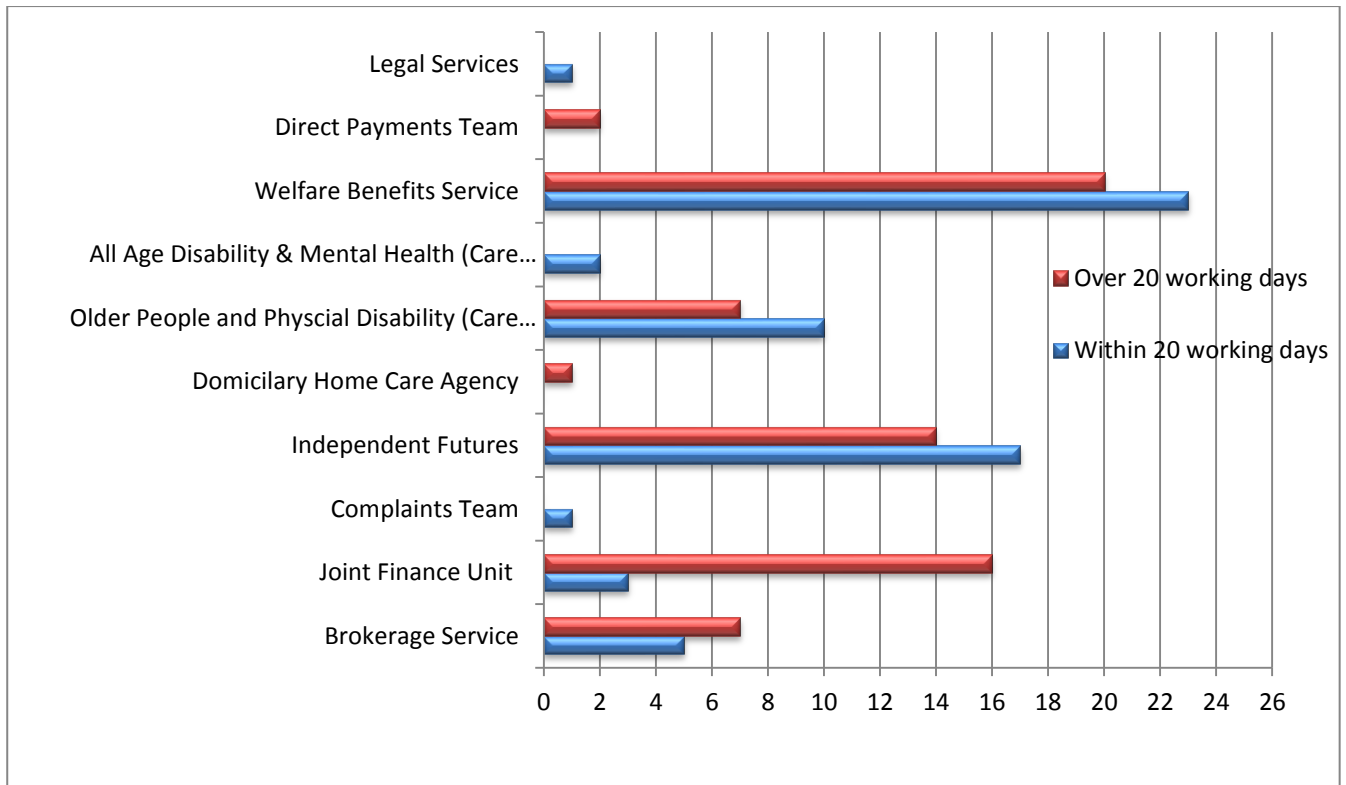
Stage 1 – Local Investigation Adults Social Care (Council) – Outcomes and Response Timescales

The chart below provides an overview of the outcome of the complaints investigated.



The timescale for responding to Stage 1 – Local investigation complaints is 20 working days. A total of 48% of complaints were responded to within timescale and 52% were closed out of timescale.

The chart below provides information on the response timescales for Local Investigations during 2017/18

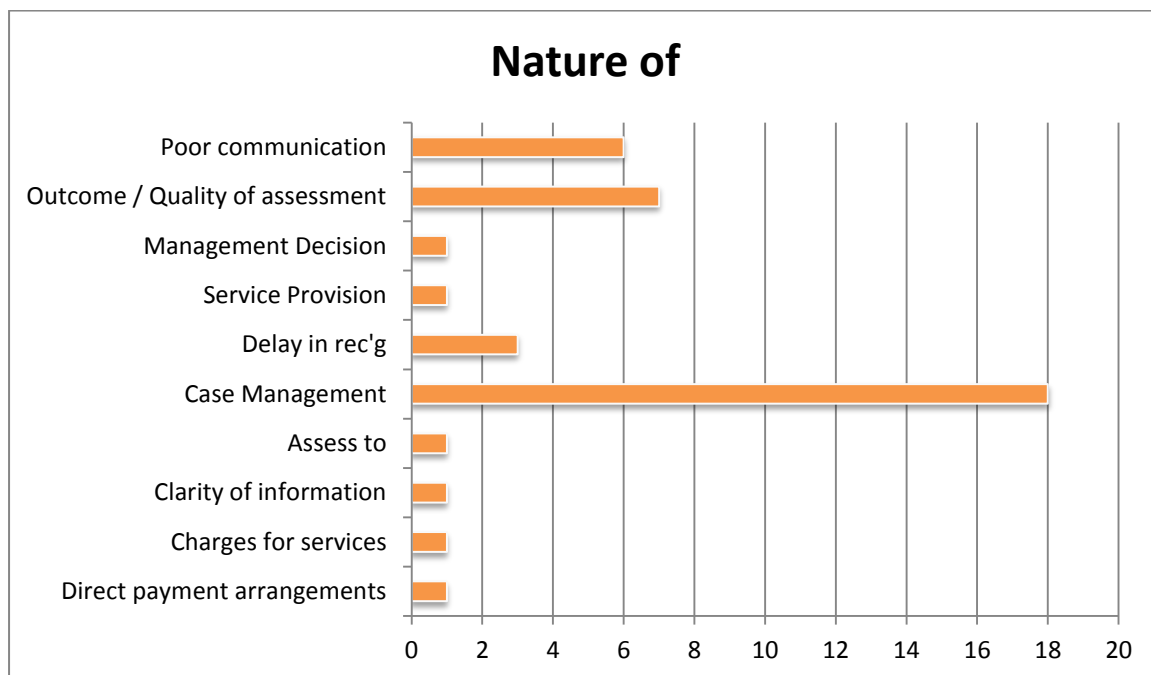


Stage 1 – Local Investigation Adult Social Care (Council) – Breakdown of Nature of Complaint and Outcomes by service

The charts below show the nature of complaint and outcome for services areas within Staffordshire County Council during 2017/18.

Adult Learning Disability Team (including Staffordshire Independent Service)

There has been a 20% rise in complaints received for Adult Learning Disability Team (ALDT) this reporting year in comparison with the previous year.

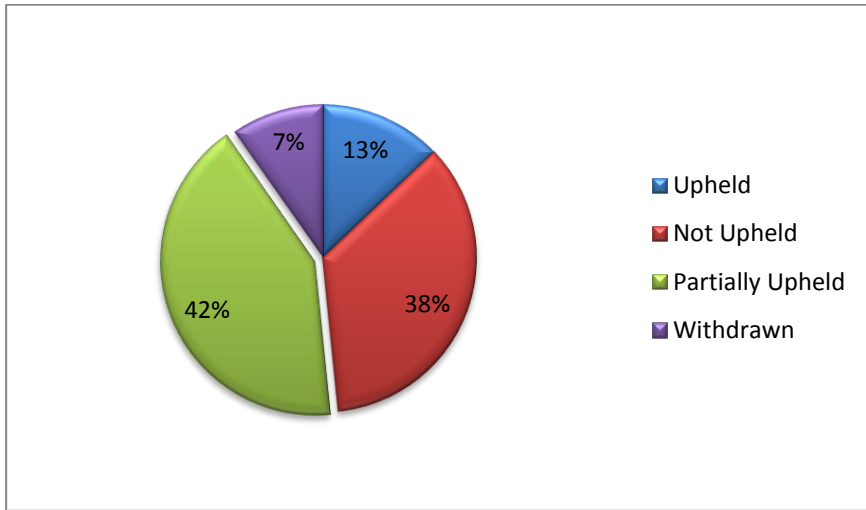


45% of complaints received for the Adult Learning Disability Team were regarding Case Management* and 18% of complaints were in respect of the quality / outcome of a social care assessment.

15% of complaints received were regarding poor communication from staff. This can include telephone calls not returned or correspondence unanswered.

**Case Management category is used when the complaint refers to more than one concern and general management of a case e.g. poor communication, delays in receiving a service, telephone calls not returned etc.*

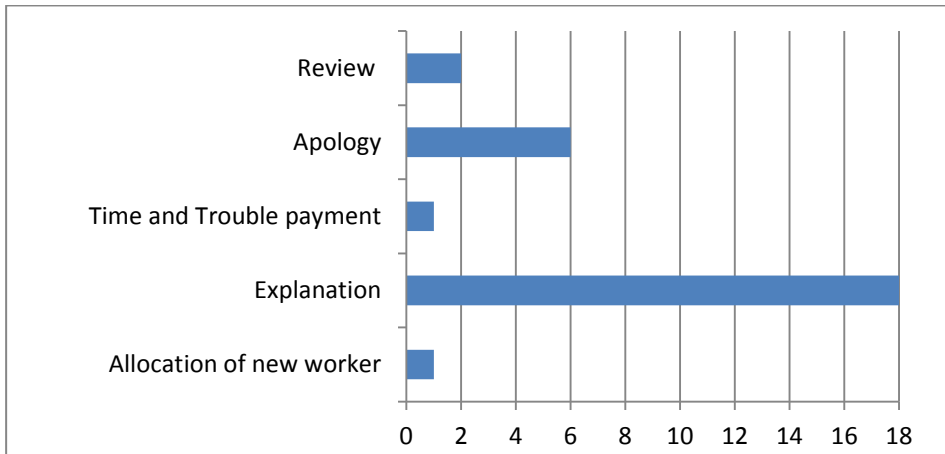
Outcome of Complaint



42% of complaints were Upheld and 38% of complaints closed were Not Upheld. At the time of writing the report 9 complaints remained open and under investigation within ALDT

86% of complainants were offered an apology/explanation as a result of the complaint investigation.

Recommendation / Learning Action

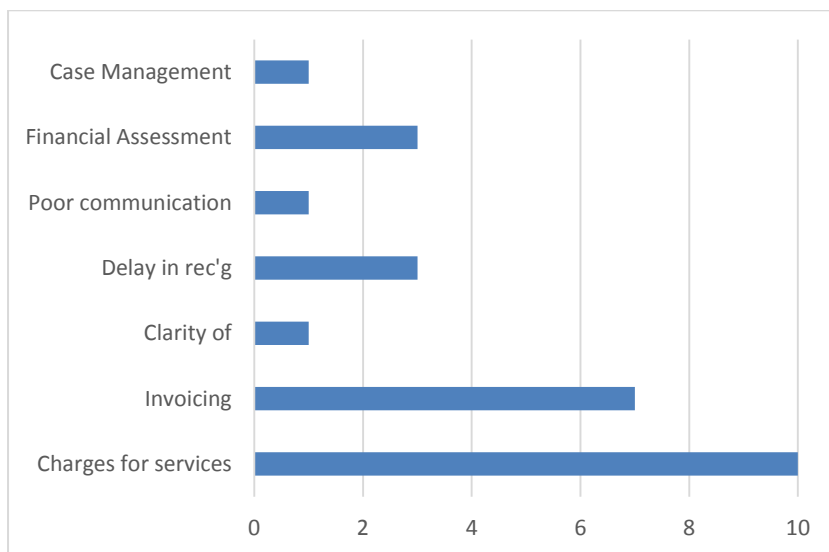


Organisational Learning and Recommendations;

- Address complaint with staff member during supervision session;
- Support to be provided in sourcing new placement.
- Review of case to be undertaken within 3 months.

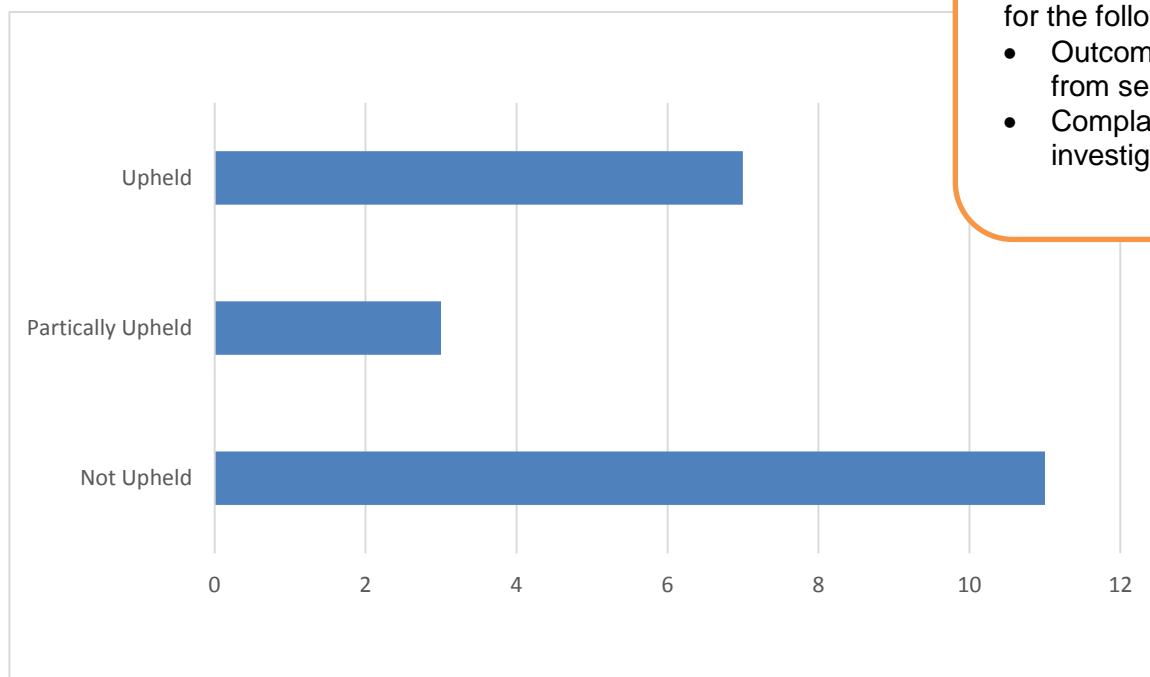
Financial Services (including Residential and Non- Residential Services, Debt Recovery and Direct Payments Team)

Nature of Complaint



65% of complaints received were regarding invoicing and charges for services. This includes service users being charged for services that they have not received e.g. home care visits missed.

Outcome of Complaint



6 complaints remain open for the following reasons;

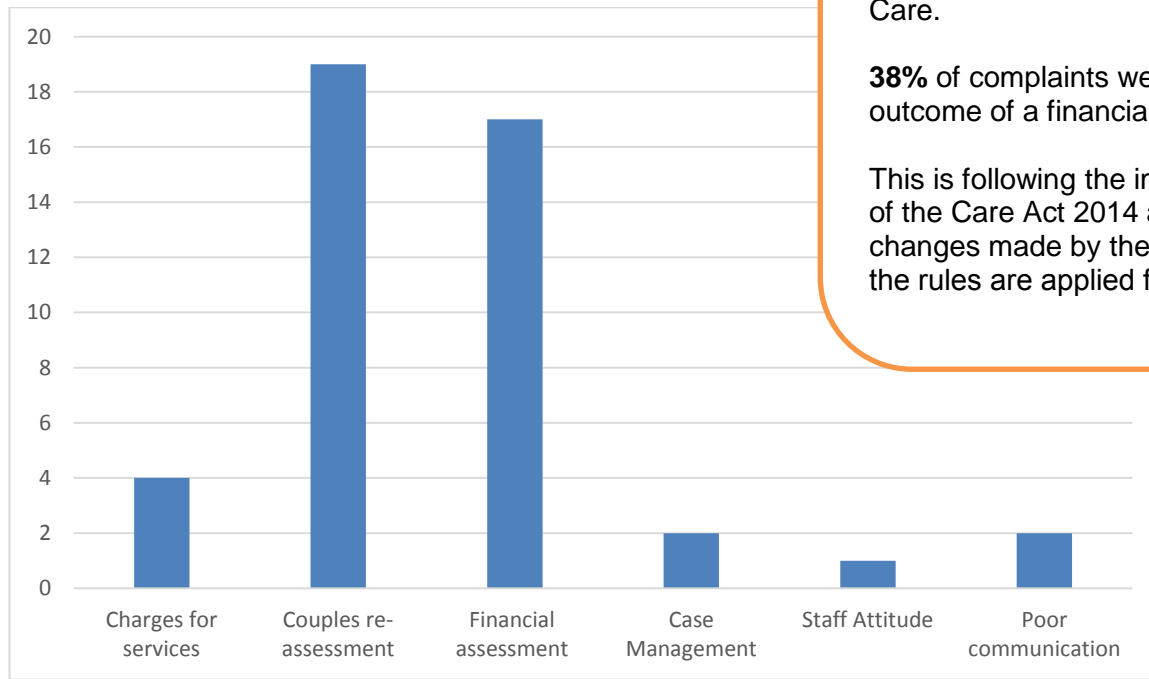
- Outcome not received from service.
- Complaint still under investigation

Resolutions and Organisation Learning

- Apology provided where complaints were Upheld
- Explanation of events provided to complainant
- Records updated.
- 2 complaints were offered a Time and Trouble payment of £250.
- Address staff issues via supervision
- 3 complaints resulted in the invoice being waived / reimbursement in full.
- Payment Plan offered.
- Processes being reviewed to ensure information regarding the Financial Assessment and Deferred Payment Agreement is relayed in an appropriate manner.

Welfare Benefits Service

Nature of complaint

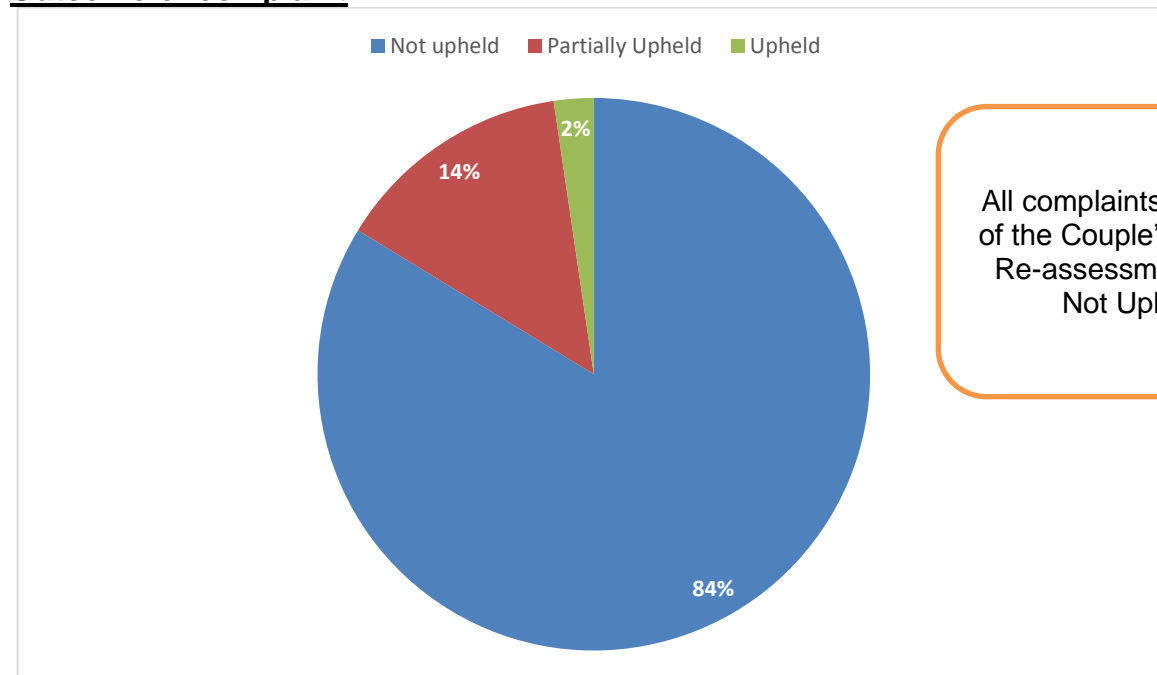


42% of complaints were regarding the outcome of the Couple's Financial Re-Assessment for Non-Residential Care.

38% of complaints were regarding the outcome of a financial assessment

This is following the implementation of the Care Act 2014 and the changes made by the Council to how the rules are applied for couple's

Outcome of complaint



All complaints in respect of the Couple's Financial Re-assessments were Not Upheld.

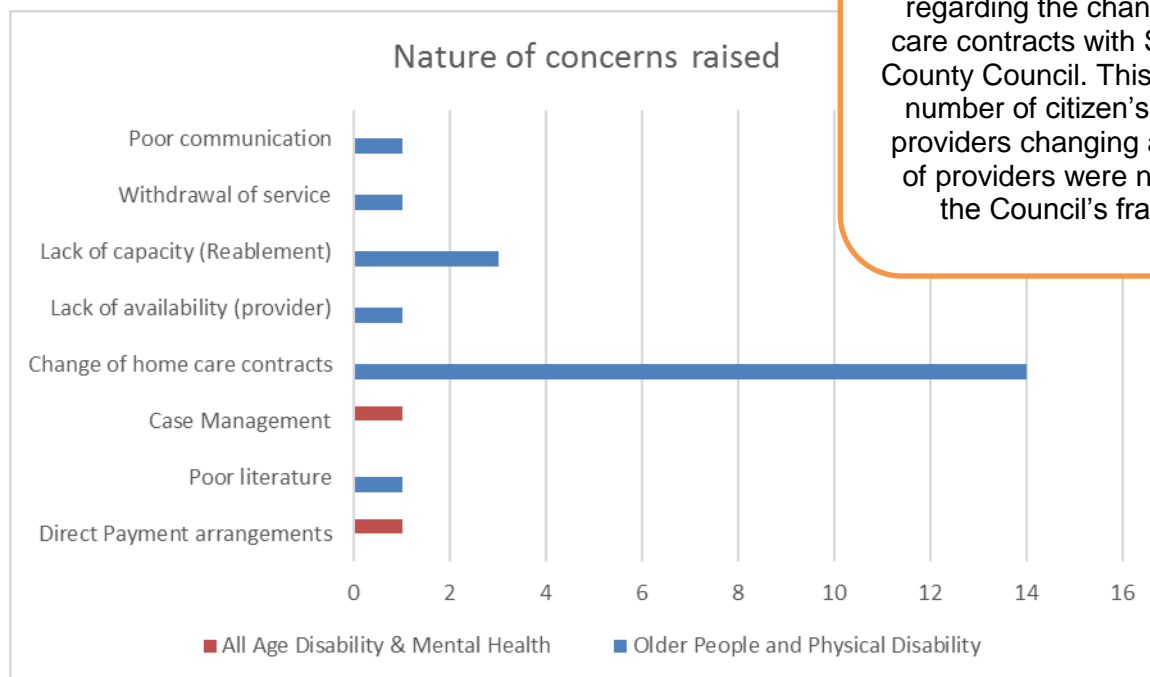
Resolutions and Organisation Learning

- Explanation of events provided to complainant.
- Fin2 updated to reflect the correct leaflets.
- Agree to waiver backdated invoice (2 complaint outcomes).
- The outcome of 5 complaints resulted in a financial re-assessment.

Care Commissioning

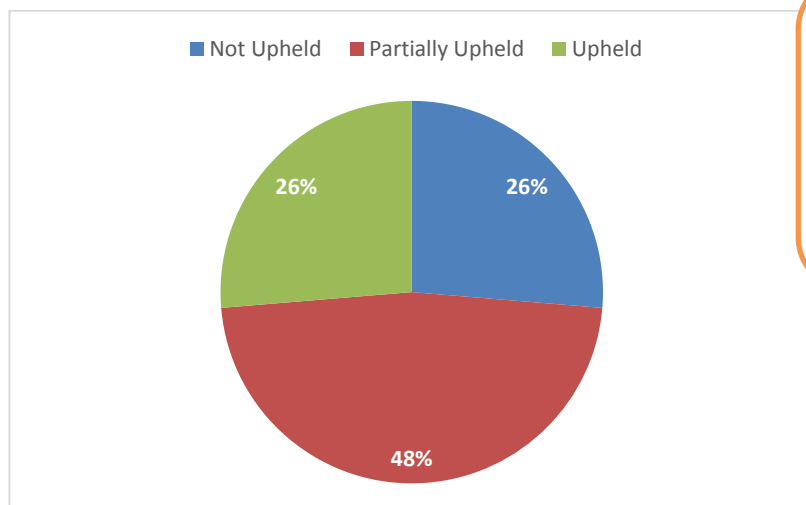
- Older People and Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment
- All Age Disability & Adult Mental Health (AD&AMH)

Nature of complaint



58% of complaints received were regarding the change in home care contracts with Staffordshire County Council. This resulted in a number of citizen's home care providers changing as a number of providers were no longer on the Council's framework.

Outcome



48% of complaints were partially upheld. This outcome was primarily in respect of the change of home care contracts and the short notice some citizens were advised of the change.

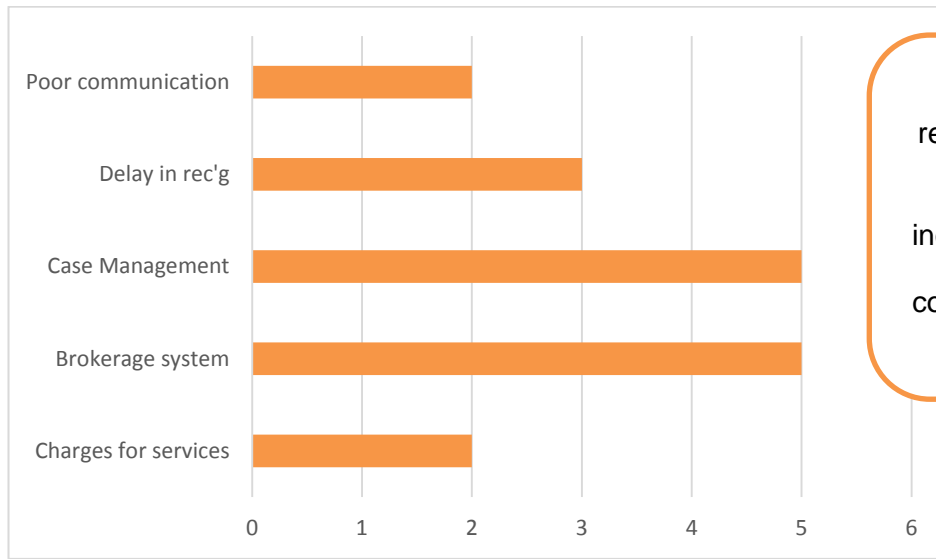
Resolutions and Organisation Learning

Explanation of events provided.

Apology provided to those complaints upheld and partially upheld

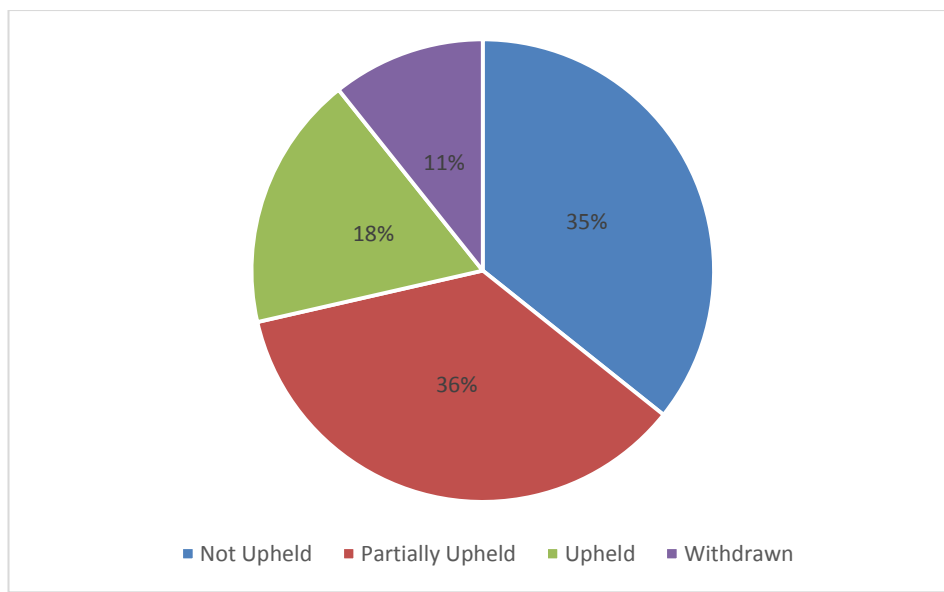
- **Brokerage Service**

Nature of complaint



56% of complaints were regarding the Brokerage system and the management of individual cases. This can include lack of contact, timescale for sourcing placements and concerns regarding the providers sourced.

Outcome



Resolutions and Organisation Learning

- Explanation of events provided.
- Apology provided to those complaints upheld and partially upheld.
- Funding agreed for residential placement.
- Third party top up payment reduced.
- From 1 April 2018 changes have been made to the way the Brokerage Service operate and the team will take responsibility for all non-complex conversations with citizens in respect of sourcing / funding care and support. The aim of this is to improve the customer journey and ensure that information is communicated in a timely and effective manner.

Stage 1 – Independent Investigation Adults Social Care

Independent investigation is initiated in circumstances where a complaint is complex, and / or a level of seriousness is identified. This is often in circumstances of multi-agency involvement. The independent investigation is conducted by commissioned external Investigating Officer.

A report of investigation is produced that details conclusions reached and recommends action to both resolve the complaint and make improvements for the organisation. The relevant Senior Officer adjudicates the report and provides the Council's formal response to the complainant.

The timescale under this part of the procedure is 25 days, although there is facility to agree with the complainant an extension up to 65 days. (again, this is not a statutory requirement but an operational goal that may be subject to negotiation)

There have been **5** complaints independently investigated during 2017-2018.

Details of the complaint investigations and outcomes are detailed below.

Service	Nature of Complaints	Outcome	Recommendations
Residential Home – Park Lane Care Home	Concerns raised about relative being left for hours without being checked on. This resulted in missed meals. Concerns also raised about relative's appearance by family member.	Partially Upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An apology to be provided to the complainant by Park Lane Care home for the failings identified. For Park Lane to reimburse the complainant for the lost items. All actions are shared with provider via the Contract Monitoring Officers, Staffordshire County Council.
Residential Care Home -	The Provider believes that their service has been treated less favourably by the Council in comparison to other Day Opportunity 'providers'	Complaint still under investigation	Complaint still under investigation
Domiciliary Home Care Agency – Desire Home Care	ID badges and uniforms not worn by carers. Concerns raised about the standard of care provided. Concerns raised about staff professionalism and qualifications.	Partially Upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to be shared with the Quality Team with a request that they conduct a detailed inspection of Desire Care. This is to include the inspection of the qualifications of all staff members. Proprietor of Desire Care to offer apologies to the complainant.
Domiciliary Home Care Agency – The Care Company	Complainant feels that the provider has done everything it can to avoid answering a request for information about the actions taken since the relative's fall. The care agency has been unnecessarily	Not Upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the Commissioning Team to review the documentation provided by the agency to satisfy the local authority that it meets the requirements. For the Quality team to address any issues of record keeping with the agency at their next routine inspection.

	obstructive		
Integrated Care (Lichfield) Residential Home – Health Care (Alma Court)	Locality Team and Care (Avery Alma Court)	Administration of medication by Alma Court and lost possessions. Failure to complete CHC funding application.	Partially Upheld <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apology to the complainant. • Apology to be provided by Alma Court for failing to retain the service user's records. • For the management of Avery Health Care to review the standard of record keeping within Alma Court and provide any training as required. • Financial reimbursement of £500 in recognition for the lack of intervention by the professionals involved.

Adult Social Care Services Provided by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Trust

From April 2012, Adult Social Care services were transferred over to the new Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust.

Please note that from 1 April 2017, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust took over the responsibility of processing all complaints relating to adult social care services provided by the Trust (post April 2017). However, as the commissioner of these services, the Local Authority work in partnership with the Trust when responding to the complaints.

The Partnership Trust received **138** complaints which were handled by the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) rather than via the statutory complaint procedure.

A total of **48** complaints were investigated under Stage 1 - Local Investigation of the Statutory Complaints Procedure for Adult Social Care services.

District Service	North		South						Total
	Moorlands	Newcastle	Stafford	Cannock	Lichfield	Siesdon	Tamworth	East Staffs	
Integrated Locality Care Team	6	4	10	4	3	1	1	4	33
Community Intervention Service	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	3
- Community Hospital	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
- Discharge Team	1	2	4	1	-	-	1	-	9
Intermediate Care & Enablement	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Integrated Therapy Team	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Living Independently Staffordshire	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	8	7	15	6	5	1	2	4	<u>48</u>

69% of complaints investigated were regarding services provided by the Integrated Locality Care Team (ILCT) with 30% relating to the Stafford District and 18% for the Moorlands.

There has been a 64% reduction in complaints formally investigated by the Partnership Trust in comparison to last financial year. This is due to the Trust handling some Adult Social Care complaints via the PALS Service where a response can be provided within 24 hours.

Stafford District have received the highest proportion of complaints with 31%, this is consistent with the previous year.

Stage 1 Local Investigation (NHS Partnership Trust) – Nature of Complaints and Outcomes – North Division

The tables below provide information on the nature and outcome of complaints for the North Division for 2017/18

Nature - North	Integrated Locality Care Team	Integrated Therapy Team	Hospital Discharge Team	Community Intervention Service	Total
Case Management	4	1	2	-	7
Standard of	1	-	-	-	1
Hospital discharge	-	-	1	-	1
Charges not discussed	-	-	-	1	1
Poor communication	4	-	-	-	4
Staff Professionalism	1	-	-	-	1
Total	10	1	3	1	15

10 complaints were formally investigated for the Integrated Locality Care Team's within the North. 47% of complaints received were regarding case management of cases and 27% were regarding poor communication from staff.

Outcome - North	Integrated Locality Care Team	Integrated Therapy Team	Community Intervention Service	Hospital Discharge Team	TOTAL
Upheld	2	-	1	1	4
Not Upheld	4	1	-	2	7
Partially Upheld	3	-	-	-	3
Withdrawn – Resolved by Team	1	-	-	-	1
Total	10	1	1	3	15

Recommendations and Learning Actions – North Division

The information below illustrates the types of recommendations and learning actions that have arisen from complaints during 2017/18.

	Integrated Locality Care Team	Integrated Therapy Team	Community Intervention Service	Hospital Discharge Team	TOTAL
Explanation	3	1	-	-	4
Apology	4	-	-	2	6
Charges waived	-	-	1	-	1
Reimbursement of monies	2	-	-	-	2
Unsubstantiated / no change	-	-	-	1	1
Total	9	1	1	3	14

Because of making a complaint 20% of service users had charges waived or reimbursed for residential care home fees and home care charges due to the delays in receiving invoices, service user not being informed of the charges incurred by the allocated worker or being charged for an enablement package following discharge from hospital

Learning Actions

The following Learning Actions have been identified for the North Districts: (Please note that this is a selection of learning actions as each complaint can receive several actions)

- To ensure incident reports/risk markers are completed timely. To ensure the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are clearly explained to the service users and carers to ensure they are provided with advocacy information and contact details.
- Staff to ensure that they communicate relevant information and decisions in a timely manner and use appropriate mechanisms. For example, if it is difficult to contact someone by phone then updates can be provided by writing a letter or email.
- Staff to ensure that all paperwork is completed in a timely manner and provide evidence that copies are sent out.
- Communication pathways between area teams and brokerage to be improved so avoid delays in care package decisions being made available.
- Appeals process and outcomes to be made clearer to service users and any right of further appeal to be provided.
- Social workers to be reminded to check that service provisions are in place at the time of the review (usually six weeks from the care package commencement).
- Where there is potential for service users to receive a late/backdated invoice for care, staff to communicate this to service users/relatives/carers.
- Staff to be reminded to record any delays or issues on Care Director in task notes and to then be discussed with other colleagues at their team meeting, to ensure that the information being shared is consistent.
- Staff to be reminded that any information about follow up actions should be explained clearly and in a manner that the carers/relatives understand, having established the preferred mode of contact or communication and record any communication issues.
- Staff to be reminded to complete safeguarding referrals using the Trust's protocol and guidance to ensure that safeguarding cases are dealt with as a priority.

Stage 1 Local Investigation (NHS Partnership Trust) – Nature of Complaint's and Outcomes – South Division

The tables below provide information on the nature and outcome of complaints for the South Division for 2017/18.

Nature - South	Integrated Locality Care Team	Community Intervention Service	Hospital Discharge Team	Living Independently Staffordshire	Intermediate Care & Enablement	Total
Delay in receiving	2	-	-	-	-	2
Case Management	11	-	2	-	-	13
Financial Assessment	1	-	-	-	-	1
Care charges not discussed	2	-	1	-	-	3
Inaccurate financial info provided	-	-	-	1	-	1
Hospital discharge	-	1	-	-	-	1
Staff Attitude	1	-	-	-	-	1
Eligibility for	1	-	1	-	1	3
Poor communication	3	-	1	-	-	4
Information provided	1	1	1	-	-	3
Social Worker decision	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	23	2	6	1	1	33

39% of complaints received were regarding 'case management'. The category 'case management' is used when a complaint relates to the general management of a case, this can include poor communication, delay in receiving a service.

12% of complaints received were regarding a poor communication from the service and **12%** of complaints were regarding 'inaccurate financial information provided' or 'care charges not discussed'. This resulted in the service user receiving an invoice for care they were not aware was chargeable.

Outcomes	Integrated Locality Care Team	Community Intervention Service	Living Independently Staffordshire	Hospital Discharge Team	Intermediate Care & Enablement	Total
Upheld	6	1	-	2	1	10
Not Upheld	8	1	-	3	-	12
Partially Upheld	6	-	1	-	-	7
Complaint withdrawn	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	21	2	1	5	1	30*

*Please note that 3 complaints remain open and under investigation at the time of writing this report.

Stage 1 Local Investigation (NHS Partnership Trust) – Recommendations and Learning Actions – South Division

The table below provides information on recommendations and learning actions that have arisen from complaints during 2017/18

	Integrated Locality Care Team	Community Intervention Service	Living Independently Staffordshire	Hospital Discharge Team	Intermediate Care & Enablement	Total
Explanation	6	-	-	3	-	9
Apology	7	1	1	-	-	9
Allocation on new worker	1	-	-	-	-	1
New literature	1	-	-	-	-	1
Retrospective CHC funding review	1	-	-	-	-	1
Complaint withdrawn	1	-	-	-	-	1
Charges Waivered	4	--	-	2	1	7
Consider back-dating charges	1		-	-	-	1
Total	22	1	1	5	1	30*

*Please note that 3 complaints remain open.

16% of complainants had charges waived as a result of making their complaint. It was found that there was a delay in service users receiving invoices due to the length of time taken for adult social care staff to action service provisions on Care Director. Charges have also been waived where staff members have not advised the service user that care arranged is chargeable.

60% of complainants were offered an apology / explanation as result of the complaint investigation.

Learning Actions

The following Learning Actions have been identified for the South Districts: (Please note that this is a selection of learning actions as each complaint can receive several actions)

- A reminder to staff to complete the Fin3 request on admission to 24-hour care.
- Cases to remain open following the death of a service user if there are on-going financial issues.
- To Record verbal discussions on Care Director in respect of finance assessments, the need for them and the process of the assessment, are clearly documented on an activity note when this discussion has taken place. To also record on the assessment and support plan that financial assessments are required and that departmental leaflets have been given out.
- All team members to read the “Adult Social Care Practice Note, Direct Payment Service Provisions”.
- All team members to be reminded to explain and document financial implications of all service provisions being considered.
- Email sent to Transformation Manager to highlight the lack of a Policy to transfer Direct Payment cases to a Personal Health Budget in a timely manner.
- Staff to be reminded that service users should always be offered a financial assessment regardless of their financial status.
- Reablement team to be clear on processes in relation to services required beyond the reablement process, and communication to be clearly documented.
- The Social Care Team to discuss expected times of contact for new allocations / reallocation of caseload, through vacancy, at individual supervision. Issues to also be added to the next team meeting agenda.
- To inform staff that if a service user / family member contacts the Partnership Trust to reduce / increase a care package, if it is reasonable and appropriate to do so, a telephone review could be considered rather than a face to face visit.
- Social care staff to have increased awareness of covert medication plans.
- To improve communication between multiple professionals especially when working with people who lack mental capacity to make their own decisions. To also have increased awareness of mental capacity and making best interest decisions.
- A reminder to the Care and Assessment Teams to ensure that they follow up any care provided with a review.
- Financial statements to be completed with the service user and signed to state that there is a clear understanding of the financial obligations.
- Staff to be reminded to check all direct payment forms thoroughly before submitting them to the Direct Payments Team.

Stage 2 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints (to include Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust)

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Whilst anyone can approach the Ombudsman at any time, the Complainant is usually required to first take up their complaint with the relevant Council to allow a local response. However, if the Complainant remains dissatisfied following local or independent investigation by the council they then have the right to pursue the matter with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Local Authority has received **36** complaints which have been referred to the LGSCO, **28** were regarding County Council services and **8** complaints were regarding services provided by Adult Social Care Teams, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent NHS Partnership Trust. The LGSCO still investigate complaints about Adult Social Care Team's (SSOTP) and therefore outcomes are reported to the Local Authority via the Monitoring Officer. I have therefore included the figures in the tables below.

Compared to last financial year there has been a **57%** increase in complaints considered by the Ombudsman. The significant rise in complaints this year is due to the implementation of the Care Act 2014 and the changes made by the Council to how the rules are applied for couples when the service user is financially assessed for non-residential care services. The Councils decision to back-date these charges also contributed to a complaint being raised. The Council received **10** complaints from the LGSCO in respect of this.

Staffordshire County Council Services			
Service	Nature	Outcome	Recommendation
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Non-residential care charges and the Council's decision to back date increased charges to July 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. But it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising this decision. There was no fault in the way the Council completed the new financial assessment.
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about home care charges and the Council's decision to backdate the increased charges to November 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused to by revising this decision.
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about husband's non-residential care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to the date of the previous financial assessment.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. But it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising this decision. There was no fault in the way the Council completed the new financial assessment.
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about non-residential care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to September 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused to by revising this decision
Couples Financial	Complaint about non-	Upheld –	The Council was at fault in

Re-assessment	residential care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to August 2016.	Maladministration and injustice	deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising this decision.
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about non-residential care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to July 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising his decision
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about non-residential care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to November 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising his decision
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about home care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to September 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising his decision
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about home care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to June 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising his decision
Couples Financial Re-assessment	Complaint about home care charges and the Council's decision to backdate increased charges to August 2016.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	The Council was at fault in deciding to backdate the charges. However, it has now remedied the injustice caused by revising his decision
Residential / Nursing - not self funder	Poor care which lead to the resident being admitted to hospital suffering severe dehydration causing kidney failure, and with oral thrush.	Upheld - Maladministration	Within one month the Council will write to the complainant to acknowledge what went wrong and apologise for the impact of this.
Welfare Benefits Service	The Council did not correctly consider the service users expenses and disregards when it calculated the contributions he has to make towards the costs of his care.	Not Upheld - No Maladministration	No fault found
Adult Learning Disability Team – Moorlands	Delays in assessment and care planning, leading to a delay in moving to a residential placement. Failure of organisations involved to work together and comply with Autism legislation/ guidance. A lack of risk assessment and crisis management plan. Failure to provide appropriately trained advocacy service for the service user.	Complaint open	Complaint open
One Recovery (Public Health –	Communication failings between the Council, the	Upheld – Maladministration	The Council will apologise to citizen for the pain and distress

Commissioned Service)	Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service resulted in citizen being wrongly identified as a needle exchange user.	and injustice	that resulted from One Recovery's actions in identifying her as a needle exchange user and the time taken to acknowledge the fault. The Council will pay £200 to acknowledge the pain and distress caused by One Recovery's faults.
Legal Services	The Council has continued to contact Mr X regarding a claimed care home fee debt, despite Mr X advising officers on 13 February 2017 that he is not the family's representative on the matter. The Council has continued to pursue for the care home fees for which he says he is not responsible.	Upheld - Maladministration	It was not fault for the Council to contact Mr X about the care home debt it considers the family owe. However, it was fault for the Council to issue a final notice to Mr X when recovery action for the debt should have stayed on hold. However, the Council remedied the injustice caused by apologising. There is no outstanding significant personal injustice caused to Mr X by this fault which requires further remedy.
Fixed Equipment Service (County Council)	The Council should have replaced the previous stairlift earlier when it started breaking down and was no longer suitable for the service user to use. It is felt that had the Council replaced the stairlift earlier, the service user would not have had to contribute £2,435.96 towards the cost of a new stairlift when their financial circumstances changed. There was a delay in assessing her needs for and fitting a new stairlift. The new stairlift then proved unsuitable for her needs and she could not use it, so she then had to wait for a through floor lift. As a result, Mrs Brown was unable to use the WC in her home for a year and had to use a commode in the living room.	Complaint open	Complaint open
Adult Care Team and Financial Services – Non-residential care.	The Council failed to carry out a financial assessment at the time the care package was arranged in March 2014. It did not discover the error until August 2016 and now expects her to pay all the backdated care charges	Upheld - Maladministration	Council to waive the backdated charges and only charge the service user from August 2016 when the financial assessment was carried out.

Residential / Nursing - not self funder	Complaint that that while in respite care arranged by the Council, the service user was not properly looked after and was placed at risk.	Upheld - Maladministration	No recommendations – satisfied with Councils actions
Adult Learning Disability Team – Newcastle	Delay in moving the service user from the family home to a residential care placement. A lack of respite provision since the previous respite provider (Douglas Road) refused to accept him on health and safety grounds.	Awaiting Final Statement	Awaiting Final Statement
Finance Services – non-residential care	The Council wrongly decided to increase the service users care charges. Service user does not consider he should have to pay the increased charges and says the Council delayed telling him about the increase. The Council's Complaints and Finance departments have not been consistent about whether he should be paying the charge while his complaint is being investigated. The Council has asked him to pay back £921 despite previously telling him he does not owe anything.	Complaint open	Complaint open
Staffordshire County Council	The Council did not properly provide the remedy it agreed for the complainant's previous complaint to the Ombudsman. As a result, she has experienced uncertainty and frustration and went to some time and trouble continuing to pursue matters.	Upheld - Maladministration	The Council has agreed to review formally what happened after 27 April in this case. The review should result in a written report explaining what went wrong and concluding whether any changes are needed to the Council's procedures for implementing agreed remedies. Any necessary procedural changes should then be made. The Council should ensure it keeps to this timescale, without the Ombudsman's office having to chase it.
Safeguarding	The Council did not properly consider the circumstances leading to a safeguarding referral the complainant made about concerns she has for a relative. The Council allowed Miss X to make a complaint of harassment to the Police about her without checking she understood what it meant.	Not Upheld - No Maladministration	No recommendations

Financial Services – non-residential care	The Council has increased the charge for home care from £22.77 to £84.20. Service user says she cannot afford to pay so much.	Upheld - Maladministration	The Council has agreed to refund the amount the service user paid over £22.77 per week for the period up to 15 March 2017 when the new financial assessment was done.
Adult Learning Disability Team – Stafford	The Council failed to properly assess his disabled adult daughter's needs. The Council delayed in completing the assessment. The Council has failed to arrange someone to stay with his daughters in an emergency despite promising to do so several times over the last 12 months.	Not Upheld - No Maladministration	No recommendations
Staffordshire County Council and Adult Social Care Team	The Council did not explain that Mrs X's client contribution for communication services would be backdated to June 2017. Mrs X also says the assessment took too long to complete. She says the charge has led her to cancel the service that was vital to her wellbeing.	Upheld – Maladministration	Apologise to Mrs X either in writing or via a BSL interpreter, whichever Mrs X would prefer. Cancel any outstanding balance on Mrs X's direct payment account. Offer Mrs X a new financial assessment that fully takes into account of disability related expenditure. Pay Mrs X £500 in recognition of the avoidable confusion and distress arising from the Council's poor communication in this matter. Pay Mrs X £250 for the time and trouble she has spent dealing with this complaint. Review the six other service users who were reassessed at the same time as Mrs X. Review its policies and procedures about communication with clients with a sensory impairment and provide the Ombudsman with a summary of action taken to address the fault identified in this report. Reflect on what happened in this case and review the way the Council introduces changes to criteria and charges for services, particularly where protected groups are affected.
Finance Team – Debt Recovery	Family not informed of service users debt of £27,090.07 until they contacted the Council. The Council agreed to put the account on hold whilst she was disputing the bill, however, family received a	Complaint open	Complaint open

	final demand for payment in May 2017.		
Commissioning	The Council failed to provide the care that the service user had been assessed as needing due to the availability of home care agencies in the moorlands area	LGO Assessment Stage	
Finance – Residential Services	Council has billed son for care charges for his late mother's stay at the care home without explaining how these figures were arrived at or why they were required to pay them.	Not Upheld - No Maladministration	No recommendations
Finance – Direct Payments	The Council did not inform service user of arrears until it reached a level that he is unable to repay.	Upheld - Maladministration	The Council has agreed to write off the £11,547 debt

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust

Service	Nature of Complaint	Outcome	Recommendations
East Staffs – Community Intervention Service and Adult Care Team	Failed to properly manage home care for an elderly resident. Failure to properly investigate how the care providers failed to notice the resident had a dislocated shoulder for a month before advising her to seek medical help. Failure to properly assess the resident's need for residential rather than home based care.	Not Upheld - No Maladministration	No recommendation
Adult Care Team – Stafford and Direct Payments Team (SCC)	The Council did not communicate with Mr and Mrs X effectively or properly involve them in decision making when changing their direct payment arrangements leaving them unclear about and causing problems when the direct payments moved to a managed account.	Upheld - Maladministration	Apologise for its handling of meetings and decisions affecting direct payments that caused avoidable distress and confusion. To arrange a meeting with Mr X in order to provide an apology and answer any questions regarding Direct Payments. The Council also agrees to pay Mr X: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £474:50 to cover payments into and bank charges on Accounts 1 and 2; • £2,000 in recognition of the avoidable confusion and distress arising from the Council's poor communication and handling of changes affecting direct payments since opening Account 3; • £2,000 in recognition of the avoidable risk of harm and

			pressures caused by its poor communications and handling of direct payments; and • £250 for avoidable time and trouble in pursuing this complaint.
Integrated Locality Care Team – Cannock	Flawed assessments of service users mental health and social care needs, as well as flawed care planning, led to two failed care home admissions and unnecessary distress for the service user and her family. Placement was unsuitable and the homes actions while the service user was there were inadequate. Delay in finding suitable care provision for service user and implementing ways for this to be introduced and delivered to her that were appropriate in light of her capacity and challenging behaviour.	Complaint open	Complaint open
Hospital Discharge Team – Newcastle	Complaint about the amount she has been charged for care services following her husband's discharge from hospital. She says she was not told about this in advance and that the size of the care package was excessive and so was too expensive.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	Apologise in writing. Cancel all outstanding home care charges from February 2017 to May 2017. I have recommended cancellation rather than a reduction because there was fault about reablement decision making as well as the failure to provide information. To review policies and procedures relating to a) information given to clients about care fees, and b) reablement decision making.
Integrated Locality Care Team – Stafford	Ms B, complains on behalf of her father Mr B that that in January 2017 while he was in Council arranged residential care there was no covert medication plan in place and he did not receive his medication. This resulted in a deterioration in his health and admission to hospital, where he remained an in-patient for about 15 weeks.	Upheld – Maladministration and injustice	Council makes a payment of £750 to Mr B and £500 to his wife, in recognition of the distress caused to them by the accepted failings in this case. Council ensures relevant staff review the Ombudsman's guidance on remedies to better inform its complaint handling and ensure that where fault is acknowledged, appropriate remedy is offered.
Integrated Locality Care Team – East Staffs	Complaint that having reassessed her social care needs when asked to do so following a deterioration in her sight and a change in her family circumstances, the Council wrongly reduced her care package from 10	Upheld - Maladministration	Arrange a reassessment of Mrs C's care needs in line with the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance, taking note of the requirements for the whole family approach and the promotion of wellbeing, and

	hours per week to 5 hours per week.		recording and addressing all identified eligible needs in any new care and support plan; and Review guidance so that it is not prescriptive in terms of specifying what is or is not the responsibility of social care, given that each case should be assessed in line with the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance in respect of meeting needs to achieve appropriate outcomes.
Integrated Locality Care Team – Moorlands	The Council stopped contributing towards the cost of his wife’s respite care and told him that he would have to pay the full cost. The Council then instructed the care home to call the police if Mr S tried to take his wife out of the care home.	Upheld - Maladministration	The Council must complete assessments for a standard deprivation of liberty authorisation within 21 days; and• they must not discuss a person’s case with a third party without the person’s consent.
Integrated Locality Care Team – Moorlands	Mrs X complains about the way the Council has dealt with issues relating to her care.	Upheld - Maladministration	Apologise to Ms X for its failings and pays her £750 for the distress it has caused and the time and trouble it has put her to in pursuing her complaint. Assign another officer to reassess Ms X’s needs and puts in place a care and support plan for meeting her eligible care needs. To work with the NHS to resolve the issue of funding for meals at the respite facility. To consider what action it needs to take to ensure assessments and care and support plans meet the requirements of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

Summary of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints

Out of the **36** complaints which were received by the LGSCO, the Council received **25** outcomes where there the complaint was Upheld and maladministration and injustice was found. A total of £7,200 ‘time, trouble and distress caused’ payments was awarded to complainants following referral to the Ombudsman. 6 complainants received a waiver or refund of care fees as a result of the Ombudsman’s investigation.

Compliments

During 2017/18 a total of 27 compliments were recorded with the Customer Feedback and Complaints Team which related to Adults Social Care. Compliments received by the Partnership Trust for Adult Social Care are recorded by PALS.

Service	No. Rec'd
Brokerage Service	3
Day Service Provider	
Lichfield	2
Tamworth	1
Moorlands	1
Cannock	1
Adult Learning Disability Team;	
Stafford / South Staffs	5
Newcastle Moorlands	10
East Staffs / Tamworth	1
Lichfield / Cannock	2
Advanced Mental Health Practitioner	1
Total	27

"I just wanted to mention from a safeguarding standpoint that your communication has been excellent and linking to the CTR has been very reassuring. Please feel free to pass on my comments to your line manager. Many thanks for your very effective communication"

Brokerage Service;
"Hi, just wanted to say a big thank you for your help with this one, very impressed!"

Learning Disability Newcastle/Moorlands;
"Thanks so much Charlotte - your support has been outstanding as usual. Your prompt professional intervention will transform Tilly's US experience and bring her ever closer to realising her dream"

"Hi, I have been dealing with a man called 'J' in brokerage over the care of my father. Sorry, I never got to know his surname but I have nothing but praise for him. He listened to my thoughts and was able to do his very best to help place my dad in a home near my sister and I. At all times he was very professional returning by calls and keeping me informed. I am not sure he will ever understand how grateful we will be to him....."

Other Activity

In addition to the recording and administering of Statutory Complaints, the Customer Feedback and Complaint Service have formally acknowledged and monitored an additional 408 enquiries each requiring redirection to other organisations/authorities or action into other procedures.

	2016/2017	2017/2018
Dealt with by Complaints Team*	90	148
Complaint refused**	3	6
Joint Statutory Stage 1 response with other organisation / NHS	15	12
Referral to another Organisation for action / investigation	45	78
MP Enquiry's (Adult Social Care)	135	135
Public Enquiry's	13	12
Safeguarding referral initiated	11	5
Corporate Complaints Procedure	1	12
Total	313	408

*Complaints / enquiries which are handled by the Complaints Team consist of liaising with the service team in order to resolve the complainants concerns or the Complaints Team solely investigating the complaint and providing a response to the complainant. Depending on the nature and complexity of the concern raised this can take 24 hours to complete or several weeks of investigative work in order to fully conclude. There was a **39%** increase in the number of complaint / enquiries which were dealt with by the Complaints Team in comparison to last financial year.

** A complaint is refused if the complainant does not meet the criteria to register a statutory complaint. In the 3 cases refused, this was due to the complaint already being investigated in line with the complaints procedure or the complaint is over 12 months old.

Commissioned Services

Domiciliary Care Agencies

A total of **14** complaints about private sector domiciliary care agencies were received directly by the Complaints Service during 2017/2018. All complaints were acknowledged and passed to the agency for consideration and response under their own complaints procedure in the first instance. Commissioning Delivery Hub, Care Quality Commission and Adult Social Work Teams are alerted to the complaint to ensure appropriate action can be taken if necessary.

Service Approach for 2017/2018

- Continue greater emphasis on quality of Stage 1 responses to complainants and the importance of discussing the complaint details with the complainant during each investigation.
- Continue to work with Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent NHS Partnership Trust in order to investigate complaints for adult social care in line with the Section 75 agreement.
- To continue to comply with the new Care Act which came into force in April 2015 and any future changes to the complaints process.
- To develop and enhance reporting processes and requirements with colleagues within Staffordshire County Council in order to provide complaint data regularly to senior management.

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 Complaints Officer
 Customer Feedback and Complaints Team
 Staffordshire County Council

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee - 3 September 2018

Customer Feedback and Complaints Service Children's Social Services Annual Report 2017/18

Recommendation

1. That the Committee considers the Annual Report of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Children Social Services 2017/18, taking the opportunity for any comments on the content of the report.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

The Select Committee is being asked to consider the Annual Report of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Children's Social Services 2017/18, with the service taking the opportunity for any comments on the content of the report.

Report

Background

1. In line with The Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, the Local Authority is required to produce an Annual Report. This report must include the number of complaints recorded under the Representation Procedure together with information on the outcome of each representation and whether statutory timescales were adhered to.
2. The Annual Report, Customer Feedback and Complaints Services, Children's Social Services 2017/2018 is being submitted for scrutiny and endorsement.
3. The report contains information about the nature of complaints received, together with responses provided and their handling by the Council.
4. It is important that the Local Authority uses the evidence available from Complaints and Representations to inform service improvements. The report provides information about how complaints investigations are used to identify specific themes, where service improvement can be addressed and highlights where the County Council is providing quality services to customers which may be identified from compliments received. This is in line with the Council's Strategic Plan, to use Customer Insight to develop high quality services which meet customer needs.

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Appendices/Background papers

Appendix A - Customer Feedback and Complaints Service, Children's Social Services,
Annual Report 2017/18

Delivering the Difference Together



Putting the people of Staffordshire first



CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS TEAM
STATUTORY ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES

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Introduction

This report provides information for the Statutory Children's Complaints and Representations Service and the Corporate Feedback Procedure for Children and Families services, for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The report and service is provided in accordance with the Complaints and Representations Procedures established under the Children Act 1989 and the Local Authority Act 1970.

The Procedures were amended from 1 September 2006 by The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, and 'Getting the Best from Complaints', the accompanying guidance.

The Statutory Complaints Procedure

The Statutory Procedure provides a Procedure for making representations about the discharge by a Local Authority of its functions under Part 3 and specified functions under Parts 4 and 5 of The Children Act 1989, certain functions under 2002 Act and functions regarding Special Guardianship support services.

There are three stages to the Statutory Complaints Procedure:

Stage 1 - Local Resolution

Stage 1 Statutory Complaints are investigated and responded to by a Team Manager or a County Manager, depending on what the complaint concerns. In accordance with the guidance the expectation is that the majority of complaints should be resolved at this stage. The Customer Feedback and Complaints Team place emphasis on resolving complaints at this stage, as local resolution allows the Team Manager to provide the most thorough and detailed response to a complaint, with it being their service. Effective handling at Stage 1 can prevent the complainant escalating to further levels of the procedure, or in the event that further investigation was requested a robust Stage 1 response can support a decision to decline some requests, or support any decisions challenged by the Local Government Ombudsman. There is a timescale to respond to Stage 1 complaints, of up to 20 working days.

Stage 2 – Independent Investigation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome following Stage 1 of the procedure, they have a right to request a Stage 2 Independent Complaint Investigation. Stage 2 investigations are carried out by external Investigating Officers. An Independent Person is appointed for all Stage 2 complaint investigations as required by the regulations.

At the conclusion of an investigation, a report is produced with findings, conclusions and recommendations. The relevant Strategic Lead acts as the Adjudicating Officer on behalf of the Local Authority and provides the Local Authority's formal response to the complainant along with an action plan to implement the recommendations. The timescale for completion of a Stage 2 investigation is up to 25 working days, although this can be extended to 65 working days with the complainant's agreement.

Stage 3 – Complaint Review Panel

Where a complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation they may request a Complaints Review Panel. The Panel is made up of 3 independent people and is clerked by the Local Authority Legal Services. The timescale for setting up the panel is 30 working days.

The Panel's remit is to review the investigation; it cannot re-investigate a complaint. The Panel provide their findings in writing within 5 working days to the complainant and the Local Authority. The Local Authority will consider the panel's findings and produce the Local Authority's response to the Panel's findings within 15 working days.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

In the event that a complainant remains dissatisfied following exhaustion of all three stages of the complaints procedure they can take their complaint to the LGO. A complainant can access the LGO at any point but the LGO normally provides the Local Authority with the opportunity to process through all stages of the complaints procedure unless they decide otherwise. Complaints referred back to the Local Authority to process are classed as 'premature referral' complaints. If the Local Authority take the decision to refuse to investigate a complaint or refuse to escalate the complaints to the next stage of the procedure, a complainant may then also approach the LGO.

Criteria for Accessing the Statutory Complaints Procedure

Who can complain?

The Children Act 1989 advises that the Statutory Complaints Procedure can only be utilised by the following persons:

- Any child or young person (or a parent of his or someone who has Parental Responsibility for him) who is being looked after by the Local Authority or is not looked after by them but is in need;
- Any Local Authority foster carer (including placements through independent fostering agencies);
- Children leaving care;
- Special guardians;
- A child or young person (or parent of his) to whom a Special Guardianship order is in force;
- Any person who has applied for an assessment under section 14F(3) or (4);
- Any child or young person who may be adopted, their parents and guardians;
- Persons wishing to adopt a child;
- Any other person for whom arrangements for the provision of adoption services extend;
- Adopted persons, their parents, natural parents and former guardians; such other person as the Local Authority consider has sufficient interest in the child or young persons' welfare to warrant his representations being considered by them.

Time Limit:

In addition to the above, there is a time limit on making a complaint to the Local Authority. Regulation 9 (1) states that 'a complainant must make their representations to the Local Authority no later than one year after the grounds to make the complaint arose'. However, the Local Authority may consider complaints outside the specified time limit if it would not be reasonable to expect the complainant to have made the complaint within the time limit and that it is still possible to consider the complaint effectively and fairly. Matters such as these would be considered on a case by case basis.

Re-occurring Issues:

Complaints will not be accepted if they are the same or substantially the same as complaints that have already been investigated and responded to previously.

Complaints Made on Behalf of a Child:

The Local Authority has the discretion to decide whether or not the representative is suitable to make a complaint on behalf of a child or young person. The Complaints Team will confirm with the service user that the complaints raised accurately reflect their views. This is subject to the child's age and understanding and is a matter which is given careful consideration on a case by case basis.

Complaints Relating to a Child:

A number of complaints received are from adults that relate to a child or young person but are not made on that child's behalf. The Children Act 1989 gives the Local Authority discretion to decide in cases where eligibility is not automatic and whether or not an individual has sufficient interest in the child's welfare to justify his own complaints being considered.

In order to establish 'sufficient interest' the Complaints Team will review the Social Work records and liaise with the Social Work Team to ascertain the following:

- Is the complainant party to any Court proceedings?
- Does the complainant attend Child Protection Conferences, Family Group Conferences or Core Groups?
- Is there evidence on the case file of frequent communication between the complainant and the Social Worker?
- Is there evidence on the case file that information regarding the plans for the child or young person is shared with the complainant?
- Has the complainant, at any time, had care of the child or young person?
- Have the issues that are being complained about matters that have directly involved or been relayed to the complainant or are they issues that have been passed to the complainant by another party?

Once the above has been taken into account, the Complaints Team will then make an informed decision as to the sufficient interest of the complainant.

The Corporate Complaints Procedure

The Corporate Complaints Procedure can be utilised when the representation does not fit the criteria to be investigated via the Statutory Complaints Procedure and is regarding a non-statutory service or if the representation is being made in the complainants own right about a service which they have personally received, subject to the specific detail of the complaint.

Stage 1: Local Resolution

The first stage of the process is when a senior member of staff or manager of the service being complained about, is given the opportunity to investigate and respond to the complaint. The timescale for a response is 15 working days.

The complainant is advised in the response letter that they can request a review of the complaint on the basis that they can provide the Council with additional relevant information that was not considered as part of the investigation.

Stage 2: Internal Review

On receipt of a request for further consideration of the complaint, the Complaints Team will screen the request to ascertain if the complainant has provided sufficient evidence to support a further review. If the request is accepted, the Internal Review will be allocated to a Senior Manager for investigation and response. The timescale for a review is 25 working days.

If the screening process identifies that no evidence has been provided by the complainant to support the carrying out of further investigation, the Complaints Team will inform the complainant of this decision. The complainant will be advised why this decision has been made and that they can refer their concerns to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Stage 2: Independent Review

Depending on the complexity and severity of the complaint, it may be necessary for the Complaints Team to appoint an Independent Investigating Officer to investigate a complaint and then report on their findings. The findings are then summarised in a review response by a designated senior member of staff within the service area.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The option to approach the LGO is available to the complainant for the Corporate Feedback Procedure, as it would be for the Statutory Procedure.

Total Feedback Received

The chart below provides a general overview of the total amount of feedback which has been recorded by the Complaints Team. For the purpose of the below chart some feedback has been categorised together, such as duty and Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) matters, these shall be further broken down as the report progresses.



Screening System

In order to ensure that either Complaints Procedure is used correctly, a detailed screening process is applied to all feedback which is received. This process allows the Complaints Team to gain essential background information on the case and consider information submitted by the complainant together with the criteria previously detailed and any legal implications before making a final decision for sign off, as to how the feedback can be dealt with.

If, following completion of the screening process it is found that a representation is not eligible to enter the Statutory or Corporate Feedback Complaints Procedure then the complainant must be informed and provided with the reason why this decision has been made. If the Complaints Team takes the decision to refuse to investigate, the complainant is routinely directed to the Local Government Ombudsman which places great importance on the decision-making process by the Complaints Team.

In addition to the above, there may be occasion when an individual approaches the Complaints Team with issues that fall outside of the jurisdiction of the Complaints Procedure. When this arises, the Team provide advice and assistance to ensure the individual is appropriately signposted.

Duty Matters

The below table shows a comparison against the data held for the previous reporting year which is categorised as being a duty matter.

Year	Number of Duty Matters
2015 – 2016	203
2016 – 2017	210
2017 - 2018	208

The following chart provides a breakdown of how these duty matters have been categorised. Specific detail with regards to duty issues is provided to County Managers on a monthly basis and to Strategic Leads on a monthly and quarterly basis.



The data above shows that duty matters account for a large proportion of the work undertaken by the Complaints Team, following a similar trend to the previous reporting year. 30% of the total feedback received falls into the duty category and there is a 13% increase between duty matters and the total amount of complaints processed.

Although duty issues are not facilitated through either formal complaint procedure; it should be noted that this aspect of work accounts for a high proportion of staff time within the Complaints Team. It is important that duty issues are not overlooked simply because they are not recorded as a formal complaint. Recording a matter through the duty system requires evidence-based decisions which are made through liaising with local level management and accessing information held on file to determine that further investigation cannot be facilitated. Once a decision of this nature is made, complainants are advised to approach the Local Government Ombudsman leaving the decision open to scrutiny.

It is therefore vitally important that the Complaints Team maintain the strong links with local level management, to validate any information which is being relied upon and to ensure a consistent message is given to the complainant from all avenues.

The facilitation of a duty issue regularly requires more communication between the Complaints Team and the service areas within the Local Authority, as there is no set process to follow as there would be for a formal complaint. It is therefore duty work which raises the awareness of the work undertaken by the Complaints Team and this allows for relationships with staff to continually be strengthened. It is pleasing to note this reporting year that staff feel confident and able to approach the Complaints Team in respect of any queries or requests for support during the formal process of an investigation.

Statutory Stage 1 Investigations

The Complaints Team believe that providing a robust response at Stage 1 of the procedure, this can prevent the complaint progressing to Stage 2 or can support the Local Authority's decision if the matter was referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Complaints Team have assessed how it can support both the complainant and the responding officer during Stage 1 and has built in the following steps into the process:

- Specific complaints are defined by the Complaints Team from the information submitted by the complainant. This is to ensure that the scope of the investigation is clear from the beginning. It also serves to ensure that each complaint is considered separately and for a clear outcome to be determined and is also in line with how the Local Government Ombudsman investigates.
- The complainant is advised in an acknowledgement letter from the Complaints Team, to make contact if they feel their complaints have been defined incorrectly. This provides assurance that the complainant is happy with the complaints being investigated and prevents any challenge on the defined complaints once the investigation has concluded.
- A pre-populated Stage 1 response letter template is created in order to provide a framework for the responding officer to use when dealing with complaints. This is to promote consistency in responding to the complaints and to ensure that the response letter clearly lays out the investigation findings in relation to each defined complaint. The standard paragraphs within the template contain information which must be provided to the complainant in order to comply with our statutory obligations.
- This reporting year the Complaints Team have made it mandatory for responding officers to submit their draft responses to the Team for statutory investigations for a quality assurance check to be carried out.

The Complaints Team processed a total of 54 complaints through the Statutory Complaints Procedure at Stage 1. The chart below provides a breakdown by quarter together with a comparison for previous years.

Reporting Period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	15	11	31	14	70
2016/17	40	23	15	13	91
2017/18	5	14	16	19	54

The data above reports a 40% decrease in Stage 1 Statutory Complaints in comparison with the preceding year. Quarter 1 accounts for only 10% of those complaints, whereas figures steadily increase across the remaining quarters.

It is always difficult to provide future forecasts of complaints, as the data above shows that figures fluctuate on a quarterly and a yearly basis. It should be stressed that the volume of complaints taken on its own, is not indicative of the quality of services being provided by the Local Authority. The findings following investigation and whether the complainant has progressed the matter any further provide a more useful measure of performance and more importantly provide useful learning for the Local Authority moving forwards to shape future service provision.

Breakdown

The following tables provide a further breakdown into operational leadership, of the 54 complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure.

Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Specialist Safeguarding Units	3	8	8	8	27
First Response Team	-	-	1	-	1
TOTAL	3	8	9	8	28
Looked after Children and Disability Services	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Care Planning and Court Teams	-	1	1	2	4
Disability Services	1	4	2	6	13
Throughcare Teams	1	-	-	1	2
Adoption Service	-	-	3	-	3
Fostering Service	-	1	-	1	2
TOTAL	2	6	6	10	24
Partnership and Development	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Independent Reviewing Officer	-	-	1	1	2
TOTAL	-	-	1	1	2

Nature of Stage 1 Statutory Complaints

The table below shows the nature of complaints dealt with under Stage 1 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure during 2017/18, broken down by service areas and detailing a percentage format specific to each service area:

Nature of Complaint	Percentage
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services	
Case Management	82%
Staff Conduct	12%
Standard of Service	3%
Inaccurate Information Provided	3%
TOTAL	100%
Looked after Children and Disability Services	
Case Management	75%
Eligibility	12%
Staff Conduct	5%
Access to Service	8%
TOTAL	100%
Partnership and Development	
Staff Conduct	50%
Case Management	50%
TOTAL	100%

The figures above show the main theme for nature of complaint to be case management, which is a trend found within each report. It should be noted that complaints are defined from verbal or written communication and on the majority of occasions a complainant raises a multitude of concerns which they wish to be further investigated. The nature is therefore recorded as a general term for the set of complaints and as such, case management can encompass a wide range of concerns.

It has previously been acknowledged by the Complaints Team, that the nature of complaint can be seen as being generic in terms of service improvement. Following feedback from management, this reporting year the Complaints Team have provided an additional document to Strategic Leads along with the quarterly reports. These documents provide detail of any defined complaints which have been found to be upheld or partially upheld. Feedback in terms of this document has been positive; management are able to discuss these documents with their staff and consider any trends or learning from these complaints through different perspectives.

Outcomes of Stage 1 Statutory Complaints

The table below illustrates the outcome of complaints dealt with under Stage 1 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure during 2017/18, including a comparison for preceding years. It should be noted that 2% of complaints remain outstanding at the time this report has been prepared:

Reporting Period	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Complainant not Engaging	Closed: Sensitive Matter	Complaint Withdrawn
2015/16	10%	63%	18%	2%	-	7%
2016/17	4%	55%	34%	3%	-	4%
2017/18	22%	39%	37%	-	-	-

The figures above report that despite there being a 40% decrease in Stage 1 Statutory Complaints in comparison to previous reporting years; there is a significant increase in complaints being found to be wholly upheld. Stage 1 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure is referred to as local resolution, meaning the Team Manager of the service concerned would usually investigate and respond to the complaint. It should therefore be commended that Team Managers are able to identify and accept fault within their respective teams and recognise any areas requiring improvement.

The developments taken in respect of further detailed reporting to Strategic Leads on complaints found to be upheld or partially upheld, will be vitally important to ensure that learning can be identified from these complaints.

Timescales for Responding to Stage 1 Statutory Complaints

The following chart shows a comparison of the response timescales for Stage 1 Statutory Complaints for 2017/18 against previous reporting years.

Reporting Period	Within Timescale	Over Timescale	Complainant not Engaging	Closed: Sensitive Matter	Complaint Withdrawn
2015/16	58%	35%	2%	-	5%
2016/17	57%	36%	3%	-	4%
2017/18	45%	53%	-	-	-

The above figures show that 45% of complaints have been responded to within the prescribed timescales, supporting the services commitment to meet these targets together with the ongoing pressures of the day to day work they are faced with.

Whilst it is preferable for timescales to be adhered to, in some cases it is simply not possible. There are a number of factors which can impact the response falling outside of timescales and these will sometimes fall outside the control of the officer allocated to investigate the complaints. When instances of this nature do occur, the advice provided by the Complaints Team is that the responding officer makes further contact with the complainant to explain the reasoning for any delay and agree a new timeframe for completion. The Complaints Team are of the view that a thorough and robust response is imperative at Stage 1 and as such an extension to ensure this is provided, is acceptable.

Any instances of exceeding timescales are closely monitored and shared with County and Strategic Level management on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Remedies for Stage 1 Statutory Complaints

An explanation is the main remedy recorded for Stage 1 Statutory Complaints; with this accounting for 93% of responses. This is a recurring theme each reporting year. On many occasions a complainant may be unsure about why certain decisions have been made or be uncertain about the role and remit of a team; a written response providing an explanation will usually suffice in providing the complainant with that information.

Stage 2 Statutory Independent Investigations

Whilst every effort is made to ensure a comprehensive and detailed response at Stage 1 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure, complainants do have the option to progress to a Stage 2 Independent Investigation.

The process at Stage 2 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure can be lengthy and as such the Complaints Team will, following assessment, discuss any requests with the relevant management to determine if there is a resolution which could be agreed upon without the need to invoke the Stage 2 process. Instances of this nature require careful liaison with the complainant to ascertain if they are in agreement with that course of action or whether they still wish to proceed with the Stage 2 Independent Investigation.

The below table shows the number of Stage 2 Investigations commissioned this reporting year, with a comparison for previous years:

Reporting Period	Number of Stage 2 Independent Investigations
2015/16	11
2016/17	9
2017/18	5

The figures above show a decrease in the amount of Stage 2 Independent Investigations upon comparison. The reader is reminded however that there is a decrease this reporting year in Statutory Stage 1 Complaints. The below table provides a comparison for the preceding year of complaints progressing to a Stage 2 Independent Investigation.

Reporting Period	Number of Stage 1 Statutory Complaints	Number of Stage 2 Independent Investigations	Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints Progressing to Stage 2 Investigation
2015/16	70	11	16%
2016/17	91	9	10%
2017/18	54	5	9%

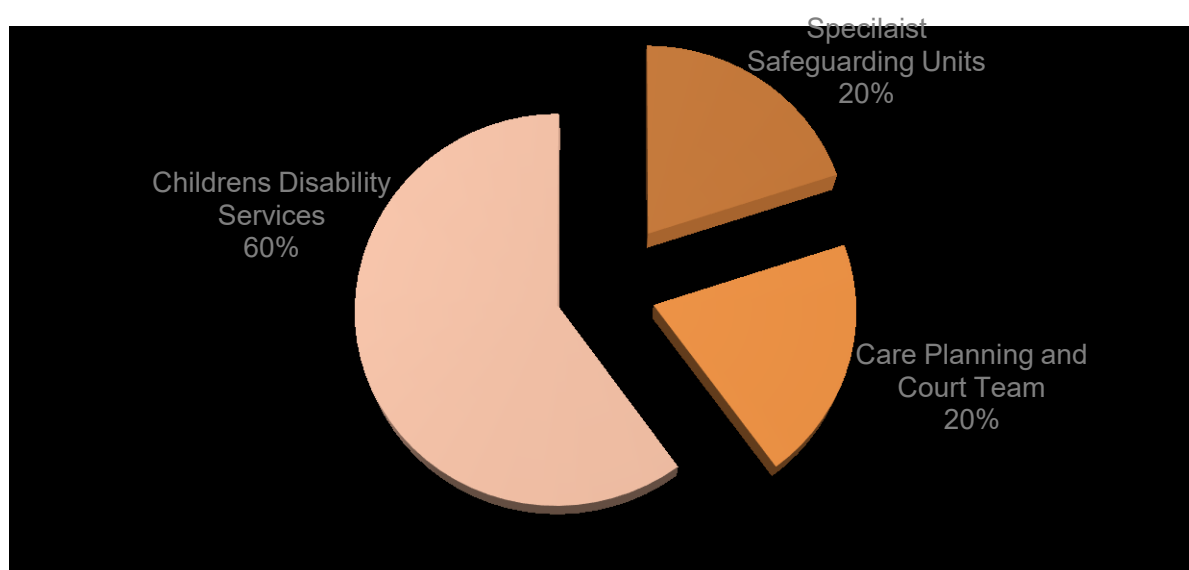
This data shows despite the decrease in Statutory Stage 1 Complaints, there is only a very slight decrease in complainants wishing to progress to a Stage 2 Independent Investigation when looked at in comparison to 2016/17. The Complaints Team would stress that the reasons behind the decision to progress to the next stage of the process varies between each complainant and it should not necessarily be assumed that it is due to a poor response at Stage 1. It is routinely communicated to staff the need for a thorough and robust response at Stage 1, as even if the matter should progress to the next stage, a comprehensive response at Stage 1 will support the stance of the service area and the detail will undoubtedly assist with the investigation at Stage 2.

The table below shows the Stage 2 Investigations that took place in respect of the services within Families First.

Service	Number of Stage 2 Independent Investigations
Looked after Children and Disability Services	4
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services*	1

*The investigation for Specialist Safeguarding remains ongoing.

The chart below provides a further breakdown into teams:



Findings from Stage 2 Independent Investigations

Investigations carried out at Stage 2 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure usually contain a number of defined complaints, which the Independent Investigating Officer will make a finding on following their Investigation. The number of complaints within each Investigation will depend on the complainant and would be informed from the initial interview.

From the 5 Stage 2 Independent Investigations commissioned during 2017/18, there were 55 individual complaints contained within. The table below provides data in terms of the findings of those 55 complaints.

Findings	Figure	Percentage
Upheld	19	34%
Not Upheld	24	44%
Partially Upheld	6	11%
No Finding	6	11%

The above data shows that the majority of complaints are not found to be wholly upheld. The Local Authority place great significance on learning from complaints and staff are encouraged to reflect upon any identified learning in order that necessary lessons can be understood and acted upon. Where an investigation suggests recommendations, which are subsequently accepted by the Local Authority, robust action plans are closely monitored to ensure completion and learning is then disseminated in several ways.

Recommendations from Stage 2 Investigations

The tables below offer a small selection of some of the complaints that escalated to Stage 2 and the actions which the services have taken to complete the recommendations made by the Investigating Officer. It is usual that these recommendations are shared as part of the Senior Managers Blog, which is a communication disseminated to all practitioners within the service to ensure that any identified learning is shared as widely and effectively as possible. Any developmental matters will form part of the respective services management and development meetings. Senior managers are also advised to discuss these recommendations during team meetings and individual staff supervisions.

It should be noted that the one Stage 2 relating to the Specialist Safeguarding Service, remains ongoing and as such recommendations cannot be reported on.

Service : Looked after Children and Disability Services
Action taken by the service following recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been reminded of the need to record significant communications, events and decisions in the file records to ensure that there is an effective audit trail.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New contact facilities have been commissioned which have improved the suitability and availability of resources to accommodate supervised contact requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commissioning and sign off arrangements for work undertaken shall be revisited to ensure they meet the needs of Childrens Services.

Stage 3 Complaint Review Panels

The below table provides an overview of any Stage 3 Complaints Review Panels which were held in 2017/18 and the respective services involved:

Service	Number of Stage 3 Complaints Review Panels
Looked after Children and Disability Services	2
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services	1
TOTAL	3

It should be noted that one of the cases which progressed to a Stage 3 Complaints Review Panel was in relation to a complaint which was initially made in 2016/17; however, the request to progress to the third stage of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was not received until the 2017/18 reporting year. It should therefore not be assumed that all three complaints which progressed to a Stage 3 Complaints Review Panel, are linked to the five Stage 2 Investigations in this report.

Through the Stage 3 Complaints Review Panel process, the Panel will consider information presented by the complainant before inviting officers in attendance to make comment on these. They will then deliberate before submitting a report including recommendations to the Local Authority and the complainant. The Local Authority will then provide a response to those recommendations and inform the complainant of how these shall be implemented.

The below table provides an example of some recommendations implemented following Stage 3 Complaints Review Panels.

Service: Looked after Children and Disability Services
Action taken by the service following recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current procedures relating to Fabricated and Induced Illness will be reviewed and appropriate policy/procedures and training put in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childrens Social Care should be notified of all EHCP assessments and are required to contribute. A copy would only be provided if there is an active ongoing or subsequent involvement. Guidance will be issues to reiterate and support this.

Service: Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services
Action taken by the service following recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Authority will undertake to review its current practice in regard to this area and seek to make changes where appropriate to improve the consistency of its provision of information and management of expectations, including where appropriate the development of policy/procedure and staff training/development. Particular attention will be paid to the situation pertaining in this specific case i.e. when duty Social Workers speak to extended family members of an active case that they explain explicitly what they can and cannot share with them and why.

Corporate Stage 1 Complaints

The Complaints Team processed a total of 130 complaints through the Corporate Complaints Procedure at Stage 1. The chart below provides a breakdown by quarter together with a comparison for the previous reporting year.

Reporting Period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2015/16	35	29	19	28	111
2016/17	31	32	34	35	132
2017/18	38	43	29	20	130

The above data represents a 2% decrease in Corporate Stage 1 Complaints this reporting year. As with the data for Statutory Complaints, it is not possible to forecast figures for complaints as it is not predictable to know what may constitute a complaint to someone.

Breakdown

The following tables provide a further breakdown of the 130 complaints investigated at Stage 1 of the Corporate Complaints Procedure:

Education and Skills	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
SEND Teams	7	8	6	4	25
School Admission and Transport	-	1	1	-	2
Home Education Team	-	1	-	-	1
TOTAL	7	10	7	4	28
Partnership and Development	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Independent Case Conference Chair	1	-	1	1	3
TOTAL	1	-	1	1	3
Looked after Children and Disability Services	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Care Planning and Court Team	1	6	2	1	10
Fostering Support Team	-	1	-	-	1
Occupational Therapy Team	-	1	-	-	1
Disability Team	1	2	-	2	5
Throughcare Team	4	-	1	1	6
Adoption Team	2	1	2	-	5
TOTAL	8	11	5	4	28
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Youth Offending Team	-	-	-	2	2
Emergency Duty Team	-	2	-	-	2
Specialist Safeguarding Units	15	17	13	10	55
First Response Team	4	-	1	-	5
Local Support Teams	3	-	1	1	5
Family Intervention Project	-	2	-	-	2
TOTAL	22	21	15	13	71

Nature of Stage 1 Corporate Complaints

The table below shows the nature of complaints dealt with under Stage 1 of the Corporate Feedback Procedure since the period where these were absorbed by this section of the Customer Feedback and Complaints Team, broken down by service areas, also detailing a percentage format specific to each service area:

Nature of Complaint	Percentage
Education and Skills	
Case Management	68%
Delay in Service	8%
Inaccurate Information Recorded	4%
Staff Conduct	8%
Standard of Service	12%
TOTAL	100%
Looked after Children and Disability Services	
Case Management	50%
Staff Conduct	20%
Standard of Service	7%
Inaccurate Information Recorded	7%
Access to Service	7%
Eligibility	3%
Disclosure of Information	3%
Delay in Service	3%
TOTAL	100%
Partnership and Development	
Staff Conduct	100%
TOTAL	100%
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services	
Case Management	43%
Staff Conduct	41%
Disclosure of Information	6%
Communication	4%
Delay in Service	1%
Access to Service	1%
Standard of Service	1%
Inaccurate Information Recorded	3%
TOTAL	100%

Outcomes of Stage 1 Corporate Complaints

The table below illustrates the outcome of complaints dealt with under Stage 1 of the Corporate Feedback Procedure during this reporting year with a comparison for the preceding year:

Please note that 6% of complaints remain outstanding as of the time this report is prepared:

Reporting Period	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Complainant not Engaging	Remains Ongoing	Unable to make a Finding	Complaint Withdrawn
2015/16	9%	42%	40%	2%	4%	1%	-
2016/17	12%	45%	38%	-	2%	12%	2%
2017/18	8%	34%	51%	-	6%	-	1%

The data above shows a decrease in the complaints which are found to be upheld or partially upheld. Whilst it is clearly pleasing to note these figures, this does not necessarily mean there is no learning to be captured. Staff are encouraged to take note of all feedback received and take any learning points forward with their respective teams in order to shape future provision.

Timescales for Responding to Stage 1 Corporate Complaints

The table below illustrates the timescales for responding to Stage 1 Complaints via the Corporate Complaints Procedure, with comparative data for the preceding year:

Please note that these figures do not consider complaints which remain outstanding or which were withdrawn:

Reporting Period	Within Timescale	Over Timescale
2015/16	59%	36%
2016/17	63%	35%
2017/18	53%	40%

These figures show that 53% of complaints are responded to within the prescribed timescale set out within the Corporate Feedback Procedure.

As stated within the data for Statutory Complaints, it is sometimes necessary for responses to run outside of timescales for a number of reasons outside of the responding officer's control. The Customer Feedback and Complaints Team will continue to work closely with staff members to ensure that communication is kept open with the complainant and a revised completion date agreed.

Remedies for Stage 1 Corporate Complaints

89% of Stage 1 Corporate Complaints have been provided with an explanation as the remedy. As with Statutory Complaints, many complainants simply require an explanation as to why certain decisions have been made and in the majority of cases, this enables the complainant accept the explanation as some form of resolution to their complaint.

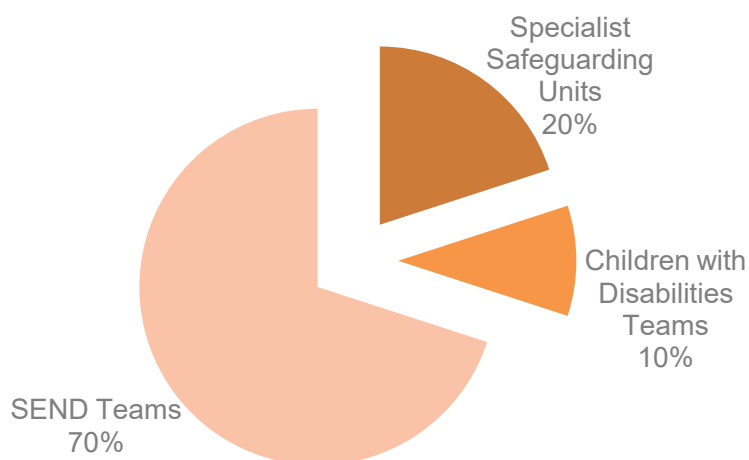
Stage 2 Corporate Complaints – Internal Review

During this reporting year, ten complaints were accepted for an internal review at Stage 2 of the Corporate Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Team has discretion with requests of this nature and each request is assessed on its own merit. If it is felt that there would be no benefit to the complaint progressing to a Stage 2 Review, then the request is refused and the complaint directed to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The table below shows the Stage 2 Reviews that have taken place in respect of the services within Children and Families Services:

Service	Number of Stage 2 Reviews
Education and Skills	7
Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services	2
Looked after Children and Disability Services	1

The chart below provides a further breakdown into teams:



Recommendations and Learning from Corporate Stage 2 Reviews

The below table provides a small selection of recommendations and learning which has been identified from Stage 2 of the Corporate Complaints Procedure. All learning identified through this process is shared in widest sense through various means of reporting and staff development sessions.

Service: Specialist Safeguarding Units
Action taken by the service following recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff have been asked to routinely consider meeting with complainants at the first stage of the process, to try and resolve concerns in person.

Service: SEND Teams
Action taken by the service following recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The response through the Stage 2 Review is shared with SEND Teams, to gain a wider understanding of the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The Local Government Ombudsman has processed 30 complaints for children's services during this reporting period. The LGO will make a judgement on whether they chose to investigate the complaint themselves or make enquiries with the Local Authority before making a decision.

The below table provides further detail; the LGO finding reported below how it is stated from the LGO:

Service	LGO Status	LGO Finding	LGO Recommendations
School Admission Appeals	Investigation	Investigation Discontinued	Not Applicable
School Admission Appeals	Investigation	No Fault	Not Applicable
School Admission Appeals	Investigation	Refusal to Investigate	Not Applicable
School Admission Appeals	Investigation	Maladministration – No Injustice	The Council was at fault when it included information about another child in the decision letter. But it apologised for this and sent the correct decision promptly. I consider this is sufficient to put matters right. I have completed my investigation into this complaint as I do not consider the fault by the Council caused injustice to Mrs B, because it did not affect the outcome of the appeal hearing.
Adoption Services	Enquiry	Investigation Commenced	Not Applicable
Adoption Services	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	There was fault by the Council in the failure to give Mr and Mrs B sufficient clear and timely information, feedback and support to enable them to explore

			their views and presentation that were of concern to the Council. This meant the decision not to allow them to proceed to the next stage was not sound. The Council will arrange, within the next two months, for Mr and Mrs B to go through stage one again.
Care Planning and Court Team	Enquiry	No Fault	Not Applicable
Childrens Disability Services*	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	The Council has implemented all the recommendations made by the stage two investigation and the stage three review panel. It is my view that these actions have remedied the injustice caused by the fault. It is Mrs X's choice not to accept the financial offer made by the Council. I cannot see any further actions that the Council should take to remedy the fault or injustice in this case.
Childrens Disability Services	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	Financial payment made. The Council has also agreed to provide training for relevant staff about the need to include parent carer needs in children's social care assessments. It accepts this should be an integral part of the process. It will also advise managers of the lessons learned from this complaint. The Council should confirm the action taken within three months of the decision.
Childrens Disability Services	Enquiry	Remains Ongoing	Not Applicable
Education Psychology Services/SEND	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	Financial payment made. The Council should also ensure its internal procedures are robust enough to ensure it delivers services where there is a legal obligation on it to do so.
Targeted Services	Enquiry	No Fault	Not Applicable
Targeted Services	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	Financial payment made. The Council should reflect with the Learning Support Team (education welfare) learning points arising from the investigation such as good record keeping, identifying a child missing out on education and when to act.
SEND	Premature Referral	Premature Referral	The complainant was directed the Complaints Team, to request formal investigation of their complaint through the Complaints Procedure.
SEND	Enquiry	Investigation Discontinued	The Council had remedied the complaint during the LGO enquiries, to the complainant's satisfaction.
SEND	Enquiry	Investigation Commenced	Not Applicable.

SEND	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	Financial payment made. Refer the case back to the Transport Appeals Panel to reconsider. The Panel should not include members who made the original decision. It should minute how the Panel reaches its decision and what evidence it has considered. Ms Y should be invited to provide additional evidence in support of her appeal. If the revised decision is to allow transport assistance the Council should pay Ms Y her reasonable travel expenses in providing transport to her son since September 2017.
SEND	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	To address these faults, I recommend the Council review its procedures to consider how best it can: a) notify parents if EHC assessments are likely to take longer than 20 weeks for any of the reasons set out in Regulations; b) complete the process set out in legislation and Government guidance before issuing a child's Education, Health and Care Plan; c) ensure that it considers the individual circumstances of children requiring alternative education, and the amount of tuition they require, and records its decisions; and d) make arrangements for alternative tuition to begin without delay.
SEND	Enquiry	Investigation Commenced	Not Applicable
SEND	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	The Council has agreed to provide Mr X with a further opportunity to provide evidence to support his appeal and refer the case back to the Panel to reconsider and. It should record how the Panel reaches its decision and what evidence it considers. The decision letter should explain the reasons for the decision and show that the Panel has taken account of the individual circumstances of the case. If the revised decision is to award transport, the Council should reimburse Mr X for any reasonable expenses in providing transport for C during the time he has been without transport. The service area has also proposed to update the review/appeal guidance for Stages 1 and 2 to ensure that officers of the Council accurately record on their decision how they considered: • the distance and journey time of the place of learning from the home, considering the nature (including safety)

			of the route, or alternative routes, which a young person could be expected to take <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fact young people should be able to reach their education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided.
SEND	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	Financial payment made. Provide Miss X and D with a written report setting out what will happen next. This should specify the support that will be offered to them, and by whom, for the year ahead. A named senior officer should be responsible for overseeing this. The purpose of this is to avoid the faults identified in this report happening again and to restore Miss X's loss of confidence in the Council. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review its procedures regarding the allocation of social workers where the service user has an EHCP. Confirm to the Ombudsman what action it has taken to ensure EHCP reviews are held when they are meant to be, as the Council has said it will do in its stage two complaint response.
SEND	Investigation	Remains Ongoing	Not Applicable
Specialist Safeguarding	Enquiry	No Fault	Not Applicable
Specialist Safeguarding*	Investigation	Maladministration and Injustice	There is fault by the Council that caused Ms X and her family distress. However, the Council's apologies and the financial offer is deemed a suitable remedy and the Ombudsman cannot achieve more for Ms X, Ms Y and Z.
Specialist Safeguarding	Enquiry	Remains Ongoing	Not Applicable
Specialist Safeguarding Team	Refusal to Investigate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
School Transport Team	Enquiry	Investigation Commenced	Not Applicable
School Transport Team	Investigation	Maladministration – No Injustice	There was no fault in how the Council decided to refuse Mr X's application for transport assistance, or in how it reviewed this decision when he appealed it. There was fault in the time the Council took to consider Mr X's appeal. This did not cause Mr X injustice because Ms Z had already withdrawn from college.
School Transport Team	Enquiry	Investigation Commenced	Not Applicable
School Transport Team	Investigation		The Council has agreed to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Mr X to make a fresh application with any additional evidence in support of his case and consider it properly based

		<p>on all the information. In advance of this it should write to Mr X and explain what information he is required to provide (for example, about the benefits he receives).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Mr X with a proper explanation for its decision. • Apologise in writing to Mr X for not considering his application properly.
TOTAL		30

From the 30 complaints which the LGO have considered, 40% have reached a finding of fault.

*It should be noted that these two investigations follow each complainant accessing all three stages of the Statutory Complaints Procedure. Whilst the Local Government Ombudsman have found fault, they have been clear in their reasoning that this is the same identified fault through the Stage 2 Investigation which had already been acted upon in terms of learning and recommendations implemented. The Local Government Ombudsman were unable to find evidence of any new fault which the Local Authority had not already identified.

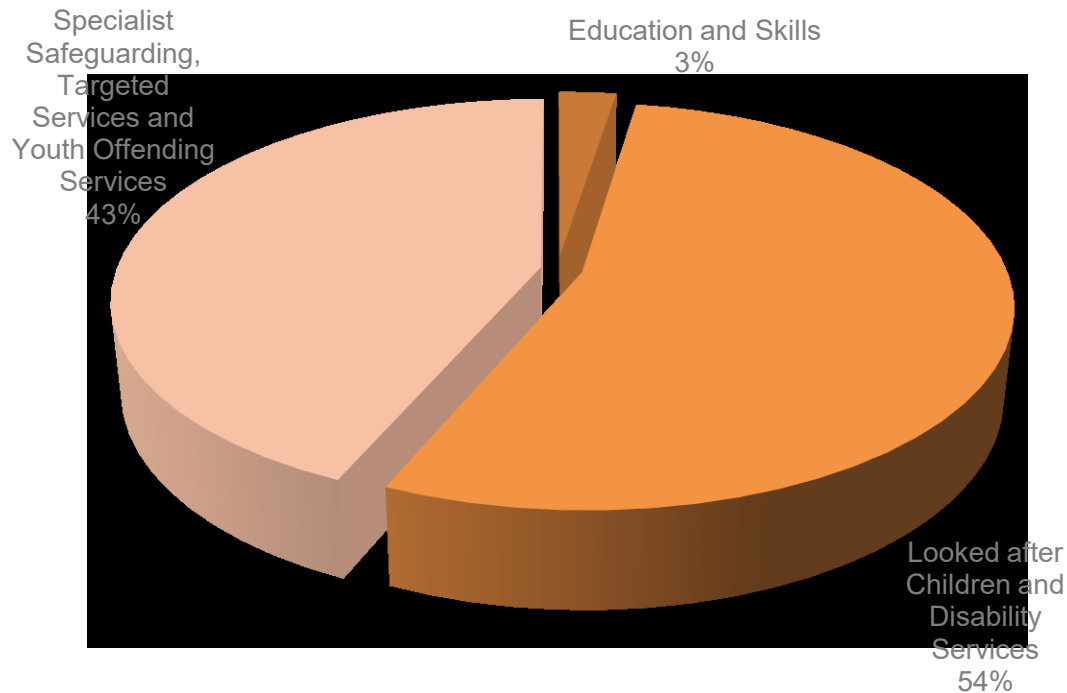
The complaints which have identified fault, shape learning for the Local Authority in the same way that learning identified from all complaints is taken forward. The LGO will monitor any recommendations and their case shall remain open until they are satisfied that a proposed remedy has been implemented.

A development this reporting year from the Complaints Team has been to introduce a reporting tracker for all LGO cases. This is shared with the Families First Management Team on a quarterly basis, to ensure that senior management are aware of all cases which are being considered by the LGO. This mechanism was introduced to allow management to become aware of any recommendations and learning which whilst may not be specific to their own services, may still provide some valuable learning and insight into any cases linked to other teams. It is also hoped to raise the awareness of any identified faults and encourage communication regarding those complaints.

Compliments

A total of 237 compliments have been recorded for this reporting period. This is a significant increase of 22% on comparison to the previous year's figures. Each compliment is highly valued and provides staff with some positive recognition for the hard work which they undertake. Data for compliments is routinely shared with Senior Managers, within the monthly and quarterly management reports produced by the Complaints Team.

The below chart provides a breakdown of these compliments between the services:



Examples of Compliments

Specialist Safeguarding, Targeted Services and Youth Offending Services

- I would like to thank you for your support and to acknowledge your positive role as a lead professional within this case.
- Thank you so much for all that you did yesterday! - I really feel that you did an excellent job and have been more proactive and communicative than many other agencies I have dealt with.
- As you will recall, HHJ Perry was genuinely delighted with what you had achieved in partnership with the Local Authority and was very complimentary in Court.
- There has been a marked improvement in the children's engagement with social services and our working relationship. The new social worker, engages well with the children and takes a genuine interest in their school work which has resulted in the children trusting him and enjoying spending time with him.
- Also, the judge wanted me to pass on to you that he felt that this case was a very good piece of social work by the local authority. He felt that this case could have gone in a completely different direction but because of how it has been managed by you it has resulted in a child being able to stay with his parent.
- She came on board and immediately instigated him being returned to his family home. She got involved, built up a relationship with him and delivered results. Her manner is friendly, supportive and trustworthy. She listens and does not judge offering suggestions for resolutions. She has always kept me informed and answered/returned my telephone calls in spite of her work load. She is a glowing example of what a social worker is all about. We are very happy to have her on

board and wish to highlight her brilliant work to you.

- I am sending you this email to thank you for allowing me to shadow your team. The time spent with them was a fantastic opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the role of a social worker in child safeguarding. Your team were very supportive, also informative, and I left with a greater knowledge of practice, law and orders.
- I genuinely believe without their input my son could have potentially been exposed to risk of harm and therefore I shall be forever thankful for their prompt and professional intervention.

Looked after Children and Disability Services

- Staff at the Alders have all, without exception been extremely professional in their work. They are always welcoming, and it is down to their compassion and commitment to their work that we have so many young people describing their time with you as very positive.
- Parents initially had very entrenched views with regards to their son's behaviour. I was amazed by the response of his parents when they stated that they were 'happy' to have the teenager remain with them as long as they knew his whereabouts. This is a clear reflection of all the hard work undertaken by you with regards to a change in the parent's views and how they manage their own responses to the teenager in question. It would not be an exaggeration if I were to say that I was 'amazed' by the transformation in the parents. Thank you for all the hard work you have done with the family.
- I believe the Theraplay has been invaluable to us in forming a good attachment and would hope that other adopters would have the chance to take part in these sessions. It has also added extra play with structure to his day so he's more than happy! Lastly, I just want to add a big 'Thank you' to you both for making this an enjoyable experience for us both and we will definitely be using your techniques going forward. It has certainly made a big impression on him, as everyone that comes to the door with an oversized bag is now asked if they have a mat, bubbles and stickers!
- My new PA has been really good to me. She has given me good advice and helped with things that I need.
- I have spoken to his Mother today and she is very emotional about the difference this has made to the whole family's life. For the first time in many years she has been able to sleep in her own bed alone and she is sleeping better. He is going to bed at 8pm and not waking until 4am. The family now have space downstairs and his sister has room to play. Mother describes things as 'completely different' and 'Extremely life changing.'
- As a fellow colleague, it was a joy to work with her. It is evident that she is proud of her work and always gives of her best. Attributes that I know will be of great benefit to her in her social work practice.
- Thank you for the exceptional service that my grandchild and myself received from these two professional ladies. She offered a "needs led service" dealt with many difficult situations with compassion sensitivity and above all wisdom. She worked many hours and offered a service that was far above, and over what was expected of her. My grandchild trusted her completely. Indeed, even the Judge at the family court on commended on her dedication on the case.
- The social worker who assessed me to become the special guardian did so much more than that, she showed me great compassion, supported me in some difficult decision making, arranged visits around my work, guided through a process which was so foreign to me and at times frightening. I honestly don't think I would have coped without her and will always be grateful for her support, guidance, kindness and professionalism. My grandchild is the most wonderful little girl in the world, at every milestone in her life. I shall tell her about these two wonderful ladies who helped shape her future and the wisdom that they displayed in securing her future.

Education and Skills

- Just wanted to say how great your transfer team are! They are genuinely seeking to improve the quality of the EHCP that they are sending to me for sign off and are actively seeking feedback! They put up with my comments and constructive criticism with grace as I understand the pressure they are under re meeting targets but are always willing to adjust/amend.
- In addition to providing DEAFvibe with a professional interpreter and notetaking service, ASSIST staff share their knowledge and expertise and passing on their skills, prioritising the needs of DEAFvibe as a charitable organisation and ensuring people with sensory loss have access to fair treatment and equal opportunities. ASSIST also deserve to be recognised for the way they have encouraged everyone connected to sensory services in Staffordshire, service users, volunteers, professionals and charities to work together to increase awareness with the aim of improving service provision.
- I just wanted to let you know that when I visited today, a lead member of staff said how great she is and what a brilliant job she's done of pulling together information to give a more holistic picture which didn't seem to have been managed by any other professional thus far.
- Anyway, thank you so much, the unit has given him a childhood back and also me a life outside caring for him and fighting to get things for him to have a normal education without illness being in the way.

Annual Report Commentary from the Complaints Team

Whilst it is evident that there has been a decrease in the overall amount of complaints received this year; it is not possible to provide a conclusive reason for this. The data used within this report is divided between the different complaints procedures and as such the fact that the statutory complaints procedure has resulted in a higher figure of upheld complaints is prominent; however, it is also important to consider the complaints received for Children and Families Services as a whole. When viewing the data in this way, of the total complaints investigated between both procedures 13% were upheld, 36% partially upheld and 46% not upheld.

Responding to complaints within the prescribed timescales has been a focus point within each quarterly report produced this reporting year. It is widely acknowledged that the timescales in some instances can be unachievable; and there are varying factors as to why this is. The Complaints Team continue to raise the importance of remaining in communication with the complainant, and ensuring they are aware of any potential delay with an updated completion date agreed. This point will continue to be monitored through the ongoing reporting to staff.

The data for Local Government Ombudsman complaints report a rise in complaints where fault has been identified, with an increase of 24% upon comparison to 16/17. Whilst some investigation findings have been challenged; the majority have been fully accepted by the services at the first stage. The Local Government Ombudsman have the same powers as the High Court in terms of requesting information and as such it is imperative that requests received from them are acted on in a swift manner. This reporting year staff have been extremely cooperative and attended various meetings to consider Local Government Ombudsman investigations and agree next steps.

The Complaints Team continue to receive exceptional support from managers at all levels within the department and despite the ongoing pressures faced by all staff within the service, their cooperation and willingness to investigate and respond to complaints is routinely noted. Every effort is made to resolve complaints at the initial stage; this reporting year there have been several instances where meetings have been facilitated between managers, the complaints officer and the complainant to try and take a different approach to resolving the issues before instigating the next stage of the process. This method has proved successful in several cases and staff are thanked for their assistance in this regard.

It is pleasing to note the increase in compliments this reporting year; compliments provide valuable detail in a direct way of what people appreciate about services and the way in which they are provided. Feedback of this nature also provides a valuable motivational tool for staff and allows them to celebrate their performance.

Given that each complaint differs in its content, there is always scope for further work to be undertaken with all services to ensure complaints investigations address all the issues raised and identify any improvements to the delivery of services. The Complaints Team will continue to work alongside staff to further develop working relationships and raise the awareness of the work which is undertaken.

Report Author:

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**Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee
3 September 2018**

**Edge of Care Inquiry
Final Report**

Recommendation of the Review Group

That the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee consider the final report and recommendations of the Inquiry Group on Edge of Care, with a view to endorsing its submission for Executive Response and forwarding to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

Report

Report of Scrutiny and Support Officer

Reason for recommendation

The investigation by the Inquiry Group considering children on the edge of the care system is now complete and the Inquiry Group has produced a final report and recommendations. The Select Committee is asked to consider the report and determine whether they endorse the recommendations. They are also asked to agree its submission to the Cabinet for their Executive Response. If forwarding the report the Committee are invited to consider if they wish to make any accompanying comments.

Report

Background

The Head of Families First reported to the MTFs Working Group in 2016/17 that there was a projected overspend of £3.5m in the Looked After Children budget. He reported that there were a significant number of initiatives in train to prevent those 'on the cusp of care' from coming into the system and various projects were showing positive outcomes.

Performance figures on the numbers of looked after children and the performance of the Looked after Service area are regularly reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel (non-public meeting). Wider performance is also reported each month to the Children's Improvement Board. However no recent scrutiny had taken place by the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee.

At the Select Committee meeting of 26 September 2017 Members agreed the scope and terms of reference for this inquiry.

Summary

The Group held an inquiry session on 30 January to consider the work already undertaken around children on the edge of the care system, current services and commissioning, proposed new developments and local member feedback. They held further meetings to address queries raised and gather information. The reasons for children being on the cusp of care are complex. Early identification and preventative work are key to avoiding children coming into the care system. A number of initiatives have been developed to address the issues highlighted and work is ongoing to help support children being able to stay safely within their family setting. The Inquiry Group have a number of recommendations, including extending some services, referrals for further investigation/monitoring of developments and around the importance of current data to inform and develop services.

Next Steps

Subject to the endorsement of the Committee, the final report, together with any accompanying submission that the Committee may wish to make, will be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration and Executive Response.

Link to the Strategic Plan

Ensure Children and Families have a network of support to help manage their own problems and stay safe and well.

Implications

The equalities and legal; resource and value for money; and risk implications are set out in the attached report.

Contact Officer

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Appendices/Background papers

- Final Report of the Working Group

**Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee
Inquiry**
on
Edge of Care

**Final Report
August 2018**



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Chairman's Foreword / Summary

Preventing children from coming into our care is a critical function of the County Council. The unfortunate truth is that the outcomes of looked after children are significantly worse than children who are brought up in their own family setting.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Mark Sutton outlined that the rate of children becoming looked after in Staffordshire is rising. Historically, Staffordshire has performed well and has relatively low numbers of looked after children compared with other Local Authorities. This continues to be the case. Whilst the rise is reflected nationally, the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee were asked to review our edge of care services to understand whether more can be done to address this rise in Staffordshire.

This inquiry set out to understand:

- Why are more children becoming looked after in Staffordshire?
- The preventative measures used by the County Council to prevent children entering the care system
- Is there anything else the County Council should be doing to prevent children from becoming looked after?

From the outset of the inquiry, it was clear that "Edge of Care" was a wide concept, covering issues relating directly to the prevention of children entering the care system such as early help and intensive support, reunification of children with their family and court proceedings.

The information provided about our edge of care offering was broad in nature and officers were keen to express issues with the system which may affect the overall number of children who are looked after and not just issues relating to the increase of children becoming looked after. These issues outlined in our report below are important but were in addition to the focus of this inquiry. Given the significance and size of the issues uncovered, some of our recommendations are referrals to other Select Committees/Panels.

Our conclusions and recommendations are below and were arrived at by holding two inquiry days with officers and several meetings with members. I would therefore like to put on record my thanks to Helen Philips and Tina Gould and all of the officers for their support throughout this inquiry and to the members for their valued input.



*Mr Conor Wileman
Scrutiny Chairman*

1. Conclusions and Recommendations

During our inquiry we have had the opportunity to consider in detail the developments made and systems in place to support children, young people and their families who are on the cusp of the care system. The dedication and commitment of the officers we met is unquestionable and the continual endeavour to create innovative ways to safely support children to remain within their family setting is a great credit to them and an incredible asset to the County Council. These developments and systems are set out in Section 6 of this report.

The issues around the care system are complex and it is apparent that in most instances there are several reasons why children become looked after.

Our inquiry focused on identifying **why** children and young people came into the care system. Throughout our investigation it became increasingly apparent that there are very complex reasons for most children being on the cusp of care. Although one issue may trigger further complications (issues around worklessness, housing, substance misuse) this one issue soon develops into a more complex picture and it becomes difficult to easily identify the initial trigger.

We received information compiled by the Transformation Support Unit (TSU) giving data on risk factors for children and their families. This data was useful and helped illustrate the factors involved, including domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health and parental substance misuse (the toxic trio). However, whilst the data was useful for providing members of the inquiry with an overview of the main factors involved, it was very difficult to use this data to address the real question, which was to explain why more children in 2017/18 were becoming looked after. Some of the data provided to the committee was 2015/16 data and at this time the Council had not seen a rise in looked after children. The inquiry did benefit from further data from 2017 about whether families known to the Council would benefit from advice on substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental mental ill health, and debt, benefits and housing advice and this is reflected in several conclusions below. This inquiry therefore **RECOMMENDS** that in order to recognise the issues, current and clear data needs to be available to enable co-existing factors for assessment to be established both for the inquiry and for the development of the wider Council strategy. We further **RECOMMEND** that a comparative set of 2017/18 data relating to that headed "Understanding the problem" (page 12), be requested from the TSU, to the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee, to enable comparisons with the 2015/16 figures.

Welfare, housing and debt

With concerns around debt and budgeting being an area highlighted in the TSU data we are aware that an unintended consequence of the Universal Credit roll out could be a 5 week gap between the change in benefit funding and the impact this could have on housing and household budgeting. It is important that everything is done to prevent this adversely impacting on the welfare of children in households where this is an issue. Concerns have also been shared more recently around the possibility of financial domestic abuse under the new credit system.

In addition we are aware of instances where a family has been evicted from their home by social housing landlords and this has led to children being put at a severe risk of neglect. We must stress that all partners must consider how their decisions may affect children and how their decisions may ultimately end up costing the taxpayer more than if they were more flexible with their rent payment terms.

We commend the work being developed through the MASH in creating a wider breadth of support from the outset, with partners including mental health, drugs and alcohol, finance and housing all engaged at the point of assessment.

We also acknowledge the One Front Door pilot project launched in Tamworth that creates a centralised point of access for Early Help referrals. Both these developments support early recognition and holistic assessment of need. This inquiry **RECOMMENDS** that the One Front Door project is rolled out swiftly throughout Staffordshire to ensure from the outset that we have a holistic view of family circumstances.

Substance misuse

We remain concerned at the impact of substance misuse. 960 families known to the Council would benefit from advice on this issue which is a substantial proportional of our known family population.

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) provides evidence based interventions and considers whole family solutions where a parent or carer's substance misuse is causing significant concerns for the welfare and safety of children in the home. This is a very intensive programme of support and necessarily means that each officer has a low case load to enable the intensive nature of the programme to be delivered. We remain concerned that substance misuse is a growing issue. Very recent news features have highlighted the destructive nature of the use of "monkey dust", a new drug which is prevalent in Staffordshire. We are also aware of concerns around County Lines, with vulnerable individuals being targeted to supply drugs across the County. There are wider safeguarding concerns here and we feel substance misuse and how the County works with partners to address this is an issue that needs further investigation and we therefore **RECOMMEND** that the Cabinet Member is asked to clarify the current situation with regard to addressing the issues of substance misuse within the County, including concerns around County Lines and the use of monkey dust. We also **RECOMMEND** that the Cabinet Member considers a less intensive service to complement the existing service where there is a lower threshold for qualification into the service.

Domestic abuse and parental mental ill health

One or more of these issues including substance misuse were prevalent in 56% of assessments undertaken by the Council in 2015/16. As mentioned above we would like up to date data in these particular areas however we are aware of work already taking place to address these issues.

The inquiry and the Committee are aware of the new domestic abuse strategy currently in implementation across the County. We welcome this new strategy and will be scrutinising

this implementation for any child or adult safeguarding concerns in 2019 once the implementation is complete. We were pleased earlier in the year to understand that the Office of the Police and Fire Commissioner had agreed to allocate an additional £600,000 to tackling domestic abuse across the County.

This inquiry is also aware of Central Government's plan to address the parity between mental and physical health. Whilst this is something that the Healthy Staffordshire Committee will scrutinise, it is important to note how this particular area can have a significant effect on a child's wellbeing and may lead to neglect and a child being taken into care. We will continue to monitor this closely.

Young people

We commend the Intensive Prevention Service (IPS) for its support of young people aged 11-17 with emotional, psychological and behavioural problems who are at risk of coming into care and also the work of the Short Break Unit. Of those receiving IPS 85% were able to remain with their family which is a remarkable success. Equally the Family Group Conference Service has seen significant number of children on the cusp of coming into care able to safely remain with their families. We **RECOMMEND** that the IPS is extended to young people between the ages of 8-11 to reflect the increasing likelihood of children of this age requiring emotional psychological and behavioural help.

Universal support and early help

Data from the NSPCC, *'Realising the potential: Tackling child neglect in universal services'*, review suggests that, nationally, there is a lack of awareness amongst partners of their responsibility around safeguarding and appropriately dealing with, and raising awareness of, potential concerns.

We are aware of the work of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) and the partnership representation on that Board. In light of the issues raised by the NSPCC and the importance of ensuring all practitioners are aware of their responsibilities, we **RECOMMEND** these concerns be raised with John Wood, Chairman of the SSCB, and that the Select Committee specifically raise these concerns during their scrutiny of the SSCB Annual Report.

Beyond universal services, it is apparent that support at the very earliest possible point is essential to prevent families falling into ever more complex situations which are more difficult and costly to resolve. Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) provides this lower level support and looks to identify route causes of problems at an early stage. In particular we commend the Early Help model and its use of the Early Help Assessment Form which is a universal tool for all practitioners from any service to use with the child and their family to summarise and record their current circumstances, their strengths and their needs. This then becomes the basis for an agreed plan for working together to achieve the identified improvements in the life of that child and their family. It is commendable that of the 639 families who received Early Help, only 2% needed to resume services.

We note the significant work undertaken with schools around the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) monies following the decision by the Schools Forum in October 2017 to take the DSG money allocated to the Local Support Teams (LSTs) and return it to schools. Work with individual schools to broker this funding has been undertaken, with this money now re-allocated on their behalf. This funding, along with £3m BRFC funding, will enable a complementary support service to the LSTs at a lower tier two level. We commend officers for this work and have some concern that partnership working with schools may become increasingly difficult as they become more autonomous, separate units. It will therefore be the responsibility of the providers of family support in local districts to build a strong relationship with local schools. We therefore **RECOMMEND** that quantifiable evidence of referrals from schools are shared with the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee and this is reviewed as part of the wider early help/children's centre review taking place in September 2018.

We are also pleased to note that both the Health Visitor and School Nurse services are part of the 0-19 commissioning and have been brought together to enable delivery of the healthy child programme. We are also aware of the work of the Children's Centres and that they are due to come under the 0-19 commissioned services from 2020. These are key services that help prevent early concerns developing into more complex issues as described above. We particularly commend the pro-active work around the whole family approach, including home visits, in areas of deprivation with children between 5-8 months and again before 2 years. We also note that of those receiving the intensive health visitor intervention service, approximately 7% go on to need additional support. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee has included scrutiny of 0-19 commissioned services on their work programme, currently scheduled for their December meeting. They are also undertaking work in September around the Children's Centres, visiting them to evaluate the changes made since their last piece of work in 2014. We wish to emphasise the importance of early help and identification services in working with children and their families to prevent escalation from cusp of care into the looked after system. We suggest that the scrutiny work in September and December should take account of the work undertaken during this inquiry.

Factors to consider when children are in our care

During our research a number of factors were identified that create difficulties for officers and the children and families they are supporting. Early on in our inquiry it was necessary to set a narrow terms of reference, however the officers were keen to mention these areas of concern below which may explain why the total figure of looked after children in Staffordshire is rising. This alongside evidence that more children are becoming looked after explains the moderate rise in total numbers of looked after children in the County.

Court delays

These delays are partly the result of court closures and partly due to a slowing down of the system, particularly with regard to the reduction in Special Guardianship Orders and delays in discharge orders. We have heard that this is a national as well as a local problem and we understand that representations have been made locally to HH Judge Perry (Designated Family Judge, Stoke-on-Trent Combined Courts) and he has in turn made representations

nationally. A promise has been made for more court time to reduce delays and we want to ensure that this takes place and that the extra time allowed enables the delays to be dealt with promptly. We therefore **RECOMMEND** to the Corporate Parenting Panel that they monitor developments with the Courts, ensuring the extra court time is given and establish if this is sufficient to enable the delays to be effectively dealt with.

We are also aware of difficulties created as a result of changes in the way Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 is now interpreted, with the removal of a child from its parents without a clear plan to return home being seen as a Human Rights issue. This again has resulted in an increase in care proceedings both locally and nationally, and in local authorities and courts having great difficulty in managing this increase in work load. We understand that representations have been made to the Family Justice Board and that these have been fed into the National Board. A national review is being undertaken, with a working group set up in January 2018 tasked to consider the significant rise in court proceedings across the Country in the last 2-3 years. We therefore **RECOMMEND** that the Corporate Parenting Panel monitor the outcomes from this national working group to identify the efforts to ameliorate the current concerns.

Adoption

There is now a shortage of individuals wishing to adopt and this, alongside the subtle change in practice resulting from recent court judgements, has seen an increase in the number of children being subject to a care order rather than a placement order. Central Government has also indicated that the large number of adoption agencies nationally is an inefficient use of resources, with an expectation that agencies will come together. Staffordshire adoption agency is creating a partnership with Telford, Stoke-on-Trent and Shropshire, and we **RECOMMEND** to the Corporate Parenting Panel that they monitor progress with this new partnership going forward.

Challenges for Foster Carers

One of the challenges identified related to the behaviour and needs of young people and how this impacts on their ability to find appropriate foster care. There is an increase in aggressive and violent behaviour as well as an increase in young people presenting with significant social, emotional and/or mental health issues. This presents challenges for making successful foster placements and a need has been identified for resilience fostering. We are pleased to note that activity is underway to address this need, in particular the Resilience Fostering Project, which includes a robust package of practical and financial support for foster carers who are able to take on the more challenging young people.

Finally we wish to congratulate officers for their continual work towards ensuring that wherever possible children are able to stay within their family setting

2. Setting the Scene

At the time of writing the scoping report for a possible review (June 2017) in Staffordshire the number of Looked After Children was 1009, showing an increase of 34 over the year. At this time there were 595 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, which had increased from 563 in May 2017, but was down overall and below statistical neighbours' average. The number of Children in Need cases had increased slightly from 2914 to 2946, but was down overall and below statistical neighbours' average. The number of Early Help 'open' family cases had increased steadily over the same period.

The Looked After Children rate in Staffordshire was stable at 58.9 per 10,000 of the 0-17 population at the end of June. This remained lower than the published West Midlands rate (74.7) at the end of December 2016, but we have seen an upward trend over the past few months.

However, the Head of Families First reported to the MTFs Working Group in 2016/17 that there was a projected overspend of £3.5m in the Looked After Children budget. He reported that there were a significant number of initiatives in train to prevent those 'on the cusp of care' from coming into the system and various projects were showing positive outcomes.

Performance figures on the numbers of looked after children and the performance of the Looked after Service area are regularly reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel (non-public meeting). Wider performance is also reported each month to the Children's Improvement Board. However no recent scrutiny had taken place by the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee.

At the Select Committee meeting of 26 September 2017 Members agreed the scope and terms of reference for this inquiry.

3. Scope of the Work / Terms of Reference

We sought to identify why children were entering care in Staffordshire.

The following key factors were identified:

- Behavioural problems
- Risks of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Gang Related involvement
- Substance/alcohol misuse of the child and or parents/carers
- Lack of full time educational placement (part time timetables, exclusions, SEN/PRU)
- Emotional/mental health issues- child -parent/carers
- Domestic violence
- Housing issues
- Financial hardship
- Risk of abuse: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse.

We wish to understand what work is being done by the Council and partners to impact on the numbers entering care and to consider the current mechanisms in place to prevent children coming into care.

4. Membership

The following Select Committee members participated in this Review Group:

Mr Conor Wileman (Inquiry Chairman)
Mr John Francis
Mr Jason Jones
Mr Kyle Robinson
Mr Paul Snape
Mrs Victoria Wilson

5. Methods of Investigation

The Inquiry was held on 30 January to consider the work already undertaken around children on the edge of the care system, current services and commissioning, proposed new developments and local member feedback.

We then met on 12 February 2018 to identify any further information required. Following that meeting we met officers on 13 March to consider the information requested.

During our investigation we met with the following officers:

- Richard Hancock, Head of Families First and Deputy Director of Children's Services
- Mick Harrison, Commissioner for Safety, Children and Families
- Barbara Hine, Building Resilient Families & Communities Co-ordinator
- Christopher Heeley, County Manager
- Deborah Ramsdale, Strategic Lead, Looked After and Disability Services
- Karen Johnson, County Manager, Specialist Safeguarding
- Liz Kelay, County Manager, Prevention and Placements
- Mandy Thomas, Team manager, Looked After Services
- Natasha Moody, Early Years Commissioning Manager

Our final meeting was on 13 August where we consider our findings and agreed our recommendations.

6. Findings

Children in Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children and the definition of "Edge of Care"

Every Local Authority (LA) must protect and promote the welfare of children in need in its area. To do this it must work with the family to provide support services that will enable

children to be brought up within their own families. Children in need are defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and: need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development; need local authority services to prevent significant or further harm to health or development; or are disabled.

Different levels of care and intervention are required dependent on the identified need of the child. Where there is a concern for a child's welfare, either arising during the course of providing current services, or through a reported concern of maltreatment, children's social care must initiate enquires to identify whether protective action is required. LAs have a duty to make enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and, where they have reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should take action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. Part of this action will be to develop a Child Protection Plan which sets out how the child can be kept safe, how things can be made better for the family and what support they will need.

The LA also has the responsibility under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 to assess and, if required, provide accommodation to children in need who have been lost, abandoned, where there is no adult with parental responsibility for them, or because they are not being provided with suitable accommodation or care. A statutory assessment of a child will also be undertaken by the LAs Children's Social Care Services where the child is made subject of a Section 31A Care Order (Children Act 1989) by the Courts. This order places a statutory responsibility on the LA as a corporate parent, to assess the child's individual needs and to develop a care plan to meet these needs.

Edge of Care considers children and young people on the cusp of coming into the looked after care system and works to safely prevent and reduce them coming into care.

Child protection

During 2017, 901 children and young people were subject to a Child Protection Plan. Almost two thirds of these (59%) had neglect as a primary category of abuse. The next most prevalent category of abuse was emotional abuse, at just over one third (36%), the cause for the remaining 5% was physical and/or sexual abuse.

The aim of the Child Protection Plan is to manage/reduce any potential risk to the child and to provide appropriate intervention. Where the plan is not being successfully completed eg the family can't evidence sustained change, consideration for the child entering care will be made. This happens in a planned way in line with the relevant policies and an application to court for a care order made.

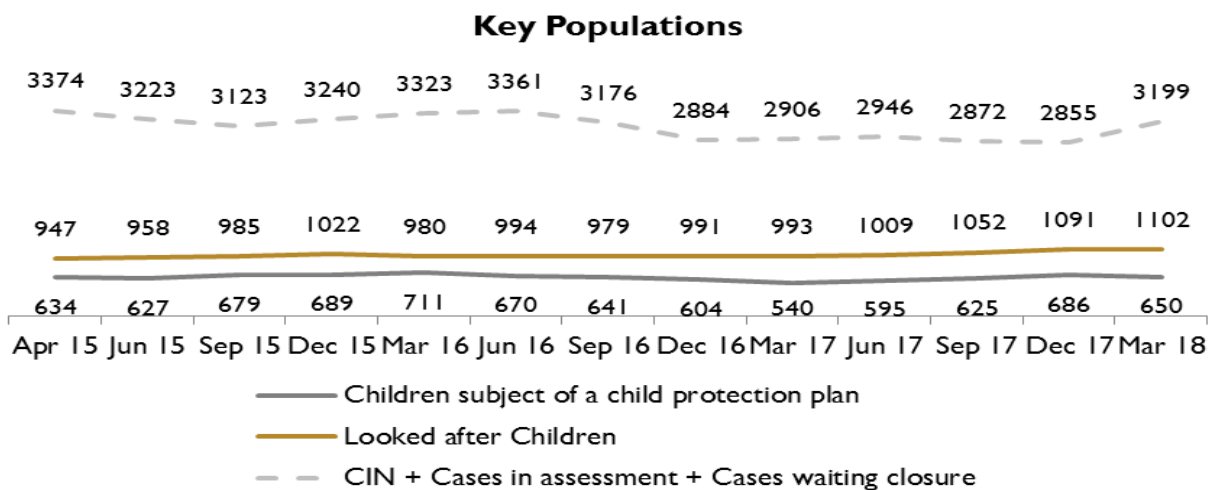
Just less than one quarter (193) of all the children and young people who were previously subject to a Child Protection Plan in 2017 became Looked After immediately following or whilst subject to their Plan. This is a similar number to the 2016 figure of 23%. Of those children and young people, just over half (107) were subject to an Interim Care Order, one

third were voluntarily accommodated under Section 20 (63 children), and the remainder were accommodated as a result of:

- Police Protection Powers (12)
- Emergency Protection Orders (10)
- Short-term breaks (1)

Looked After Legal Status	0-4 years	5-8 years	9-11 years	12-16 years	17 years	Total
Interim Care Order	55	21	17	14		107
Voluntary accommodation under Section 20	31	13	7	12		63
Under Police Protection in LA accommodation	6	2	1	2	1	12
Emergency Protection Order	6		3	1		10
Short term breaks				1		1
Total	98	36	28	30	1	193

At the end of March 2018 the most up to date figures showed that the number of Looked After Children was 1102, an 11% increase from the previous year (993). 650 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, an increase of 20% from the previous year (540). The number of Children in Need (which includes cases in assessment and awaiting closure) is 3199, a 10% increase from March 2017 (2906).



Data supplied by BIDT

Why children are coming into the care system in Staffordshire

At the time of this review 405 children or young people had entered care during the 2017-2018 calendar year (as at end of February 2018).

Of these 221 (55%) entered the system voluntarily under Section 20.

Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 allows for the LA to take a child into the care system by agreement rather than by court order. This will include children with nowhere to live or those that have no one to look after them, eg unaccompanied asylum seekers. They may also include those whose parents can't look after them for a period of time, due to illness or other difficulties. A local authority may also offer to provide Section 20 accommodation for a child when that local authority has made an application to court for a care or supervision order, or is thinking about making an application. Recent case law has seen a significant change to the way Section 20 is interpreted by the Court, now seeing the removal of a child from its parents without a clear plan to return home as a Human Rights issue. This has led to the Courts now being more likely to issue an Interim Care Order, with shared parental responsibility between the parents and the LA and the child remaining at home. This can present safeguarding concerns with, in general, 28 weeks wait for court proceedings to be concluded. Even though the child remains at home during this process they are still included in the LAs looked after population figures.

These changes have resulted in an increase in care proceedings both locally and nationally. LAs and Courts have great difficulty in managing this increase in work load. Representations have been made to the Family Justice Board and these have been fed into the National Board. A national review is being undertaken on this issue, with a working group having been set up in January 2018 tasked to consider the significant rise in court proceedings (37% rise) across the Country in the last 2-3 years.

Of the 405 children and young people entering care during 2017-2018, 136 children and young people (34%) entered the care system on a Care Order, which suggested their accommodation was planned.

A Care Order places a child under the care of the LA under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989. The Order gives the LA parental responsibility for the child. This does not necessarily mean that the parent doesn't have parental responsibility but the parent's wishes can be overridden by the LA where it is in the best interests of the child.

Of the remaining 11%:

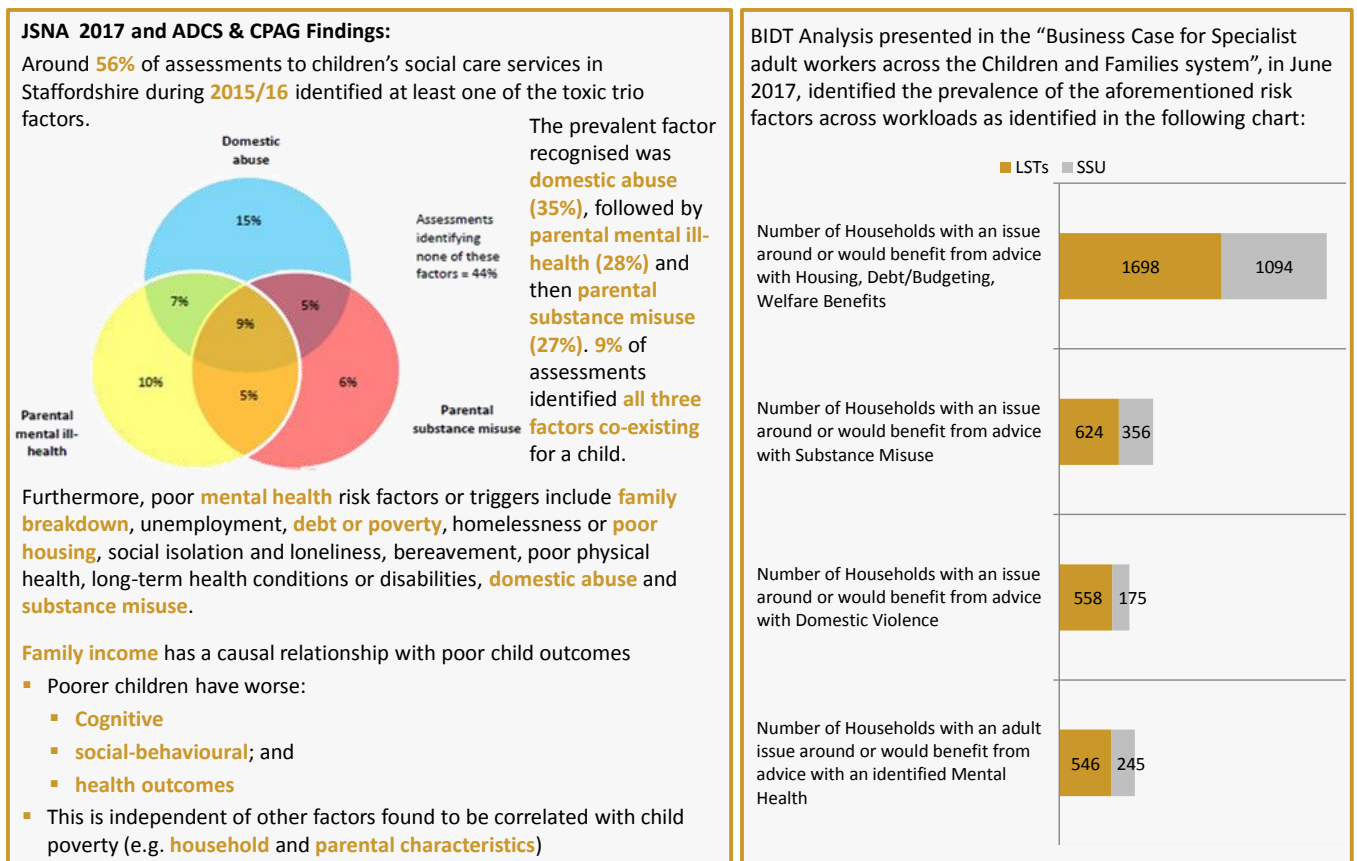
- 32 had come into the system as a result of Police Protection, where a situation arose that required the use of emergency Police powers which allow the removal of a child and for that child to be placed into the care of the LA;
- 14 had been subject to an Emergency Protection Order (EPO), where a court gives the LA the power to remove a child or keep a child in a safe place for a specified duration, giving the LA parental responsibility to protect the child's welfare. An EPO

is an extreme measure and is therefore used only in cases of emergencies, ie, where the child is considered to be in imminent danger;

- 2 were on remand under Section 21 of the Children Act 1989.

The Transformation Support Unit (TSU) provided the detail below identifying the primary drivers for children and young people entering the care system:

Understanding the Problem



During 2017 approximately 150 children entered the care system without previously being subject to a Child Protection Plan. Of these about two thirds entered care after escalating from a CIN Plan, with the majority of these children being over the age of 10 and entering on a Section 20 voluntary agreement. Of the other third (50 children), the majority entered care quickly within 7 days of their referral. 17 of the 50 entered care on an emergency protection order/police protection powers due to immediate safety concerns for their wellbeing.

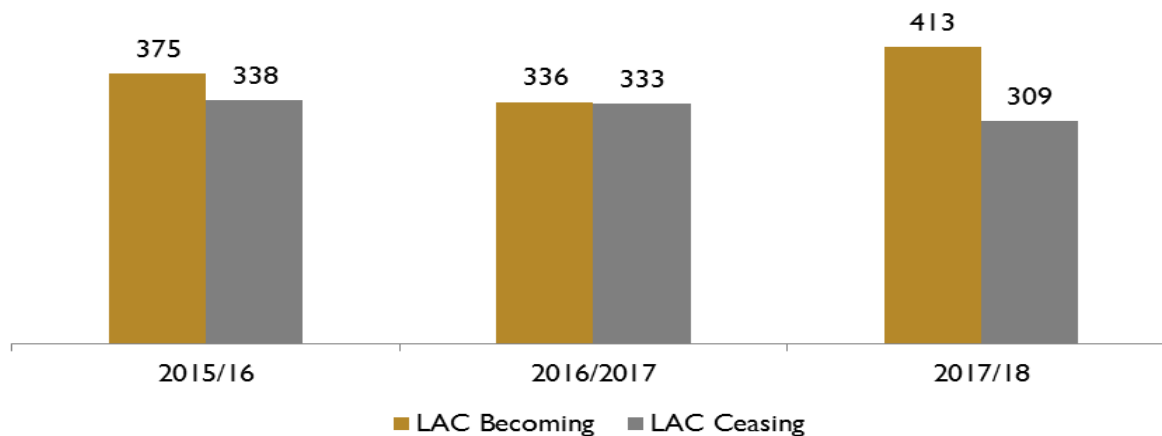
Leaving Care

315 children left care during 2017-2018. The most common reason for children and young people to leave the care system is as a result of becoming 18 (included in the “other” figure).

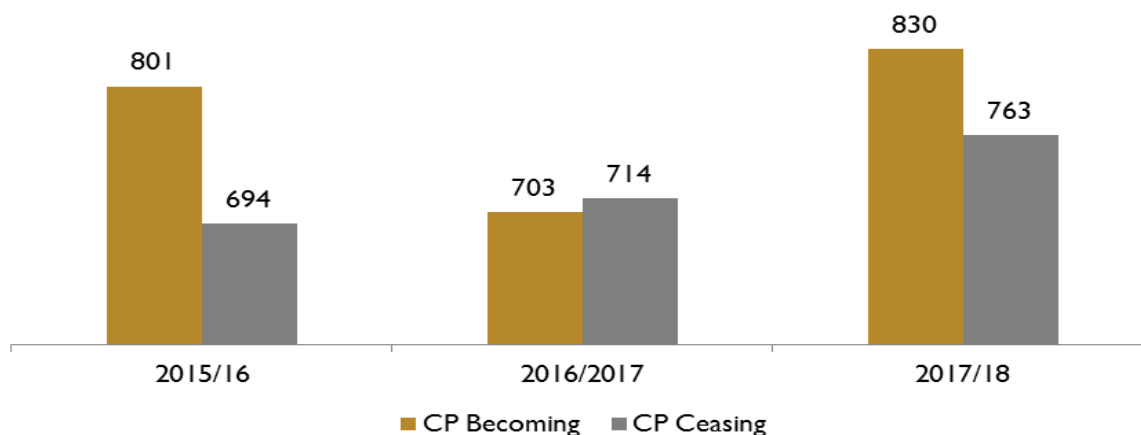
Reasons for children and young people coming out of the care system 2017-2018	
Reason	Number
Other (including turning 18)	118
Returned home	66
Adopted	49
SGO granted	37
Independent living	36
Residence Order Granted	5
Sentence to Custody	3
Transfer to other LA	1

However 27% left care as a result of adoption or Special Guardianship Order (SGO).

Looked After Children - Becoming & Ceasing



Children Subject Of A CP Plan - Becoming & Ceasing



Data supplied by BIDT

Managing numbers of children coming into care - including current and anticipated future demand

It is difficult to predict the demand for children coming into the care system, although targeted measures have been developed to support those vulnerable to becoming looked after. Recently the number of children becoming looked after has been fairly static, other than for unaccompanied asylum seekers (rising from 20 to 80 in 2016 and remaining at that level).

• Age range of children and young people coming into the care system 2017-2018	
Age Range	Number
0 - 4	145
5 – 9	73
10 - 14	85
15-16	80
17 - 18	19
Over 18	3

NB the 3 aged over 18 years were unaccompanied asylum seekers who were initially age assessed as being under 18.

However, since April 2017 there has been a rise in the number of looked after children, partly due to a slowing down of the Court system, the consequent reduction in the flow of cases and the general capacity following a number of court closures. There has also been a change in the type of orders given, with a reduction in the number of Special Guardianship Orders awarded. Representations have been made to HH Judge Perry (Designated Family Judge, Stoke-on-Trent Combined Courts) over the significant delays in discharge orders being heard and the impact this has on the number of looked after children and young people. Having raised this issue at a national level Judge Perry has advised that more court time will be made available. He has also agreed to give consideration to how discharge applications can be prioritised to quicken the process and reduce delays.

There has been a significant change in **adoption**, with a large rise in the number of adoptions following a clear focus from the Coalition Government to address the backlog. However resulting from this backlog focus there is now a shortage of those wishing to adopt. Added to this there has been a number of cases where judgements have influenced case law and Courts have seen a subtle change in their practice, with adoption now being seen as a very last resort. The result of this has been a growth in the number of children being subject to a care order rather than a placement order.

In Staffordshire the number of adoptions has remained between 40-50, but has dropped this year to 30. Nationally there are between 4000-5000 children adopted each year, with approximately 180 adoption agencies managing these. Central Government has indicated they feel this is an inefficient use of resources and expect agencies to come together.

Staffordshire adoption agency is creating a partnership with three other LA adoption agencies, these being: Telford; Stoke-on-Trent; and Shropshire.

There continues to be steady recruitment of **foster carers** and it is recognised that fostering is the best option with residential care only used where fostering is not possible. Currently Staffordshire places approximately half of its fostered children with independent foster carers and half with its own Staffordshire carers. Each week the number of foster carer placements is reviewed, with 100% of Staffordshire's capacity currently in use.

As at December 2017 in Staffordshire there were:

- Over 300 Staffordshire children placed in in-house foster placements;
- Just under 300 placed with independent foster carers;
- 100 placed with friends/relations;
- Approximately 100 in residential care;
- Between 50-60 placed at home;
- A small number in independent living; and
- 30 placed for adoption, although the order had yet to be made.

Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC)

BRFC focusses on work with families that need support to ensure:

- school attendance increases and to reduce the risk of school exclusions;
- support the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour in children and young people;
- help address worklessness, financial exclusion and working debt;
- support children who are in need or subject to a Child Protection Plan;
- help support families who are affected by domestic violence and abuse; and
- help ensure that mental health issues are recognised and addressed.

BRFC is a whole family model that works to identify and address the root causes of exhibited problems. Most of the support is lower level and can be addressed through partnership working with voluntary and community providers through the Children Centres. Following a recent tendering process there are now 6 providers working towards the 6 BRFC outcomes. Local Support Teams (LSTs) are involved with BRFC where the adult's needs are impacting on the needs of the family and/or children.

The work of BRFC is usually at Tier 2 level and this lower level support is vital to ensure problems are addressed and appropriate support given to avoid escalation of needs and services required. It works in partnership with the family, focusing on their existing strengths and recognising them as the experts of their own experience. It works to empower the family to challenge and change their thoughts and behaviours in order to meet the needs of their children.

Part of this programme is the Family Intervention Team which provides wrap around family support delivered through district based teams, recognising that problems are interconnected and affect family members in different ways. The Team contains individuals from a range of organisations to help respond to the needs of the family, including, for example, representation from the LSTs, Staffordshire Police, and the Department for Work and Pensions.

BRFC introduced the Early Help model which is now working across a wider partnership to support identifying and addressing needs at the earliest opportunity and support reducing demand across the sector. This model uses the Staffordshire Early Help Assessment Form, a universal tool for practitioners from any service to use with the child/young person and their family to summarise and clearly record their current circumstances, their strengths and their needs. This is then the basis for an agreed plan for working together to achieve the identified improvements in the life of that child and family. Of the 639 families who had received Early Help, only 2% had needed to resume services.

0-19 Commissioning

A lot of 0-19 commissioned services are delivered through the LSTs. These include Health Visitor and the School Nurse Services, which have been brought together to enable delivery of a healthy child programme. Changes have been made to enable a more intensive programme of work which helps identify cases for concern. There has been an increase in the number of children coming into the care system aged 0-4. These early services often present the first opportunity to recognise concerns and identify the support needed to address them at the earliest opportunity.

The Children's Centres are also due to come under the 0-19 commissioned services from 2020. Children Centres are purpose built centres for families. Their primary purpose is to be a community venue which is used by a range of partners including Job Centre, Midwives, Health Visitors, Childcare, private and voluntary provision. These centres are used by a range of partners, most of whom offer consent based support services to families.

A tendering process has been undertaken for 0-19 contracts, looking at the whole family approach. Contracts have been awarded to six providers, all of whom had previously been delivering services, and will continue to provide Tier 3 support services.

Pro-active work is now being undertaken, including home visits, in areas of deprivation with children between 5-8 months and again just before 2 years of age. This work included efforts to ensure the take up of 2 year old nursery provision. Work is also undertaken to improve socialisation and to encourage families to access the support they need. This includes raising awareness of the facilities and opportunities available through community centres and sign posting around community support.

Of those receiving the intensive health visitor intervention approximately 7% go on to need additional support.

Innovation and current services

A number of changes and developments have taken place in recent years to ameliorate the growth in number of those needing support and/or coming into the care system. The chronology below briefly highlights some of these developments.

Chronology of developments	
Date	Development
2012/2013	<p>As a response to an increase in children coming into the care system (both locally and nationally) targeted work is undertaken to consider how to appropriately manage those on the cusp of the care system.</p> <p>The Accommodation Panel replaces the previous arrangements and an Independent Placement Overview Panel is established. Critical friend discussions are established for all emergency decisions. This gives a formal process and weekly meetings to consider any child coming into the care system, critically assessing any planned entry before this is made and assessing those placements made as a result of crisis to ensure the most appropriate care provision.</p>
January 2013	<p>Intensive Prevention Service (IPS) is introduced (through a re-alignment of existing resources) in response to local and national data that indicated a disproportionate rise in teenagers entering care and that those late entrants into the care system often have poorer outcomes. Edge/cusp of care becomes a priority focus.</p>
2014/2015	<p>All staff are trained in the solution focused methodology that underpins IPS. A range of evidence based interventions are delivered, linked to the Child in Need Plan and tailored to the needs of the family.</p> <p>Core working hours are extended.</p>
January 2016	<p>The Breathing Space project goes live. This is a Families First, Public Health and Midwifery partnership adopting the same solution focused methodology as IPS.</p>
February 2016	<p>The Alders Children's Unit changes designation to become a focused 4 week placement centre for young people coming into care with a plan to return home, or a foster placement breakdown and a plan for the young person to return to the foster placement. The IPS team work to support this process.</p> <p>A drugs and alcohol worker is seconded to the IPS from Tier 3 services as a response to the increasing number of young people with drug and alcohol issues who are not engaging with mainstream support.</p>

April 2016	<p>The Intensive Family Support Service is introduced. This is a Families First, Public Health and Addiction Dependency Solution partnership. The service has an intensive strength based approach.</p> <p>The YMCA commissioned placements go live, working alongside IPS and filling the gap created by a reduction in the Supporting People Fund. This provides accommodation under Section 17 for young people aged 16/17 years who present as homeless.</p>
June 2016	<p>Stafford Short Breaks Unit (SSBU) goes live, offering short breaks under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, to young people at risk of entering care. The Unit works alongside IPS and the Social Worker under the Child in Need (CIN) Plan to offer bespoke packages of support to meet family's needs including both planned and emergency overnight stays and outreach support.</p>
2016	<p>The Intensive Interventions Team brings together existing but disjointed resources to provide County wide support services to children and young people in Staffordshire Foster Placements that are at risk of placement breakdown.</p>
October 2016	<p>The Intensive Interventions Team implements a weekend out of hours service to provide further support to fostering households. As part of this an existing senior practitioner post takes on a more focussed role (cost neutral) with responsibility relating to sufficiency of internal placements. The post over 9 months has a significant influence in expanding the terms of approval of existing carers through working closely with the Placement Service at the point of referral and with the Intensive Intervention Team to provide bespoke support to existing carers.</p>
November 2016	<p>The Family Group Conference Service moves into the Edge of Care Service alongside IPS and extends its role to supporting families with a lower level of need to prevent problems escalating through the development of a good practice guide.</p>
2017	<p>2 YMCA emergency beds are developed which can be accessed up to 7pm.</p>
October 2017	<p>Contingency funding of £250k over 12 months is agreed to extend IPS support to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency duty service out of hours • Provide an all age reunification service to help support younger children returning home after this intensive support • Support to residential providers, foster carers and young people to assist with the transition from residential care to foster care and ensure placement stability

The **Intensive Prevention Service** (IPS), first introduced in 2013, supports children and young people aged 11-17 who have emotional, psychological and behavioural problems and

who are at risk of coming into care. The aim is for the young people to remain in their home, or to return home from a short period of care as soon as possible. This intensive support could be as much as 7 days a week, at any part of the day, including early mornings or evenings, and may include a weekend stay at the Short Break Unit. The support is solution focused and develops a plan to help both the parent and child, and may include parenting programmes that are evidence based and tailored to the needs of the individual parent and child. This service provides additionality to existing services that may already be accessed by the family, taking a multi-agency approach and working in partnership with the LSTs. The young people receiving this intensive service are hard to reach and would struggle to access more main stream service provision.

In the 2016-2017 financial year, 217 young people received support from IPS, with 66 young people receiving this support at the end of March 2017. Over half of these young people (132) received support for behavioural difficulties, whilst 40 received support as a result of parenting issues. Of those young people who received this service 85% remained in the care of their parents and/or carer, and 23 entered the care system. Where the need for IPS is identified the team has the resource available to provide same day emergency response as and when required.

The **Reunification Team** supports children and young people to return home from long term care. A bespoke support plan is developed prior to the return home, with intensive support to aid the transition. NSPCC research has been used to help develop this work, with the developed plan working 3 months before and between 3-6 months after the return home to support that process. The aim is to ensure the child is able to remain at home and to achieve the best possible outcome. In the 2016-2017 financial year 28 young people were supported through this programme. During that time 28 new young people were referred to the programme and of these 17 were accepted for support. On average 12 cases are open at the end of each month. Support for 24 young people concluded during this period, with 20 of these successfully remaining at home.

The **Family Group Conference Service** works with young people who are: at risk of coming into the care of the LA; part of the Reunification Programme; and as directed by the Court. The purpose of the Conference is to mobilise wider family networks to support the child to stay at home safely. The Conference is independent of the child's social worker or their care plan, is evidence based, with the child and/or their advocate attending, helping them to be involved in the decision making process. Once a family plan has been agreed it is reviewed regularly to ensure the promised support is still available. 126 Family Group Conferences were held during 2016-2017 with 37 reviews. Of these children and young people 83% remained within their family and 56% of children that were looked after by the LA prior to the Conference are no longer in care. The primary aim of the conference is to build strength within the family.

The **Breathing Space** Project works with women who have had one or more children removed from their care and who are in the early stages of a further pregnancy. The Project offers intensive support to these families by delivering parental programmes and practical and emotional support to help them make the changes needed to remain caring for their child following the birth. 12 women receiving support from the Breathing Space Project gave birth between April 2016 and May 2017. Of these 11 babies returned home with their parents following the birth. The final baby came into care temporarily and has since been placed in the care of his father.

The **Stafford Short Breaks Unit** was developed in 2016 when Ofsted re-registered the Shaping Futures Stafford based children's residential care home. The re-designation was designed to allow a more creative use of facilities. The Unit gives an opportunity for planned (as far as possible) short break placements that prevent young people being taken into long term care. Placements have to meet clear criteria, including: being known to IPS; being aged between 11-17 years; and being subject to a Section 17 Order. The occupancy level of the Unit runs at approximately 80%. Between June 2016 and June 2017, 60 young people had been supported in the Short Break Unit and 53 young people had been offered emergency support.

The **One Front Door** initiative is a pilot project launched in Tamworth on 19 February 2018. The project has two separate strands:

- the one front door approach which creates a centralised point of access for Early Help referrals; and
- a full review of the existing Early Help Assessment, introducing new paperwork and a new approach to assessment, planning and intervention which is more focused and based on a strength based model of intervention.

The Outcomes Star is utilised as a means of assessment and assessing effective change.

The **Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)** works with families where:

- there is already an allocated social worker;
- parent or carer substance misuse is causing significant concern around the welfare and safety of children in the home;
- the public law outline process is being instigated; and
- children are subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The IFSS provides evidence based interventions and considers a whole family solution (this type of approach has been adopted in Wales throughout their work with families). The work is intensive for a 4 to 6 week period, offering at least 30 hours intervention at times to suit the family, including evenings and weekends. The intervention includes a range of

structured exercises to help the family identify strengths, values and consider goals to work towards, in agreement with the Social Worker to ensure it is safe for the children to remain in the home.

Some families have entrenched drug use over many years and IFSS supports them in making necessary changes. Following the 4-6 week intensive programme regular “check-in” visits are made over a 12 month period. Booster sessions are offered to support families maintain their progress if required. Because of the very intensive nature of this work the service case load per Family Intervention Specialist is necessarily low, with 2 families per specialist at any one time. Currently there are 6 full time and 1 part time specialists in Staffordshire.

A number of **new projects** have also been identified and agreed by Cabinet at their October 2017 meeting. These new services will support transition and are invest to save projects, with funding agreed for 1 year when it is hoped that the demonstrability of the savings will result in the projects becoming self-funding. The agreed projects are:

- Emergency Duty Services (EDS) Pilot: IPS staff will deliver weekend support for families at risk of breakdown. This will be piloted for 6 months (starting from 12 January 2018) to test its effectiveness and value for money before a decision is taken on whether to continue the work;
- Reunification – younger age group: work started in December 2017 targeting a younger aged group of children (under 11 years) who are in long term care, to consider whether they are able to return home. Where a return home is considered possible a programme of support will be put in place, which may include parenting programmes. This initial return home will not immediately decrease the number of looked after children as they will return home on a care order until the return has been identified as secure;
- Extending the Intensive Prevention Service: consideration is being given to extending IPS to work with younger children (under 11 years).

Challenges/opportunities and how these are being managed

Challenges remain around:

- the collective management of risk across Families First and other agencies, ensuring that all partner agencies are working towards a common outcome;
- the lack of understanding in some instances that care is not a no risk option;
- the long term consequences of a lack of full time education and difficulties in terms of school exclusions;
- involvement in crime;
- Involvement with drugs and alcohol;
- Increasingly aggressive/violent behaviour;
- mental health issues for both young people and parents and access to appropriate services in a timely manner;

- Child Sexual Exploitations (CSE) and children who are missing.

Work is underway through the MASH to develop a wider breadth of support from the outset, with a wide range of partners, including, mental health, drugs and alcohol, finance, housing, with partners engaged at the point of assessment. This will enable one joint assessment and avoid the need for referrals and the wait that this can entail as well as avoiding the trauma of constant assessments which can be difficult for some individuals to manage. Almost all interventions with children are as a result of the behaviour of adults around them and part of the Children's Transformation is to address this.

The **behaviour and needs of young people** open to the IPS have significantly changed over recent years, becoming more complex. There is an increase in aggressive and violent behaviour and increase in young people presenting with significant social/emotional and often mental health issues. This presents challenges for placement making, and the current cohort of foster carers largely do not appear to be able to manage or have skill set, confidence or resilience to manage this growing group of young people.

Activity is under way to address this in a number of ways, including the **Residential to Fostering** project, which looks at the increasing number of children being placed in long term residential care who have a care plan for fostering but have been unable to find a secure foster placement. Often these young people have had a number of placements break down. This development looks again at the possibility for the young person of being placed with specialist foster carers. It includes planning meetings to identify what multi - agency response is required to enable the child to live within a family setting and support a smooth transition.

A programme of payment for skills has been started, with a robust package of financial and practical support for foster carers who are able to take on the more challenging young people. Consideration is given to what multi agency response is needed to help support the placement and identify who will deliver the necessary interventions. Resilience fostering will receive enhanced support and funding. The placements are prescriptive, and may include the requirement for a solo placement. Advanced payments are made to the carer to assist transition as well as pre-fostering meetings to help build relationships. As at January 2018 it was anticipated that 2 young people would leave their residential placements within the next 6 months. It is a very small cohort but in terms of cost to the young person and their outcomes it is invaluable. The expansion of the **Resilience Fostering Project**, with specialist carers skilled and supported to provide placements for the most difficult to place children is designed to meet the increasingly challenging needs of the more difficult to place children and young people.

The Intensive Intervention Teams work is being extended to undertake assessing foster carers to pilot **Turnaround**. This project will provide fostering placements under Section 17 to support children remaining in their home community and will work closely with the Short Break Unit. The team is also piloting a **foster carer peer support programme** that will better meet the needs of general foster carers providing long term care and is expected to provide efficiencies such as the reduction of social work visits to these households.

The Intensive Intervention Teams also undertake all **stability and unplanned ending meetings**. The significant learning coming out of the work of these Teams will further inform both current and future developments.

Staffordshire has made a Social Impact Bond application for the **Pyramid Project** which is designed to establish a provider who will work with the LA to recruit and support specific/specialist carers for the older, and more difficult to place (in foster care) young people. Staffordshire has been successful in their expression of interest through the Life Chances Fund. Work is being undertaken with regional partners to firm up the bid which will be used for:

- Step-down from residential care to work with investors and providers to recruit carers who have resilience to support young people with complex needs to live in a family environment;
- Stimulate the market and expand supported lodgings hosts for young people 16+ for whom supported accommodation is too large a step.

The submission will be made by 30 April 2018 with successful submissions being informed by 18 July 2018.

A **Credo Residential Migration Project** has also been established to find specialist foster placements close to home for young disabled people currently living in out-of-area residential care. This is a £1.1m joint project with Hertfordshire County Council over an 18 month period from July 2017.

A challenge remains around IPS for Children with disability needs, as whilst it is recognised that IPS can provide an intensive service, specialist skills and knowledge is lacking.

The **Edge of Care Strategy** is clear with regard to pathways and in the role of each service area in working with children on the edge of care through to permanency. However in some cases there may be a requirement for further training to ensure the support mechanisms in the strategy are realised and all families' situations are improved, reducing incidents of referral or re referral to edge of care services and short breaks.

Staffordshire has made a Social Impact Bond application to address **Drug & Alcohol** issues, working with Children in Need and/or children subject to a Child Protection Plan and their families to reduce child safeguarding concerns associated with drug and/or alcohol use amongst parents. It will deliver strength based interventions to reduce drug/alcohol use and improve parenting skills with the aim of de-escalate levels of risk to children and young people who may end up on child protection plans or as looked after. This is a joint proposal developed by the SCC Commissioner and the provider, Alcohol & Drugs Solutions. The successful application is for a £35k development grant, which has been received. An agreement has also been reached for a further £1.89m over 7 years

A further challenge followed the vote by the Staffordshire Schools Forum in October 2017 to allocate **Dedicated Schools Grant** monies back to schools. This funding had been used to support the work of the LSTs and a significant piece of work has since been undertaken with individual schools to broker this re-allocated money on their behalf. This funding, along with £3m of BRFC money, will enable a complementary support service to the LSTs at a lower tier two level. The funding will be performance managed and delivered on a district based model.

Developments within other LAs

Similar services to those developed in Staffordshire are replicated in some other authorities. For example North Yorkshire has implemented a service named “No Wrong Door” which combines residential care with fostering, creating a hub to provide support for those children within the care system or who are on the cusp of becoming looked after. Each hub has a dedicated team and all children have an individual key worker.

Two hubs have been created, one in Scarborough to serve the east of the county, whilst one in Harrogate serves the west. The traditional council-run young peoples' homes have been replaced by these hubs. The two hub teams each include: a life coach who is a clinical psychologist; a speech therapist; two community foster families who work out of the hub and are part of the professional team; and Community supported lodging places for 16 and 17-year-olds, again staffed by people who are specially trained and are part of the professional team.

The London Borough of Bexley has joined with four other boroughs to provide multi-systemic and functional family therapy to young people and their families. The initiative will work to keep vulnerable families together and prevent young people from being taken into care. The Positive Families Partnership is the first programme of its type in London, and has been jointly commissioned by the five London Borough Councils of Bexley, Merton, Newham, Sutton and Tower Hamlets, with support from the Big Lottery Fund using National Lottery funding. Over the next three years it is anticipated that the Positive Families Partnership will work with more than 350 young people involved in serious anti-social behaviour and/or substance misuse, who have been identified as being at risk of going into care. These vulnerable young people and their families will be offered access to intensive, holistic, therapeutic programmes designed to help address the young person's behavioural issues and improve how the family functions. This has only recently begun so there is no statistical data to measure its performance as yet.

Community Impact

Resources and Value for Money

Early recognition, intervention and targeted support for those on the cusp of coming into the care system helps prevent escalation of issues that impact on children and young people's chances of staying safely in their home setting and therefore avoid them becoming part of the looked after system and the cost implications that this entails.

Equalities and Legal

Every Local Authority (LA) must protect and promote the welfare of children in need in its area in line with the 1989 Children Act.

Risk

Without early preventative work the number of children being taken into the care system will increase, having a significant impact on the children and families involved whilst increasing the cost to the LA.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications.

**County Councillor Conor Wileman
Review Group Chairman
August 2018**

Contact Officer/s

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Staffordshire County Council
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E-mail: helen.phillips@staffordshire.gov.uk

List of Appendices/Background Papers

Background papers

Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 - A guidance note for parents & professionals
<http://www.transparencyproject.org.uk/press/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/s20guidancefeb16.pdf>

Building Resilient Families and Communities Staffordshire's Operating Model
July 2015
<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/community/community/BRFC-Operating-Model.pdf>

Glossary	
ADCS	Association of Directors of Children's Services
BIDT	Business Improvement & Development
BRFC	Building Resilient Families & Communities
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CIN	Child in Need
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CYP	Children & Young People
DfE	Department for Education (previously DCSF/DES/DfES)
DIPs	District Inclusion Partnership
DSG	Dedicated School Grant
EDS	Emergency Duty Service
FIP	Family Intervention Projects
FIT	Family Intervention Team
HCP	Healthy Child Programme
HIAs	High Impact Areas
ICO	Interim Care Order
IFSS	Intensive Family Support Service
IPS	Intensive Prevention Service
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LA	Local Authority
LST	Local Support Team
NCMP	National Childhood Measurement Programme
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PLO	Public Law Outline
PR	Parental Responsibility

PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SGO	Special Guardianship Order
SIB	Social Impact Bond
SSBU	Stafford Short Breaks Unit
TSU	Transformation Support Unit

WORK PROGRAMME

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee 2018/19

This document sets out the work programme for the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee for 2018/19. The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee is responsible for scrutinising: children and adults' safeguarding; community safety and Localism. The Council has three priority outcomes. This Committee is aligned to the outcome: The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

We review our work programme at every meeting. Sometimes we change it - if something comes up during the year that we think we should investigate as a priority. Our work results in recommendations for the County Council and other organisations about how what they do can be improved, for the benefit of the people and communities of Staffordshire.

Councillor John Francis

Chairman of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please get in touch with Tina Gould, Scrutiny and Support Manager on 01785 276148 or by emailing tina.gould@staffordshire.gov.uk

Membership – County Councillors 2018-19

John Francis (Chairman)
Conor Wileman (Vice Chairman)
Ann Beech
Mike Davies
Syed Hussain
Trevor Johnson
Jason Jones
Natasha Pullen
Paul Snape
Mike Worthington

Calendar of Committee Meetings 2018-2019

23 April 2018 at 11.00 am	Special meeting with the PCC & Chief Constable
8 June 2018 at 10.00 am	
10 July 2018 at 10.00 am	
3 September 2018 at 10.00 am	
8 November 2018 at 10.00 am	
11 December 2018 at 10.00 am	
14 January 2019 at 10.00 am	
4 March 2019 at 10.00 am	

Meetings usually take place in the Oak Room in County Buildings.

Work Programme 2018-19

Date of meeting	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
Extra meeting 23 April NB meeting starts at 11.00 am	Safeguarding concerns over the Rise in Crime PCC – Matthew Ellis Chief Constable – Gareth Morgan	Following concerns raised at the 15 January Select Committee and discussions at the 10 January Triangulation meeting the Chairman requested all Members of the Council forward details of crime and safeguarding issues within their area with a view to this Select Committee meeting with the PCC and Chief Constable to address these safeguarding concerns.	The Chief Constable Gareth Morgan and the Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis responded to the questions raised by member around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact services, including call handling, emergency 999 calls, 101 calls and incident resources; • overall crime performance, acquisitive crime, violence against the person, public order and drug related offences; • use of body cams; • police and PCSO visibility; • PCSO powers; • Mutual aid deployment; • Cross boarder crime; • Motorway policing; • Crewing of police vehicles; and • Local issues.
8 June 2018 10.00 am Page 112	Children’s Centres 3 years on Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Mick Harrison	At the Select Committee meeting of 5 March 2018 it was agreed that the Children’s Commissioning Officer should attend the June meeting to update Members on progress since the Children’s Centres Working Group 4 years ago.	A working group will be set up to consider the current work of the Children’s centres in comparison with the findings of the 2014 Select Committee Review and the impact of the significant changes made as a result of the 2014/15 Best Start in Life consultation.
	Inquiry Group Report on Elective Home Education	Following a referral from the Corporate Parenting Panel a review group set up conflated with members of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee. Its first meeting was held on 12 January where Members received a briefing from officers. Further meetings were held, including the inquiry session scheduled for 21 March. The final report and recommendations will be considered by the Select Committee in readiness for forwarding to the Cabinet Member for his executive response.	The Select Committee congratulated the Review Group on their report and endorsed both the report and its recommendations for submission to the Cabinet Member. As this had been a joint review submission would be after the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee had considered the report.
10 July 2018 10.00 am	Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison	The Committee has requested a six monthly update on this issue. The Chair of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Stoke City Council has been invited to attend this meeting and this arrangement is reciprocated.	The Select Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wish to be informed of the outcome of the October SSRGB meeting to which Wolverhampton City Council representatives have been invited; • will write to the LGA outlining their concerns over inconsistency of licensing authorities practices and protocols and to request best practice guidelines; • asked for clarification on the advise and guidance given to taxi drivers/passenger assistants with regard to first aid.

	<p>Provision of “places of safety” under section 136 MHA. Cabinet Member – Alan White Lead Officer – Jo Sutherland</p>	<p>Following the Triangulation meeting of 10 January the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing asked the Select Committee to consider undertaking an overview of the current provision of places of safety. A few years ago there had been circumstances where prison cells were being used, which was agreed as inappropriate. A review to assess the current provision was requested.</p>	<p>The Select Committee were reassured in the work undertaken to ensure those detained under Section 136 of the MHA are taken to health based Places of Safety and never routinely retained in police custody. They requested that the Chairman write to the PCC on their behalf to allay his concerns on this matter.</p>
<p>3 September 2018 10.00 am</p>	<p>Customer Feedback & Complaints, Adult Social Care Annual Report 17/18 Cabinet Member: Alan White Officer: Kate Bullivant</p>	<p>Adult’s Services have a statutory obligation to submit an Annual Report on complaints and representations to the relevant County Council Committee.</p>	
	<p>Customer Feedback & Complaints, Children’s Social Care Annual Report 17/18 Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Kate Bullivant</p>	<p>Children’s Services have a statutory obligation to submit an Annual Report on complaints and representations to the relevant County Council Committee.</p>	
	<p>Edge of Care Inquiry Report of the Inquiry Group</p>	<p>To consider the final report of the Edge of Care Inquiry Group</p>	
	<p>Quarterly performance update against Safeguarding Indicators Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton & Alan White Lead Officer: Andrew Sharp</p>	<p>Requested at the 29 May Triangulation meeting – KPI data will enable scrutiny of a range of services and inform further work as appropriate.</p>	
	<p>CSE Learning from Reviews (previously taken to the 10 July meeting – exemption paragraph 7) Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Vonni Gordon</p>	<p>This had been taken as an exempt briefing note to the 10 July meeting but Members requested this be brought to their September meeting as an item for discussion with appropriate Officer/Cabinet Member.</p>	
<p>8 November</p>	<p>Missing Children Cabinet Member: Mark</p>	<p>Suggested at the 29 May Triangulation meeting. To look at missing children in the broader sense,</p>	

2018 10.00am	Sutton Lead Officer: Mick Harrison & Deborah Ramsdale	not just CSE.	
	Trading Standards, Rogue Traders & Doorstep Crime Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Lead Officer: Trish Caldwell	Suggested at the 10 January & 29 May Triangulation meeting. Consider the safeguarding issues following the service review in 2018.	
	MISPERS Cabinet Member Lead Officer	Suggested for inclusion on the work programme at the 10 January Triangulation.	
	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Cabinet Member: Alan White Officer: Peter Hampton	Last considered at their meeting of November 2017 where Members noted the difficulties with the number of referrals and the need to prioritise assessments. They had concerns that this meant the Council was effectively in breach of the law, but within the resource available they accepted this as the only current solution. (Previously considered by this Select Committee in July & November 2017)	
	Update from the October SSRGB meeting Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Robert Simpson	At the Select Committee meeting of 10 July Members were informed that representatives of Wolverhampton City Council had been asked to attend the October Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group to discuss their taxi licencing. They requested an update on the outcome of this meeting.	
11 December 2019 10.00am	Care Homes Quality Assurance data Including the role of Healthwatch Cabinet Member: Alan White Lead Officer: Andrew Sharp	Suggested at the 29 May Triangulation. To consider the how our care homes are scrutinised and quality assured. Included in this is an understanding of the independent work of Healthwatch.	
	Children's Centre Visits Report from the Select Committee visits to Children's Centres	Four years ago the Select Committee completed work to assess the role of the Children's Centre. Four years on the Select Committee re-visited this work, visiting the Centres to assess the current situation in comparison with the findings of the original working group report.	

	<p>Children's & Families System Transformation including Independent Futures, Children Centres & 0-19 Family Support Contract Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison/Helen Riley/Janene Cox</p>	<p>The Transformation programme for Children and Family Services has previously been considered by this Select Committee on 8 June, 8 July & 12 December 2016 & 13 July 2017 and 5 March 2018. Independent Futures is now part of Families First. Members request a report on the Transformation to include details of Independent Futures, the work of the Health Visitors and Children's Centres, considering the Family Support 0-19 contract from a Safeguarding perspective.</p>	
<p>14 January 2019 10.00am</p> <p>Page 115</p>	<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison</p>	<p>The Committee has requested a six monthly update on this issue. The Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Stoke City Council has been invited to attend this meeting and this arrangement is reciprocated. (Last considered at 10 July Select Committee meeting).</p>	
	<p>Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Cabinet Member: Alan White Independent Chair: John Wood</p>	<p>This is reported to committee on an annual basis.</p>	
	<p>Staffs Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) Annual Report 2016/17 Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Independent Chair: John Wood</p>	<p>This is reported to committee on an annual basis.</p>	
<p>4 March 2019 10.00am</p>	<p>Domestic Homicide Reviews & emerging themes Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton and Alan White Officer: Julie Long</p>	<p>To consider possible themes emerging from an overview of these reviews and considering these from both an adult and children's safeguarding view point. (suggested at the 29 May Triangulation).</p>	
	<p>Youth Offending service</p>	<p>Consideration of the YOS Review</p>	

	Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Vonni Gordon		
	Prevent Strategy Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Lead Officer: Becky Murphy	To consider and be updated on the work of the Prevent Strategy	
Awaiting the final report of the APMG	Stresses within mental health service Cabinet Member: Lead officer:	Suggested at the 29 May Triangulation. To ensure duplication is avoided this work will be postponed until the report of the Innovation APMG has been published.	
tbc	Domestic Abuse Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Lead Officer: Mick Harrison	Update on how the new contract is working.	

Standing Items 2018-19

	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
150	Themes emerging from Serious Case Reviews Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Richard Hancock	Where Serious Case Reviews have taken place the Select Committee will consider any learning that can be taken from the Review	
10	MTFS Reforms and assessing the “no impact claims”	Suggested at the 29 May Triangulation meeting. To scrutinise those areas of the MTFS that promise “no impact” from the changes made to assess if this was accurate and/or whether the identified mitigating action has been effective. This is routinely scrutinised by Corporate Review, with that Select Committee referring to the appropriate Select Committee for further scrutiny as and when necessary.	

Briefing Notes/Updates/Visits 2018-19

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
22 August 2018	Direct Payments Cabinet Member: Alan White Lead Officer: Andrew	Following the 15 January consideration of Home Care Members requested an item on Direct Payments to clarify how the system worked. The Chairman and Vice Chairman agreed that this	The Briefing note was emailed to Select Committee Members on 22 August 2018.

	Jepps	should be dealt with via a briefing note in the first instance.	
22 August 2018	Post 18 Transition Services Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Lead Officer: Andrew Sharp & Clare Owen	At the 10 July Select Committee Members requested a briefing note on this issue.	The Briefing note was emailed to Select Committee Members on 22 August 2018.

Working Group and/or Inquiry Days 2018-19

Date	Item	Details	Action/Outcome
Inquiry Day 30 January 2018 + follow-on meetings on 12 February 13 March	Preventing Children coming into Care- now called "Edge of Care" Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Richard Hancock	This item was initially proposed by the Commissioner for Community Safety, Children and Families. The Chairman has met with the Head of Families First and a scoping report has been prepared for Members' consideration.	The 30 January Inquiry has been held. A further Member meeting on 12 February identified a range of further information they required. This detail will be presented by Officer at the 13 March meeting.
June and July 2018	Children's Centres – 4 years on Cabinet Member: Mark Sutton Officer: Mick Harrison	Three years ago the Select Committee completed work to assess the role of the Children's Centre. Three years on the Select Committee will re-visit this work, visiting the Centres to assess the current situation in comparison with the findings of the original working group report.	At the Select Committee meeting of 26 November Members agreed to a request that this review be put back until the current significant changes within Children's Centres were completed. At the 8 June Select Committee Members agreed to set up this working group, with Members visiting the Centres before the end of the 2018 summer term.
12 January 31 January 21 March Reporting to 8 June 2018 Select Committee	Elective Home Education	Referral from Corporate Parenting Panel – August 2017 (NB – also referred to Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee)	A review group has been set up jointly with members of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee. Its first meeting was held on 12 January where Members received a briefing from officers. A planning meeting was held on 31 January with the inquiry session on 21 March. The Inquiry Group then compiled their report and recommendations which were submitted to the 8 June Select Committee for their comment and/or endorsement. Both this Select Committee and the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee endorsed the report and recommendations. The report was therefore sent to the Cabinet Member for his executive response.

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Current & Related Work of Select Committees and/or All Party Member Groups 2018-19

Timescale	Area of Work	Details	Action/Outcome
30 May 2018 Special joint meeting	All Age Disability Strategy Cabinet Member: Alan White Officer: Martyn Baggaley	The Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee has the All Age Disability Strategy on their work programme with the original intention that this issue would be considered by them and their findings shared. However it has now been agreed	Detailed scrutiny took place at the joint meeting with the thoughts, questions, concerns and comments of members at the Meeting being taken into consideration by the authors and Cabinet Members in the preparation of the final version of the Whole Life Disability Strategy 2018-2023

		that this will be considered at a special joint meeting between Healthy Staffordshire, Prosperous Staffordshire and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committees on 30 May 2018.	Consideration is being given to whether a further joint meeting is needed
September 2017 - June 2018	Children's mental health & wellbeing Cabinet Member: Alan White Officers: Tilly Flannigan & Divya Patel APMG Membership Keith Flunder (Chair) Johnny McMahon Bernard Peters Ron Clarke Bryan Jones Ann Edgeller	Innovation APMG: Terms of Reference 'how to promote children's emotional and mental wellbeing to reduce referrals to specialist services across SCC and other partners, by intervening earlier to ensure better long-term outcomes'	The final report of this APMG is due to be considered by Corporate Review in June 2018.
August 2017 – February 2018	Increasing S3 Capacity Cabinet Member: Gill Heath Officers: Angela Schulp & Adam Rooney APMG Membership Mike Davies (Chair) David Smith Kyle Robinson Maureen Compton Julia Jessel	Community APMG: How do we increase the capacity and utilise the services of S3 to deliver 'People helping people' and reduce the involvement of SCC	The final report of the APMG was considered by Corporate Review on 19 February 2018.

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