
Annual Report April 2018 – March 2019

Children's Services Feedback Cambridgeshire County Council

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Customer Care Manager
April 2019

Executive Summary

- ↑ In the period between April 2018 and March 2019, the Customer Care Team has received 204 (176)* compliments. **This constitutes a 16% increase.**
- ↓ The Customer Care Team have received 20 (46) Enquiries, 15 (13) Councillor Enquiries, and 69 (66) MP Enquiries in this year. **This constitutes a 17% drop when all combined.**
- ↑ The Customer Care Team have received 238 (190) Stage 1 Statutory complaints throughout this year, of which 16 (16) are still ongoing and will be responded to in the following year. **This constitutes a 25% increase.**
- ↑ The Customer Care Team have received 120 (63) Stage 1 Corporate complaints throughout this year, of which 6 (1) are still ongoing and will be responded to in the following year. **This constitutes a 90% increase.**
- ↓ Throughout the year, a total of 7 (8) Stage 2 Statutory complaints were worked with. Of these, 2 (5) were initiated in previous year. 3 (6) concluded in this year, therefore 4 (2) remain ongoing and will be responded to in the following year. **This constitutes 13% reduction.**
- ↔ Throughout the year, a total of 9 (9) Stage 2 Corporate complaints were worked on. Of these, 2 (0) were initiated in previous year. 8 (9) concluded in this year, therefore 1 (0) remains ongoing and will be responded to in the following year. **This % has stayed the same.**
- ↓ In this year, 0 (3) Stage 3 Statutory complaints were worked on. **This constitutes 100% reduction.**
- ↔ In this year, 4 (4) Stage 3 Corporate complaints were worked on. Of these, 0 (0) were initiated in previous year. 4 (4) concluded in this year, therefore 0 (0) remain ongoing. **This % has stayed the same.**
- ↓ In this year, 13 (5) Local Government Ombudsman enquiries were worked on. Of these, 3 (0) were initiated in previous year. 11 (5) concluded in this year, therefore 2 (0) remain ongoing and will be responded to in the following year. **This constitutes a 160% increase.**

To conclude we have seen a 42% increase in combined (statutory/corporate) new stage 1 complaints in 2018/19 (does not include re-opened stage 1s).

* Figures in brackets are for the preceding year: April 2017 – March 2018

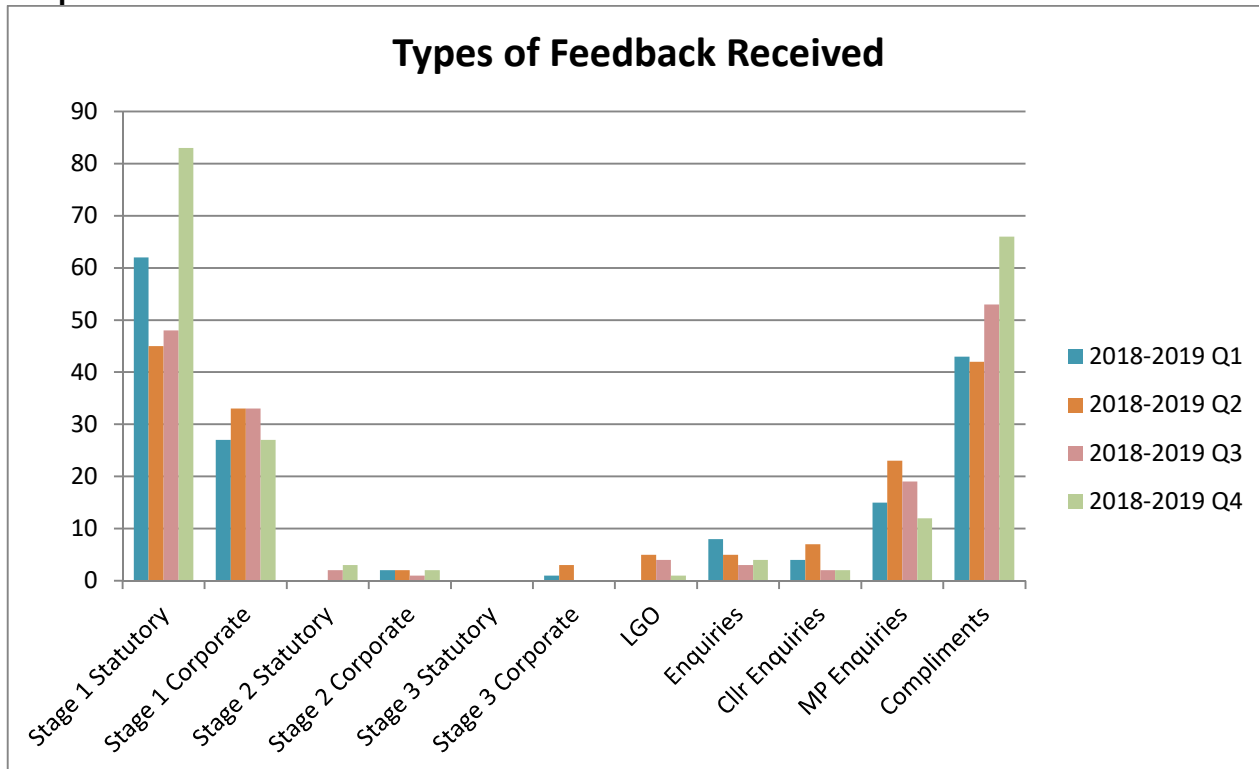
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1.0 Summary of Feedback

The Customer Care Team (CCT) are responsible for receiving and recording all forms of feedback regarding Children's Services across Cambridgeshire County Council. Graph 1 gives an indication of the volume of different types of feedback received throughout the past year, broken down into the last four quarters.

Graph 1

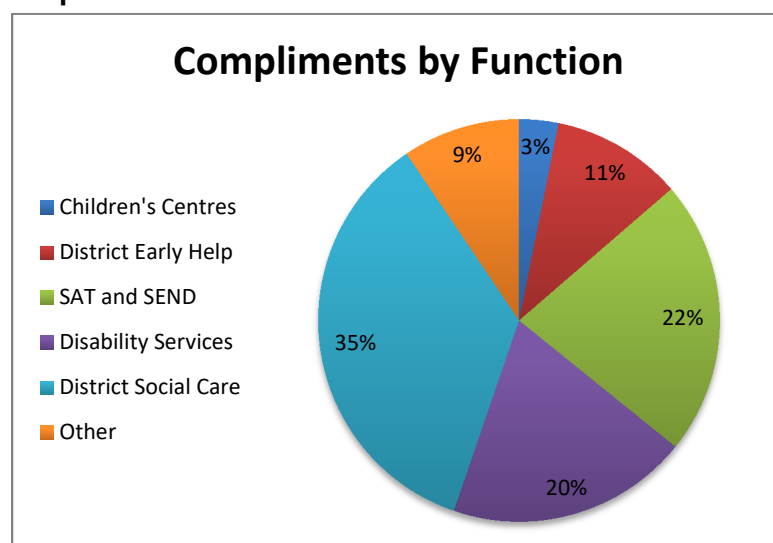


1.1 Compliments

In the period between April 2018 and March 2019, the CCT has received 204 (176) compliments. They are divided into compliments from young people, parents, other family members and foster carers; compliments from external professionals; and compliments from members of staff with no line management for the individual cases.

Graph 2 identifies compliments received by Function.

Graph 2



The Customer Care Team receives a range of compliments about Children's Social Care.

We are aware that some parts of the service collect and report back separately and those compliments are not all reproduced here. This includes the Child and Family Centres and the Participation Services.

We have received 204 compliments in total this year which are available to view online at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/contact-us/council-complaints-procedures/#annual-report>

They have been anonymised both in terms of the children and families concerned and also in terms of those individual members of staff being praised. A variety of examples are included below:

Headteacher said of a (SEND) Specialist Practitioner:

'I was in [infant school] this morning and the Head was raving about the impact that X was having on a lad I was working with, and generally the support SEND services and Speech and Language were providing'.

Parents said of Teachers of the Deaf (Sensory Support Service, Hearing Support Team)

'You have both been with us through a bit of a journey! Thank you both for being stars who have helped X so much over the years. We are so grateful and know that she will miss you!'

A Young Person said of a Consultant Social Worker (Social Care Unit, Wisbech)

'X wanted to share how brilliant she feels A is, She feels A has done everything she said she would. X absolutely raves about A which is extra special as before X met her in January she had a deep seated mistrust of social workers. She said A says it straight, she cares, she has made me feel safe (what amazing words from a girl who has been through what she has, I feel safe!). I have seen her smile in the last few days and that's something I haven't seen since I met her in December. X has said that she knows she will be ok as long as A is looking out for her.'

Professional LSCB Lawyer said of a Social Worker (March)

'I wanted to write to tell you how impressed I was with your statement on X, I was particularly impressed that you provided so much analysis which is what we really want to see in statements – really good work!'

Barrister said of a Consultant Social Worker (Social Care Unit - Cambs City)

'Credit is due to the Consultant Social Worker, T. I am not the only legal representative involved in the case who noted that she is a conscientious, diligent and considerate social worker. T had carefully prepared 10 documents including statements, viability assessments, parenting assessments, sibling assessments and care plans. This is an exceptional amount of work. Despite the negative assessments of one parent and some members of the extended family, it was apparent during the final hearing that T has maintained a good professional relationship with them all. I was grateful for her instructions at the final hearing which were proportionate to the issues yet sensitive to vulnerable witnesses'.

Parent said of an Information Officer (MASH)

'S is well supported by her work and is grateful for mine and N's calls with her. She stated that N was very nice, supportive and made her feel listened to. S says she is not afraid anymore and she has spoken with M and made her aware that she is to tell her anything that upsets her with her dad and then she will stop contact because she wants do the right thing by M. S says that she feels empowered

now that she has taken these steps to cut ties with her ex-partner and this is based on the initial advice given by N and also that the case will now be passed to EHH'.

Parent said of a Family Worker (Cambs City)

'I feel we must write on behalf of all of us, for all the valuable contributions/support from D family support worker has made to the family. We found D very knowledgeable, friendly and highly qualified in her profession. We feel we wouldn't have been where we are today without D's advice, which contributed in L continuing to move forward. We are also sure that you are all ready aware of that you have an exceptional employee, D. Thank you to everyone who helped in the support'.

Parent said of a Social Worker (Hunts)

'I am writing to you as a previous service user to give feedback in regards to the care my son H and I received from his social worker L. From the start L has always been very welcoming of my concerns, my opinions and has fully participated in helping me come to conclusions when needing to deal with difficult situations revolving around an ex partner and keeping my son safe from him and any mental health deterioration. L has always been at hand to seek advice and has been respectful towards me regardless of past issues that have in time been rectified. I have found that L is not judgemental and very down to earth which added to the positive environment in which we worked together. I found that L's positive attitude and complimenting my actions at present made me feel confident and comfortable in my own capabilities as a parent. L's relationship with H has always been positive, she has come into our home made attempts to interact with him and this felt warming and natural and didn't make the situation feel like a professional appointment, more like a nice catch up with added support as and when needed. My experience with L over the past 5 months has been positive, I have felt that I could come to her with any issues when I have needed advice and that she was very ready and willing to allow me to make choices on my own and commended the positive changes implemented in my life that inevitably closed the case with social care. I want to personally thank L for her care of H during this period and wish her well in her career within the social work team.'

Parent said of an ASYE (St Neots)

'I have been very impressed with the work and efforts made from your team throughout the time they have spent working with my children. It's been a difficult and distressing time for all of us however the support from yourselves far surpassed what I had expected and made the whole situation more manageable. Having not seen my eldest son (J) for over half a year and being told that he was refusing to come to contact and did not want to see me, G was the first person to spend any time with J addressing this which resulted in J attending contact for a number of weekends. I feel that G handled what was a complex and difficult situation without bias and always kept the interests of my children as the main focus for which I cannot thank him enough. He kept me informed at all times and even when I did not agree or was told information that I had not wanted to hear I felt he handled it sensitively and in a professional manner. The team as a whole reacted to the concerns about my children's safety swiftly and efficiently and did not shy away from the difficult decisions and discussions that were required with my children's mother again keeping me informed with any relevant information. You all made significant efforts to support their mother to remove any risks for the children which I commend but ultimately due to her actions the children were moved into my care and away from the risk of significant harm. I will be forever grateful for the efforts you've all made over the last 5 months and wish you all the best for the future once the matter is transferred to [location].'

Parent said of a Social Worker (Disabled Children's Social Work Team South)

'Thank you so much for coming with us on Tuesday. We achieved the outcome we have been fighting for for the last 4 months, so this is a fab result for L (child.) I do thank you for your all patience, understanding and continued support over the years and feel very appreciative of your presence with us on this crusade, we know we wouldn't be this far ahead if it wasn't for you and your compassion'.

Parent said of a Senior Practitioner (Adolescent Team North)

'Just a little thank you note for everything you have done for the past year and helping me get the support I needed for years and supporting my 2 beautiful kids though all the hard times I will defo keep up the hard work. I can't thank you enough never let anyone put you down in you career because you have been a brill social worker'.

Parent said of Disabled Children's Early Help Team

'I wanted to pass on my thanks for the short breaks funding for my son. As a direct outcome of the support received this year, C (young person) has decided he will be able to manage University and has applied to do a computer science degree... he has also made a small group of friends and his short break really helped him achieve this. We are very grateful for your support'.

1.2 General Enquiries

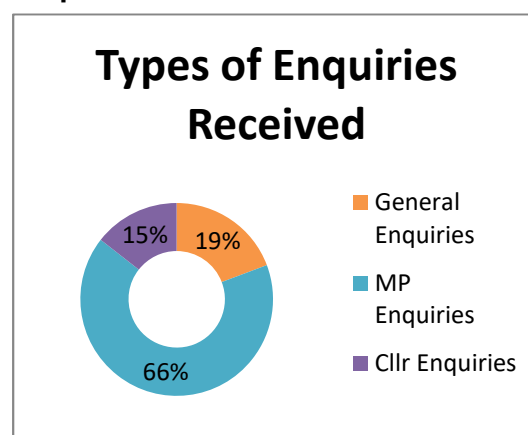
From April 2018 – March 2019, 20 (48) service user enquiries were worked on. 0 (2) of these were received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. 0 (0) enquiries were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

1.3 MP and Councillor Enquiries

The Customer Care Team facilitates responses to MP and Councillor enquiries. These are not counted as complaints. In some cases, a complaint may already have been received and in some, but not all cases, a complaint may be made subsequently. Every care is taken with these responses, which are written in the expectation that they will be shared with the MP or Councillor's constituent.

From April 2018 – March 2019, 16 (14) Councillor enquiries were worked with. 1 (1) of these was received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. 0 (1) enquiries were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

Graph 3



From April 2018 – March 2019, 71 (71) MP enquiries were worked on. 2 (5) of these were received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. 2 (2) enquiries were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

1.4 Formal Complaints Procedure

Children's Social Care has a formal complaint procedure in three Stages, which is in line with Regulations and National Guidance*. A detailed description of Cambridgeshire's procedure is available on:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/contact-us/council-complaints-procedures/>.

1.5 Stage 1 Statutory Complaints

From April 2018 – March 2019, the CCT worked with 258 (201) Stage 1 Statutory complaints. 20 (11) of these were received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. Out of the 258 complaints worked with, 242 (189) received a response. Therefore, 16 (16) cases were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

Out of the 258 (201) complaints worked with this year:

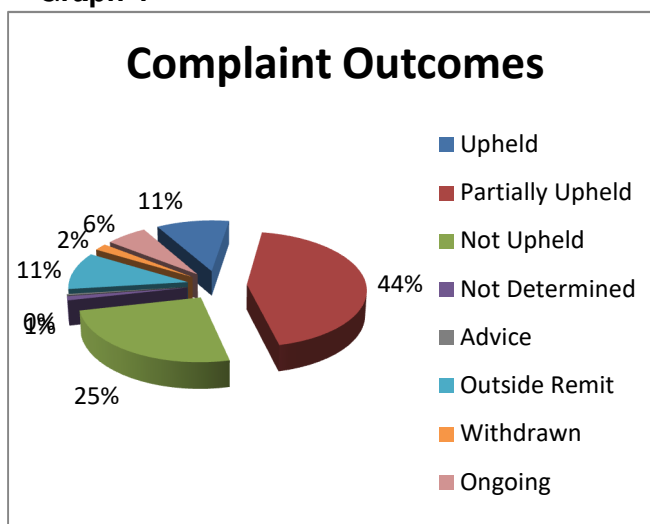
- ↑ 28 (27) were upheld
- ↑ 113 (90) were partially upheld
- ↑ 65 (41) were not upheld
- ↔ 3 (3) were not determined
- ↓ 5 (7) were withdrawn
- ↓ 1 (4) did not qualify as advice was sought
- ↑ 27 (17) were outside of the complaints remit, where issues were historic or had already been investigated
- ↔ 16 (16) were ongoing as of the end of the year

Out of the 242 (189) Statutory complaints for which responses were provided during this year, 68 (60) complainants returned with further concerns relating to their initial complaint, at which point their Stage 1 complaint was re-opened for investigation which constitutes 28%. 13 (15) of these complainants re-opened their complaint multiple times.

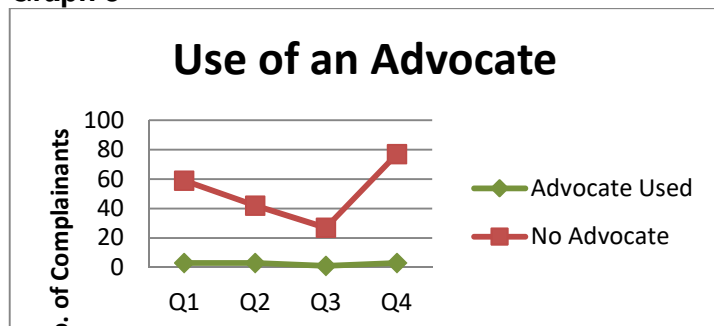
77 (68) complainants who submitted a complaint in this year had made at least 1 unrelated complaint previously which **constitutes a 13% increase in returning complainants.**

Out of the 238 (190) Statutory complaints received in this year, 160 (127) were made by parents or step-parents which equates to 49%, 21 (18) were made by a young person which equates to 9%, 46 (35) were made by other family members which equates to 19%, and 11 (10) were received from non-family members which equates to 5%. Advocates have been involved in 15 (19) complaints received in this year. 11 (12) of these were 'Looked After' young people, 2 (1) were CP young people, 1 (0) was a young person open to the Disability Service and 1 (0) was open to the Statutory Assessment Team. 13 (11) of them were assisted by NYAS.

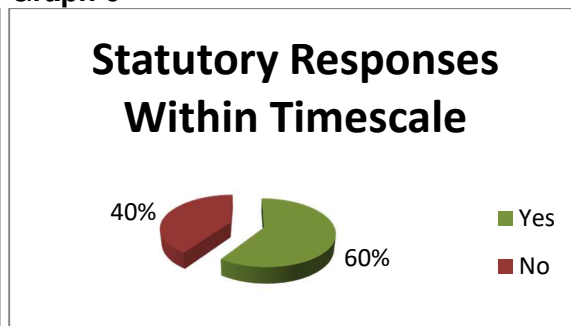
Graph 4



Graph 5



Graph 6

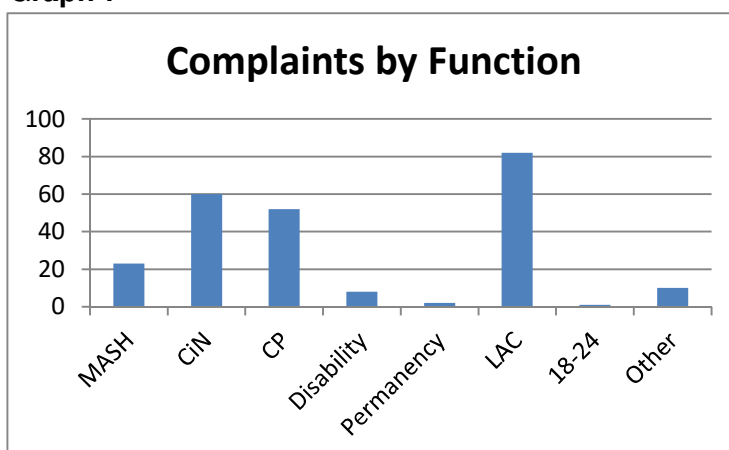


Out of the complaints responded to in this year, 68 (46) responses were extended from the initial 10-working-day timescale to a 20-working-day maximum which constitutes 28%.

Graph 7

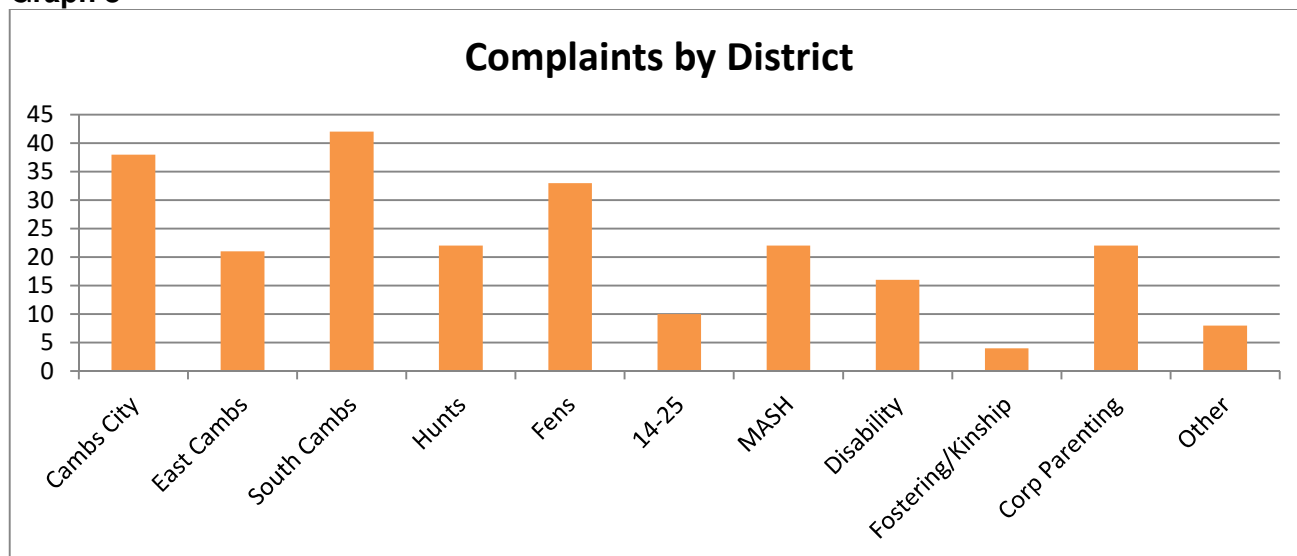
98 (16) were responded to outside of the prescribed timescale (whether it was 10 or 20 working days) which equates to 40%.

There were a wide range of issues raised within the complaints. The highest volume of complaints were received in relation to Looked After Children where 82 (55) complaints were received, Child in Need where 60 (59) complaints were received, shortly followed by Child Protection 52.

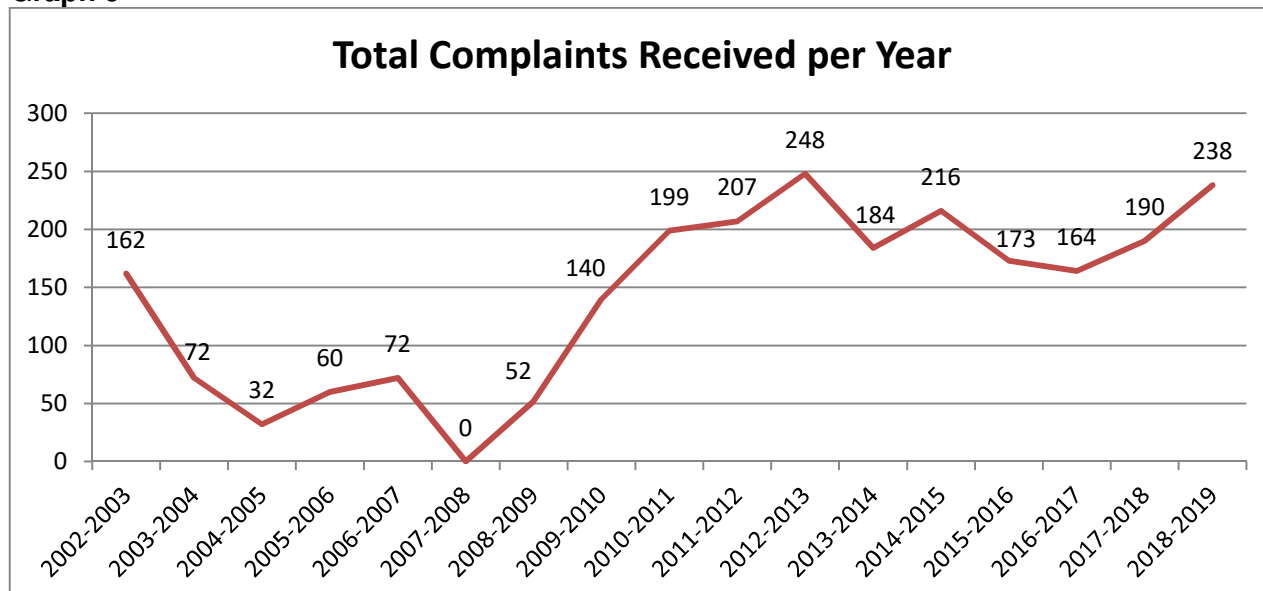


The majority of Statutory stage 1 complaints, 42 received in this year, were received from South Cambridge District.

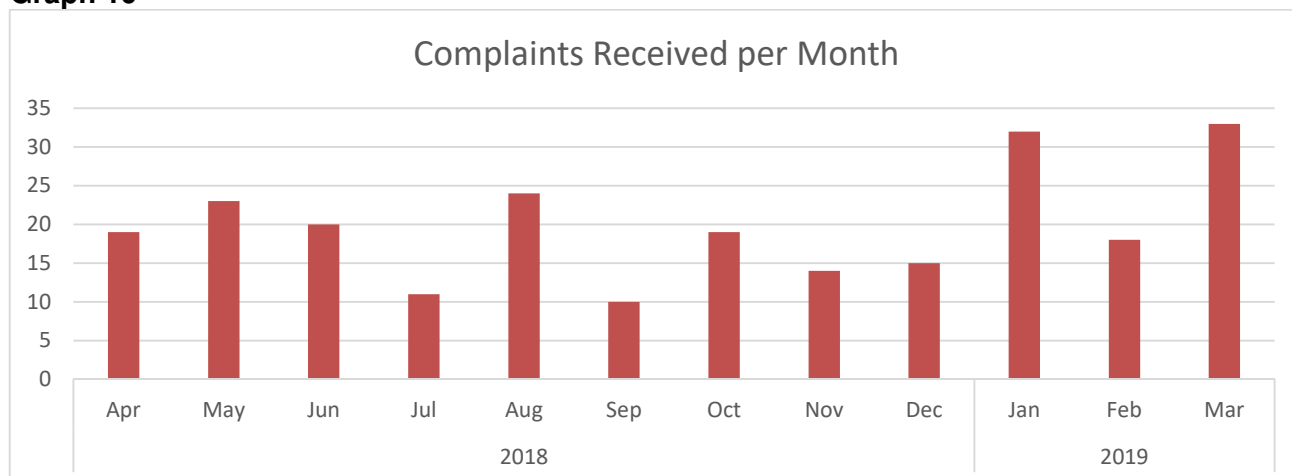
Graph 8



Graph 9



Graph 10



1.6 Stage 1 Corporate Complaints

From April 2018 to March 2019, the CCT worked with 122 (64) Stage 1 Corporate complaints. 2 (1) of these were received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. 6 (1) cases were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

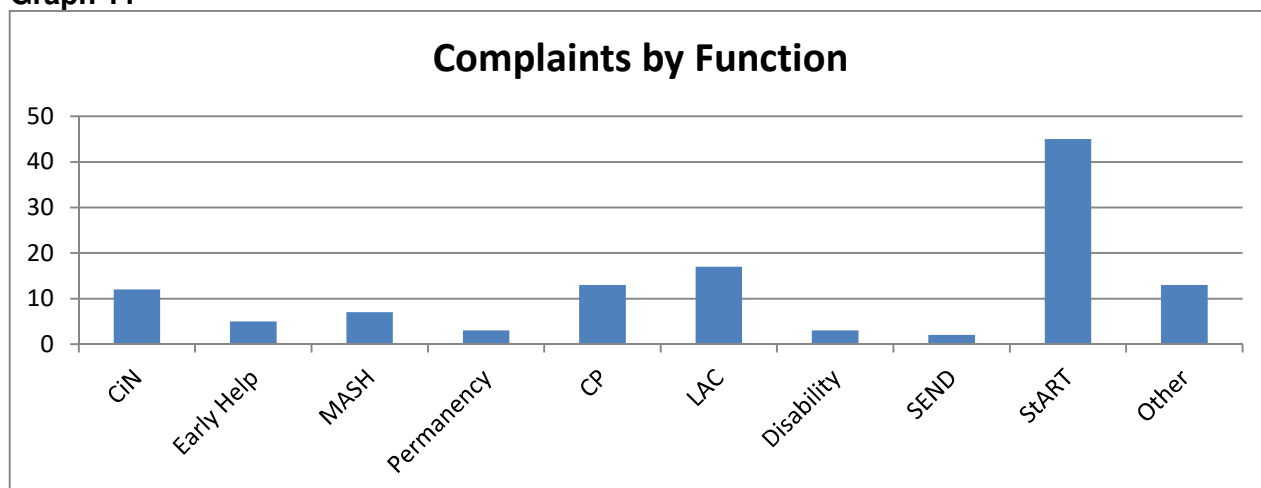
Out of the 116 (63) complaints which concluded in this quarter:

- ↑ 40 (19) were upheld
- ↑ 41 (27) were partially upheld
- ↑ 27 (16) were not upheld
- ↑ 1 (0) were not determined
- ↑ 1 (0) were withdrawn
- ↑ 1 (0) did not qualify as advice was sought
- ↑ 4 (1) were outside of the complaints remit, where issues were historic
- ↑ 1 (0) was an enquiry

Out of the 116 (63) Corporate complaints for which responses were provided this year, 23 (35) came back with further concerns to their initial complaint, at which point they were re-opened for investigation at Stage 1. Out of the 120 (63) complaints received in this year, 30 (12) of the complainants had made at least 1 unrelated complaint previously.

Out of the 120 (63) complaints received in this year, 65 (43) were made by parents or step-parents, 3 (4) were made by the young person themselves, 21 (3) were made by another family member, and 31 (13) were made by others unrelated to the young person.

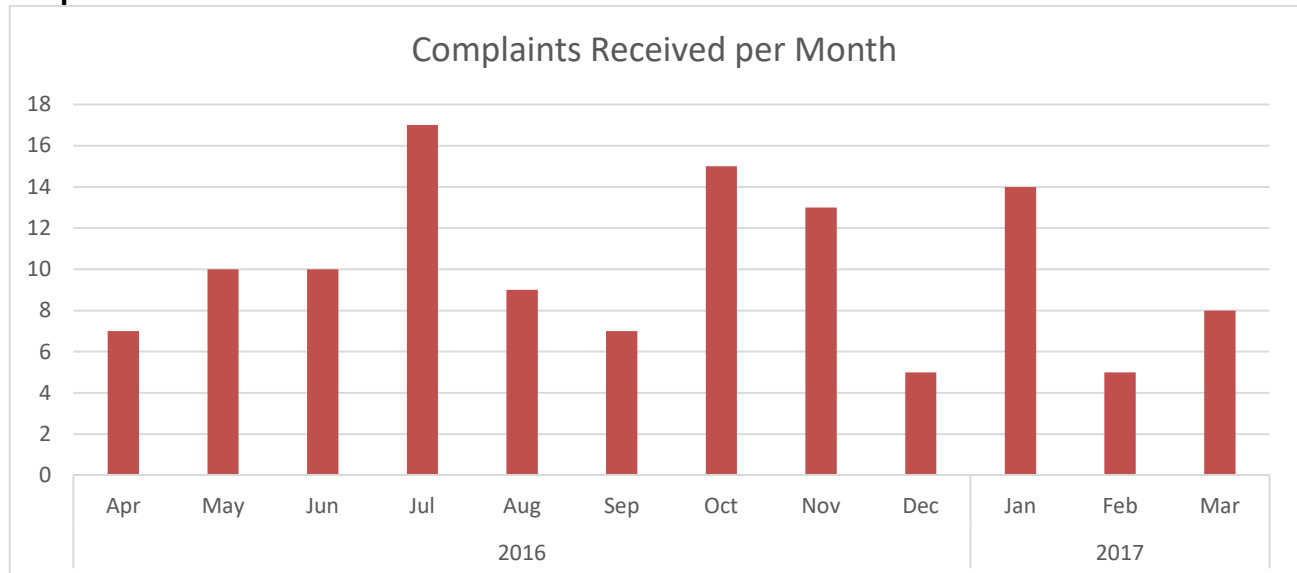
Graph 11



Out of the 116 (63) Corporate complaints responded to this year, 23 (9) responses were extended from the initial 10-working-day timescale to a 20-working-day maximum. 52 (10) were responded to outside of the prescribed timescale (whether it was 10 or 20 working days) which constitutes 45%.

The highest volume of Corporate complaints was seen in the Statutory Assessment Team (SAT), with 45 (30) complaints received in the year which constitutes 38% overall.

Graph 12



1.7 Stage 2 Statutory Complaints

From April 2018 to March 2019, the Customer Care Team worked with 6 (8) Stage 2 Statutory complaints. 1 (5) of these was received in the previous year and carried forward into this year. 4 (2) cases were still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year. These will be reported on in the next annual report.

Out of the 2 (6) Stage 2 investigations which were concluded this year, 5 (67) issues were investigated. Both were extended from the initial 25-working-day timescale to a 65-working-day timescale, with 1 (0) being responded to outside of the prescribed timescale.

- ↓ 2 (10) was partially upheld
- ↓ 1 (5) were not determined
- ↔ 2 (0) were not upheld

Of the 5 (3) Stage 2 complaints received in this year, 1 was closed prior to investigation as matters related to Court Proceedings. 3 (1) were made by parent, and 2 (0) were made by another relative. 3 (1) were made in relation to Looked After Children, 1 (1) was made in relation to Child Protection, and 1 (0) was made in relation to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

1.8 Stage 2 Corporate Complaints

From April 2018 to March 2018, the CCT worked with 9 (11) Stage 2 Corporate complaints, 7 (11) of which were initiated this year. 1 (2) case was still open and therefore ongoing as of the end of this year.

Within the 8 (9) complaints which concluded in this year:

- ↑ 2 (1) were upheld

- ↓ 3 (4) were partially upheld
- ↓ 2 (4) were not upheld
- ↑ 1 (0) was withdrawn

Out of the 8 (9) complaints which concluded in this year, 4 (5) responses were extended from the initial 10-working-day timescale to a 20-working-day timescale. 3 (4) were responded to outside of the prescribed timescale (whether it was 10 or 20 working days) which equates to 38%.

Of the 7 (11) Stage 2 complaints received in this year, 6 (8) were made by a parents, and 1 (1) was made by a person unrelated to the young person. 5 (6) of the complaints were made in relation to SEND or SAT services, 1 (0) was made in relation to a Looked After Child, and 1 (0) was made in relation to Child Protection.

1.9 Stage 3 Statutory Complaints

From April 2018 to March 2019, the CCT did not work with any Stage 3 Statutory Complaints.

1.10 Stage 3 Corporate Complaints

From April 2018 to March 2019, the CCT worked with 4 (4) Stage 3 Corporate complaints. All 4 (4) complaints were initiated and concluded this year.

Within the 4 complaints which concluded in this year:

- ↑ 2 (0) were upheld
- ↓ 2 (4) were partially upheld

Of these 4 (4) complaints received this year, 2 (4) were made by parents, and 2 (0) were made by a person unrelated to the young person. 2 (2) complaints were made in relation to SEND or SAT services, 1 (0) was in relation to LADO, and 1 (0) was in relation to MASH.

3 (4) complaints which concluded in this year were extended from the initial 10-working-day timescale to a 20-working-day timescale. 3 (3) were responded to outside of the prescribed timescale (whether it was 10 or 20 working days) which equates to 100%.

1.11 Local Government Ombudsman

From April 2018 to March 2019, the CCT worked with 13 (7) Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) enquiries. 10 (7) enquiries were initiated this year. 11 (5) cases were closed in this year, therefore 2 (2) cases were ongoing as of the end of this year.

Of the 11 (5) enquiries which concluded this year:

- ↑ 2 (1) were upheld
- ↑ 4 (0) were not upheld
- ↑ 5 (4) were outside of remit

Of the 10 (7) enquiries received this year, 8 (6) were made by parents, and 1 (1) was made by another family member, and 1 (0) was made by a person unrelated to the young person. 2 (3) complaints were made in relation to Child in Need services, 2 (1) was made in relation to Looked After Children, 2 (0) were made in relation to MASH, 1 (0) was made in relation to LADO, and 3 (1) were in relation to SEND or SAT services.

2.0 Themes, Learning, and Actions

The issues raised in complaints are inevitably similar at all three Stages of both the Corporate and Statutory Complaints Process. While each point contains valuable learning, it should be remembered that the total number of complaints is low.

Please note that learning has been taken from all complaints rather than just those that were upheld or partially upheld.

2.1 Communication

- All written communication to pre-adoptive children should be sent via their pre-adoptive parents to avoid their location being identifiable.
- When Workers are away from the office, on leave or on visits, it is essential they divert their phones onto other colleague's numbers and/or leave a voice mail message signposting the caller as to whom they might contact in their absence.
- Child Protection convening service to consider who they are sending invitations out to (Children Centres etc), and whether the invitees have any knowledge or involvement with the family due to data protection/GDPR concerns raised.
- Parents/carers should be contacted when meetings/supervised contact need to be cancelled due to staff illness/absence.
- Should delay become unavoidable, then it is essential to keep the service user informed, agreeing an extended (realistic) timeframe that the task will be completed within.
- A lack of awareness of how alternative education provision in Cambridgeshire (such as home tuition) is commissioned and funded, lead to staff raising parental expectations which resulted in reimbursement of expenses incurred for tutoring and exam entry.
- Legal advice being sought after staff supported legal name change of LAC under 18 without having prior consulted with parents with PR, parents to be informed of outcome.
- All children in special educational provision currently in Year 11 are to be included on the Post 16 spreadsheet for phase transfer in September 2019, to ensure that families are notified of the different transport arrangements for this age group including application and charging policy.
- Changes to reports run as part of the Phase Transfer Process for children with EHCPs due to transfer to secondary school the following academic year are required in order for the non-resident parent to be consulted, as presently report only identifies the home address at which the child lives.
- When corresponding with service users, it is important any written work is checked for factual accuracy not only for spelling and dates but for gender, title etc.
- When it is necessary to change worker due to staff turnover, it is essential that this is fully explained to the service user and where possible, a brokered introduction of the new worker with an appropriate handover.
- When deadlines are due during approved staff absence, it is important to communicate if delay is likely to the child or family and whether cover for the outstanding task will be provided and if so by whom, providing contact details.
- Both parents with Parental Responsibility (resident and non-resident) should be provided with the opportunity to participate in their child/ren's assessment and plan, receiving the information pack at the outset of our involvement, attending meetings where possible and receiving minutes.
- In accordance with the Customer Service Charter, staff should answer 85% of all calls, and aim to avoid the use of voicemail. Where voicemail is used, staff will respond to messages

within 2 working days. Staff will respond to e-mail enquiries in full within five working days, and written correspondence in full within 10 working days, whilst ensuring you know who to contact if you require more information. Where we are unable to respond in full within the timescales stated above, staff will advise families of this and provide detail of when a full response will be provided.

- Where transport is an issue for parents when attending meetings, they should be enabled to participate via skype.
- Link Worker to be provided to a School in order to improve communication difficulties.
- Workers to make case record of unanswered attempts to contact service user following messages received.

2.2 Statutory Assessment Process and SEND Services

- Statutory Assessment Team to ensure parents are kept fully informed whilst seeking legal advice, following a Final Education Health and Care Plan being issued late, breaching timescales set out by The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. This lead to further delay in support provision being named within the Plan and the setting up of a Personal Budget for the child.
- Late notice to Early Years settings of the cessation of Additional Needs Funding for children in their care, caused confusion, frustration and a delay in provision. Agreed that the setting in question could make an application to Panel based on their observations without completing all elements of the plan, do, review cycle first.
- Further consideration to be undertaken into Contact Centre taking over Statutory Assessment Team's duty telephone line to ensure calls can be answered and acknowledged promptly and messages taken.
- Statutory Assessment Team leader agreed to take forward complainant's suggestion to introduce an automated acknowledgement system, so schools and settings can see if their documentation following an Annual Reviews has been received. Also an effective case management system is to be introduced to track Annual Reviews and contact schools where paperwork has not been received. Statutory Assessment Team leader to progress with Business Support and IT colleagues.
- Statutory Assessment Team leader agreed that since complaint received, practice has been revised by sending out electronic versions of proposed EHC Plans, so parents can feedback via email, and track changes can be noted.
- To review the training and specialism on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) for professionals within the Local Authority and CAMHS.
- During the summer (2018) the 14-25yrs Moving-On booklets for young people with complex additional needs have been updated and is now available on the Local Offer.
- Statutory timescales exceeded by LGSS Law at Tribunal, deployed on behalf of the Council have led to a contract review.
- A full review of the EHC Plan funding and Childcare Access funding available to settings/parents, to be made available on The Local Offer.
- All EHC Plan referral outcomes are now shared with the referring school and parents alike.
- Management review into direct payments to parents as a result of overpayments being made.

2.3 Assessments

- Children's Social Care to contact past Authorities when new issues arise.

- Young Person caused distress after reading family history within Single Assessment, given his PTSD diagnosis due to early life experiences. Agreed that future reports would either be hand delivered directly to mother or recorded delivery to be signed for by mother.
- Where amendments are necessary to CIN meeting minutes, these should be agreed and completed, then signed off at the next CIN meeting as standard practice.
- An internal deadline of 35 days should be set to complete single assessments, to allow time for parents' views to be added prior to sign off.
- Workers to avoid the use of acronyms, spelling out in full instead.
- The direction to undertake checks and visit to a LAC teenager's boyfriend's house could have been managed differently in conjunction with the Foster Mum who has delegated responsibility.
- Workers to ensure a balanced approach when assessing a child's learning difficulties to ensure abilities and strengths are reflected to.
- Communication difficulties with parents with learning difficulties need to be better managed with Learning Disability Partnership to avoid expectations being raised, using appropriate symbols where necessary.
- Children's Continuing Care framework and the Social Care short break framework need to be better aligned to produce the best outcomes for children with disabilities, including the timeframe of decisions. This will be done by bringing together representatives from Children with Disabilities Social Work Teams and Nurses (from the CCG and also the local Community Children's Nursing Teams who are commissioned by the CCG) to look at what we are doing and how we can work together in a better way.
- Further discussion to take place with the County Resourcing Panel as to how best to deliver decisions made, are correct and in a timely way to prevent incorrect information being passed to families.
- Business Support to investigate feedback form enclosed with assessments, as it stated there was a freepost envelope included, however there was no freepost envelope, and none of the telephone numbers listed worked.
- Where possible those with Parental Responsibility should be invited to participate in assessments which relate to their child, providing them with the opportunity to identify and raise issues they feel are important and share in decision making, beyond consultation. If it is not possible or appropriate for them to be present, then opportunities should be explored to ensure they remain involved and informed.

2.4 Child in Need/Child Protection/Looked After Children/Adoption support

- No current care leaver should end their involvement with the 14-25 Service without a record of their life.
- Child Protection Conference Chairs should ensure that the use of advocates is known prior to any pre-meetings, so families can be appropriately supported.
- Conference Chairs should be clear in their expectations that professionals should remain present for the duration of the Conference.
- When a person enters or leaves a Conference, a note of the timing should be made within the minutes.
- A specific note should be added in Conference minutes, when a recommendation has been made by a professional who has not attended the whole meeting.
- A meeting is to be held between Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption and the Local Authority, to consider how to respond more generally to respite requests for children who are adopted.

- The Local Authority agreed to provide funding for a Qube building to be located in a foster carer's garden, so a young person could remain living at the property under the Staying Put scheme.
- Failings to communicate effectively with grandparents over the placement of their grandson and acknowledgment they ought to have been registered as Regulation 24 carers, led to grandparents being offered £4,582.06 + £300 compensation for distress and out of pocket expenses. Grandchildren to receive therapeutic intervention, and the Post Court Memo to be investigated re compensation for the children re proceedings. The children's contact list within their safety plan to be reviewed, agreement for grandparents to liaise directly with foster carers for increased contact.
- As a result of delays in progressing adoption due to getting a birth certificate changed, Independent Reviewing Officer Service Manager is now tracking all children placed for adoption, and visits each District on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of all cases with the relevant District Safeguarding Managers.
- District Safeguarding Manager advised lawyer that issues regarding birth certificates, need to be dealt with by the Courts within the expected 26 weeks' timescale for care planning.
- Following a decision to 'retire' a foster couple after 36 years of service without their agreement and for their foster son to move out into supported lodgings, it was agreed their 'Staying Put' status would be reinstated and their Staying Put allowances to recommence, with back dated payments paid from when their allowances were ceased.
- The Local Offer for Leaving Care should be published and a review into arrangements for Staying Put will be completed.
- Where Looked After Children siblings have different workers, liaison is necessary to ensure updates can be shared between siblings.
- Following dissatisfaction over Special Guardianship Order funding agreement, a financial re-assessment arranged within 10 working days.
- Female worker to be allocated to vulnerable female client, replacing male worker due to historical abuse.
- Single Assessment/Child Protection Conference reports should be sent out two working days in advance of Conference to enable the family to feedback or challenge any perceived inaccuracies, ideally before it is signed off.

2.5 Worker Behaviour

- The way in which information was shared with a parent following a referral being received, could have been done differently by summarising the key concerns without relaying specific details about the incident, leading to the identification of the referrer.
- Workers should be careful not to offer their own personal opinion with families rather they should use their professional judgement based on information gathered.
- Worker to speak to Pathways about male staff restraining a young girl who has history of sexual abuse, and Pathways staff giving Looked After Child cigarettes.
- District Safeguarding Manager to speak to Supervised Contact Worker's Manager about comments made in front of the children.
- District Safeguarding Manager to feedback to Supervised Contact Service importance of Worker showing name badge and introducing themselves.
- Clinician to explore further difficulties the family experienced whilst working with Social Worker so that lessons can be learned.

2.6 Children's Change Programme

- Ongoing issues over staffing have caused problems with tasks not being completed, minutes not being written or sent out and meetings being cancelled at short notice
- Ongoing issues over capacity have led to delays in assessments and communication difficulties.
- A District Safeguarding Manager proposed an allocation template is completed that identifies, in addition to specific work and tasks, a realistic time-scale which should be reviewed by the Line Manager during the supervision process
- Where change of worker is necessary, a brokered introduction with the new worker should be facilitated.

3.0 Customer Care Team Update and Conclusion

Following a 30% increase in combined (Statutory and Corporate) Stage 1 complaints in 2017/18, we have again seen a further increase of 42% in combined Stage 1 complaints in 2018/19. Within this percentage, we have seen a 25% increase in Statutory complaints and a 90% increase in Corporate complaints.

In addition to the significant increase in initial complaints received, 28% of statutory and 20% of corporate complaints have been re-opened following feedback received raising further concerns to the initial complaint response.

Quarter 4 was the busiest period for Statutory complaints with 83 received. Quarters 2 and 3 were equally busy quarters for Corporate complaints, with 33 complaints received in each.

Despite the increase in initial Stage 1 complaints, we have seen a reduction from 4>3% of Statutory Stage 1 complaints and a reduction from 14>7.5% of Corporate Stage 1 complaints being worked on at Stage 2.

We have seen a 160% increase in complainants taking their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, however, of the 11 cases concluded this year, 4 were not upheld and 5 were deemed outside of remit, with only 2 being upheld.

For the second year in a row, Looked After Children remain the highest function area being complained about making up 34% of all Statutory Stage 1 complaints. In addition, South Cambridgeshire has generated the highest number of complaints for a second year, equating to 18% of all Statutory Stage 1s.

Complaints relating to the Statutory Assessment Team remain the highest for a second year in a row within Corporate complaints, with 45 received equating to 38%.

The largest issue being complained about across Statutory and Corporate complaints remains Communication with 106 complaints received, equating to 45%, second highest being Worker Behaviour with 80, equating to 34%.

Specific issues which compound the number of Communication complaints received is new Social Work staff who have started without access to work mobile phones or laptops, the lack of business support and team telephone numbers around the Children's Change implementation period, staff not logging into their VOIP phones and messages via email or telephone going unanswered.

Finally, a worrying trend is the number of complaint responses being sent outside of timescale. 40% (10%) of Statutory complaints and 45% (16%) of Corporate complaints were responded to outside of the prescribed timescale (whether it was 10 or 20 working days).

The Annual Report for April 2018 – March 2019 is available to the public on the main County Council website through the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/contact-us/council-complaints-procedures>

4.0 Customer Care Team Contact Details

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Telephone:

01223 699664
01223 714765

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Childrens.ServicesFeedback@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Appendix A – Counting Complaints

This Appendix aims to explain how complaints are counted and how outcomes are decided.

It is rare that complaints contain only one issue and it is often the case that the issues are not very clear, making it difficult to count them separately or to compare them easily with other complaints. Nevertheless themes and learning are taken very seriously.

At Stage 1, a complaint is counted as one, even if it contains more than one issue. For example, a parent may ring to say that she is dissatisfied with how a Social Worker spoke to her on a first visit; factual inaccuracies in a report, and the late arrival of minutes of a meeting. Each of these will be investigated and a single response will be sent. If the same parent rings again while the complaint investigation is ongoing, to say that the Social Worker also failed to show his ID card, this will be added to the same complaint. Once the complaint has been investigated and a response sent, any new complaint will be counted separately.

In the above example, there may be no witness to the visit and it may not be possible to ‘determine’ whether or not the Social Worker showed his ID card or not, or if he was rude. Where it is one person’s word against another’s, the outcome of those aspects is that they ‘cannot be determined’ either way. If, having checked available information, there is evidence to support the content of the report; the complaint that the report contains factual inaccuracies will not be ‘upheld’. Finally, if the minutes were late, i.e. more than 10 working days after the event, that aspect will be ‘upheld’.

Overall, this complaint would be deemed to be ‘partially upheld’ as one aspect was upheld. Even where more aspects are ‘not upheld’ than are ‘upheld’, the complaint will still be deemed to be ‘partially upheld’.

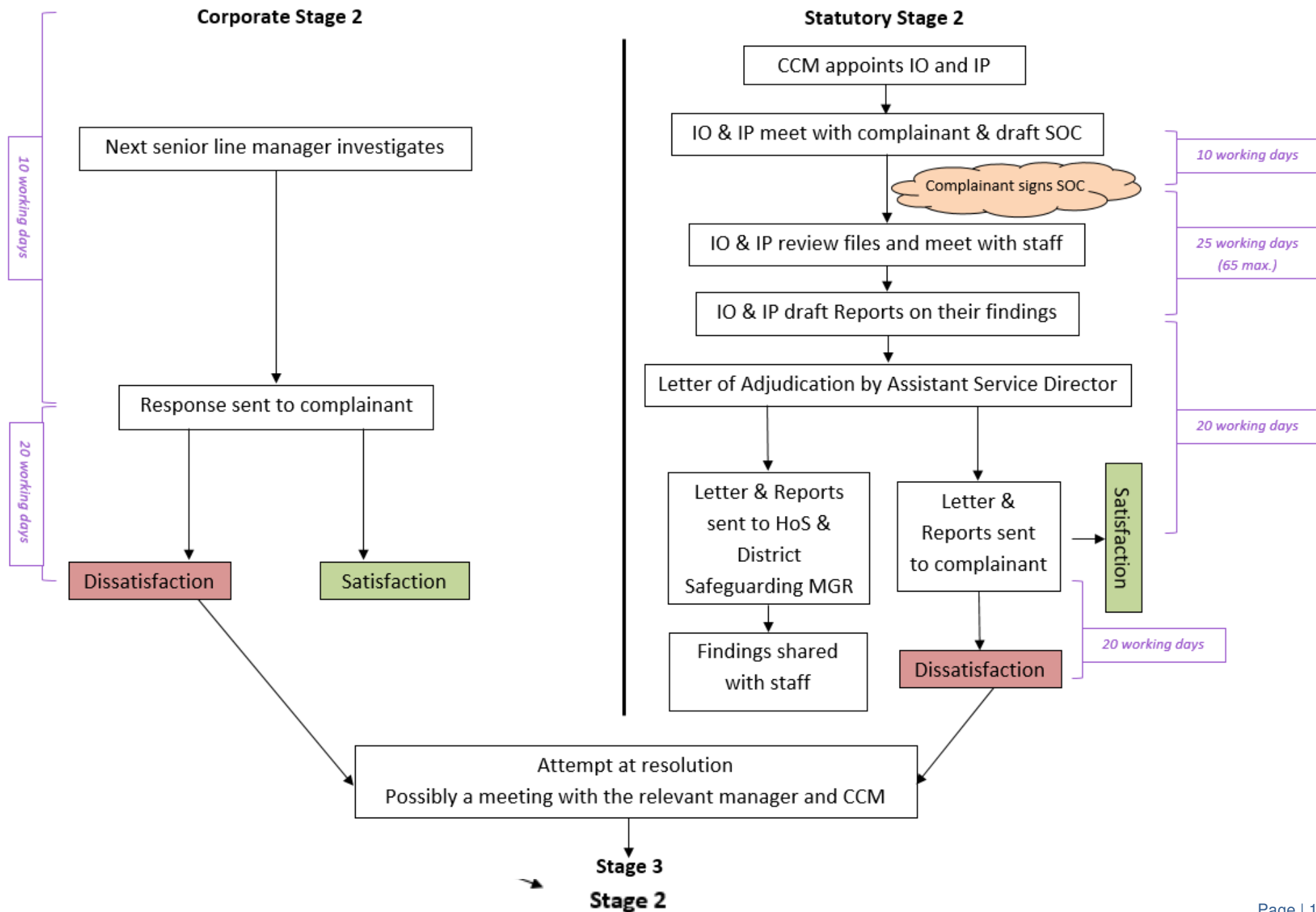
The Customer Care Manager, who has no line management involvement with the cases that are complained about, makes the final decision as to whether or not a complaint is upheld.

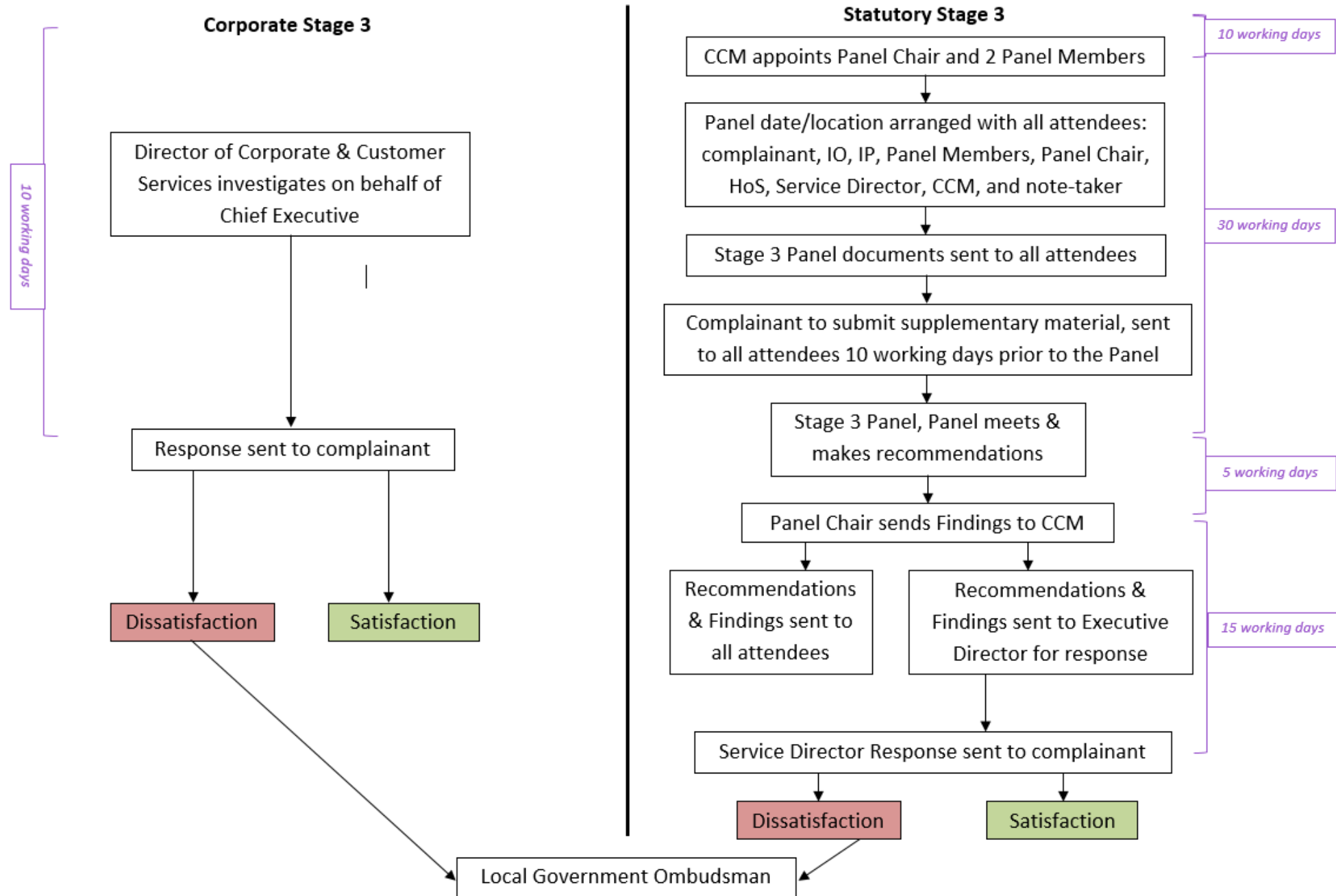
In a Statutory Stage 2, the two Independent Investigators meet with the complainant to go through which aspects of the original complaint continue to cause concern. These are usually the aspects which were ‘not determined’ or ‘not upheld’ at Stage 1. The Investigators draw up a ‘Schedule of Complaint’ with the complainant, which the complainant signs only when she is happy that this is an accurate reflection of her views. This can contain a list of issues. Each of these is investigated and a finding (of ‘upheld’, ‘partially upheld’, ‘not upheld’ or ‘cannot be determined’) is reached against each one.

The complainant receives copies of both Investigation Reports in full, together with a letter from the Assistant Service Director. There is no County Council involvement in the making or altering of the Statutory Stage 2 outcomes.

Each Statutory Stage 2 investigation is counted as one investigation and is not counted as a number of separate complaints. Similarly, each Statutory Stage 3 Panel is counted as one. The number of Stage 2 investigations and Stage 3 Panels is reported upon within in-house and public reports.

At Statutory Stage 3, the complainant notifies the Independent Panel in advance of the Panel Meeting as to which complaints continue to be unresolved and these are discussed. While a Statutory Stage 3 Panel is not a new investigation, the Panel will, nevertheless comment on whether it agrees with previous findings or not. The Panel findings are sent to the complainant at the same time as they are sent to the Service Director. The Service Director also writes directly to the complainant.





Appendix C – Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASYE – Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (Student Social Worker)

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group

CCM – Customer Care Manager

CCT – Customer Care Team

CIC – Child/ren in Care

CIN – Child in Need

Cllr – Councillor

CP – Child Protection

EHCP – Education Health and Care Plan

EHH – Early Help Hub

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

HoS – Head of Service

IO – Investigating Officer

IP – Independent Person

LAC – Looked After Child/ren

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer

LGO – Local Government Ombudsman

LGSS – Local Government Shared Services

MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

MGR – Manager

MP – Member of Parliament

NYAS – National Youth Advocacy Service

PR – Parental Responsibility

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SAT – Statutory Assessment Team

SC – Social Care

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability

SOC – Schedule of Complaint

VOIP – Voice Over Internet Protocol (telephony system)