

TITLE OF REPORT: **Children and Families Service** - Annual Reports on Children's Services Complaints, Compliments and Representations – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

REPORT OF: Dale Owens, Chief Executive - Gateshead Council

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Annual Reports for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 which relate to all complaints and representations received under the Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure 2006.

Background

2. The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 set down the procedures that Children's Social Care Services must follow when complaints or representations are made about any statutory children's services function. As part of the responsibilities set out in the act, local authorities must produce an annual report on all complaints and representations received. This report fulfils Gateshead Council's obligations and provides information on all representations received about the Council's Children's Social Care Services between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.
3. Information contained in the report provides a summary of the statistical information together with a review of the effectiveness of the procedure. Some examples of service improvement are also included, along with examples of compliments received about Children's Social Care.

Proposal

4. The Cabinet is requested to endorse the annual report.

Recommendations

5. It is requested that Cabinet:
 - (i) Endorses the Annual Report on Children's Services Complaints and Representations
 - (ii) Agrees to refer the report to the Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration

for the following reason(s):

- (i) It is a statutory requirement that the report is considered by a formal committee
- (ii) To improve practice and the offer to children and families

Policy Context

1. The Statutory Social Care Complaints Procedures supports the Council's objective of delivering services that continually improve and ensuring that customers are satisfied with the services they receive.

Background

2. The complaints procedure is a statutory responsibility under the "The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006". The procedures are derived from The Children Act 1989, The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, The Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Health and Social Care (Community Health & Standards Act) 2003. These acts set down the procedures that Councils and Social Services have a responsibility to follow when a complaint is made

The report focuses primarily on Children Act Statutory Complaints for Children's Social Care Services, with information on complaint related queries and compliments that are received about staff or services.

Consultation

3. Consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People.

Alternative Options

4. The report is a legislative requirement.

Implications of Recommended Option

5. **Resources**

a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

b) Human Resources Implications

It is possible that complaints made against social care employees could lead to disciplinary action in a small number of cases.

c) Property Implications

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

6. **Risk Management Implication**

An effective complaints process can identify and minimise risks through seeking resolution.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

The Social Services Complaints Procedure contributes to the implementation of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy through identified service improvements. All Complaints literature is available in different languages and formats.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

9. Health Implications

There are no health implications arising from this report.

10. Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications

There are no climate and sustainability implications arising from this report.

11. Human Rights Implications

There may be human rights implications in a number of complaints made to the Council. Having a Social Care Complaints Procedure will assist the Council in carrying out its duties under the Human Rights Act, 1998.

12. Area and Ward Implications

The Annual Report is applicable to all wards.

13. Background Information

Quarterly Complaints Monitoring Reports.
Social Care Complaint Tracking & Monitoring System.