



# Complaints Annual Report Children's Social Care Services 2020 / 21



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## 1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Social Care Services for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, it details the complaints and compliments that have been formally recorded during this period. A temporary amendment made to the Complaint Regulations (Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure) occurred due to COVID – 19 and is detailed in this report but, aside from this, the remainder of this introduction and chapter 2 'The Statutory Process' are unchanged from last year's report.

The Children's Act 1989 require all local authorities with Children's Social Care responsibilities in England and Wales to have a complaints procedure. The aim of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure is for Children and Young People to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible by the people who provide the service locally. 'Getting the Best from Complaints' provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the Children's Act and defines a complaint as being:

**A complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.**

Statutory complaints relate to the provision of Children's Social Care and are handled in line with the national regulations referred to above, the key stages of which are set out in section 2 of this report: stage 1 - local resolution; stage 2 – investigation; stage 3 - review panel and section 4 - referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Complaints about Children's Social Care Services that do not fall under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure may be responded to under the local Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure which is set out in section 3 of this report. Some complaints may be addressed in accordance to internal HR procedures.

It is a requirement of The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure for the local authority to have a designated officer who is responsible for the management of the procedure and who is independent of social care operational line management and of direct service providers. In order to contribute effectively to service development, the Complaints Management function is managed by the Principal Policy Officer based within the Policy, Provision and Performance Division in the Education, Inclusion & Provision Department.

There are other customer contacts which allow early resolution to prevent complaint escalation and this can include advice and guidance, signposting and problem solving direct with the customer. Another and very positive aspect is the recording and reporting of compliments and positive feedback received by the People (Children Services) Directorate.

This Annual Report is produced in line with national guidance and is designed to share information more widely with members of the public.

## 2. The Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Process

The aim of complaint procedures is to resolve any dissatisfaction promptly, effectively and transparently and to inform service improvements to prevent service users experiencing the same issues in the future. We cannot promise to deliver the outcomes that complainants want, but we do make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

**STAGE 1** – the complaint will be allocated to the appropriate team manager who is asked to investigate the complaint. We always aim to resolve the problem as quickly as possible (within 10 working days) however, sometimes the complaint is complex so may take up to 20 working days.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response or investigation at Stage 1 and feels that the complaint is not resolved, they or their representative can request to go to Stage 2.



**STAGE 2** - An external Independent Person is commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint. The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 working days in which to produce their reports. Once the reports have been finalised they are sent to the Adjudication Officer (usually the Head of Service) who will, after careful consideration of the reports, provide the complainant with a written response to their complaint.

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied with the decision/outcome following the independent investigation at Stage 2, they can ask to have their complaint reviewed by the Complaints Review Panel.



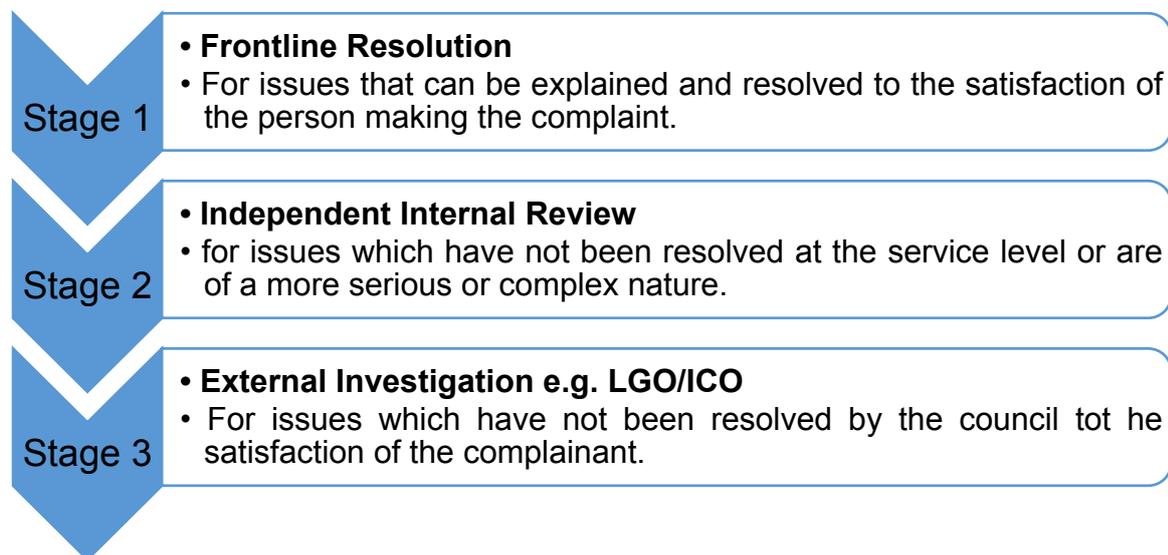
**STAGE 3** -. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.



**STAGE 4** – If a complaint cannot be resolved locally, it can be investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). A complainant has the right to self-refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any stage during the complaint process. However, the LGSCO normally allows the Local Authority the opportunity to process a complaint through every stage of the complaints procedure, before investigating it themselves.

### 3. The Corporate Complaints Process

The Corporate Complaints Procedure consists of a two stage internal process.



The Council try to respond to all Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt.

Where a Stage 2 review is undertaken the Independent Investigating Officer will aim to respond within 28 working days of receipt of the request.

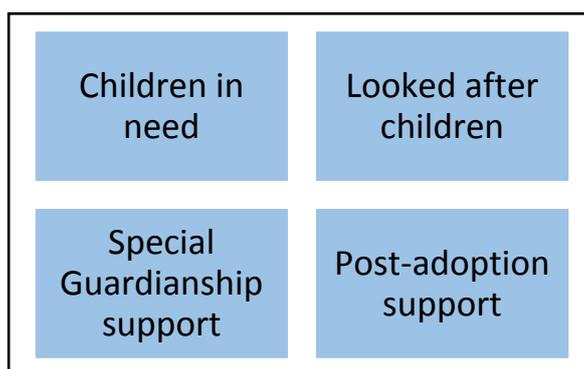
The following types of complaints cannot progress beyond Stage 1 of the Procedure.

- Complaints about a Council policy or decision rather than the way that the policy or decision has been carried out.
- Complaints against the conduct of individual employees. Should such matters need to be progressed, after a Stage 1 response has been provided to the complainant, this will be done through the Council's internal management procedures.
- A decision where regulatory powers are being exercised (such as licencing and planning) unless the complaint relates to the way the matter has been administrated.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal, a legal remedy, or where legal proceedings are ongoing.
- Matters that are of a general nature and do not relate to the provision, or lack of provision, of a service at an individual level.

## 4. Which Complaint Procedure should be used?

The statutory guidance, Getting the best from complaints, sets out which of a council's children's social care functions that can be considered under the procedure. The guidance should always be read alongside the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the associated regulations referred to in the guidance itself.

The procedure covers complaints about councils' actions under Part 3 and some of Parts 4 and 5 of the Children Act 1989, as well as some adoption and special guardianship services. Generally, assessments and services in the following areas should be considered under the Statutory Procedure:



### Complaints about the following tend to be exempt:

- Early Help
- Child protection including S47 enquiries and conferences
- Assessments of potential foster carers and adopters
- Foster carer registration
- Section 7 and Section 37 court reports

While these may be excluded from the Statutory Procedure, this does not prevent councils investigating them, it is expected that councils assess each complaint on its own merits and apply other procedures, such as the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

As a Council we do receive complaints where there is an overlap between those areas which are inside and outside the scope of the procedure, for example a case may have been at Section 47 Child Protection Conference and stepped down to Child in Need or, a Section 47 investigation concluded finding no concerns of a safeguarding nature and was instead referred to Early Help services for support.

The guidance allows councils to use their discretion to consider all parts of a complaint in a single investigation and response. Complainants should not be disadvantaged by any overlap between complaint procedures. Councils should consider which procedure is likely to produce the best result for the complainant and the child or young person.

## 5. COVID – 19

There is not a single area of local government that has not been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and for the management of complaints this is also true.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 was introduced to Parliament on Thursday 19th March 2020 and became law on Wednesday 25th March 2020. The legislation and government guidance issued in response to the Covid-19 outbreak has changed during the period of crisis and it continues to change and be updated.

It did as suspected at the onset have profound implications for social work practice, education provision, health provision and every other possible provision for service users, these changes affected the way councils and care providers worked during the crisis. Understandably there was a need to focus resources on tackling the coronavirus pandemic and undoubtedly it will have a major and long-lasting impact on a range of council and care provider services. In terms of the impact of COVID – 19 on complaints:

Amendments were made to the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure and came into force on 24th April 2020 reverting back on the 25th September 2020, specifically this was in reference to stage 3 Review Panels, the time scale changed to '*or as soon as is reasonably practicable*'.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) suspended all casework activity that demanded information from, or action by, local authorities and care providers in March 2020 to allow organisations to concentrate on their response to the crisis and protect the Councils capacity. They monitored the situation and government guidance in order to reengage with councils and complainants at the appropriate time and when the government guidance allowed. On the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020 the LGSCO issued guidance 'Good Administrative Practice during the response to COVID – 19' whilst recognising that complaint handling capacity would be reduced there was still very clearly the expectation that we continue to respond to complaints appropriately. The LGSCO in early May 2020 re-opened its helpline on reduced hours, to give general advice to the public and recommenced with complaints handling on the 29th June 2020.

For Children's Social Complaints in Halton, it was business as usual in terms of accepting and acknowledging the complaint. There was the significant challenge with Principal Manager's capacity to, on top of the impact of COVID -19 on their service, to be able to find the time to investigate and respond to the complainant within timescales.

The requirement of the Representation Procedure is to have an officer (Principal Policy Officer) facilitate the process however this year has been '*unprecedented*' and this did in effect result in the Principal Policy Officer assisting managers greatly in the investigations and responses in order to take pressure off the front line but mainly, to ensure complainants received a thorough investigation and response in a timely manner.

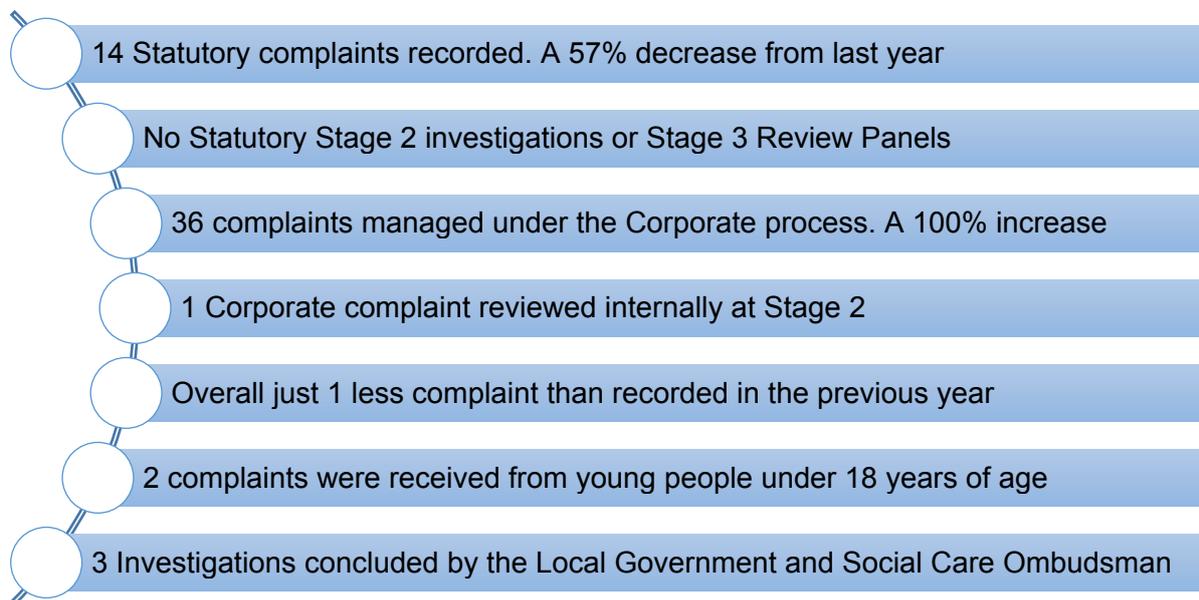
The impact of COVID-19 will be seen further in this report and referenced throughout.

## 6. Key Messages

Complaints and compliments are feedback received from our service users. Effective feedback, both positive and negative is very helpful, it highlights areas for development as well as strengths that can be used to improve services.

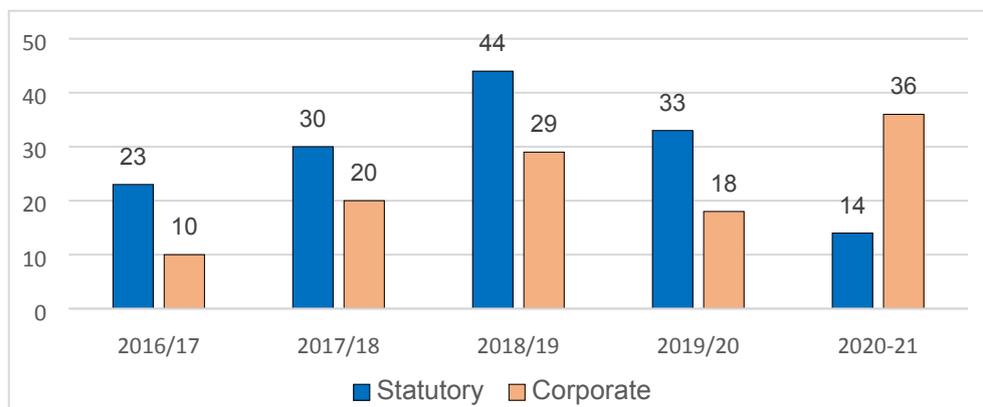
Managing a customer expectations and demands is always challenging in the area of Children and Families Services, understandably it can be a very emotive time for families.

For most of us in our day to day work there is that opportunity to pick up on those small signs of frustration, receive that feedback and address it there and then but sometimes regardless of best efforts or intentions they will escalate to a complaint.



## 7. Customer feedback data

### 7.1 Number of complaints Children and Families Division



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020-21
Total Complaints	33	50	73	51	50

The Principal Policy Officer has been in post for 12 years, whilst the overall number of complaints has remained similar, this is the first time that the number of complaints investigated under the corporate process has exceeded those under the statutory process. There are a number of things to consider in respect of this.

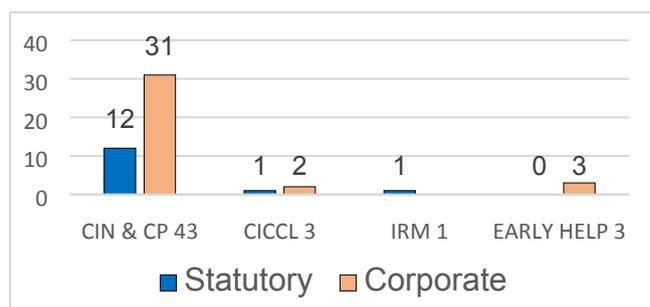
Because of the lockdown, children were less visible and so the number of contacts coming into Children's Social Care decreased. Whilst there were peaks when lockdown eased overall, during the financial year 2021 provisional figures\* indicate a drop in Children's Social care contacts being screened by the integrated Contact and Referral Team (iCART), and less referrals being made to Children's Social Care for assessment. That reduction in contacts and referrals may correlate with the reduced number of complaints under the Social Care Complaints procedure.

	2019-2020	2021-2021*	% Reduction
iCART Social Care Contacts	4067	2656	35%
Children Social Care Referrals	1656	1338	19%

Other considerations include the national and localised lock downs resulting in changes to service provision, some services were cancelled/postponed indefinitely, if services are not provided, it will not generate complaints about it. Safeguarding services understandably continue and for those children assessed as being at high risk, visits in person continued. Where it was assessed as safe to do so, visits were undertaken virtually (video/telephone calls) which from a families point of view can perhaps feel less invasive/stressful particularly for parents with mental health issues. Direct work being undertaken in local parks or whilst on a walk perhaps felt like a less official and more neutral environment and led to a more natural conversation which could perhaps lead to less statutory complaints. Where services were not provided, families may have felt that the measures taken by the department in response to the pandemic would have been reasonable in the circumstances.

During Lockdown Family Court matters continued, reports were still required which would be addressed as a corporate complaint.

## 7.2 The teams the complaints are made about



The greatest number of complaints continues to be in the Children in Need and Child Protection Division, it is the frontline service dealing with a large number of cases with very difficult issues to address.

## 7.3 Who is contacting us and how

48 of the 50 complaints were received from adults (parents, carers other parties), the number of complaints received from children and/or young people (2) remains low which is the case historically and nationally.

3 Complaints were in relation to children with disabilities.

Halton has a 97.8% white population. No complaints were from an ethnic minority.

E-mailing complaints continues to be the preferred method to make a complaint, this is probably due to the ease of access on mobile devices and the desire for them to have their own written record. COVID-19 has restricted movement in terms of post and access to Halton Direct Link offices and so this is reflected in the increased emails.

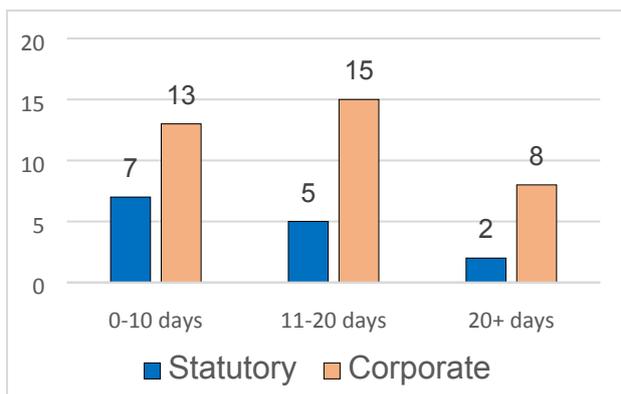
	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
Email	19	64%	19	43%	19	58%	43	86%
Telephone	10	33%	14	32%	8	24%	5	10%
Complaint Form	0	4%	5	11%	4	12%	2	4%
Letter	1	3%	6	14%	2	6%		

Halton Borough Council commissions the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to support Children in Care and Care Leavers, if they want one. All young people in contact with the team are offered access to an advocate so that their voices can be heard and their issues discussed, this can often be at the point of service delivery where the matter can be resolved rather than progressing to a complaint.

## 7.4 How quickly do we respond to complaints

In regards to Statutory timescales despite COVID-19 there was an improvement in meeting these. In 2019-20 there were 67% of complaints responded to within 20 working days, in 2020-21 it is 86% however, the number of complaints responded to under this procedure is lower.

	% within 10 days	% within 20 days	% over 20 days
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>9%</b>



Whilst Statutory complaint numbers were lower, overall the number of Statutory and Corporate complaints was comparable (previously 51, this year 50). Taking this into consideration, 80% of complaints were responded to within 20 working days.

The accurate definition of complaints by the Principal Policy Officer means that multiple issues are often identified within

each complaint, this assists investigating managers to respond quickly and accurately but, it should also be noted that due to COVID-19 the Principal Policy Officer provided more assistance in this year than the guidance would allow, there is a difference between facilitating the complaint process and being part of it, the guidance requires independence and transparency from the service provider.

Despite the challenges faced this year complaints have been responded to in a timely manner. Responses that took longer were either complex, lengthy or due to staff capacity/availability.

### 7.5 Stage 2 investigations

No stage 2 external independent investigations took place under the statutory complaints procedure.

The Corporate Complaints team did review one complaint at Stage 2 and concluded that each of the matters raised had been fully and properly considered and that a detailed explanation had been provided. Where there are conflicting accounts of what occurred the Council is unable to objectively determine which account is correct.

### 7.6 Stage 3 Review Panels

No Stage 3 Review Panels took place under the statutory complaints procedure.

### 7.7 Complaint outcomes and themes

We record complaints under 3 main categories, 'service provision' is about how we have done things, and it's about how we have delivered it and the quality. 'Assessment and review' is about the process, have we done what we should have done in accordance to policy, procedure or regulations as well as challenges to the content of the assessment and the outcome of it.

The Complaints Procedures are not designed to deal with allegations of misconduct by staff however they will be interwoven into the complaint. Complaints about staff conduct are often linked to the decisions they have made or the service they have provided and so for recording purposes we look at the context of the complaint. Complaints received about staff conduct do not necessarily mean that they are making poor decisions, rather, it is an indicator that complainants do not agree with the rationale or policy on which the decision is based. Complainants will disagree with the

social workers analysis of the information and the judgement made, this then leads to complaints about their conduct and these can be difficult to manage. Complaints of this nature would be responded to under Stage 1 of the Corporate Procedures only. Should any further action be required this would be dealt with in accordance to the organisations disciplinary procedures.

In the majority of cases, complaints have multiple issues that need responding to and that will cross over all three categories and so the Principal Policy Officer taking into consideration the main crux of the complaint, the desired outcome, and the complaint findings will determine the category. In 2020-21;

- 50% were categorised as Assessment / Review Process
- 46% as Service Provision
- 4% in respect of staff

Once a complaint has been concluded it will be recorded as being

- Upheld - this means that the service made mistakes or provided a poor service that amounted to maladministration or service failure.
- Not upheld – the service acted correctly
- Partly upheld - where there are complaints with multiple issues there may be a mix of complaints that were up held and not upheld and so overall for recording purposes they will be recorded as partly upheld but, it can also be recorded as this if it is a single element where it was not wholly the fault of the service.

	Upheld	Not upheld	Partly upheld	Total
Assessment / Review Process	4	16	5	25
Service Provision	1	16	6	23
Staff	0	1	1	2
Total	5	33	12	50

14 Complaints were linked to Cases in the Court arena. In terms of Section 7 and Section 37 court reports, whilst the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) can decide not to investigate because another body, such as Court, is better placed to consider it, there is no such limit placed on Councils. Whilst the guidance allows councils to decide not to investigate a complaint if it would prejudice a concurrent investigation, including those in court proceedings, we do not refuse to accept a complaint because it is in the Court arena. Wherever possible we investigate all matters and provide a response to the complainant, this allows for work submitted or, to be submitted to the Court to be checked and the accuracy confirmed but ultimately, these reports have been produced at the order of a Court, to be used in Court and the Court is the higher authority. These reports form part of the Council's evidence and will include the professional views and opinions of the Social Worker which is what the Court have requested and also what is usually the area of the complainants dissatisfaction so, whilst a response to the complaint and explanations may be provided to aid clarification, families will/may be advised to challenge the content, views and analysis of the Social Worker in these reports, in the Court arena. Because Council's can investigate matters which the LGSCO do not have jurisdiction to consider, these matters are recorded under corporate complaints and at Stage 1 as there is no recourse to Stage 2 due to the legal proceedings.

The below table, whilst not capturing every single element of every complaint made does give an indication of the areas of the service or aspects of work that generates complaints. The world of Children Social Care complaints is unique, families often do not want Social Workers involved however, the statutory duty to safeguard requires them to be involved and so before any work commences, conflict can be there at the onset.

Not providing immediate response to text, calls or emails	17	14 x Not upheld 3 x Partly upheld
Biased / discriminated in the other parties favour	14	Not upheld
Disagree with content of the report/assessments/information held in records	6	Not upheld
Concerns are being ignored/not taken seriously	6	Not upheld
Child in Need meeting (e.g.not invited, cancelled, what is it)	6	5 Upheld 1 x Partly upheld
Child contact – arrangements/adherence	5	1 x Upheld 4 x Not upheld
Attitude, tone, content of Social Workers response, feel intimidated	4	1 x Partly upheld 3 x Not upheld
Changed decision or conflicting information given	3	Not upheld
Children Social Care involvement, not necessary	3	Not upheld
Child contact – COVID-19	2	Not upheld
Time taken to commence parenting assessment	2	Not upheld
His call was terminated, he was not erratic or shouting	2	Not upheld
Address shared when asked not to	2	1 x Upheld 1 x Not upheld
Social worker not visited home to see if safe (COVID_19)	2	Not upheld
Factual error (date) in the court report	2	Upheld
Delay in assessment progressing	2	1 x Upheld 1 x Not upheld
Social worker – missed appointments	2	Upheld
Communication between agencies	2	Not upheld
Not received / delay in receipt of documentation (COVID-19)	2	Upheld
Unannounced visits	2	Not upheld
Was not given information or kept informed	2	Not upheld
Social worker requested GP to change medication	1	Not upheld
Child protection category changed outside of meeting	1	Upheld
Not happy about change of Social Worker, positive relationship	1	Partly upheld
Supervision of contact arrangements	1	Not upheld
Child not accommodated when asked for	1	Not upheld
CAF Meetings, (Split between parents, technology) COVID-19	1	Not upheld
Number of allocated social workers for the duration	1	Partly upheld
Statutory visits were late	1	Upheld
Completed two financial assessment forms	1	Not upheld
Home visit arranged only gave 24 hours' notice	1	Not upheld
Foster care provision for the children	1	Not upheld
Time of day Social Worker sent email (evening/early morning)	1	Partly upheld
Staff not maintaining social distancing, wearing PPE correctly	1	Not upheld
Social worker lied, gave different advice	1	Not upheld
Quality of Assessment – not representing the child's voice	1	Upheld
Felt being accused of breaking lockdown rules	1	Not upheld
Child is to be put up for adoption and that family members have not been assessed (understanding/communication)	1	Not upheld

## 7.8 The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO)

Halton received 4 enquiries from the LGSCO in relation to complaints in this financial year. 1 did not progress to investigation, the other 3 did.



**Case 1** - the Council did not respond to the complaint because we were unable to establish that the complaint made in his name, was actually made by him, the complaint letter was not signed. When a social worker visited to ask him to sign a complaint letter, he declined. Investigating a complaint requires the Council to process personal information and consent is required. The LGSCO found that the Council was right to make sure he made the complaint before responding and therefore found no fault by the Council.

**Case 2** – The LGSCO found that the Council did not clearly explain the section 47 enquiry process or explain why it changed its supervision arrangements for Mrs X’s daughter. The complainant was clear that she wanted one single response to her issues which also involved Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Halton Clinical Commissioning Group’s. This led to the LGSCO also criticising the complaint handling across all organisations. A number of other issues were also investigated for which no fault was found.

**Case 3** – The LGSCO found the council was at fault when it wrongly told her husband that he could not return home. The Council also failed to explain the purpose of Child in Need meetings and delayed providing her with a document after repeated requests. Again a number of other issues were investigated for which no fault was found. The LGSCO again also criticised the complaint handling, this complaint was received as the first lockdown commenced and so pressures on the service at that time did impact on this.

## 7.9 Actions taken and learnings

As the table above (7.7) shows, a number of customers raised complaints when they could not get in touch with their allocated social worker immediately or directly. This was a similar theme in the previous years, there is an expectation that Social Workers will be there to provide an immediate response. Social workers are working with a number of other families so when they are out of the office or due to COVID-19 in telephone conferences they are not available to take calls or respond to messages, they cannot provide instant responses. Of the 17 complaints made only 3 were found upheld in failing to provide a timely response.

The LGSCO complaint investigations identifies actions for the Council in order to improve service delivery. In Case 2, the LGSCO found that the Council did not clearly explain the Section 47 enquiry process and in Case 3 the Council failed to explain the purpose of Child in Need meetings. The LGSCO in their analysis identified that as the Social Worker did not record the exact infinite detail of what their conversation entailed at the time, the conversation therefore did not occur, whilst investigating it internally at Stage 1, the Social Worker provided a statement confirming this however, this was

discounted, they found that on the balance of probabilities, as the complainant raised the issue as a complaint they must not have been informed.

As a result of this, the Assessment Pack given to families at the beginning of their involvement has been reviewed to capture this information, it explains the processes and types of questions asked during the assessment, and this will ensure that families are consistently given the same information at the onset. It also captures some other themes raised in complaints such as the availability of staff when ringing and leaving messages so that they can understand why they may not get an immediate response as well as a section on 'frequently asked questions'.

Children may wish to someday access their records and so what a Social Worker records is important, their file can in effect become their autobiography. The Case Recording Policy has been updated and relaunched to emphasise the importance of accurate case recording.

In terms of criticising the complaint handling, in Case 2, the Council was criticised for engaging the statutory process when it was a Section 47 enquiry citing that corporate procedures were applicable. It was perhaps a little frustrating that shortly after this complaint concluded the LGSCO published a focus report in which it stated '*We expect councils to assess each complaint on its own merits. We would not criticise a council for deciding to investigate these matters under the statutory complaint procedure*'. There were other issues however, how the cross boundary complaint was handled, we are in the process of agreeing a protocol with Health partners should any arise in the future. In order to address Managers understanding of the process the LGSCO requested that their focus reports be shared with Social Care Managers to aid their understanding of the process.

Learning from complaints is discussed by investigating managers with both individuals (where appropriate) and their teams and is also shared with the relevant service area by heads of service. The Children Services Department have recently reviewed and updated their Quality Assurance framework ensuring a formal route for the reporting of complaint outcomes and themes so that where necessary they can be mapped and addressed through staff training, supervision and practice/policy development.

The Principal Policy Officer will continue to work proactively alongside managers making enquiries and challenging findings in order to help catch issues quickly and resolve dissatisfaction locally to prevent unnecessary escalation.

## 7.10 Complaints Training and Procedures

No training sessions took place in this financial year in part due to COVID-19 and in order not to place additional stress on front line services. Training did occur for the new Duty and Assessment Team as part of their induction which has also occurred for some other staff new to the Council.

## 8. Compliments

A separate report is compiled that records all the positive comments received and so this is a snapshot. The number of compliments and positive feedback has increased this year with a number of them making reference to the support provided during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown periods.

Year	Total
17-18	80
18-19	101
19-20	67
20-21	92

Staff are reminded of the importance to report compliments, it can be helpful feedback giving a flavour of what works well and what support families value. Staff also benefit, knowing that they are valued is powerful in motivating and enhancing their performance.

It is important to remember that all the Divisions, Team around the Family, Children in Need, Children in Care and the Safeguarding Unit work together to support families. As an example, a child on a Child Protection Plan could be open to the Child in Need Division and the Safeguarding Unit.

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
<b>CIN</b>	33%	31%	25%	44%
<b>CIC</b>	14%	14%	42%	14%
<b>TAF</b>	53%	55%	33%	42%

Email - She came into our lives after malicious allegations from their father, but I am thankful for this, if he had not I would never of met her. That women is like an Angel to me and my children. Upon meeting her I realise I was a broken women without her I am not sure if I would of woken up and realised this, by being strong, caring and mainly amazing at her job this woman made me see not just my sense, but my worth! And that is something I cannot thank her enough for. My children are happy, I am happy and I believe that is all down to her, without her I would still be plodding through life whereas now, I am waiting to start my diploma in Law at university and my driving lessons and be the person I always wanted to be. There were times I cried, times I laughed. I was always worried about the stigma around social services, now I realise without people like her doing the hard job she does there would be a lot more people walking around sad, unhappy and abused. This woman needs to be recognised in my eyes as a hero, as saving me is what she has done. She was strong and always told me straight, some things are hard to hear but I know this was her pushing me to be the real me, better me. When she closed our case I cried because of the impact she has had on our lives, she is a truly a special woman and I could not of asked for a social worker to come in my life that knows her job, knows herself, knows when to pass a tissue and cleaning tips and turn someone's life around. Thank you so much, an email doesn't feel enough but I couldn't get it out through crying last time we met, I hope you get the recognition you deserve, what might seem so little to some, means so much to others. Thank you (Client)

Verbal - Thank you for everything you have done, we know it hasn't been easy, and I know we have had our ups and our downs, I really appreciate everything you have done for my kids. (Client)

Email - Inglefields: Shut doors due to coronavirus epidemic but have kept in regular contact via phone and email. Am extremely grateful for the care and consideration they show not just to my son but my whole family. And yes even for the hugely helpful tips and links sent via email. (Client)

Email - A big thank you to you both for listening to me the other day. As an intensive care front line worker, working extra shifts, life has become extremely stressful. (Client)

Text - Feeling super proud of our little family this week, things are looking so positive. She had physio yesterday and her professionals are made up with her progress. We had a lovely present of our amazing play partner, the health nurse has nominated us for a Christmas hamper as well. We feel super lucky, and so supported today. We're a very luck little family x (Client)

Letter - I would like to appreciate them for the support I received. The kids and I want to say thank you, in a short time we have known you, you have helped us with lots of problems. You have offered good support for my family. She will always explain things to me, so I fully understand what was happening. She offered advice and support that benefited me and my family. Thank you so much, god bless you. (Client)

Letter - Thank you for all you have done for my family. I feel like I've grown in confidence as a person with your help and support. I very much appreciate all the support you have given us over the past year. Me and the kids will miss you. Thanks again. (Client)

Email - Just wanted to pass on some comments made about how his involvement and hard work has made some positive differences to a family who are now in position to close to Children Social Care. We completed our last home visit to Y and his mother last night. The case has moved from very complex with some very concerning behaviours presented by Y to one that is now allowing us to confidently recommend closure. During our visit we talked about how things have been in the past compared to how the family think they are now and mum was very complimentary to the help and support she has received from him. She said she felt they would not be in the position they are now if it wasn't for his support and advice. (Professional)

Email - I just wanted to pay a massive compliment to him on the work he has completed on my case. The feedback from the father was that he was able to point out useful strategies that made him think twice about his behaviour and understand issues from his past he hadn't previously addressed. The father said he found him relatable and the work completed has stuck in his mind which he was able to relay in my risk assessment of him. A complex case so well done. (Professional)