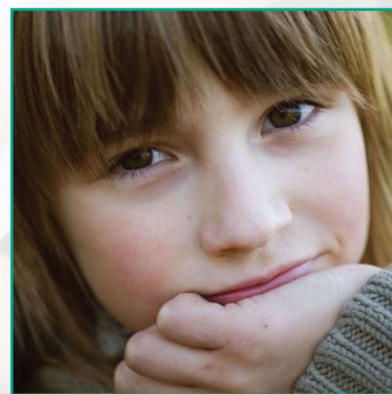
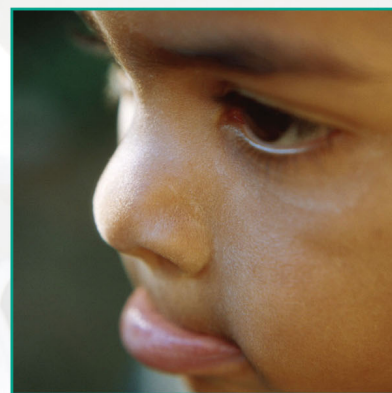
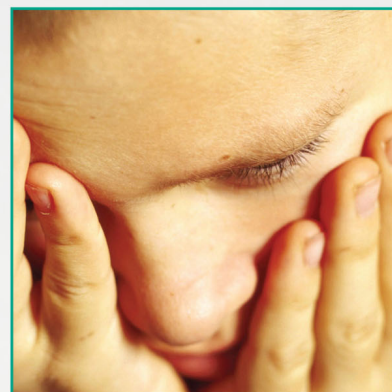


# Annual Complaints Report

## Children's Services

April 2016 - March 2017



West Berkshire  
C O U N C I L

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# **Children's Services Annual Report Complaints 2016/17**

## ***1) Statutory functions fulfilled by the complaints reports***

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the complaints which have been received by West Berkshire's Children's Services during the financial year 2016/17.

The majority of complaints processed by Children's Services within West Berkshire are undertaken using the framework set out within the Children Act (1989). This framework consists of 3 sequential stages: -

- ❖ Stage 1: Local Resolution
- ❖ Stage 2: Independent Investigation
- ❖ Stage 3: Review Panel

In addition to the Children Act complaints, a small number of complaints are processed using the Corporate Complaints framework. This is a 2 Stage process and is used when the concerns being complained about relate not to a child, but to an interaction between an adult and the Local Authority. This process consists of:

- ❖ Stage 1: Local Resolution
- ❖ Stage 2: Investigation by a Senior Manager from an unrelated service within the Council

Where it has not been possible to resolve a dispute using either of the processes outlined above, the complainant will be directed to the Local Government Ombudsman.

A copy of the Annual Complaints Report is published on the Council's website each year. This is in-line with the statutory requirement set out in the Children Act.

## **Complaints figures and statistical analysis 2016/17**

### ***2) The volume of complaints received 2016/17***

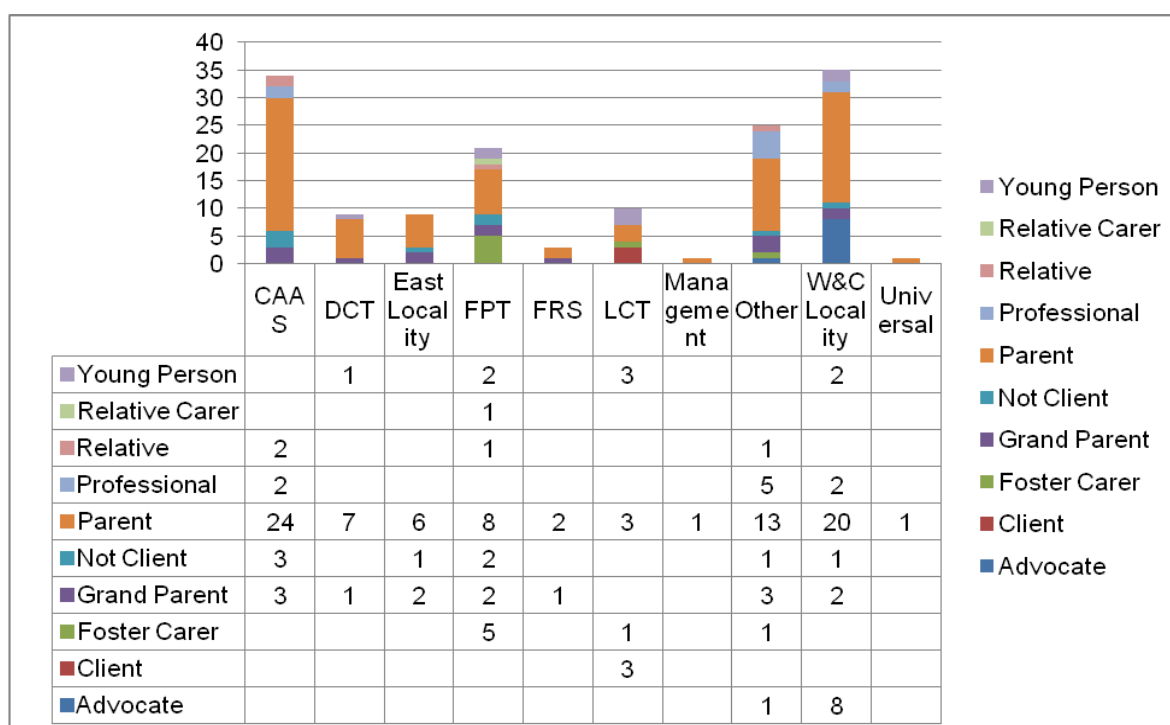
During the financial year 2016/17 **148** complaints were received by Children's Services. This shows an increase on the number of complaints received in 2015/16 when 110 complaints were received. During 2015/16 and 2016/17 there have been significant changes to the way in which the provision of services has been undertaken by Children's Services. The increase in the number of complaints appears to correlate with the way in which the number of contacts with Children's Services is now counted/recorded.

### ***3) Who has made complaints***

Of the **148** complaints received **125** were processed using the Children's Services Statutory process, **20** were processed using the Corporate Complaints process and **3** were processed using an alternative complaints resolution process.

- ❖ As in previous years the majority of the complaints received by Children's Services were made by parents (**57%**).
- ❖ A further **13%** of complaints were received from either a grandparent or other relatives without parental responsibility.
- ❖ **5%** of the complaints that were received were made by young people.
- ❖ **5%** of the complaints received were from Foster Carers
- ❖ A further **6%** of complaints were received from advocates working on behalf of an adult. (However, this figure should be treated with caution as 8 out of the 9 complaints received were from a single advocate who was unwilling to accept a decision that had been made by the Court, and who was made subject to the persistent and unreasonable complainants process.)
- ❖ **6%** of complaints were made by professionals (for example by a school or Local MP)
- ❖ The final **5%** of complaints were received from people who were not receiving a service from Children's Services. These complainants were directed to the appropriate services or agency.

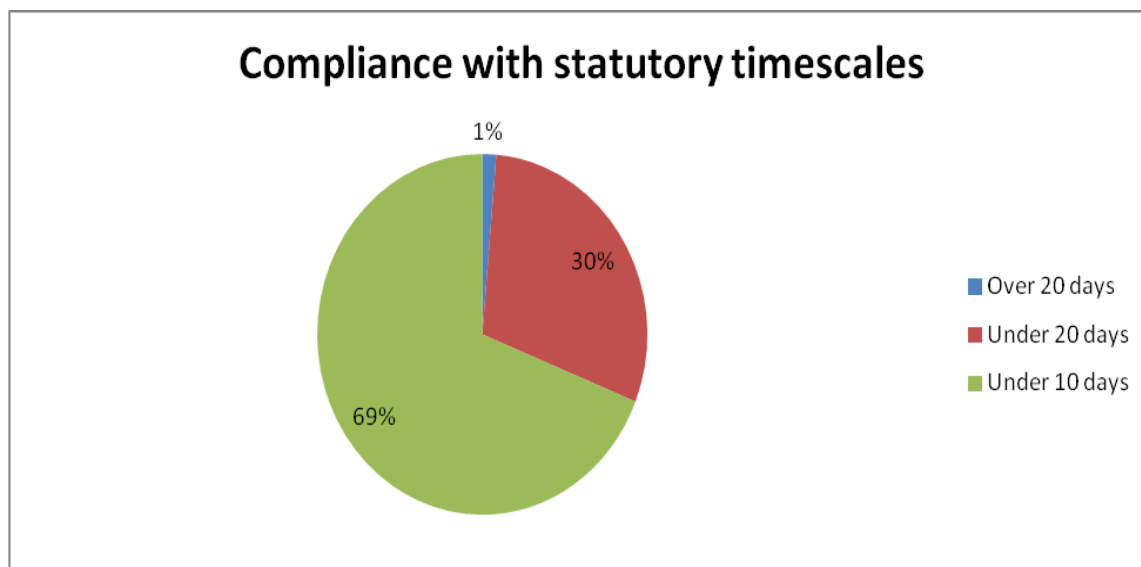
The graph below provides a breakdown of which team received complaints from whom:



The structure/teams have now changed. This will be reflected in the 2017/18 report. QAAS will also be added to the complaints analysis at this time.

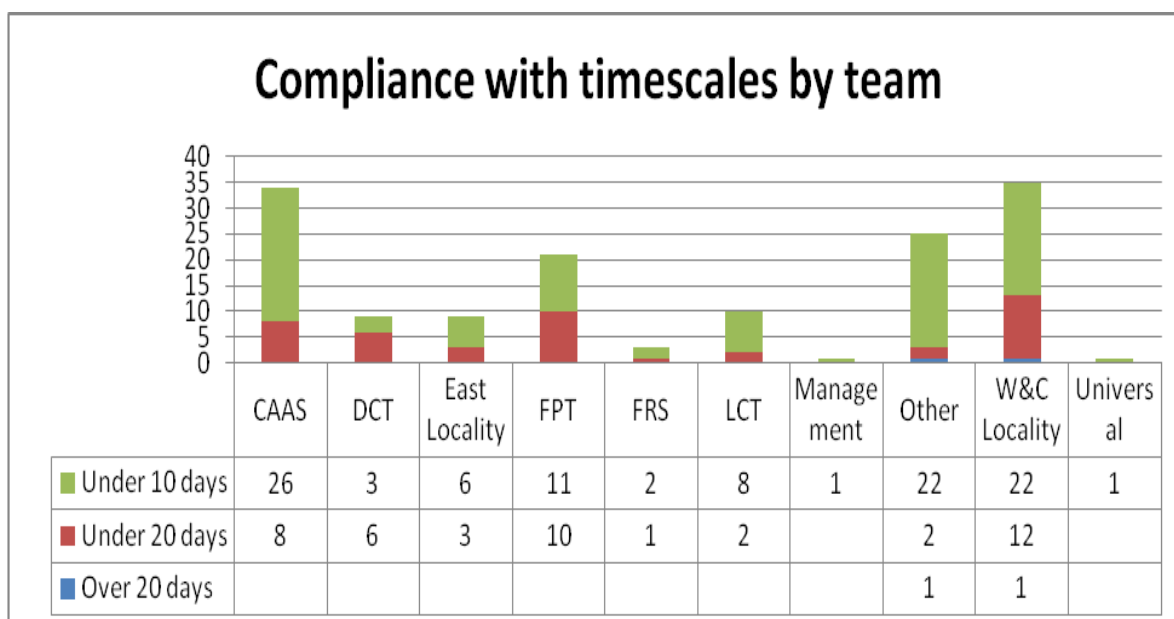
#### 4) Compliance with statutory time scales

Compliance with statutory timescales has remained high with 99% of all complaints being responded to within the allowable 20 working day statutory timescale. 69% of all complaints were responded to within 10 working days. 2 Children's Services complaints responses fell outside the allowable 20 working day timescales during 2016/17. The learning associated with this indicates that we need greater managerial oversight of the timescales associated with the analysis and issuing of complaints findings in a timely way.



As can be seen from the graph below, which shows compliance with timescales by team, all but one team, respond to the majority of the complaints they receive within the 10 working day period.

Where the allowable extended time scale of 20 working days has been used, a consideration of the complaints records shows that the complaints being responded to were complex and required the additional 10 working days to allow for a full investigation to be carried out.



## **5) Complaints from young people**

**8** Complaints were received from young people during 2016/17. This equates to **5%** of the complaints received during 2016/17 and is twice the number of complaints received from young people during 2015/16.

This increase in complaints from young people is encouraging, as it has been recognised nationally that the number of complaints from young people is consistently low. Enabling complaints from young people is an important mechanism for ensuring the experience of children and young people informs our service design and delivery. An increase in complaints from young people suggests that the concerns of individual young people are becoming more visible, which will in turn help to promote opportunities for learning.

The highest number of complaints from young people were received by the Leaving Care Team who received **3** complaints. This team works with young people from around the age of **15 ½** to **18** who are preparing to live independently. Making use of the complaints process enables young people to understand that they can have an impact on the service which they receive and that the points they raise will be taken into consideration.

Those young people who are struggling with the adjustment to independent living need a different type of support to enable them to use their own skills and abilities. The Leaving Care Team's strategic investment in restorative practice is designed to encourage young people to build upon their strengths and assets, engaging with the complaints process helps to support young people to develop the skills they will need for independent living.

The Family Placement Team and West & Central received **2** complaints each from young people and The Disabled Children's Team received **1** complaint. These complaints reflect a similar pattern to those complaints received by the Leaving Care Team.

## **6) Complaints from Adults**

As in previous years the majority of the complaints received by Children's Services were made by parents (**57%**).

A further **13%** of complaints were received from either a grandparent or other relatives without parental responsibility. A further **5%** of complaints received during 2016/17 were made by Foster Carers.

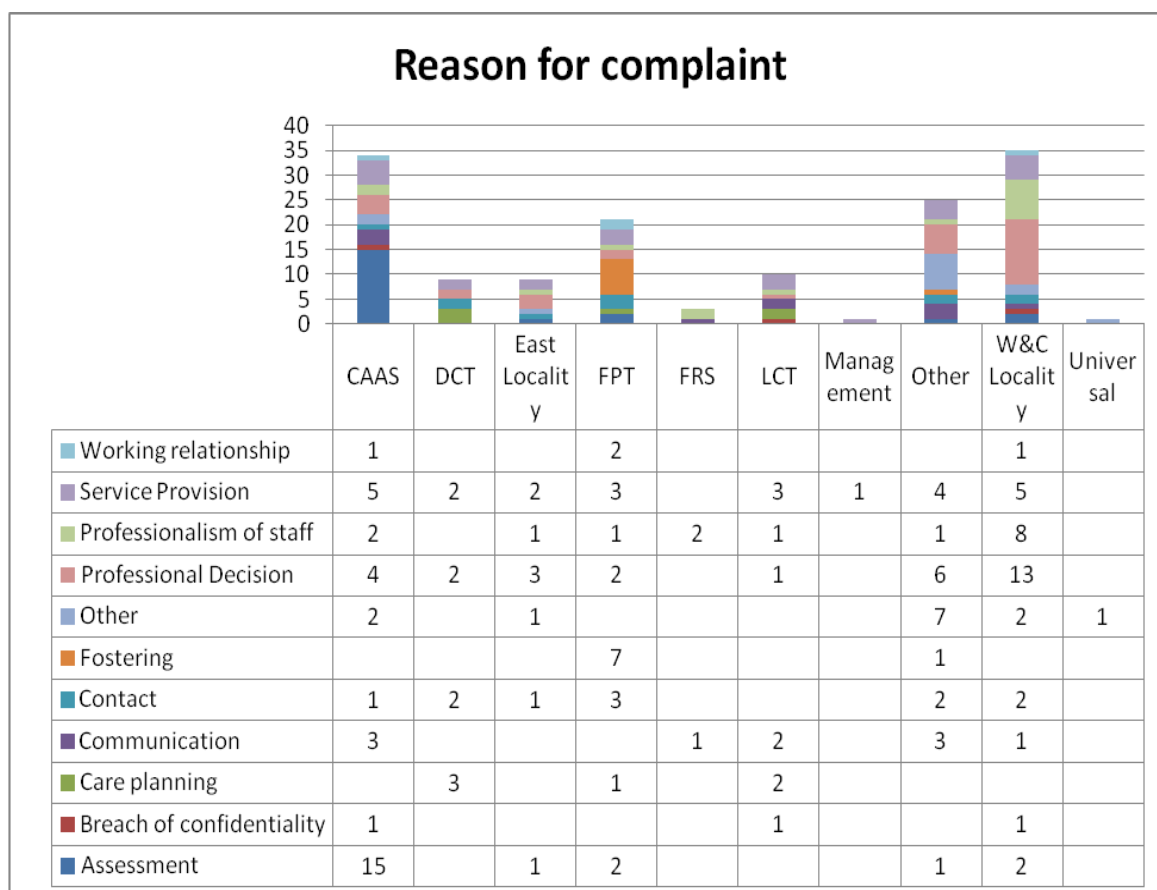
This is a higher rate of complaints than in previous years, possibly because work around how to make complaints, as well as the learning opportunities which complaints and representations offer to the service, has been undertaken with both existing and potential Foster Carers by the Service Manager for the newly formed Children In Care Team and the Complaints Manager.

A further **6%** of complaints were received from friends/supporters/advocates working on behalf of an adult. However, this figure should be treated with caution as 8 out of the 9 complaints received were from a single advocate who was unwilling to accept a decision which had been made by the Court.

**6%** of complaints were made by professionals (for example by a school or Local MP)

The final **5%** of complaints were received from people who were not receiving a service from Children's Services. These complainants were directed to the appropriate services or agency.

## 7) What did people complain about



The most common reason for complaints during 2016/17 was around professional decisions. **39%** of complaints received fall within this category. The case recording which sits behind these figures demonstrates that complainants tend to identify differences in the way in which information is perceived as poor professional decision making, particularly where a significant difference of perspective exists between family members. This is particularly apparent where there has been an acrimonious relationship breakdown and each parent feels that they are being unfairly treated.

The second largest category of complaint is that of Service Provision, (**30%**) although shown separately on the graph above the **18%** of complaints which are identified by complainants as being about poor communication, can reasonably be linked to those complaints made in respect of service provision. This is also true for the categories shown above as relating to the professionalism of staff and working relationship.

The workforce development work is associated with investment in restorative practice training which has been intentionally designed to respond to the learning in this area, to support social work colleagues and wider members of the workforce with how they engage

with families and manage their working relationship, including specific support with managing difficult conversations via high challenge and high support.

The remaining **22%** of complaints relate to the following issues

- ❖ contact,
- ❖ fostering
- ❖ other
- ❖ signposting

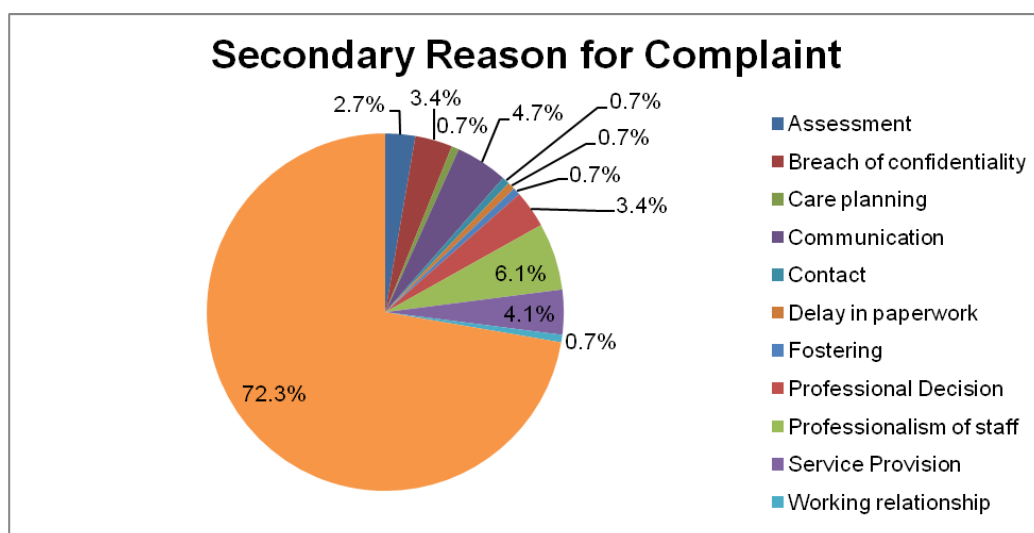
## 8) *Consideration of reason for complaint by team*

The graph above demonstrates that the breakdown of reason for complaint by team is reflective of the service which these teams provide. As would be expected the greatest number of complaints in relation to the Single Assessment are received by the Contact Advice and Assessment Service, which receives all incoming referrals and therefore, is the service that carries out the majority of Single assessments undertaken by West Berkshire.

It should be noted that the number of complaints in relation to professional decisions concerning the West & Central Locality Team, should be considered to be unrepresentative as this figure includes 8 complaints made by the same person about a decision which had been made during Legal Proceedings.

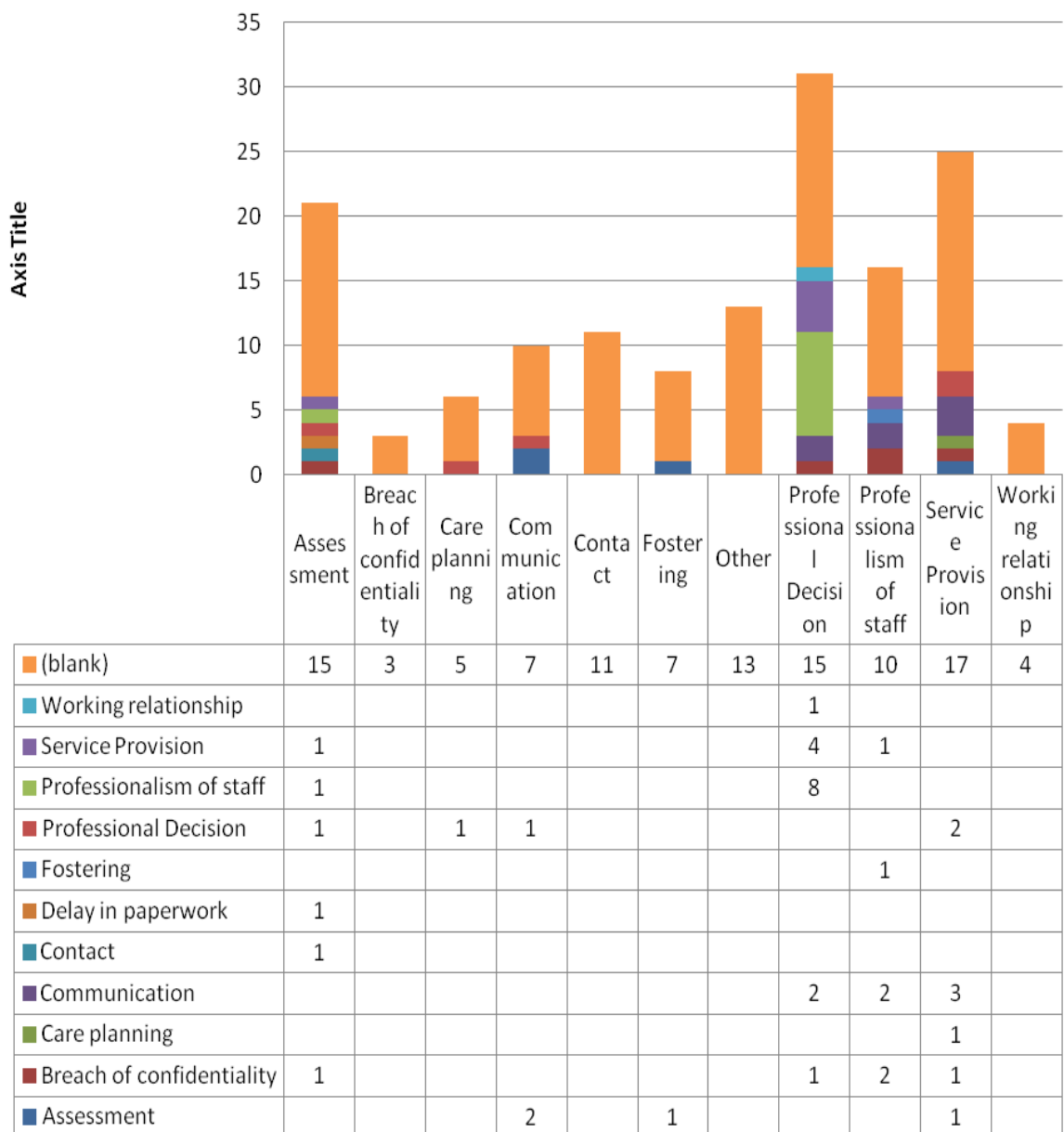
## Secondary and Tertiary reasons for complaints

As shown on the chart below **28%** of complainants wished to complain about more than one aspect of the service they had received. Where this is the case it appears that the concerns being raised tend to fall into identifiable groups, for example, professional decisions, professionalism of staff and working relationship, or assessment, professionalism of staff and communication..



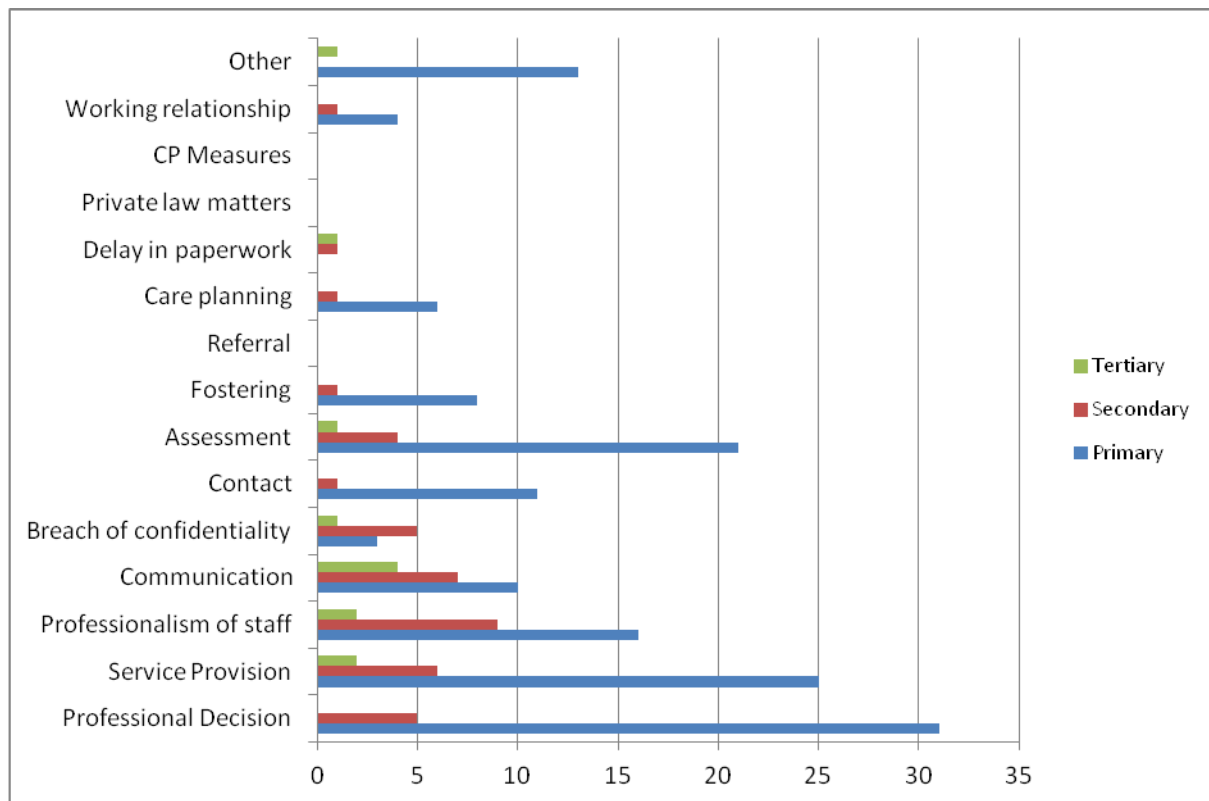
The following two graphs; 'Primary and Secondary reasons for Complaints' and 'Primary, Secondary and Tertiary reasons for complaints' give a fuller picture of the complexity of the complaints which are being made.

## Primary and Secondary reasons for complaints



In the graph above the row entitled 'blank' refers to complaints which relate to a single issue or matter, and are therefore not specified for the purposes of this analysis.

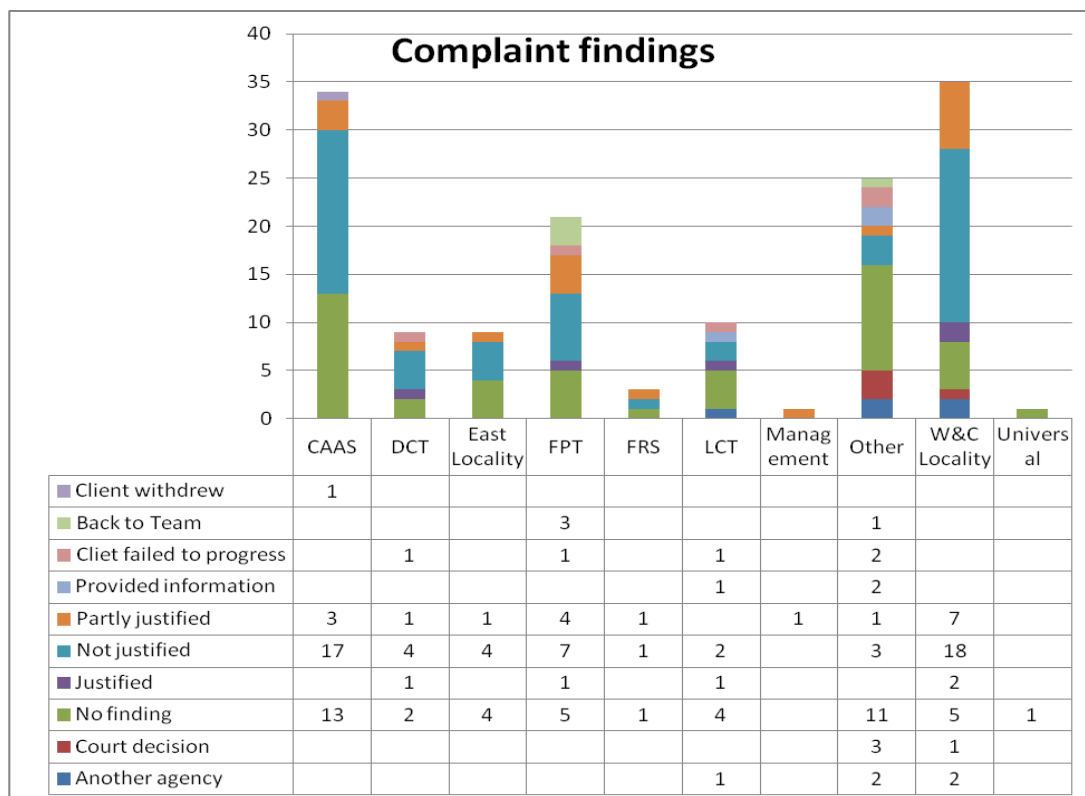
## Primary, Secondary and Tertiary reasons for complaint



## What have we learnt

Families can often find the process of single assessment challenging and the expectations around the process, the development of the 'What to Expect' information for families directly responds to this area of learning and is intended to improve communication between Children's Services and families. This series was designed in partnership with families, to ensure it was clear, transparent and accessible.

## 9) Complaint findings/Outcomes



In summary:

- ❖ **3%** of the complaints received in 2016/17 were upheld
- ❖ **12%** of complaints were partially upheld
- ❖ **38%** of the complaints received in 2016/17 were not upheld.

Of the remaining complaints:

- ❖ In **5%** of cases the complainant either withdrew their complaint or did not progress their concerns
- ❖ **8%** of the concerns raised resulted in a complainant being directed back to the social work team or to another agency, or being provided with information.

In addition, in **31%** of cases no finding was made; and this related to situations in which families were not looking for a complaint outcome to be upheld, but rather to receive an explanation in relation to an unresolved query. So for example in some cases, a complainant had their comments and views on the content of an assessment or report added to the electronic record, whilst in another case, Children's Services processes and legislation were discussed more fully with the complainant who was then satisfied that due process had been correctly followed

This flexibility in our complaints process, to work with our families and complainants, to seek to understand their experience, perspective and concerns is an important feature of our local approach and helps inform our learning culture as an organisation. This learning has directly informed our 'What To Expect' series.

**10) Complaints progressed beyond Stage 1 of the complaints process, referred to an alternative supervisory body or via an alternative resolution process- 2016/17**

Complainant/Family	Process	Outcome	Date of Complaint	Date of decision
Family 1	Stage 2 Children's Services	Not Upheld	03/05/2016	15/02/16
Family 1	LGO	Not Upheld	03/05/2016	22/09/16
Family 2	YOT Complaint	Partially Upheld	16/06/16	16/06/16
Family 2	Stage 2 Children's Services	Partially Upheld	09/09/16	21/11/16
Family 3	Stage 2 Corporate	Partially Upheld	22/07/2016	17/6/2016
Family 3	LGO	Awaiting LGO finding	08/11/2016	With the LGO for consideration
	HCPC	Yet to establish if there are any concerns to investigate	30/01/2017	No decision to date
Family 4	Stage 2 Corporate	Not Upheld	20/09/2016	11/10/2016
Family 5	Stage 2 Corporate	Not Upheld	17/11/2016	07/12/2016
Family 6	Alternative Resolution	Partially Upheld	03/01/2017	08/05/2017
Family 7	Joint Alternative Resolution	Not Upheld	18/01/2017	To be sent out following GCSE examination period 2017
Family 8	Alternative Resolution	Information provided	06/12/2016	On-going
Family 9	Stage 2 Corporate	Partially Upheld	06/12/16	06/1/17

**11) Good practice to promote**

A fundamental aim of the complaints process is to bring about the early resolution of a dispute whenever possible. As noted above very few complaints are escalated beyond Stage 1 of the process. The following are examples of the good practice undertaken in relation to the resolution of complaints which have taken place during 2016/17.

Following a written response to a Stage 1 complaint Mr. and Mrs. X remained unhappy and asked for information about how to escalate their complaint. Mr. and Mrs. X were West Berkshire Foster Carers who had made a complaint about the impact which some of the wording within their former foster child's Looked After Child Review had had on their own children. This wording gave the views of the foster child and as such the Local Authority had a duty to represent this information. It was suggested to Mr. and Mrs. X that instead of moving to Stage 2 immediately it might be helpful to take part in a restorative meeting with the Service Manager and Social Worker to explore in more detail how a resolution could be achieved. Mr. and Mrs. X were reassured that this meeting would not prevent them from escalation their concerns should they remain unhappy following the meeting.

During the meeting, it was possible to discuss why the disputed information had been included in the report and how the inclusion of the information could have been achieved in a way which recognised more fully the impact which the information might have on members of the foster family. It was agreed that the Social Worker would write to the foster carer's children and explain why the information had been included, apologise for any upset and provide them with a copy of the new text.

This restorative meeting allowed workers to reflect on the wider impact which assessments and reports might have on those people who are supporting a child.

## **12) Examples of Organisation Learning Activity**

***Learning Area 1 –Many Families who are referred to Children's Services are coming in to contact with Children's Services for the first time. They can often find the process of Single Assessment challenging and can be unfamiliar with the expectations around the process.***

What we have done - the development of the 'What to Expect' information for families directly responds to this area of learning and is intended to improve communication between Children's Services and families. This series was designed in partnership with families, to ensure it was clear, transparent and accessible.

***Learning Area 2 - To consider how Children's Services should respond to requests for Carers Assessment and establish what responsibilities Children's Services have***

What we have done – Children's Services have worked closely with colleagues in Adult Services and the recently appointed Transition Manager to establish what the Children's Services responsibilities are in respect of Carer's Assessments and what information is being given to parent carers of children under the age of 18. Adult Services have advised about the revised duties under the Care Act.

***Learning Area 3 - Families can be upset by the need for the open and honest sharing of information which is relevant to ensuring the safety and safeguarding of their children. In a number of cases family members have questioned why certain information has been shared.***

What we have done – In response to these complaints a specific learning review discussion has been carried out to reflect on best practice. These discussions have involved Social Work teams and managers and have been undertaken in conjunction with colleagues

specialising in Information Security and Data Protection, so helping to ensure that the information included in reports is proportionate and appropriate.

***Learning Area 4 – Managing professional boundaries – for example, ‘I know someone you are working with’***

What we have done – Complaints of this nature identified the need for additional training and the development of a specific poster reminding Council officers of the need to maintain professional boundaries at all times. This poster has subsequently been included in the training information provided to foster carers. See appendix 2 ‘Living and working locally poster’

**Learning 5 – Making use of Restorative Practice**

Positive results can be seen where a restorative practice approach has been used to encourage young people to engage with the services in order to achieve a resolution of their complaints. This can be seen to encourage young people to build upon their strengths and assets, in a supportive process which helps to prepare young people to deal effectively with the challenges they might face once they reach adulthood.

Since the appointment of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) the Complaints Manager and PSW have been working closely together to reflect on the learning from complaints and how this can be used to inform better practice. Similarly, the appointment of a transition worker in Adult Services has allowed greater interaction between Children's and Adults Services particularly for those young people who are unlikely to meet the threshold for adult services.

# Compliments 2016-2017

## ***Compliments received by the East Locality Team***

Compliments from young people and family members

- ❖ I was stuck in an abusive relationship and felt I had no way out. I initially did not want to work with social services. However, I realised that they were not against me and they reassured me that they wanted to help. I went to an amazing foster family where I learnt how to cook healthy meals and look after C. I worked with the Social Worker, FRS, A2 Dominion, The Children's Centre, IRO and Foster Carers. They have all been brilliant! I now feel safe and C is happier, she can now walk and lives in a safe family. I am a completely different person. It has been a bumpy road, a long journey that has helped change us both'.
- ❖ I can't describe how much I appreciate your help.
- ❖ Mum thanked me for how I worked with her and the children for being 'non-judgemental' and making her time with the children at contact positive.

## ***Compliments received by the West and Central Team***

Compliments from young people and family members

- ❖ Thank you. Those first few months of having ...was the hardest few months ever and I wanted to give up, but with your help and support, we made it. I couldn't have done it without your support. You were amazing. I will be forever grateful.
- ❖ The social worker has persisted in seeking the truth and safeguarding S, and today S's mother and grandmother both expressed that they could not thank the Social Worker enough for his persistence and how grateful they both were for the work he had undertaken with them.
- ❖ Can I just note how positive E and his family are regarding your work with them. They have expressed a lot of gratitude and praise and have been very complimentary regarding your input with the family.
- ❖ T is good, I can talk to him, he is helping us a lot and has helped me not get into trouble anymore.
- ❖ Things are good, I'm sad I can't go home, but I can talk to ... I am enjoying my drama group and am now a purple belt at in martial arts. School is quite good,

## ***Compliments received from professionals***

- ❖ The Social Worker received positive comments from both the Judge and B's mother. They commented on how easy the social worker had been to work with and the quality of intervention she has provided.

### ***Compliments received by the Children in Care Team***

#### *Compliments from young people and family members*

- ❖ In a LAC review, S's family spoke of F "flying the flag for social workers", F was described as being child focused and having S's best interests as the focus of her work.
- ❖ F carries her glitter bag which has various tools in too communicate with children; both children have said they enjoy seeing her.

#### *Compliments received from professionals*

- ❖ I just wanted to congratulate the Social Worker on some of the work I have observed. I am so pleased the children have a Social Worker who is going to spend time with them and hear what they have to say.
- ❖ I just wanted to say how lovely it was to see L yesterday not only surviving but thriving. He looked so well and happy...the difference in him in just one month is remarkable. Once again thank you to you all I can now rest assured knowing he is happy.
- ❖ ... received a commendation from the judge who was presiding over an application for a Care Order...The Judge congratulated this authority on the good social work practice evident throughout these proceedings.

### ***Compliments received by the Contact Advice and Assessment Service***

#### *Compliments from young people and family members*

- ❖ ...Parents said you were very professional and sympathetic and spoke very highly of you, saying you were lovely.

#### *Compliments received from professionals*

- ❖ ...Thank you and your team for supporting me over the past year. I am constantly impressed with the level of support and understanding that I receive whenever I need to call the CAAS team. My role as Student Manager at the ... School can often be stressful and emotionally demanding when I am at the point of having to make a call in to your team, but knowing that I am always met with such professionalism and empathy makes the experience a lot less daunting than it could be. I look forward to working with you next year!

- ❖ Dr P wanted to feedback that the service and communication from EDS and CAAS was excellent. At all times she knew what the situation was, the status and what decisions were being made. She further stated that decisions were all made in consultation making the above case a positive example of good practice.
- ❖ ... is also great and is trying to get the right residential assessment placement for K.

### **Compliments received by Family Placement Team**

*Compliments received from young people and family members*

- ❖ P gives us good guidance and is always there when needed.
- ❖ *It's nice to feel so supported.*
- ❖ Thank you for all your support with him over Christmas

### **Compliments received by the Looked After Children's Team**

*Compliments from young people and family members*

- ❖ Rate the Leaving Care Team between 1 – 10.  
1 = poor - 10 = excellent

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

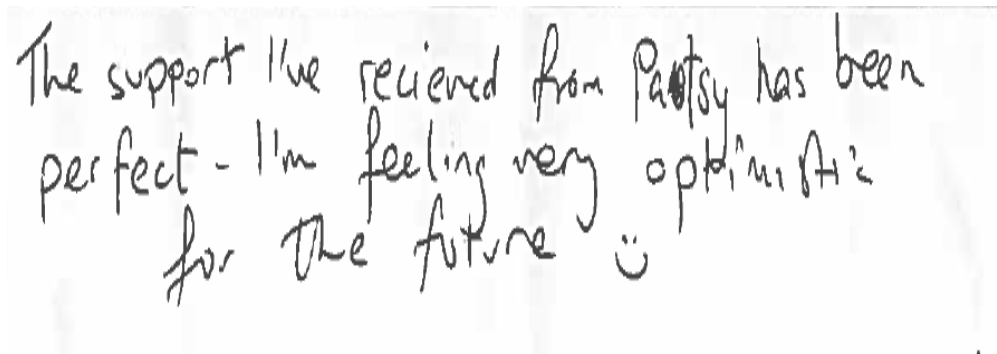
Why did you choose that score?

*because Nathan has helped me more than any  
of my previous social workers*

- ❖ You have given me my dream. I have confidence because of the help I have had. I won't give up
- ❖ ...has been very helpful to me and helped a lot since I moved from Bramlings.
- ❖ I know I can talk to my SW about anything.
- ❖ ...has been good support

- ❖ Very help when needed always there when needed.
- ❖ thank you to L for being a lovely SW
- ❖ thank you to S for support with housing
- ❖ thank you to S for support to hospital
- ❖ thank you to P and S for support this year
- ❖ thank you to A and everyone for helping me settle in the UK.
- ❖ ...K is the best SW
- ❖ ...K is the best Social Worker as she doesn't take things personally. K has done more for me in 1 month than any other Social Worker

❖



#### Compliments received from professionals

- ❖ Can I just take this moment to praise your lovely team especially K, P and H, they all work so hard and are so passionate they are all a joy to work with, I think we all work together as a great team to support the Young People we look after. And not forgetting N, what an amazing worker he is. He always is so helpful and supportive, I know if I ask him anything he will get back to me and he has an incredible relationship with all of the young people. Also S of course she is wonderful, but you know that anyway.

#### ***Compliments received by Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service***

##### *Compliments from young people and family members*

- ❖ Many thanks for a very good review. Fair and well handled. We appreciate it.

##### *Compliments received from professionals*

- ❖ ... chaired this one and she really is just the best - she won't let anyone get in the way of the right path forward...
- ❖ I have attended various meetings chaired by ... since January 2016 and I just wanted to say how meticulous she is about considering very significant and important details in all the reports she has to listen to. She states the situation very fairly and squarely but always makes sure that the families involved understand important implications and consequences connected with the action plans and the various reports. She is very supportive but firm and never lets essential details escape her notice.

#### **Compliments received from Independent Reviewing Officers and Independent Child Protection Chairs**

- ❖ What a delight it has been working with L. This has been a difficult case and hard for everyone involved. L was very diplomatic and remained positive through yet another difficult lengthy core group, she kept the meeting and adults concerned contained which was not an easy task.
- ❖ ...has nothing but positive things to say about her current SW. I asked her to reflect on what J does differently than previous workers. She said that she feels more like a friend. She provides advice and support, but she doesn't make her feel bad about herself. J has also had a really positive impact on her children and she has gone to great lengths to reassure them that they are not about to be removed from their home etc. She describes her as a lovely person despite not generally liking 'you guys'.
- ❖ F had clearly spent time with S, this was evident in her presentation of the child and talking about S's needs during the meeting.
- ❖ The social worker encouraged L to attend both her LAC and PEP meetings. For the first time ever L was able to attend the whole of both of these meetings. She was able to talk about what she wanted and to give her views on her life and what was happening... although L has previously said what she wants, this time she was relaxed during the meeting, I believe this was down to the Social Worker spending time with her before the meeting so that L was well prepared.
- ❖ M has at all stages of the recent difficulties worked in a collaborative and inclusive manner. M has sought to keep me and the TAC updated on the significant events for P and ensured we all had an opportunity to work in a supportive manner for P.
- ❖ M has in my opinion managed a very difficult child in crisis and has gone over and beyond to maintain a positive working relationship with P even when he has been verbally aggressive and threatening in his presentation.
- ❖ S supported T to attend his whole meeting and advocated on his behalf which enabled him then to say what he wanted. T was involved in the decision he made about family contact
- ❖ T struggles in crowds and meetings however yesterday he was amazing and that was down to the support he had from his social worker.
- ❖ Excellent practice by P; further to LAC review for C. P carried out the tasks agreed in the last care plan linking C's MGM with a foster carer's support group in their area and liaising with

the local FPT which will give access to training events in Essex. I was also impressed that he had sought to secure funding to allow these arrangements to be put in place.

- ❖ ...complimented K on her commitment to YP
- ❖ I have been the IRO since E was accommodated and whilst I have seen many examples of good practice I need to highlight this case as in my view the work that has taken place with E and on behalf of E is outstanding, and there is clear evidence of positive impact. When I first met E she was trapped in a fantasy world ... Yesterday E was confident made direct eye contact and was able to tell me very confidently that she did not want to attend her review as it was boring. These are E's views:
- ❖ I want to share with you as S's IRO that I have been impressed by ... practice and her knowledge of S and commitment to supporting him, promoting his overall needs and her motivation to ensure that his best interests are well served.
- ❖ When asked to score how she was feeling- 1 being get me out of here and 10 being I don't need anything else, E said 9½ because I would still like to go home, otherwise everything is perfect - I think this has been achieved not only by the commitment of all involved, but by a very well thought out plan and effective joint working.

***Compliments received by YOT:***

- ❖ Your team were very kind, helpful and considerate at all meetings or phone calls. I felt that they actually cared about myself and the young person which made it all easier to deal with. Thank you
- ❖ We are extremely grateful for all the help he has received.
- ❖ The service provided fitted 100% to the needs of the child.
- ❖ She supported and understood me.
- ❖ She always motivated me and gave me confidence.
- ❖ She helped me achieve and do more than what I would of at school
- ❖ She helped me achieve and do more than what I would of at school
- ❖ YOT was very flexible with his appointments, in fact they often went to him
- ❖ When he had a disagreement with me he went to YOT for advice and support
- ❖ He has been offered lots of help and support by the YOT
- ❖ YOT were very supportive pre-trial and in his application. He realised what he'd done and wanted to somehow make amends.
- ❖ Thank you for bringing hope back to [name] he has truly learnt a lot this year, I can just tell by his actions and attitude. You have helped us more than you would know.
- ❖ Big up the YOT workers Thank you!

- ❖ I have been so pleased and thankful for your support
- ❖ I just wanted to say thank you so much for all your support with [name] over the past year, you have been amazing and supported her through a challenging time. You have gone above and beyond with your support.
- ❖ The team have been brilliant. Thank you all so much.

***Compliments received by*** The Edge Compliments:

- ❖ The Edge has been most helpful because the staff are so warm and welcoming, and very easy to get along with
- ❖ I've been to many different organisations, none of which have helped me as much as The Edge. The staff go the extra mile to have complete faith in me, and it has been so encouraging.
- ❖ The Edge has been a positive start to a new part of my life.
- ❖ I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all the support you have given [name] and our family.
- ❖ If ... had not been able to build a trusting relationship with you I dread to think where he would be in his life today.
- ❖ I feel so blessed that we discovered The Edge and I now have my Son back and life is starting to become "normal".



## Appendix 2 - What to Expect: Initial Contact with Children & Family Services

West Berkshire Children and Family Services

### What to expect: Initial Contact with Children & Family Services



All initial contacts with Children & Family Services are made via the Contact Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS).

All calls made to CAAS during working hours will be answered by a business support worker from within CAAS.

Their role is to take your details and connect you to the appropriate person.

Business Support workers are not trained social workers and will not be able to discuss the details of your case with you.

- **If you already have an allocated worker your call will be put through to this worker.**

If your allocated worker is not available, you will either be asked to leave a message or offered a call back. A record of all calls received by the Social Work teams is kept on the central electronic record.

- **If your allocated worker is unavailable and you need to speak to a Social Worker urgently you will be put through to a member of the relevant team.**
- **If your call is about a new referral you will put through to a qualified Social Worker within CAAS.**

This worker will be able to discuss your concerns with you and will be able to give you advice where appropriate.

The worker will ask if you have Parental Responsibility (PR) for the child or children who you have called about.

**If you do not have PR** the worker will listen to and record the information which you wish to given to Children & Family Services.

However, **if you do not have PR it will not be possible for the worker to give you any information.**

If you are raising a concern about a child or children the worker will use their professional knowledge to assess if the child or children about who you are concerned might be at risk of harm.

**The outcome** of this initial contact might be

- **No further action** being taken
- **Advice** being offered to you or you being directed to the service who can best answer your questions
- **Further enquiries or information gathering** being undertaken
- **A Single Assessment** being undertaken
- A referral being made to **MASH** (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- Starting **Child Protection** Process

The **MASH** process is carried out by a multi agency team of professionals who work alongside CAAS.

## Appendix 3 - Here4me Independent Advocacy Figures

Here4me provide an advocacy and independent visitor service for eligible children and young people within West Berkshire. This service is well used and helps to ensure that children and young people are able to express their thoughts, feelings and wishes effectively.

These figures record the number of contacts which the advocacy service has had with young people during 2016/17.

No of advocacy contacts this Quarter	2016/17 Q1	2016/17 Q2	2016/2017 Q3	2016/2017 Q4
<b>Quarterly total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>151</b>
LAC Reviews	16	33	14	30
CPC Meetings	70	50	43	63
ICPC Meetings	19	15	32	47
Core Group	2	4	6	4
Age Interview			6	
Independent Statement for Court		1		1
CIN Meeting			4	2
Complaints / Representations	4			2
Joint CP & LAC Meetings	8			
Family Group Conference				