

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21st JANUARY 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN' S SERVICES

COMPLAINT MONITORING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides members with an analysis of complaints registered under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 from 1 July 2009 to 11 December 2009.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report has been compiled following members consideration of the Children's Services Annual Complaints Report (see minute 61 Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18.03.2008).
- 1.2 Ongoing quarterly reports will be submitted for members' consideration following a recommendation made by the Local Government Ombudsman (see minute 60 18.03.2008).

2. REGISTERED COMPLAINTS

- 2.1 During the six month reporting period the following complaints were registered:

33 Stage 1 complaints *[compared to 20 complaints the previous quarter]*
3 Stage 2 complaints *[compared to 4 complaints in the previous quarter]*
1 Stage 3 complaints *[compared to 0 in the previous quarter]*

3. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS (LOCAL RESOLUTION)

- 3.1 The 33 Stage 1 complaints registered in the reporting period were registered by:



3.2 Stage One Complaints Made by Children

2 of the children's complaints are still open. The average time taken to complete/resolve the 6 complaints made by a child/young person was 14 working days – compared to 10 days in the last reporting period.

71.2% of the complaints made by a child/young person were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days - compared to 83% in the last reporting period.

3.3 Stage One Complaints Made by Adults

One adult complaint was withdrawn; 3 are ongoing. The average time taken to complete/resolve the remaining 29 complaints made by adults with parental responsibility or day to day care was 15.6 working days – compared to 12.5 days in the last reporting period.

77.9 % of these complaints were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days – compared to 83.3% in the last reporting period.

4. **STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS (FORMAL INVESTIGATION)**

One Stage 2 is ongoing. Two Stage 2 complaints have been completed:

The average time to complete the investigation was 41.5 working days - compared to 16.5 days in the last reporting period. *[One investigation was considerably delayed due to the complainant and then the Investigating Officer having their annual holidays, the timescale for this investigation to be completed was extended by mutual agreement.]*

The average time to produce a departmental response following investigation was 35.5 working days – compared to 22.5 working days in the last reporting period.

50% of Stage 2 complaints were completed within the maximum timescale of 65 working days.

5. **STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS (INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL)**

- 5.1 One Stage 3 complaint was considered by an Independent Review Panel on 23 October 2009. The Panel upheld the Investigating Officers findings and outcomes and made three recommendations regarding communication.

The Director accepted the Panel's recommendations and responded to the complainant within the expected statutory timescale.

6. **OMBUDSMAN**

- 6.1 There have been 2 Ombudsman's enquiries during the reporting period; 1 regarding the case heard by Independent Review Panel; and 1 regarding a Special Guardianship issue. The Department has responded to the Ombudsman's initial enquiries and await her decision as to whether she is to consider these complaints any further.

7. **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial and staffing implications arising from this report.

8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS/HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13. SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

14. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None arising directly from this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
Getting the Best from Complaints 2006.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 Members are asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services