

Customer Feedback Annual Report

Children's Services

April 2015 – March 2016

Blackpool Council



Customer Feedback Annual Report – Children’s Services

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1. Annual Overview

This report covers the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 inclusive and provides information on customer feedback recorded by the Customer Relations Team, both from direct customer contact and/or via a third party.

Children’s Services received 91 complaints over the year, seeing quarter 4 with the highest amount received. Of the 91 complaints received: 7% were upheld and 27% partially upheld – 34% in total.

To add context to this information it is key to recognise that over the same period, 3781 children had an allocated worker during 2015/2016. Blackpool has a population of 28810 children aged 0-17 years.

Over the year Children’s Services has received 44 MP Enquiries with only Quarter 3 showing single figures received (5). Councillor Enquiries numbered 15 with the most enquiries being received in Quarter 2.

Sixty-eight percent of the annual complaints have been dealt with within the allocated timescale, which shows a slight increase on achievement for 2014/15 (65%), and continues the trend of improvement from 2013/14. This is significant considering that complexity levels have risen together with more elements being listed within each complaint. However, the statistic confirms how the numbers of complaints across the year impact on resources, staffing and timescales.

It is encouraging to see that young people are aware of the complaint process and are using the mechanism to raise their complaints without any detrimental effect on the services they are receiving. Use of an Advocate is strongly encouraged to help young people ensure their voice is heard. There have been 13 complaints lodged from young people over the year; of these 1 was upheld and 6 were partially upheld – 54% in total. These figures are included within the overall totals and account for 14% of the total complaints received.

In terms of theme categories for young people; 5 were requests for service; 2 policies and procedures; 2 Lack of Action; 1 Finance /Funding; 1 Lack of Communication; 1 Quality of Service and 1 staff conduct/treatment of customer.

Compliments have been reviewed and only those which describe ‘above and beyond’ service delivery are now accepted. It is pleasing to see with this new criteria in place, figures have increased from 39 in 2014/15 to 58 this reporting year, and is an accurate measure of staff ‘going the extra mile’ to make a real difference. However, it must be noted that levels of compliments received are lower than other areas due to the very difficult and emotive arena of work undertaken.

This report will provide further breakdowns of these highlights with potential explanations for some of the statistics.

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2. Children’s Services Customer Feedback

The following table shows the total numbers of Complaints, Compliments, Comments, MP/Councillor Enquiries and LGO cases for the year 2015/16.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
Children’s Social Care	31	32	32	40	135
Early Help for Children	3	14	1	4	22
Education	12	17	12	19	60
TOTALS	46	63	45	63	217
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	105	100	70	80	355
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	63	69	61	59	252

The number of items received has reduced over the last 2 years for compliments, complaints and Councillor Enquiries. This is in part due to transparent working with Members and Councillors in conjunction with stringent new recording of compliments. Complaints, whilst they have reduced in number are now far more complex and have more substantial elements to them. Customers’ expectations are still high even though the Council’s resources have been reduced within the current economic climate.

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3. Complaints

Statutory legislation dictates that all complaints should be addressed and concluded within a 6 month timeframe. Children’s Services feel all complaints should be addressed quickly and efficiently with each case being individual and viewed on its own merits.

Children’s Services endeavour to make the complaints process accessible so that complainants feel comfortable when feeding back their concerns.

The following table shows the breakdown of the complaints by service area for the year and how many complaints were “Upheld” or “Partially Upheld”:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
Children’s Social Care	17 [3U 4PU]	13 [2U 4PU]	19 [1U 6PU]	23 [5PU]	72 [6U 19PU]
Early Help for Children	1 [1PU]	6 [2PU]	nil	1	8 [3PU]
Education	4	1	3 [1PU]	3 [2PU]	11 [3PU]
TOTALS	22 [3U 5PU]	20 [2U 6PU]	22 [1U 7PU]	27 [7PU]	91 [6U 25PU]
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	35 [6U 3 PU]	35 [0U 8 PU]	29 [4U 5 PU]	35 [3U 8 PU]	134 [13U 24PU]
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	31 [3U 4PU]	36 [2U 6PU]	32 [2U 8PU]	26 [2U 1PU]	125 [9U 19PU]

Key: U = Upheld; PU = Partially Upheld

The above figures also include 37 complaints Not Upheld and 23 complaints Withdrawn

Withdrawn reasons: Court [4], out of timescale [2], dealt with informally/complainant withdrew [3], lack of contact/info from complainant [7], duplicate matter/already dealt with [2], school [3], social care allegation, passed to duty [2]

Children’s Social Care, as could be expected, has received the highest number of complaints. As a front line service they are often delivering difficult news, emotional messages and endeavouring to support families in crisis. This service has to take decisions with and for families for the benefit of children, which some families find difficult to accept.

Children’s Social Care dealt with 79.12% of the overall complaints lodged.

Early Help for Children and Education remain comparable to the previous year. It must be noted, that School complaints fall directly under the School or Academy Sponsor to deal with and do not fall under the remit of the Statutory Children Social Care procedures.

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The main reasons for complaints being upheld over the year are shown below:-

- Communication
- Conflicting information re Looked After Children reviews, invites and minutes
- Perceived actions/lack of actions of social workers and attitudes
- Legal issues including Court parameters
- Delivery of support, action plans and safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Perceptions of support, roles and responsibilities
- Forward planning/Lack of action in general
- Financial queries and requests for support
- Impact of service delivery in times of change
- Delays in assessments and clarity around understanding of difficult decisions and processes

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4. Timescales

It is good practice to keep the complainant informed of progress at all times. Timescales are important and if for any reason Children’s Services is unable to meet the allocated timescale for response and resolution, the complainant should be advised as soon as possible. This may be by way of email, telephone or written letter (dependent on how contact was first made and subsequent requests for updates being specified). Responding Managers should advise the Customer Relations Team why they are unable to meet the deadlines. A further date of anticipated response should then be provided by the Customer Relations Team to the complainant together with an apology for the delay. Missing the timescale in this way counts against the Council for reporting purposes and can diminish the trust with the service users and complainants.

The table below shows the percentage breakdown of timescales **successfully met** for complaints by service areas over the year:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End % Totals
Children’s Social Care	13/17	3/13	15/19	15/23	46/72 64%
Early Help for Children	1/1	5/6	Nil	1/1	7/8 88%
Education	4/4	1/1	2/3	2/3	9/11 82%
TOTALS	18/22 82%	9/20 45%	17/22 77%	18/27 67%	62/91 68%
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	11/35 31%	16/35 46%	16/29 55%	22/35 63%	65/134 49%
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	21/31 68%	25/36 69%	17/32 53%	18/26 69%	81/125 65%

There has been a marked improvement in achieving allocated timescales over the last 3 years: 49%, 64.8% and 68% respectively. Overall each Division has substantially improved and this is attributed to the efforts made to ensure complaints are fully acknowledged and resolved efficiently, effectively and in a timely manner.

However, complaint responses will always be superseded by sudden unexpected priorities arising, such as Court Summons and safeguarding of vulnerable children. But all staff and managers are mindful of their responsibilities under the statutory Children’s Social Care Complaint process and every effort is made to provide a thorough and quality response to complainants within anticipated timescales. On occasion, during investigation it becomes apparent that further work needs to be undertaken and the response date will then be extended to ensure a full enquiry is made and appropriate response supplied.

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5. Complaint Theme

These themes help Children’s Services to identify trends and patterns quickly and aids in the recognition of action required. For unity in recording and balancing the number of complaints, the main overarching or most appropriate theme is used for recording purposes. The following table shows the breakdown of the annual complaints by theme.

Themes	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals	Upheld [U] or Partially Upheld [PU]
Assessment Undertaken	1	0	1	5	7	1PU
Bully/Racist Incident	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Safeguarding	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Confidentiality	2	1	0	1	4	1U
Custody of Child	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Financial/Funding	0	2	0	1	3	1U
Lack of Action	6	2	2	6	16	2U 5PU
Lack of Communication	2	3	0	1	6	1U 1PU
Policies & Procedures	1	0	5	1	7	1U 2PU
Quality of Service	7	7	4	3	21	9PU
Staff Conduct/ Treatment of Customer	2	5	5	8	20	4PU
Request for Service	1	0	5	1	7	3PU
TOTALS	22	20	22	27	91	6U 25PU
Comparison 2013/2014	35	35	29	35	134	15U&25PU
Comparison 2014/2015	31	36	32	26	125	9U 19PU

Key: U = Upheld; PU = Partially Upheld

The top theme is Quality of Service with 21 complaints under this theme for the year. When complaints are received, the overarching element is used to assign a theme. However, with the complexity increasing together with the amount of elements making up a complaint, the overall perception of the complainant naturally becomes quality of service. If many themes are evident and overall service perception is poor, then quality of service is allocated.

This theme received the most complaints and had the most upheld: 9 of 21 upheld – 42% of this theme’s complaints and 9.89% upheld of the overall complaints received.

This is closely followed by Staff conduct/treatment of customer with 20 items received and 4 being upheld. Expectations and perceptions are rightly high and complainants can feel very aggrieved if these are not met by Council staff. Communication is paramount to help open up discussions, explain the Council’s limitations and actually find a way forward in a positive and respectful manner. Staff found to be at fault can be subject to a number of ways of redress including disciplinary procedures, re-training provided or close monitoring under one to one supervision meetings.

Lack of action is the 3rd most significant theme and again is subject to perception and expectation. Sixteen complaints were received over the year accounting for 17.58% of the overall complaints received. Of these 16, 2

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were up held in their entirety and a further 5 partially. Therefore, overall 7 complaints were upheld in some form – amounting to 43.75% of the complaints within this theme and 7.69% of the overall complaints received in the year.

Underlying each theme is communication and staff are fully aware of the need to be open, transparent and clear at all times. Checking of understanding must continue to ensure all parties are fully aware of resulting action being taken and by whom.

6. Lessons Learnt

The Council feels it must identify lessons learnt and learn from its complaints, thereby improving service delivery. Improvements this year have taken the form of a number of actions:

- Further training for staff
- Periods of close monitoring or supervision
- Cultural changes led by Senior Managers
- Review of contracts with third parties

Lessons learnt can be positive as well as negative and are just as important.

The Customer Relations Team has been working hard with all service areas to ensure lessons learnt are recorded and follow-up action is then taken to make improvements where necessary. It is hoped this will improve performance and reduce duplicate complaints in future.

As a further positive action, lessons learnt will be monitored and discussed at the Children’s Services Management Team meetings in order that practice can be improved across the Departments as appropriate with Senior Managers setting a clear and consistent example of ownership and expectations.

All areas of the Departments have accepted the need to improve dialogue with service users and their families and to be available to stop escalation of issues. Good practice of other departments has been shared and adopted. Appendix 1 includes a sample of lessons learnt recorded during the course of the year.

7. Compliments

Compliments are extremely important and help to highlight the areas we are improving in or maintaining levels of high quality service. They act as a morale booster for staff and are evidence that every detail within service delivery matters. Good practice needs to be shared across the Directorate as and when appropriate.

New recording is now in place, which clearly justifies each compliment as being, ‘above and beyond the norm and going the extra mile’. Appendix 2 shows a sample of compliments received during the year.

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The table below demonstrates the levels of compliments received by Children’s Services split by Service.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
Children’s Social Care	4	5	6	7	22
Early Help for Children	2	3	1	2	8
Education	4	10	3	11	28
TOTALS	10	18	10	20	58
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	50	46	23	27	146
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	9	15	6	9	39

48 EXTERNAL + 10 INTERNAL

Quarters 2 and 4 show the most compliments being received this reporting year; Education continues to be the area receiving the highest amount of compliments as was the case in the last year.

8. Comments

Comments are equally important as complaints and help to shape and improve the quality of service. If necessary, Children’s Services will respond to comments and compliments based upon the same timescale as complaints. However, each comment will be judged individually as to whether a detailed response is necessary or not. The service user will not always be aware of the work being carried out behind the scenes regarding the comments made.

The following table shows the levels of comments received by service area:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year End Totals
Children’s Social Care	0	2	2	2	6
Early Help for Children	0	1	0	0	1
Education	0	1	1	0	2
TOTALS	0	4	3	2	9
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	3	2	2	3	10
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	5	5	0	3	13

There are no major changes in the amount of comments received this reporting year.

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9. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO is the Governing Body that reviews and investigates complaints against Councils where appropriate; usually where cases have followed procedures and the complainant feels their issues have not been addressed or resolved to their satisfaction. Under the Children’s statutory complaints process, the LGO can be contacted after stage 2 and stage 3 processes have been carried out.

However, some complainants prefer to contact the LGO in the first instance. The LGO will determine whether this is a premature complaint which must be directed back to the Council to respond to in the first instance or if they will commence an investigation based on the information provided by the complainant.

Over the year, 15 contacts have been made by the LGO which relate to 6 new named cases for this reporting year; all enquiries have originated from Social Care complaints.

Six Final Decisions have been received this year; this figure includes outcomes relating to some cases originating in the previous year of 2014/2015. Outcomes are as follows:

- 1 - Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice (the LGO recommended a monetary payment as compensation for injustice caused – the amount was £750)
- 1 - Not upheld: no maladministration
- 1- Closed after initial enquiry - out of jurisdiction
- 1 - Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.
- 2 -Premature complaint to be dealt with via the Council's procedures.

10. Members of Parliament (MP) & Councillor Enquiries

Blackpool Council’s policy is that all MP and Councillor Enquiries must be actioned and resolved within 5 working days. MP and Councillor Enquiries are not complaints – but can be categorised as:

- requests for background information,
- reasons for decisions,
- requests for service or
- requests for review of outcomes

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The following table shows the annual breakdown of MP Enquiries received by Children’s Services and the percentage which met the 5 day response timescale:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
Children’s Social Care	9 [56%]	6 [33%]	4 [50%]	7 [43%]	26 [46%]
Early Help for Children	NIL	3 [67%]	NIL	NIL	3 [67%]
Education	4 [75%]	5 [20%]	1 [100%]	5 [60%]	15 [53%]
TOTALS	13 [62%]	14 [36%]	5 [60%]	12 [50%]	44 [50%]
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	10	14	15	10	49 [43%]
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	12	10	19	16	57 [44%]

The number of MP Enquiries received this report year is the lowest for 3 years. However, service- users are very aware of the MP process and utilise this facility with many complex cases. The 5 day turnaround for response is extremely tight especially in light of complex cases and again if the timescale is extended it is counted as missing the timeframe. Children’s Social Care accounts for the majority of MP Enquiries again this year – (59%). Some complainants turn to their MPs for support after completing the complaint process and hope their MP will raise the same issue with the Council but achieve a better outcome for them.

The following table shows the annual breakdown of Councillor Enquires received by Children’s Services:-

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
Children’s Social Care	1 [100%]	6 [67%]	1 [0%]	1 [100%]	9 [67%]
Early Help for Children	NIL	1 [100%]	NIL	1 [100%]	2 [100%]
Education	NIL	NIL	4 [75%]	NIL	4 [75%]
Total	1 [100%]	7 [71%]	5 [60%]	2 [100%]	15 [73%]
Comparison Totals 2013/2014	7	4	1	3	15 [67%]
Comparison Totals 2014/2015	NIL	2	3	3	8 [13%]

Double the amount of Councillor Enquires has been received this reporting year compared to 2014/15. Again, Councillors are often contacted after a service user has completed the complaint process. The 5 day timescale relates to Councillor enquires also and the same difficulties are faced as MP Enquiries. Last year Children’s Social Care received all 8 enquiries whilst this year shows a slightly broader base.

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11. Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

The timescale for responding to an FOI request is 20 working days as set out by the Information Commissioner’s Office and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

There are a number of circumstances where the request may be exempted in part or as a whole: included in the list are:

- Time taken to collate the response would be in excess of 18 hours (needs to be evidenced)
- Individuals could potentially be identified
- Information not held in a retrievable format or not collected at all
- Future publication is intended – date to be provided
- On-going investigations may be affected by the divulging of the requested information

The table below shows the amount of FOI enquiries received per division together with how many achieved the statutory timescale:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Totals
Children’s Social Care	17/34	24/29	15/24	28/31	84/118
	50%	83%	63%	90%	71%
Early Help for Children	1/1	1/2	0/1	1/1	3/5
	100%	50%	0%	100%	60%
Education	1/2	12/14	6/23	22/22	41/61
	50%	86%	26%	100%	67%
Total	19/37	37/45	21/48	51/54	128/184
	51.%	82%	44%	94.%	70%
		3	5	6	14
		exemptions	exemptions	exemptions	exemptions
Comparison for 2014/2015	27/42 64%	18/29 62%	12/31 39%	32/34 94%	89/136 65%

There has been an increase in FOIs received this reporting year from 136 in 2014/15 to 184 in 2015/16. The timescale achievement percentage has also increased particularly in the last quarter. This reflects a new colleague who has worked diligently on ensuring departments respond quickly and accurately. So far in the reporting year 2016/17, this is a continuing trend and timescales are improving.

Like complaints, FOI requests are becoming more complex, covering a wide array of issues and cross departmental working. This has had a knock on effect with exemptions and from the table it can be seen that exemptions are now more common place. Sensitivity, time limitations and cost implications are the most common reasons for exemptions but also, we simply do not hold some of the information requested.

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It is also interesting to note that 19 FOIs were received by Childrens Services which were not for the Council or Children’s Services. However, they still need to be logged in line with procedures and responded to or transferred to correct areas.

12. Staff Training

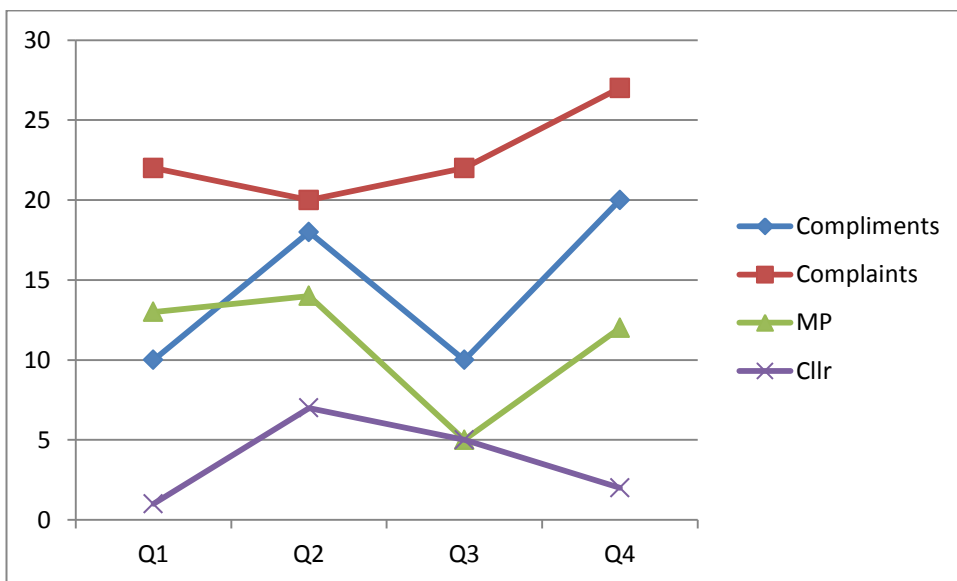
Due to the current economic climate and the many Government changes, there have been council cuts in funding and services and therefore resources have been limited across the Council as a whole. This in turn brings about staff changes and additional duties. Therefore, the Customer Relations team has offered relevant complaint training to Heads of Service and Service Managers across the Children’s Services Department to reflect changes and staff turnover.

Training can be tailored to meet the needs of the specific service. Regular meetings and open discussion with relevant Managers has aided in the understanding of the statutory complaints process.

13. Conclusion

Complexity with complaints, MP and Councillor Enquiries and FOIs continues to increase across all areas. The timescale for responses to such matters is restrictive and every effort is made to provide full and thorough responses within the timescales. Credit must be given to all Social Care staff who receive the majority of these items and endeavour to respond on time and with appropriate information.

Attention to detail and team working is vital to ensure departments work coherently together to resolve issues. Communication with Service Users and their families is paramount to ensure all parties are aware of their actions and responsibilities. Expectations must be addressed immediately to allow the relationships to flourish with trust and transparency.



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Recommendations, based on the information available:

- Continued efforts re communication should alleviate initial issues and be used to improve dialogue
- Timescales should help focus upon issues and resolving of same for the benefit of our Service Users and families thereby negating the use of holding letters and dissatisfaction of complainants
- Lessons learnt need to be recognised, discussed and implemented with direction and monitoring from Senior Management. Ownership of these needs to be addressed and embedded.
- All of these actions should reduce the perception of poor quality service which is the main complaint theme surfacing throughout the year.

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Appendix 1 - Sample of Compliments

Children Social Care

- The social worker from other local authority for the prospective adopters complimented Blackpool Children’s Services on its practice of IROs visiting children on a separate day to their Review meeting. This had been this social worker’s experience with a number of Blackpool cases, and she felt that this was a valuable and good practice.
- Staff Member, I would like to pass on my gratitude on behalf of everyone at Provider A Care. Time and time again I hear staff compare other professionals to you, as you have always been professional and dedicated. Thank you
- Mr E commented that he was impressed with the knowledge and experience that Staff Member D (YOT Worker) and Staff Member C (YOT Victim Liaison Officer) showed. He also appreciated the honesty and openness which they showed and their willingness to “say it as it is,” concluding that the service received so far had been “outstanding.”
- Mr K telephoned to ask for a Social Worker’s details and contact telephone number. Mr K was advised that this was not possible until his identity was checked. Before he went off the telephone he said that he wanted to pay a huge compliment with regard to the way the call was handled. As well as being Head of Pastoral Care at a School, he was the Designated Safeguarding Lead and was very impressed.
- Email received from School Nurse, thanking staff member K, Social Worker, for all her hard work.
- Compliment received from a Judge for the work Social Worker did in preparation for a court case
- Social Worker N, has through perseverance and reassurance and slow steps, managed to engage this family in the process and allow them to see her as a professional who was not there to judge, but to act and work with them. The progress she has made to the family as a whole has been tremendous and certainly should not go unrecognised. Had she not used her skills to make such a difference, the outcome for the family could have been so very different. Parents want to thank Social Worker N personally and to express their appreciation for her respect for them, and for the help she had given them all as a family unit.
- I just wanted to send an email to let you know how much we enjoy working with Social Worker S. We find her to be incredibly child-focused and hardworking with some of our most complex and challenging young people.
- Judge described Social Worker K's assessment as impressive, fair and full.
- We want to convey our gratitude for the work carried out by Social Worker V who is clearly dedicated to her job; we feel that we have been exceptionally supported by V who makes herself available all hours of the day and late into the evening. Her professionalism has been highlighted further recently by her assistance in getting our children accepted into their new school when there were continuous delays. We have sought V's advice throughout this process and always found her guidance to be sound. She has provided us with advice regarding the transition of schooling for our boys which will greatly assist us. We know we were very lucky to have V take us on our adoption journey because she is clearly a dedicated professional who cares about her adopters and the children being adopted.
- I visited the young Person yesterday and he told me he is very happy with the outcome of his complaint, and feels that this issue has now been resolved to his satisfaction. Many thanks for all your help in obtaining a successful outcome.
- I assisted counsel today at court – Social Worker S was given outstanding praise by all of the advocates and indeed a number of times by the Judge in his judgment as to her professionalism, her commitment and the outstanding relationship she has achieved with the parents in this case which has resulted in the children

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remaining in the care of their parents. I did not want the extremely lovely comments made by all at court today to go unnoticed. She did an excellent job.

Education

- You and your team helped this happen - we thank you.
- Thanks for all of your support in every way this year. You have been fantastic!
- The National Deaf Children's Society stated in their email that they believed Blackpool to be one of the flagship Local Authorities. Mr C appreciated all that Blackpool Council had done and wanted to thank all those involved with the family.
- Positive feedback received from Learning and Autism Service, regarding Blackpool being a good example of a council that has got to grips and embraced the EHCP process.
- It was really nice to meet you. We feel so much better now after your involvement. We feel as if we've been banging our heads all this time and now it's like a weight has been lifted.
- Email sent to Staff member P to thank her for all the help, advice and support offered over a difficult time.
- Email received from a Community Academy: Thanks for all the great work your team did for Child A last year. You all helped her get through a particularly difficult time and she got exam results that ensure she has good future choices available to her.
- Thanks for our training earlier this week. It was very informative and very well delivered and gave the teachers all the knowledge that they need in order to continue to safeguard our pupils.
- Praise for the SEND Service Manager for training done in the West Midlands on producing quality EHC Plans, based on the Blackpool approach. The feedback was all positive and the authorities involved have commenced their own cross authority working parties.

Community Early Help for Children and Families

- Whilst preparing for adulthood lead (for information a national organisation working with the DFE) said how knowledgeable you were and how lucky Blackpool was to have such knowledge/ skills.
- In conversation with Andre (the DFE lead advisor on SEN) he had said how well we were doing in Blackpool in the area of implementing the SEND reforms overall.
- Really enjoyed the course yesterday and feel more confident to chair my next meeting so thank you!
- I just wanted to let you know that staff member J was incredible in the meeting at SSA yesterday (as she always is)! She challenges in a really constructive and professional way and fights so hard for the best outcomes for the young people
- I just wanted to say thanks again for sorting child E out, he seems to have settled in well and the family are a lot happier, you are a superstar
- As you know I asked staff member P to come into school yesterday to speak with some of the staff re Elective Home Education. The feedback today from the school was extremely positive. P was able to use examples of cases from our school which I felt was very useful as it then personalised the issue for the staff. She was also able to be very clear on her remit within the authority, many of the staff before the talk presumed that P provides packages of work and also visits regularly. At the end of the talk the staff were left with a very clear view of what Elective Home Education actually looks like, particularly for the more vulnerable students. So just wanted to say a big thank you to P, I know how busy her days are, so to fit in yet another meeting wouldn't have been easy!

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Appendix 2 - Sample of Lessons Learnt

- Aftermath of adoption order being granted with or without subsequent support from the Council. **Lessons Learnt:** better communication, further explanation of withdrawal by LAC Team at the time of adoption order being granted and repeat offer to be made of ‘after adoption support’, if refused initially. Delay in response and complaint investigation must not occur and all Managers have been reminded of this.
- Extended family wanting contact with adopted children. **Lessons Learnt:** sensitivity to situation required with clear information on how information can or cannot be shared in the future – dependent of individual circumstances.
- Delays in Court paperwork being provided. **Lessons Learnt:** Follow action plan, adhere to all timescales and pass to Legal Department in plenty of time for them to deal with matters too.
- Movement of Young People in care. **Lessons Learnt:** review if needs are being addressed and communicate regularly and clearly with young person to alleviate any worries. Invoke extra support where necessary e.g. Personal Advisor being appointed early due to individual circumstances or needs.
- Inaccuracies within child protection paperwork may set a bias by professionals involved. **Lessons Learnt:** accuracy to be checked and maintained at all times. Transparency when putting things right, across the board with families and professionals to ensure trust and only accurate information is discussed and reviewed. Further meeting with families if required to ensure satisfaction with corrections. Outstanding actions and resulting requests to be addressed quickly and with clarity.
- Addressing of confidential information being sent out via the postal system. **Lesson Learnt:** All relevant administration staff spoken and relevant Managers reminded of confidentiality requirements and the need to provide full courtesy titles, names/initials with contact address details. Formal instructions implemented for addressing mail correctly.
- Contacts made to Social Worker with no response received. **Lessons Learnt:** Respond to calls and contacts each day wherever possible or as soon as practicable. Message taking to improve to allow Social Workers to be aware of all daily contacts.
- Breakdown in communication and relationship between family and Family Support Worker despite many efforts to work together. **Lessons Learnt:** Early clear communication often alleviates the need to change Family Support Worker and keeps continuity for family. However, when relationships do breakdown, acceptance of time to change by all parties is required quickly and with clear guidelines to all to help rebuild relationships.
- Case management and communication. **Lessons Learnt:** Staff have been spoken to and practice across the relevant teams has been improved after training delivered to whole areas of teams. Emphasis on communication and quality of service.
- Observations of members of public regarding perceived behaviours of alleged LAC and carers parenting skills. **Lessons Learnt:** Data Protection must be explained clearly to avoid perception of being unhelpful. Carers to be communicated with and supported further where necessary with parenting skills. LAC encouraged with boundaries and self-awareness.
- Out of date information on the website. **Lessons Learnt:** Service apologised that the policy in questions had been ‘missed’ when out of date polices were being deleted. However, signposted to new information on website which meets all legal guidelines. Care to be taken to ensure all up to date information is posted and previous versions are deleted and removed from all public areas.
- Young people making complaints. **Lessons Learnt:** ensure timescales are met. All young people’s matters to take priority and moved forward as swiftly as possible.

Customer Feedback Annual Report – Children’s Services

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