

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officers:	Delyth Curtis, Director of People, Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People
Date of Meeting:	17 September 2015

CUSTOMER RELATIONS TEAM ANNUAL REPORTS ON ADULT SERVICES AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2014/2015

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To present the Annual Reports of the Customer Relations Team relating to Adult Services and Children's Services. The reports attached as appendices include details of complaints, comments and compliments received during 2014/2015, as well as Member of Parliament and Councillor enquiries, Local Government Ombudsman contacts, and Freedom of Information Requests.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to scrutinise the content of the Annual Reports, identifying any issues for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 It is a requirement for local authorities to make publically available details of social care complaints received each year. To also ensure full consideration is given to any complaints by Members in order to identify any areas for further scrutiny.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? No

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are:

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement

- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable
- Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Included as appendices to this report are the annual reports for 2014/2015 of the Customer Relations Team relating to Adult Services and Children’s Services. These documents contain details of complaints, comments and compliments received during 2014/2015, as well as Member of Parliament and Councillor enquiries, Local Government Ombudsman contacts, and Freedom of Information Requests.

5.2 The number of contacts dealt with during the course of 2014/15 by each Department, together with comparatives from the previous year, can be summarised as follows:

	Adult Services		Children’s Services	
	2014/2015	2013/2014	2014/2015	2013/2014
Complaints	91	108	125	90
- of which upheld	19	23	8	15
- of which partially upheld	26	32	17	25
- responded within timescales	53%	51%	65%	49%
Compliments	367	350	17	25
Comments	24	43	13	10
MP enquiries	52	37	57	49
Councillor enquiries	14	27	8	15

5.3 For Adult Services, the number of complaints, as well as those which were upheld or partially upheld has fallen since the previous year, and the level of responses within timescales has increased slightly. The number of compliments has again increased, with a total of 367 recorded.

5.4 For Children’s Services, while the number of complaints has increased by more than a third in the year, the number of those upheld either in whole or partially has reduced from 40 to only 25. Response times to complaints have improved significantly.

5.5 The main themes of complaints across both Departments continue to be “quality of service” and “staff attitude/treatment of customer”. There have been continued efforts to strengthen the lessons learnt processes in order to avoid repeated complaints about the same issues. Timescales for responding to complaints are set at

the outset depending on the complexity of the subject matter; the focus on setting realistic expectations for response times appears to be bearing fruit, with a higher level of timescales being met than in previous years.

5.4 In order to further improve the customer experience, the Departments have committed to the following next steps:

- Continue to identify lessons to be learnt from complaints by sharing good practice across services, and by using governance structures to monitor that actions have been taken.
- Further improve the setting of realistic expectations of timescales for responding to complaints in order that complainants receive our response when we tell them they will.
- Heads of Service are exploring ways to address the reasons for complaints in specific themes, notably “quality of service” and “staff attitude/treatment of customer” in order to ensure that users of our services have a positive experience in this regard.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 9a: Customer Relations Team Feedback Report 2014/2015 – Adult Services

Appendix 9b: Customer Relations Team Feedback Report 2014/2015 – Children’s Services

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 Local authorities are required to make publically available an annual report containing details of complaints received relating to social care.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The reports have been considered at the Adult Services Governance Committee and the Children's Services Senior Management Teams, and discussed with the Cabinet Secretary and relevant Cabinet Members.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.