



# Customer Service Annual Report 2016-17

## Report Summary

This report gives a summary of complaints and compliments received by the Trust between 2016 and 2017 and their outcomes. It also details the processes and procedures put in place by the Trust to help service users and others understand and access these, as well as ways in which the Trust has improved its service and learned from complaints.

**Policy Author:** Ragen Khan,  
Complaints Manager,  
Safeguarding and Quality  
Assurance Team

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©Slough Children's Services Trust  
St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road Slough SL1 3UF

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A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be  
..... Safe, Secure and Successful

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## 1. Introduction

This report provides information about complaints made during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The statutory responsibility under the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, requires children's services to have complaints procedures in place in order to regulate the procedure which needs to be followed in consideration of representations made under the Children Act 1989 and the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

It is a statutory requirement to produce and publish an Annual Report. Slough Children's Services Trust (the Trust) has been responsible for children's services since 1 October 2015. This is the second annual customer services report for the Trust.

The Complaints Manager (CM) has the key responsibility for managing the statutory process for complaints from children and young people (or their representative) and a key responsibility in ensuring the quality of that service. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview and analysis of all complaints, concerns and compliments received and summarise the issues that have arisen, providing a mechanism by which the Trust can monitor the quality and effectiveness of services and of its complaints procedure.

The report will be presented and approved by the Trust, Board, and, under the contractual arrangements, to Slough Borough Council (Council) and the Slough Local Children's Safeguarding Board (SLSCB). This report will be published on the Trust's website.

## 2. Progress made in 2016-17

- Permanent Complaints Manager (CM) appointed, from August 2016
- The CM has focused and succeeded in trying to resolve many complaints at an informal mediatory level rather than progressing to a formal Stage 1. This has resulted in many complainants providing positive verbal feedback that they felt they had been given a chance to talk and be listened to by a senior manager. This gave both parties a platform to learn from
- The CM has been more directly available to callers which have enabled them to clarify the issues they were concerned about and taking the opportunity of talking with an informed and neutral party
- The Trust's complaints policy has been revised and updated and is published on the Trust's website
- The complaints service is more accessible through a new complaints leaflet, which is made available to all social workers to give to young people and other service users. Business cards have also been provided to all of the social workers of the Trust, which include the contact details of the CM, to give to young people and all other service users when they visit them. The Trust's new website has full details of how to make a complaint or compliment. The existing complaints procedure has been made available to all staff via the intranet
- A comprehensive, mandatory training programme on complaints is in place for all across the Trust. To date, the Trust has held 13 sessions and trained 71 staff members
- Worked in partnership with key service providers e.g. participated in the Healthwatch Slough 'Learning from Complaints' workshop

- Focus on improving the recording and analysis of data to inform better analysis and information is available
- Provision of information from complaints to the Trust to help develop services
- Developed a positive working relationship with our partner Slough Borough Council, which has been positive in terms of supporting and addressing legacy complaints.

### 3. Context

#### 3.1 Definitions

The Children Act 1989 defines the complaints procedure as being for ‘representations (including complaints)’. A representation could include a complaint, concern, a compliment in regards to the nature, delivery or availability of a service. The representations are defined below:

**Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet.

**Concern:** There are many instances where minor concerns can be addressed without further recourse to the complaints procedure. These are generally handled within the team or informally by the CM and resolved through mediation.

**Compliment:** Comments made to praise or thank someone for the service provided.

**Deferred Complaint:** It may not be possible to respond to a complaint immediately, for example if a case is in, or about to begin Court proceedings; the Trust has discretion in deciding whether to consider the complaint, whereas to do so would prejudice any Court decisions. In such cases the complaint is deferred until the Court proceedings are concluded and then the complaint may be resubmitted.

**Decline Complaint:** The Trust has the discretion to decide whether or not to accept a complaint made by a person who does not meet the criteria of ‘qualifying individual’ (please see point 4.4 page 6)

**Representation:** Where a complaint has been resolved at a mediatory level and not progressed to the formal Stage 1, the Trust has recorded this as a ‘representation’ in our data.

#### 3.2 Legislation

The arrangements for the Statutory Procedure and Management of Complaints from children and young people (or their representatives) are set out in The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

The Legislation requires the Trust to appoint a CM responsible for:

- Managing, developing and administering the Complaints Procedure;
- Providing assistance and advice to those who wish to complain;
- Overseeing the investigation of complaints that cannot be managed at source;
- Supporting and training existing and new members of staff;
- Quality assuring the management of and responses to complaints, and
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity and data.

Legislation is supported by detailed guidance from the Department for Education entitled 'Getting the Best from Complaints' which has been taken into account in the Complaints Procedures published by the Trust.

## 4. Complaints Procedures

### 4.1 Statutory Complaints Procedure at Slough Children's Services Trust

Responsibility for the service rests with the Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, who manages the CM. This ensures independence from the line management of cases and the allocation of resources.

The purpose of the Statutory Procedure is to enable the complainant to have access to independent consideration of the matters raised.

#### Complaints process using the Statutory Procedure:

##### **Stage One: Local Resolution**

This initial stage provides the Trust with the opportunity to try and resolve issues of dissatisfaction at local level with managers and staff who have responsibility for the case.

The Trust has 10 working days from the acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint in which to respond to the complainant. As a rule, the Practice Manager (PM) of the service in question will write to the complainant within this timescale, providing details of their investigations and any outcomes or decisions made.

##### **Stage Two: Independent Investigation**

Stage Two involves a full and formal investigation. Having received the response at the conclusion of Stage One, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome is able to escalate their concerns and request progression of their complaint to the next stage.

The CM will appoint an Independent Investigating Officer (IO) to lead the investigation an Independent Person (IP) must also be appointed who works alongside the IO and will be involved in all aspects of the investigation. The role of the IP (as identified in Guidance) is to shadow and oversee the quality of the work of the IO.

The CM provides ongoing guidance advice and support during the Stage Two process.

The investigation should be completed and the response sent to the complainant within 25 working days. Where this is not possible, this may be extended to 65 days. The CM will maintain a dialogue with the complainant if a response in the 25 working days is not feasible.

On conclusion of the investigation, both the IO and IP individually write a report. The IP comments on the findings outlined in the IO's as to whether they are in agreement or not with the outcomes and recommendations. Both reports are forwarded to the Head of Service for consideration and response.

##### **Stage Three: Review Panel**

Where Stage Two has been concluded and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be eligible to request further consideration of the complaint by an Independent Review Panel.

The Panel does not re-investigate the complaints, nor does it consider any new complaints that have not been first considered at Stage Two.

The Panel comprises three people, all of whom must be independent of the Trust. The purpose of the Panel is to consider the complaint and wherever possible, work towards a resolution, which very often takes the form of recommendations made to the CEO of the Trust, who will write to the complainant, informing them of the outcome reached.

The complainant should be advised of their right to refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if still dissatisfied.

### **Final Stage: The Local Government Ombudsman**

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) is impartial and investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by the Trust. When they receive a complaint, the LGO are on the side of neither the complainant nor the Trust.

Complainants are entitled to refer complaints to the LGO at any stage. The LGO, however will not normally accept the complaint until the Trust has had a chance to complete all stages of the Complaints Procedures.

This is the final stage that the complainant can take with their complaint, if they remain dissatisfied; their only recourse is through judicial proceedings.

### **4.2 What may be complained about?**

Some examples are outlined below (this is not an exclusive list)

- An unwelcome or disputed decision
- Attitude or behaviour of staff
- Poor/ lack of communication
- Application of eligibility and assessment criteria/ assessment care management and review
- Concerns about the quality or appropriateness of a service
- Delay in decision making or provision of services/ delivery or non-delivery of services.

### **4.3 What is exempt from the Statutory Complaints Procedure?**

Some examples are outlined below (this is not an exclusive list)

- The person wishing to complain does not meet the requirements of a 'qualifying individual'. A person is a 'qualifying individual' if the Trust have a power or a duty to provide a service to them. A representative can complain on behalf of the child, but there must be a direct connection, for example, have parental responsibility.
- The same complaint has already been dealt with at all stages of the procedure.
- The complaint does not concern the actions or decisions of the Trust (or any body acting on its behalf).
- Regulation 8, as set out in the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 provides the Trust with discretion in deciding whether to consider complaints, where to do so would prejudice any of the following:
  - Court Proceedings
  - Tribunals
  - Disciplinary Proceedings
  - Criminal Proceedings, or
  - Grievance Proceedings.

#### 4.4 Timescales for Statutory Procedure

Each stage in the management of complaints is time limited and the timelines are set out in the regulations. On occasions the time line is not achieved, and when this occurs the CM is empowered to negotiate an extension with the complainant.

Some of the reasons why a complaint may need to be managed through the use of a negotiated extension are:

- A more complex complaint may require additional time for a thorough investigation to take place
- Those who need to be interviewed (either professionals or complainant) could be unavailable within timescales due to annual of sick leave
- In some cases a member of staff may have left the Trust and it may take time to contact them and seek their agreement/ involvement in the investigation. Staff who have left are under no obligation to participate in an investigation
- It may take time to secure the services of an IO and an IP.

The progression of requests for an escalation to a Stage 2 Complaint Investigation because of dissatisfaction with the judgements and outcomes following a Stage 1 Investigation has required requests for an extension, because of the need for the CM to build a pool of suitably qualified and vetted IO and IP.

#### 4.5 Non Statutory Complaints Procedure in Slough Children's Services Trust

Complaints not covered by the Statutory Complaints Procedures may be dealt with under the Trust Corporate Complaint Procedure. These are often complaints made by parents, or carers regarding the impact of a service on them personally, liaison and coordination of these remain through the CM. The Corporate Complaint Procedure will be developed as follows

##### **Stage One:**

- The aim of the Corporate Procedures will be to resolve complaint at the earliest opportunity. Stage One is investigated formally by the manager of the officer with the same rigour and thoroughness as complainants managed through the Statutory Complaint Procedures.

##### **Stage Two:**

- If the complaint remains unresolved, the Head of Service will initiate an investigation into the complaints made.

##### **Stage Three:**

- The Chief Executive will review the complaint and consider whether the complaint has been dealt with appropriately.

The timescale for Corporate Complaints will mirror the timescale for the statutory procedure in order to maintain and monitor standards.

## 5. Access To The Statutory Complaints Procedures

The aim is that the Complaints Procedures are accessible and simple to use, when children, young people and 'significant others' feel dissatisfied with the service provided by the Trust. The CM is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with the Statutory Complaint Procedures, and provides an easily accessible service for those service users who wish to make a complaint. These strategies include:

- The CM is available to the public Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and offers a number of ways for people to contact them for advice, opportunity to discuss a concern or problem, or to make a complaint. These include face to face meetings, telephone calls, email correspondence, letters
- A new complaints leaflet has been designed and made available to all social workers to give to young people and other service users; business cards have also been provided to all of the staff of the Trust which includes the contact details of the CM. A requirement of The Practice Standard of Statutory Social Work and Early Help is that service users are informed of their right to make a complaint and how to contact the CM. The Trust's new website has full details of how to make a complaint or compliment, and the intranet provides staff in the Trust with easy access to the procedure.
- The CM is available to work with the Children in Care Council (Reach Out! group) to develop child-centred information sheets/ brochures for children to enable them to make a complaint
- All Child Protection Conference Chairs explain to families and Child Protection Conference participants of their right to make complaints and advise them of the contact details of the CM and how to lodge a complaint
- All Independent Reviewing Officers are required to advise all of the children who are looked after by the Trust of their right to make a complaint and how to go about it.

## 6. Overview of Complaints

### 6.1 Overview

The Complaints Manager (CM) routinely collects a range of data to manage the complaints, and it is from this data that the following analyses have been completed. The CM will hold liaison meetings with the relevant managers for more complex cases.

The CM will also discuss with the complainant if they are agreeable to their concerns being resolved at a mediatory level in the first instance rather than going straight to the formal Stage 1.

This is a positive outcome for the Trust as it shows that social workers are engaging in the process of preventing complaints escalating, it also gives the complainants a sense of a more personal and less formal organisational response.

Complaints that have been resolved at a mediatory level are recorded as a representation on the Trust's records.

## 6.2 Total Number of Complaints and Representations 2016/17

Table: Total number of complaints

Number in Period		
Year	Complaints	Representations
2016/17	63	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	

The above table shows that a total of 96 complaints were received in 2016-17 out of which 63 were managed under the statutory complaints procedure at Stage 1, and 33 were managed at mediatory level and were recorded as representations.

It is not possible to compare data between 2015/16 and 2016/17 because the data was recorded differently. From February 2017 onwards representations have been recorded as a separate category so that a better analysis can be made.

## 6.3 Timelines of Responses to Complaints

The Trust aims to respond and resolve a Stage 1 Complaint within ten working days of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint.

In 2016-17 out of the 63 complaints 27 (42.8%) were resolved within timescales, 29 (46%), (12%) were outside timescales and data for 7 is unavailable, as the time period for these 7 complaints is before the permanent CM was appointed. This is an improvement from last year as in 2015-16 out of the 82 complaints received, 25 were responded to within timescales, 14 were responded to outside timescales, and data is not available for 43 complaints.

## 6.4 Trust Corporate Complaints

In 2016-17, out of the representations, 2 were identified as Trust corporate complaints. Both were regarding delays in payment of invoices. 12 complaints were relating to the SEND services and were progressed through their complaints procedure.

## 6.5 Who is making the complaints?

The Statutory Complaints Procedures are only accessible to those who qualify in regards to specific criterion, and overleaf is a breakdown of the role of the complainant.

Table: Role of the Complainant 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Complainant	Number	%
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Children/ young care leaver	13	20.6
Parents	39	61.9
Foster carers	1	1.5
Other (grandparents; advocate; SGO; carer)	10	15.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>

The largest group of individuals lodging a Stage 1 Complaint was the parents of a child/ children receiving a service from the Trust. Overall parents lodged a total of 39 of the 63 complaints. Young people, all of whom were clients of the Leaving Care Service, lodged 13 complaints of the 63.

### 6.6 Method of Lodging a Complaint

To enable service users to make a complaint, the decision on how to make that complaint is entirely up to them. The table below provides information about the method of lodging a complaint.

Table: Method of Lodging a Complaint

Mode of making a Complaint	Number
Email	42
In person	5
Telephone	8
Letter	7
Other ( e.g MP)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

Although 8 complaints were lodged via telephone, many more potential complainants did contact the CM to seek guidance and advice on how to lodge a complaint. Data shows that the method of contact preferred is via email. Potential complainants also accessed the CM to discuss their concerns and on many occasions a mediated resolution was negotiated with the service user and the relevant manager.

### 6.7 Reasons for Making a Complaint

There are many reasons people who are involved with children's social care will complain, but for the purposes of collecting data the Trust has put them into four categories.

- **Category 1** Behaviour/ attitude of social worker or staff member
- **Category 2** Case management decision/ Disagreement with decision
- **Category 3** Quality of services provided by the Trust
- **Category 4** Lack of / failure to provide services.

Table: Reasons for making a complaint

Reason for making complaints	No	%
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Behaviour or attitude of social worker or staff member	37	58.7
Case Management decision/ Disagreement with decision	7	11
Quality of service provide by the Trust	13	20.6
Lack of/ failure to provide service	4	6.3
Not recorded	2	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of complaints relate to staff behaviour or attitude, of these 17 were upheld or partially upheld. This provided learning for managers and they were able to into place further training and closer supervision for the relevant staff. The next largest group of complaints were about the quality of service provided by the Trust of which 9 were upheld or partially upheld, again providing information highlighting areas where the Trust could improve.

## 6.8 Outcomes of Complaints

### There three outcomes to a complaint:

**Upheld** – this means the Trust accepts it is at fault. The Trust will apologise, and also explain what it will do to rectify the error and stop the error for occurring in future

**Partially Upheld** – this means the Trust partially accepts that it is at fault and will apologise, and also explain what it will do to rectify the error and stop the error from occurring in future

**Not Upheld** – this means the Trust does not accept that it is at fault.

Table: Outcomes of complaints 2016-17

Year	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	N/A	No outcome recorded	Total
2016/17	4	26	27	2	4	63

In 2016/17 out of the 63 complaints 4 complaints were upheld, 26 were partially upheld, 27 were not upheld. No data is available for 4 complaints in terms of an outcome.

Of the 2 complaints recorded with (N/A) there is only data for 1, which states that the decision was deferred due to court proceedings commencing. The dates for these complaints precede the start of the permanent CM so it is not possible to comment further.

One legacy complaint (relating to issues that arose when children’s services were managed by Slough Borough Council) was progressed to Stage 2 as the complainant remained dissatisfied with the Stage 1 investigation.

One complaint progressed to Stage 2 because the timeline of ten days was not met, but the Stage 2 investigation was then deferred as court proceedings were begun.

It has not been possible to compare the data for all the categories between 2016/17 and 2015/16 because of the different ways in which it has been collated and recorded. Therefore, for many categories, comparisons between the two years have not been made.

## 7. Representation

### 7.1 Who is making the representations?

The Trust has defined 'Representation' for its purposes where the complainant has agreed to resolve their concerns at a mediatory level, the Trust has only accepted complaints from those who meet the criteria according to the Statutory Complaints procedure.

Table: Role of the Complainant 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Complainant	Number	%
Children/ young care leaver	3	9.0
Parents	23	69.6
Foster carers	10	30.3
Other (grandparents; advocate; SGO; carer)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

### 7.2 Method of lodging a representation

To enable service users to make a complaint, the decision on how to make that complaint is entirely up to them. The table below provides information about the method of lodging a complaint.

Table: Method of Lodging a Representation 1st April to 31st March

Method of making a representation	Number
Email	10
In person	0
Telephone	19
Letter	4
Other ( e.g MP)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

The data shows that the preferred method of contact is via the telephone, this allows the complainant to discuss their complaint with the CM and decide whether they wish for their complaint to be progressed as formal stage 1 or as a representation.

### 7.3 Timelines of Responses to Representations

The Trust still aims to resolve representations within ten working days. However this timeframe is applied more loosely as the aim is to resolve the concerns between the complainant and the Trust through discussion and meetings. The meetings may be multi-agency with senior managers, which can take longer to arrange and may involve more than one meeting.

In 2016-17 out of the 34 representations 13 were resolved within timescales, 14 were outside timescales, 6 were abandoned at the request of the complainant, 1 is still ongoing.

### 7.4 Reasons for making a representation

There are many reasons people who are involved with children’s social care will raise concerns or wish to make a complaint, but for the purposes of collecting data the Trust has put them into four categories.

**Category 1** Behaviour/ attitude of social worker or staff member

**Category 2** Case management decision/ Disagreement with decision

**Category 3** Quality of services provided by the Trust

**Category 4** Lack of / failure to provide services

Table: Reasons for making a representation

Reasons for making representation	No	%
Behaviour or attitude of social worker or staff member	25	75.7
Case Management decision/ Disagreement with decision	2	6
Quality of service provide by the Trust	4	12.1
Lack of/ failure to provide service	2	6
Not recorded	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

### 7.5 Outcomes of Representations

Table: Outcomes of Representations 2016-17

Year	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	N/A	No outcome recorded	Total
2016/17	2	8	15	7	1	33

In 2016/17 out of the 33 recorded representations only 2 were upheld, 8 were partially upheld and 15 upheld. Out of the 7 representations that had N/A recorded against them, 3 were deemed not a matter for Social Care Complaints Procedure, of which one was referred to access to records, the other followed the adoption complaints procedure; 2 were withdrawn at the request of the complainant, 2 have no information recorded against them.

The dates for these representations precede the start of the permanent CM so it is not possible to comment further.

## 8. Compliments

In addition to managing and monitoring complaints and representations the Trust also collects compliments. Data for compliments has been recorded since 1 January 2016 and these are reported below.

The compliments have been broken down into three categories, and these are described below:

**Category 1: Social Work Practice** which relates to feedback about the Social Worker's and allied Trust professionals' skills and empathy in their communications and practice skills in the work with children and families,

**Category 2: Case Management** which relates to the skills exercised by the staff of the Trust demonstrated in managing meetings, care and case planning and allocating resources in the process of supporting and safeguarding children, young people and families.

**Category 3: Partnership Working** which is evidence of Trust staff working in partnership across Services/ Teams within the Trust and between Trust staff and professionals across agencies, to enhance the safeguarding and well being of children, young people and families.

From April 2016 to March 2017 a total number 38 compliments were recorded, of these 28 related to category 1 and 10 for category 3. We believe this number is actually higher, however we are only able to report on those compliments that were submitted to the CM.

Table: Compliments by category

Category of Compliment		No	%
1	Social Work Practice	28	73.6
2	Case Management	0	0
3	Partnership Working	10	26.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

Compliments are received via a number of avenues and through different methods. The compliments include positive feedback from children, young people and families, other professionals and community members.

Below is a breakdown of the parties who have complimented the work of the Trust.

Table: Role of the person making the compliment.

Role		No	%
1	Child, Young Person	3	7.8
2	Family, Foster Carer	7	18.4
3	Trust Manager	14	36.8
4	Partner Professional/ Agency	14	36.8

<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>
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#### Example of a compliment from a foster carer

“D and I just wanted to share how SW went above and beyond to assist us with young person’s disappearance on Sunday, he was available all day and advised and constantly checked via text and calls on the welfare of the young person.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank SW once again for all his professional support and input.”

#### Example of compliment from young person

“Okay, I will start college next year so. I can complete my course. Anyway thank you so much for your support, you guys have been helping me since I came to this country, I really appreciate it. And your very a good social worker thanks to you as well. I could never forgot you guys. “

#### Example of service user (experiencing domestic abuse)

“Dear Manager, I am XX as you know me. I was alone and depressed in UK and I was lost all my hopes. But the social services give me another life. Specially XX and, of course, XX, thank you so much to give me and my children a new life. Thanks for give my life a new turn. Without you I was really nothing. Now I am independent confident and very happy. God bless you all and may God give you more success to help people like me. Thank X thank you so much.”

As an area of development the Trust will continue to collate compliments and examples of good professional practice and reporting this on an ongoing basis.

## 9. Member of Parliament Enquiries

The correspondence from the local Member of Parliament has been record by the office of the CEO. Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, 15 enquiries were logged and each of these was managed by the designated Head of Service.

- 6 of the 15 enquiries were for the SEND and LDD teams and responded to by the delegated to the Head of Services, the majority of these related to the educational provisions to the eligible children

Of the remaining 9 enquiries the breakdown of the issues was as follows:

- Four enquiries were about lack of communication from the Trust
- One enquiry was about a child missing education
- One related to concerns about a father taking his children out of the country
- One was a enquiry about support required for children over the age of 18
- One enquired about the YOT needs.
- One was in relation to a provider.

## 10. Cost of the Complaint Service and Investigations 1 April 2016 To 31 March 2017

From 1 August 2016, a permanent Complaints Manager has been in place, which reduced the cost of interim staff filling this post.

However there were costs of a number of complaints progressing to Stage 2 and one case progressing to mediation after Stage 2 rather than going to Stage 3.

Compensation payments were made to two legacy complaints, payment for these was made, after negotiation, by Slough Borough Council.

The Complaints Manager aims to continue to develop the complaints service ensuring that it is accessible, understandable and a well-managed customer-focused service and to further enhance the following standards:

- A service with an established process for managing new complaints
- A service that is resourced with an accessible, qualified and verified team of Investigating Officers and Independent Persons to support Stage 2 investigations
- A clear Complaints Procedures and a strong policy base for the management of complaints
- An annual report that provides an account of the quality of the service.
- A Complaints Training programme, that informs staff of the Statutory Complaints Procedure in children's services, the role they play in this process and the rights of the service users to complain
- A culture for staff to see complaints as a means to learn and reflect in their professional practice as Social Workers rather than as a negative force
- Accessible information for service users on how to make a complaint
- Accessible information on how to make a compliment
- A service which is valued by service users and staff.

## 11. 2017/18 Developmental Plan for the Complaints Management Service

The Trust acknowledges that those who access its services are from the most vulnerable sections of the community and, as such, understands the need to continue to strive in delivering a service within a culture of transparency, openness, respect and listening.

In October 2016 the Trust developed and distributed a child/ young person friendly complaints leaflet to continue to ensure that the complaints process is accessible and the Complaints Manager approachable.

The Trust will aim to continue to enhance the management of complaints in line with the Statutory Guidance, with the following:

- Development of strategies to ensure that all those who qualify to utilise the Statutory Complaints Procedures are aware of their right and the knowledge about how to exercise their right to challenge and lodge a complaint
- Complaints Manager to work with the Reach Out! groups and the IROs to ensure that children and young people are aware of their right to make a complaint and on how to do this

- To increase access to advocacy for those children / young people who wish to make a complaint
- Ensuring and evidencing a strong policy and procedure base within the Complaints Management Service of the Trust
- Continue to develop the mandatory training programme for all staff on how to achieve and learn from complaints.

As a matter of principle, all staff of the Trust who are part of a Stage 2 Complaint Investigation are provided with a copy of the Statement of Complaint prior to being interviewed by the Investigating Officer and Independent Person.

### Provision of information from complaints to the Trust, to inform ongoing quality assurance of services

- Ensure active process of learning from complaints by linking outcomes to practice development
- Establish a strong auditing programme of the management, conduct and findings of complaints
- Establishment of clear benchmarks in the management of complaints. The enablement for the Trust to demonstrate to complainants that their voice has been heard and that the issues they complained about were treated seriously, respectfully and reassured that the investigation was undertaken without fear or favour and that the same result/ outcome would be realised
- Improve timescales for responses to Stage 1 complaints
- Continue in further developing the culture to help negotiate and achieve a mediated resolution, with an ambition of enhancing the customer service aspect of the post and organisation.

## 12. Addendum

This report was completed in August 2017 and was presented to the Senior Management Team during this month.