

Families Customer Relations Service

**Children, Schools and Families
Statutory Complaints Report – 2009-2010**

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report statistical information to Members and Officers detailing Surrey Children's, schools and Families Directorate Social Care complaints activity from 01/04/09 – 31/03/10 including developments and planned improvements. This is the first time information relating to the management of complaints in the Children's Schools and Families Directorate within Surrey will be detailed in one report, following the restructuring of the Directorate.
- 1.2 To meet the regulation 18 (2) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1681 Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and regulation 13 (3) of Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738 The Children Act (1989) Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- 1.3 For the current year the following Statutory Guidance remains relevant
 - Getting the best from Complaints 2006
 - Guidance on Social Care Complaint and Representations for Children, Young People and Others
- 1.4 This report provides analysis and comment for the Directorate on all complaints including those managed under the County Process.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Regulations require Local Authorities with Social Services responsibilities to set up and retain a complaints procedure and to operate that procedure with regard to specified timescales and methods of investigation and review. The guidance requires an Annual Report should provide a mechanism by which the local authority can be kept informed about the operation of its complaints procedure. Further, the report should be presented to staff and the relevant local authority committee, and should be made available to the regulator and the general public.
- 2.2 Surrey's Children's Services, in line with other council services, encourages and enables service users to comment about the services they receive. During the period covered by this report, a 3-stage procedure has been in operation in respect of statutory complaints made by qualifying individuals, as specified in the legislation.
- 2.3 All complaints made by non-qualifying complainants and complaints about non-social care functions are managed in line with the Council's corporate complaints procedure. This procedure has been designed to mirror the statutory processes, however during 2009-2010 it initially operated to different timescales, which have subsequently been brought into line with the Statutory Process. The Families Customer Relations Team (FCRT) oversees all complaints about service delivered within the Directorate and distinctions between the processes are made at stages 2 and 3 only.
- 2.4 A low volume of recorded complaints can sometimes, although not always, indicate contentment with service provision. However, the organisation should never be complacent and complaints are welcomed particularly as they can reveal a deficiency in practice, policies or procedures and potentially highlight safeguarding concerns. It is from these that the Service and those who work in it can learn and improve practice and service delivery.
- 2.5 The complaints process and feedback gained is an integral part of the quality assurance process, which feeds into the development and monitoring of services.

3 LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 The FCRT continues to offer “Complaints Visiting Workshops” to teams across the directorate. These are intended as informal training sessions to raise awareness of the complaints processes and to enable staff to raise concerns in a supportive and helpful environment. There continues to be a good take up of the visiting workshop training and feedback from these indicates that teams find them more useful than a one-day course. A total of 9 children’s teams received training during this period, in addition teams have received database training when requested.
- 3.2 Staff involved in complex stage 1 and all stage 2 complaints continue to be offered debriefing sessions with FCRT staff. This provides the opportunity to discuss the process of the case, learning outcomes and how experience was for staff involved. Take up of these sessions has been sporadic, however, when completed, both staff and managers have very positively received these.
- 3.3 The development of Corrective Action Plans [Documents which are agreed with the Service and detail the learning for the County arising from the Complaint and subsequent actions to improve service, practice and performance] (following the outcome of complaints is now systematic at stages 2 and 3 of the process and led by the relevant Customer Relations Officer. Plans are agreed and signed off by the senior operational manager who is responsible for taking actions forward. In the coming year learning from complaints will become the focus point of the remit of a Customer Relations Officer. It is anticipated that this will aid the Service in early identification of organisational learning at all stages of the process.
- 3.4 Improvements to process and learning that have been made as a result of complaints, identified by operational staff and FCRT staff, are listed below.

3.4.1 Children’s Services

- Improved communication with advocates, when the complaint is not on behalf of the Service User or their family, in explaining which complaint process would apply and why. Also in regard to obtaining consent from the service user or their family as appropriate.
- Social Workers and Assistant Team Managers reminded of the importance to clarify understanding with parents in regard to the roles of multi agency professionals attending Safeguarding Conferences
- Social Workers reminded to explain to parents the reasons underpinning the calling of Safeguarding Conferences
- Social Workers and Assistant Team Managers of assessment teams reminded of the requirement that recommendations are included in Child Protection Conference reports.
- Families Customer Relations team visited specific teams to assist them in developing their complaints handling practice.
- Social Workers and Assistant Team Managers of assessment teams reminded that parents should be offered the opportunity of second medical opinions during Child Protection Process as appropriate
- Team Managers assisted by the Families Customer Relations Team in employing methods available in dealing with persistent complainants. This, including recommendations about managing contact from the complainant by agreeing frequency and manner of communication with the complainant.
- Protocol in place with Surrey Police Force to assist in complaint liaison where concerns cut across both organisations
- Improved communication with complainants who do not qualify to access the statutory process particularly relative to stage 2 of the county process

- Social Workers and Assistant Team Managers reminded of the requirement that complaints from qualifying individuals must account for the expressed wishes and feelings of Children and Young People when appropriate

3.4.2 Schools and Learning

- On going review of the SEN Policy relating to Residency Criteria for Children moving into the County partway through an academic year

3.4.3 Services for Young People

- Development of a Complaints/Feedback Information Sheet specifically for use by Surrey Outdoor Learning Development

4 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 The County's Corporate Aims, to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all are also reflected by the Complaints Procedures in securing the participation of service users and their representatives through consultation and communication.

4.2 The Government's guidance 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' also provides a framework for promoting change and building services around the needs of the child or young person so that opportunities are maximised and risks minimised. Integral to the framework are the introduction of Local Authority performance measurement against the five new outcomes: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being. Although the majority of the performance indicators within the framework measure against specific aspects of service provision, the over arching message from the guidance is:

- "The services that reach every child and young person have a crucial role to play in shifting the focus for dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children's lives to preventing things from going wrong in the first place."

4.3 The complaints process supports and underpins this approach.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 The Complaints Procedures are a means of engaging service users and their representatives to provide feedback on services, as well as highlighting specific areas of concern. Complaints information is provided verbally to services users and leaflets on the procedure are distributed. Complaints information is also available via the County Council website, in Surrey County Council and other public access points.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Statutory foundations for the Social Services Complaints Procedure are –

- The Local Authority Social Services Act (1970)
- The Children's Act (1989)
- The Children's Act (2001)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Adoption and Children's Act (2002)
- The Children's Act 1989 Representations Procedure (2006)

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Provision is included within the Service's budget for 2009/10 to cover the management of the complaints services. This includes the sum of £35,000.00, which is available to fund the use of External Investigators, Independent People (required for Children's Act complaints), and for Complaints panel hearings. The provision for the NYAS contract is met through budgets in the Safeguarding Children Unit. This provision for complaint related advocacy has been changed and brought in house as from 1 April 2010 and will have a positive impact on the residual budget.

7.2 Children's Service Spend

Spend	Total 2006/07	Total 2007/08	Total 2008/09	Total 2009/10
Independent Persons	£6,112.10	£5,572.77	£4,074.79	£8,512.38
Investigation Officers	£20,715.20	£14,424.21	£14,955.68	£17,619.31
Stage 3	£2,126.92	£3,719.31	£2,945.70	£1,046.09
Total	£28,954.22	£23,716.29	£21,976.17	£27,177.78

7.3 Other Service Spend excluding staff costs

Spend	2009-10
Provision of free phone line	£300.00
Total	£300.00

7.4 Total service spend excluding staffing **£27,477.78**

7.5 A direct comparison of volume and level of cases with year on year expenditure is not necessarily the most accurate measure of performance due to the invoicing cycle of Independent Workers. What is relevant in general terms however is that the figures reflect that volumes of complaints received at stages 2 increased slightly, at stage 3 these were substantially reduced. It is notable that the IP cost has doubled whereas the increase in IO cost has been less than 25%. This is related to an increase in the Pool of IP's and the consequential initial lack of experience of some of the IP's within the role. The Team is confident that the budget reflects the volume of work undertaken. This is a result of continuing to manage investigations more directly and ensuring that Independent workers are clear on their remit and responsibilities. The overall increase reflects the increase in numbers of stage 2 investigations that were undertaken.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Much of the information for this report is gleaned from individual complaint files, Surrey County Council customer feedback database, previous years complaint reports and FCRT records. The data is also taken from monthly and quarterly performance monitoring reports held by Customer Relations Service. Complaint files remain confidential, while as in previous years this report is anonymised and in the public domain.

PART 2

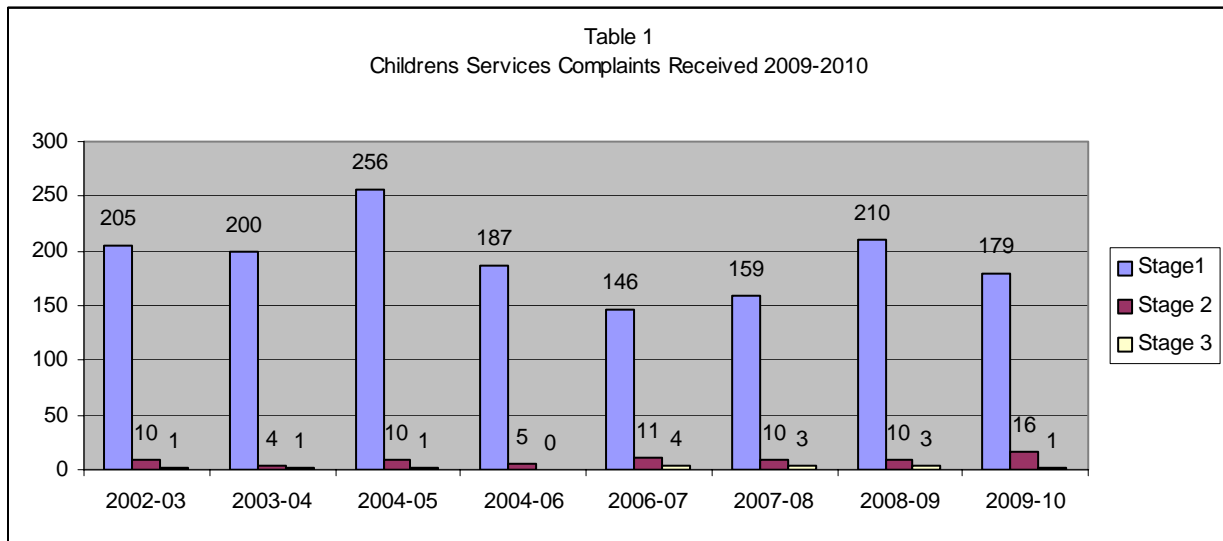
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS 2009 – 2010

9 CHILDREN'S SERVICE

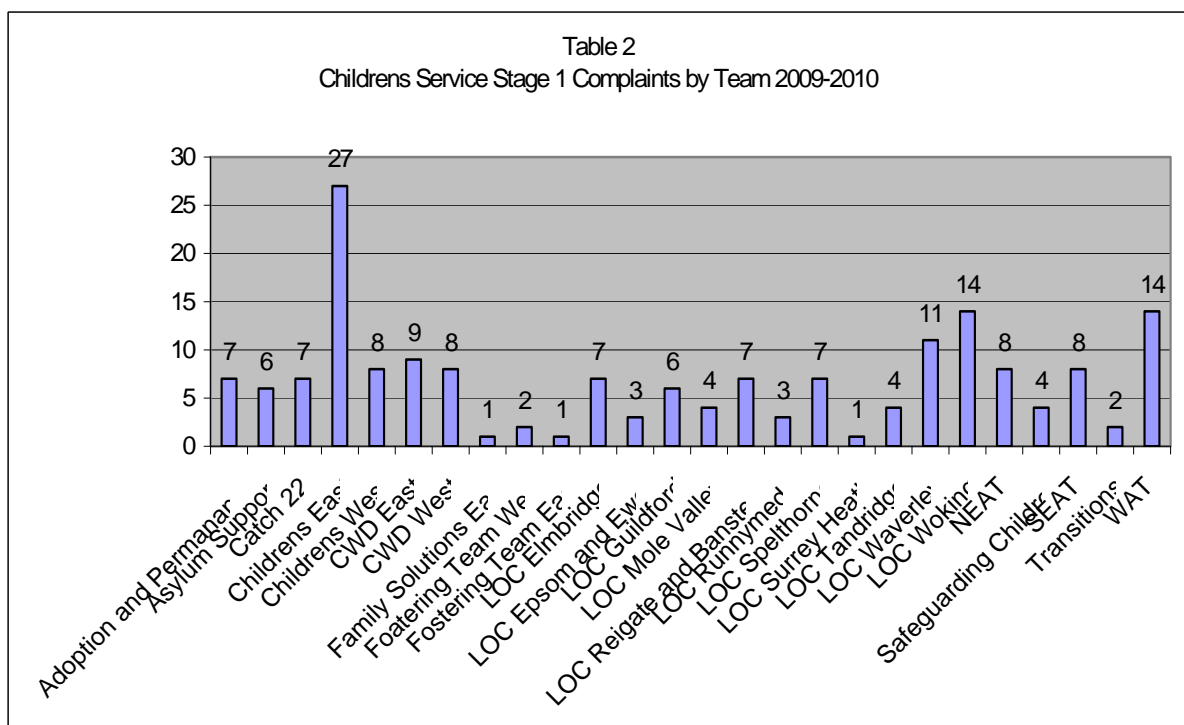
9.1 As illustrated in table 1, total numbers of complaints received this year for Surrey Children's Service has decreased by 21. This is a disappointing result as the FCRT continues to promote

information about the procedure to operational teams and to service users. The FCRT team have seen increased requests for individual case support and team meeting visiting workshops and debriefing sessions in the last twelve months.

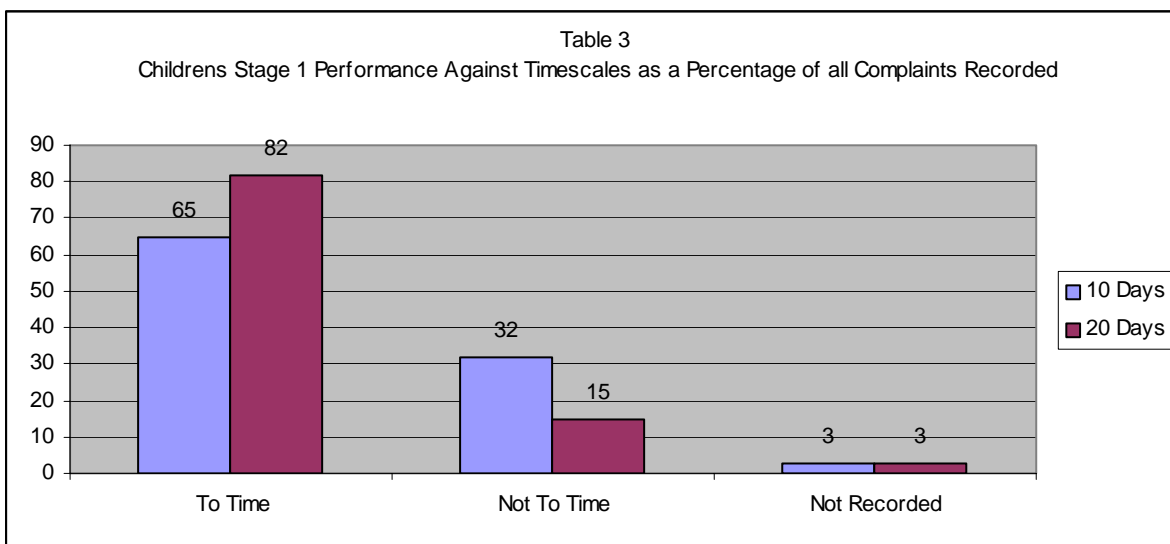
9.2 Despite the decrease in stage 1 complaints, the numbers recorded at stage 2 increased while at stage 3 there was a decrease this year, 16 and 1 respectively. The FCRT will continue to work hard to ensure that all alternative dispute tools are considered before the matter is progressed. Given the reduced numbers of stage 1s an increase in stage 2 is disappointing this year especially given the efforts of the team. Ultimately, it should be noted however that service users have a statutory right to progress complaints and the service has a duty to respond. Of the Stage 2 complaints recorded this year it should be noted that five have yet to be concluded and that one was dealt with via the County as opposed to Statutory Process.



9.3 Table 2 details Children's Service complaints by team over the last year. A high level of stage 1 complaints is a welcomed indication of the Services' openness to feedback and commitment to respond effectively.

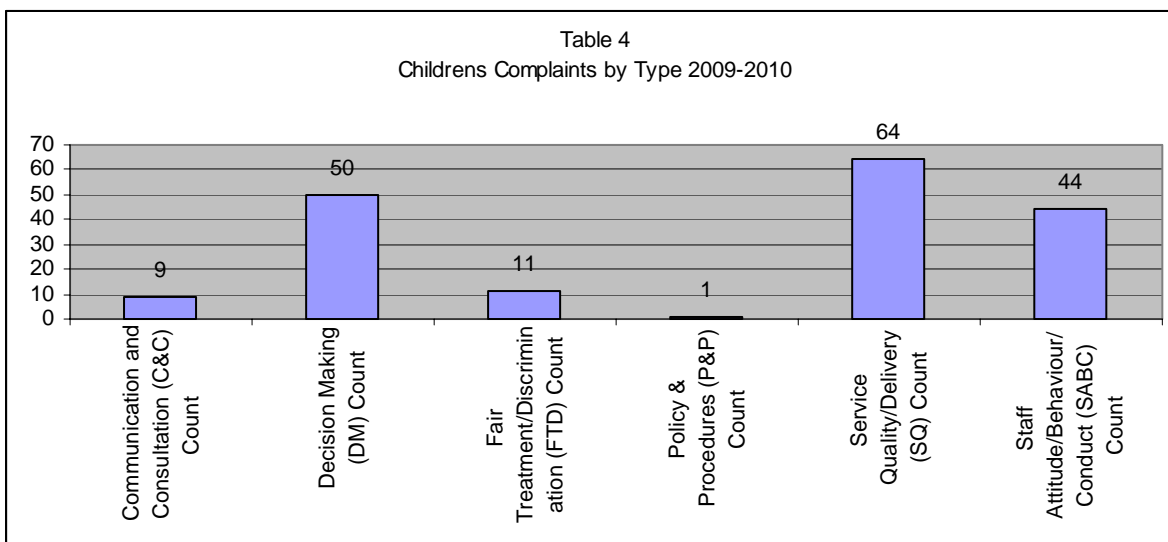


9.4 Table 3 provides detail of time taken to respond to complaints at stage 1, providing a comparison between the 10 and 20 day timescales. The table demonstrates that there was 65% compliance to the lower statutory timescales of ten working days this year. This is a small improvement on last year [62%]. In addition, 82% were responded to within the longer 20-day timescale, however performance in this area has decreased compared to the 84% compliance in the previous year. Additionally 6% of cases recorded have been reported as 'Not Recorded' as operational teams have not completed the response data and hence records cannot demonstrate response information. Although this misses the Council's corporate performance indicator it is reflective of the complexities of Social Care complaints. The improvement in performance at the 10-day response target is welcomed and is viewed as an improvement in operational staff understanding of their role in the procedure. It also needs to be acknowledged that there will, in some circumstances be cases, which cannot be responded to within this timescale, due to other contributing factors. However, the expectation is that these will remain in the minority. The FCRT continues to work with the Service to assist in compliance and is grateful to managers who have been proactive in raising timescales as an issue.



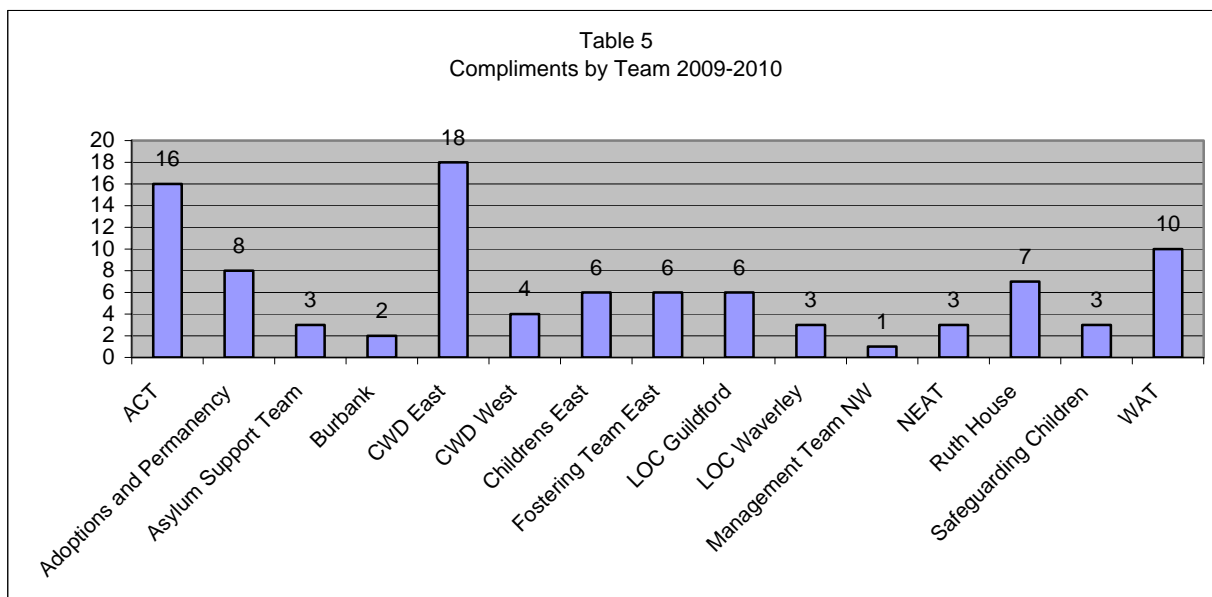
9.5 Again, throughout this year in order to address the balance and give a more reflective picture of performance, Customer Relations staff have spent a significant amount of time interrogating the data and chasing responses. Operational teams are routinely reminded of their responsibilities to log complaints and update records. This is a priority, especially as the figures within the database are used to report on performance throughout the county. Generally compliance to timescale and communication between the FCRT and operational teams has improved in the last year. This is demonstrated in the overall performance and is the basis for improvement in the coming years.

9.6 Table 4 below shows complaints received by type. The categories reflect the changes in the number of categories available for reporting purposes that was introduced at the start of the year. The chart demonstrates that the greater majority of complaints are in regard to Quality of Service provided, Decision making and Staff Attitude/conduct. This continues to be consistent with previous years. The nature of complaint in no way demises the right of the service user to complain; however it is important that complaints information is meaningful and enables learning.



- 9.7 Sixteen complaints were progressed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure in 2009 / 10. Five of which are ongoing at the time of writing. Of the remaining complaints one fell outside the statutory procedure and was therefore managed under the County complaints process. In addition, two did not progress to investigation as an alternative resolution was agreed. The majority of stage 2 complaints were recorded under the categories of Decision Making or Service quality/delivery and 4 about Staff Behaviour with one about Policies and Procedures. The majority of complaints at stage 2 were recorded as upheld in part or not upheld.
- 9.8 Timescales at stage 2 are measured from the date the complainant signs their statement of complaint to the date of the service adjudication. The statutory timescale at stage 2 is a maximum of 65 working days. Of the complaints that were progressed to full investigation, three exceeded this timescale. One due to delays in the completion of the statement of complaint, the second due to an extended review at stage 2 of the County Process and the other was dealt with as alternate resolution. In all cases the complainant was kept informed of delays.
- 9.9 One complaint relating to Children's Service was progressed to stage 3 of the procedure in 2009/10. This is less than last year and was managed through the statutory complaints process and was heard by a review panel. The matter was progressed further by the complainant and underwent scrutiny by the LGO. A final decision is awaited. A Corrective Action Plan was issued by the FCRT identifying learning and improvements. The stage 3 complaint was responded to within the required timescale. Overall this is indicative of improved responses at stage 2 of the process given the increase in cases progressed.
- 9.10 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received a total of 10 enquiries about Surrey Children's Service in 2009/10. This compares favourably against the previous year which saw 13 enquires from the LGO in regard to Surrey Childrens Service. Of the 10 enquiries received in 2009-2010, 6 were progressed to their investigations teams, and advice only was given in the remaining four cases. The LGO issued no public report in relation to Children's Services during this period. Children's Social Care enquiries made up 34% of the total received by the LGO in relation to the Childrens Schools and Families Directorate and 9% of the total received by the LGO in relation to Surrey County Council in 2009 /10. These figures reflect a decrease in the number of enquiries received by the LGO compared to the previous twelve months which saw 37% of the enquiries about the Directorate being in regard to Childrens Service and the Directorate as a whole making up 14% of the total received by the LGO in respect of the County.

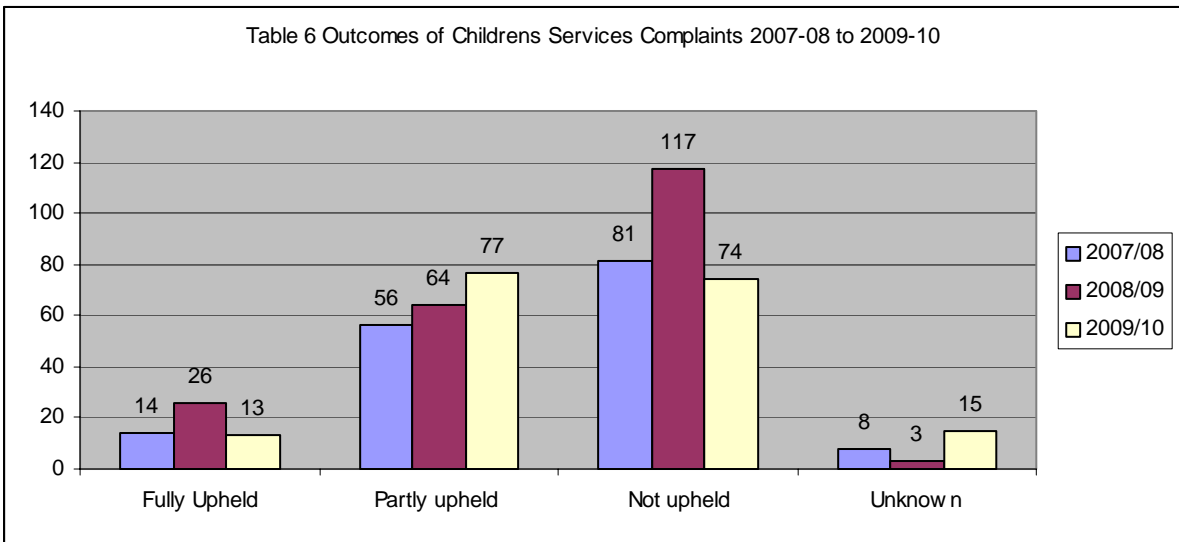
9.11 Table 5 below provides a breakdown of compliments recorded by team. As detailed some teams are recording much higher volumes of compliments than others but overall there has been an improved level of compliments recorded on the database by Children's Teams although overall the trend remains low. As the FCRT continue to receive queries from operational teams about logging compliments there appears to continue to be confusion on the process. As this is a trend across the Service it makes it extremely difficult to provide an accurate analysis of the true picture in relation to compliments. The FCRT will continue to actively reminding teams that they must record compliments as well as complaints in order to provide accurate and balanced data.



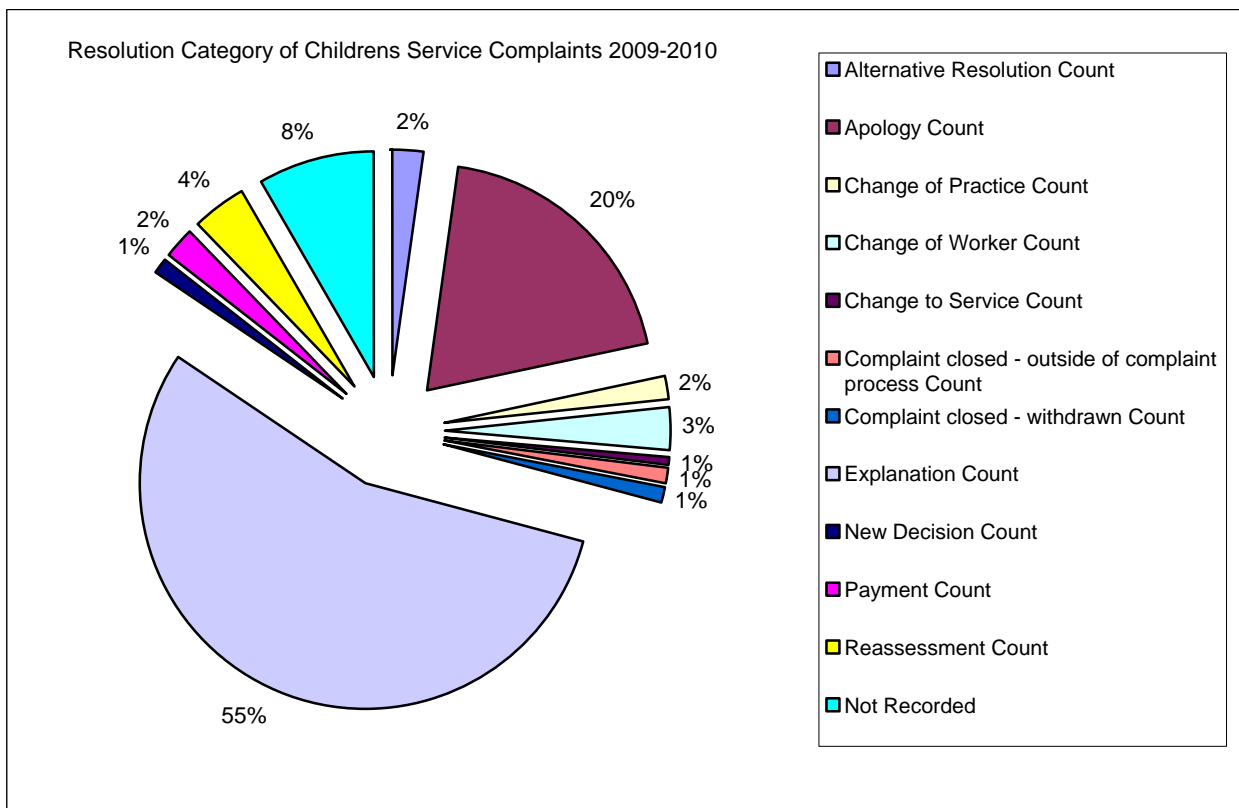
9.12 Once again the vast majority of complainants identified themselves as white British, which is not unexpected given the demography of the population. Generally the breakdown is reflective of the local area and is therefore a good indication of the accessibility of the procedure.

9.13 Table 6 shows the outcomes recorded for Children's Service complaints over the last three years. As is demonstrated by the table, outcome categories have been generally consistent. The majority were recorded as either not upheld or partly upheld. 7% of complaints received in 2009/10 were recorded as fully upheld. This is a decrease of 5% from last year and could be reflective of the increase in unknown results of 8%, which may be demonstrative of poor recording of outcomes by the Service. Over the coming year the FCRT, with the agreement of the Senior Managers within Childrens Service, propose to work with the Service to address this issue, by providing refresher training on the use of the database itself as well as visiting newly recruited managers either on a one to one tuition basis or within Service Areas as appropriate

9.14 These outcomes from complaints in no way are an indication that complaints received are not valid or reasonable and it will always be important to emphasise learning from all complaints. The underlying themes of poor communication or lack of information are central to the majority of complaints received for the Service. It is therefore critical to learn from individual complaints arising either as a result of misunderstandings or a failure to manage expectations. Routinely, the FCRT will receive requests from both the Service and service users asking for support in managing communications and resolving issues. The FCRT are becoming much more involved in learning from complaints and will continue to lead in providing management information on this.

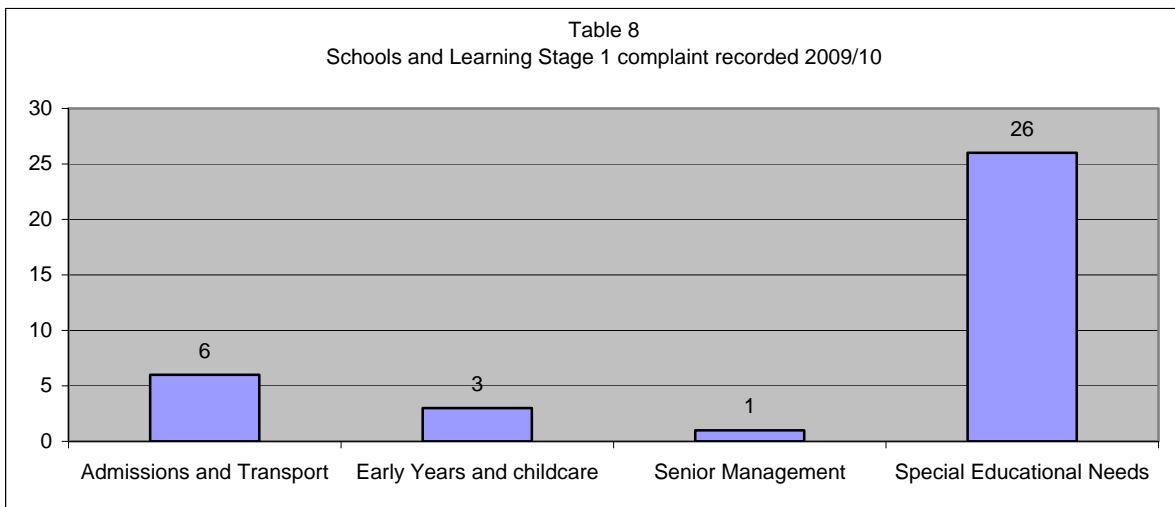


9.15 Table 7 below provides detail of the resolution category recorded by teams when the complaint is responded to. This provides an indication of the action taken to address the complaint. The vast majority of complaints were resolved by providing an explanation to the complainant. The proportionately high volume in this category indicates that service users and their families appear unclear about the actions of the service. Not understanding the work of the service and its limitations is often a cause for complaint, especially where service users' expectations have not been well managed. During staff complaints workshops, the importance of clear messages and managing expectations continues to be covered. The FCRT will be reinforcing this message by emphasising these trends in Performance Reports together with the development of Corrective Action Plans in collaboration with the Team and Service Managers.

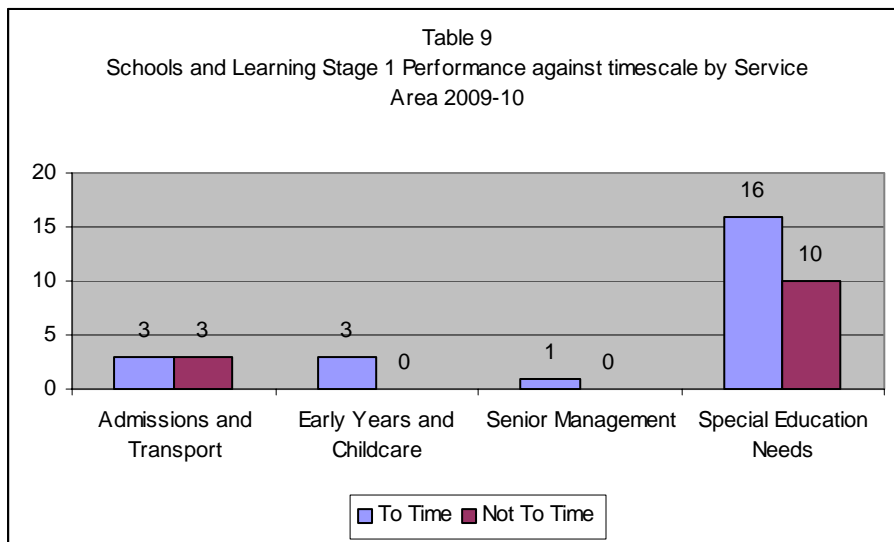


10 Schools and Learning

- 10.1 This is the first year that the report has incorporated separate data and analysis of Performance the Schools and Learning Services within the Childrens Schools and Families Directorate.
- 10.2 As illustrated in Table 8 below the total numbers of complaints recorded this year for Surrey Schools and Learning Service is 36. These complaints are managed via the County Process. The FCRT continues to develop a working and cooperative relationship with the operational teams and service users. As a result the team has seen increased requests for individual case support in the last twelve months. It is noted that the highest number of complaints are recorded by Special Education Needs and this is reflective of the complex nature of the service and in particular the expectations of the families in regard to requests for formal assessments of perceived needs. The appeals process in place in terms of Schools Admissions will also account to some extent for the low levels of recording in that area.

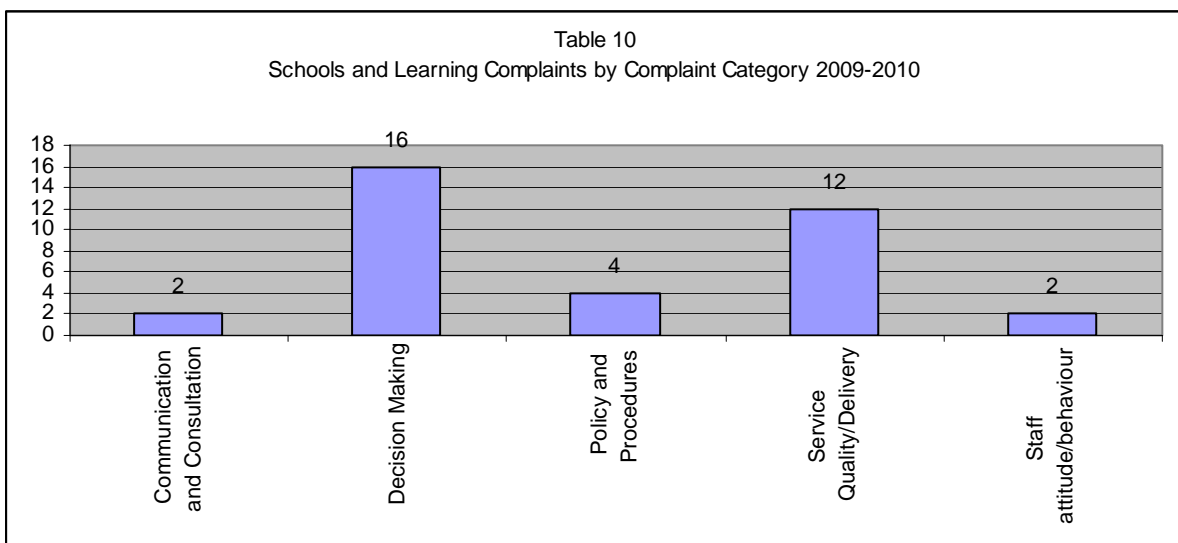


- 10.3 Table 9 provides detail of time taken to respond to complaints at stage 1, providing a comparison between the Service areas. Overall the Service is achieving 64% compliance against timescales at stage 1 of the process. This is a disappointing result as it falls well below the County's Performance Target of [88%]. The FCRT will continue to work with the Service and seek to improve performance in the coming year. The FCRT will be seeking senior managers support in working towards improving compliance to response times especially given the reduction in responding timescale to 10 work days as from 1 April 2010 and will focus support on SEN.



10.4 Throughout this year Customer Relations staff have spent a significant amount of time interrogating the data and chasing responses. Monthly Performance Reports serve as routine reminders to operational teams in regard to their responsibilities to log complaints and update records particularly as the figures within the database are used to report on performance throughout the county.

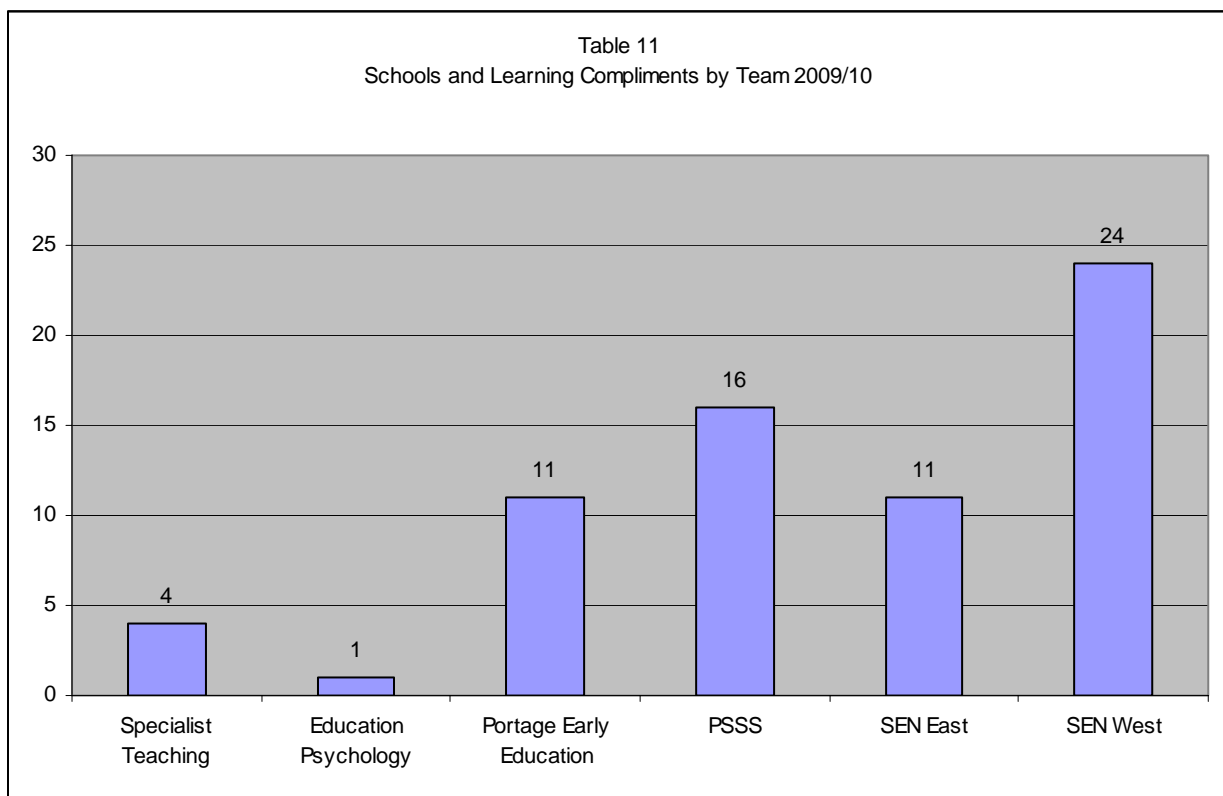
10.5 Table 10 below shows complaints received by type. The chart demonstrates that the greater majority of complaints are in regard to Quality of Service provided and Decision Making. This is consistent with other Service Areas within the Directorate.



10.6 Four complaints progressed to Stage 2 of the County Process. Of these one progressed to full investigation with the others being resolved by alternate means including a change of decision. Three of the four complaints were placed within the Special Education Needs Service. One of these is continuing at the time of writing this report. Of the four complaints two were in regard to decision making with the others being in respect of Policy and Procedures and Service Quality. All of the three complaints that have been concluded at stage 2 of the process have been upheld in part. All of the complaints that have completed the second stage of the process have been completed to time.

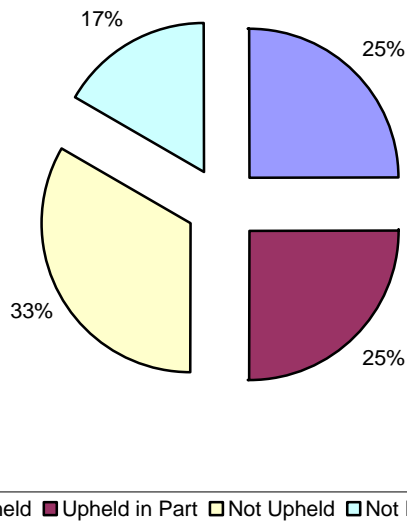
10.7 No complaints progressed to Stage 3 of the County process.

- 10.8 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received a total of 18 enquiries about Surrey Schools and Learning Service in 2009/10. Of these 15 related to Transport and Admissions and it must be noted that in the main these were cases that had been through the Admissions appeal process where the complainant remained dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal. The LGO issued no public reports in relation to Schools and Learning Services during this period. Schools and Learning enquiries made up 62% of the enquiries relating to the Childrens Schools and Families Directorate and 16% of the total received by the LGO in relation to Surrey County Council in 2009 /10. This is consistent with the previous twelve months where 62% of all LGO enquiries about the Council related to Education.
- 10.9 Table 11 below provides a breakdown of compliments recorded by Teams. As detailed some teams are recording much higher volumes of compliments than others but overall there has been an improved level of compliments recorded on the database by Schools and Learning Teams although overall the trend remains low. It is notable that the highest level of recording rests with SEN and is consistent with high-level recording of complaints. This is seen as indicative of an awareness of the importance of recording feedback to inform the development of best practice across the area.



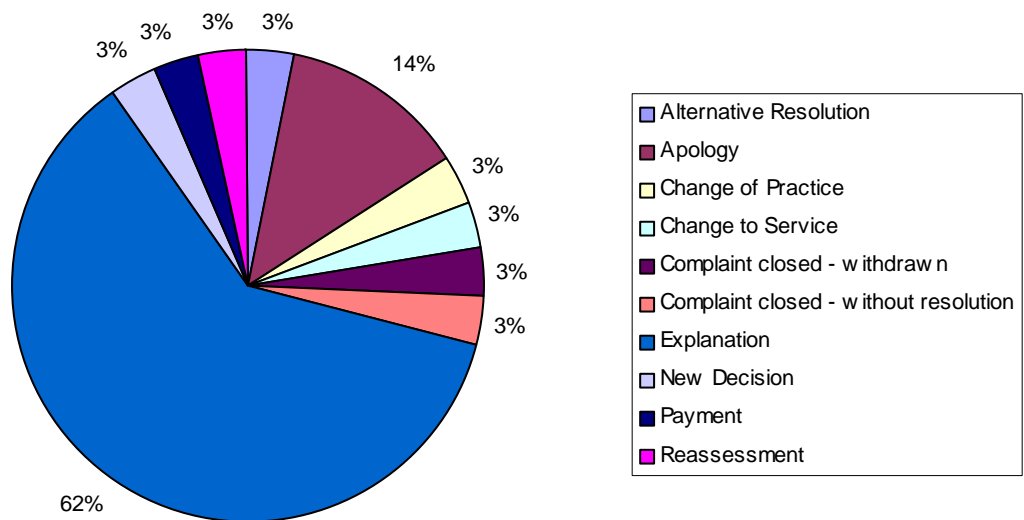
- 10.10 Table 12 shows the outcomes recorded for Schools and Learning complaints over the past year. 33% of Complaints were not upheld with 25% being Upheld and a further 25% being Part Upheld. At the time of writing 17% of outcomes are not recorded. Of these, 4 relate to Special Educational Needs and two to Transport and Admissions. It is important to highlight the learning arising from all complaints and therein to identify underlying themes reflective of poor communication or lack of information which are in accordance with other parts of the Directorate. It is therefore critical to learn from individual complaints arising either as a result of misunderstandings or a failure to manage expectations. The FCRT are becoming much more involved in learning from complaints and in taking the lead in the provision of management information on this.

Table 12
Schools and Learning Complaint Outcomes 2009/10



10.11 Table 13 below provides detail of the resolution category recorded by teams when the complaint is responded to. This provides an indication of the action taken to resolve the complaint. The vast majority [63%] of complaints were resolved by providing an explanation to the complainant. This is in line with other Services within the Directorate and indicates that service users and their families appear unclear about the reasons underpinning the actions of the service. This can often be a cause for complaint, particularly if the service users' expectations have not been well managed. The FCRT will continue to highlight the importance of this during complaint management workshops and presentations.

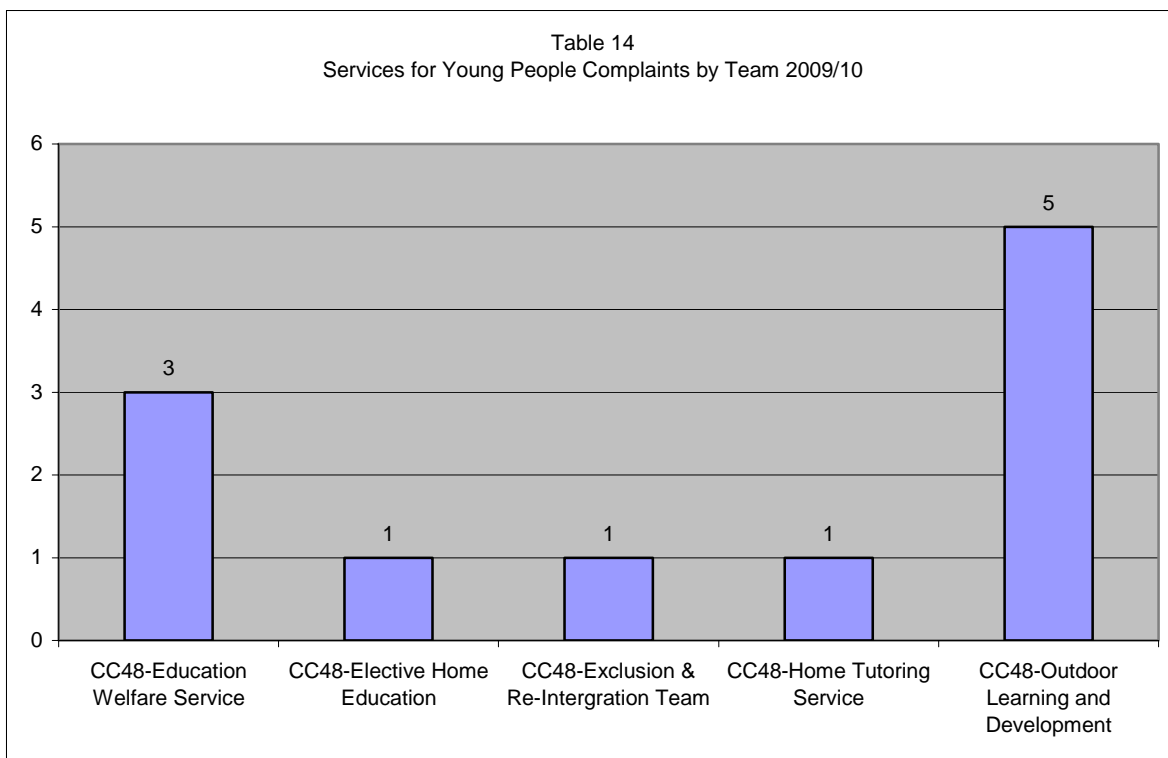
Table 13
Schools and Learning Complaint Resolution Categories 2009/10



PART 4

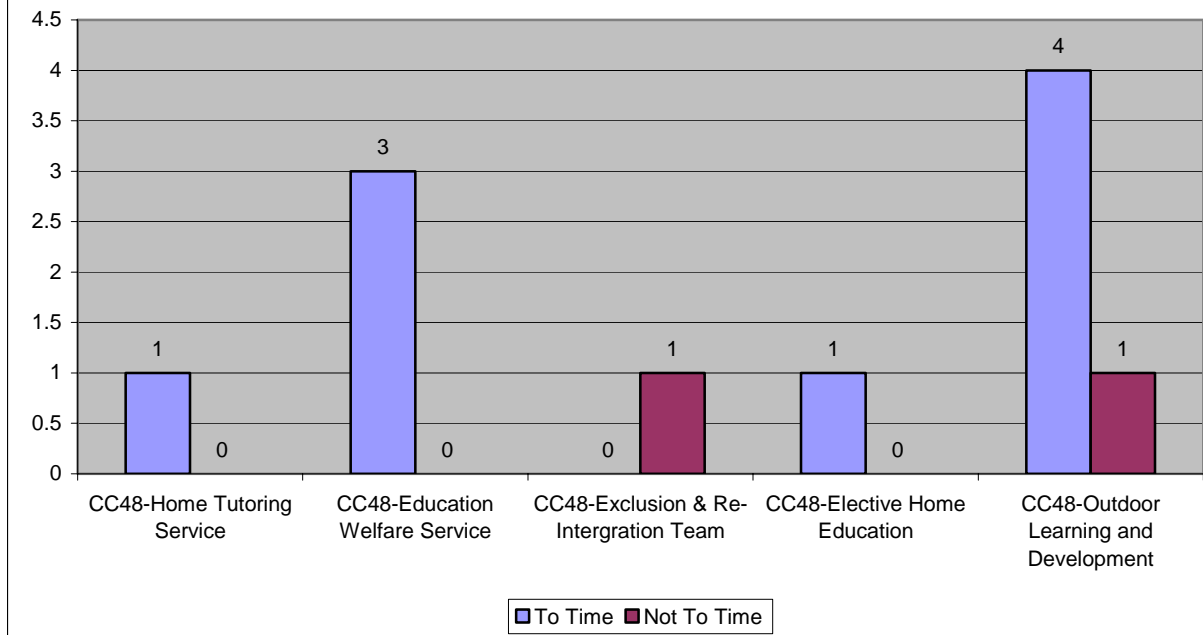
11 Services for Young People

- 11.1 This is the first year that the report has incorporated separate data and analysis of Performance within Services for Young People in the Childrens Schools and Families Directorate.
- 11.2 As illustrated in Table 14 below the total numbers of complaints recorded this year for Services for Young People is 11. These complaints are managed via the County Process. The FCRT continues to develop a working and cooperative relationship with the operational teams and service users. It is notable that of the 5 Complaints recorded by Youth Development Service four were made by the same individual and related to similar concerns about Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development and further the use of one particular site, which is in close proximity to the individual's premises.



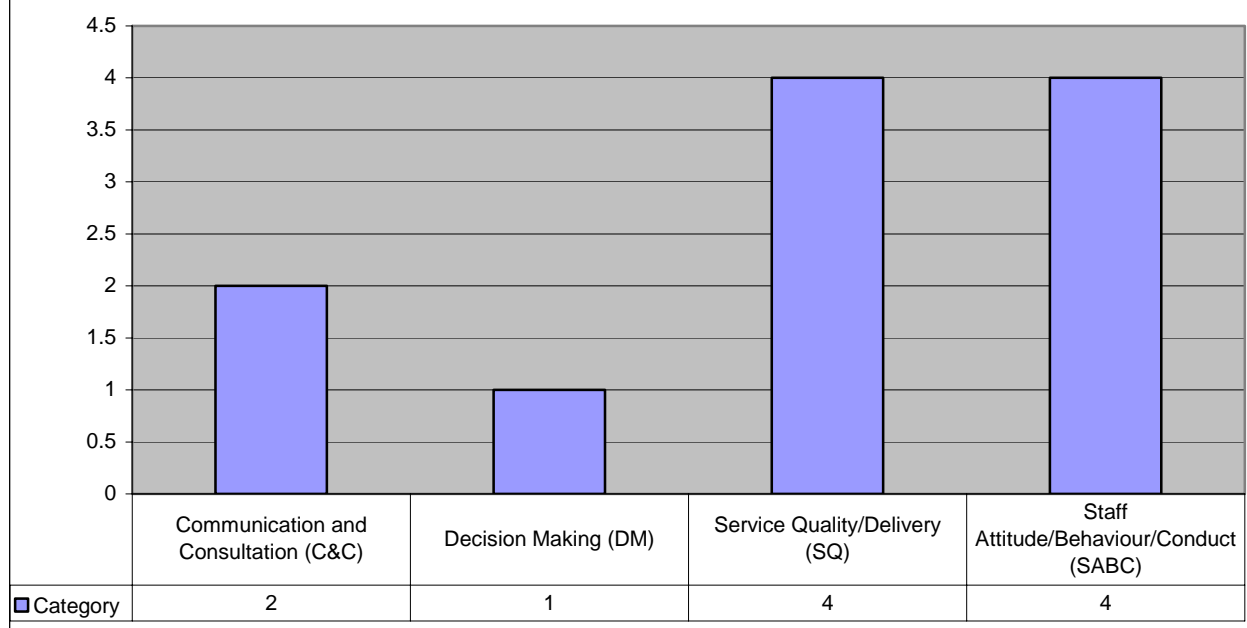
- 11.3 Table 15 provides detail of time taken to respond to complaints at stage 1, providing a comparison between the Service areas. Overall the Service is achieving 82% compliance against timescales at stage 1 of the process. Although this can be seen to be a disappointing result it is only slightly below the County target of 88% it is notable that this is more compliant than other services within the Directorate. Together with the support of senior managers the FCRT aims to work with the service to identify areas of improvement over the coming year.

Table 15
Services for young People Performance against Response Timescales 2009/10

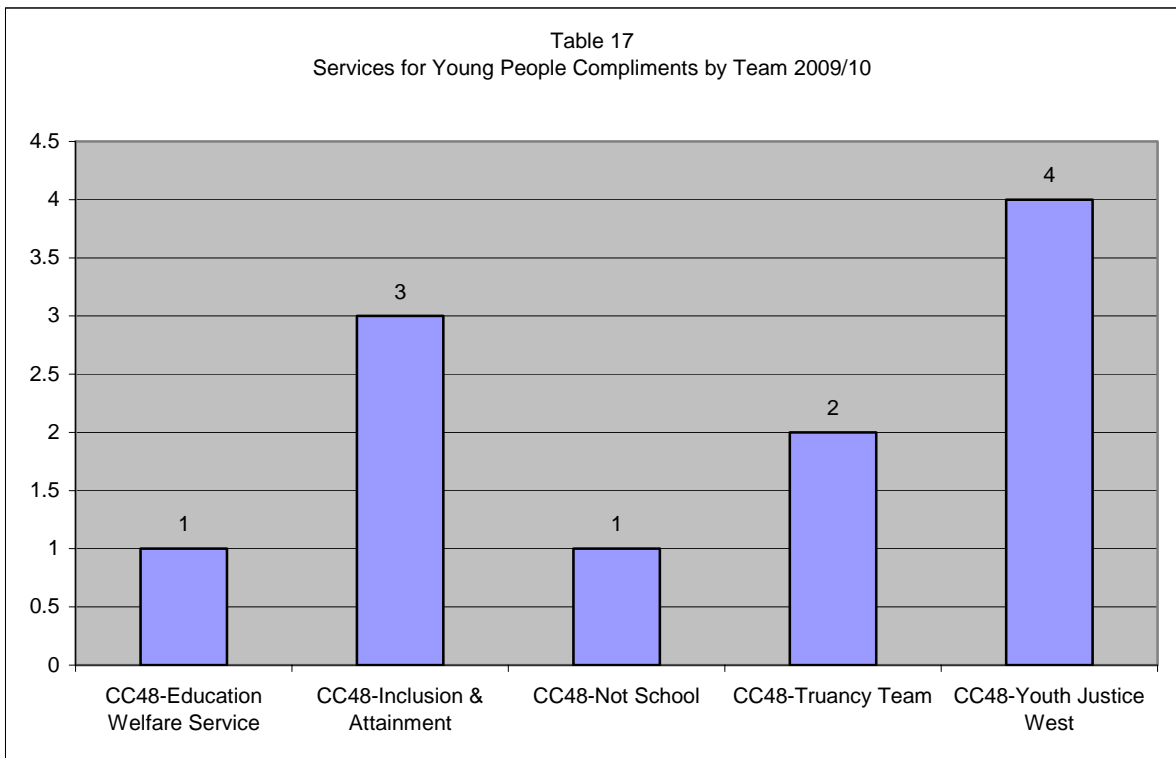


11.4 Table 16 below shows complaints received by type. The chart demonstrates that the greater majority of complaints are in regard to Quality of Service provided and Staff Attitude/Behaviour. It should be noted that of the four complaints about Staff Attitude/Behaviour, the same complainant made three of these, in regard to the same Team. Following a review at stage 2 of the process it was clear that a lack of understanding of the full remit of the Services could be the underlying problem. The Service addressed this and complaints from that particular individual have subsequently ceased. This supports the view that the nature of the complaint in no way detracts from the right to complain and highlights the importance of learning from complaints.

Table 16
Services for Young People Complaints by Category 2009/10

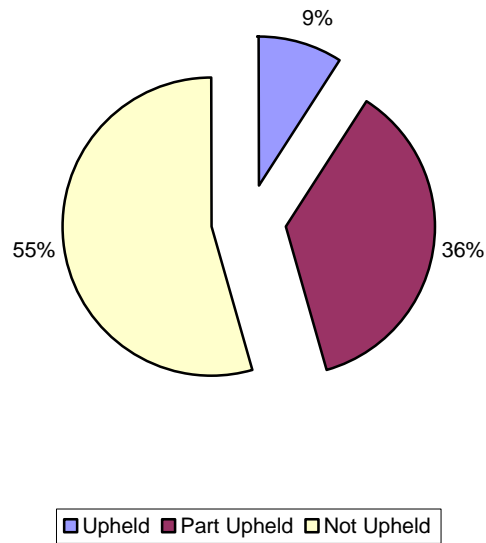


- 11.5 A single complaint progressed to Stage 2 of the County Process. The request was reviewed by the FCRT and the Team was asked to revisit the stage 1 response and provide additional detail. Following the review and further response from the Team, the complainant did not progress the complaint further. The complaint was dealt with within timescale at stage 2 of the process.
- 11.6 No complaints progressed to Stage 3 of the County process
- 11.7 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received one enquiry about Services for Young People during 2009/10. This related to Inclusions and was in regard to the perceived failure to provide alternate means of education. The Complaint was upheld in part by the LGO and local resolution was attained. The LGO issued no public reports in relation to Services for young People during this period. Services for Young People enquiries made up 4% of the enquiries related to the Children Schools and Families Directorate and 1% of the total received by the LGO in relation to Surrey County Council in 2009 /10. The service did not exist in its present form during the previous twelve months and it has therefore not been possible to provide meaningful comparative data.
- 11.8 Table 17 below provides a breakdown of compliments recorded by Teams. As detailed teams are recording similar volumes of compliments; overall the trend remains low.



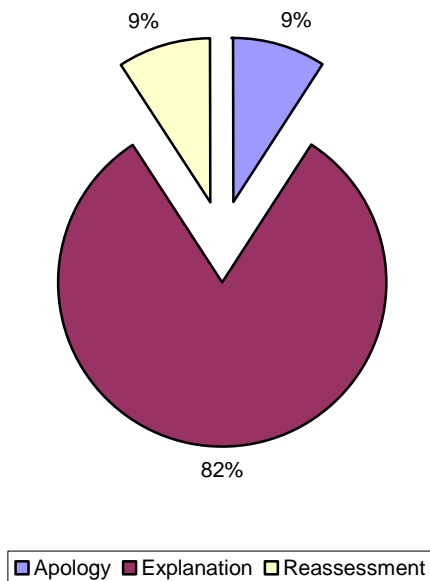
- 11.9 Table 18 below shows the outcomes recorded by Services for Young People complaints over the past year. 55% of Complaints were not upheld with 9% being Upheld and a further 36% being Part Upheld. These outcomes are broadly in accordance with the other services within the Directorate and continue to highlight the importance of learning from all complaints. The underlying themes of poor communication or lack of information are also in accordance with other parts of the Directorate.

Table 18
 Services for Young People Complaint Outcomes 2009/10



11.10 Table 19 below provides detail of the resolution category recorded by teams when the complaint is responded to. This provides an indication of the action taken to address the complaint. The vast majority [82%] of complaints were resolved by providing an explanation to the complainant. This is in line with other Services within the Directorate and indicates that service users and their families appear unclear about the actions of the service. Not understanding the work of the service and its limitations can often be a cause for complaint.

Table 19
 Services for Young People Complaint Resolution by Category 2009/10



PART 5

12 Advocacy Support

- 12.1 As with previous years complaint related Advocacy support has been provided via NYAS. Following the restructure of the Service and the need to identify areas where savings could be achieved for the Directorate, a decision was made to terminate the contractual arrangements with NYAS and to bring advocacy support in house.
- 12.2 From 1 April 2010 as part of the Family Rights and Participation Service, statutory complaint related Advocacy Support is available for Children and Young People in line with the requirements of Get it Sorted. Complaint Information Leaflets for Children and Young People have been redesigned to account for the new arrangements and provide the new contact details both by freephone, email and textphone.

PART 6

13 FAMILIES CUSTOMER RELATIONS TEAM

- 13.1 The role of the FCRT continues to develop following restructure and now offers much more one on one and case specific support to operational staff. This has enabled good working relationships to develop and a more holistic approach to complaints management within all service areas. In the coming year the team will focus on compliance to timescales, enhanced learning from complaints, increase service user feedback and enhanced joint working with partners.
- 13.2 In order to assist operational managers, the FCRT continue to issue detailed monthly and quarterly reports to both services. These detail numbers of recorded complaints, response to timescale, areas of missing data and highlights low or no reporting. The feedback from all Services is positive, stating that the reports enable managers to have oversight of their area and the information to address any issues. The reports have been extended to include more trends and learning information.

14 FINAL COMMENTS

- 14.1 Overall this has again been a positive year for complaints management across the services. Stronger working relations continue to be developed between services and the FCRT, *“key areas have been around consultation, facilitation and support”*, which have resulted in speedier resolution and *“an improved understanding of the customer experience by front line services”* in many cases. The FCRT will continue to work with services on improving recording and updating complaints information as well as focusing on learning as a priority in the coming year.

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