



**EAST RIDING**  
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

**Children's Social Care and  
Other Children's Services  
Annual Feedback Report  
2019 – 2020**

**Customer Relations Team**

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## Introduction

It is a statutory requirement of the **Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006** and the **Local Authority's Feedback policy** that the local authority publishes an annual report providing information regarding children services complaints and representations. These are the 'Regulations' referred to throughout this report.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council children services welcome complaints, compliments and comments as a way of improving service delivery to children and their families.

This report provides information about complaints and representations made relating to children's social care and other children services under the Regulations during the twelve month period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, and includes comparisons to previous year's activity. In addition the report includes information relating to children services Subject Access Requests (SAR) and Deceased Information Requests (DIR), and Freedom of Information Requests (FOI).

All timescales for complaints referred to within this report are in working days.

The customer relations team oversees the management of complaints and representations, SAR, DIR and FOI requests for children and adult services for the local authority, following the above mentioned Legislation / Regulations.

## Compliments

119 compliments were received in children services in 2019/20, an increase on 101 received in the previous year 2018/19 and 85 in 2017/18.

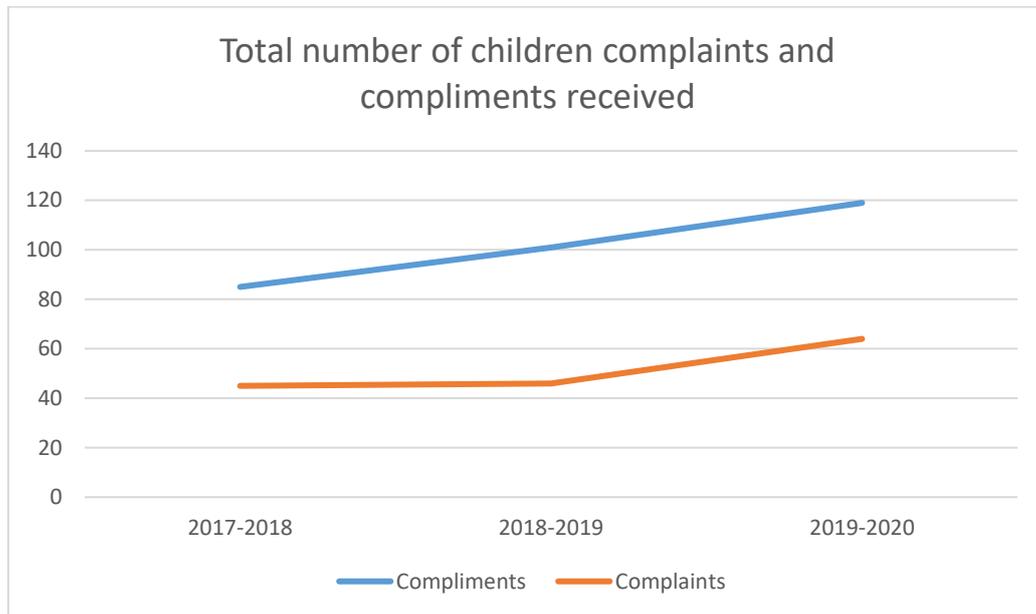
8 compliments were received for Children's Social Care Services in 2019/2020 compared with 13 compliments in 2018/19 and 21 in 2017/18.

111 compliments were received for other children's services in 2019/20. This is an increase on the 88 compliments received in 2018/19 and 64 in 2017/18. The number of compliments received across Children's Services continues to consistently outnumber the number of complaints received year on year.

There was an 80% increase in compliments received during the first month period of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the previous year. Compliments received acknowledge thanks for the hard work of individuals who it was felt went above and beyond expectations to ensure that services were provided during the pandemic. Learning is taken from compliments received in the same way as that of complaints, compliments are recorded and the learning used to influence and promote best practice across the service.

		<b>2019-2020 (119)</b>	<b>2018-2019 (101)</b>	<b>2017-2018 (85)</b>
<b>Other Children's Services</b>	Youth & Family Support Service	2		4
	Family Information Service Hub / SENDIAS	45	45	20
	Education Welfare Service & VCET	5	2	2
	Portage	1		4
	Early Years & Family Support Service			1
	Children's Centres	37	19	27
	Customer Relations Team	6	1	1
	SaPTS	2	3	
	SEND (EHC team)	9	5	2
	Children's Disability Team			2
	Pupil Services/Admissions	2	1	1
	0-25 Team	2	11	
	Education Psychology		1	
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	Children's Safeguarding Teams	5	12	11
	Looked After Children Teams			2
	Fostering and Adoption	2	1	6
	Participation and Rights Team			1
	Residential	1		1
	Family Contact Service			
<b>Total</b>		<b>119</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>85</b>

The number of compliments received remains high and continues to be significantly higher than the number of complaints received.



A sample of compliments received are detailed below:

Other children's services:

*"To the School Admission Team: Just like to say a Thankyou to you all for helping with a place, we got a place and we're over the moon."*

*"Customer service has been exceptional. He is polite, his customer relations over the phone is welcoming. He is honest, open and transparent. He answered my questions with ease in a professional manner. Nothing was too much trouble."*

*"The impartial support has got things back on track with the school and parents."*

*"I would like to say that I have found the EHCCO extremely competent and efficient. She is helpful and knowledgeable."*

*"Thank you for sorting out my anger problems."*

*"Thanks to EHCCO for support. He was positive, professional, knowledgeable, caring, non-judgmental and dedicated."*

*"Many thanks to SENDIASS for all the support given in making a decision around requesting a personal budget."*

*"Thanks from SENCO for advice, support and guidance including training for staff."*

*“I would like to thank you for the support you gave to staff and pupils yesterday, it was very much appreciated. This is an excellent service.”*

*“Thank you for all your support over the telephone. With this knowledge we now feel empowered to know we are not alone on this journey to ensure our son gets his needs and rights met”.*

Children’s social care:

*“Jenny was an amazing social worker - I am very happy with the work she has done with my boys”*

*“thank you to you for all the help and support you gave them when completing the forms and paperwork for their Grandson's passport and help with their direct payments. Your support was invaluable and they really appreciate everything you did to help them.”*

*“Thanks all the staff at The Croft for looking after her and helped her get her life back on track and helped her get a good education”*

*“Thank you ever so much for your, help we really appreciate it”*

*“Thank you email from \*\*\*\* for Liz Garner is support provided to his family in regard to son”*

*“thanks to Jane and Martyn for their work, but also wanted to thank Ruth as she recognised the amount of work she had done before it was agreed that we would reinvestigate.” “It has been a long and difficult journey but I think we have a positive outcome and some learning that we can apply to other cases in the future:*

## Complaints

### What is a Complaint?

A complaint can be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet, which requires a response. Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, letter or email, or through an advocate.

Officers from local authority services will always look for opportunities to effectively resolve concerns raised, as a positive alternative for the service user to entering a formal complaints process.

Complaints about Children's Social Care are addressed via Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and complaints about other children's services are addressed via the local authority's corporate feedback policy.

A person is eligible to make a complaint under the procedure where the local authority has a power or duty to provide or secure a service; which includes a service provided by an external provider acting on behalf of the local authority.

A complaint can be made by the representative, parent carer of the child or young person. Anyone can complain who is affected (or likely to be affected) by the actions, decisions or omissions of the service that is subject to a complaint.

Children and young people in East Riding of Yorkshire known to Children's Social Care services can be supported in making a complaint by officers from the Children's Rights and Participation Team, who can provide an advocacy service.

Concerns raised are recorded at two levels, local resolution and complaint:

- **Local resolution – *contacts to the customer relations team not progressing to a complaint*** where the customer relations team / relevant team manager will aim to resolve concerns raised, with the agreement of the complainant rather than entering the longer, formal complaint process. This level results in teams using the '**team solution**' form to capture how concerns have been resolved and what lessons have been learned
- **Other children's services formal complaint**
  - Stage 1** - The complaint is allocated to an investigating officer within the relevant service who will investigate and respond to the complainant within 10 working days (20 working days for complex cases) as a stage one investigation. If the complainant is unhappy with the response to their stage 1 complaint, they have 30 days in which they can ask for their complaint to be considered by the director of Children, Families and schools at stage 2.
  - Stage 2** - Is another opportunity to consider the complaints and to examine the accuracy of the stage 1 response. The director will respond within 10 working days.

- **Children Social Care Formal complaint**

**Stage 1** – This is the most important stage of the Children Social Care complaints procedure as it is an attempt to address the complaint as quickly and informally as possible at a local level. Complaints at Stage 1 should be responded to within 10 working days, with an extension of a further 10 days where necessary.

**Stage 2** – a complaint usually progresses to this stage if the complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of Stage 1. This is a more in depth investigation conducted by a senior officer and an external Independent Person. The findings of this investigation are adjudicated by a senior manager in Children’s Services. Complaints at Stage 2 should be responded to within 25 working days, although in certain cases this can be extended up to 65 days if the complaint is more complex or there are unexpected delays.

**Stage 3** – If the complainant remains dissatisfied then the complaint can progress to this stage, the Review Panel, made up of three Independent People. The Review Panel make recommendations to the Director of Children, Families and Schools who then makes a decision on the complaint and any action to be taken. The timescales for this stage are:

- Review Panel to be convened within 30 days
- The Panel’s report to be produced within 5 days of the panel
- The Local Authority’s response to be produced within 15 days of receiving the Panel’s report

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the complaint response, then they can refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), who is empowered to investigate where it would appear that the local authority’s own investigations have not resolved the complaint. Complainants can refer their complaint to the LGO at any time, although the Ombudsman would normally refer the matter back to the local authority to be considered under the appropriate complaint procedure first before getting involved.

### **Local Resolution - Team Solutions**

At the outset the approach taken is to actively seek opportunities for alternative resolution or remedy when concerns are first raised. Team solutions are those concerns which have been raised with the Customer Relations Team as a formal complaint but handled successfully through the concerns being forwarded to the relevant team manager for resolution. Where service users remain dissatisfied with the resolution, they can request their concerns are escalated to a formal complaint.

The number of concerns handled at local resolution level remains consistently high.

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Team solution children’s social care	122	98	126
Team solution other children’s services	58	61	68
<b>Total team resolutions</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>194</b>

Children services have consistently achieved a high level of success at resolution where in the first instance resolution is being attempted by the relevant team manager, particularly in relation to the team solutions where the concerns raised were requested progress through the formal complaint process. There is a high level of resolution achieved through the team solution approach with only a few escalating into the formal complaints process.

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Team solutions	180	159	194
Number escalated to formal complaint	17	5	7
<b>Percentage resolved at team solution</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>96%</b>

### Breakdown by area

Area	Team	2019-2020	2018-2019
Other children services	Youth & Family Service	2	3
	The Hub		2
	SEND	36	35
	School's Music Service	1	
	School Admissions	6	4
	SaPTS	1	
	Pupil transport		2
	Inclusion Access	1	
	FISH	1	1
	Education Welfare Service & VCET	3	3
	Education Psychology		2
	Early Years		1
	Children's Centres	4	5
	0-25 Team	3	3
Children's Social Care	Wolds & Dale CST	9	5
	South Holderness CST	14	15
	Safeguarding team	11	1
	Pathway	3	
	North Holderness CST	7	6
	Independent Chairing Service	1	
	Looked After Children Teams	9	9
	Haltemprice CST	14	12
	Goole CST	11	12
	Fostering	2	2
	ERCSP	2	
	EHASH	5	5
	Children's Home		2
	Children Participation Rights		1
	Bridlington CST	14	16
	Beverley CST	20	10
Adoption		2	

## Breakdown by category

Category	2019-2020
Communication	5
Poor Quality Service	81
Professional practice	1
Safeguarding	2
Service inappropriate	2
Service not provided	7
Service provision	61
Staff attitude/behaviour	18
Other	3

The majority the contacts received by the customer relations team related to concerns about poor service provision or quality of service received. Further analysis showed there were a number of contributing factors / recurring themes that resulted in dissatisfaction with the service experienced or received:

- Lack of, or poor communication by professionals – workers not returning calls or replying to emails
- Issues with transparency - workers not being clear or ensuring there is mutual understanding
- Complainants disagreeing with professional judgements made within Assessments and Child In Need plans
- Timeliness of assessing the needs of the family / not meeting the deadline for completing assessments
- Staff not sharing assessments or reports with absent parents
- Complainants without parental responsibility feeling safeguarding services are not taking any notice of their safeguarding concerns
- Disagreement with decision making / perceptions of staff conduct
- Complainant are in the process of private matters raising disagreement with judgements made with section 7 or section 37 reports

## Complaints

### Other children's services complaints

38 new complaints were received for other Children's Services during 2019/20. This was a 58% increase in the number of new complaints received in 2018/19 (24). A total of 41 complaints were handled during 2019/20 which is a 24% increase on the previous year. Three cases transferred in from the previous year 2018/19. There was an increase in the number of complaint investigations completed during 2019/20, with more complaints being resolved at Stage 1 than in 2018/19. Eight of the 41 complaints handled transferred to 2020/21.

During 2019/20 34 formal complaints investigations were concluded and completed, 22 complaints were resolved at Stage 1 (65%) and 12 resolved at Stage 2 (35%).

Seven complaints were still ongoing at the conclusion of 2019/20 and were transferred into 2020/21, three at Stage 1 and four at Stage 2.

For some complaints delays were experienced in concluding investigations during 2019/20. This was as a result of operational pressures due to the emergency response to flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in a number of complaint investigations being suspended or delayed. That being said only one complaint was suspended as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic before the year end.

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
<i>Transferred from previous year</i>	3	9	1
<i>New complaints received</i>	38	24	20
<i>Total complaints handled</i>	41	33	21
<i>Total completed investigations</i>	34	30	12
<i>At Stage 1</i>	22	18	9
<i>At Stage 2</i>	12	12	3
<i>Total complaints transferred into next year</i>	7	3	9
<i>% of complaints completed</i>	83%	91%	57%
<i>% of complaints transferred into next year</i>	17%	9%	43%

### Complaints by area:

Area	Team	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Other Childrens Services	The Hub/0-25 team	4		
	SEND	31	32	20
	Improvement Advisory service (inc. Supply service)	2		
	Inclusion Access	1	1	
	Education Welfare Service & VCET	3		
	Children's Centres		1	

### Nature of the complaints received in 2019/20 for other children's services:

- 39 complaints were about poor quality service
- 2 complaints were about service provision

The most common theme for complaints raised in the year can be categorised as poor quality service. This includes complaints inclusive of the following:

- Delay in receiving information
- Education Health Care Plans not issued/reviewed within statutory timeframe

- Information not being fully explained
- Not involved in meetings/decision making
- Accuracy of information
- Poor quality assessment
- Poor quality EHCP
- legislation, policy, procedure not followed
- Delays in decision making/commissioning process/panel

Some key issues raised include the following:

Statutory time frames:

- Plans not issued or reviewed within statutory timeframes. This delays provision and also denies the right to appeal to SEND Tribunal
- Amendments to plans not being made within statutory timeframe following reviews
- Limited understanding of SEN code of practice with regards to amendment timeframes

Commissioning:

- Failure to provide appropriate full-time education
- Failure to deliver provision specified in EHCP
- Limited understanding of panels in complex cases. Where requests should be presented
- Additional information being required for panel
- Delay in procuring sensory integration assessments
- Implication that decisions have already been made

Personal Budgets & Direct Payments:

- Information not being fully explained
- Staff knowledge of direct payments and personal budgets is limited
- Direct payment agreement not robust enough

Quality:

- Not being appropriately prepared prior to a meeting
- Not obtaining all evidence
- Not undertaking all assessments
- Inaccurate EHCP
- Use of 3rd party plan writing company

Communication:

- Not being respected, listened too and valued
- Not returning calls
- Views being challenged

## Outcomes of other children’s services complaint investigations:

The table below shows the outcome of complaints following an investigation. The three main categories for classifying the outcome of a complaint are ‘upheld’, ‘partially upheld’ and ‘not upheld.’ Also included are the complaints which were inconclusive in their finding ‘no finding’ and those that were ‘withdrawn.’

The 22 complaints successfully resolved at Stage 1 comprised of 87 parts, the 12 complaints that progressed to Stage 2 and were resolved, there were 62 parts. Overall there were 197 parts investigated at stage 1, including those that progressed to stage 2, the parts are detailed in the table below.

It is noted from the table below there has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints which were upheld or partially upheld, compared to the previous year.

		2019-2020	%	2018-2019	%
<b>Stage 1</b>	Not upheld	56	28.5%	24	17%
	No finding	2	1%	3	2%
	Withdrawn	1	0.5%	3	2%
	Partially upheld	29	15%	15	10%
	Upheld	109	55%	98	69%
<b>Stage 2</b>	Not upheld	25	40%	25	31%
	No finding	1	2%	3	4%
	Withdrawn	0	0%	0	0
	Partially upheld	7	11%	10	13%
	Upheld	29	47%	42	53%

70% of complaints were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1; 28.5% of the complaints made at Stage 1 were not upheld. Lessons learnt from the complaints upheld have been fed back into the service area to ensure reflection and learning takes place.

The 62 parts of the twelve complaints investigated at stage 2 were made up of:

Complaints	Parts
carried forward at Stage 1 from 2018/19 that progressed to Stage 2 in 2019/20	20
progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in 2019/20	49
carried forward at Stage 2 from 2018/19	7
progressed straight to Stage 2 in 2019/20	0

At Stage 2 40% (25 of 62 parts) were not upheld, with a low number being upheld – 29 parts, 47%.

The data above demonstrates that whilst the number of complaints received in 2019/20 increased, a large proportion of complaints were successfully resolved at Stage 1 and of those that progressed to Stage 2 only a small proportion of decision making at stage 1 was

overturned. This demonstrates the thoroughness and quality of the Stage 1 investigations and appropriateness of decision making.

### **Other Children’s Services complaint timescale performance:**

The statutory timescale for acknowledging complaints is 2 working days. In 2019/20 performance against this target was 87%, this is an improvement on the previous year of 74%.

Timescales for investigating a complaint through the Corporate Feedback policy are 10 working days (20 working days for complex cases) at stage one and 10 working days for the director’s response to be shared with the complainant at stage two.

Performance against timescales is detailed below showing the number of complaint investigations completed at each stage:

<b>Days taken</b>	<b>2019-2020 Stage 1</b>	<b>2019-2020 Stage 2</b>
> 20 days	14	4
11-20 days	14	6
10 days or less	9	2
Did not progress	0	0

	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Other children services complaints within statutory times scales at Stage 1	62%	27%	0%
Other children services complaints within statutory times scales at Stage 2	16	27%	33.3%

It should be noted that whilst a high percentage of other children’s services complaints were completed outside the statutory time scales, investigating officers will agree an appropriate timescales with the complainant reflective of the nature of the complaint. All stage two investigations were completed within the timescale agreed with the complainant.

### **Improvement actions themes of other children’s services upheld complaints:**

Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, often the investigating officer will make recommendations on how the service should improve to avoid a similar situation arising for another service user. These actions are shared with the complainant and a system is in place for recording and monitoring the actions agreed.

Themes are identified which are shared within the service to help prevent problems occurring in the future. Actions regularly identify the need for learning to be discussed with operational managers and shared wider in team meetings and additional training sessions were required.

Services experienced some capacity issues resulting in complaints about poor communication and failure to meet statutory time frames. The service recognised capacity issues and the

teams continue to learn and training is an ongoing area for both new and existing staff. Training was already being delivered to teams with scheduled weekly sessions that cover a wide range of relevant areas. Training sessions have been provided, each Wednesday afternoon, on a range of subjects including: Plan writing, Code of practice – statutory timeframes, SEND legal discussion, Personal Budgets, Home to school transport, Data protection, preparing for adulthood, Local Offer, short breaks, sensory and physical teaching service, vulnerable children, SEND tribunal preparation, lessons learned from complaints and plan amendments.

### **Children’s Social Care complaints**

15 new complaints were received for children’s social care during 2019/20. This was an increase in the number of new complaints received in 2018/19 (11). A total of 23 complaints were handled during 2019/20 which is a decrease of one on the previous year. Eight cases transferred in from the previous year 2018/19.

There was an increase in the number of complaint investigations completed during 2019/20 (18), with more complaints being resolved at Stage 1 than in 2018/19. 12 complaints were resolved at Stage 1 (67%) and 6 resolved at Stage 2 (33%).

Five complaints were still ongoing at the conclusion of 2019/20 and were transferred into 2020/21.

For some complaints delays were experienced in concluding investigations during 2019/20. This was as a result of operational pressures due to the emergency response to flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in a number of complaint investigations being suspended or delayed. That being said only one complaint was suspended as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic before the year end.

	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Transferred from previous year	8	13	12
New complaints received	15	11	20
Total complaints handled	23	24	32
Total completed investigations	18	14	19
At Stage 1	12	9	12
At Stage 2	6	3	5
At Stage 3	0	2	2
Total complaints transferred into next year	5	10	13
% of complaints completed	78%	58%	59%
% of complaints transferred into next year	22%	42%	41%

## Complaints by area:

Area	Team	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Children's Social Care	Children's Social Care Safeguarding Teams	17	8	14
	Pathway	0	2	5
	Looked After Children Teams	4	2	5
	Fostering and Adoption teams	0	0	1
	Children's Centre	1	0	0
	0-25 team (now part of Children's Social Care)	1	0	0

## Nature of the complaints received in 2019/20 children's social care:

- 12 complaints were about poor quality service
- 10 complaints were about service provision
- 1 complaint was about staff conduct

The most common theses for complaints raised were about poor quality service and service provision. This includes complaints of the following:

- Failure to communicate effectively and professionally
- Issues regarding arrangements for contact with children and extended family
- Disputes regarding decision making
- Transition to new foster carers
- Disputes about information in family plans
- Poor co-ordination and administration of multi-agency meetings

## Outcomes of complaint investigations:

The table below shows the outcome of complaints following an investigation. The three main categories for classifying the outcome of a complaint are 'upheld', 'partially upheld' and 'not upheld.' Also included are the complaints which were inconclusive in their finding 'no finding' and those that were 'withdrawn.'

The 12 complaints successfully resolved at Stage 1 comprised of 45 parts, the six complaints that progressed to Stage 2 and were resolved, there were 47 parts. Overall, including those complaints that progressed to further stages, there were 63 parts investigated at stage 1 and 64 at stage 2, the parts are detailed in the table below.

Stage 1		2019-2020	%	2018-2019	%
	Not upheld	24	38	19	43
No finding	1	1.5	3	7	

	<i>Withdrawn</i>	1	1.5		
	<i>Partially upheld</i>	10	16	8	18
	<i>Upheld</i>	27	43	14	32
<b>Stage 2</b>	<i>Not upheld</i>	24	37	3	25
	<i>No finding</i>	5	8	1	8.5
	<i>Withdrawn</i>	2	3	1	8.5
	<i>Partially upheld</i>	7	11		
	<i>Upheld</i>	26	41	7	58
<b>Stage 3</b>	<i>Not upheld</i>			8	18.5
	<i>No finding</i>			9	56
	<i>Withdrawn</i>				
	<i>Partially upheld</i>			2	4.5
	<i>Upheld</i>			24	21

59% of complaints were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1; 38% of the complaints made at Stage 1 were not upheld. Lessons learnt from the complaints upheld have been fed back into the service area to ensure reflection and learning takes place.

The 64 parts of the 8 complaints investigated at stage 2, two of which progressed to stage 3, were made up of:

Complaints	Parts
carried forward at Stage 1 from 2018/19 that progressed to Stage 2 in 2019/20	0
progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in 2019/20	8
carried forward at Stage 2 from 2018/19	56
progressed straight to Stage 2 in 2018/19	0

At Stage 2 37% (24 of 64 parts) were not upheld, with a low number upheld – 26 parts, 41%.

The data above demonstrates that whilst the number of complaints received in 2019/20 increased, a large proportion of complaints were successfully resolved at Stage 1 and of those that progressed to Stage 2 only a small proportion of decision making at stage 1 was overturned. This demonstrates the thoroughness and quality of the Stage 1 investigations and appropriateness of decision making.

### **Children’s social care complaint timescale performance:**

The statutory timescale for acknowledging complaints is 2 working days. In 2019/20 performance against this target was 73%, this is an improvement on the previous year of 55%.

Timescales for investigating a complaint through the children’s social care complaint procedures are 10 working days (20 working days for complex cases) at stage one and 25 working days (65 working days for complex cases) at stage two.

Performance against timescales is detailed below showing the number of complaint investigations completed at each stage:

Days taken	2019-2020 Stage 1	2019-2020 Stage 2
>65 days	2	6
25-64 days	2	2
11-25 days	3	
10 days or less	6	
Did not progress	1	

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Children's Social Care complaints within statutory times scales at Stage 1	64%	67%	67%
Children's Social Care complaints within statutory times scales at Stage 2	25%	40%	40%

### **Lessons learnt examples from children's social care complaints within this reporting period**

Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, often the investigating officer will make recommendations on how the service should improve to avoid a similar situation arising for another service user. These actions are shared with the complainant and a system is in place for recording and monitoring the actions agreed.

Themes are identified which are shared within the service to help prevent problems occurring in the future. Actions regularly identify the need for learning to be discussed at the adult operational managers meetings and for wider sharing to improve practice.

The assessment process requires where appropriate the fully inclusive involvement of service users at all stages of the assessment process. Assessments are shared with family members.

Regular reviews of literature used on digital platforms and paper form needs to be identified when creating new guidance for service users to ensure the information continues to be pertinent and correct.

Managers across Early Years services to ensure that training has been completed or refreshed in Dispute Resolution and De-escalation Techniques.

Feedback to parents raising concerns irrespective of whether concerns have been substantiated or not.

Families are informed at the earliest opportunity when it is necessary to re-allocate a case and appropriate steps put in place to minimise any disruption.

Minutes of meetings are produced and distributed to all parties and follow up discussions take place with the family.

To consider producing a leaflet (Surviving Child Protection) which will inform families of what this means for the family and the potential impact this intervention may have.

## Subject Access Requests

The local authority responds to requests for copies of a person's records it holds under the Data Protection Act 1998, as a Subject Access Request (SAR).

There has been a continued rise in the number of SARs received, year on year. There were 78 requests for records received in 2019/20 a 30% increase on SARs received in 2018/19 (60) and a 62.5% increase on 2017/18 (48).

58 requests were for Children Social Care records, 2 requests were solely for other Children Services records and 18 requests were for a combined request as follows; 10 requests for Children and other Children Services records; 5 for Children and Adult Social Care records and 3 for all children records and Adult Social Care records.

Children Social Care (CSC)	58
Other Children Services records	2
Combined:	18
CSC and Children Services records	10
CSC and Adult Social Care records	5
CSC, other Children Services and Adult Social Care records	3

66 SARs were completed in 2019/20, 6 SARs carried forward to 2020/21 and 6 SARs did not progress. 48 of the 66 completed SARs (73%) were completed within the statutory timescales compared to 74% in 2018/19 and 83% in 2017/18. Completing SARs within the 30 working day statutory timescale remains a challenge where requests received involve a large volume of records as some children may have been involved with children's social care from birth to adulthood which generates a significant amount of records of involvement.

In addition to the SARs, 168 requests for children services records (predominantly Children's Social Care records) were dealt with as a Data Protection exemption (DPeX) in 2019/20. A reduction compared to the 222 requests dealt with in 2018/19.

## Freedom of Information Requests (FOI)

The number of FOIs received remains consistently high year on year.

242 FOIs were received in 2019/20 which was an increase compared to previous years; 214 in 2018/19 and 202 in 2017/18. The nature of FOIs continues to increase in complexity and in the amount of information requested which increasingly spans a number of different teams within the services.

Out of the 226 FOI requests completed in 2019/20, 178 (79%) were completed within the 20 working day statutory timescale. This is a slight reduction compared to 83% in 2018/19.