



# Northumberland County Council

Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 7 March 2024

## Annual Representations Report 2022/23

**Report of Councillor(s)** Guy Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People

**Responsible Officer(s):** Audrey Kingham, Executive Director for Children, Young People & Education

### 1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the "Achieving Value for Money" priority in the NCC Corporate Plan 2023-26.

### 2. **Purpose of report**

The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 require the submission of an Annual Report by every local authority which "provides a mechanism by which the local authority can be kept informed of the operation of its complaints procedure."

### 3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 Committee are recommended to note and agree the content of the report and identify any additional areas for scrutiny relating to complaint handling.

### 4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

November/December 2023

### 5. **Background**

- 5.1 This report will cover all representations and complaints made in relation to Children's Services including both social care services and education/skills. The report has been prepared in conjunction with the regulatory requirements and provides data and analysis of information in relation to feedback from complaints, compliments and other enquiries, submitted to Children's Services and those referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

5.2 The data used for this report was received during the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

5.3 This report will inform members of the Committee of:

- How feedback from complaints, compliments and other enquiries in relation to Children's Services are managed;
- Statistical information for 2022/23;
- Learning arising out of the complaints received and how this is used to improve service provision;
- Decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in respect of complaints they have received about Children's Services.

## 6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

6.1 In accordance with The Regulations, it is important that elected members are informed of and understand how representations, complaints and other feedback are handled and managed within Children's Services and that they provide effective scrutiny, challenge and oversight of that work to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

## 7. Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Complaints contribute to monitoring the impact of the Council's policies and the effectiveness with which they are being implemented.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There are no direct implications.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no direct implications, however, Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the statutory children's social care complaint process, requires the commissioning of independent officers to undertake the required works. This is currently done through a regional NEPO arrangement.
<b>Human resources</b>	There are no direct implications.
<b>Property</b>	There are no direct implications.
<b>The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment</b>	No - no equalities issues identified

<b>required and attached?</b>	
<b>Risk assessment</b>	Individual complainants are risk-assessed on receipt, and appropriate actions are taken if required.
<b>Crime and disorder</b>	Arrangements are in place to ensure that if complaints suggest that someone is being abused, or a crime may have been committed, there is an appropriate response.
<b>Customer considerations</b>	Complaints are one of a range of methods by which we received feedback on the quality and consistency of our services. They are also invaluable for learning lessons and quality improvement.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no direct carbon reduction implications.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	There are no direct Health and Wellbeing implications.
<b>Wards</b>	(All Wards);

## 8. **Background papers**

Annual Representations document

## 9. **Links to other key reports already published**

Not applicable

## 10. **Author and Contact Details**

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