

**Children's Social Services**

**Summary of complaints received 2016-17**

**Fieldwork and Resources**

**X complained about a breakdown in relationship with her children's Social Worker, who she claimed was negative and unsupportive.**

We reminded X of our significant concerns about the children's safety given recent domestic violence incidences. The case is now entering into legal proceedings and the Social Worker will remain the same in the meantime.

**X complained about a recent social work visit to her home, her belief she is victimised because of her mental health issues and the children's grandparents not being involved in the assessment process.**

We apologised for being late to a visit. We also explained what happens during a Section 47 (child protection) investigation and the need to sometimes speak with children alone. We respected children's wishes by not visiting them at school hence why this was done at home. We added the wider family would not be part of the Section 47 investigation. They would instead be involved in the wider assessments. We explained our duty to assess all referrals whether or not the family concerned believe the information to be accurate or not.

**X complained about the level and timeliness of communication from a social work team following her enquiry.**

We explained we took her concerns seriously but they were not child protection matters. We advised her at the time of her enquiry that the Team Around the Family were best placed to assist and her case would be allocated within 2 weeks, which it was.

**X was unhappy that it has taken 8 weeks for a safe carers assessment to be completed and that we are pre-judging her.**

We explained that a safe carer's assessment requires a period of observation but we apologised for delays due to a busy workload. The Social Worker will complete the assessment shortly. We sought to reassure X she has not been pre-judged, but she does not acknowledge the risk her partner presents, hence why all contact is supervised.

**Foster carers complained about an email written about them by a Social Worker which they took exception to. They also complained about the timeliness of her statutory visits.**

The Social Worker concerned reflected on the matter and acknowledged the upset her comments will have caused. We reassured the carers that at no point did they undermine the case and care planning. Statutory visits were completed in a timely manner, though in her absence they were undertaken by others.

**X complained that she hadn't had direct contact with her daughter for several months.**

We explained that X's daughter had chosen not to have contact with her mum in order to protect herself and concentrate on her school work. Both mum and we have to respect this wish. However, there have been some positive steps of late via exchange of letters.

**X complained she had only just found out about an allegation concerning her son made a couple of months ago.**

We explained we are mindful of the intrusion felt by families following our previous intervention and the anxiety this sometimes causes. In this case the referral received from school resulted in our making checks with other agencies without the need to inform family and cause unnecessary anxiety. X was satisfied with the explanation.

**X had contacted First Contact in relation to difficulties she was experiencing with her teenage son, who had chosen to live with his dad. X doesn't believe he is being held accountable and wanted our support, but she was unhappy with our response.**

We acknowledged that X may feel aggrieved about her son not wanting to return home but explained there was nothing we could do about this. He is of an age where he has chosen to vote with his own feet. We signposted her for legal advice.

### Safeguarding

One complaint was received concerning the Safeguarding Unit and their remit within childcare social work.

**X believed she had been spoken to in an abrupt manner by the Conference Chair and that she was talked over during the meeting. Her ex-partner was seen separately with the Chair at the end of the Conference.**

We explained to X our belief she had been treated in an open, fair and professional way before and during the Conference. The subject matter was serious and the Chair facilitated a meaningful discussion between X and her ex-partner, bearing in mind the conflict that exists between them. The Chair also gave both parties ample opportunity to speak and be listened to. The discussion with her ex-partner at the end was not in relation to the conference and was a private matter.

### C.I.D.S. (Children's Integrated Disability Service)

Three complaints were made re. C.I.D.S. including:

**Parents complained about a range of issues about our handling of their son's case including about communication and assessments.**

This was a complex matter as parents' issues changed over time. However, they have been given the opportunity to challenge the assessment.