

**Children's Social Services**

**Summary of complaints by theme (2020-21)**

Complaints relating to contact

X wanted her contact arrangements reviewed so she could spend more time with her son and it be unsupervised. She asked how care could be 50/50 between her and her ex.

We advised that contact arrangements could be reviewed once our assessment is completed. We can then explore reviewing the existing contact arrangements starting with decreasing the number of sessional workers that are currently present, but the review of contact arrangements is going to take time, shared care even longer.

Complaints relating to communication

X alleged we had shared information about a child protection investigation in an inappropriate way with her children resulting in a breakdown in trust.

We advised X we found no evidence that information was shared inappropriately. Indeed X conceded her daughter had overheard an adult conversation as X had her phone on loudspeaker. We instead sought to alleviate daughter's concerns about our role with the family. We reassured X we wanted nothing more than to continue to work with her to improve the outcomes for both X and their children. The Social Worker will continue as they are.

Complaints relating to a lack of advice or support

X complained about the lack of advice and support she received from us and other services last year.

We reminded X of the advice and support we had offered to her and the children but for her own reasons X had largely chosen to decline. They included: counselling, mentoring, adolescent strategy work, hub, return to school, DART course, outreach via Women's Aid, therapy work with Action for Children, family group meeting and advocacy.

### Complaints relating to the timeliness of our decisions or actions

X complained about continuous mistakes made by us culminating in her daughter's residential placement being almost lost.

We believed we had followed process in terms of meeting daughter's social care needs. We explained that placing a child/young person in care has to be very carefully considered and planned from a Local Authority perspective. We have to take a number of additional factors into consideration including the legality of the decision and process, financial implications for Education, Social Services and Health etc. We also have to ensure a placement is regulated, responsive and accountable to the Local Authority who place children there. Subsequently a 42 week placement was identified and agreed at Panel.

### Complaints relating to disagreements with our decisions or actions

X complained about a range of issues following our involvement with her children including: lack of support, our view the children were being neglected, non-adherence to the child protection process, records not being shared and their accuracy, and of being discriminated against.

We reminded parents of the joint visit we did with Police earlier in the summer when their home's conditions were deemed unliveable and parents' suggestion the children stay with their grandparents whilst improvements were made. We explained the process around Conference decision making and our belief that procedures had been followed. We did not agree with parents' view they had been discriminated against because of their hoarding disorder.

### Complaints relating to staff

X shared his feelings via his advocate that he didn't get on with his Social Worker and that we didn't listen to him

We spoke with X and his Advocate about the way he felt and mediated between X and his Social Worker, which went well. We sought to reassure X he could contact us again if he felt the same and reassured him his views were always listened to.

### Complaints relating to process

X complained about the content of documents sent to Court and our decision not to consider her as a kinship carer for her grandchildren.

We explained Court proceedings had ended and changes couldn't now be made. X had been written to separately as to why she had been turned down as a kinship carer and the opportunity to appeal, but we hadn't heard back from her. The children concerned are now going through the adoption process.

### Complaints relating to foster placements

X complained that we were planning to move her from her present home where she was settled, to a new home. Her views and wishes weren't being listened to.

We explained that X's present placement was an emergency only and we never considered it to be long term. This was because there were three other children living in the same home and we would be in breach of Regulations if it continued. An alternative placement has been identified that can better meet her longer term needs.

### Complaints relating to COVID

X complained why the maternal grandparents were placing his daughter at risk of COVID as they had someone visiting them during Lockdown when daughter visited for contact.

We found the visitor had called round unannounced where X's daughter was staying for and we reminded grandparents of the restrictions in place. In the meantime X has exercised his parental rights and changed contact arrangements so they now take place at his property. Although outside the Court Order, we believe X is taking appropriate measures to promote contact safely and in his daughter's best interests.