

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
 <b>Number of FORMAL complaints</b>	358	644	544	2021/22 saw a reduction in formal complaints (detailed overleaf).
 <b>Number of INFORMAL complaints</b>	364	624	862	2021/22 saw a further significant increase in informal complaints (detailed overleaf).
 <b>Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received</b>	4/34	17/30	20/35	In 2021/22 we received 121 approaches from the LGSCO. 35 cases were investigated, and 20 were upheld.
 <b>Timescales (overdue)</b>	16%	39%	18%	In 2021/22 we saw a great improvement over the previous year in adhering to response timescales.
 <b>% fully justified complaints</b>	5%	8%	8%	2021/22 continued to see a low volume of complaints reported as fully justified.
 <b>% part justified complaints</b>	24%	11%	9%	2021/22 continued to see a low volume of complaints reported as partially justified.
 <b>Compliments</b>	298	633	380	There was a large reduction in the number of compliments received in 2021/22 (details overleaf).
 <b>Learnings</b>	151	119	127	We gathered 127 learnings from complaints in 2021/22 (details overleaf).

## Total Complaints Overview

# 1406 Complaints

# 2021/22

performance

## Numbers

2021/22

### Total Complaint Contacts – 1406

This is a 14% increase from the 1268 received in 2020-21 and 100% increase on 722 received 2019-20 pre-Covid. Dorset Council and its services continue to be more visible to the general public since the Covid19 emergency. Although we are pleased that the complaints process remains accessible and easy to find, as in 2020-21 not all of the scrutiny has been fair or communicated in a reasonable way. Although in some cases complaints have given the authority a chance to learn and implement changes. Out of the 1445 contacts, 544 of these were considered as formal complaints. The focus on early resolution continues to pay dividends for both council staff and those complaining but we need to ensure that we don't obstruct statutory processes due to the significantly increased demand. Not all of the scrutiny has been fair or communicated in a reasonable way and we have also seen an increase in vexatious and aggressive behaviours

### Formal Complaints 544

Although complaints overall have increases year on year, this is a 12% decrease on the 644 received 2020-21. Place services have had the greatest impact as they provide the most visible services to the public. Planning matters have featured heavily as well as continuing trends of neighbour disputes.

### Informal Complaints 862

This is a 28% increase on the 682 received in 2020-21. Although we are encouraged by Dorset Council's appetite for informal resolution we also recognise some formality is required for some areas, (particularly Planning and Adult Finance), to ensure outcomes are reached without unnecessary bureaucracy. We do however need to employ a common sense, outcomes-based approach to complaints handling when possible

### Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Complaints

Members should be heartened that of 1406 complaints only 121 reached Ombudsman with 32 investigated and 20 upheld. Dorset Council met the recommendations in 100% of these cases. Of the upheld cases 8 related to Children's Services, 7 to Adult Services, 4 in Place and 1 in Corporate. There was a total cost of £42,300 in financial remedies. 6 related to SEN delays or children out of education at a cost of £40,850. This is an area the Complaints Team are focusing support on as some of these delays and complaints are historic but only more recently finding their way into the Complaints Process. We continue to work closely with Children's Services and are recording learnings wherever possible. In addition there was 1 Adult Social Care finding at a cost of £750, 1 Place finding at a cost of £200 (Enforcement), and a Children's Social care case at £500. This is a steep rise from £6,750 2020-21 and just £1,800 in 2019-20. The other cases although upheld did not result in a financial penalty as an apology had been offered

### Timescales – 18% Overdue

This is a tremendous improvement when compared to 29% overdue in 2020-21 and should be celebrated. The complaints procedures operated by the Council vary in timescales for responses. The Whole Authority procedure is 20 working days, the Children's Services Social Care procedure is 10 working days, up to 20 by exception (with automatic escalation to an independent investigation if not met. This can be costly). The Adult Social Care procedure does not specify exact timescales, and we are now looking to establish these on a case by case basis depending on the gravity and risk of the complaint and the time need to investigate it.

### Justifications – 8% fully 9% partially

This is the same as last year. It may still seem surprising that so few complaints are considered to be justified by responding managers, but there is a growing sense that people complaint more readily than pre-covid times, despite a return to more normal, post lockdown living.

### Compliments – 380

The is still a good news story despite the reduction from 633 2020-21. There was a genuine wave of gratitude for a job well done last year, especially in Q1. Despite Covid having less of an impact the Complaints team have captured and shared these compliments which has been really beneficial both to the individuals and the Complaints team themselves. Its important we recognise a job well done as well as the scrutiny and critique.

### Learnings - 127

We are pleased to report an increase in organisational learnings from 2020-21, especially around Children's Services. Not only have the volume of learnings increased, the quality and supporting action plans overseeing delivery has improved, offering significantly more assurance that loops are being closed and lessons genuinely learned

# Total Complaints Overview

# 2021/22

2021/22

## Background

The purpose of this report is to highlight key issues from the Annual Report for Complaints 2021/22. There is a full annual report to support this executive summary together with material to meet the statutory functions associated with Social Care.

## Introduction

The corporate Complaints Team was established in the Shaping Dorset restructure to manage complaints for a new Dorset Council. The team sit in Legal & Democratic as an Assurance function, with the emphasis more on learning from complaints, rather than merely processing numbers. As the report will show, despite the greatly reduced impacts of the Covid19 pandemic, a greater level of scrutiny on services remains

The Complaints Team have also been heavily involved in helping Dorset Council manage vexatious and unreasonable behaviours. The number of people now managed through a Single Point of Contact at Dorset Council remains higher than pre-Covid times.

The council operates 4 complaints procedures. The Council's own – which is a one stage process with a review process as necessary and Children's Services and Adult Services Social Care have their own legal procedures. Full details of these procedures are found in Appendix 1 and 3 as full reports which are required to satisfy legislation. We have also been delegated the Councillor Code of Conduct complaints to triage and manage. Although not contributing greatly to the overall numbers, it has been an interesting experience trying to apply the same culture of learning to a new and unfamiliar policy to the team.

The team's focus for this coming year is:

Team Wellbeing and Development – Further galvanising a team to deal with increasingly upsetting subject matter, and (at times) vexatious behaviours. We have been very vocal in ensuring staff are aware of the support available.

IT developments – Our new software (Infreemation) is finally in place and been rolled out to colleagues with training videos available. In time it will start to deliver more granular detail than previously available

Reporting/Learning – 2021-22 saw an improvement in the quality of learnings presented by team managers. There is a genuine mutual awareness for delivering extra value. However some complaints are resolvable without grass-roots learnings presenting themselves.

## Total Complaints Overview

# 2021/22

# dorsetcomplaints

2021/22

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
	Number of FORMAL complaints	49	49	63	74	235
	Number of INFORMAL complaints	135	140	80	116	351
	Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	2/11	0/9	2/15	0/8	4/43
	Timescales (overdue)	36%	17%	11%	8%	18%
	% fully justified complaints	2%	5%	8%	4%	5%
	% part justified complaints	7%	10%	8%	8%	8%
	Compliments	59	45	35	58	197
	Learnings	5	6	9	11	31

Place

Total Complaints = 586

2021/22

performance

# dorsetcomplaints



2021/22

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
	Number of FORMAL complaints	10	7	19	13	49
	Number of INFORMAL complaints	31	20	32	40	123
	Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	0/5	0/3	0/2	1/7	1/17
	Timescales (overdue)	54%	13%	8%	2%	19%
	% fully justified complaints	Unknown	13%	13%	5%	10%
	% part justified complaints	Unknown	13%	13%	10%	12%
	Compliments	0	0	5	1	6
	Learnings	0	1	0	2	3

performance

Corporate  
Total Complaints = 172

2021/22

# dorsetcomplaints

2021/22

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
 Number of FORMAL complaints	5	7	11	19	42
 Number of INFORMAL complaints	10	4	10	14	38
 Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	0/1	0/2	0/0	0/4	0/7
 Timescales (overdue)	9%	41%	25%	10%	22%
 % fully justified complaints	Unknown	Unknown	8%	0%	4%
 % part justified complaints	Unknown	Unknown	8%	9%	8%
 Compliments	7	2	6	1	16
 Learnings	0	0	0	0	0

**People - Adults - Non social care**

Total Complaints = 80

2021/22

performance

# dorsetcomplaints

2021/22

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
 Number of FORMAL complaints	22	22	19	28	91
 Number of INFORMAL complaints	10	17	21	10	58
 Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	4/6	1/7	0/1	2/7	7/21
 Timescales (overdue)	41%	41%	18%	17%	29%
 % fully justified complaints	6%	3%	8%	5%	6%
 % part justified complaints	6%	3%	8%	2%	5%
 Compliments	36	28	30	21	115
 Learnings	4	4	5	8	21

**People - Adults - Social care**

Total Complaints = 149

2021/22

performance

# dorsetcomplaints

2021/22

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
	Number of FORMAL complaints	19	24	23	32	98
	Number of INFORMAL complaints	14	23	15	23	75
	Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	0/6	3/9	1/5	2/7	6/27
	Timescales (overdue)	10%	32%	27%	16%	21%
	% fully justified complaints	9%	6%	16%	22%	13%
	% part justified complaints	9%	11%	16%	13%	12%
	Compliments	11	9	3	7	30
	Learnings	14	6	5	14	39

**People - Children - Non Social Care**

Total Complaints = 173

2021/22

performance

# dorsetcomplaints

2021/22

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
	Number of FORMAL complaints	8	6	8	7	29
	Number of INFORMAL complaints	17	26	17	31	91
	Upheld approaches to the LGSCO Ombudsman compared to total received	0/2	2/2	0/1	0/1	2/6
	Timescales (overdue)	20%	32%	27%	16%	24%
	% fully justified complaints	8%	6%	8%	7%	7%
	% part justified complaints	20%	6%	16%	7%	12%
	Compliments	11	16	20	18	65
	Learnings	6	6	18	3	33

**People - Children - Social Care**

Total Complaints = 120

2021/22

performance

# Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

## Appendices

### Children's Service Statutory Reporting Requirements

To get perspective on the small number of complaints received from our Children in Care it is important to understand the overall numbers for Children's Social Care complaints. Most complaints received are from parents (some estranged) and not necessarily representing the voice or best interest of the child. That is why we need to shine a light on the complaints process and how young people can find it

The figures below show an increase in complaints over all for Childrens Social care, but not limited to Children in Care which feature further down the report. Representations capture the figures for complaints that were resolved informally outside of the Statutory Process

Children's Social Care	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Representations	91	131	83
Stage 1	29	51	40
Stage 2	1	1	0
Stage 3	0	0	1
LGSCO approaches	6 with 1 upheld	4 none upheld	6 none upheld
Children's Whole Authority			
Representations	75	19	23
Formal Complaint	98	37	37
LGSCO approaches	13 with 6 upheld	5 with 3 upheld	4 none upheld

1 case accepted at Stage 2 relating to a child removed from the care of a Foster Carer. This was ultimately upheld and has since been referred to the Ombudsman

The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) investigates complaints from the public about councils and other bodies providing public services in England. It also investigates complaints about registered social care providers.

### **Social Care**

Of the 6 Social Care complaints to be formally investigated by the Ombudsman, maladministration was only found in 1 case

*Summary: Ms C complains the Council persuaded her to leave her partner and enter a refuge to escape domestic violence, with the agreement her son would follow but this did not happen. I find fault with the Council for not recognising Ms C as a vulnerable person and suggesting actions that would have been difficult in her circumstances as a person at significant risk. This left Ms C with uncertainty and unable to exercise her parental responsibility. The Council has agreed to reassess this case, apologise to Ms C, pay her a financial remedy and look at lessons it can learn.*

### **Non Social Care**

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

The 13 Non Social Care complaints heard by the Ombudsman related to delays with EHCP and poor communication regarding SEN and children out of education. 6 were upheld by the Ombudsman with financial penalties amounting to £40850

### Which customer groups made the complaints;

Changes in software midway through 2021 has made it difficult to accurately report on Customer Groups. We can however report that Parents and Other Relatives are the most active regarding Children's social care issues, with only 8 from the young person directly or via advocacy.

### The types of complaints made;

Most complaints fall under subcategories of Service Provision, largely around delays of perceived failures to deliver a service

Themes	Children's Social Care
Communication	12%
Data	2%
Finance	0%
Policy - Disagreement with Decision	7%
Service Provision - Delay	0%
Professional Practice/Quality of Service	74%
Other	5%

### The outcome of complaints;

Of the complaints received for Children's Social Care in 2021-22 only 6% were considered Fully Justified by operational managers shows there is some level of justification as outlined below:

Fully Justified	8% up from 6% last year
Partially Justified	10% down from 13% last year
Not justified	82% up fractionally from 81%

In 2021-22 the Complaints Team have improved the quarterly reporting and added extra value in terms of learnings and actions from complaints. In many cases however the complaints process is used by parents who are unhappy with records held that cant be legally altered. There is always more work to do in providing robust assurance of our self assessment of the services we provide.

## Focus on Children in Care

Advocacy is a key part of how we deliver for children and young people in Dorset. Action for Children were our long standing provider for advocacy until the end of July 2021, when following a competitive tender process, we awarded the contract to the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) who have been the provider since the beginning of August 2021.

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

The change between providers saw some logistical challenges with a move between different referral systems, so we have worked hard to improve our advocacy offer and have seen improved reach in more recent months. During any quarter, NYAS is typically working with 3 young people who wish to make complaints, and this has been consistent since the start of the contract. All complaints have either been resolved in collaboration with the team(s) involved, or at Stage 1, with no complaints escalating further.

The table below demonstrates a breakdown of Children in Care complaints. All complaints by young people are coming to the Complaints team via an advocacy service. As the numbers are so low there could be concerns we are not hearing the voice of the Child in Dorset through the complaints process and work in 2021-22 has highlighted this with the QAROs

Year	Number of Complaints
Children in Care 2021-22	8
Children in Care 2020-21	15
Children in Care 2019-20	10
Children in Care 2018-19	20

In 2021-22 we have identified 8 cases that related to children in care, all via an advocate representing the voice of the child through the complaints process. You will note the figures are consistently low by comparison to the overall figures.

In Q1 we have identified 3 cases that related to children in care, all via an advocate representing the voice of the child. 2 informal and 1 formal

A summary of these can be found below:

### **SG – A4C wrote**

she is stating that the Team Manger/Social Care, has closed the initial complaint? SG states at the time that the discussions that she had with Social Care sounded positive, but these actions have now been retracted. SG states that Social Care had offered mediation between the foster carers and herself, but this was declined. SG, also says that contact was supposed to be reinstated with her brother. This had been discussed as unsupervised. This again has been retracted and now put forward as a one hour supervised visit.

Can the first complaint be used with this additional information, as this is really the same issue?

### **KM – A4C wrote**

- They have asked Jenny to join an agency so she can work with me. (Explored with the Foster Carer – J will have a pay cut if this happens)
- I scream when I have someone else bathing me. I also throw my arms around (This could be dangerous to me as I could hurt myself) K, nodded and agreed with this. This was checked out several times with K.
- J does schoolwork with me, Physio, takes me for a walk. The other carer only used to take me for a walk and a nappy change. Jenny really looks after me. (Foster Carer stated this – Checked out with K agreed by nodding yes.
- J was supposed to come in a see me in the holiday's, but no one let me or J know what was happening. (Foster Carer Statement )

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

In Q2 we have identified 1 case that related to children in care, via an advocate representing the voice of the child. In this case the Complaints Team were able to recommend resolving the case positively and the manager was really pro-active in bringing this matter to a close without undue escalation. There was a significant investment of time on this case, but it was heartening to see resolution and a DC approach to complaints management

***M would like to complain about the support he is getting from Social Services. He is at college in X and believed that Dorset was going to support him whilst he is there both with housing and personal support. He is very upset and stressed about what has happened with the council initially saying support was to stop when he became 18, and then extending this only until June which is not long enough to complete his education. M would not have left his placement to go to X if he had not believed he had the agreement from Dorset to support him until his course was complete, otherwise he would have chosen to stay in Dorset. M feels that he was not given the correct advice and has been let down.***

In Q3 we identified 2 complaint/contacts from a young people in care through advocacy, which was considered informally as a service request due to the nature of the concerns

*LH – Voiced various concerns and service requests via advocacy in Q3 including the desire for a placement near mum, and concern around Dorchester town due to an upsetting incident there*

*MA – In this house it's annoying and so are the staff members. There is lack of communication and the organisation is bad as well. Say like on Sunday, we had three girls here, all on one to one, but there wasn't enough staff, there was only two on shift. That has happened three times this week already. Therefore when there isn't enough staff, we all have to stay in. it's like being in lock down.*

In Q4 we identified 2 complaint/contacts from a young people in care – Both were Upheld

RR – Decision making to place in care

*I will ensure that, through the Senior Management Team, our legal and Locality Teams, all are reminded of the importance of full genograms in care proceedings and consideration of all extended family links and promoting sibling contact as a priority for children in our care.*

LH – removal from Foster Parents

*I'm sorry that we can't change the way in which things happened for you, but I and my colleagues here in Dorset have looked back at what happened and how so that we can do our best to make sure this doesn't happen for you or any other children we work with in the future unless it is an absolute emergency and there are no other options.*

Advocacy is described as supporting children to have their say and making sure their views and wishes are taken into consideration on decisions and matters that affect them, it is also about ensuring that rights are upheld. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the right of children to be listened to in decisions which affect them. There is a statutory duty to provide an independent advocacy service that supports children and young people to have their views and wishes taken into account when key decisions are being made about their lives.

An advocate can help if:

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

- something needs to be started, changed or stopped, for example, if the child is unhappy about their treatment by children's social care or there are worries about plans being made, such as a move
- a child needs support during meetings to make sure their voice is heard
- children need advice and want to know their rights
- a child needs support to make a complaint

The contract for advocacy during 2020/21 has been with Action for Children. In accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council was required to seek competitive tenders for this service provision at the end of the current contract (31/07/2021). The tender was awarded to the highest scoring bidder, and from 01/08/2021 advocacy will be provided by National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS).

Referrals to Advocacy by quarter is shown below

Referrals	Q1 (Apr-June 20/21)	Q2(Jul-Sept 20/21)	Q3 (Oct-Dec20/21)	Q4 (Jan-March20/21)
New referrals to advocacy	161	176	197	166

### Compliance with timescales, and complaints resolved within extended timescale as agreed;

The table below show the majority of all Stage 1 cases for Children's Services Social Care were over the 20-day statutory timescale.

Timescales	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
0-20 Working Days	77%	78%	75%
20+ days	23%	22%	25%

The complaints team have worked hard to ensure timescales improved year on year but the overdue complaints figures are still consistent. Closer observation reveals that some cases exceed the 20 days as a result of agreeing a more informal approach and resolution after the receipt of the original complaint, with good work from locality managers. This can include follow up calls and meetings, so the figure in isolation does not tell the whole story of the journey of the complaints.

### learning and service improvement, including changes to services that have been implemented and details of any that have not been implemented;

Learning points are collected at all stages of the complaints procedure. At stage 1, Operational Managers identify learning from complaints and learning actions. At Stages 2 and 3, action plans are compiled based on the recommendations of the investigator's or panel chair's report. In addition, the LGSCO will include recommendations to remedy complaints, and actions are monitored by the complaints team to ensure that they are completed.

### How we disseminate learning

Quarterly reports to Children's Services Leadership Team produced by the Complaints team

Dissemination of the quarterly report to Operational Managers to be discussed at Service Team Meetings.

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

The complaints team also feed into the performance data for SLT each quarter

### How we learn from complaints

Improvement in Stage 1 responses - Additional Training to be provided to Team Managers on how to complete and present and stage one investigations. The Complaints Team Manager will be attending meetings to advise and update

Improvement in communication, sharing of Assessments and CIN Plans - Practice issue raised. Notes from Meetings to be completed in a timely manner and a copy sent to the attendees, including the family. Operational Managers to ensure that Team Managers and Social Workers are clear about the need to record meetings. Robust quality assurance processes put in place.

Improved use of complaints as a measure of performance and quality control:

Evidence of sharing of quarterly reports and using to track individual team performance. The Senior Assurance Officer will be leading on this

### Examples of learning from Complaints:

We have collected 33 good quality and robust organisational learnings in 21-22 up from 26 last year. In addition, non social care complaints provided 55 cases with valuable learnings which is really pleasing

Case ID	What we have learned from Complaints	What we have done as a result to improve practice
COM/00000886	Complaint upheld regarding possible parental alienation	Manager confirmed that they have begun to run workshops around Parental Alienation in the East and Purbeck Locality. They are involving Children's Social Care Principal Social Worker in this, so that Parental Alienation is understood by all our Social Workers and taken into consideration when assessing families where parental conflict, separation and divorce is a feature. As a council we are participating in a pilot project where issues of contact between separating parents is being taken out of the court arena and alternatives to litigation are considered.
COM/00001162	Complaint upheld regarding communication and contact with Social Worker	Manager has asked the social worker to ensure that, following the next review, she schedules the next review with the professionals at the meeting. If for any reason this needs to be re-scheduled, the social worker will ensure that another meeting is re-arranged.
COM/00001192	Should have been more oversight from social workers prior to the domestic incident.	Manager to ensure that every effort is made to allocate duty social workers to visit on time where such concerns are known to exist.
COM/00001212	The SEN Team were unable to meet the child's needs in a timely way	The actions taken are as follows: There is wider work underway about the provision of specialist school placements, and Dorset Council are investing in improving provision for all of Dorset's children, including the development of the provision at Coombe House near Shaftesbury. We are also working with our colleagues in the maintained and independent schools

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

		to make sure that we have sufficient provision to meet needs.
<b>COM/00001269</b>	Manager has ensured that the social worker, and the rest of the team, are aware of best practice when sharing reports with parents and how they talk to children about issues, as a result of this complaint.	Manager has talked to social worker about how important it is for parents to feel that they are being listened to and they have looked at prioritising the social worker's time.
<b>COM/00001272</b>	Complaint upheld regarding communication of panel decisions	As part of the Panel decision making processes, the panel is now emailing panel outcomes to the SEN Provision Leads by the end of the week of the panel. This ensures that we are able to effectively and efficiently communicate those decisions to all involved, especially to the young people and their families.
<b>COM/00001310</b>	Complaint upheld regarding communication of panel decisions	Manager has worked with the team and, as the chair for the SEND Panel in North Dorset has implemented a process whereby the SEND Provision Leads are notified of the panel outcomes no later than the next working day. This enables us to effectively communicate those decisions to all involved, especially to families.
<b>COM/00001320</b>	Complaint upheld in regards to the lack of communication particularly relating to scheduled appointments and contact is not going ahead due to social worker on sick leave etc. This has been acknowledged to cause stress and impacts adversely on the anxiety and depression of customer	Manager has asked that the team complete updated training on customer service as they do not wish level of service to be repeated or caused any further anxiety
<b>COM/00001333</b>	The referral could have been dealt with in a more sensitive manner	Manager has raised this with colleagues to ensure other families do not have the same experience in similar situations
<b>COM/00001383</b>	Manager to ensure that, when there are workers off in the team for a long period of time, children are written to explaining the situation and what their plans will be to have a social worker and also their care plans.	Complaints team to query any follow up actions necessary
<b>COM/00001362</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social Worker involved needs to understand when sensitive information is shared, how this should be recorded and discussed with parents in advance of sharing with partners</li> <li>2. Where parents are separated or one</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervision discussion with Social Worker</li> <li>2. Reflective workshop on information sharing and report writing</li> </ol>

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

	parent only has PR for one child and not others involved in assessment it is essential the report is written in a way which enables the information not relevant to that parent to be removed without losing the essence of the assessment and concerns raised.	
<b>COM/00001422</b>	Complaint upheld regarding lack of acknowledgment to emails and lack of updates may have caused anxiety and distress to customer	To make the service work better, we have put significantly more resource into the team over the Autumn, including new caseworkers and specialist Family Workers. We also continue to actively recruit new permanent Provision Leads. Action for the complaints team is to follow this up and to ensure this is completed.
<b>COM/00001440</b>	To make the service work better, we have put significantly more resource into the team over the Autumn, including new Caseworkers and specialist Family Workers. We also continue to actively recruit new permanent Provision Leads.	To make the service work better (SEN ECHP) we have put significantly more resource into the team over the Autumn, including new Caseworkers and specialist Family Workers. We also continue to actively recruit new permanent Provision Leads.
<b>COM/00001496</b>	As learning from complaint and findings, manager will ensure that, through the Senior Management Team, our Legal and Locality Teams all are reminded of the importance of full genograms in care proceedings and consideration of all extended family links and promoting sibling contact as a priority for children in our care. This will take place through Reflective Practice training in our teams and supervisions. Recently, Dorset have implemented the need for a Child and Family Assessment to be completed annually for each Child In Care and this will be a useful tool to gather all family information and consider contact issues further, aside from the Care Plan and Child In Care Reviews.	Complaints team to query any follow up actions necessary and facilitate by means of an action plan to ensure these targets are met
<b>COM/00001550</b>	Manager confirmed that Dorset Council are working hard to ensure that they have an increase in Foster Placements and Residential Placements based in Dorset for our children and young people in the future.	There are now twice weekly placement meetings that have been introduced between Senior Managers, Fostering and Commissioning to support more proactive identification of placements and addressing barriers or issues relating to placement searches.
<b>COM/00001695</b>	The Service Manager has spoken to the SENDIASS Officer and reviewed with her in detail how the conversation should have been handled differently. We expect our	We will be looking at additional customer services training for our SENDIASS team in early 2022. I know that some offers of support have already been made to you: If you would find it helpful, SENDIASS can offer you a different officer to support and advise

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

	staff to treat everyone with dignity and respect and she has recognised that she should have behaved in this way towards you.	you and the Chesil Locality Team could offer you some support for you and your family.
<b>COM/00001782</b>	In relation to lack of communication this is something we will be able to address as we move forward, this was predominantly down to a shortage of staff due to sickness and change of agency staff at the time. We now have SEN PLs in place and are recruiting to the SEN Family Worker roles which will support this.	Team Around the Schools support is being put in place in relation to Stalbridge Primary. SEN Team Manager will be responsible by 28.02.2022
<b>COM/00001085</b>	Manager has contacted the Purbeck Team Manager to discuss the nature of this complaint and to make sure they appreciate the strain the complainants are feeling as they continue to care for the three children.	Manager and Social Worker have reflected on, in going through the terms of the complaint, how they can make sure that they take the time to listen to families' concerns and explain decisions.
<b>COM/00001122</b>	Upheld complaint regarding contact arrangements and communication	Manager has ensured that the social worker, and the rest of the team, are aware of best practice when sharing reports with parents and how they talk to children about issues, as a result of this complaint. Manager has talked to social worker about how important it is for parents to feel that they are being listened to and they have looked at prioritising the social worker's time.
<b>CIC (H)</b>	Information was presented to young person in visual format which proved very effective and will be used in future. Young person had concerns about not being able to contact social worker, so a student social worker was also allocated to him so that he has two workers to communicate with.	With regard to Transition Services, manager stated that there are council wide improvements being implemented by Theresa Leavy across Children's Services to address the lack of placements for young people to move on to.
<b>CIC (LB)</b>	The learning from this complaint will need to be taken forward in the Legal Team and Children's Services to raise the importance of planning earlier when a child wishes to change their name. This will ensure that all documents and ID are in place at age 18 to prevent delay for the young person and to ensure their wishes are heard and acted upon promptly and effectively, between teams and agencies.	Complaints Team to seek update on action plan
<b>COM/00001496</b>	As learning from complaint and findings, manager will ensure that, through the Senior Management Team, our Legal and Locality Teams all are reminded of the importance of full	This will take place through Reflective Practice training in our teams and supervisions. Recently, Dorset have implemented the need for a Child and Family Assessment to be completed annually for each Child In Care and this will be a useful tool to gather all

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

	genograms in care proceedings and consideration of all extended family links and promoting sibling contact as a priority for children in our care	family information and consider contact issues further, aside from the Care Plan and Child In Care Reviews.
<b>Stage 2 MY</b>	A full IP report and adjudication letter including high level organisational learnings we provided	The Complaints Team and Children's Services are working on a detailed action plan relating to a Stage 2 investigation to ensure actions follow the lessons

### The one upheld LGSCO for Social Care (excluding SEN/ECHP) presented us with the following outcome:

<b>Management Response – what needs to happen</b>
issues an apology to Ms C for failing to adequately assess this case and gather all relevant information,
pays Ms C £500 for distress caused
reassess this case, ensuring it has a correct and detailed record of information that reflects my findings in this case. It is noted that as Ms C's son is now 16, the Council's action may be limited but it should fully explore if there is any action it should take following a reassessment.
Within three months of a decision, I recommend the Council; • reviews its internal processes to ensure information sharing is adequate within its safeguarding departments, ensuring there is effective lines of communication in place between its housing department and CSC. The Council should also ensure it has sufficient methods of communication with MARAC to avoid missing information as happened in this case
reminds its staff are aware of the need to thoroughly obtain and ascertain the circumstances around any information it uses to make decisions,
carry out training with its staff to ensure they are able to identify vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and to consider such vulnerability when making decisions,

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

reminds all staff that children in these circumstances that they should be visited promptly in an independent environment, such as their school, to obtain their wishes.

### Sharing Information

Professionals need to ensure they have explicit permission to share information, either through statutory guidance or with the consent of the children and family involved. This includes when sharing information with other family members.

Maintaining confidentiality within a family is complex and checks should always be made of the records to confirm what can and cannot be shared with each family member. A handover of key information between practitioners and their managers in respect of any changes in family's circumstances should take place after periods of absence to ensure clarity about what has happened and what information can be shared with whom.

### Data Protection and Appropriate Action to take

Managers need to contact Data Protection Team as soon as possible following a potential breach to seek advice about immediate actions to mitigate risk and distress to the family. When aware that a data breach has occurred, advice must be obtained from the Data Protection Team about immediate actions required. Information on how to report a data breach can be found at <https://intranet.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/task/report-a-data-breach/> Unless advised otherwise, contact should be made with the family to alert them to the breach and to provide apologies, reassurance and information about what the service will be doing to rectify the situation and mitigate the risks.

### Safeguarding, the Legal Framework and Good Practice

Reference Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

### A summary of statistical data about the age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity of complainants

All complainants to Dorset Council are sent an equality and diversity monitoring form as part of the complaint process. Complainants are asked to complete this form but it is completely voluntary. If complainants contact us via the online form, we currently collect any information offered. We will need to introduce manual collection for postal complaints in future. The percentages are based on those who completed the form only and not specific to Children's Services as they are anonymous

Happily the data for 2021-22 seems more complete and indicative of trends but these figures are based only on the 1146 records provided

	2021-22	2020-21
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	47%	53%
Male	37%	40%
Self described or non binary	1%	0%
Prefer not to say	15%	7%
<b>Sexuality</b>		
Heterosexual	66%	76%
Gay Man	1%	1%

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

Bisexual	<b>2%</b>	3%
Prefer not to say (selected)	<b>15%</b>	20%
Gay Woman/Lesbian	<b>1%</b>	0%
Left Blank	<b>13%</b>	0%
<b>Age</b>		
16-24	<b>1%</b>	1%
25-34	<b>20%</b>	2%
35-44	<b>15%</b>	16%
45-54	<b>15%</b>	22%
55-64	<b>18%</b>	22%
65-74	<b>12%</b>	7%
75 & Older	<b>10%</b>	7%
Left blank	<b>9%</b>	23%
<b>Religion</b>		
Atheist	<b>3%</b>	Unknown
Buddist	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and other Christian denominations)	<b>29%</b>	44%
Hindu	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Jewish	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
Muslim	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
None/no religion	<b>35%</b>	40%
Other	<b>2%</b>	1%
Prefer not to say (selected)	<b>12%</b>	8%
Left Blank	<b>17%</b>	8%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	<b>0%</b>	3%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Black or Black British - African	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Black or Black British - Caribbean	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Mixed Ethnic Background - Other White background	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Mixed Ethnic Background - White and Asian	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Mixed Ethnic Background - White and Black African	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Mixed Ethnic Background - White and Black Caribbean	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Not known	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
Prefer not to say	<b>5%</b>	Unknown
Traveller of Irish Heritage	<b>0%</b>	7
White - British	<b>68%</b>	87%
White - Gypsy or Traveller	<b>0%</b>	Unknown
White - Irish	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
White - Other White background	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
Other	<b>1%</b>	3%
Left Blank	<b>24%</b>	Unknown
<b>Disability</b>		
Mental Health, Learning Difficulty/Sensory	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
Mental Health Long Term	<b>1%</b>	Unknown
Mental Health - Unspecified	<b>3%</b>	18%
Physical Disability - Long Term	<b>10%</b>	Unknown

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

Physical Disability - Unspecified	3%	31%
-----------------------------------	----	-----

### **A review of the effectiveness of the complaints procedure**

The Complaints Team send out forms to gather feedback from complainants about their experience of complaining in order to continually improve the service. Regrettably there has been very little uptake on this and there is no reportable data of any value established.

### **Monitoring the effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure**

We need to improve on current arrangements for collecting this information and the Complaints Team are aware that customer feedback on the complaints process is important

# Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

## Appendices

### Adult's Service

We hope the Infographic on pages 6 and 7 provides key information at a glance in a format that allows the Quarters to be directly compared. We include the specific the number of complaints and the manner in which they were considered. We have specified the number of complaints which were justified, and the number referred to the Ombudsman. Complaints should be regarded as an important tool and be performance monitored to ensure the Council can evidence that we are a learning organisation. Compliments should also be valued and communicated effectively to staff. Good practice and learning should be disseminated. These are feedback as soon as we receive them and are highlighted in internal quarterly reporting

### Complaint Themes and Subject matter

#### Q1 2021/22

Communication	3
Data	0
Finance	13
Policy Procedure	3
Service Provision	13

#### Q2

Communication	1
Data	0
Finance	7
Policy Procedure	0
Disagreement with Decision	3
Customer Service	4
Quality of Service	17
Service Provision	5
Other	2

#### Q3

Communication	2
Customer Service	2
Disagreement with Decision	4
Finance	7
Other	1
Quality of Service/Provision	24

#### Q4

Service Provision	7
Quality of Service	9
Finance	6
Disagreement with Decision	10
Customer Service	1
Data	1
Communication	4

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

### Learning from Complaints

Dorset Council have collected 22 learnings from complaints with a sampling below:

<b>What we have learned from Complaints</b>	<b>What have we done to improve practice</b>
Learnings experience for social worker	Social Worker has apologised and working to improve communication and rapport
delay in allocating someone explore options moving into new property	Apology from Manager with reflection on shortage of carers
Allow adequate time to provide a meaningful visit, the reason why elderly relative didn't feel that anyone had been	Apology offered by manager with assurances improvements in service and reporting will be pursued through investigations
We did not make decisions in a timely way, and when those decisions were challenged, we did not act swiftly to put things right.	Manager considering matters differently to avoid similar issues happening again.
Lack of information, response, and progress regarding my parents	Reflection on resource challenges
Length of time to resolve an adult social care issue	Manager confirmed that they have identified the need to improve communication for individuals who are awaiting assessment, ensuring we confirm in the meantime what to expect. Implemented on 10.01.22 – a check for all individuals awaiting assessment every 4 weeks to update situation and reassure individuals they have not been forgotten
Should have received a call from the locality team.	Apology offered. Allocated a Social Worker who will contact you both to start the conversation about his needs and arrange an assessment under the Care Act. Area Practice Managers to understand where mistakes were made. She will also be reviewing the processes at the point of contact in the locality Team and making changes to improve the service.
Safeguarding concern / complaint 3110972	To ensure services/social workers request copy of LPoA in good time Actions
In future clearer processes will be in place to make sure, in situations like this where a person lacks capacity, that Best interest Meetings are convened in a more timely way.	This has been addressed with the workers from the Locality and Safeguarding Teams. If, in the future, there is evidence of a person living in a situation where professionals are being stopped from seeing the individual then consideration will be given to seeking assistance from the Police to gain access, where necessary.

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

<p>Having investigated manager could not see evidence that complainant was advised of the end date of the COVID funding and from what date complainant would be liable for charges prior to the financial assessment result.</p>	<p>Therefore, manager agreed to cancel the £552 charged to complainant and the invoice dated 6 October 2021. Manager has ensured that, in the future, there is clear communication in regard to dates and the responsibility of funding.</p>
<p>We do need to communicate well with people with care and support needs and their families, particularly when we are unable to execute plans that we had previously communicated. In this case a colleague who was well-known to the person and their family left the organisation with a review outstanding, within the context of the person experiencing a deterioration in their wellbeing, without the person and their family being informed. The review date slipped owing to an inability to reallocate due to workforce pressures.</p>	<p>Remind teams and colleagues within the LD, Transitions, Reviews and Shared Lives service of the importance of good customer service and of the need to keep people informed.</p>
<p>Complaint upheld regarding paperwork and information gathering</p>	<p>I have reinforced with the team that customers, families, carers, and advocates must be informed when information gathered will be added to any formal documents.</p>
<p>Review how would respond to future cases to ensure we minimise the impact of decisions for both the provider and those supporting residents. This would include ensuring provide has conversations with individuals, or their representatives, should funding be withdrawn at any stage, and that providers are aware of whether they would be responsible for the cost of their care or if they would require support from the Local Authority. By pre-empting this conversation this will reduce the risk to the provider of any unpaid bills. It is reasonable to assume that, whether an individual is responsible for the cost of their care or the Local Authority contribute to this, that a breakdown of these costs and how the care is delivered will be required.</p>	<p>Complaints team to query any follow up actions necessary</p>

## Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

### LGSCO Findings

Of the 21 cases investigated by the LGSCO only 7 cases were upheld, with just one resulting in an action plan and financial penalty, captured below:

### **Final decision**

I have found fault by the care home causing injustice. I have completed my investigation on the basis the Council will carry out the above actions as a suitable way to remedy the injustice.

### **Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman**

#### **Action 1**

Apologise to Mrs Y and her family for the distress caused by Care Homes failures in its care for Mr X

#### **Action 2**

Pay Mrs Y £750 to acknowledge the distress, time and trouble caused to her and her family by the failings in Mr X's care. This figure is a symbolic amount based on the Ombudsman's published Guidance on Remedies.

#### **Action 3**

Review and assess the improvements in practice and record keeping, put in place in response to the safeguarding enquiry.

#### **Action 4**

Consider with care home whether any further changes should be made in light of the findings in this decision.