

Complaints About Children's Services – What Happened in 2024–25

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Summary of what the report is about

This report talks about the complaints people made about Dorset Council's Children's Services. It looks at how many complaints were made, what they were about, and what the council did about them. It also includes complaints from children in care.

What are the key messages of this report

- Dorset Council got more complaints than ever before – nearly 2,000!
- Complaints about social care (helping children and families) went up a lot.
- Only 3 complaints came from children in care, but more of these were taken seriously and looked at in detail.
- Some complaints were found to be right or partly right.
- The complaints team helps the council learn from mistakes and improve.

Important facts and figures

- **1919 complaints** were made in total – up 17% from last year.
- **Children's Services complaints** went up by **34%**.
- **3 complaints** came from children in care – same as last year.
- **11%** of complaints were fully agreed with, and another **11%** were partly agreed with.
- The council paid out **£103,510** for complaints looked at by the Ombudsman.
- Another **£42,621** was paid for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) complaints.
- Investigations cost **£15,986**, which is more than last year.
- The complaints team earned **£9,240** by helping schools with complaints.

Actions or recommendations

- The Corporate Parenting Board should read and check the report.
- They should make sure the council is following the rules and learning from complaints.
- Staff are reminded to take care of their wellbeing because dealing with complaints can be tough.