

**Children's Social Services**

**Summary of complaints by theme (2019-20)**

Complaints relating to contact (4 complaints)

X was unhappy with arrangements put in place to drop off their children after contact. X also believes the Family Group Co-ordinator was biased toward their ex-partner and advised them separately about contact arrangements.

X was advised that as he has shared parental responsibility with their ex-partner, it was down to them both to consider what was in the best interests of the children, but we would not intervene. Instead X was directed to seek legal advice. We assured that Co-ordinators are independent and do not take sides, but another Co-ordinator was allocated the family's case.

Complaints relating to communication (2 complaints)

X complained via their Advocate that we were lying to X about contact with their mum, X's voice wasn't being heard throughout the process and their relationship with their Social Worker had broken down.

We met with X and their Advocate and suggested weekly unsupervised contact would be able to start from next week. We had already discussed this with mum and she was happy with this proposal. In the meantime the Social Worker will continue in her role for the purposes of continuity during this important time in X's life until everyone is clear about what is happening with the planned Special Guardianship Order.

Complaints relating to a lack of advice or support (4 complaints)

X complained they were not given the correct information by ourselves in the lead up to the adoption of their child in 2006, who is now displaying challenging behaviour and the placement has sadly broken down. This lack of information has had a significant impact on themselves and on their son.

We advised we could find no clear rationale as to why additional information was not shared with them at the time of their son's adoption. We explained by reflecting on adoptive parents' experiences on a nationwide basis processes have adapted and changed over the years and indeed continue to do so, giving a couple of examples. The approach to information sharing is also very different and more transparent and open (including family history, life experiences etc.) so adoptive parents can make better informed decisions. After a lengthy but productive meeting, X were satisfied a similar situation happening again will have reduced and everyone is focussed on mediation between family and son.

#### Complaints relating to the timeliness of our decisions or actions (4 complaints)

X complained contact review meetings were not being held as originally agreed, X received little or no communication from us about their children who are looked after, and X wasn't receiving paperwork in a timely manner.

We acknowledged we haven't been proactive in terms of arranging meetings and we gave a commitment to meet every several weeks as well as weekly telephone contact to update X about his children. Outstanding paperwork had previously been shared. We advised about future contact arrangements and the longer term plan for rehabilitation.

#### Complaints relating to disagreements with our decisions or actions (7 complaints)

X complained about the inaccurate information provided to case conference about them by ALL the agencies present. X did not, however, wish to appeal the decision that their children remain on the Register.

Much of X's correspondence were their views about our management of their children's case and we advised these would be added to PARIS for future reference. It is our professional opinion that both parents were consulted about the enquiries etc. Throughout the Part 2 (separate) meeting with X, the Chair checked after each professional's report and X either stated he agreed or intimated that he agreed with their presentation. X did not raise any objections to any professional opinion raised at Conference.

#### Complaints relating to staff (7 complaints)

X complained that they had been painted as an abuser toward their ex-partner in the social work report to Court and X wanted a change in Social Worker.

We had agreed to change the original Social Worker late last year as we needed an effective working relationship with X. We explained we will not be changing Social Worker again. X's son remains on the child protection register and the case is subject to ongoing legal proceedings so continuity is important. Instead we agreed for an independent social work assessment to be completed as part of these legal proceedings, being mindful of X's concerns and provide them with some reassurance that we are listening to their views.

#### Complaints relating to our processes (9 complaints)

X complained about our failure to follow Placement with Parents guidance, our not reacting to potential risks and concerns and the lack of progress in terms of their son's immediate future. Their son was also without a P.A. for several months.

We met with X and agreed to make a request to the Housing Department for a single person's accommodation with support. We apologised for the absence of a Placement with Parents Agreement and agreed in future that any such arrangement of this type of care will receive the same process to which all P.W.P. are subject, i.e. the completion of all relevant documentation should be completed at the same time a P.W.P. meeting is to be arranged. There were some gaps earlier in the year re. P.A.s but we reassured X at no time was their son not under appropriate overview and monitoring.

#### Complaints relating to foster placements (1 complaints)

X complained we had gone behind their backs and allowed a family member recently released from prison for violent offences to stay at their children's placement.

There are no plans to change the placement. We advised X that the conversation he had with his eldest daughter about a family member's history was inappropriate. We have no concerns re. the family membr. We confirmed what we spoke with daughter about and because of the adult conversations that were taking place within the family, it was hard to establish daughter's wishes and feelings. If X was unhappy with matters, they can take the case back to Court. We also met separately with both sets of parents.