

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS: NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS – 2003/2004

Table 1

	Number of Complaints Quarter 1 2003/2004	[Division / Section]	Number of Complaints Quarter 2 2003/2004	[Division / Section]
Stage 1	1	[Planning and Commissioning 1]	1	[Planning and Commissioning 1]
Stage 2	0		0	
Local Government Ombudsman	0		1(2)*	[Planning and Commissioning 1]

* Two complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman during this period. The Ombudsman investigated one of the two cases. This is represented by the figure in bold before the bracket. The Ombudsman found that there was no Maladministration and that no injustice had been caused.

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Table 2

ISSUES	S1 Quarter 1 2003/04	S1 Quarter 2 2003/04	S2 Quarter 1 2003/04	S2 Quarter 2 2003/04	LGO Quarter 1 2003/04	LGO Quarter 2 2003/04
Communication	0	1	0	0	0	1 (4)**
Council Decision	0	0	0	0	0	1 (2)**
Discrimination	0	0	0	0	0	1(1)**
Quality of Service	1	1	0	0	0	0

** The figures in the brackets show the total numbers of issues complained about to the Local Government Ombudsman. The figure before the bracket shows the issues contained in the one complaint that the Ombudsman did investigate.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE: NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS – 2003/2004

Table 3

Section	Number Stage 1 Complaints Quarter 1	Number Stage 1 Complaints Quarter 2	Number Stage 2 Complaints Quarter 1	Number Stage 2 Complaints Quarter 2	Number Stage 3 Complaints Quarter 1	Number Stage 3 Complaints Quarter 2	Number LGO Complaints Quarter 1	Number LGO Complaints Quarter 2
C&F DAT	8	8	0	0	0	1	0	0
C&F Long Term	4	8	1	1	0	1	0	0
Child Protection	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fostering & Adoption	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Accommodation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fostering & Adoption	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	20	2	1	0	2	0	0

- Table 3 shows that a large majority of complaints received refer to the Duty and Assessment Team and to the Long Term Fieldwork / Leaving Care Team.
- The total number of complaints at stage 1 has increased from 15 to 20 over the first two quarters of 2003/04.
- It is recognised among many Local Authorities and the SSI that nationally there is under-reporting of complaints from or relating to children and young people. This is being addressed locally by creating better awareness among social care teams of the need to log with service users' 'expressions of dissatisfaction' as complaints and by providing complaint monitoring forms for use by staff. New publicity material specifically aimed at children and young people will be launched in the near future.
- The numbers of complaints escalating to stages 2 and 3 help to provide a measure of the ability of staff to resolve matters at the problem solving stage. Service users have a legal right to request an Independent Investigation if they remain dissatisfied with attempts to resolve complaints at Stage 1. However, this can be a costly and time consuming and can have an effect on staff morale.

- There is value to be gained from having Independent Investigations carried out at Stage 2. A number of useful recommendations have emerged from the cases referred to in the above table.
- In the second quarter there have been two requests for Review Panels. The Review Panel is subject to the requirements of the Children Act 1989. This provides an opportunity for complainants who remain dissatisfied with the findings of the Independent Investigator to have their complaint reviewed.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE: COMPLAINTS BY ISSUE - 2003/2004

Table 4

Complaint Issues	Stage 1 Quarter 1 (Problem Solving)	Stage 1 Quarter 2 (Problem Solving)	Stage 2 Quarter 1 (Independent Investigation)	Stage 2 Quarter 2 (Independent Investigation)	Stage 3 Quarter 1 (Review Panel)	Stage 3 Quarter 2 (Review Panel)	LGO Quarter 1	LGO Quarter 2
Total for Assessment	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for Communication	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0
Other	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Procedure	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Quality of Service	7	4	1	0	0	2	0	0
Staff Competency/Attitude	5	8	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	15	21	2	3	0	5	0	0

- The above table 4 describes the Complaint Issues for each stage of complaint for both quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2003/2004.
- Some complaints contain multiple issues and so the number of issues will not necessarily be the same as the number of complaints.
- The table shows that the key service users complain about are Quality of Service and Staff Competency / Attitude. In Stage 1 quarter 2 there was an increase in the complaints about Staff Attitude. There were an unusual amount of complaints about Assessment.