



**Safeguarding and Family Support  
Children's Services  
London Borough of Islington**

**Children's Social Care  
Annual Complaints Report  
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

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## 2. Context

The Social Services statutory complaints procedure requires that an annual report must be produced for children's social care complaints.

This report provides information about complaints made during the twelve months between 1 April 2023 and the 31 March 2024 under the complaints and representations procedures established through the Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006, the Representations (Children) Regulations 2006 and the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

### 2.1 What is a complaint?

The guidance 'Getting the best from Complaints' produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfE) provides advice for local authorities on implementing the Children Act 1989 complaints procedure for children and young people and defines a complaint as:

'A complaint may be generally defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.'

### 2.2 Who can make a complaint?

Section 26(3) and section 24D of the Children Act, 1989 and section 3(1) of the Adoption and Children Act, 2002 require councils to consider complaints made by:

- Any child or young person (or a parent of his or someone who has parental responsibility for him) who is being looked after by the local authority or is not looked after by them but is in need.
- Any local authority foster carer (including those caring for children placed through independent fostering agencies).
- Children leaving care / care experienced young people.
- Special Guardians.
- A child or young person (or parent of his) to whom a Special Guardian order is in force.
- Any person who has applied for an assessment under section 14F (3) or (4).
- Any child or young person who may be adopted, their parents and guardians.
- Persons wishing to adopt a child.
- Any other person whom arrangements for the provision of adoption services extend.
- Adopted persons, their parents, natural parents, and former guardians.
- Such other person as the local authority consider has sufficient interest in the child or young person's welfare to warrant his representations being considered by them.

## 3. Stages of the complaint procedure

The statutory social care complaints procedure has three stages.

### 3.1 Stage 1 – Local Resolution (Problem Solving)

This is the most important stage of the complaints procedure. The Safeguarding and Family Support Services managers and external contractors provide services on behalf of the Council are expected to resolve as many complaints as possible at this initial point.

The statutory social care complaints procedure requires complaints at Stage 1 to be responded to within 10 working days; however, Safeguarding and Family Support Services can request an extension of an additional 10 working days where a complaint is complex.

The vast majority of complaints are successfully resolved at Stage 1, which indicates that front line managers are making an effort to listen to clients and work with them to reach mutually acceptable outcomes.

### 3.2 Stage 2 – Independent Investigation

This stage is usually implemented where the complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of Stage 1. However, Mediation is considered as a complaint handling tool to resolve ongoing concerns at the end of the Stage 1 complaints process and before Stage 2 is evoked.

Stage 2 is an investigation conducted by an external investigating officer. An additional independent person also works alongside the investigating officer. The Director of Safeguarding adjudicates on the findings of all Stage 2 complaints.

Stage 2 complaints falling within the statutory social care complaints procedure should be dealt with within 25 days, although this can be extended to 65 working days.

### 3.3 Stage 3 – Review Panel

Stage 3 of the statutory social care complaints process is a Review Panel.

Where complainants wish to continue with their complaint about statutory social services functions, the Council is required to establish a complaint Review Panel. Review Panels are only open to complainants who have had their complaints investigated at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints process. The panel makes recommendations to the Corporate Director of Children's Services who then decides on the complaint and any action to be taken. Complaint Review Panels are made up of three independent panellists.

There are various timescales relating to Stage 3 complaints. These include:

- Arranging the Panel within 30 working days.
- Producing the Panel's report within a further 5 working days; and
- Producing the Council's response within 15 working days.

A further option for complainants is the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The LGSCO is an independent organisation who is empowered to investigate where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint. The LGSCO is a free, independent, and impartial service. Complainants can refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any time, although the LGSCO will normally allow the Council to consider the complaint first and will refer the complainant back to the Council unless exceptional criteria are met.

## 3.4 Other Complaints

Not all complaints relating to children's social care services will be dealt with under the Children Act statutory complaints procedure as those procedures relate particularly to complaints made by or on behalf of a child or young person. Occasionally the department receives complaints which do not fit into this category, and these are dealt with using the Council's corporate complaints procedure. For instance, a potential foster carer or adopter complaining about the process and/or outcome of their assessment. The Council's corporate complaints procedure has 2 internal stages. Stage 1 is investigated and responded to by the relevant manager within Safeguarding and Family Support Services, and then Stage 2 is investigated and responded to by the Council's Central Complaints Team. Thereafter complainants are advised to approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if they remain unhappy with the Council's action/s.

Complaints in relation to Child Protection Conferences and the decision of children being made the subject of a Child Protection plan are also dealt with under their own procedures. Stage 1 – Local Resolution is a meeting with the Child Protection Manager (Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) who will meet and then respond to the complainant in writing within 20 working days. If the complainant remains dissatisfied and requests the complaint is escalated, it is referred to Stage 2. At Stage 2 a panel is convened to review the Child Protection Conference decision. The panel should be convened within 20 working days of the request and is made up of senior representatives from Islington Safeguarding Children's Board.

## 4. Overview

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 inclusive the department had 13,934 (12,455) contacts made to Children's Services Contact Team.

Of which in 2023/2024, there were as followed:

- 2044 (2019) Child & Family (Child in Need) Single Assessments completed
- 441 (520) children with 649 (510) periods of care Looked after Children throughout the year
- 761 (914) Children Looked After (CLA) reviews completed
- 892 (839) the number with an open referral Children in Need (CIN) cases (at year end)
- 186 (169) Child Protection cases (at year end)

As a comparison, the figure in brackets are the 2022/2023 data.

In 2023/2024, the following communications were received from service users, parents, carers and/or their representatives:

- 36 compliments
- 7 representations
- 98 complaints
- 4 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries and complaints

In 2023/2024, the common themes of complaints received regarding Safeguarding and Family Support Services are as followed and they remain the same as in 2022/2023:

- Lack of support
- Conduct and/or attitude of staff
- Assessment disagreement
- Information/communication

In 2023/2024, just over one-third - 32 (35%) of the 91 Stage 1 complaints received were considered justified in full or in part.

We continue to aim to:

- Resolve complaints as quickly and informally, where possible
- Learn lessons from complaints to inform practice in the future
- Improve and deliver better customer services to our service users
- Reduce escalations, thereby reducing overall cost to the Council
- Use alternative complaints procedures where possible, to reduce the overall cost to the council.

## 5. Learning from complaints

Customers expect their interaction with Safeguarding and Family Support Services to be professional and positive, despite the difficult circumstances' families are often in, and in the main this is the case. When things go wrong swift action is expected to be taken to resolve the matters causing concern.

The complaints process provides the council with an additional means of monitoring performance and improving service quality and provides an important opportunity to learn from complaints.

There is an established system in place to capture a range of complaints information including the nature of the complaint, the action taken, the outcome of each complaint and whether there was compliance with the time periods specified in the Regulations. The information captured from this monitoring is used in a number of ways including:

- The provision of feedback and the dissemination of the information to managers, to improve systems and procedures
- Measurement of performance and quality control
- Where services are purchased under contract, informing the appropriate service i.e., Commissioning (Placements Team) who monitor each contract.

In Safeguarding and Family Support Services From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 lessons have been learnt in a few cases of the complaints investigated.

### 5.1 Service improvements

The nature and complexities of delivering social care services means that at times Safeguarding and Family Support Services can learn from complaint investigations. As a result, the department aim to improve service delivery and the experience of our service users based on the findings from complaints. Some complaint outcomes are a matter of putting things right for the individual and apologising to the complainant and/or service user. Other outcomes may have a wider significance on service delivery.

The lessons highlighted below have come from complaints received throughout the year in 2023/2024, with changes already made based upon the learning, followed by recommendations that staff have been asked to note.

#### 5.1.1 Social work practice

- To consider the broader situation for children living with one parent and having contact with the other parent.
- Need to be confident and professional when calling (the correct) family members. Providing accurate information and explain rationales for our intervention and involvement. Understand the local policy and procedures including how LCS, our electronic case management system works.
- Need to send young people copies of their pathway plans once completed.
- Ensure nominations for housing are swift.
- The importance of regularly seeing children and young people by themselves, to ensure they feel able to share any concerns. To alleviate young people feeling shut down by their carers and/or support networks.



- Role responsibilities defined and clear for staff responsible for local authority checks.

### 5.1.2 Carers

- To support foster carers whilst the child/young person is in their care and immediately afterwards if the placement breaks down.
- Work with foster carers to support them to meet the changing needs of the children they care for over time and ensure they have the support to continue to care for our children for the duration of their childhood
- Following the end of a foster placement, the foster carer should be updated on the situation for the child.

### 5.1.3 Communication

- Need to ensure that workers and managers respond to communication from service users promptly and within the set timeframe.
- Need to keep young people updated about what steps are being and have been taken to address the issues they raise, even if the matter is not fully resolved.
- At times relationships between social workers and parents do breakdown and there is little scope for meaningful repair – this could be explored at an early stage to try and prevent such occurrences.
- Listen to parents and communicating what and how the concerns they raise are being addressed.
- Keep enquirers and colleagues aware and abreast of what is happening with their enquiries.
- Clarity to ensure appropriate priority is afforded to correspondence received in generic admin email mailbox.

### 5.1.4 Customer care

- Ensure staffing levels are maintained in the Finance department, to avoid missed payments.
- Many of the issues raised in the complaint could have been addressed with timelier communication.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Following on from the identified learnings, which is being shared with staff and managers within Safeguarding and Family Support Services via children's social care management meetings and internal communications are asked, where appropriate, to implement the learning gleaned.

## 6. Compliments

### 6.1 Number of compliments

Table 1 shows the total number of compliments recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 compared to the previous three years.

**Table 1: Number of compliments received in the last four years**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Compliments	76	57	45	36

### 6.2 Compliments by period, service area and team

The volume of compliments received over the past four years has been varied, with the last three years seeing a reduction. The reduction is due to the Youth Offending Team no longer being within the Safeguarding and Family Support service.

It is difficult to benchmark performance or capture themes/trends in relation to compliments; however, overall, it indicates that good practice is happening across the department and some of our service users and partner agencies are taking the time to express gratitude and satisfaction with aspects of the service provided by Safeguarding and Family Support.

The compliments received are varied and range from individual messages of gratitude to specific members of staff, i.e. support staff, social workers, and managers, by email to thank you cards for the work a team has done for the children/young person or family. See Appendix 1 – a synopsis of the compliments received.

Table 2 shows the number of compliments recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support Services by the period, service area and team.

**Table 2: Compliments by period, service area and team**

Service	Team	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Bright Futures	Bright Futures	-	-	-	4
	<b>Total</b>				<b>4</b>
Children in Need	CSCT	0	2	1	0
	Disabled Children's Team	2	6	2	3
	EDT	0	2	0	0
	Lough Road	11	9	5	0
	Personalisation Team	4	2	0	3
	Specialist Family Support	0	-	-	0
	CIN South 1 - Barnsbury	3	1	1	1
	CIN Central 2 - Canonbury	1	2	0	3
	CIN South 2 - Finsbury	0	2	2	0
	CIN Central 1 - Highbury	5	3	0	0
	CIN North 2- Hornsey	3	2	5	1
	CIN North 1 - Holloway	2	1	2	2
	Drug & Alcohol Service (IYPDAS)	0	-	-	0
	YOS	15	-	-	0
	Early Intervention Team	0	-	-	0
	Families First	0	3	-	0
	CIN Provider	0	-	1	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>
Children Looked After	CLA	1	1	0	1
	CAIS	0	-	0	0
	Adoption	1	1	0	0
	Contact Centre	0	0	0	0
	Independent Futures	3	3	5	-
	Independent Futures Team 1	-	-	-	5
	Independent Futures Team 2	-	-	-	3
	Family Plus (Permanence)	4	-	0	0
	Fostering	1	4	10	0
	CLA Team 1	10	6	2	4
	CLA Team 2	4	1	2	1
	Pause	-	1	3	1
	Virtual School	1	2	1	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>
Placements Commissioning	Business Support	1	-	0	0
	Placements Commissioning	-	2	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	Access to Records	2	-	0	1
	Child Protection Team	1	-	0	0
	Complaints Team	0	-	0	0
	Independent Reviewing Team	0	-	1	1
	Family Group Conference	1	-	0	0
	Anti-Bullying & DV Prevent	0	-	0	0
	CSE/MISSING	0	-	0	1
	Workforce Development	0	1	2	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>36</b>

## 7. Representations

Service users and/or their representatives may make representations about the contact they have had with Safeguarding and Family Support Services or the service they have received without necessarily making a complaint under the formal procedure.

A representation may be regarded as a comment, enquiry, or statement of a formal nature regarding matters such as the availability, delivery, or nature of services. They will not necessarily be critical. They can be considered when assessing the quality of a service provided but are not usually viewed as a complaint. The issue may be critical, but the service user does not wish to go through the complaints procedure.

### 7.1 Number of representations

Table 3 shows the total number of new representations recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 compared to the previous three years and the number of representations that escalated to a formal complaint.

**Table 3: Representations**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Representations	9	7	5	7
Escalated to formal complaints procedure	0	2	2	0

In 2023/2024, the representations received are low, and none escalated to a Stage 1 complaint, which is testimony that the concerns raised were taken seriously and steps taken to successfully resolve them.

### 7.2 Representations by period and service area

Table 4 shows a breakdown of representations recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by period and service area, compared to the previous three years.

**Table 4: Number of representations recorded in the last 4 years by period received and service area**

Service Area	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Children in Need	7	6	2	4
Children Looked After	2	0	2	2
Targeted Services (Non CSC)	0	1	1	0
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	0	0	0	1
<b>Total no. of representations</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>

## 8. Complaints activity

All timescales in this report are in working days.

This report sits within the wider context of complaints activity in Islington as a whole. In 2023/2024, the number of new Stage 1 complaints received across the council was 3892 compared to 3409 in the previous year. This is an increase of 14%.

Table 5 shows the total number of new Stage 1 complaints recorded in the council from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to the previous three years.

**Table 5: Number of complaints recorded in Islington by period**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Number of complaints	2433	3015	3409	3892

Table 6 shows the total number of new complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to the previous nine years.

**Table 6: Number of complaints recorded in SFS by period**

14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
90	98	104	85	81	102	96	98	97	98

In 2023/2024, the number of complaints received in Safeguarding and Family Support increased by 1% in comparison to 2022/2023. The number of complaints received is not too dissimilar to previous years, despite the increase in the number of contacts made to the department.

Complaints are reviewed to ensure that any patterns in relation to reoccurring issues are identified and addressed.

### 8.1 Complaints compared to compliments

Table 7 shows the total number of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to the total number of compliments recorded and gives a comparison to the previous three years.

**Table 7: Number of complaints and compliments recorded in SFS**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Complaints	96	98	97	98
Compliments	76	57	45	36

## 8.2 Complaints by procedure

Table 8 shows the distribution of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by complaints procedure and gives a comparison to the previous three years.

**Table 8: Complaints by procedure**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Statutory complaints	86	91	84	78
Corporate complaints	10	7	13	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>

In 2023/2024 of the 98 complaints recorded during this period, 78 were dealt with under the statutory social care complaint procedure and 20 dealt with under the council's complaint procedure.

## 8.3 Complaints by period and stage

Table 9 shows the total number of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by the stage of the complaint and gives a comparison to the previous three years.

**Table 9: Number of complaints by period and stage**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Stage 1 complaints	92	94	90	91
Stage 2/CE complaints	3	2	6	4
Stage 3 complaints	1	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>

In 2023/2024 of the complaints received, 91 were investigated at Stage 1 of the statutory children's social care and council complaints procedures, 4 escalated to Stage 2/CE stage and 3 Stage 3 – Review Panel hearings held. (In 2023/2024 – 2 of the Stage 3 complaints, were carried forward from 2022/2023 where they were investigated at Stage 2 of the statutory social care complaint process.)

Under the statutory children's social care complaint procedure, it is not possible to prevent complainants from escalating their complaint through to Stage 2 and Stage 3 if the complaint was accepted and investigated at Stage 1, even if the complaint is unfounded/not justified. There will always be complainants who, having had their complaints not upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1, will insist their complaint is escalated to Stage 2 and on occasion, to Stage 3 – Review Panel hearing.

## 8.4 Complaints by service area, team, and stage

Tables 10 to 14 shows the total number of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by service area, team, and stage, compared with the previous three years.

**Table 10: Children in Need**

Year	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024		
Stage	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
CIN South 1 - Barnsbury	3	0	0	9	1	0	7	1	0	4	0	1
CIN Central 2 - Canonbury	5	0	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	0
CIN South 2 - Finsbury	3	0	0	12	0	0	6	0	0	3	0	0
CIN Central 1 - Highbury	7	1	1	3	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	0
CIN North 2 - Hornsey	2	0	0	7	1	0	6	1	0	2	0	0
CIN North 1 - Holloway	8	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	5	0	1
CSCT	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0
Disabled Children's Service	7	0	0	8	0	0	12	1	0	22	2	1
Emergency Duty Team	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lough Road	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
CIN Provider	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
<b>Children in Need</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>			<b>56</b>			<b>46</b>			<b>58</b>		

**Table 11: Children Looked After**

Year	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024		
Stage	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Virtual School	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adoption	4	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	0
CLA Team 1	11	0	0	10	0	0	14	1	0	7	2	0
CLA Team 2	11	1	0	3	0	1	6	0	0	5	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Family Plus (Permanence)	2	0	0	4	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0
Fostering	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0
Historical CLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Independent Futures	18	1	0	15	0	1	17	1	0	-	-	-
Independent Futures Team 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	0	0
Independent Futures Team 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0	0
Pause	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Children Looked After</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>			<b>40</b>			<b>48</b>			<b>38</b>		

**Table 12: Information and Commissioning**

Year	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024		
Stage	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Business Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placements commissioning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Placements Commissioning</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>			<b>0</b>			<b>1</b>			<b>0</b>		

**Table 13: Safeguarding and Quality Assurance**

Year	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024		
Stage	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Access to Records	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Protection	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Care & Complaints	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independent Reviewing Team	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
S&QA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>2</b>			<b>2</b>			<b>0</b>		

**Table 14: Totals**

Year	2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024		
Stage	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Children in Need	42	1	1	54	2	0	42	3	1	53	2	3
Children Looked After	49	2	0	38	0	2	45	3	0	36	2	0
Information and Commissioning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Bright Futures)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>			<b>98</b>			<b>97</b>			<b>98</b>		

Of all the CIN teams, the Disabled Children's Team (DCT) received the highest number of complaints for the second time in the last three years; however, it should be noted that DCT cover the whole borough, whereas the other CIN teams all have specific, smaller geographical areas as the names denote.

In 2023/2024 CIN DCT received 25 complaints, which was a significant increase on the previous year. However, it is worth noting that DCT, unlike the other teams, assess and provide financial resource to families. In the cost-of-living crisis we have observed families requesting an increase in their allocated resources via the complaints process, despite acknowledging that they had a positive experience of their allocated social worker and that the assessment itself was accurate. Also, the service complete financial assessments using the Council's Resource Allocation Support System (RAS) that some parents do not always agree with.

Of the 25 complaints received in CIN DCT in 2023/2024:

- 7 (28%) complaints were in relation to an assessment disagreement
- 5 (20%) complaints were in relation to lack of support
- 3 (12%) complaints were in relation to the conduct and/or attitude of staff
- 2 (8%) complaints were in relation to service delay
- 2 (8%) complaints were in relation to the quality of the service
- 2 (8%) complaints were in relation to no response to previous communication
- 2 (8%) complaints were in relation to communication/information issue
- 1 (4%) complaint was in relation to an unsatisfactory assessment
- 1 (4%) complaint was in relation to the placement

Of the 25 complaints received – 3 (12%) were upheld following investigation, 5 (20%) were partially upheld, 13 (52%) were not upheld, 2 (8%) were withdrawn, as the complainants no longer wished to



pursue their complaints and 2 there was no further action, as the cases were in court. Also, 6 of the complaints received was from one parent disgruntled about different aspects of the service, at different times throughout the year. Of which only 1 complaint was upheld/justified, the other 5 were not upheld.

Of all the CLA teams, CLA Team 1 received 9 complaints the highest number of complaints; however, this is a significant reduction on the number of complaints received in the previous year. Also, it should be noted that CLA Team 1 has 3 clusters as opposed to 2 that other CLA teams have. Nonetheless, there has been no changes in the service delivered and the team has remained stable.

Of the 9 complaints received in CLA team 1 in 2023/2024:

- 3 (33%) complaints were in relation to placement issues
- 3 (33%) complaints were in relation to lack of support issues
- 1 (11%) complaint was in relation to disagreement of support provision
- 1 (11%) complaint was in relation to communication
- 1 (11%) complaint was in relation to contact

Of the 9 complaints received in CLA team 1 in 2023/2024, none were upheld following investigation, 1 (11%) was partially upheld, 6 (67%) were not upheld, with 1 (11%) no further action – due to the case being in court and the 1(11%) Stage 2 complaint remains outstanding, with the response not due until the 6 August 2024.

## 8.5 Complaints by subject category

Table 15 shows the total number of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 recorded by subject category, compared with the previous two years. Attempts have been made to categorise the subject matter of each complaint; however, it should be noted that some complaints comprise of more than one issue. For example, complaints about conduct and/or attitude of staff are sometimes interconnected with assessment disagreement complaints.

**Table 15: Number of SFS complaints recorded in last 3 years by subject category**

Complaint subject	2021/22 Number	2021/22 %	2022/23 Number	2022/23 %	2023/24 Number	2023/24 %
Quality of assessment	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Assessment delay	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Assessment disagreement	15	16%	9	9%	12	12%
Conduct and/or attitude of staff	20	21%	30	31%	19	19%
Contact	2	2%	2	2%	2	2%
Finance	4	4%	5	5%	1	1%
Support Disagreement	2	2%	0	0%	2	2%
Information/communication incl. data protection	22	22%	9	9%	11	11%
Lack of Support	11	11%	13	13%	20	20%
No response to previous communication	1	1%	7	7%	4	4%
Placement issues	11	11%	6	6%	9	9%
Quality of service	2	2%	8	8%	6	6%
Service delay	4	4%	3	3%	4	4%

Complaint subject	2021/22 Number	2021/22 %	2022/23 Number	2022/23 %	2023/24 Number	2023/24 %
Support disagreement	2	2%	1	1%	2	2%
Other (including lost belongings, Housing)	2	2%	3	3%	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Whilst numbers for complaints in individual categories are small, it is important to examine the areas where we receive the most complaints to learn. The two highest subject categories were 'Lack of Support', which has increased from 13 (13%) complaints in 2022/2023 to 20 (20%) this year; and 'Conduct and/or attitude of staff', which has decreased significantly from 30 (31%) complaints in 2022/2023, to 19 (19%) this year. 'Lack of Support' and 'Conduct and/or attitude of staff' were the two highest subject categories of complaints received in 2022/2023 too.

The two categories make up 39 (40%) of all complaints received.

- 'Lack of support' = 20 (20%) complaints: of which 3 (15%) complaint received were upheld, 7 (35%) complaints were partially upheld, 8 (40%) complaints were not upheld, 1 (5%) complaint was NFA (no further action), and 1 (5%) complaint remains outstanding.
- 'Conduct and/or attitude of staff' = 19 (19%) complaints: of which 4 (21%) complaints were upheld, 4 (21%) complaints were partially upheld, 6 (32%) complaints were not upheld, 3 (16%) complaints were NFA (no further action), as the cases were in court/out of time and 2 (11%) complaints were withdrawn.

In the two categories that featured above, 18 (46%) of the complaints were considered justified, having been upheld or partially upheld.

## 8.6 Complaints by outcome

Table 16 shows the total number of complaints in Safeguarding and Family Support Services recorded by outcome in the past four years, whether the complaints were upheld (justified), partially upheld (partially justified) and not upheld (unjustified).

**Table 16: Stage 1 complaints by outcome**

Year	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Other	Total no. of complaints
2020/2021	8 (9%)	24 (26%)	53 (58%)	7 (8%)	92 (100%)
2021/2022	14 (15%)	22 (23%)	48 (51%)	10 (11%)	94 (100%)
2022/2023	9 (10%)	22 (24%)	42 (47%)	17 (19%)	90 (100%)
2023/2024	13 (14%)	19 (21%)	40 (44%)	19 (21%)	91 (100%)

In 2023/2024, of the 91 Stage 1 complaints received 13 (14%) were upheld, 19 (21%) were partially upheld and 40 (44%) were not upheld.

Therefore, 32 (35%) of the complaints investigated were upheld (justified) in full or in part and 59 (65%) were not upheld/other. This is similar to the previous three years.

In 2023/2024 of the 4 - Stage 2/CE complaints received, 1 (25%) complaint was upheld, 2 (50%) were not upheld and 1 (25%) complaint remains outstanding. Of the 3 – Stage 3 complaints received, 2 (67%) complaints were partially upheld, and 1 (33%) complaint was not upheld.

## 8.7 Timeliness of complaint responses

The council's objective is that 95% of all new complaints are responded to within the target timescale; however, the complexity of the statutory complaints received has an associated impact on achievability of responding to complaints within the set timescales.

### 8.7.1 Stage 1 complaints

Table 17 shows the total number of Stage 1 complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, in relation to the timeliness of the written complaint responses, compared with the previous three years.

**Table 17: Timeliness of Stage 1 complaint responses**

Year	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Other (i.e., withdrawn)	Total no. of complaints
2020/2021	52 (57%)	37 (40%)	3 (3%)	92 (100%)
2021/2022	75 (80%)	17 (18%)	2 (2%)	94 (100%)
2022/2023	78 (87%)	12 (13%)	0 (0%)	90 (100%)
2023/2024	74 (82%)	11 (12%)	6 (6%)	91 (100%)

NB. Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10/20 working days are included as being within timescale.

In 2023/2024, 74 of the 91 Stage 1 complaints received and completed by the department were responded to within the relevant timescale, meaning we achieved 82% compliance. This is a reduction on the previous year. In comparison, in 2022/2023, 78 of the 90 Stage 1 complaints received and completed by the department were responded to within the relevant timescale, meaning we achieved 87% compliance.

It is important to note that where the set or agreed timescales were not met, complainants were routinely kept informed and updated throughout the investigation process by the allocated investigating manager and/or the Customer Care and Complaints Manager.

### 8.7.2 Stage 2 complaints

Table 18 shows the total number of Stage 2 complaints received in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, in relation to the timeliness of the complaint response, compared to the previous three years.

At Stage 2 – independent investigation, the initial deadline for responding to complaints is 25 working days, which is very tight and unrealistic in most cases, as the complaints tend to be complex and multifaceted. However, with the agreement of the complainant, the timescale can be extended to 65 working days, from the date the complaint is agreed.

**Table 18: Timeliness of Stage 2 complaint responses**

Year	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Outstanding	Total no. of complaints
2020/2021	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	-	3 (100%)
2021/2022	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	-	2 (100%)
2022/2023	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	-	6 (100%)
2023/2024	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	4 (100%)

Nb: Stage 2 complaints responded to within 65 working days are included as being within timescale.

Of the 4 Stage 2/CE complaints received from the 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 3 (75%) were dealt with under the statutory social care complaints procedure and 1 (25%) under the Council complaints procedure. All 3 (100%) completed Stage 2/CE complaints were responded to within the set timescales; however, 1 complaint remains open/active.

### 8.7.3 Stage 3 complaints

Table 19 shows the total number of Stage 3 complaints received in Safeguarding and Family Support Services from 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, in relation to the timeliness of the complaint response, compared to the previous three years.

**Table 19: Timeliness of Stage 3 complaint responses**

Year	Timescale met	Timescale not met	Total no. of complaints
2020/2021	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
2021/2022	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
2022/2023	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
2023/2024	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)

All 3 Stage 3 complaints received from the 1 April 2023 to the 31 March 2024 were dealt with under the statutory social care complaints procedure and within the timescales set out in the statutory regulations.

## 8.8 Complaints by relationship to the service user

Table 20 shows a breakdown of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by relationship to the service user, compared to the previous three years.

**Table 20: Complaints by relationship to the service user**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Advocates	15	12	13	7
Children in need	1	1	0	3
Child/young person being looked after	2	1	0	3
Children leaving care	1	5	5	5
Parents	65	67	67	63
Foster carers	5	5	5	7
Persons with sufficient interest in the child's welfare	4	5	3	5
Partner agency	0	0	1	1
Other	3	2	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>

As might be expected the highest number of complaints were received from parents, and year on year the numbers remain remarkably similar.

In 2023/2024 'advocates' and 'foster carers' were the second highest categories with 7 (7%) complaints each. Of the 7 complaints received from advocates, 5 (71%) were from Action for Children, who are commissioned internally by Children's Active Involvement Service (CAIS), ensuring our young people are being empowered and actively supported through the formal complaint processes.

## 8.9 Complaints by ethnicity with comparative data

Table 21 shows the number of complaints recorded in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 by ethnicity, with comparative data.

**Table 21: Complaints by ethnicity with comparative data**

	Complaints in 2023/2024	% of complaints in 2023/2024	% of service users 2023/2024	Islington's Child population*
Indian	0	0	-	-
Pakistani	0	0	-	-
Bangladeshi	2	2%	3%	6%
Other Asian	3	3%	4%	2%
Asian / Asian British	0	0	-	-
<b>Total - Asian</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Caribbean	8	8%	8%	5%
African	7	7%	4%	10%
Black British Caribbean	4	4%	-	-
Black British African	8	8%	-	-
Other Black	2	2%	16%	2%
Other Black British	3	3%	-	-
<b>Total - Black</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	10	10%	-	-
Mixed White & Black African	0	0	22%	18%
Mixed White & Asian	1	1%	24%	26%
Mixed British	0	0	1%	-
Mixed Other	0	0	14%	14%
Mixed Not Stated/Unknown	10	10%	-	-
<b>Total - Mixed</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>18%</b>
White British	18	18%	24%	26%
White Irish	2	2%	1%	-
White Other	2	2%	9%	13%
<b>Total - White</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Not Stated / Unknown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

NB. \*Islington Population (0-17 Years) source: January 2023 - Early Years and School Censuses

In 2023/2024 the ethnic profile of complainants to service user population.

## 8.10 Complaint by source

Table 22 shows the number of complaints received in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 by the source. It is evident that the majority - 70 (77%) of complainants prefer to communicate with the department in the first instance via email.

On 2 January 2024, the Council introduced a new complaint management system, which enables our residents and customers to directly submit and monitor their complaints. The express aim of the new system is to improve our data capture and to service delivery of complaint responses. The implementation of the new system has been driven by the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's expectation of better data gathering, reporting and service delivery around complaints. The new system enables the capture of all correspondence relating to complaints in one place with automated monitoring to ensure set targets are met. To date the system has been successful, with further enhancements for reporting due in the next couple of months.

**Table 22: Complaints by source**

Source	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Contact Form	3	7	5	25
Email	89	87	88	70
In Person	0	0	0	0
Letter	1	0	1	1
LGSCO	0	0	0	0
Telephone	2	4	3	2
Text Message	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>

## 9. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries and complaints

Table 23 shows the total number of new LGSCO enquiries and complaints received in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to the previous three years.

**Table 23: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries and complaints**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Notice	0	0	0	0
Enquiries	4	0	0	1
Complaints	2	0	3	1
Other (i.e. outside jurisdiction)	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

In 2023/2024 there were 4 LGSCO enquiries and complaints received in children's social care. All 3 enquiries received, were closed by the LGSCO after initial enquiries. The 1 complaint received, was not upheld by the LGSCO, and the decision was that 'no further action' would follow. This is testament to the effective, robust complaint investigations being conducted within Safeguarding and Family Support at the internal stages of the complaints processes.

## 10. Cost

### 10.1 Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints independent (external) people

Table 24 shows a breakdown of the cost in delivering the statutory social care complaints process in Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and gives a comparison to the previous three years.

**Table 24: Cost of Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Investigating Officers	£4800.94	£6500.45	£4782.30	£10,582.20
Independent Persons	£1610.00	£2012.50	£2150.00	£1412.50
Review Panellists	£1697.50	£2437.50	£1950.00	££4682.85
Advocate	£0	£0	£0	£333.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8108.44</b>	<b>£10,950.45</b>	<b>£8882.30</b>	<b>£17,010.55</b>

The increase is due to the complexity of the complaints investigated and the time taken to carry out thorough, robust investigations.

### 10.2 Compensation/ex-gratia payments

Table 25 shows a breakdown of compensation/ex-gratia payments made by Safeguarding and Family Support from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 in relation to complaints.

**Table 25: Compensation/ex-gratia payments offered**

Year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Stage 1 complaints	£17,900.00	£14,605.00	£750.00	£4080.00
Stage 2 complaints	£0	£450.00	£2000.00	£14,500.00
Stage 3 complaints	£0	£1500.00	£300.00	£6000.00
Stage 4 - LGSCO	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,900.00</b>	<b>£16,555.00</b>	<b>£3050.00</b>	<b>£24,580.00</b>

If it is appropriate to do so, compensation is offered and paid at Stage 1 of the complaints process. In 2023/2024, the compensation was offered in relation to 8 complaints. Of which, 4 complaints were at Stage 1 of the complaints process, 2 at Stage 2 and 2 at Stage 3. With 4 complaints being from the CIN Service (South 1 (Barnsbury) x2, North 1 (Holloway), DCT teams) and 4 complaints from the CLA service (CLA 1 x2, Independent Futures 1 and Permanence and Fostering teams).

The amounts paid varied and were made as goodwill gestures, and in some cases were payments due to complaints being upheld or partially upheld, delay within the complaints process, the stress caused, time and trouble for pursuing their complaint etc. One Stage 2 complainant was offered £11,190.00 as reimbursement for the delay to the start of a child's support plan and having to progress the complaint.



## 11. London complaints network

The Children's Customer Care and Complaints Manager continues to work with colleagues from the London Complaints Managers group, meeting quarterly each year to ensure that Safeguarding and Family Support Services is kept informed and, in a position to adopt as consistent an approach to complaints handling as possible. Since the 1 April 2020, the work of this group has been held solely online via Microsoft Teams.

## 12. Conclusion

Considering the number of contacts, the department has, the number of people assessed and in receipt of services; together with the nature of the work, the number of representations and complaints received continues to be a relatively low numbers, and there should be no concern that the department is receiving too many complaints.

The number of complaints dealt with under the corporate complaints procedure this year is significantly higher than previous years, increasing to 20 (20%) from 13 (13%) in the previous year – 2022/2023, which is fortunately not reflected in the same way within Safeguarding and Family Support as there was only a 1% increase in the overall number of complaints received. Using Islington's corporate complaints procedure can potentially save money for the department as complaints do not then escalate to the expensive and time-consuming statutory social care Stage 2 complaint - independent investigation and Stage 3 – review panel hearing processes; however, this is not always possible to prevent due to the nature of the complaints received.

It is recognised that frontline teams have a variety of pressures they need to manage and in the coming year – 2024/2025 it is important that complaints continue to feature high on their list of priorities.

## 13. Moving forward - 2024/2025

The Customer Care and Complaints team will continue to deal with complaints, where appropriate, under alternative procedures to the Children Act statutory social care procedure.

From February 2024 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman introduced a new Complaint Handling Code offering advice, guidance, and best practice in complaint handling for organisations they investigate. As a result, in April 2024 the Council revised its complaint procedure, which is now in line with the code. A notable change is that 'partially upheld' has been removed from the list of outcomes; therefore, a complaint is either upheld or not upheld. For continuity this has been adopted for statutory social care complaints.

Full use of the Data Protection Act, Council, Child Protection, and any appeal procedures will continue to be used where they are available.

The recommendations for next year – 2024/2025 are that:

- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager will provide a summary of the Annual Complaints Report for children social care managers and staff.

- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager will continue to encourage managers to consider the benefits of virtual and/or face-to-face discussions (Resolution Meetings) when investigating complaints.
- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager and line managers where required to continue to support individual members of staff during the complaint investigation process, as it can sometimes be upsetting and stressful for those involved.
- Customer Care and Complaints service to continue to be promoted through the Children's Active Involvement Service.
- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager will continue to work with colleagues from the Central Complaints Team and the London Complaints Managers group to ensure Safeguarding and Family Support Services remain informed and, in a position, to adopt as consistent an approach to complaints handling as possible.
- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager to continue to work with the Council's Change team to review how the new Council electronic database is working to achieve the agreed targets.
- Aim to reduce the number of complaint escalations, thereby reducing overall cost to the Council.
- Continue to consider learning events for disseminating and promoting key learning points from complaints throughout the department.
- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager to encourage each service to review the complaints received, to identify common issues and themes and how they will resolve these through specific objectives.
- The Customer Care and Complaints Manager to remind each service to take steps to remind their customers of how to provide feedback, whether it be compliments, representations, or complaints, and actively promote this through all their interaction with customers.

## Appendix 1 - Compliments

A sample of the compliments received from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 follows:

### **A foster carer said of the Senior Social Worker:**

*I would like to give a really positive comment on my foster son's social worker... He has been an amazing help and support to my foster son ....He has gone above and beyond to offer continuous mental health support and is very knowledgeable on the system of a good family.*

### **A Headteacher said of an Outreach Support Practitioner:**

*Thank you so much for being part of the inspection this week. It was so helpful having you there and to be so willing to be interviewed by the inspector. The work you and the team do was picked up via other conversations so everything came together very well. Really appreciate all you do.*

### **A young person said to a social worker:**

*From the bottom of my heart, I appreciate everything you've done for me big or small, you've been more of a parent to me than my own parents have and I couldn't ask of you anymore. You showed me there's more to life than this little portion I'm only going through now. You've had more patience with me than anyone I've ever known and always had my best intention at heart. I could never really put into words how much you have benefited me and impacted my life, you've had faith in me when I haven't had faith in myself. You made me realise I need better for my life and for that I could never thank you enough I can just hope you understand how pivotal you've been to me since I've met you and I wouldn't have a clue where I'd be if it wasn't for you you've been nothing but great to me and I wish you the best in whatever you end up pursuing...*

### **Another young person said to their Young Persons Advisor:**

*... Just want to say thank you again/Thank you for all that you do. You always go out of your way for all your young people and I'll forever be grateful to you for all the support/help/conversations you've given me over the years....*

*You always go above and beyond and out of your way and if you do this for all the young people who ain't your kids I can't imagine the father you are to your kids.*

### **Foster carers said to the Independent Reviewing Officer:**

*I am a bit sad that your involvement with A is coming to an end, you have been wonderful to work with, supportive to A and B and making sure they got what they needed and staying on top of everything else, I love your no nonsense approach, gentle when you need to be and firm when required. You have been a part of their lives (in the background) for a very long time, I really appreciate everything.*

**A parent wrote to the Family Support and Reviewing team and said:**

*Please let me know if I am allowed to express my gratitude to the ladies. They were so kind, extremely professional and stayed almost 3 hours late!!!...*

*Those ladies definitely put the CARE back into social care. Indeed you are lucky to have them*

**A parent said to Independent Futures Team 2:**

*Thank you for your help and precious time to discuss and deal with C's case in the recent few days. C has very complex needs and his disability and mental health are at stake I appreciate again the fact that you understand the need for equity when meeting C's needs for stable and suitable accommodation and also his health and educational needs too. We will meet hopefully next month and it was lovely to hear that you hear my concerns for C's near future.*

**A partner agency said of the Step Up to Social Work Programme Manager:**

*Thank you for all of your help over the past 11 months while I've been on the SU team. You provided myself and L with so much insight and answered so many questions for us when we weren't sure of what to do, so I just wanted to take the time to thank you and let you know how grateful we are.*

**Adopt North London Independent Panel Chair said of a social worker:**

*L is an exceptional and very special social worker who is well known to me as a hugely valued member of the adoption panel....*

*L is incredibly child focussed and has a very unique ability to put herself in a child's shoes, viewing a child's often very complex and distressing experiences through his/her eyes. She completes CPRs with deep sensitivity using language that is both honest and empathic. When she describes birth families she does so with sympathy and compassion. She is clearly able to understand and respond to the enormous complexity of feeling and emotion that adoption can elicit, and the care and attention she pays to this reflects her deep understanding of the need for social workers to get this right.*

**A parent sent a greetings card to a Family Support Worker:**

*Thank you so much! Thank you doesn't seem enough you have been amazing. You have gone above and beyond for D and also myself. You made me feel as though you were doing more than just your job. Thank you for being so kind and patient.*