

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister –

- (a) set out in detail the complaints procedure that is available to all users of the Children's Service, including each step in the procedure and the details of who hears any complaints and how they do so;
- (b) detail the number of complaints made about the Service over each of the last 5 years;
- (c) state the average time it takes for a complaint to be heard;
- (d) explain what quality assurance of the complaints-handling process has been undertaken, if any, and if such quality assurance has occurred, by whom and when it was undertaken; and
- (e) provide details of any inspection reports on the running of the complaints-handling process followed by the Service?

Answer

- a) As part of the One Government approach, the Customer Feedback Policy has been developed and sets out how all service users are able to express their views about how our services are provided. This policy does not cover feedback about services that were provided over 12 months prior to the feedback being received. There are three levels of complaint handling which have been listed below:
 - Stage 1 - Frontline complaint handling and early resolution of complaints
Timescale - up to 5 working days from point of escalation
 - Stage 2 - Escalation to team leader or manager for issues that require further investigation or are complex/serious/high risk
Timescale - up to 10 working days from point of escalation
 - Stage 3 - Escalation to Director General if issue is still not resolved after stage 2. The Director General can include or refer the complaint to another Director General or an independent third party, if appropriate. Timescale - up to 10 working days from point of escalation

The service encourages complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible so encourages islanders to contact their Team Managers in the first instance with the option for contacting the Head of Service. The website provides a contact number for the Head of Service and also a link to an [online complaints form](#).

- b) The below table shows the number of complaints over past 5 years.

| Year | Number of complaints |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2015 | 4 |
| 2016 | 21 |
| 2017 | 38 |
| 2018 | 29 |
| 2019 | 13 |
| 2020 (CFMS) | 12 |

Historically up until 2020 the service has used Datix, a data management system managed by Health and Community Services, this was used to capture all feedback across Children's Service. Since 2020, we have moved across to the Customer Feedback Management System, CFMS.

The data from CFMS shows that there are 12 complaints against Children's Services for 2020.

- c) The Customer Feedback Policy gives clear timescales for when complaints should be handled. It is acknowledged that during 2020 most complaints are responded to outside the timeframe specified. Children's social care complaints in Children, Young People and Education can be significantly more complex requiring a more specialist level of investigation at stage 2 or 3 and therefore take longer to conclude. In these cases, the service user must be kept informed of any extended timescales and progress throughout.

The average time for a complaint to be heard is unable to be determined due to the multi-faceted approach that forms the complaint process these include interviews, independent inspection of files and multi-agency inputs.

- d) The service currently aims to respond to all complaints within 25 working days. If the complaint is likely to be overdue, then timely liaison with the complainant is encouraged. Currently complaints come in via CFMS go to the Principal Social Worker and are allocated to the appropriate Team Manager for investigation in consultation with their Head of Service, Director of Safeguarding and Care, and depending on the complexity, the Director General of CYPES.

Complaint responses are quality assured by the Head of Service prior to being sent out. Children's Social Care have recently appointed a Quality Assurance Manager who will oversee all feedback with her team, including the development of a quarterly report to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on findings and lessons to be learned from complaints.

- e) There are no inspection reports on the running of the complaints-handling process followed by the Service.