

Directorate for Education
Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met

Summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	6	6	100
Stage 2	2	2	100
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	3	3	100
Totals	11	11	100

Summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
ALN and Inclusions Services	2	2	100
Early Years	2	2	100
Education Welfare Service	1	1	100
Youth Service	1	1	100
Totals	6	6	100

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
ALN & Inclusion Services	2	2	100
Totals	2	2	100

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
ALN & Inclusions Services	2	2	100
Early Years	1	1	100
Totals	3	3	100

How the complaints were received

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	0	0	0
Email	6	3	2
Letter	0	0	0
On-line	0	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Totals	6	3	2

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Education Customer Service and Complaints officer on a dedicated database.

1. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

Schools have their own complaints policy/process that must be dealt with by the school. However, the L.A may provide advice and guidance on the school-based policy but direct complainants back to the school for response.

All governing bodies are required by law to have a procedure in place for dealing with complaints from parents, pupils, members of staff, governors, members of the local community and others in relation to matters for which the governing body has statutory responsibility.

An overview of the complaints received and dealt with are as follows:

- **ALN and Inclusion Service** – School / LA failure to meet Additional Learning Needs and concerns about home tutor.
- **ALN and Inclusion Service** – Delay in finding a Specialist Provision
- **ALN and Inclusion Service** - LA failed in finding appropriate school provision
- **ALN and Inclusion Service** - Delay in the completion of the building work at the new EOTAS site at Virginia Park and poor communication from the LEA
- **Early Years** – Lack of support from Early Years Language Intervention
- **Early Years** – Allegations made against a member of staff
- **Education Welfare Service** – Correspondence issued by Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- **Youth Service** - Member of staff at one of our Youth Clubs

2. Number by Category (Commissioner Case Type)

Complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories – To complete

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0
2 Decision Making	0
3 Delay in Service Provision	1
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	2
5a Following Council Policies	0
5b Following relevant Legislation	0
6 Accessibility of Services	0
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	1
8 Quality of Work	0
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination of categories	7
Totals	11

3. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Complaints by Outcome Data sets as categorised by the Complaints Standards Authority.

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
ALN and Inclusions Services	3	3
Early Years	0	3
Education Welfare Service	1	0
Youth Service	1	0
Totals	5	6

Stage 1 - Lack of support from Early Years Language Intervention.

Timeline of the team's involvement showed various support packages and advice provided by the LA. The family also refused one support programme. The child is now attending a childcare setting 5 days a week. Where speech, language and communication concerns were being addressed.

Outcome - Not Upheld (Category 3)

Stage 1 – Member of staff at one of our Youth Clubs.

The investigation found the events described by the parent were not accurate. However, the Youth Worker could have handled the situation differently.

The Youth Worker held a discussion with their line manager and received focused training to identify how they deal with situations in the future.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 4)

Stage 1 - Correspondence issued by Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The investigation found that while the wording of the correspondence may have caused upset. The EWO was referring to accurate information provided by the Police during a Multi-Agency Panel meeting. Therefore, parent was advised to raise her concerns directly with the Police. Parent was also informed that all Multi Agency Panel meetings are confidential, and all information shared with those professionals present is not discussed or shared outside the meeting.

The EWO wrote to the family expressing their apologies for any upset the correspondence had caused. The EWO held a discussion with their line manager and received focused training to identify how they deal with situations in the future.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 4)

Stage 2 - School / LA failure to meet Additional Learning Needs and concerns about home tutor.

The LA can only investigate concerns specific to the LA. School-based concerns must be raised with the school directly. It was recognised that communication on behalf of the LA was not effective enough and it was not until the LA received parent correspondence in September that the LA was made aware of the concerns. These issues will be addressed with LA officers.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 7)

Stage 2 - Delay in finding a Specialist Provision.

The investigating officer recognised parents' efforts to share information and communicate with the LA, but it was/is important for LA officers to be thorough in gathering information from all stakeholders to support decision making. Officers had been seeking to develop a specialist childcare opportunity specifically for the child thus ensuring appropriate provision is in place to meet their complex needs as they have been described to the LA. This was impacted through a gap in communication from health to the LA in terms of notifying the LA of the child's needs (parent was advised to pursue this with health colleagues).

The timescales parent was referring to was in relation to a school's production of an Individual Development Plan (IDP). With parents agreeing to refer the child to the LA panel for guidance regarding the consideration of the production of an IDP and specialist educational provision (flying start), an exception to the LA timescale was applied. That in effect meant that the LA could extend to the twelve-week timescale that applies to the LA in producing an IDP.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 11 - 2, 3, 5b & 7)

The investigating officer determined that provision had not been established in a timely manner and communication with parent had not been effective enough. In order to address these opportunities to explore the lessons learned and develop practice, the findings will be explored with officers.

Stage 1, escalated to Stage 2. LA failed in finding appropriate school provision.

The investigating officer determined that communication can be improved. Expectations need to be clear and agreed between all parties to avoid doubt. Where expectations are not aligned or cannot be met, this needs to be communicated clearly and the way forward agreed. The rationale for decision making needs to be clear and where this is unclear this must be raised in a timely way and clarified for the avoidance of doubt. Where decisions are made that are unclear, there must be an agreed mechanism to raise any concerns and for these to be resolved before reaching a point of dispute or formal complaint. Statutory processes should be followed. Where there are exceptions the rationale for these should be clearly communicated with parents and agreed with all parties.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 11 - 1, 2, 3, 5b & 7)

The investigating officer will be working with LA officers and schools to ensure that these lessons are shared and are embedded in practice going forward.

Stage 1, escalated to Stage 2. Delay in the completion of the building work at the new EOTAS site at Virginia Park and poor communication from the LEA.

While the delay was outside of the LA's control. The investigating officer determined that communication can be improved. Expectations need to be clear and agreed between all parties to avoid doubt. Where expectations are not aligned or cannot be met, this needs to be communicated clearly and the way forward agreed. The rationale for decision making needs to be clear and where this is unclear this must be raised in a timely way and clarified for the avoidance of doubt. Where decisions are made that are unclear, there must be an agreed mechanism to raise any concerns and for these to be resolved before reaching a point of dispute or formal complaint. Statutory processes should be followed. Where there are exceptions the rationale for these should be clearly communicated with parents and agreed with all parties.

Outcome – Upheld (Category 11 – 1, 3 & 7)

The investigating officer will be working with LA officers to ensure that these lessons are shared and are embedded in practice going forward.

Stage 1, escalated to Stage 2. Allegations made against a member of staff.

Parent was reported to social services for failing to secure their young child in a car seat, as defined by law. Parent was sat in the front passenger seat with their young child sat on their lap when they arrived at the setting.

This resulted in a counter complaint by parent.

A thorough investigation was undertaken by the line manager(s) and the Education Safeguarding Co-ordinator. There was no evidence to substantiate any elements of the complaint.

Outcome – Not upheld (Category 11 – 4, 5a & 5b)

4. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Complaints that relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Age	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0
Gender Reassignment	0	0	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0	0	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0	0	0
Race	0	0	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0	0	0
Sex	0	0	0
Sexual Orientation	0	0	0
Welsh Language	0	0	0
Totals	0	0	0

No specific characteristics links have been identified for this reporting period

5. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Complainant contacted the Ombudsman in relation to the LEA's conduct in arranging suitable education provision for their child on the grounds that the LEA failed to follow the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, had not communicated in a meaningful way and breached data protection regulations.

The Ombudsman carefully considered the information provided by the complainant and the LEA complaint file and determined that no further investigation was necessary.

It is important to recognise that the changes currently being made to the ALN and Inclusion Service are due to the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act which has led to a lot of confusion and frustration of some of our stakeholders, especially parents.

The LA always reflects on complaints and responses, seeking to learn lessons and improve partnerships and working practices. The LA seeks to ensure there are clear expectations and through the implementation of the ALN Act is continuing to ensure that all practices are person centred and focus on capturing pupil and parent / carer voice.

The recent LA Inspection of the Education Services recognised the reflective work and strategic approach of ALN services, and that the education service has an embedded culture of reflecting on the effectiveness of services and planning for improvements.

For further information, please contact

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