

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny	Date: February 2007	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No.	Agenda Item No
Report of: Chief Executive Social Services Originating officer(s) Lynne Myers, Senior Complaints Officer.		Title : Annual Review of Social Services Complaints Procedure 2005/2006 Wards Affected: All		

1 **Summary**

- 1.1. This attached report provides an overview of the Social Services Complaints procedure and its operation in 2005/6.
- 1.2. This report fulfils the statutory requirements under the Children Act 1989 to produce an annual report.
- 1.3 In September 2006, the Social Care Complaints team moved to Customer Access under Corporate Complaints. It is recommended that in future Overview and Scrutiny considers Social Care and Corporate Complaints under one report.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report in accordance with the requirement of the Children Act 1989.

3. **Comments of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 3.1 This report recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the annual review of the complaints procedure report, a statutory requirement under the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report that impact on the children's and Adult Services Revenue or Capital Budgets, or other directorate budgets, in current and future years.

4. **Concurrent report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)**

- 4.1 Local authorities are required by an Order made under Section 7B Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to establish a complaints procedure relating to their Social Services functions.

4.2 Complaints which relate to the exercise of a local authority's exercise of its child care functions are required to be considered under a procedure established by Section 26(3) Children Act 1989. An annual report on the operation of that procedure is required under the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991.

5. **Equal opportunities Implications.**

5.1 The complaints procedure is an important mechanism to ensure that vulnerable members of the community being assisted by Social Services are able to voice their concerns.

5.2 There is a complaints leaflet available in five community languages and on tape in both English and Sylheti, which is widely distributed through out the Directorate and within the local voluntary sector agencies. There is also a leaflet for children and young people which is in community languages. This publicity ensures that all members of the community are made aware of the procedure.

5.3 The Directorate also ensures that complainants are offered the opportunity of an interpretation service to assist them in making their complaint. Young people are always offered the opportunity of an advocate in line with the Children Act 1989.

6. **Anti-poverty implications**

6.1 The Social Services complaints procedure is an important mechanism for vulnerable service users to give feedback on services.

7. **Sustainable action for a greener environment**

7.1 There are no specific implications.

8. **Risk management implications.**

8.1 The Complaints Unit looks at means of redress where complaints are upheld. This successfully reduces the risk of Ombudsman Enquiries findings of maladministration, and compensation claims.