

Listening to learn

Annual report on how we have responded to comments and complaints about our services from April 2008 to March 2009



as long as it takes

Action for Children is committed to helping the most vulnerable children and young people break through injustice, deprivation and inequality to achieve their full potential. We want everyone who has contact with our organisation to have a positive experience of what we do.

This means that:

- ▶ people know what to expect from our services
- ▶ people are encouraged to comment on the service they receive
- ▶ we handle complaints fairly and consistently
- ▶ we use feedback to learn and improve

In our projects, this means that:

- ▶ we create an open culture and work in partnership with children, young people and their families
- ▶ we respect people's rights, particularly children's
- ▶ we make sure children, young people and their families can make their voice heard and we take what they say into account

This report captures information on how we have addressed customer service and complaints issues in the last year. It also sets out some actions for the coming year.

Activities we undertook to promote customer service during the year

- ▶ Within our new centrally based inclusion team, we brought together customer service and complaints with equality and diversity, participation and volunteering.
- ▶ Work has begun to reframe complaints as just one part of the customer feedback we can, and should, gather from the people using our services.
- ▶ We developed rebranded complaints leaflets for service users, available in 15 languages, in a Welsh/English version, and in booklets using Makaton, Boardmaker and Widgit symbols.
- ▶ All rebranded project leaflets feature information on how to make a complaint.
- ▶ A training course, Managing complaints, for project managers and senior staff, ran 10 times. It was complemented by a presentation, Listening to people who use our services, available to all project staff on our intranet.
- ▶ A training course, Customer service, ran at various locations for support staff.
- ▶ We introduced advocacy standards and an implementation plan to ensure that young people using our projects can access advocacy support.
- ▶ We updated complaints procedures and made staff aware of changes.
- ▶ We began a review of the sustained impact of recent complaints investigations.
- ▶ We put systems in place to capture and analyse feedback from our rebranding and TV advertising activities to make sure we had sufficient resources to deal with responses to these activities and to brief staff.

How we listened to what people said about our services and activities

During the year, we used many ways to understand what people thought of our services and activities.

As part of our commitment to participation and inclusion, all our projects review with service users the work done with them. We use this to confirm what has gone well and to identify areas for improvement. We achieve the engagement of children and young people through a variety of methods, for example:

- ▶ service user questionnaires during and after a piece of work
- ▶ interviews carried out by someone independent of the project
- ▶ participation days where staff and families are asked to share their views
- ▶ suggestion boxes and graffiti walls
- ▶ group meetings and users' committees

For children and young people who don't use verbal communication, we use creative tools such as photographs or objects, encouraging them to express preferences.

Although there is a great deal of good practice, different services currently collect different information, which makes it harder to analyse data and compare services. In addition, we currently receive little information from projects on services users' feedback, apart from complaints.

partners. Capturing the views of children, young people and their families on the service they have received is key to this process.

In our public campaigns and promotion work, we include, with permission, the voices of children and young people. Case studies illustrate the support that young people have received from us, as well as enabling them to speak out on issues that affect them.

During the year, Action for Children ran its first TV advertising campaign to raise awareness of our work. This used real-life stories from three young people about how our services had made an impact on and difference to their lives. We monitored feedback on the adverts and researched responses from the public.

Our central support services provide support to staff. They also demonstrate customer service and listen to those using our services. Their work helps projects better support children, young people and families. You can find key customer service activities and priorities for the year for our customer-facing departments in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

Action: We will establish a more structured, good-practice way to collect and use service user feedback.

Action for Children is committed to involving our services in research and review, and seeking the most effective approaches to our work. This is especially important for work that is innovative. Our research programme involves all service areas (disability, looked-after children, supporting families, and youth) and often involves external

Complaints made about our projects

Customer service is partly about recognising good services and listening to positive feedback and compliments when we are getting it right. But it is crucial to learn from the times when people using our services are dissatisfied – for the person themselves, and as an opportunity for us to learn and improve.

We inform people who use our services about their right to complain. They can contact the customer service and complaints manager directly via a freephone number, a freepost letter or email.

Our project managers and senior staff resolve the majority of complaints locally. If someone remains dissatisfied, next steps are agreed with the customer service and complaints manager. Where appropriate, an investigation is carried out, usually by someone independent of Action for Children. Where a child or young person is directly involved, an independent person is usually also involved to check that everything is done correctly and fairly. Our process has up to three stages:

Stage 1 – Local resolution: the project addresses the complaint, with management support if needed, aiming for a timescale of within 10 working days

Stage 2 – Investigation: if the complaint is not resolved, there may be an independent investigation, aiming for a timescale of within 25 working days

Stage 3 – Review: if the complaint is not resolved, an independent panel may review it

In 2008/09, we received notifications of 135 complaints centrally. (This compares to 172 in the previous year.) The customer service and complaints manager assisted with 62 of these. The 135 were spread as follows:

Adoption	4
Education	16
England	76
Scotland	23
Wales	16

- ▶ Only 85 (20%) of our projects reported complaints.
- ▶ A disproportionate number of the complaints reported were complex and difficult to resolve, leading to a skewing of the picture.
- ▶ Some recording levels seem disproportionate, such as in our four schools, which have robust reporting systems in place and therefore reported a relatively high level of complaints.

Anecdotal reasons for the low numbers and disproportion include reporting an impact from restructuring and other organisational change, including the rebranding of materials. However, this belies a deeper problem of under reporting.

There is a need to promote the complaints recording system and raise awareness about its importance. We want to continue to raise awareness of the value of complaints and complaint reporting so that the collated figures don't significantly under report the real picture. This is not to say that complaints are not being handled well at project level, but the lack of reporting does not enable us to demonstrate this, or to learn from local practice.

Action: We will, through an audit and re-engagement with projects and managers, secure a higher percentage of projects reporting on complaints in the year ahead, seeking to have reports from at least 75% of projects.

We aim to address complaints within 10 working days. We achieved this for 71% (96) of all reported complaints (compared with 69% in the previous year). With the complainant's agreement this may be extended to 20 working days. A further 10.5% (14) were resolved in this extended period. In 15.5% (21) of cases, the timescale was longer than 20 days (compared with 9%

in the previous year). In 3% (4) of cases, the timescale was not recorded.

Reasons given for complaints taking longer to resolve include:

- ▶ complexity of issues
- ▶ another procedure needed to be carried out first, eg disciplinary
- ▶ going at the young person's pace or difficulty contacting the complainant
- ▶ involvement of other agencies, eg police or local authority
- ▶ staff absence, staff changes and workload

While there are occasionally legitimate reasons for the timeframe of a complaint to exceed the procedure, we must be more robust in securing timely resolutions.

Action: The customer service and complaints manager will ensure that, where timescales are extended, appropriate reasons are given and recorded. Staff changes and workload should not extend the timescale of a complaint.

Our complaints procedure emphasises finding positive solutions to the complaint at the local resolution stage. This year, 80% (108) of complaints were wholly or partly resolved locally. Where resolution was not possible, this was recorded as being because:

- ▶ another procedure was invoked (in 10 cases, including formal investigations by Action for Children, local authority investigations, a police investigation, a disciplinary matter and an employment agency's own procedure)
- ▶ the complaint was withdrawn (in two cases), or it was jointly concluded that no resolution was possible (in 12 cases)

In five cases people were unhappy with Action for Children's response to their complaint at stage 1 and asked to take it further. Of these complaints:

- ▶ two were investigated independently
- ▶ one was a parallel complaint made by different family members; the strategic director of children's services wrote formally to the complainants on the outcome, with the option of having any additional issues investigated further
- ▶ one is being investigated by the local authority that was also complained about
- ▶ one independent investigation was halted due to a civil claim being made; our investigation will be restarted following legal advice

Outcomes of complaints currently being investigated will be included in the 2009/10 report.

One complaint made by a service user was, following an investigation, reviewed by a panel of three independent people (ie not employed by Action for Children). In this case, while the panel agreed our investigation had been robust and fair, the organisation gained significant learning from a number of recommendations of the panel.

Inclusion

Action for Children is committed to modelling inclusive practice in all that we do. Our vision – of a world where all children and young people have a sense of belonging, and are loved and valued, a world where they can fulfil their potential, shape their destiny and experience the joy of life – defines how important inclusion is to our work. This is further exemplified in our mission and values.

During 2008, Action for Children established the Inclusion Team, bringing together our work on participation, equality and diversity, customer care (including complaints) and volunteering to better facilitate the threading of these key cross-cutting themes through our strategic and operational planning and delivery.

Our 2009/10 country and directorate plans include challenging targets for each cross-cutting theme and the themes are also expressed in our corporate priorities for the year.

Dealing well with complaints is a useful contributing indicator of our inclusive approach. During the last year we have drawn data on a number of inclusion strands: age, disability and ethnicity.

The age profile of the children and young people who have complained allows us to consider whether all age ranges are able to make their voice heard. The profile is shown here:

Of complaints made by service users, 63% (74) were made by or on behalf of young people under 21. This is a fall from 77% in the previous year. A slightly higher proportion of adults complained about their own issues than in the previous year.

Thirteen complaints were made by people who are disabled, nine of whom were young people under 21. A further 19 complaints were made by adults in respect of a disabled child or young person.

Twenty-four complaints were made about disability services.

There were no complaints where disability discrimination was alleged.

Good practice example: making the complaints procedure accessible – Short Breaks@Adrian Rd

Young people who use this project have various disabilities, including learning disabilities. They are encouraged to talk to staff about problems or complaints, and can call the customer service and complaints manager or Ofsted inspector, whose photographs and phone numbers are provided. The information is provided in the formats that the young people use.

Young people aged under 12	2
Young people aged 12–15	21
Young people aged 16–17	7
Young people aged 18–20	5
Adults (over 21) about an issue concerning a child	39
Adults about an issue concerning themselves	44
Not applicable (complaints not made by service users)	17

Of the 118 complaints made by service users, 13 were by or on behalf of people from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. Issues raised and dealt with about our response to ethnic diversity included:

- ▶ a Bangladeshi mother complained that she felt isolated as she spoke little English and efforts were not made to include her. The manager took action to ensure that staff are more aware of how service users perceive their actions, including communication training, addressing staffing issues for group work, and liaison with other services working with people from different backgrounds
- ▶ an adult supporting a young failed asylum seeker felt the project was not supporting the young person well. This group was new to the service and we learned a great deal from the complaint, including how to develop clearer advice for young people, creating a more robust referral process, involving asylum seekers at an earlier stage, ensuring the team has a full legal history and ensuring young people are dealt with separately from adult services
- ▶ a mother felt discriminated against because she was told she was no longer considered a service user. This was upsetting as she felt she had achieved a great deal via the project in previous years. The project acknowledged it needed to be clearer with service users about changes to the service and eligibility, and should signpost people to other sources of support

We will continue to assess complaints by age, disability and ethnicity as part of the quality assurance mechanism applied to the complaints process.

As part of our commitment to ensuring the voices of children and young people can be heard, children and young people are entitled to involve an advocate to support them with their complaint.

Of the 36 complaints made directly by under-21s, only seven involved an advocate. Of these, two advocates were family members and one was the young person's social worker. The others were professional advocates. In most of the cases where no advocate was involved, the reason given was that the young person did not wish for one or that the issue was easily addressed.

We have recently issued revised guidance on the use of advocates, particularly in relation to complaints, to all projects.

Good practice example: advocacy – Cotswold Community

Cotswold Community is a residential school and therapeutic community. It is geographically isolated and accommodates young people from a wide range of local authorities. The school has arranged regular visits from an independent advocate. During a visit, the advocate meets a senior member of staff to catch up on current issues and arranges to see any young people who have requested to see her. She joins the young people for lunch and offers informal time for them to approach her so she can get to know them. The advocate supports young people in taking up issues, writes reports on their behalf and attends their reviews to support them in speaking out.

Action: We will audit the practice and use of advocates and encourage and build consistency of advocacy use across the organisation.

Learning and improvement

Where complaints arise, we are committed to learning from them and, where appropriate, taking action to change practice, guidelines, policies and procedures throughout the whole of Action for Children. This is a way for us to minimise the chance of a particular type of complaint recurring.

Action: We will instigate a systematic, analytical approach to learning from complaints so we can show when and how learning has taken place.

This year's analysis has identified learning that we have already acted on. We report these actions in detail to appropriate parts of the organisation, including the four strategic service areas.

Some learning is potentially wider than in a single strategic service area, such as the best use of agency staff and best practice in partnership working.

Eleven of this year's complaints involved temporary staff supplied by an agency, three of which went on to the next stage. In some cases the complaint added to existing concerns regarding the temporary staff member. We must ensure that agency and temporary staff are fully briefed and supported, that references offered by agencies are taken up, that agency staff are not supervised by other agency staff, and that we monitor new and agency staff in their direct practice with service users and ensure they receive correct information to pass on to service users.

Action: We will complete a review of guidance on the use of agency staff and seek reassurances to show guidance has been implemented.

We often work in partnership with other organisations. Occasionally poor partnership working has been a factor in complaints. In such work, projects should be clear with partner agencies what will happen to any information passed to them, including whether it will be shared with others, so that users can be accurately informed. If an independent investigation into a piece of partnership work has been requested, checks should be made with the partner to see if a similar request has been made to them. If so, a joint approach may be useful, can save time and resources and give the complainant a more satisfactory response. Where a project disburses money on behalf of a local authority, clear record keeping and excellent communication with the local authority are essential.

Action: Where complaints are about services delivered with partner agencies, the customer service and complaints manager will seek a joint approach. If collaboration is not forthcoming, this will be referred through line management to try to secure higher level commitments from partners.

We have provided the strategic development managers with detailed reports that catalogue all complaints, their outcomes and any action plans requiring delivery. This will enable us to implement and monitor action plans.

Learning from complaints can often result in very positive change for the organisation, even when the complaint has come from an event that has been distressing for the individuals involved. We continue to regard complaints as an opportunity for us to get things right even more often for even more of our service users.

Good practice in learning from complaints

- ▶ A young person in a residential project complained that another boy was setting him up and getting him into trouble. The house manager helped him think about how he might address the situation positively with the other young person. With support, he gained insight into how to deal with the issue by himself in a mature manner.
- ▶ A young person complained about incidents regarding carers who had looked after him for short breaks away from home over several years. His foster carers believed they had been dealt with at the time, but the young person wanted them to know he had been upset. The service explored the complaints and identified the need to be more robust in checking that long-established family link arrangements continue to work well for the young person and meet changing needs as the young person gets older.
- ▶ A mother complained that her child had got out of a play scheme and into a car park used by large vehicles reversing. The information the mother had been given was not accurate, however the child had run away and it was not clear how this had happened. Learning included recognition of the need for staff to communicate facts clearly to parents, the referral system to pick up more details, better recording and reporting of incidents, more detailed risk assessments of venues, and improved arrangements for play worker introductions to families.

After any stage 2 investigation or stage 3 review, we prepare an action plan based on the outcomes. We agree timescales and a senior manager takes responsibility for implementing the plan. Services have to show that they have been carried out.

Examples of learning acted upon during the year include:

- ▶ Where a project is undertaking court work, the letter of instruction from the court should be thoroughly checked on receipt and discussed by the manager and social worker. This will establish clear aims for how it will be followed, which will be discussed at the working agreement meeting. If at any point the parameters of the assessment are unclear, clarification should be sought.
- ▶ In an assessment, if information comes to light about professionals having been involved previously (eg in relation to a medical diagnosis or significant work with the family), the service must be clear about how this is to be regarded and record the decision. It should be made clear to those involved whether or not this information is regarded as relevant to the assessment.
- ▶ Where a child or parent/carer is anxious or resistant to contact with a relative, the service should explore the reasons fully with them.
- ▶ In assessments, projects must have robust methods to make children's views clear, and their views must be clearly set out in the assessment report.
- ▶ Referral and waiting list systems should be well managed. Those who are referred should be kept informed about what will happen about their referral and told what service they will receive and when.

Action: Having completed an audit of the ongoing learning from all stage 2 investigations and stage 3 reviews from the last three years, we will reaffirm our process for checking that learning has been implemented, and will continue to carry out longer term checks to confirm learning is sustained.

Learning from complaints made about Action for Children's fundraising activities

Action for Children's fundraising department reports on complaints in the calendar year. This is in keeping with the Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) regulations that regulate charitable fundraising. Members adhere to a strict set of codes, including treating the public with respect, fairness, honesty and clarity in all their fundraising activities. The FRSB sets and monitors categories of complaint and works with members and with the Institute of Fundraising to address issues that arise.

Action for Children's record for 2008 is shown in this table:

Activity	Number of complaints
Collections	2
Direct mail	22
Door-to-door fundraising	37
Telephone fundraising	3
Face-to-face fundraising on the street	20
Website/internet	0
TV fundraising	0
Total	84

Overall we saw an increase on the 45 complaints dealt with during 2007. However, FRSB widened its report categories, resulting in reporting on areas previously not collected. The changes have made it more difficult to identify trends.

The customer care team dealt with responses to the major Action for Children initiative of changing our name and rebranding in September 2008. One hundred and three complaints were received on this, all from current supporters of the charity. These broke down as follows:

Disagreeing with the name change	74
Lack of marketing materials ready in time with new name/logo	21
How we communicated the name change	4
The cost of the name change	4

Before the name change, we gave staff a question and answer booklet about possible issues, so they were well-equipped to respond. We also set up systems to capture and analyse feedback about the new name and brand. We gave people who complained about the name change information on the need for change and the consultation process.

During the current year, the team continues to focus on door-to-door and street fundraising issues. As Action for Children invests further in these types of fundraising, we hope to sign up 27,000 new supporters by these methods by August. Working with the agencies that carry out these types of fundraising for us, we have ensured that when a complaint is received it is dealt with straight away and, where possible, results in action being taken within 14 days of its receipt.

Learning from feedback about our advertising and other promotional activity

As part of our commitment to build a higher public profile, Action for Children launched a TV advertising campaign in January 2009. It consisted of three short adverts based on the experiences and words of three young service users. The customer care team briefed staff on responding to different responses the adverts might generate, such as from those wishing to donate or volunteer, those interested in fostering or adoption, young people or families needing a service, ex-service users and people wishing to make a complaint. We also made arrangements to monitor the contacts received.

The adverts had a clear impact. Overall, traffic on our website has increased by 33% and page views have increased by 50%. The number of people accessing information on fostering and adoption via the website has doubled. The average value of one-off donations in response to the adverts has been around double the usual sum given, and the number of people signing up on the website to make regular donations has grown.

Two hundred and ninety complaints were received by Action for Children about the adverts. There was a very marked increase in people looking for support and these calls were handled by dedicated social workers. We are looking at the most effective ways to handle such calls in the future.

Two hundred and fifty four of the complaints focused on the advert about Dan (not his real name), a young person with autism whose story describes how he was helped by one of our services. Most complaints were about the image chosen to represent Dan's anger, which some felt reflected negatively on autism. We received many positive comments about this advert, including from people who said they identified with Dan or had a child who faced similar issues, or who found the story moving.

We carried out an internal review following this part of the campaign. Learning included:

- ▶ we will continue to consult on our adverts
- ▶ we will consider having a named person to respond to complaints from campaigns
- ▶ while providing consistent responses to issues raised, we must ensure a reasonably personalised response

In addition to the feedback we received about the 'Dan' advert, the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) also received a small number of complaints. Following an investigation, the ASA concluded it would not uphold the complaints. They considered that the advert told the story of how Dan had wanted to deal with his situation and how, with the right help and support, he was able to do so. They concluded that the advert was unlikely to cause offence or to mislead viewers by portraying autism as a behavioural problem.

The new Action for Children brand is already attaining target levels of awareness. The campaign to date is building, with nearly six out of 10 members of the public aware of any one of the three commercials (from our brand tracking survey May 09). This brand tracking survey is essential to provide us with information about the way the adverts are performing so that we can continue to build on our campaign launch.

The new brand and advertising campaign mean that we have to do many things differently. A higher profile means investing in our customer service, and being available and ready to handle an increased volume of traffic coming into our website, our telephone numbers and our projects. In campaigning on behalf of children and young people we will continue to reflect the voices and experiences of young people themselves, and will balance our decision making against the risk that from time to time others may not agree with our approach.

Appendix 1: Departments serving internal customers – activities and priorities

Human resources

This year we merged three shared services within human resources: management information and payroll shared service (MIPSS), recruitment shared service and the learning and development shared service. They are now located together at the HR shared service (HRSS) in Glasgow. We have reviewed jobs to re-emphasise the focus on the customer and their needs. The aim is to maintain the department's reputation for excellent client service in recruitment and ensure stakeholders feel they enjoy the same level across a full HR transactional portfolio.

During the year a group of interested HRSS staff were trained in the participation of children and young people in recruitment, and helped facilitate participation events. This has a number of client service benefits, including providing a greater breadth and depth of assistance to managers. The increased knowledge within the team helps them to better advise and guide managers in an area they may not be familiar with.

MIPSS was responsible for maintaining all Action for Children's staff information held on the computerised personnel and payroll systems. Their customer care strategy covered open access to the service for managers at their convenience, a direct phone line and dedicated email address, call logging software to track and monitor when queries are received and actioned, maintaining good working relationships with regions/countries and departments via allocating team members specific areas of responsibility, a focus on learning and development, with the team attending internal and external sessions on customer focus and team development, and regular newsletters giving customer information about the service and inviting suggestions for improvement. During the year, MIPSS resolved 1,211 queries in relation to payroll and 460 in relation to the personnel database. There were two formal complaints, which were resolved.

Key customer developments for the health, safety and welfare (HSW) service included changing parts of the HSW policy manual so they were more accessible to end users and overtly facilitated learning and development activity, and introducing a personalised employee assistance programme website that gives each member of staff their own 'site', which will be implemented early in 2009/10. We successfully piloted a web-based accident reporting and data management system with schools in Scotland. It will considerably reduce data inputting at service, divisional and corporate level, and it allows each manager for the first time to have a single place to record all health and safety related accidents and incidents, and use the data to monitor trends and inform reports. We completely revised the fire safety manual to reflect audit feedback from a sample of managers and staff. We also made many changes to HSW service policy and advice support.

Our customer service priorities for the year ahead are to implement the accident system corporately, and to further develop the HSWS policy manual.

Finance, IT and property

During the year, the finance department undertook a customer survey by telephone, targeting a random sample of internal and some external customers and suppliers who had recently contacted them with an issue or query. Each individual was asked four questions on the service they had received from the department and to rate the service according to their experience. All respondents rated the department's response as 'good to excellent' in respect of speed of resolution, quality/professionalism of service, knowledge of staff and overall level of service.

Some changes made in response to customer feedback were:

- ▶ We identified a list of queries/issues that when received must be actioned immediately (eg password resets, new user set up requests, hierarchy amendments) to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.
- ▶ We set a target of 80% of emails received from internal/external customers being logged, responded to and where possible resolved on a daily basis. The current resolution rate within eight hours is 87%.
- ▶ Problems assigned to individuals on the finance service desk that require further investigation are actioned and resolved within seven days of the original logged date.

Priorities for the current year are:

- ▶ the implementation of Remedy 7, a more enhanced/sophisticated version of the current remedy system being used. A new automatic logging and response system will enable finance to log and respond to issue/queries more efficiently. In addition the system will generate customer service questionnaires so customer service can be monitored in a more detailed and interactive way
- ▶ a FASSU systems status page on the intranet will be introduced to help users to be fully aware of the current status of the finance computer systems, including any changes or downtime that might affect daily operational requirements

We restructured the information services (IS) department and created a dedicated IS customer services team. This was in response to feedback received in a survey conducted by the department and resulted in Action for Children having dedicated IS service delivery facilitators and a training team for all core Microsoft products. The department's customer priorities for the current year are to:

- ▶ assist customers in the effective and efficient use of the IS investment the organisation has made
- ▶ develop the role of 'IS buddies', who volunteer to answer non-technical 'How do I?' questions for colleagues

In property services, activities during the year included a customer survey carried out following the introduction of new national supplier contracts for repair and maintenance work across the UK. In response to customer feedback, the department is managing supplier performance in terms of response times and improvements sought. One learning point has been the importance of making prior appointments for maintenance visits, and we have stressed this to suppliers.

A current priority is to introduce a new customer satisfaction survey format, and a continual process for assessing customer satisfaction and acting on feedback received.

Appendix 2: Summary of actions

These actions have informed the annual work plan of the customer service and complaints manager and will be monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

1. We will establish a more structured, good-practice way to collect and use service user feedback.
2. We will, through an audit and re-engagement with projects and managers, secure a higher percentage of projects reporting on complaints in the year ahead, seeking to have reports from at least 75% of projects.
3. The customer service and complaints manager will ensure that, where timescales are extended, appropriate reasons are given and recorded. Staff changes and workload should not extend the timescale of a complaint.
4. We will audit the practice and use of advocates and encourage and build consistency of advocacy use across the organisation.
5. We will instigate a systematic, analytical approach to learning from complaints so we can show when and how learning has taken place.
6. We will complete a review of guidance on the use of agency staff and seek reassurances to show guidance has been implemented.
7. Where complaints are about services delivered with partner agencies, the customer service and complaints manager will seek a joint approach. If collaboration is not forthcoming, this will be referred through line management to try and secure higher level commitments from partners.
8. Having completed an audit of the ongoing learning from all stage 2 investigations and stage 3 reviews from the last three years, we will reaffirm our process for checking that learning has been implemented, and will continue to carry out longer term checks to confirm learning is sustained.

For further information, discussion and advice about Action for Children's customer service and complaints processes, contact Dory Dickson, Customer Service and Complaints Manager, Performance Improvement and Inclusion Division, telephone 01539 823678, email dory.dickson@actionforchildren.org.uk

For further information about our supporter care team and issues about fundraising activities, including advertising, contact Gary Day, Head of Customer Care, Fundraising Department, telephone 01442 877077, ext. 215, email gary.day@actionforchildren.org.uk

The cover illustration in this leaflet was done by Scott, who uses an Action for Children-Gweithredu dros Blant project



Action for Children

85 Highbury Park

London N5 1UD

Telephone: 020 7704 7000

Fax: 020 7226 2537

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Action for Children is committed to helping the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK break through injustice, deprivation and inequality, so they can achieve their full potential.