

**Regulation and Review Committee
Panel**

4 August 2017

Present: Councillor P Earley (Chair)
Councillors F Lott, W Lott, T Mulvenna and A Percy.

RQ24/08/17 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence reported.

RQ25/08/17 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

RQ26/08/17 Exclusion Resolution

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test in accordance with Part 2 of Schedule 12A the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RQ27/08/17 Stage Three Corporate Complaint - Ref: 102008374

The committee met to consider a complaint submitted against the Council's Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service. The complainant had requested that the complaint proceed to Stage 3 of the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, which involved a hearing by the committee.

The complainant was in attendance and was accompanied by her advocate, Ms F.

The officers in attendance were Jodie Henderson, Senior Manager, Safeguarding Service, and Jill Baker, Assistant Director, Prevention and Early Help. An officer from the Council's Customer, Governance and Registration Services' team was also present.

On behalf of the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service, Ms Henderson set out the basis of the complaint which related to the financial assessment and allowance paid to the complainant for the care she was providing for her granddaughter. Ms Henderson set out the reasons for the delay in resolving the complaint. She also confirmed that the authority now accepted that its' social workers had arranged the placement of the child with the complainant and therefore the complainant should have been paid an allowance at the rate of a connected person's carer. The committee was advised that arrangements would be made for the amended rate to be paid to the complainant.

Ms Baker explained that further legal advice had been received on the 3 August 2017 regarding the payment of special guardianship allowances. It was also explained that a report was to be presented to the Cabinet to agree a new policy for the payment of the allowances in relation to special guardianships. This new policy would address the issues raised as part of this complaint.

The complainant and Ms F were then given the opportunity to ask questions of the officers and did so.

Members also asked questions of the officer and sought clarification on a number of points.

The meeting adjourned to allow the complainant to consult with her advocate.

The meeting reconvened and the complainant's advocate confirmed that based on the information presented at the meeting it appeared that the outstanding issues had now been addressed.

The officers from the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service and the complainant were all given the opportunity to sum up their respective cases and then left the meeting to enable the committee to determine the complaint in private.

The committee considered all the evidence presented at the meeting both written and verbal and noted the steps that had been taken to resolve the complaint at stages 1 and 2 of the complaints process. The committee also noted that during the meeting the service area had acknowledged the outstanding issues relating to the complaint and had offered a solution which was acceptable to the complainant.

Resolved that (1) the complaint against the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service be upheld; and
(2) the Senior Manager, Customer, Governance and Registration be instructed to arrange for the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Service to make a payment of £200 to the complainant as a thank you for bringing the issue to the attention of the service area and as an acknowledgement that the service received was below the expected standard.