



ANNUAL CASEWORK REPORT 2017-2018 LEGAL AND INVESTIGATIONS DEPARTMENT

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COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD



I would like to welcome you to NICCY's Casework Report 2017-'18, which outlines the nature of cases and enquiries NICCY's Legal and Investigations Team has undertaken on behalf of just under 500 children, young people and their families.

The range of duties and powers outlined in the 'Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003' mean that my Office works to ensure that we use our powers effectively and in the most efficient way. It is also important that we maximise those powers which are unique to NICCY, and you will see in the report we are utilising our investigatory role in an increasing number of situations.

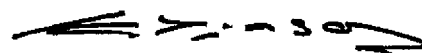
The report outlines how we have discharged our statutory responsibilities as outlined in articles 7(2) and (3) of the legislation. We have supported children and their families on a range of issues but unsurprisingly education, and particularly special educational needs, remains the biggest area of our work and there is every indication that this trend will continue.

NICCY's Legal and Investigations Service helps us identify the issues and emerging trends in relation to those which adversely affect children and families. By hearing directly from families, and engaging with relevant authorities, we are able to identify the barriers that prevent children from enjoying their rights.

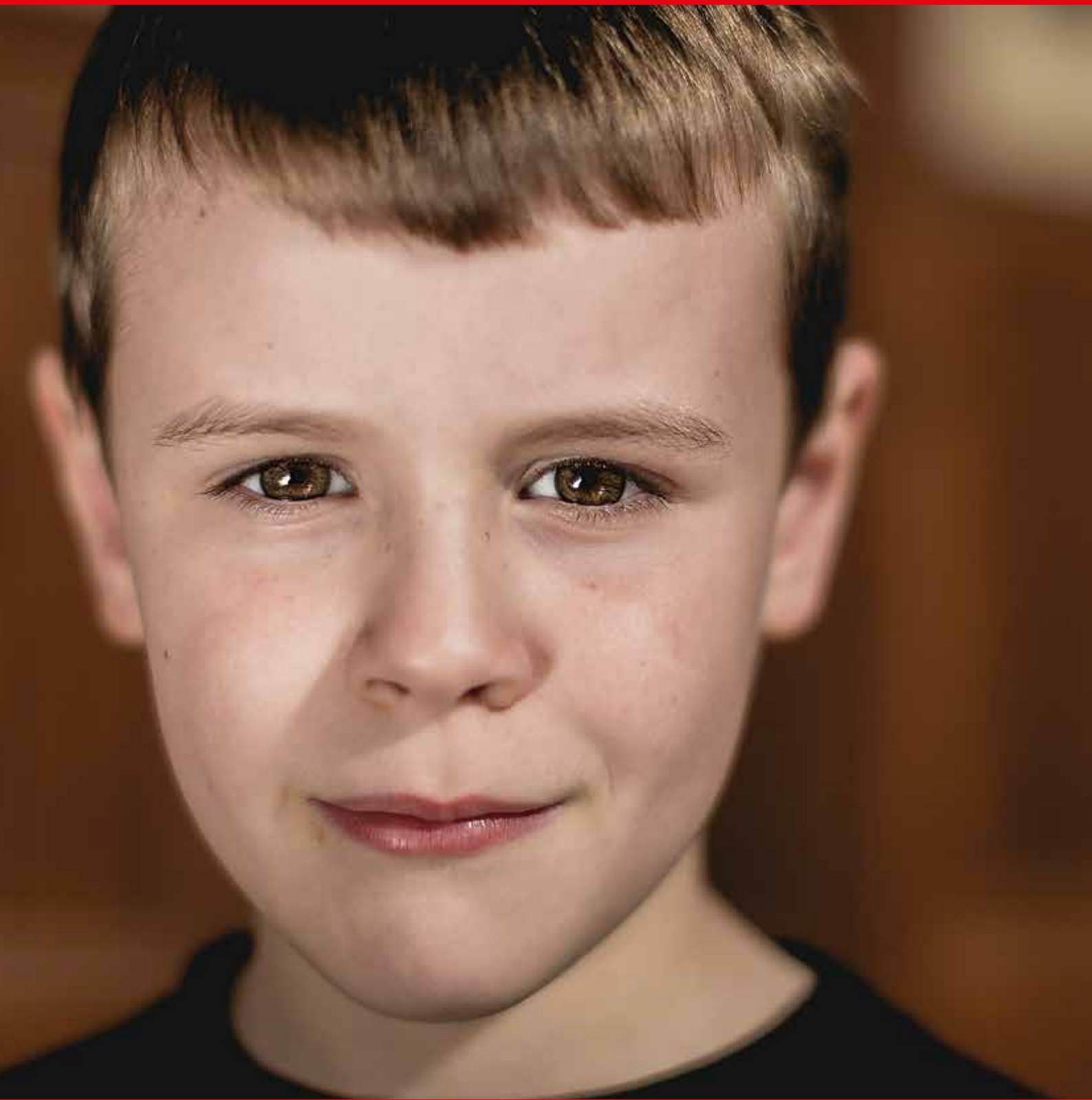
NICCY has also developed internal working processes to ensure that our legal team are able to inform the advice and guidance we issue, ensuring that our work, including our reactive work, is informed by cases of the most egregious breaches of our children's rights in Northern Ireland.

In the absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, it has not been possible to implement the long overdue recommendations from the latest review of the 2003 Legislation. This continues to affect our legal and investigations work, however we are determined to continue working with, for and on behalf of the hundreds of children and young people who seek our support every year.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from clients is an indication of the quality of the work of our Legal and Investigations Team. They have demonstrated resilience, determination and expertise within an often challenging environment. I am incredibly grateful to them for all their hard work and good humour.



**Koulla Yiasouma
Northern Ireland Commissioner for
Children and Young People**



INTRODUCTION

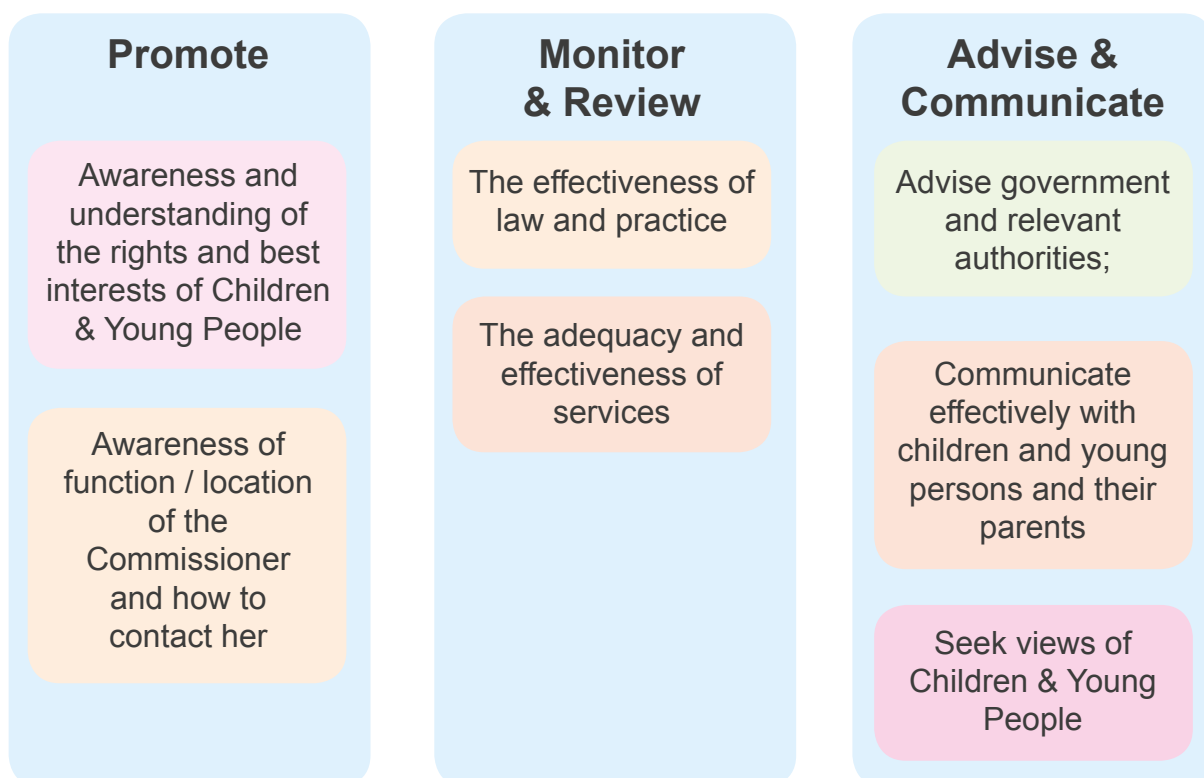
This is our Annual Casework Report for the 2017-'18 Business Year.

The purpose of this report is to provide a greater understanding of the casework service and an indication of the types of cases we receive and deal with. The casework service is part of our overall legal and investigations work by the Legal and Investigations Team.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was created in accordance with 'The Commissioner for Children and Young People

(Northern Ireland) Order 2003' to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people in Northern Ireland. In carrying out these functions, paramount consideration must be given to the rights of the child or young person, having particular regard to their wishes and feelings and to all relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Also under this founding legislation, the Commissioner has a statutory duty to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services provided by relevant authorities.

NICCY's Statutory Duties



'The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003'

NICCY's Statutory Powers

Undertake Commission Challenge

Research or educational activities concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons or the exercise of her functions

Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties

Compile info', provide advice and publish any matter (including educational activities, investigations and advice) concerning their rights and best interests

Issue Guidance Make Representations

In relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons

Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons

Address Rights Breaches Advocacy

Assist with complaints to / against relevant authorities

Bring, intervene in, or assist in legal proceedings

'The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003'

The legislation gives us the power to assist with complaints to relevant authorities (Article 11) and investigate complaints against relevant authorities (Article 12). It is this work which we refer to as casework and which is the subject matter of this report.

In the 2017/18 business year we dealt with 475 cases in total; these were made up of 390 new cases and 85 which were ongoing and carried forward from the previous business year.

Similarly to last year, the largest number of enquiries we received were in relation to the area of education. Enquiries which are referred to our casework service are progressed if they fall within our statutory remit. Where enquiries are outside our remit, we always signpost the complainant to an appropriate body who can assist

them with their case. In this business year we signposted 101 enquiries to other organisations. Further details of our signposting is set out in a later section.

Where we identify issues which give rise to concerns of systemic failings on the part of a relevant authority, we can invoke our investigative powers. During this business year we identified appropriate cases for investigation and progressed them with relevant authorities accounting to us for their actions and/or inaction. We made recommendations to the relevant authority in respect of their practices where we deemed it appropriate.

A full statistical breakdown of the enquiries received is contained within the main body of this report.



THE CASEWORK SERVICE

The casework service is provided by NICCY's Legal and Investigations team.

The ethos of NICCY's casework is to attempt to resolve issues for children and young people, at the earliest possible stage, without the need to resort to legal proceedings i.e. resolution before formal legal proceedings. We believe a lot can be done at this stage to attempt to bring about resolution and a satisfactory outcome for the child or young person concerned. This may include advice and guidance as to how to access complaints procedures, or assistance navigating such processes. In addition, if necessary, we can assist with the drafting of correspondence and attend meetings to advocate on behalf of the child or young person where matters can be discussed and addressed. In some complex cases we have called roundtable meetings of all the statutory agencies involved to address the issues and reach a resolution.

Although we attempt to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity we do also have the power to take legal proceedings, or initiate investigations (both casework investigations and formal investigations) if necessary, within defined circumstances.

We also provide representation at Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals (SENDIST) and can assist complainants with preparing cases through to representing them at the Hearing.

Accessing the Casework Service

Cases are initiated by complainants completing our online Complaints and Advice Form which appears on our website (see back cover for these details). If however, a person requires additional help or support, we will take details via telephone. Children and young people are not required to complete the online form and are always given priority access to the team on the same day that they make contact with us.

Once the information is received by the team it is allocated to a Caseworker who then progresses the case by seeking further instructions from the complainant and offers them advice, assistance and representation, depending on what the case requires. We provide advice over the telephone, via email or in person at meetings. At this stage, we obtain consent to seek necessary information from relevant authorities and agencies on behalf of the complainant.

Number of People Contacting the Casework Service

In the 2017/18 business year our casework service:

- ▶ Dealt with 390 new cases;
- ▶ Carried forward 85 cases ongoing from the previous business year;
- ▶ Closed 439 cases;
- ▶ Exceeded our 90% successful closure rate where the case objective had been met.

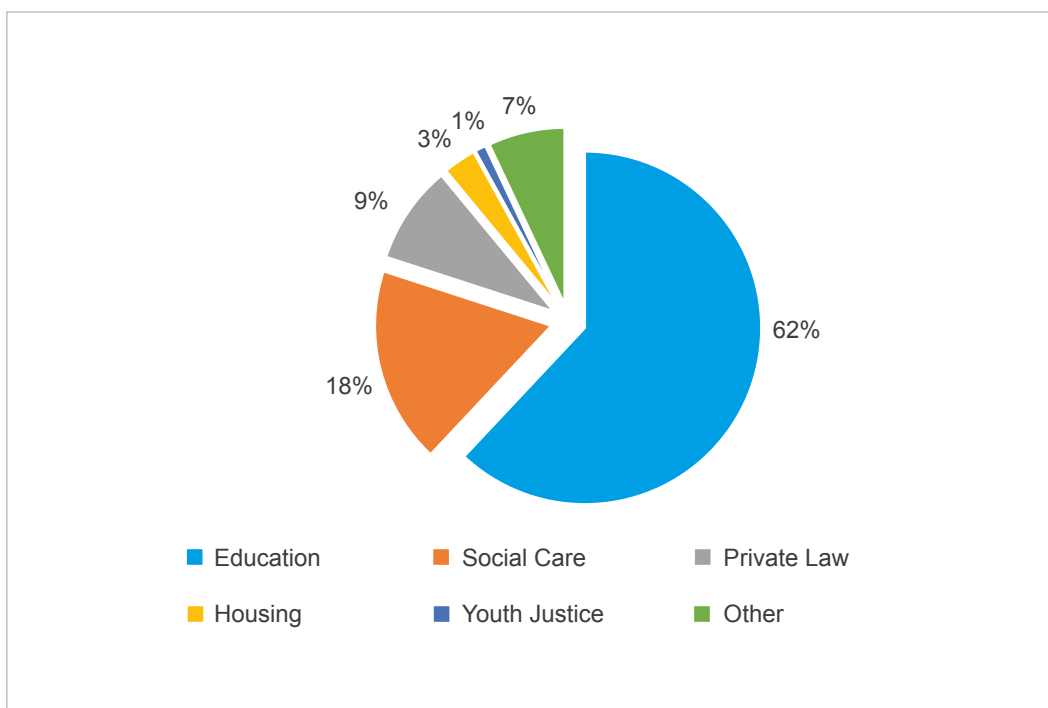
Cases are closed when they are resolved. Unfortunately sometimes complainants disengage during a process; this is normally due to the issue having been resolved for them and they no longer require assistance. In these situations we always write to the client advising that we are closing the case, but they are free to contact us if they require further assistance and the matter will be re-opened.

The statistical breakdown on annual casework follows.



ANNUAL CASEWORK REPORT STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN

2017-18



As can be seen from the above, education enquiries constituted over 60% of the work of the casework team this year. Education enquiries are broken down in the next diagram.

Some of the other areas of enquiries we dealt with are those in respect of health and social care. These frequently revolved around provision, but also included complaints about social workers alleged misconduct or concerns around their decision making. We dealt with the complaints around provision but signposted those with complaints about social workers to the appropriate Trust's Complaints Procedure, the Patient and Client Council or to the appropriate regulatory body.

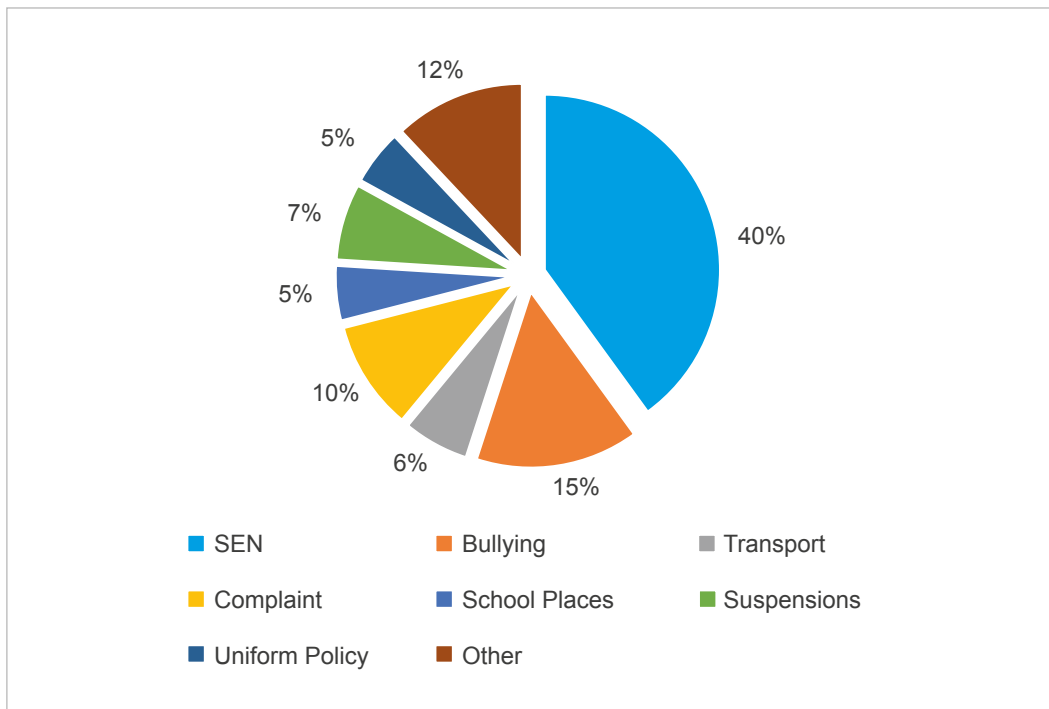
We received a small number of complaints about housing issues which involve children. Some of these we could address but others we signposted to Housing Rights.

We occasionally received complaints which related to the actions of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). We cannot deal with these due to restrictions in our legislation which prohibit us from acting where there is an existing statutory complaints mechanism in place, so we referred these matters on to the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

We also received enquiries about court proceedings relating to children's contact and residence. We cannot deal with these matters as they fall outside of our remit because they do not relate to a relevant authority.

Our Casework Team also dealt with other matters which involve court orders made in respect of children and young people, particularly within the Youth Justice System.

Education enquiries



Range of Enquiries

Special Educational Needs

It can be noted from the pie chart above that Special Educational Needs (SEN) is once again the largest area within the education enquiries. Indeed it has risen from 32% last year to 40% this year.

We continue to offer advice in this area and have developed a Guide to Special Educational Needs for parents which is available on our website. We offer representation at Special Educational Needs Disability Tribunals (SENDIST). We have had a number of Tribunal cases this year and will continue to offer this service to assist parents through a complex system.

We also assisted parents and children and young people, with enquiries around the assessment and statementing processes, SEN provision and difficulties they may be facing around school placement or transport.

Bullying

Our enquiries regarding bullying were down 1% on last year to 14%. These enquiries encompassed complaints about bullying by peers and in some cases by teachers. The types of bullying ranged from allegations of physical and verbal bullying, to social and cyber bullying. We directed complainants to the school anti-bullying policy and advised them to arrange a meeting with the school if they had not already done so. We also assisted complainants in accessing the school complaints mechanisms and worked with them and the school to attempt to find a satisfactory resolution to the matter.

School Placements

Our enquiries around school places rose from 2.6% last year to 5.5% this year. We receive enquiries of this nature each year when school places are allocated at nursery, primary and secondary schools. In each case we directed the complainant to the appropriate admissions criteria and advised that the only ground for appeal is that the criteria were not applied correctly. If it was identified the criteria were not applied correctly, we offered advice and guidance around the appeals process.

School Transport

Enquiries around school transport have dropped from 8% last year to 6% of all education enquiries this year. We engaged regularly with EA transport officers and parents to attempt to resolve issues for children in this area.

School Suspensions

Enquiries in relation to school suspensions and expulsions dropped from 12% to 8% of all education enquiries this year. We worked with children, young people and their parents to ensure that proper processes have been followed and to guide them through any appeals process available. We also worked with complainants when children were suspended or excluded, to assist them in finding a new school place or to get home tuition put in place if appropriate. In this business year we also represented two children before the Expulsion Appeals Tribunal and were successful in having one of the expulsions overturned.

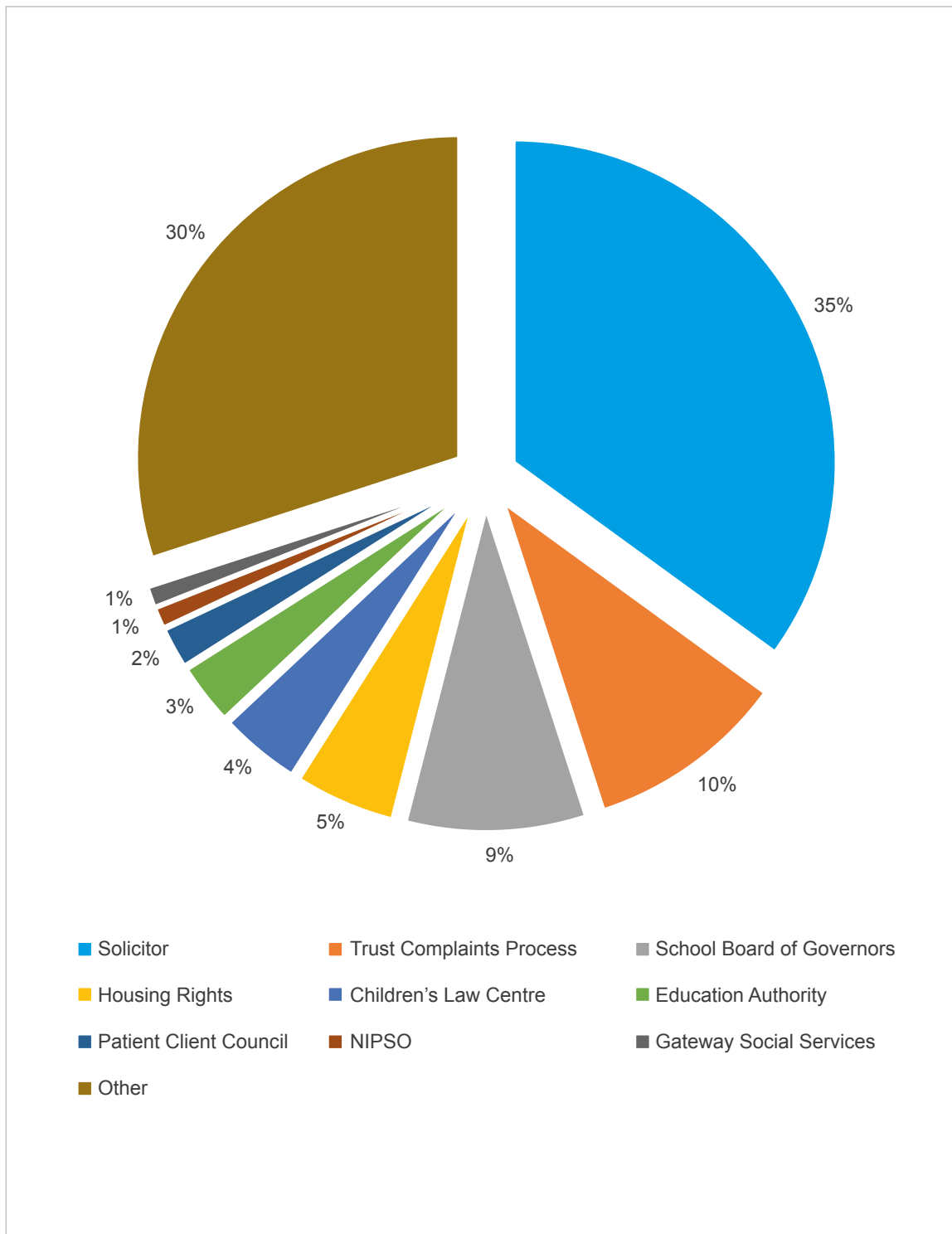
Other

The remainder of our education enquiries fell into this category as they did not come under any of the headings above.



SIGNPOSTING

Signposting 2017-18



In 2017/18 we signposted 101 enquiries to other agencies as we were unable to assist with the enquiry due to restrictions in our legislative remit which prevent us from acting in certain matters, for example, where there is another statutory complaints mechanism available or where there is no relevant authority involved.

Of these 101 enquiries, the single largest amount (36%) were signposted to solicitors in private practice as they related to private law matters of children's contact with non-resident parents and questions of residence, both of which are outside our remit. While these are clearly children's rights cases, as the child in these matters has a right to contact with both parents, we cannot become involved in these matters. Although the right to family life may be engaged, our powers relate to complaints about the actions of relevant authorities only. In these matters the dispute is normally between two parents who are engaged in ongoing court proceedings, the conduct of which also falls outside our remit due to our legislation, as it does not include relevant authorities.

The remainder were signposted to other relevant agencies and organisations as appropriate, whose remit specifically covers the area of complaint such as Housing Rights, the PSNI, The Office of Communication (OFCOM) and The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).



CASEWORK EXAMPLES

Special Educational Needs and Statementing Process

► **Case Study 1:**

NICCY were contacted by the father of a 13 year old boy who has a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome. The father had issued proceedings before the SENDIST in relation to the Education Authorities' refusal to conduct a Statutory Assessment of the child's special educational needs. This appeal stood adjourned to allow the family to obtain updated expert reports. When we became involved in the case it became clear that a further appeal needed to be issued in relation to a more recent refusal to assess. NICCY were able to liaise with the Tribunal to agree a way forward to withdraw the adjourned hearing and issue fresh proceedings which would take into account all of the issues in the case. NICCY issued proceedings by lodging a detailed 'Notice of Appeal' and subsequently a very detailed 'Case Statement' which contained all of the evidence which pointed to the need for the child to have a Statutory Assessment. On the basis of our submissions, the Education Authority agreed to conduct a Statutory Assessment of the child, which subsequently led to the child obtaining a Statement of Special Educational Needs which made provision for the assistance he needed.

► **Case Study 2:**

We were contacted by a community organisation who were supporting a newcomer family with three children. The two older children had obtained places at school and were doing well; however, the youngest child had special educational needs and had not been at school since arriving in Northern Ireland over 12 months previously as the parents found it difficult to get him assessed. The child was 6 years old and had limited English, learning difficulties, ADHD and had marked features of ASD. NICCY met with the parents and their community representatives and agreed to liaise on behalf of the family with the EA to have the child assessed and provision made. As a result of our involvement, the parents were assisted through the Assessment and Statementing process and an educational placement was found which met his needs. Door to door school transport was also provided for him.

► **Case Study 3:**

We were contacted by the mother of a 10 year old boy who had a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyslexia. The child had been referred for a Statutory Assessment of his special educational needs but the Education Authority had declined to conduct this. NICCY issued an appeal on behalf of the child to the SENDIST. We prepared a very detailed 'Notice of Appeal' and 'Case Statement' which set out in detail the reasons why a Statutory Assessment was necessary and the evidence which supported this. Based on our robust submissions the Education Authority conceded the Appeal and agreed to conduct the Statutory Assessment.

► **Case Study 4:**

NICCY were contacted by the parent of a 12 year old boy who had a visual impairment and had a Statement of Special Educational Needs to make provision for his needs. The parent was concerned that the child was not making progress in literacy and felt that this could be as a result of undiagnosed dyslexia. The child had been referred to the Educational Psychologist and the parent was concerned that as the waiting list was lengthy, this would have a detrimental impact on the child. NICCY made contact with the Educational Psychologist who told us that he had been liaising with the school regarding this child and had suggested that the school undertake some school based screening and then the child could have a comprehensive assessment which would include a formal dyslexia diagnostic assessment. We conveyed this to the parent which assuaged their concern that the child was missing out whilst on the waiting list. We were subsequently informed by the parent that the comprehensive assessment was conducted and the child was found not to have dyslexia. The parents and NICCY were assured by the Educational Psychologist that the child was being taught in the best and most appropriate way to meet his needs.

School Transport

► **Case Study 1:**

We were contacted by the mother of two children who attended an Integrated School in their local area. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond the family's control they had to move from their home and were housed in temporary accommodation by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The mother contacted us to ask whether the Education Authority could provide bus passes for the children to be transported from their new temporary address to their existing school, in order to provide them with some continuity at an otherwise turbulent time in their lives. Given the distance, the mother could not afford to pay for taxis or busses to and from the school for the children. We made enquiries with the Education Authority and then submitted a request via the online process which was refused initially however, when we challenged this refusal, given the children's specific circumstances, the Education Authority agreed to provide them with bus passes until the end of the academic year.

► **Case Study 2:**

We were contacted by a mother whose son could no longer live in the family home due to his aggressive behaviour towards the family. He had moved to live with his grandparents which was some distance away but continued to attend the same school as he was doing his GCSEs. He had to get two buses and the family were paying for the travel to and from school. NICCY contacted the local Health Trust and reminded them of their responsibility towards this child as he was a "child in need" for the purposes of the Children (NI) Order 1995. They subsequently agreed to pay the bus fares for the young person to and from school which considerably reduced the financial pressure on the family.

Suspensions and Expulsions

► **Case Study 1:**

We received a referral from a parent on behalf of a child who was aged 15. The child had been suspended from school due to behavioural issues and a consultative meeting had been scheduled to discuss the child's educational future including whether the child should be expelled from the school. An expulsion or break in his education would have been additionally detrimental for the child given he had completed one year of a two year GCSE syllabus. We clarified with the school which strategies had already been attempted to help manage his behaviour and discuss what further support options were available. After having spoken to the school we identified that there were some supports that had not yet been tried and we suggested these to the school and the parent. These suggestions were adopted and implemented by the school and the child was able to remain in school and complete his GCSE courses.

► **Case Study 2:** NICCY were contacted by the father of a 13 year old boy who had been suspended from school and was facing a consultative meeting to consider the options available for his future education, one of which was expulsion. We were able to advise the father of the processes around suspension and expulsion and gave him some advice as to the 'arguments' he should make at the meeting. The child was expelled by the school and we appealed the expulsion to the Expulsion Appeals Tribunal on behalf of the child and family. We represented the child before the hearing of the Tribunal and were able to point to procedural irregularities in the School's process, including in the Risk Assessment undertaken by the Governors before they proceeded with the expulsion. We assisted the young person to give evidence on his own behalf at the hearing. The result was that the expulsion was overturned and the expulsion was expunged from the child's record.

► **Case Study 3:**

A young person contacted us directly as he had been expelled from his Grammar school just before he was due to sit his GCSE exams. The expelling school would not permit him onto the school grounds to sit his exams. We engaged with the school directly and negotiated an appropriate arrangement whereby the young person was able to be enrolled as an external candidate in another school who would permit him to sit his exams in their exam centre.

Bullying and Assaults on Pupils

► **Case Study 1:** We were contacted by the mother of a 12 year old boy who had been subjected to a severe and unprovoked assault by an older pupil in the school playground. The child was very fearful of going back to school and the mother was concerned for her son's safety. The mother was due to meet with the school to discuss her son's return and we were able to offer her advice and guidance about what safeguarding measures she should request for her son within the school. The school agreed to implement all of our recommendations and the boy returned to the school and was supported both physically and emotionally by the staff to ensure that he felt safe.

Transgender Prejudice / Bullying

► **Case Study 1:** NICCY were contacted by the parent of a young transgender person in further education who was subjected to vicious bullying. The young person had been told to 'kill themselves', to 'make up your mind', and asked 'what are you anyway?'. As the young person had previously suffered from mental health issues the parents were very concerned about the impact this could have on their child's health and wellbeing. NICCY contacted the Head of Student Support who advised that they were aware of incidents but that the young person did not want to make a complaint. NICCY reminded them that regardless of whether a formal complaint was made or not, they still had a responsibility to ensure the safety of all their students. We also advised they must be proactive and not put the responsibility on a very vulnerable and frightened young person who was reluctant to make a complaint in case it made things worse. The College agreed to address the matter appropriately and effectively in collaboration with the young person. The College addressed the bullying with the other students involved and the young person was offered pastoral and counselling support. This helped to ensure they felt able to stay at the College and to successfully complete their course.

Safeguarding in Schools

Peer on Peer Sexual Assaults

► **Case Study 1:** We received a call from the mother of a 14 year old girl who alleged that she had been the victim of a serious sexual assault by a pupil who also attended her school. The girl had remained out of school for some time and was concerned that if she returned she would come into contact with the other pupil who was on bail. A further issue arose in that the pupils were to sit external examinations and unless arrangements were made, both pupils would be in the same examinations hall. The mother and child were not fully aware of the criminal legal processes that were underway in relation to bringing the other child to Court. NICCY were able to explain the processes to the mother and child which alleviated some of their stresses regarding the criminal trial. NICCY were able to advise the mother of the options for her child's return to school without the risk of having contact with the other pupil and the possibility of sitting her exams in a different exam centre, or in a separate room in her own school. As a result of NICCY's advices the mother and school were able to agree a plan to return the child to school which the child felt safe to follow. They were also able to agree a plan for the girl to sit her exams in a separate room.

► **Case Study 2:** NICCY received a referral from the mother of a 13 year old boy who had been accused of a sexual offence against another pupil in the school. The boy had initially been suspended for a period and then returned to the school and was the subject of a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP). The mother was concerned that the RAMP was excessive and it meant that the child was almost totally socially isolated in the school and this was having a very detrimental impact on his mental health. NICCY attended a number of meetings in the school and played a key role in ensuring that the rights of both children were protected within the school environment. We were able to suggest the involvement of a number of agencies to offer support to the children and school. NICCY were further able to clarify the criminal process to the attendees at the meetings which assisted them in decision making regarding the RAMP. NICCY remained involved in the case until the criminal process was concluded and the RAMP had been reduced to a level which was acceptable to the family and the child.

► **Case Study 3:** NICCY were contacted by the father of a 14 year old boy who had been accused of a sexual offence. He was the subject of a RAMP which the father felt was overly onerous. NICCY made contact with the school and discussed the plan with them and asked them to review the pastoral support for the child generally and specifically when the matter was in the press or before the Courts. The school agreed to keep the plan under constant review. We provided ongoing assistance to the father in relation to his interaction with the school.

Mental Health

► **Case Study 1:** NICCY were contacted by the mother of a 15 year old boy. The mother was really worried about the health and safety of her son – he was presenting with mental health needs and the mother instructed us that she had been seeking help for her son for 9 months but was being referred from one service to the next without anyone offering direct assistance to her son. The mother told us that her son’s mental health had declined while awaiting intervention to the point that he was suicidal, self-harming and was attempting to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol. NICCY made urgent contact with the Crisis Team in the Trust and arranged for an emergency assessment, after which the appropriate care pathway was identified for the child. The mother reported to us that after having a number of appointments with the Drug and Alcohol Mental Health service her son was engaging with a therapeutic plan, was much happier and was returning to school to complete his education.

Leaving Care LAC

► **Case Study 1:** We were contacted by the manager of a children’s home as one of the prospective care leavers, who was about to turn 18, was having problems obtaining a place to live. She had been offered a flat by NIHE but this offer was withdrawn due to worries about the vulnerability of the girl because of paramilitary activity in the local area. The girl was extremely distressed and anxious about the uncertainty surrounding her future. NICCY contacted the NIHE and Social Services in relation to their duties to care leavers. The NIHE secured the offer of another flat in a different area where the girl was able to have a fresh start when she turned 18 years old.

Child Safeguarding

► **Case Study 1:** NICCY were contacted by a parent whose son disclosed to them that he had been the victim of a sexual offence while at a club which was run by a relevant authority. The alleged perpetrator was another young person. In addition, both young people had diagnosed conditions and/or disorders that made them extremely vulnerable. The children came from different Health and Social Care Trust areas and internal Trust investigations were opened in relation to the allegations. The PSNI were also involved. The parent was of the view that the Trust had not carried out an effective investigation and not follow the correct procedures at an early stage, which potentially put the young person and other young people at risk. We conducted our own Complaints Investigation which involved writing to the relevant Trusts and requesting that they furnish us with all information they held pertaining to the complaint and the investigation. At the conclusion of this sensitive and thorough Complaints Investigation, NICCY raised concerns in relation to the levels of co-operation between the Trusts and reminded them of their duties under the provisions of the Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015.

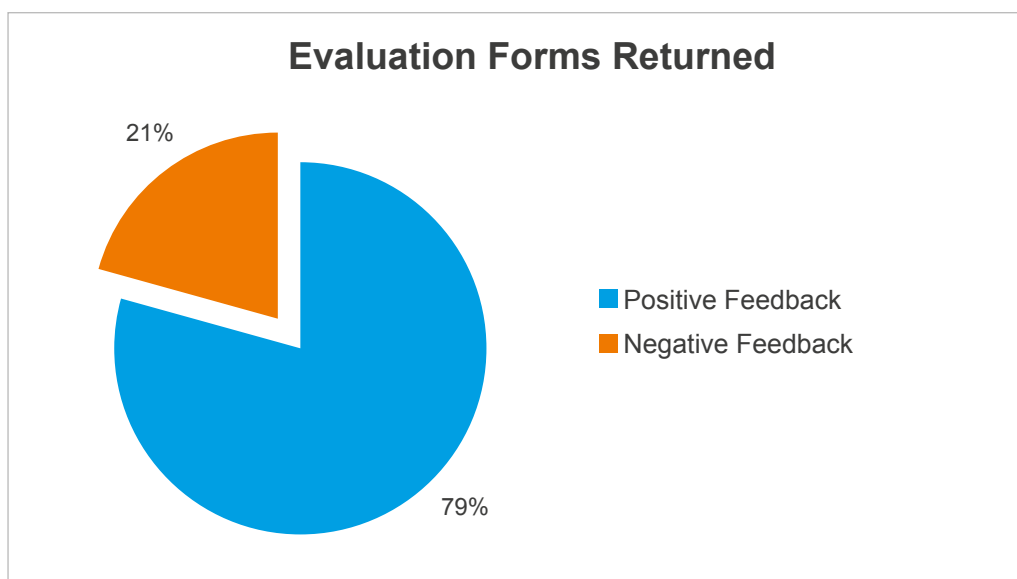


EVALUATION PROCESS

When we close an enquiry we issue an evaluation form to the complainant. In the past this would have been a paper copy sent along with a letter explaining why we seek feedback.

Historically we had a low return rate therefore in order to address this, we decided to trial an electronic system whereby evaluation forms were sent by email to those complainants for whom we held an email address. This resulted in a significant rise in evaluation forms being returned in the 2017/18 business year, an increase in returns of over 95% from the previous year.

Feedback can be, and frequently is, returned anonymously and we retained this option with the electronic system.



Of the returns, almost 80 % contained positive feedback, with individual staff and indeed our service as a whole being praised.

The following are a selection of comments:

“Very good communication and follow up on phone calls.”

“Advice and support was much appreciated.”

“Very helpful staff who were happy to give help, advice and support.”

“Excellent advice.”

“I appreciated the caring and supportive attitude of the advisors.”

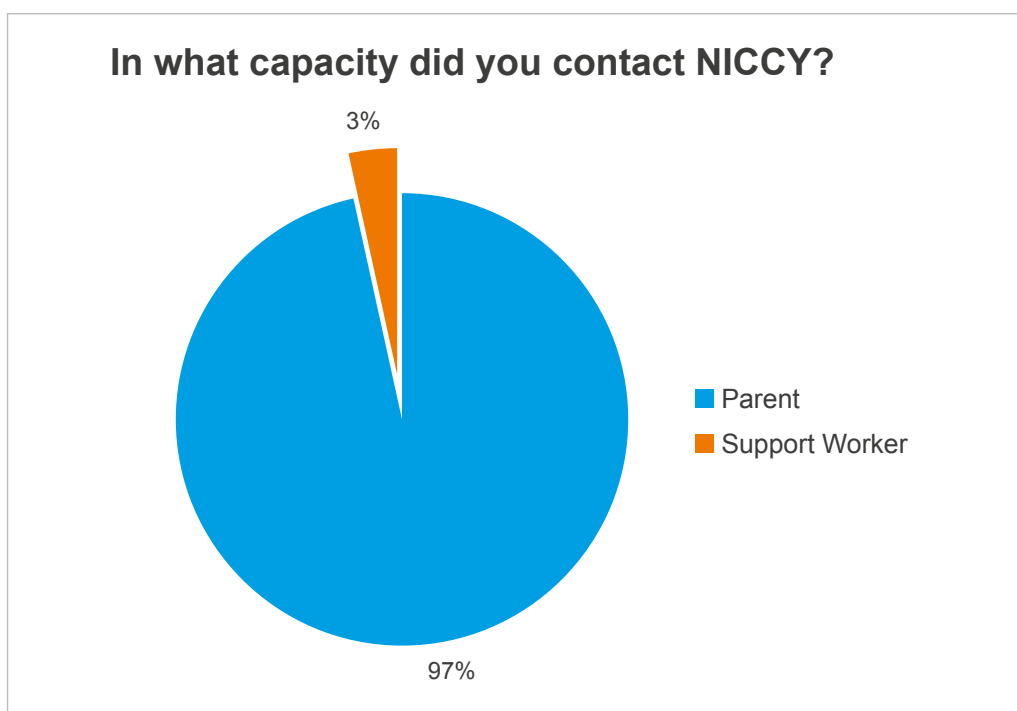
We welcome positive feedback and comments as we know these reflect the experience of the vast majority of our clients. In the event that we receive negative feedback, this is taken very seriously and we seek to use it constructively in order to improve our service and to identify any training needs if/where necessary.

All feedback is reviewed both within the team and by Management with a view to commending where positive and learning where negative.

As in previous years, the main source of negative feedback came from frustrations as a result of restrictions in our legislative remit, which prevent us from helping with issues and cases that are outside our remit. Nonetheless we always attempt to provide initial advice to the client and signpost them to the most appropriate agency.

The restrictions on our remit are an issue NICCY has addressed in reviews of our legislation and would hope to have this changed. To this end we have been actively working towards this with previous and current Sponsor Bodies.

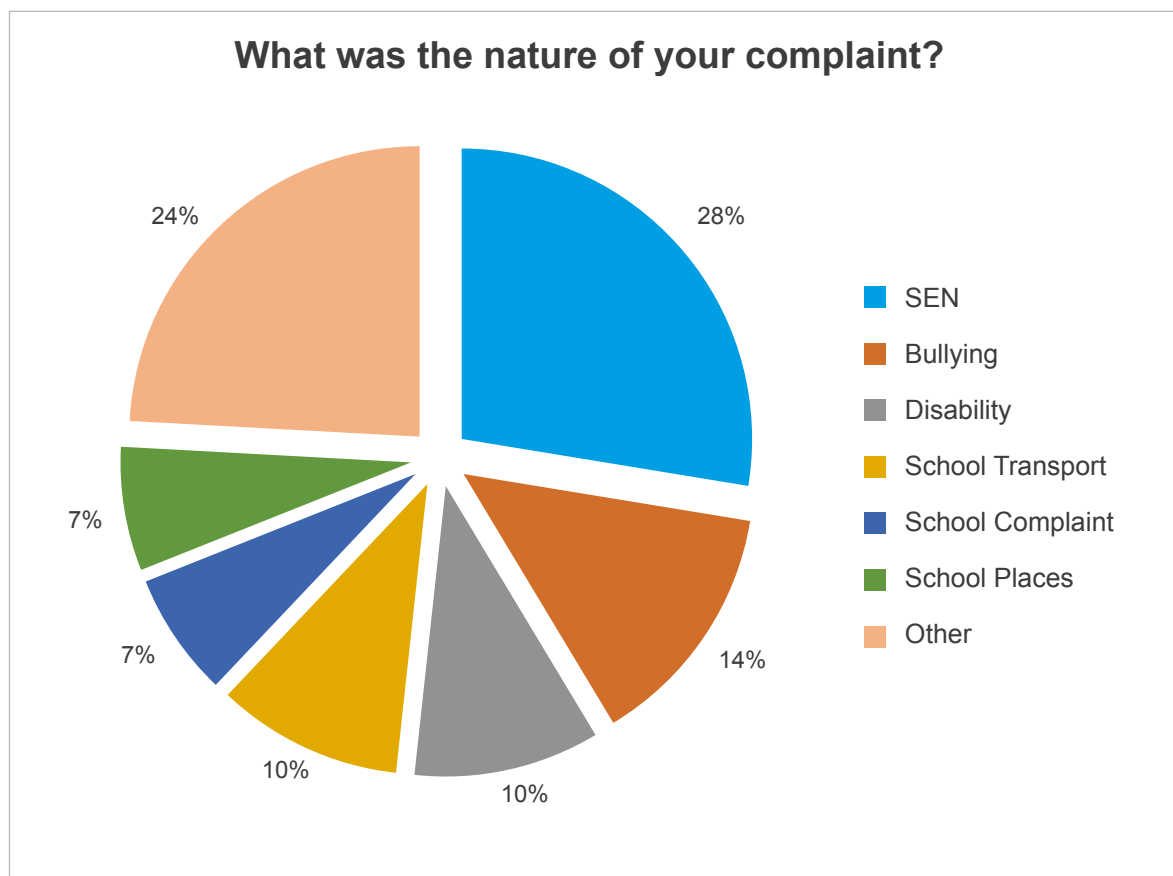
Question 1 Analysis



The vast majority of the evaluation forms that are returned to us are completed by parents and this is reflective of the fact that it is primarily parents who refer cases to us on behalf of their children. We are keen to receive as much feedback from children and young people as possible. We always try to gauge their assessment of our service when we are engaging directly with them as, historically, we have found that children and young people are less likely to return evaluation forms. We have recently amended our practice to ensure that when we are speaking to a young person at the conclusion of their case, we remind them of our evaluation form or capture their feedback verbally if they wish to provide any.

Question 2 Analysis

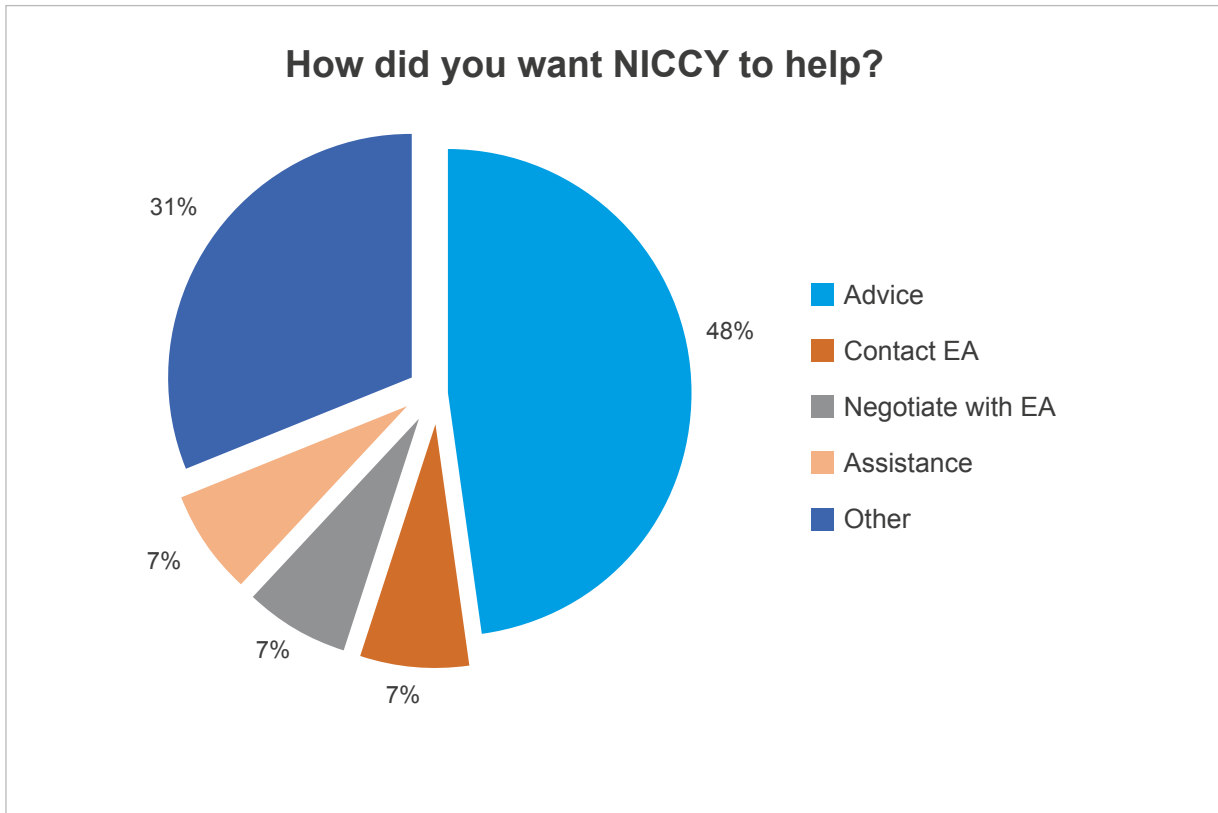
Question 2 establishes the reason for contacting NICCY.



The returned evaluation forms cover a wide range of issues but as expected school and education issues predominate. This reflects our casework which is dominated by education issues such as Special Educational Needs and Bullying.

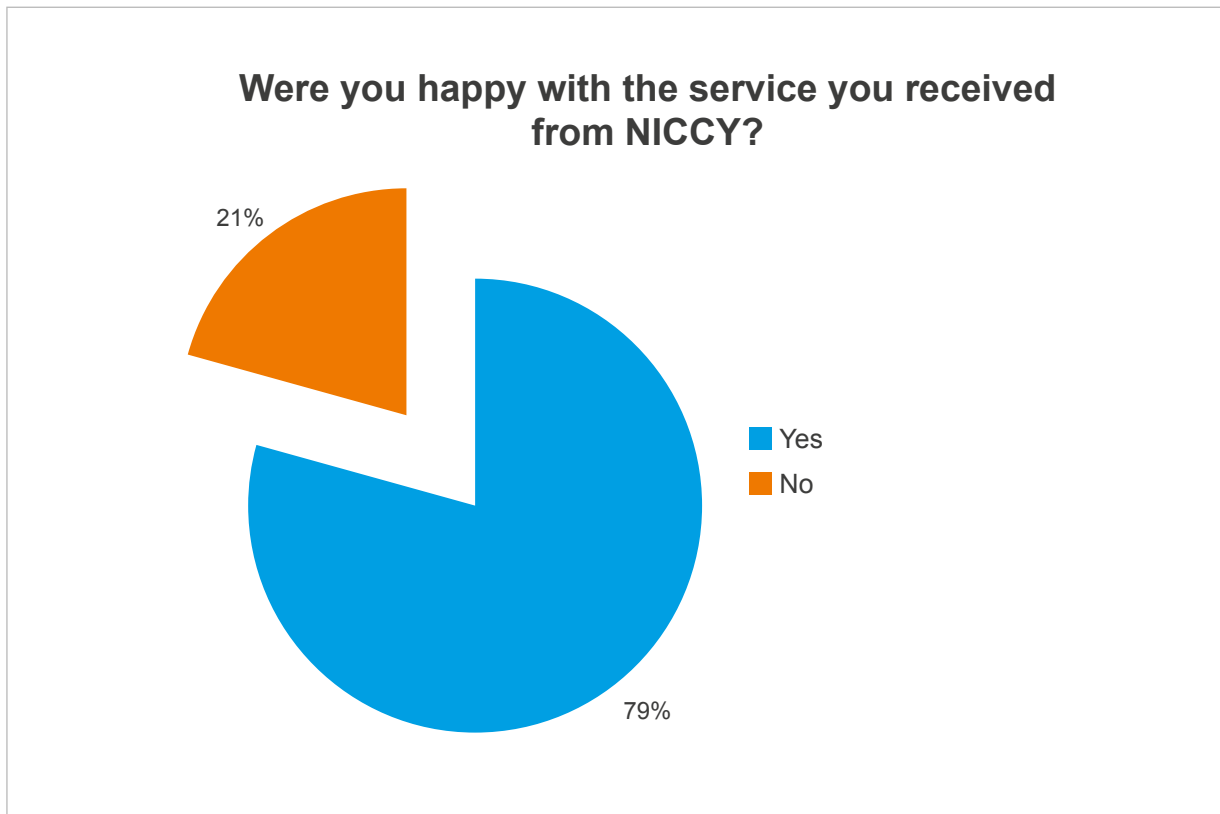
Question 3 Analysis

This question establishes how the client wanted NICCY to help when they contacted us.

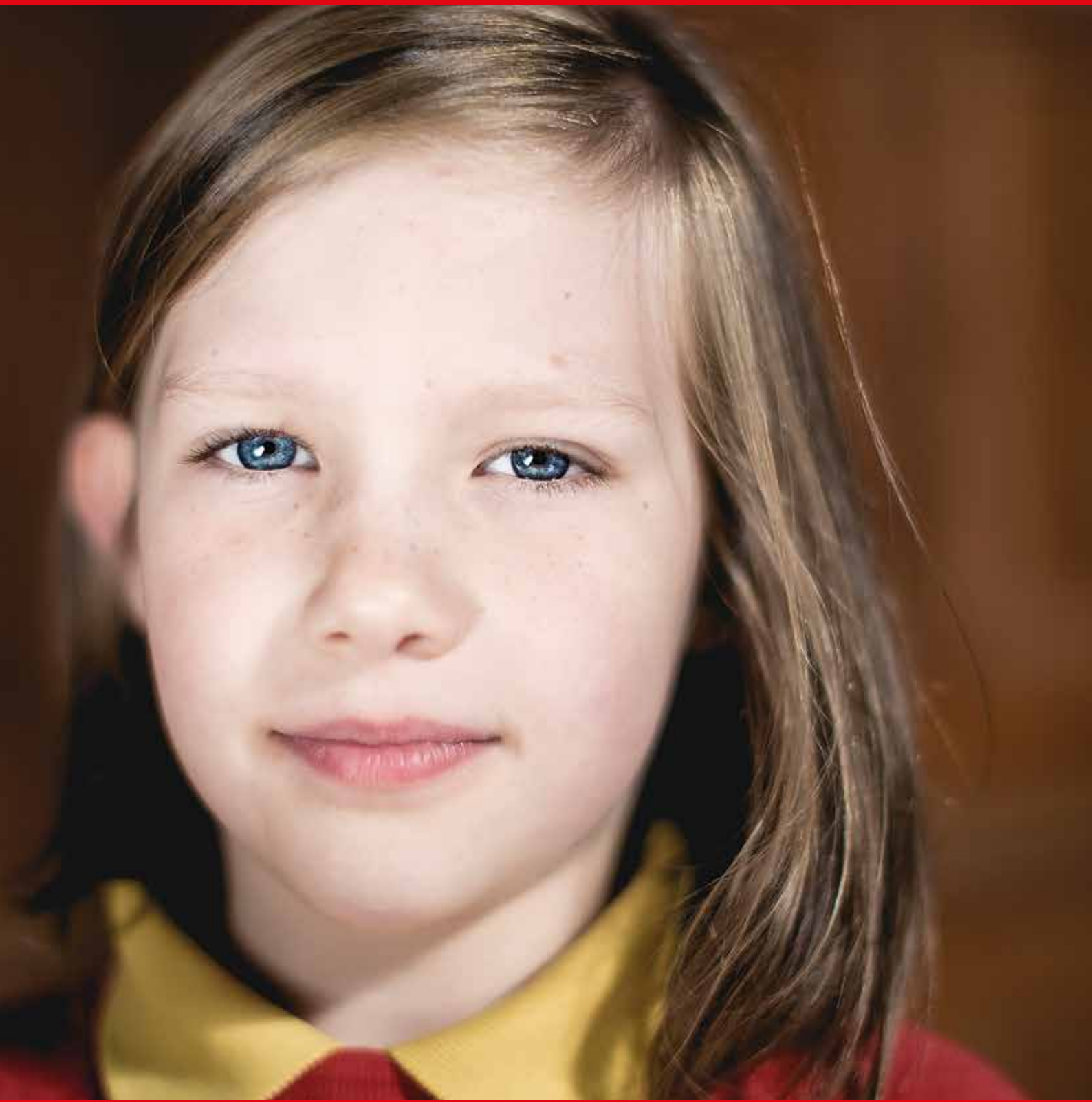


This question is designed to help us understand what each complainant expects from us at the outset. The majority of people contact us with realistic requests for advice. We do however get enquiries from people that are unaware of how we work and the limitations of our remit. These enquiries can result in a dissatisfied complainant or an outcome that is less than they expected if we are unable to assist due to our remit restrictions. We always try to carefully manage complainant expectations from the outset to try to prevent such outcomes.

Question 4 Analysis



As set out above, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with our service. Where there was dissatisfaction this could, in the main, be attributed to frustrations regarding our remit rather than any true complaint about the standard or quality of our service.



GOING FORWARD

NICCY continually review the operation and delivery of the casework service we provide, seeking ways to improve and enhance the service. While we remain absolutely committed to assisting children, young people and their parents or carers via our casework service, we are also intent on increasing the number of Complaint Investigations we conduct each year. We believe that this strategic approach will assist children and young people both individually and collectively by bringing about positive change in the provision of services and practice on the part of responsible relevant authorities.



You can contact the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People using the following details:

**Northern Ireland
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People**

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Please contact the Communications team at NICCY if you require alternative formats of this material.