

**Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead  
Annual Compliments and Complaints Report**

**1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018**

**“Building a borough for everyone – where residents and businesses grow, with opportunities for all”**

**Our vision is underpinned by six priorities:**

*Healthy, skilled and independent residents*

*Growing economy, affordable housing*

*Safe and vibrant communities*

*Attractive and well-connected borough*

*An excellent customer experience*

*Well-managed resources delivering value for money*

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**Frequently used acronyms**

LGO	Local Government Ombudsman
RBWM	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution

## Complaints processes

	Adult services complaints	Children's services complaints	Corporate complaints	Not within the formal complaints process
Incoming concern	Received via online form, email, telephone call or face to face contact. However received, all complaints are logged on the complaints database (Jadu) for monitoring and tracking. Once logged the complaint is acknowledged within 3 working days and customer informed whether this will be taken as a complaint and if so, under which complaints process			
Stage 1	<b>Statutory</b> No specific timescale but aim to respond within 10 working days. Response from Service Manager or higher.	<b>Statutory</b> Up to 10 working days. Can agree extension for a further 10 working days. Response from Head of Service.	Up to 10 working days. Can agree extension for a further 10 working days. Response from Head of Service.	N/A
Stage 2	N/A	<b>Statutory</b> 25-65 working days. Completed by independent complaints investigators and report produced. Adjudicating letter in response to report completed by Children's Director of Social Care.	Up to 20 working days. Review of stage 1 complaint and response by Director.	N/A
Stage 3	N/A	<b>Statutory</b> Stage 3 independent panel. Up to 70 working days. Panel of three independent members who produce a report. Letter in response to the report completed by the Directors of Children's Services.	N/A	N/A
LGO	Can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman			N/A
Alternative appeal process	N/A	N/A	N/A	Customer given timescales for response

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The annual report covers the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and details all compliments and complaints made by or on behalf of customers, that are investigated under the:
- Formal corporate complaints policy.
  - Statutory adults and children's complaints policies.
- 1.2 Local Authorities are not required to produce an annual report on complaints relating to corporate activities. They are required under statute to report complaints submitted on adults and children's services. The corporate complaints team produce an annual report capturing all compliments and complaints. This allows the Council to assess how residents experience the Council in its entirety. Learning taking from compliments and complaints informs the organisation and development learning programme offered to employees.
- 1.3 The council is a multi-faceted business, for instance council activity during 2017-18 included:
- 203,000 phone calls, 20,000 emails and 15,000 face-to-face enquiries.
  - Over one million visits to libraries with 7,000 new library members.
  - 88 births, 525 birth declarations and 884 deaths registered.
  - 727 marriages conducted.
  - 72,000 visits to museums.
  - Five million waste and recycling collections.
  - 13,000 streetlights upgraded to LED.
  - 275 referrals to children's safeguarding.
  - 57 families supported by the Intensive Family Support Team.
  - 141 adult transfers into long term care.
  - 2,254 support plan reviews.
  - 1,157 adult safeguarding concerns and enquiries investigated.
  - 1,961 planning applications determined.
  - Engagement with 98.3% of residents and 98.8% of business to collect tax and rates.
- 1.4 In 2017/18 the Council received 463 compliments a significant increase on the 192 received in 2016/17 and 644 complaints, slightly down on 2016-17 at 665. Our ambition would be to have fewer complaints, however, the 644 complaints set against the activity base captured in point 1.3 is small.
- 1.5 This report summarises the number and themes of compliments and complaints received. It provides details of compliments and complaints split by service area and response rate. For ease, the report is organised into sections:
- Section 2 Council's complaints processes and procedure.
  - Section 3 National and legislative context.
  - Section 4 Summary of activity.
  - Section 5 Formal corporate complaints and compliments.
  - Section 6 Adult services complaints and compliments.
  - Section 7 Children's services complaints and compliments.

## **2. COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

- 2.1 Complaints made about the council's services are dealt with under two processes. The formal corporate complaints policy for general council activity such as: council tax; housing; highways; communications; democratic services and so on; and the statutory adult and children's services. The different complaint processes have different stages, however regardless of which policy a complaint is investigated under, or the outcome, the complainant still has the right to refer their complaint on to the Local Government Ombudsman. The different stages are:
- The council process contains two stages.
  - The adult process contains one stage
  - The children's process contains three stages.
- 2.2 The principle behind the council's complaints procedure is to ensure that every opportunity for resolution is sought through dialogue or local resolution before a complaint is submitted. Where agreement is not achieved customer have a right to complain and the complaints process has different stages dependant on the area of service the complaint is about, see point 2.1.
- 2.3 Although customers can refer complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) at any stage, the LGO will not normally investigate until the council have exhausted their complaints procedure.
- 2.4 Complaints are made by email, phone call, letter, face to face or by logging the complaint online. All complaints received, along with comments and compliments, are recorded on the council's complaints database (Jadu). The Jadu system provides for compliments and complaints to be captured by number, types, themes, postal address and timeliness of complaint.
- 2.5 The council's complaints policies are intended for use by service users, customers, residents, businesses and visitors or their chosen representatives, which may include councillors.
- 2.6 The Council's complaints process is managed through one team. This means the team is independent of the two statutory adult and children's service, ensures independence from services, removes the possibility of conflicts of interest and secures impartial challenges.
- Quality assurance**
- 2.7 Effective complaint management is crucial to allow confidence on the part of complainants to submit complaints with the understanding that the council will take these seriously and respond. The council has a transparent complaints process that customers can access, in real-time, direct through the online contact platform.

- 2.8 The complaints team focus on ensuring: when a complaint is received, Stage 1, the language and terminology used is easy to understand, this is essential if the complaint is from a child, young person or vulnerable person with additional needs; the process for investigating the complaint is followed and on time and lessons learned and recommendations are captured to secure continual improvement – this includes one to one training/advice/meetings with relevant employees providing them with support and guidance on how best to resolve a complaint.

#### **Demographic information**

- 2.9 The complaints team is exploring whether the collection of protected characteristics data can be supported, for analysis purposes only, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant data protection legislation. This will also link into the council's equality objectives.

### **3. NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

#### **Formal corporate complaints**

- 3.1 The council's formal corporate complaints policy is discretionary and has been developed based on the Local Government Ombudsman's guidance 'Running a complaints system - Guidance on good practice'.

#### **Adult services**

- 3.2 The council has a statutory duty, under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, to have in place a complaints procedure for Adult Social Care services and is required to publish an annual report relating to the operations of its complaints procedures.

- 3.3 The Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 introduced a single approach for dealing with complaints for both the NHS and Adult Social Care, the key principles of which are:

- Listening - establishing the facts and the required outcome.
- Responding - investigate and make a reasoned decision based on the facts/information.
- Improving - using complaints data to improve services and influence/inform the commissioning and business planning process.

#### **Children's services**

- 3.4 The procedure for dealing with children's statutory complaints and representations is determined by the following legislation:
- The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
  - The Children & Adoption Act 2002 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and
  - The accompanying guidance 'Getting the Best from Complaints' (DfE July 2006).

- 3.5 Qualifying individuals are defined in national guidance as the child or young person, their parent, carer or foster carer or 'anyone who could be seen to be acting in the best interests of the child.'

- 3.6 Under the regulations, the council is required to produce and publish an annual report.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- 4.1 In 2017-18, the council received 1,809 contacts from customers that were initially recorded as complaints. This compares to 1,089 in 2016-17; a 66% increase in contacts year-on-year. The increase in the number of contacts made may be the result of increased awareness by customers of the complaints processes and improved ease of access for customers to log a complaint themselves using Jadu.
- 4.2 Contacts that that were not progressed as complaints were signposted to an alternative means of resolution, for example, a service request or via an alternative appeals process, such as parking appeals or statutory tribunals.
- 4.3 The total number of complaints recorded in the annual complaints and compliments report for 2016-17 was 802. This figure included stage 2 and 3 and withdrawn complaints in addition to stage 1 complaints. Therefore the figure of 802 is higher than the 665 reported in table 1 because the final figure does not include:
- Escalation of the same complaint, from 2017-18 stage 2 and 3 complaints have not been added to the total complaints in 2017-18.
  - Withdrawn complaints.
- 4.4 Information on stage 2 and 3 complaints will be shown separately in this report.
- 4.5 As a number of changes have been made to the council's structure during the reporting year 2017-18, this year's report will look at complaints according to whether they were made under the formal corporate, the statutory adult or the statutory children's complaints processes, see table 1

**Table 1: complaints received**

	<b>Formal corporate</b>	<b>Statutory adult</b>	<b>Statutory children</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017-18	574	33	37	<b>644</b>
2016-17	592	37	36	<b>665</b>

- 4.6 Despite a larger number of contacts with the complaints team, the numbers of complaints logged has slightly decreased during 2017-18.

#### **Themes**

- 4.7 Complaints are captured as themes, see table 2.

**Table 2: themes of complaints 2017/18 and 2016/17**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2016-17</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Lack of action - did not do what we said we would	150	23	68	10
Services delivered at a lower standard than in our policy	78	12	109	15
Attitude or behaviour of staff	78	12	72	11
Failed to follow timescales	71	11	56	8
Unhappy with the decision made	61	9	73	11
Situation handled incorrectly	54	8	114	17



Theme	2017-18		2016-17	
	Number	%	Number	%
Did not follow policy	34	5	30	5
Require help, intervention or guidance	30	5	0	0
Gave the wrong information	24	4	21	3
Inaccurate or wrong information recorded	16	2	8	1
Objecting to a policy	15	2	5	1
Failed to take all information into account	10	2	8	1
Did not answer all questions	9	1	1	1
Safeguarding	9	1	0	0
Breach of data protection	5	1	5	1
Failed to respond at all	0	0	40	6
Multiple	0	0	48	7
Malice bias or unfair discrimination	0	0	6	1
Not kept informed	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>98</b>

4.8 The theme with the highest number of complaints received was lack of action. This along with the theme of failed to follow timescales make up 34% of complaints, see section 4.13 for further information.

4.9 The next two highest themes, making up 24% of complaints, are concerned with services being delivered at a lower standard than in our policy and attitude or behaviour of staff. These relate to how customers feel about the service they receive from the council.

### Timescales

4.10 Each stage of the three individual complaint processes have indicative response times. However, these can be extended or alternative timescales agreed from the outset with the complainant. Despite this, in 2017-18, 10% fewer complaints were responded to within agreed timescales compared to 2016-17, see Table 3.

**Table 3: Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale**

Year	Progressed complaints	Responded to within timescale	% within timescales
2017-18	644	329	51%
2016-17	665	410	61%

4.11 Given the number of complaints received regarding timescales, this is clearly an area for significant improvement. Processes are now in place to monitor the timeliness of responses more robustly, including weekly reports to services of outstanding complaints and use of the council's new performance management software InPhase at weekly SMT meetings. In the first part of 2018/19 there is an improvement in timeliness of responses.

### Decisions

4.12 The outcome of complaints is recorded, see table 4.

**Table 4: Outcome of complaints**

	Fully upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Not yet concluded*	% Partially or fully upheld
2017-18	346	130	133	35	74%
2016-17	259	174	182	50	65%

\*It should be noted that the 'not yet concluded' is likely to mean that the complaints team were waiting for the response to update the records and that this had not been received at the time a data snapshot was taken for this report, rather than the complaint still being outstanding.

### Local Government Ombudsman

- 4.13 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) received 58 complaints and enquiries about the council in 2017-18, compared to 54 in 2016-17, see table 5.

**Table 5: complaints received by the LGO**

	Adult Care services	Benefits and Council Tax	Corporate and other services	Education and Children's services	Environment services	Highways and transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
2017-18	14	4	4	12	5	3	4	11	1	58
2016-17	12	6	2	10	6	4	4	9	1	54

- 4.14 The Ombudsman made 54 decisions during 2017-18 compared to 48 in 2016-17. Complaints decided in 2017-18 includes a number of complaints submitted to the LGO in 2016-17. Some complaints made to the LGO in 2017-18 will have a decision in 2018-19.
- 18 were referred back to the council as they had not been through the complaints process.
  - Four were deemed 'incomplete or invalid' and were not investigated.
  - 19 were closed after initial enquires where they would have asked the council for details and evidence.
  - Four were investigated and not upheld. This is fewer than 2016-17 where seven were not upheld.
  - Nine were investigated and upheld, this was three more than 2016-17. See appendix 1, for full details of decisions as per the 2017-18 LGO annual letter on cases upheld and not upheld.
- 4.15 The nine complaints that were investigated and upheld were:
- Adult social care x 3.
  - Benefits and council tax x 1.
  - Highways and transport x 1.
  - Housing x 2.
  - Planning and development x 2.

### LGO reports

- 4.16 A public interest report was published in 2017/18 for a complaint against the council's housing service. The LGO published 42 reports nationally during 2017/18; an increase of 40% on the previous year.

### **Improvements in working with the LGO**

- 4.17 Following the report being issued, liaison arrangements between the council and the LGO were changed and the link officer role that previously sat within the information governance team moved to the complaints team. This has streamlined the provision of information requested by the LGO, improving the timeliness of responses and providing a centralised point of contact both internally and externally. LGO enquiries are logged on Jadu in a similar way to other complaints so that they can be monitored effectively.

### **Learning and improvements from complaints**

- 4.18 Understanding why complaints are made, establishing root causes, changing processes and delivering training as a result is essential to help drive improvements across the council. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we did not get it right can highlight opportunities for improvement and increase satisfaction, fulfilling our strategic priority to provide an excellent customer experience.
- 4.19 Learning from complaints can be found in sections 5.12, 6.14 and 7.18.

### **Compliments**

- 4.20 In 2017-18, there were 563 compliments recorded for teams or individuals across the council, see table 6. Compliments received are fed back to the relevant service areas to ensure that due recognition is given to staff and that learning is shared and disseminated across the directorate.

**Table 6: Compliments received**

	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
Corporate *	310	93
Adult	50	41
Children's	103	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>192</b>

\* For the purpose of this report corporate services refers to compliments that were received by services other than those within adult and children's services.

- 4.21 This is a substantial improvement in compliments recorded in 2017-18. This may be because of improved services, the ability for customers to record compliments themselves via the council's website and the readiness of services to share compliments that they have received.
- 4.22 Examples of compliments received can be found in sections 5.13, 6.17 and 7.19.

## 5. FORMAL CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

### Summary

5.1 In 2017-18, there were 574 corporate complaints. This represents 89% of all complaints progressed.

- 68% were either fully or partially upheld.
- 52% were responded to within timescales.
- 32 complaints were decided by the LGO, of these:
  - Nine were investigated.
  - Six were upheld.
  - Three were not upheld.
- 310 compliments were received.

### Complaints received

5.2 Table 7 details the number and percentage of stage 1 complaints received by service area.

**Table 7: Corporate complaints received by service**

Teams	Number of complaints	Percentage
Highways	106	18.5
Waste	100	17.4
Customer services	94	16.4
Planning	63	11.0
Housing services	59	10.3
Parking policy	50	8.7
Revenues and benefits	34	5.9
Trees	16	2.8
Outdoor facilities	10	1.7
Environmental services	6	1.0
Leisure services	6	1.0
Libraries and museums	6	1.0
Elections	4	0.7
Finance	3	0.5
Parking enforcement	3	0.5
Building control	2	0.3
Licensing	2	0.3
Community wardens	2	0.3
Building services	1	0.2
Communications & Marketing	1	0.2
Complaints team	1	0.2
Information governance	1	0.2
Registrars	1	0.2
Town centre managers	1	0.2
Trading standards	1	0.2
Web services	1	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100</b>

5.3 Highways and Waste received the highest number of complaints. Both service areas deliver a large number of services for the council and along with customer services have a high degree of contact with residents.

## Themes

- 5.4 Table 8 details the number and percentage of new complaints received by theme during 2017-18.

**Table 8: Corporate complaints received by themes**

Type of complaint	Number	Percentage	Number fully upheld
Lack of action	141	25	88
Failed to follow timescales	69	12	30
Attitude or behaviour of staff	68	12	44
Services delivered below standard	65	11	42
Unhappy with a decision that has been	54	9	31
Situation or incident handled incorrectly	46	8	22
Require help or intervention	29	5	25
Did not follow policy	27	5	14
Gave the wrong information	22	4	17
Believe our policy to be incorrect	15	3	1
Inaccurate information recorded	14	2	5
Did not answer all questions asked	9	2	4
Failed to take all information into account	9	2	0
Breach of data protection	4	1	3
Safeguarding	2	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>328</b>

- 5.5 Themes of complaints received are similar to those across the council, see table 2. This is to be expected as the majority of complaints to the council are against these service areas.

## Timescales

- 5.6 Table 9 details the number and percentage of stage 1 complaints that were responded to within timescales for each service.

**Table 9: Corporate complaints responded to within timescales**

Teams	Total number of complaints	Number in timescales	Percentage in timescales
Libraries and museums	6	6	100
Licensing	2	2	100
Community wardens	2	2	100
Registrars	1	1	100
Town centre managers	1	1	100
Trading standards	1	1	100
Web services	1	1	100
Parking policy	50	45	90
Elections	4	3	75
Leisure services	6	4	67
Finance	3	2	67
Parking enforcement	3	2	67
Waste	100	62	62
Highways	106	64	60
Revenues and benefits	34	18	53
Environmental services	6	3	50

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Total number of complaints</b>	<b>Number in timescales</b>	<b>Percentage in timescales</b>
Trees	16	7	44
Customer services	94	40	43
Planning	63	20	32
Outdoor facilities	10	3	30
Housing services	59	11	19
Building control	2	0	0
Building services	1	0	0
Comms & Marketing	1	0	0
Complaints team	1	0	0
Information governance	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>298</b>	

5.7 Numbers of complaints and responses within timescales are shared in monthly performance management meetings between the head of HR and corporate projects and the managing director.

### **Stage 2 complaints**

5.8 If a complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving a response at stage 1 of the corporate complaints service they may request a review by the service director. The timescale for response at stage 2 is within 20 working days.

5.9 Table 10 shows the number and percentage of stage 2 complaints that were responded to within timescales for each service.

**Table 10: Corporate complaints in timescales**

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Total number of complaints</b>	<b>Number in timescales</b>	<b>Percentage in timescales</b>
Planning	6	6	100
Revenues and benefits	5	4	80
Trees	5	3	60
Customer services	3	2	67
Environmental services	2	2	100
Trading standards	1	1	100
Parking policy	1	1	100
Waste	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	

5.10 All but one of the eight services that received stage 2 complaints were among those receiving the highest number of stage 1 complaints. Responsiveness to complaints is significantly higher at stage 2 at 79% compared to 53% for the same services at stage 1.

### **Complaints to the LGO**

5.11 The LGO made decisions about 32 complaints and enquiries for corporate services. Nine were decided following detailed enquiries and of these, six were upheld and three were not upheld. Of the remaining 23, one was incomplete or invalid, 10 were referred back for local resolution and 12 were closed after initial enquiries. See appendix 1 for details on 2017-18 decisions.

## Learning from complaints

- 5.12 An important part of the complaints process is capturing the learning and embedding of good practice across the council. Table 11 picks up some of the learning across corporate services during 2017-18.

**Table 11: Learning from corporate complaints**

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Undated consultation letter received with a deadline for response of one working day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deadline was immediately extended for a further two weeks.</li> <li>• Consultation letters are now dated.</li> </ul>
No staff able to gain access to payment machine to check whether money had been 'swallowed'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff given training to allow similar issues to be resolved at the time they occur without the need to escalate.</li> </ul>
Single person discount not applied and subsequent refund actioned in the wrong name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team reminded of the correct processes to follow when actioning a direct debit instruction.</li> </ul>
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about waste reduced from 115 in 2016-7 to 100 in 2017-18.</li> <li>• The waste management team and customer services are working together to ensure the correct information is captured when a concern is raised and that it is then escalated appropriately.</li> <li>• Ongoing training is taking place and the handover of issues is now more streamlined.</li> <li>• A new role of customer service coordinator has been created and recruited to in commissioning communities. This is proving effective.</li> </ul>
Revenue and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a specific issue is found to be valid, then it is discussed with the individual officer and the wider team.</li> </ul>
<p>Housing services</p> <p>There was a distinct pattern observed in the complaints received that related to poor communication by the team and failure to contact the customer back when such a promise was made to them. This meant that the customer no longer had any trust in the information they were being given by staff and felt that staff were</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All outstanding complaints were responded to and in some cases a meeting was arranged with the Head of Housing and the customer to mitigate.</li> <li>• The team have all been made aware of the standard expected of them and have improved in their level of communication with customers resulting in fewer complaints being received.</li> </ul>

<b>Complaint area</b>	<b>Actions and learning</b>
unhelpful and lacked interest in their problems.	
Complaint about the lengthy process to renew a blue badge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to process to ensure a smoother and speedier renewal for customers.</li> </ul>
Complaint following attempts to contact customer services using the online message service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigated and a technical issue found and rectified.</li> </ul>
Delays in applications for a certificate of lawful use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning service has taken steps to significantly increase resources and reduce the risk of these type of delays.</li> </ul>
Planning application notice posted on wrong property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers reminded to ensure that the site notice is displayed on or as near to application sites as is possible and also to use items on the public highway where this is possible</li> </ul>
Confusion regarding the Enforcement Process (which is a regulatory investigation process) and the Corporate Complaints process (which does not deal with enforcement investigations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help clarify this, the planning enforcement webpage was updated and the word complaint replaced with the word investigation.</li> </ul>

## **Compliments**

5.13 Corporate services received 310 compliments during 2017-18. This is an increase from 2016-17 when there were 101 compliments received. Table 12 shows the breakdown of compliments across corporate services.

**Table 12: Compliments by service**

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Number of compliments</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Libraries and museums	104	34
Highways	70	23
Customer services	34	11
Planning	22	7
Waste	18	6
Community wardens	10	3
Complaints team	7	2
Directors	7	2
Facilities	6	2
Revenues and benefits	6	2
Environmental services	5	2
Communications & Marketing	3	1
Housing services	3	1
Parks and open spaces	3	1
Parking enforcement	2	1
Registrars	2	1



Teams	Number of compliments	Percentage
Town centre managers	2	1
Trees	2	1
Democratic services	1	0
Outdoor facilities	1	0
Parking policy	1	0
Training	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100</b>

5.14 Table 13 shows examples of compliments received across service areas. Front facing services that interact regularly with customers received the highest number of compliments in the same way as they also receive the highest volumes of complaints.

**Table 13: Examples of compliments received**

Service	Compliment received
Libraries and museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Sunday morning I visited Maidenhead library with my son to get him a library card. The young lady who served me was very helpful, and efficient. She then also helped me to look and reserve some books for him which you did not have in Maidenhead. Unfortunately I forgot to take note of her name, but she did a very good job.</li> </ul> <p>It was also very nice to have some activities taking place for my son to interact with. The young people running this activities were very proactive in explaining what was happening, and more than happy and confident to look over the children whilst taking place in the activities. It was a challenge to get him out of the library when it was time to go home! Thank you</p>
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I just wanted to say a BIG thank you to all your staff involved in keeping the roads clear of ice and snow over the recent cold snap. I had several important meetings to drive to over this period and not once was I delayed! I am sure your staff worked incredibly hard over this period - thank you very much for a great service!</li> <li>Many thanks for the fix on the lamppost at the entrance to Ashley Hill place. It's made a massive difference. We much appreciate the speed and professionalism of the response of yourself and the lighting team.</li> </ul>
Customer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bless you!!! Thank you so very much for your swift care and assistance, it is so very appreciated. I am always most grateful for your help on all issues we have come up against. Your great, uncomplicated and efficient professionalism is something quite rare these days especially within a complicated system that sometimes seems impossible to know which way to turn or what to do.</li> <li>A huge thank you from us all, alongside great appreciation for your care.</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm delighted to say that the application approval document arrived today. The whole committee are so pleased to receive it so</li> </ul>

Service	Compliment received
	<p data-bbox="523 241 1241 342">promptly. Thank you very much for your input and support for the application as we went through the necessary stages.</p> <ul data-bbox="478 365 1369 398" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 365 1369 398">• Many thanks to the planning team with whom I have had contact.</li> </ul>
Waste	<ul data-bbox="478 432 1369 566" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 432 1369 566">• Whilst some of the bins in the Broomhill area of Cookham were not collected this past Friday, I just wanted to say 'thank you' for all the 'dusties' who managed to get in to work so that there were any collections at all on a very difficult day. Well done all!!</li> </ul>
Community wardens	<ul data-bbox="478 600 1385 1227" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 600 1385 958">• I just wanted to send my sincere thanks to the team that worked with me over the weekend on Night Time Economy. As always they were on top of their game and were able to direct venues re drunk individual who had been ejected from other premises so they were refused access elsewhere, they identified a couple of vulnerable females and requested the appropriate assistance from the Street Angels and also were second to none in alerting us to fights in progress and where the offenders and victims were. Very often this vital service and the team behind it are over looked so just wanted to make sure that they received the praise they are due.</li> <li data-bbox="478 992 1385 1227">• I just wanted to express my gratitude for the work of the community wardens in Windsor town centre. Both do an excellent job within the community and are always on hand and willing to assist myself and my colleagues. Yesterday was one of many examples when they offered assistance during an incident after we received word that Boots had a shoplifter in store. I really appreciated their help.</li> </ul>
Complaints team	<ul data-bbox="478 1261 1385 1641" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 1261 1385 1361">• First, let me say "Thank you" for the simple decency of answering the telephone earlier today, and listening to my comments in a calm and collected way.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="523 1384 1345 1451">Thank you also for doing what you said you would do - you got back to me later in the day.</p> <p data-bbox="523 1473 1385 1641">Thank you in particular for your email - it was clear and concise (I had feared I had unearthed the proverbial buggers muddle). Contrary to your comment, it does indeed provide a good outcome to my query - it gives clarity and certainty as to what the law requires.</p>
Facilities	<ul data-bbox="478 1675 1385 1877" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 1675 1385 1877">• Just a note to thank you for everything you did at the weekend to help make the memorial fundraising event go so smoothly. I knew I could rely on you and you made sure it was as stress free as possible. Thank you for sorting out the taxi driver, looking after the guests and all the setting up of the room and "technical" equipment.</li> </ul>
Outdoor facilities	<ul data-bbox="478 1910 1385 2036" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 1910 1385 2036">• Yesterday, I collected the cremated remains of my brother-in-law for relocation. This was not a day to look forward to, but thanks to the professional efficiency of your officer the whole process was seamless and worked like an expensive chronometer. The lift</li> </ul>

Service	Compliment received
	<p>during his busy working day, was greatly appreciated as this lessened the pressure of trying to keep my appointment in the afternoon. Similarly, another officer was also courteous and helpful, in supporting the process. If the other services administered by RBWM are of the same standard, then the residents of the borough are very fortunate indeed.</p>

5.15 The variety of compliments highlights the breadth of work carried out across the council and helps celebrate the good work carried out by a wide range of officers.

## 6. ADULT SERVICES

### Summary

6.1 In 2017-18 there were 33 adult complaints. This represents 5% of all complaints received.

- 60% of complaints were either fully or partially upheld.
- 55% were responded to within timescales.
- 11 complaints were decided by the LGO
  - Three were investigated.
  - Three were upheld.
  - 0 were not upheld.
- 50 compliments were received.

### Complaints received

6.2 There is no discernible trend in relation to the number of complaints received for adult social care services, see table 14 for the volumes for the period 2010-18.

**Table 14: Total number of adult complaints, 2010-2018**

2010-11	2012-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
19	16	49	78	21	44	37	33

6.3 In 2013-14 there was a significant peak of 78 complaints however; this, was unusually high and for the last three years, where oversight has been more consistent, there has been a decrease year on year.

6.4 Table 15 details the number and percentage of stage 1 complaints received by each service.

**Table 15: Adult Services complaints for 2017-18**

Teams	Number	Percentage
People with disabilities and older people's team	17	51
Community mental health team	3	9
Community team for people with learning Difficulties	1	3
Hospital team	1	3
Occupational therapy	1	3
Short term team	1	3
Adult financial assessments	1	3
Safeguarding	1	3
Partner agencies (including care homes)	7	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

6.5 In 2017-18, the majority of complaints received, 17 (51%), were in relation to the Physical disability and Older people team. This could be expected given that this team supports the highest number of people.

### Themes

6.6 Table 16 details the number and percentage of new complaints received by theme during 2017-18.

**Table 16: Themes of adult complaints received during 2017-18**

Type of Complaint	Number	Percentage	Number fully upheld
Services being delivered at lower standard than is set out in our policy	9	27	4
Safeguarding	5	15	3
Unhappy with how a situation/incident was handled	5	15	2
Attitude or behaviour of staff	4	13	0
Lack of action - did not do what we said we would do	3	9	2
Unhappy with the decision made	3	9	0
Breach of data protection	1	3	1
Failed to follow timescales	1	3	0
Inaccurate information recorded	1	3	0
Require help or intervention	1	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>

- 6.7 As in 2016-17, the highest number of complaints received were recorded under the theme of services being delivered at a lower standard than is set out in our policy. Nearly half of the complaints recorded against this theme were upheld. Of the complaints recorded against attitude and behaviour of staff however none were fully upheld. As the number of complaints against each theme is low these figures are indicative only, however each upheld complaint can provide learning and recommendations to enhance the service provided to the council's residents.

### Timescales

- 6.8 Table 17 details the number and percentage of complaints responded to within timescales for each service.

**Table 17: Adult complaints responded to within timescales**

Teams	Total number of complaints	Number in timescales	Percentage in timescales
People with disabilities and Older people's team	17	10	59
Community mental health team	3	0	0
Community team for people with learning difficulties	1	1	100
Hospital team	1	0	0
Occupational therapy	1	1	100
Short term team	1	0	0
Adult financial assessments	1	1	100
Safeguarding	1	0	0
Partner agencies (including care homes)	7	5	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	

6.9 The council’s target for dealing with adult services complaints is 10 to 20 working days although there is no specified limit for statutory complaints about adult social care and this timescale may be increased for complaints that are particularly complicated. Of the 33 complaints received during 2017-18, 55% were responded to within agreed timescales. This is less than in 2016-17 where 71% were responded to within timescales.

6.10 In April 2017, adult services transferred into Optalis. The complaints team and managers in Optalis have worked together to tighten the processes in place and this is having a positive impact on achieving timescales. Complaints about adult services continue to be managed by the Royal Borough through the complaints team.

**Complainants**

6.11 The majority of complaints made in 2017-18 were by the service user themselves, followed by the child of the service user, see table 18 for full breakdown

**Table 18: People making adult complaints**

Who made the complaint	Number	Percentage
Service user	23	70
Child of service user	7	21
Parent of service user	1	3
Extended family	1	3
Spouse or partner	0	0
Advocate	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

6.12 The high percentage of complaints being made by the service user themselves indicates that they feel comfortable and understand how to make a complaint.

**Complaints to the LGO**

6.13 The LGO made decisions about 11 complaints and enquiries for adult services. Three were decided following detailed enquiries and of these, three were upheld and one was not upheld. Of the remaining eight, one was incomplete or invalid, three were referred back for local resolution and four were closed after initial enquiries. See appendix 1 for details on 2017-18 decisions.

**Learning from complaints**

6.14 Table 19 picks up some of the learning across adult services during 2017-18.

**Table 19: Learning from adult complaints**

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Residential services forwarded an incorrect copy of a grant approval to a resident. This detailed a different home adaptation to that which was previously been agreed and resulted in delays in progression of the grant application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New procedures have been put in place to support a smoother transition and communication between Residential Services and Adult Social Care. The importance of regular communication with our customers has been discussed in supervisions and team meetings.</li> </ul>

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Better communication facilitated between the council, Optalis and the contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A three-way recruitment process was carried out and a commissioning assistant was appointed, which has improved communication.</li> </ul>

## Compliments

- 6.15 Adult services received 57 compliments during 2017-18. This is an increase from 2016-17 when there were 41 compliments received. Table 20 shows the breakdown of compliments across adult services.

**Table 20: Compliments by service**

Teams	Number	Percentage
People with Disabilities and Older People's Team	24	41
Short Term Team	13	23
Community Team for People with Learning Difficulties	12	21
Occupational Therapy	3	5
Hospital Team	2	4
Access team	2	4
Community Mental Health Team	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>

- 6.16 As with complaints, the highest number of compliments received were for the people with disabilities and older people's team.
- 6.17 Table 21 shows examples of compliments received across adult services.

**Table 21: Examples of compliments received**

Service	Compliment received
PDOPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was lovely to meet you today and I thank you for taking the time to think through ways to improve my situation whilst at the same time retaining my sense of independence. I enjoyed your visit (despite my tears) and, for the first time in many years, I feel positive about the future. I seem to have been fighting for some help for so many years that I can hardly believe that there is now a good chance that my life will get better instead of getting worse by the day. I must also thank you for the reassurance that I won't have to go through the horrors of returning home after surgery to be faced by an empty house and the hopeless task of trying to care for myself whilst recuperating.</li> <li>I am coping OK with looking after my Dad and it's certainly in no small part to the Support, Information and Services you have provided. Please pass on to your Boss that you are doing a fantastic Job</li> </ul>
Short Term Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hi. I just wanted to compliment the team of carers who looked after and took such wonderful care of my dad during the last two months of his life. They were all so kind and understanding. They made my mum's life so much easier during such a difficult time.</li> </ul>

Service	Compliment received
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank you for visiting my mother on Tuesday, I am very grateful for the way that you spoke to her and that you treated her with such respect and thoughtfulness.</li> </ul>
Occupational Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like to express our appreciation for the help and guidance you have given us during the visits you made to us here in Ascot. We did not know what to expect as we have never in the past experienced a visit from a Physiotherapist. You very quickly calmed any concerns we may have had. Your patience and explanations as we progressed through the exercises in your booklet were and still are remembered. The benefits of regularly carrying out these well thought out and illustrated exercises are indeed being realised.</li> </ul>
Hospital team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many thanks for all your help and understanding throughout this period. I have been very impressed by the standard of care, the responsiveness and the speed of the Social Services team working in Maidenhead.</li> </ul>
CTPLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every Wednesday the group attend the Cemetery, where they work on a project with ISS Grounds Maintenance. The group has done wonders with the flower beds and rose gardens at the cemetery and recently helped an elderly lady who had travelled some distance to attend her mother's grave. The grave was very overgrown and the group saw she was struggling and stepped in to help. They also agreed to keep the grave tidy in the future as she often finds it difficult to travel.</li> </ul> <p>The following day, a card arrived from the lady thanking the group for their help and for offering to attend to the grave in her absence. It clearly had made her day and had given the group a great sense of pride.</p>



## 7. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### Summary

7.1 In 2017-18 there were 37 children's complaints. This represents 6% of all complaints received.

- 54% of complaints were either fully or partially upheld.
- 27% were responded to within timescales.
- 11 enquiries were received by the LGO, of these none were investigated. See 7.16 for further detail.
- 103 compliments were received

### Complaints received

7.2 The number of complaints received for children's services during 2017-18 has remained at a similar level to 2016-17 both for stage 1 and stage 2 escalations. There were no stage 3 Panels held during 2017-18, see table 22 for details.

**Table 22: Children Services overview**

<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
Stage 1	36	37
Progressed to Stage 2	4	3
Progressed to Stage 3	0	0

7.3 In addition, 36 complaints were withdrawn from the complaints process.

7.4 The number of complaints relating to children's social care services has varied over the last eight years, peaking at 92 in 2013-14, see table 23 for a breakdown for the period 2010-18.

**Table 23: Complaints received comparison 2010-18**

	2010-11	2012-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Stage 1	22	18	43	90	61	81	36	37
Stage 2	1	1	1	2	0	5	4	3
Stage 3	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

7.5 In 2017-18, the majority of complaints received related to the Pods, see table 24 for full breakdown by team.

**Table 24: Complaints received**

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Pods (child protection, children in need and children in care)	14	38
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	7	19
Children & Young People Disabilities Service	6	15
Duty and assessment	1	3
Family placement team	2	5
Children's centres	1	3
School transport	5	14
Frontline	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

- 7.6 The high number of complaints being directed towards the Pods is not unexpected as these teams hold the long-term cases, dealing with complex child protection and children in care cases, often involving court proceedings.

### Themes

- 7.7 Table 25 sets out the themes of children’s complaints during 2017-18.

**Table 25: Themes of complaints**

Type of Complaint	Number	Percentage	Number fully upheld
Did not follow policy	7	19	2
Attitude or behaviour of staff	6	16	1
Lack of action - did not do what we said we would	6	16	0
Services delivered at a lower standard than in our policy	4	11	1
Unhappy with the decision made	4	11	1
Situation handled incorrectly	3	8	0
Gave the wrong information	2	5	0
Safeguarding	2	5	0
Failed to follow timescales	1	3	1
Failed to take all information into account	1	3	0
Inaccurate or wrong information recorded	1	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>

- 7.8 The highest number of complaints received were categorised as did not follow policy, process or the law followed by attitude or behaviour of staff, and lack of action. While the number fully upheld is low, the themes may in themselves give an indication of how it feels to be involved with children’s services and could indicate an opportunity for reflection by and with practitioners.

### People making children’s complaints

- 7.9 The vast majority of complaints made in 2017-18 were by parents. One formal complaint was made by a young person, which is currently being investigated under stage 2 of the statutory children’s complaints process, see table 26 for further detail.

**Table 26: People making children’s complaints**

Who made the complaint	Number	Percentage
Parent/Step parent/Adoptive parent	33	89
Carer	3	8
Child/young person	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Timescales

- 7.10 The timescale for dealing with a stage 1 complaint is 10 working days. However, this can be extended to 20 working days for more complex complaints or if additional time is required.

- 7.11 Table 27 details the number and percentage of complaints responded to within timescales for each service.

**Table 27: Response timescales**

Teams	Total number of complaints	Number in timescales	Percentage in timescales
Pods (child protection, children in need and children in care)	14	4	29
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	7	0	0
Children & Young People Disabilities Service	6	2	33
Duty and assessment	1	0	0
Family placement team	2	1	50
Children's centres	1	1	100
School transport	5	2	40
Frontline	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10</b>	

- 7.12 Completing children's social care complaints within statutory timescales continued to be a challenge during 2017-18. Of the 37 complaints that were received during 2017-18, 27% were responded to within timescales, which is a drop to below half of those responded to within timescales in 2016-17 (62%).
- 7.13 It is acknowledged that this is an unacceptable picture and action to improve this is already in place. This includes weekly reports of outstanding complaints to heads of services and director, as well as meetings between the complaints team and the investigating officers to clarify the complaint and ensure the scope of this is understood. This is having a positive impact on both the timeliness and quality of complaints responses.
- 7.14 On 3 August 2017, children's services transferred into Achieving for Children. The complaints team and managers in AfC have worked together in order to tighten the processes in place and this is already having a positive impact on achieving timescales. Complaints about children's services continue to be managed by the Royal Borough through the complaints team.

### **Stage 2 complaints**

- 7.15 Six stage 2 complaints were resolved in 2017-18, see table 28. Three of these were investigated under the statutory children's complaints process and three under the formal corporate complaints process. No complaints were investigated at Stage 3 in 2017-18.

**Table 28: Statutory stage 2 children's complaints, 2017-18**

Origin	Number of complaints	Outcome
Escalated from Stage 1 in 2016-17. Responded to in 2017-18.	2	Complainants satisfied with response
Escalated from Stage 1 in 2016-17. Responded to in 2017-18.	1	Complainant dissatisfied with response. Stage 3 requested

## Complaints to the LGO

- 7.16 The LGO received 11 complaints for children’s services. Two were incomplete or invalid, five were referred back for local resolution and four were closed after initial enquiries. See appendix 1 for details on 2017-18 decisions.

## Representations

- 7.17 There were 10 representations made by children and young people during 2017-18. These included:
- Young person requested more contact with parent. Weekly telephone calls were agreed.
  - Young person made a representation about their social worker. The issues were successfully addressed in the child in care review meeting and were fully resolved.
  - Young person would like overnight contact with parent. Agreed social worker will carry out a risk assessment and progress if appropriate.
  - Young person did not want to move into semi-independent living. It was agreed to delay the search for a placement.

## Learning from complaints

- 7.18 Table 29 sets out learning from children’s complaints

**Table 29: Learning from children’s complaints**

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Reports have been produced which present as fact information that has not been substantiated or which use old information that has since been proven to be unsubstantiated or is out of date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised in performance meetings. A themed audit is planned to further explore this.</li> </ul>
Hot drink was spilled over a child while attending one of the children’s centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The offer of hot drinks was immediately suspended in all sessions and the policy was reviewed and updated to ensure that hot drinks are served and consumed away from the play areas. If there is no facility for this then only cold drinks must be offered.</li> </ul>
Complaint about a single assessment written for two children in the same family. Parents felt that one child’s situation not fully acknowledged and remained unhappy following a response at stage 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service met with the parents to fully understand their concerns and a separate single assessment was written for the child that fully covered the issues.</li> <li>• Team managers have oversight of all supervision to ensure any practice issues are dealt with at an early stage.</li> </ul>
Complaint regarding difficulties communicating with contact workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phones were provided for all contact workers to ensure good communication when delays occurred or contact needed to be cancelled.</li> </ul>

<b>Complaint area</b>	<b>Actions and learning</b>
Parents complained about how a referral was dealt with by children's social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The case was reviewed and it was identified that the approach had been over cautious.</li> <li>This case has been anonymised for use in practice development.</li> </ul>
Complaint about a delay in allocating a social worker because of a lack of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unallocated cases are reviewed every Monday in the performance meeting to ensure no case remains unallocated for longer than 5 working days.</li> </ul>
Complaint received about the delay in providing an assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timeliness of assessments is now continuously monitored and has risen from below 50% to 93%.</li> </ul>
Dentist and optician appointments not made as required following child in care health review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business support team leader for the Pods now leads on health reviews. An escalation process is in place.</li> </ul>
Statutory visits out of timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is monitored in performance meetings to ensure this no longer happens or to understand the reasons on the occasions when it does.</li> </ul>

### Compliments

7.19 97 compliments were recorded for children's service in 2017-18. This is an increase of 42% from the 56 compliments recorded in 2016-17, see table 30 for a full breakdown.

**Table 30: Number of compliments by children's services teams**

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Number of compliments</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Youth services	44	45
Pods	16	16
CYPDS	14	14
Duty and assessment and MASH	6	6
Education and School admissions	5	5
Children's centres	3	3
Family placement team	3	3
Frontline student team	3	3
Educational psychology	1	1
Leaving care	1	1
School transport	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>

7.20 Table 31 shows examples of compliments received across children's services.

**Table 31: Examples of compliments received**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Compliment received</b>

Service	Compliment received
Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just to let you know that I caught up with X last week. He absolutely LOVES Youth Club! He said, he 'really wants to thank who set it up for him, he thinks that they are marvellous!' He says he feels 'exhilarated in himself' when he's on his way there and wishes that he'd gone years ago!</li> <li>• I want to say thank you for all the support and care you have given me since Friday. You managed the situation really well and gave me positive support throughout. Whatever I wanted or needed you ensured I had it. You provided a shoulder for me to cry on and helped me to manage the distressing news. You helped me pick myself back up and provided distractions for me in order to cope. You made me laugh and played games with me, which helped me so much. I would also like to thank you for your determination and strength especially when I ran away. You came after me and didn't give up. You supported me back to CAMHS. You remained strong despite how distressing the situation was. If you wouldn't of come after me and provided me with the support you did I don't think I would of been safe. You really helped me and I'm ever so thankful. I really appreciate everything you have done for me. You're the best youth worker.</li> <li>• Until coming along to the ICE music sessions our son didn't participate in any extra-curricular activities. He has had problems with bullying at junior school and the first two years at secondary and this lead to him becoming quite isolated, lacking in confidence and feeling pretty down. He loves playing the guitar, but didn't feel encouraged or confident to play at school. Through attending the youth music sessions he has been provided with an outlet and his confidence has soared. He recently had the opportunity to perform at the recent youth awards ceremony which was amazing to us as, even 6 months ago, he wouldn't have been confident enough to play to an auditorium full of parents, youth workers, teachers etc. We are so grateful for the amazing opportunities that the sessions have provided and really think that our son's general wellbeing and his engagement at school would be at a much lower level if it hadn't been there. We think that coming to the sessions has enabled him to literally keep his head above water and for this, we really can't express our gratitude enough.</li> </ul>
CYPDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just a quick note to day thanks for this and thanks for all your help. I honestly do not know what we would have one without you and your help. Having a disabled child is hard gruelling work. It is so wonderful knowing you are in our corner - you are inspiring.</li> </ul>
Family placement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliment for a supervising social worker who has restored the foster carers' faith in themselves and renewed their conviction to carry on fostering.</li> </ul>
Pods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strength and determination you have is rare and precious. As a social worker, you are doing great. I get frustrated at you but I</li> </ul>

Service	Compliment received
	<p>know it's not you. It's hard for you as you're not the one who makes the decisions but I guess I just get angry with you because you're the one that tells me. I haven't come across a social worker like you before. You put so much care into everyone and provide the best care possible. Everyone always tells me I'm lucky to have you as my social worker as you're of the best ones. I agree with that they say.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would like to say a massive thank you to you, you had late evenings the last couple of nights sorting things out and we are very grateful... the last two calls we have seen a huge improvement in mood... Thank you both again... today is my 1st day of not feeling sick with worrying. I know it's the 1st day from the fall out of it all but hearing in her voice the barriers were definitely coming down is my focus of the day.</li> </ul>
School admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you so, so much for your speedy action in facilitating the in-year transfer, you've given an exceptional &amp; fast service, that genuinely is appreciated. The school have just called and he starts next Monday, so we're thrilled to bits. Sincere thanks &amp; appreciation for all your help!</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

18 July

2018

*By*

*email*

Alison Alexander

Managing Director & Strategic Director of Children's  
Services Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead  
Council

Dear Alison Alexander,

### **Annual Review letter 2018**

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2018. The enclosed tables present the number of complaints and enquiries received about your authority and the decisions we made during the period. I hope this information will prove helpful in assessing your authority's performance in handling complaints.

### **Complaint statistics**

In providing these statistics, I would stress that the volume of complaints does not, in itself, indicate the quality of the council's performance. High volumes of complaints can be a sign of an open, learning organisation, as well as sometimes being an early warning of wider problems. Low complaint volumes can be a worrying sign that an organisation is not alive to user feedback, rather than always being an indicator that all is well. So, I would encourage you to use these figures as the start of a conversation, rather than an absolute measure of corporate health. One of the most significant statistics attached is the number of upheld complaints. This shows how frequently we find fault with the council when we investigate. Equally importantly, we also give a figure for the number of cases where we decided your authority had offered a satisfactory remedy during the local complaints process. Both figures provide important insights.



I want to emphasise the statistics in this letter reflect the data we hold, and may not necessarily align with the data your authority holds. For example, our numbers include enquiries from people we signpost back to the authority, some of whom may never contact you.

In line with usual practice, we are publishing our annual data for all authorities on our website, alongside an annual review of local government complaints. The aim of this is to be transparent and provide information that aids the scrutiny of local services.

In previous years we have commented on delays in your Council responding to our enquiries. This year was no exception and we continued to experience considerable delay. These problems were highlighted in the public report we issued against your Council.

The main issue was the Council's failures in dealing with a homeless man. The Council failed to protect his belongings when he became homeless, did not offer him suitable accommodation or help him find permanent housing and did not deal with his complaint about these matters properly. We recommend the council should apologise to the man and pay him a total of £4,175 to remedy the injustice from these failings. We also asked the Council to amend its accommodation offer letters. The report had considerable criticism of the way the Council handled the man's complaint to it, and our investigation enquiries. On a positive note, senior Council officers have personally explained to me what action the Council is taking to improve its complaint handling and its responses to us. We look forward to seeing the impact of these changes over the next year.

### **Future development of annual review letters**

Last year, we highlighted our plans to move away from a simplistic focus on complaint volumes and instead turn focus onto the lessons that can be learned and the wider improvements we can achieve through our recommendations to improve services for the many. We have produced a new corporate strategy for 2018-21 which commits us to more comprehensively publish information about the outcomes of our investigations and the occasions our recommendations result in improvements to local services.

We will be providing this broader range of data for the first time in next year's letters, as well as creating an interactive map of local authority performance on our website. We believe this will lead to improved transparency of our work, as well as providing increased recognition to the improvements councils have agreed to make following our interventions. We will be seeking views from councils on the future format of our annual letters early next year.

### **Supporting local scrutiny**

One of the purposes of our annual letters to councils is to help ensure learning from complaints informs scrutiny at the local level. Sharing the learning from our investigations and supporting the democratic scrutiny of public services continues to be one of our key priorities. We have created a dedicated section of our website which contains a host of information to help scrutiny committees and councillors to hold their authority to account – complaints data, decision statements, public interest reports, focus reports and scrutiny questions. This can be found at [www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny](http://www.lgo.org.uk/scrutiny). I would be grateful if you could encourage your elected members and scrutiny committees to make use of these resources.

## **Learning from complaints to improve services**

We share the issues we see in our investigations to help councils learn from the issues others have experienced and avoid making the same mistakes. We do this through the reports and other resources we publish. Over the last year, we have seen examples of councils adopting a positive attitude towards complaints and working constructively with us to remedy injustices and take on board the learning from our cases. In one great example, a county council has seized the opportunity to entirely redesign how its occupational therapists work with all of its districts, to improve partnership working and increase transparency for the public. This originated from a single complaint. This is the sort of culture we all benefit from – one that takes the learning from complaints and uses it to improve services.

### **Complaint handling training**

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. In 2017-18 we delivered 58 courses, training more than 800 people. We also set up a network of council link officers to promote and share best practice in complaint handling, and hosted a series of seminars for that group. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

Yours sincerely,



Michael King

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

**Local Authority Report:** Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council  
**For the Period Ending:** 31/03/2018

For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our website:  
<http://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/interpreting-local-authority-statistics>

### Complaints and enquiries received

Adult Care Services	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and Other Services	Education and Children's Services	Environment Services	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
14	4	4	12	5	3	4	11	1	58

### Decisions made

Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed After Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	Total
4	0	18	19	4	9	69%	54

#### Notes

Our uphold rate is calculated in relation to the total number of detailed investigations.

The number of remedied complaints may not equal the number of upheld complaints. This is because, while we may uphold a complaint because we find fault, we may not always find grounds to say that fault caused injustice that ought to be remedied.

by LGO

Satisfactorily by Authority before LGO Involvement

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