

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Annual Compliments and Complaints Report

1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

“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

LGSCO	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
RBWM	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The annual report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 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 complaints and compliments team produce an annual report capturing all complaints and compliments. This allows the Council to assess how residents experience the Council in its entirety. Learning taken from compliments and complaints informs the services for improved operational satisfaction and could feed into the training needs analysis.
- 1.3 The council is a multi-faceted business, for instance council activity during 2019/20 included:
- 162,246 phone calls
 - 717,298 library loans from 980,145 visits
 - 653 Births/Birth Declarations
 - 597 Marriages/Civil Partnership ceremonies conducted
 - 924 Notices of Marriage/Civil Partnership taken
 - 993 Deaths registered
 - 456 New British Citizens
 - 65,252 visits to museums
 - 60,823 tonnes of waste collected from residents, from over five million collections
 - 1020 children and young people with Education Health and Care plans
 - 144 Education Health and Care plans issued
 - 862 contacts into the Single Point of Access (SPA) in March 2020
 - 150 single assessments completed each month on average.
 - 266 Children In Need open to Children's Social Care in March 2020
 - 149 children were subject to Child Protection Plans in March 2020
 - 121 Children In Care in March 2020
 - 473 children and young people receiving early help services via the Early Help Hub as of March 2020
 - 1,761 planning applications determined
 - 98.29% of council tax and 98.23% of business rates collected.
- 1.4 In 2019/20 the Council received 440 compliments, a reduction on the 555 received in 2018/19, and 400 complaints, a reduction on the 437 received in 2018/19. The 400 complaints received is relatively low compared to the amount of activity and interactions with residents.
- 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 Summary of activity.
 - Section 3 Formal corporate complaints and compliments.
 - Section 4 Adult services complaints and compliments.

- Section 5 Children’s services complaints and compliments.

2. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

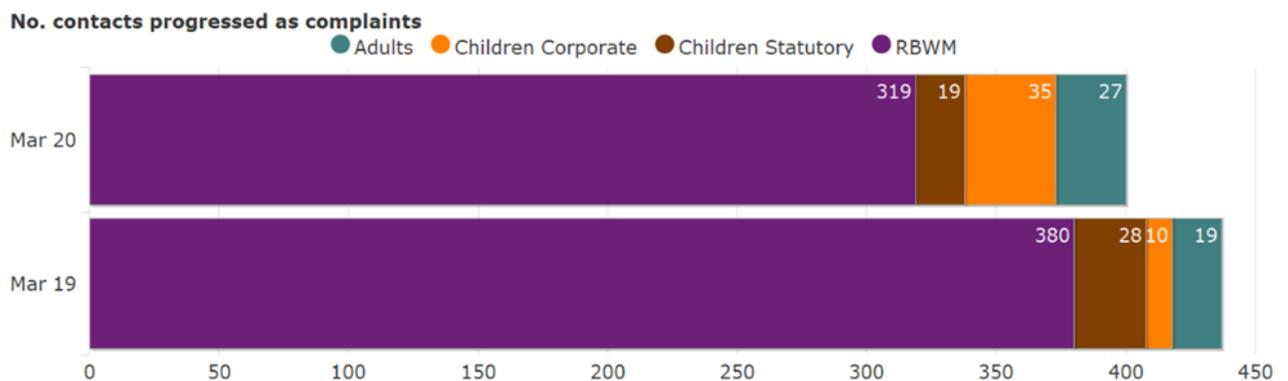
2.1 In 2019/20, the council received 2,107 contacts from customers that were initially logged as complaints. This compares to 1,639 in 2018/19 (Figure 1), a 28% increase in contacts to the compliments and complaints team year-on-year.

Figure 1: Total contacts received



- 2.1 Contacts 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 or were withdrawn.
- 2.2 The total number of complaints that were progressed through stage 1 of the specific complaints process that they followed was 400 in 2019/20, a decrease on 2018/19 (437). Stage 2 and 3 complaints are escalations of stage 1 complaints and so are not counted as new complaints. Information on these is shown separately in this report.
- 2.3 This report will look at complaints according to whether they were made under the formal corporate, the statutory adult or the statutory or corporate children’s complaints processes. Figure 2 provides a summary breakdown of volumes received against each complaints process in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Figure 2: No. contacts progressed as complaints



Children’s services complaints

2.4 The reporting differentiates between children’s statutory and children’s corporate complaints. Both types of complaints are looked at within section 5.

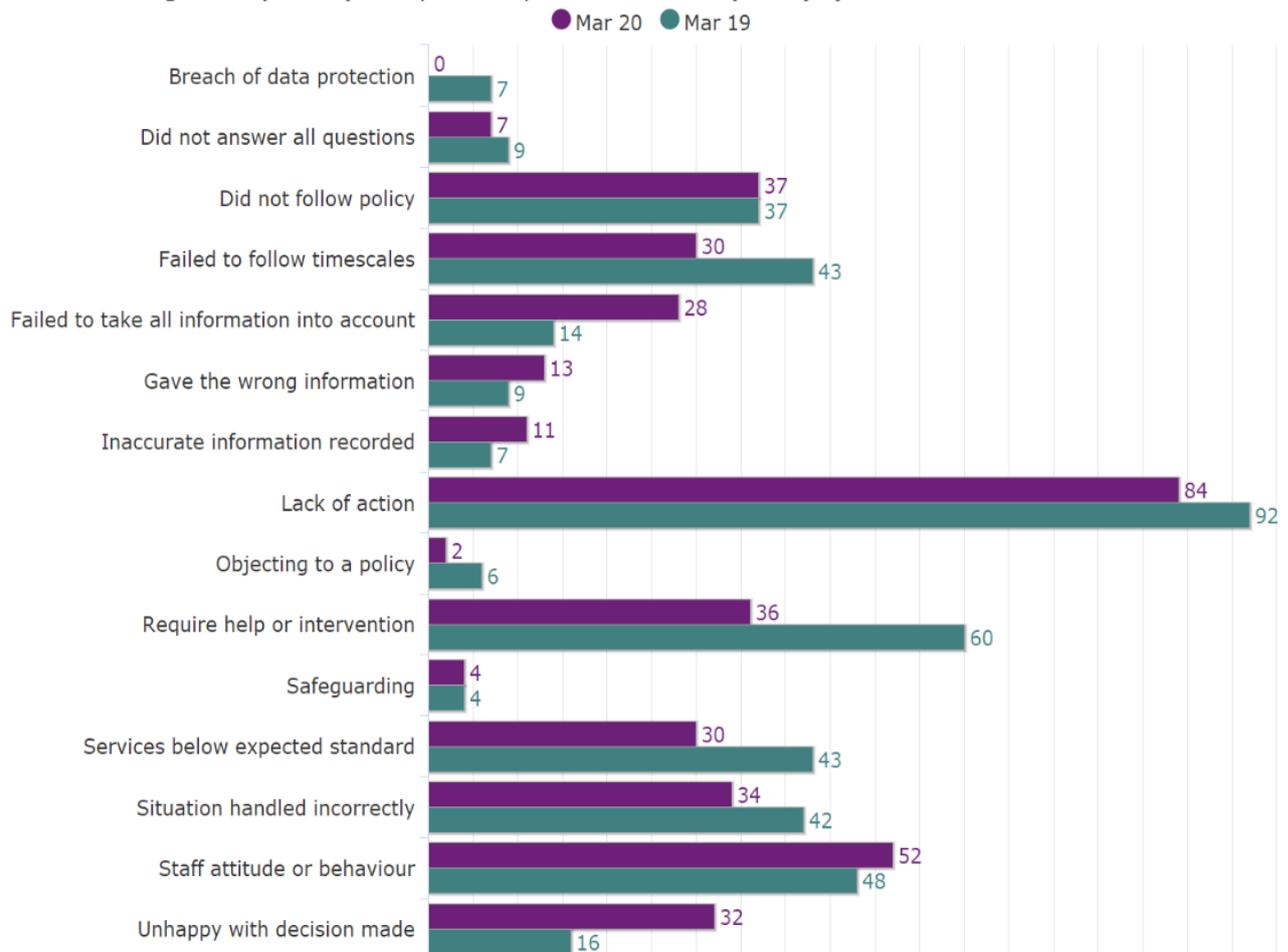
2.5 A children’s statutory complaint is invoked when the complaint is by or on behalf of a child in need or a child in care. Complaints specifically regarding child protection conferences however are taken under the children’s corporate complaints process. This is a national standard. All other children’s complaints are taken under the childrens corporate complaints process.

Themes

2.6 Complaints are captured as themes. When logging their complaint via the council website, complainants self-select the theme themselves. As this is the theme they feel is most relevant to their complaint, the complaints and compliments team does not change this categorisation. When a complaint is logged by a member of the complaints team or the customer contact centre, the person logging will select the theme they believe is most appropriate. Only one theme can be selected for each complaint and the information from themes is therefore an indicator only of the reasons behind often complex complaints. Figure 3 outlines the volume of complaints by theme for 2019/20 and 2018/19 across all complaints processes.

Figure 3: No. closed Stage 1 complaints (all processes) by theme

No. closed Stage 1 complaints (Adults, Children, RBWM Formal Corporate) by theme



2.7 As with 2018/19, the theme with the highest number of complaints received across the council was “lack of action”, making up 21% of all complaints in each year. This was the highest theme recorded for corporate complaints, See sections 3.22 and 3.23. The

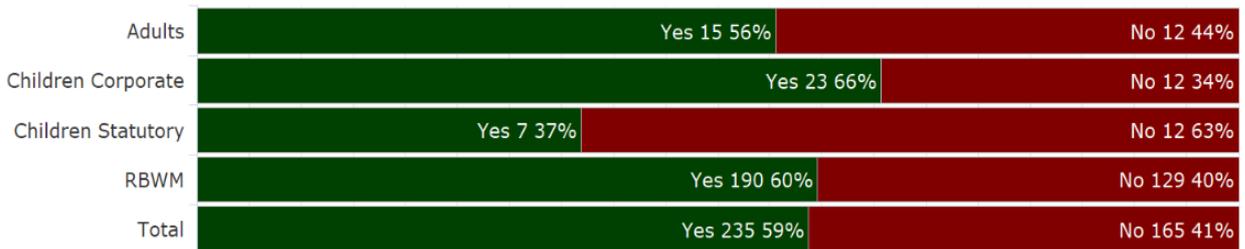
highest theme for adults was “require help of intervention”. See section 4.20. For children’s the highest themes were “failed to follow policy (statutory) and “failed to take all information into account” (children’s corporate). See sections 5.12 and 5.13

Timescales

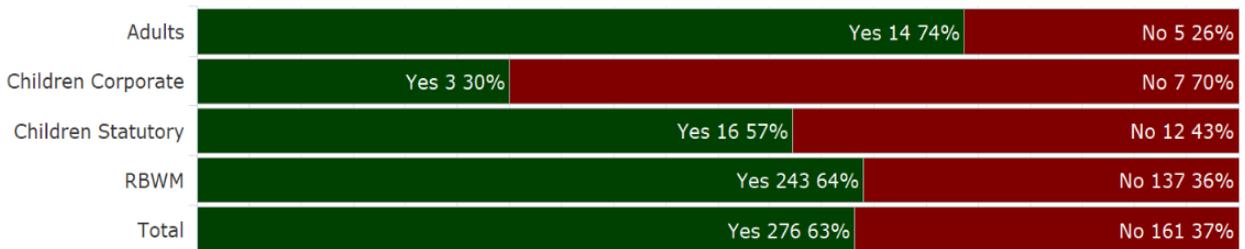
2.8 Each stage of the individual complaint processes has indicative response times. However, these can be extended, or alternative timescales agreed from the outset with the complainant. Figure 4 shows that there was a slight decrease in the percentage of complaints (all processes) responded to within agreed timescales (59%) compared to 2018/19 (63%).

Figure 4: Complaints responded to within timescale (all processes)

2019/20 No. and percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale by complaints process



2018/19 No. and percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale by complaints process



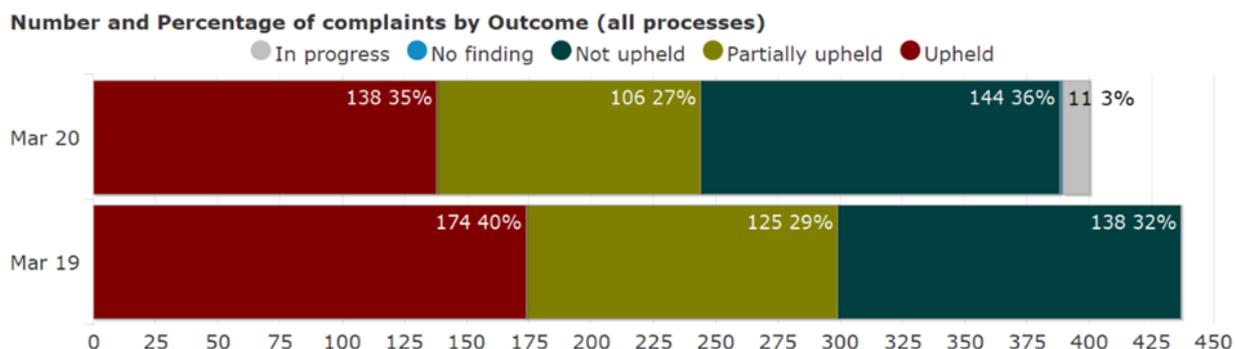
2.9 Processes are embedded to monitor the timeliness of responses more robustly, including weekly reports to services of all complaints. However, despite this, timescales continue to have been missed more frequently in a number of services. Reasons for this include complexity of complaints and officer resource pressures. See also further information in 3.30 and 3.31.

2.10 The council’s performance management software InPhase provides further opportunity for service areas to monitor their complaints; this is expected to be fully embedded in 2020/21.

Decisions

2.11 The outcome of complaints (all processes) is shown in Figure 5. In 2019/20 there was one case (0.3%) with an outcome of “no finding”, meaning that there was insufficient evidence to make a decision. At the time of this report’s preparation there are 11 cases (2.8%) in 2019/20 which have not yet been concluded.

Figure 5: Stage 1 complaints (all processes) by outcome



Local Government Social Care Ombudsman

2.12 The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) received 49 complaints and enquiries about the council in 2019/20, compared to 44 in 2018/19, see table 1.

Table 1: complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO

	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
2019/20	9	1	2	10	7	6	4	9	1	49
2018/19	13	2	5	9	4	1	5	4	1	44

See appendix 1 for full details of decisions as per the 2019/20 LGSCO annual letter on cases upheld and not upheld.

2.13 The Ombudsman made 49 decisions during 2019/20 compared to 46 in 2018/19. This includes decisions on 6 enquiries submitted to the LGSCO in 2018/19 and 29 enquiries submitted in 2019/20. Enquiries that were made to the LGSCO in 2019/20, but no decision made within that year will be included in the decisions reported in 2020/21. See table 2.

Table 2: LGSCO decisions 2018/19 & 2019/20

	Incomplete or invalid	Advice given	Referred back for local resolution	Closed after initial enquiry	Detailed investigations		Uphold rate of detailed investigations	Total
					Not upheld	Upheld		
2019/20	4	0	14	16	8	7	47%	49
2018/19	3	0	15	11	5	12	71%	46

See appendix 1 for full details of decisions as per the 2019/20 LGSCO annual letter on cases upheld and not upheld.

2.14 If we were to include those investigations closed after an initial enquiry to the council, then the upheld rate for 2019/20 is 23%. This is lower than in 2018/19 when under this calculation 42% would have been upheld.

2.15 The 7 complaints that were investigated and upheld were:

- Adult social care 4.
- Licencing 1.
- Housing 2.

See sections 3.41, and 4.14-4.16 for further details.

2.16 The upheld rate for detailed investigations is lower than in 2018/19 by around a third.

LGSCO reports

2.17 No public interest reports for the council were published in 2019/20.

Improvements in working with the LGSCO

2.18 The compliments and complaints team have attended training around adult care complaints as well as attending the Link Officer training. The LGSCO has set up an online group for local authority complaints officers to ask peers for advice and share good practice

Learning and improvements from complaints

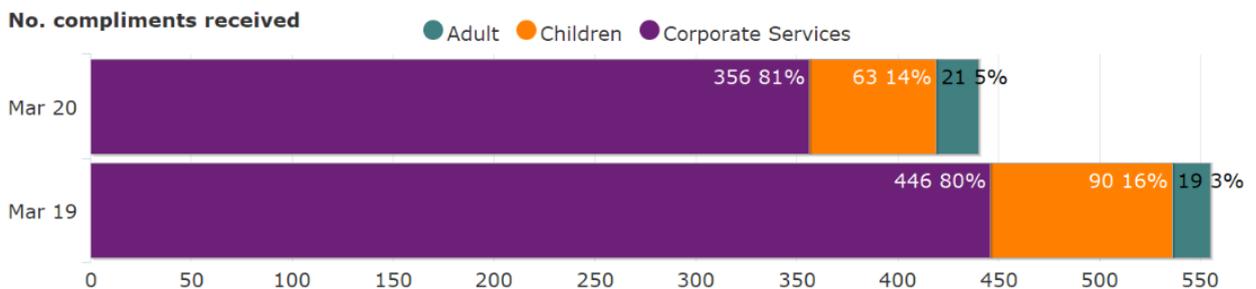
2.19 Understanding why complaints are made, establishing root causes, changing processes and delivering training as a result is essential to help drive improvements across the council. Listening to customers and reflecting on examples of where we did not get it right can highlight opportunities for improvement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

2.20 Learning from complaints for specific services can be found in sections 3.42. 4.17 and 5.31.

Compliments

2.21 In 2019/20, a total of 440 compliments were recorded for teams or individuals across the council. 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. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of compliments by Adults, Children’s and Corporate Services. For the purposes of this report, “Corporate Services” refers to compliments that were received by services other than those within adult and children’s services.

Figure 6: Compliments received (Adults, Children’s and Corporate Services)



2.22 Following continuing improvements in compliments recorded over previous years, there has been a fall from 555 in 2018/19 to 440 in 2019/20. This drop seems to be evenly spread across corporate, adult and children’s services. Further analysis can be found in sections 3.44, 4.19 and 5.33.

3. FORMAL CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

Overall corporate complaints summary

3.1 In 2019/20 79.8% (319/400) of all complaints progressed were Formal Corporate, compared to 87.0% (380/437) in 2018/19.

Internal process

- 38.2% (122/319) were fully upheld
- 23.2% (74/319) were partially upheld
- 35.7% (114/319) were not upheld
- 2.8% (9/319) where a decision had not been reached at the time of data extraction for the preparation of this report.
- 59.6% (190/319) were responded to within timescales.
- 356 compliments were received.

External process

- 23 corporate complaints or enquiries were decided by the LGSCO, of these:
 - seven were fully investigated.
 - one was upheld.
 - six were not upheld.

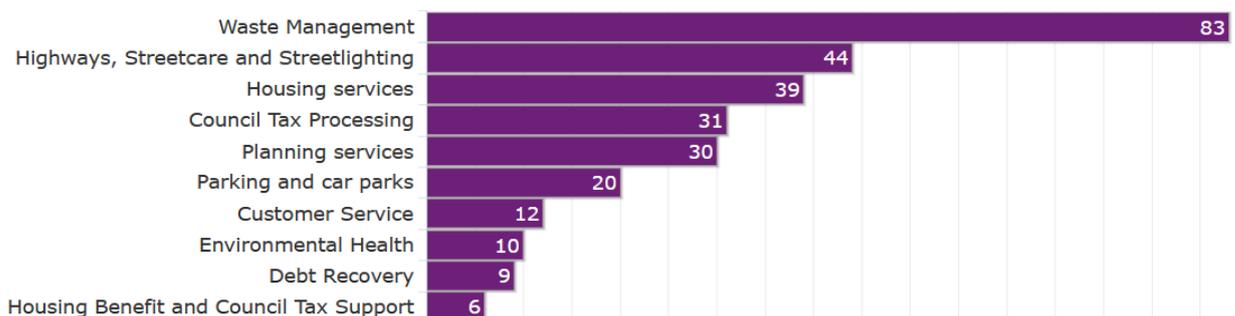
NB: Internal figures as waiting for LGSCO letter.

Complaints received

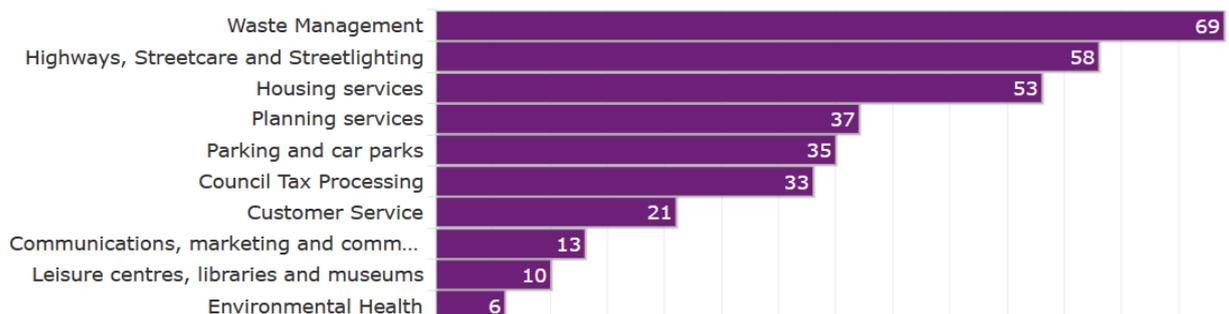
3.2 From 1 October 2019 the council's organisation structure changed, meaning that a full comparison of complaints by service across the last two years is not possible. To enable some comparison between 2018/19 and 2019/20 complaints have been broadly grouped by the area to which they relate and the top-10 are shown in Figure 7. These groupings will be refined in 2020/21 as part of a broader project to develop digital platforms that support reporting of complaints to the council and subsequent data reporting.

Figure 7: Top-10 Formal Corporate complaints by broad area

2019/20: Top 10 Formal Corporate complaints by area



2018/19: Top 10 Formal Corporate complaints by area



3.3 Figures 8 and 9 sets out the complaints received in 2019/20 by service and remit based on the organisation structure at the end the year.

Figure 8: 2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service

2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit

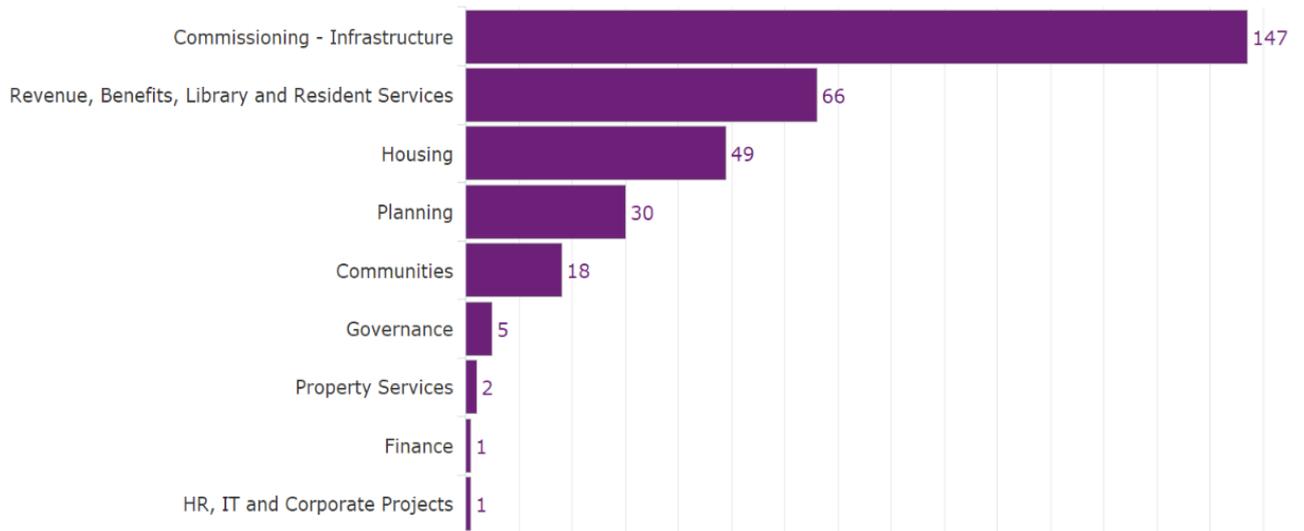
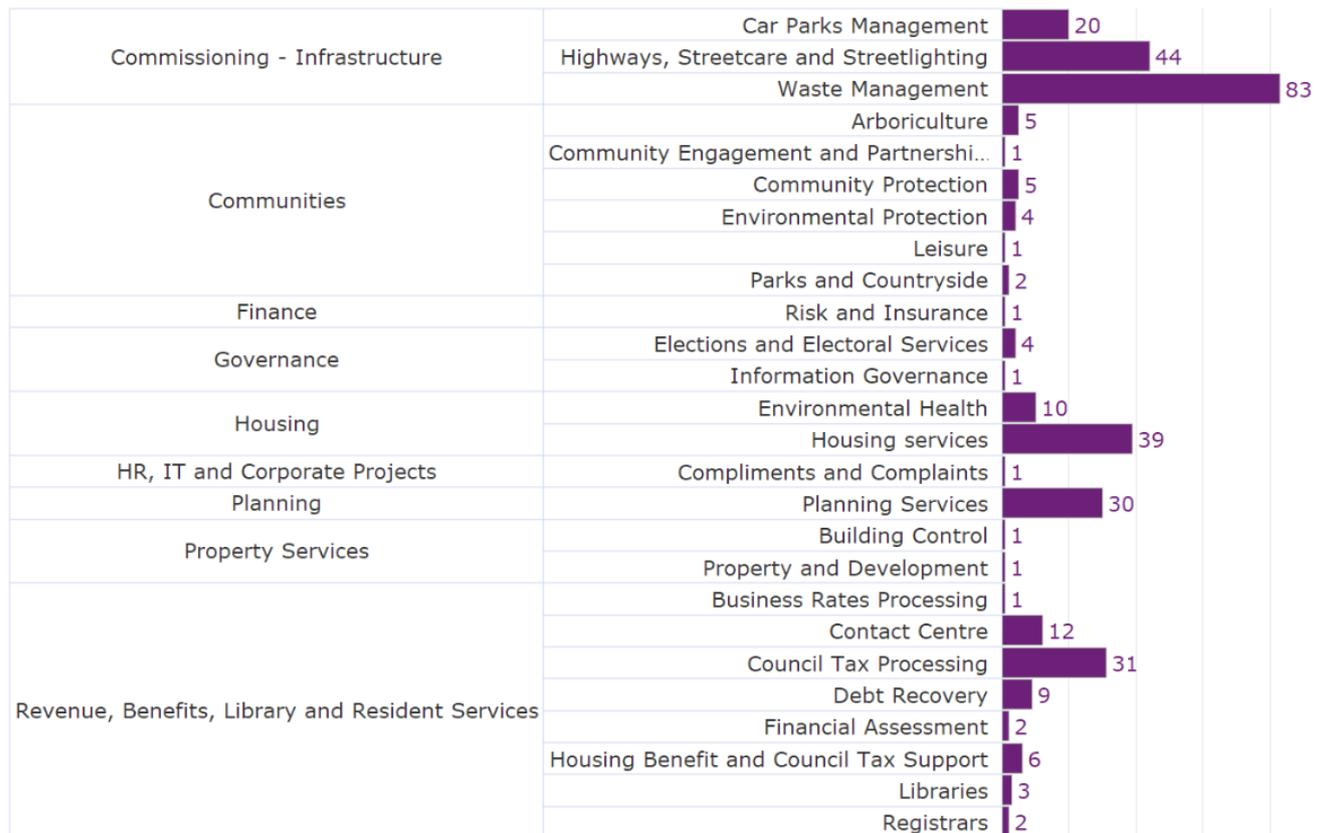


Figure 9: 2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit

2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit



Commissioning Infrastructure

3.4 In October 2019 the Commissioning Infrastructure service was established incorporating relevant service areas from the former Strategy and Commissioning service. These resident-facing services impact upon every resident, household, business and visitor to the Royal Borough (for example: waste collections; highways;

management of road works, parking and parks). Services are often delivered which cause disruption (for example: road works); these are essential and widespread as the council continues to invest in infrastructure across the Borough. The number of complaints received by Commissioning Infrastructure is therefore expected to be higher in comparison to other service areas.

- 3.5 Despite this, the number of complaints across the service area as a whole decreased from 161 in 2018/19 to 147 in 2019/20. This is reflected in all areas within Commissioning Infrastructure apart from waste management, which represented 69 in 2018/19 compared to 83 in 2019/20.
- 3.6 Commissioning Infrastructure, the contact centre and the waste service contractor deal with high volumes of service requests and are working together to bring down the number that turn into complaints. Many of the contacts received are about operational issues and are requests for a service e.g. a missed bin. Where this is not an ongoing issue the contact is changed to a service request, but some will remain as complaints with a formal response identifying the problem and providing information on the remedies that have been put in place to ensure that the concern has been resolved.
- 3.7 To add context in terms of service contact, the service empties 6.2 million bins for residents at the kerbside each year. The complaint level represents between 0.001 and 0.002 %.

Revenues and Benefits

- 3.8 Revenues and Benefits saw a slight rise in the number of complaints made to them during 2019/20. The majority of complaints were made about council tax processing. While there was nothing obvious to account for this, there were periods where the team was recruiting/training new staff leading to increased levels of outstanding correspondence. In addition, complaints continue to be made around changes in legislation which had been in place for some time which see residents faced with increased levels of charge such as removing empty discounts and charging a Long-Term Empty Home Premium.

Library and Resident Services

- 3.9 Library and Resident Services achieved a 55% drop in the number of complaints received across services. A successful coaching and mentoring plan was implemented to raise standards and ensure staff have the skills and empathy to de-escalate difficult situations before they become formal complaints

Housing Services

- 3.10 The number of complaints relating to Housing Services dropped from 53 in 2018/19 to 39 in 2019/20 with a small drop in the overall percentage of formal corporate complaints. The level of complaints is reducing as a direct result of the training, support and advice provided to staff, including a joined up consistent approach to service delivery. From October 2019 the Environmental Health remit was moved from the former Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships service to Housing Services.

Planning

- 3.11 Complaints about Planning dropped from 37 in 2018/19 to 30 in 2019/20. The Planning department has updated its enforcement policy and templates to better set expectations of timeframes for investigations and what we can and can't investigate. Determination of applications is higher, and this has reduced complaints with regards applications

Communities

3.12 The Communities service encompasses a number of front-facing services which, by their nature, receive quite a large volume of service requests. Of these service requests a relatively small proportion can become formal complaints. The statutory nature of some of these services can result in complaints because the decisions may not meet with service users' expectations or ambitions, but they will be taken in accordance with the adopted service delivery plans and policies.

Property Services

3.13 Property Services received two complaints in 2019/20 which is the same as was received in 2018/19.

Finance

3.14 The Finance service received a single complaint, which was against Risk and Insurance and was not upheld.

Communications and Marketing

3.15 Following an unusual jump to 13 complaints in 2018/19 the Communications and Marketing service area received no complaints in 2019/20.

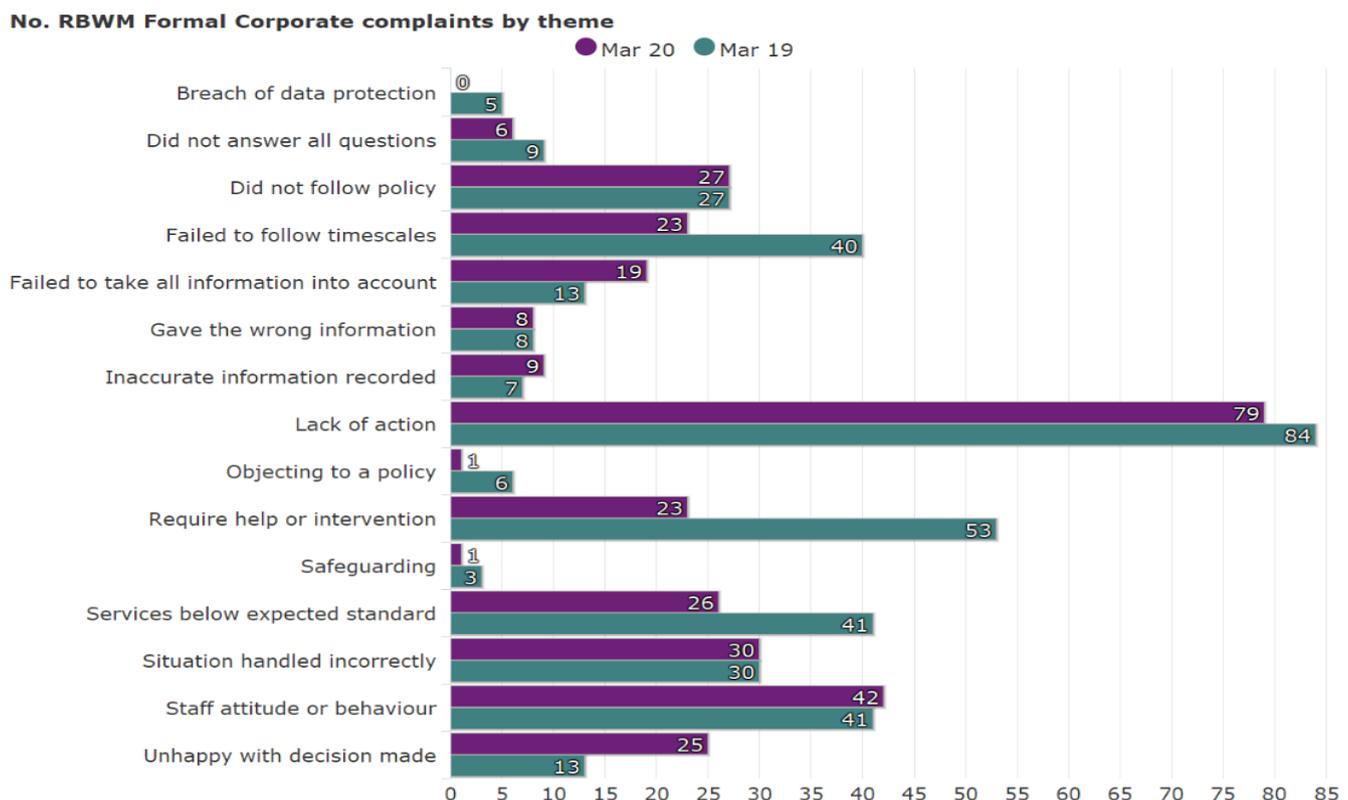
HR, Corporate Projects and IT

3.16 HR, Corporate Projects and IT received a single complaint about application of the complaints policy and procedure which was upheld.

Themes

3.17 Themes of complaints are in the main self-selected by the person making a complaint and not all complaints fit neatly into a single category. Figure 10 shows a comparison of the volume of Formal Corporate complaints received by theme in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

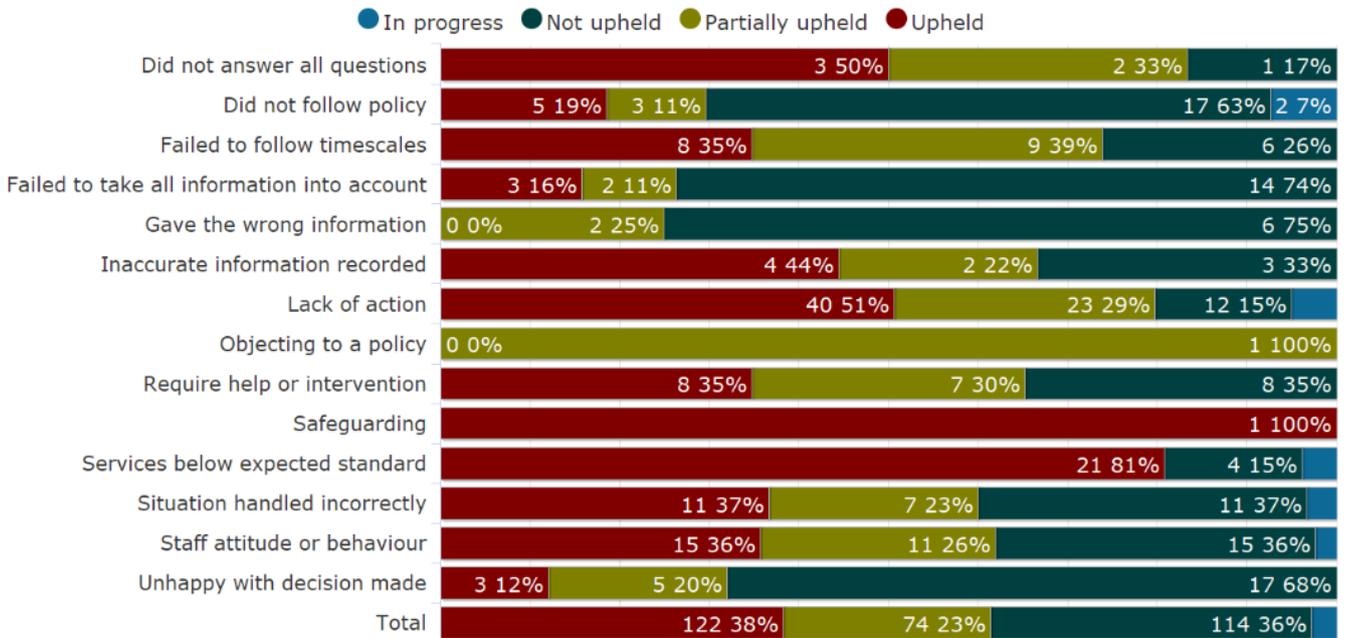
Figure 10: No. complaints received by theme (Formal Corporate)



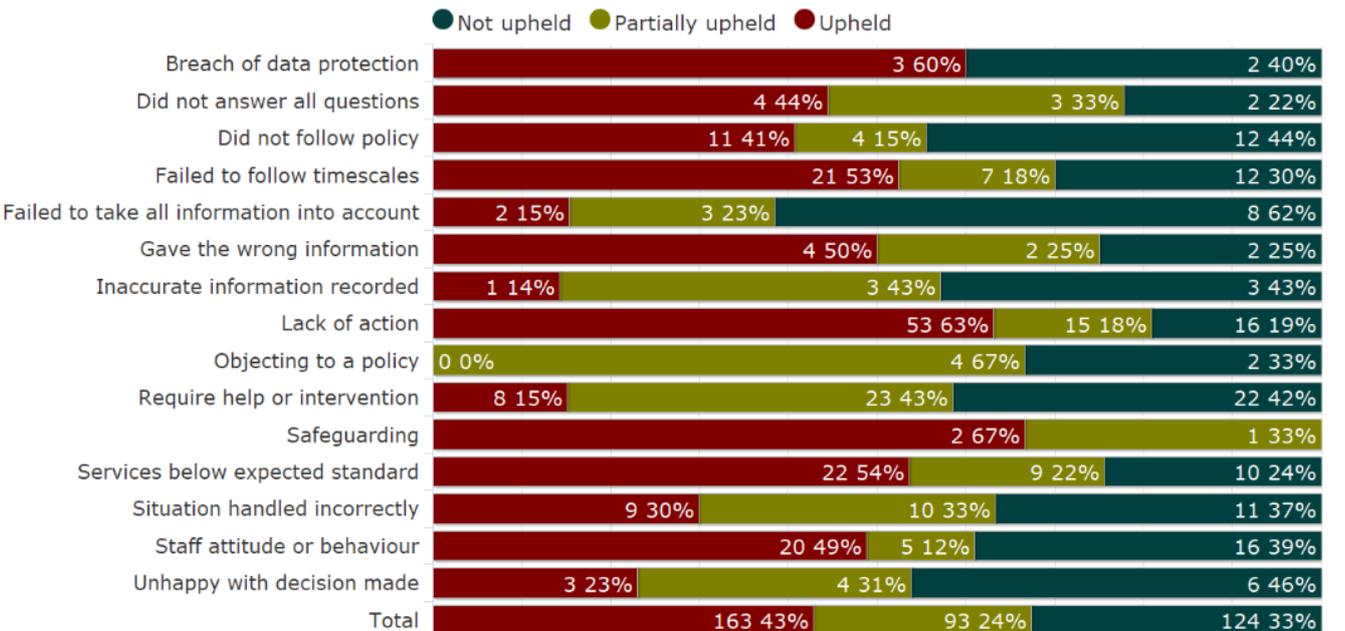
3.18 Figure 11 shows a breakdown of Formal Corporate complaints by theme and outcome. Note that in 2019/20 there were 9 complaints where a decision had not been reached at the time of data extraction for the preparation of this report.

Figure 11: Breakdown of Formal Corporate complaints by theme and outcome

2019/20 Number and percentage of RBWM Formal Corporate complaints by theme and outcome



2018/19 Number and percentage of RBWM Formal Corporate complaints by theme and outcome



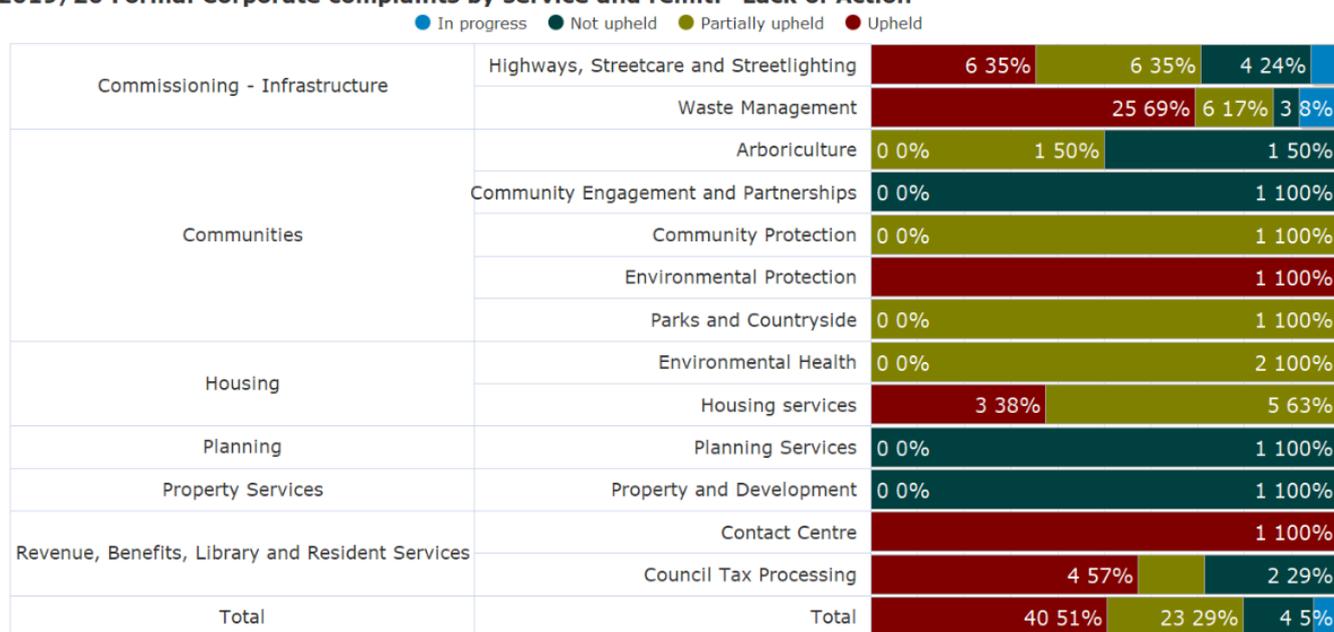
3.19 The number of complaints with a mainly self-selected theme of 'lack of action' remains the highest across the council. For complaints under the formal corporate complaints process this theme made up 79 of the complaints received, which is almost twice the next highest theme of 'attitude or behaviour of staff'. It is however worth noting that the

percentage of complaints taken under this theme that were upheld has reduced from 63% in 2018/19 to 51% in 2019/20. See figure 12, 3.22 for further information.

- 3.20 Complaints with a theme of ‘services below expected standard’ that were upheld have risen from 54% in 2018/29 to 81% in 2019/20. The majority of the 2019/20 complaints (72%) were in the Commissioning Infrastructure services. This compares to 47% in 2018/19.
- 3.21 Figure 12 shows the volume and percentage of Formal Corporate complaints relating to “lack of action” across Services. This information will be included in the complaints quarterly updates to Heads of Service.

Figure 12: Volume and percentage of Formal Corporate complaints relating to “lack of action” across all services

2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit: "Lack of Action"



- 3.22 Commissioning Infrastructure service area received the highest number of complaints logged against this theme (53). Within this, the majority (36) were logged against Waste Management. Of these, 25 were upheld, six were partially upheld and two were not upheld. Three had not yet had a response and outcome when the report was run. None of these complaints were escalated to stage 2.
- 3.23 This level of complaints to this service area is likely to be due to the frequency, volume and immediate nature of the service and also reflects the number of complaints that relate to operational requests. Once the operational matters such as missed bins have been resolved complaints are not escalated further as reflected in the fact that none of the 36 were taken to Stage 2.

Timescales

- 3.24 Figure 13 shows that, overall, 60% of Formal Corporate Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescale in 2019/20, a decrease from 64% in 2018/19. Figure 14 details the number and percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales for each service.

Figure 13: Total Formal Corporate Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale

Total Formal Corporate Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale



Figure 14: Breakdown of Stage 1 Formal Corporate complaints responded to within timescale by service

2019/20 Formal Corporate Stage 1 complaints within timescale

● No ● Yes

Service Area	Sub-Service	Yes	No
Commissioning - Infrastructure	Car Parks Management	19 (95%)	1 (5%)
	Highways, Streetcare and Streetlighting	20 (45%)	24 (55%)
	Waste Management	51 (61%)	32 (39%)
Communities	Arboriculture	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
	Community Engagement and Partnerships	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Community Protection	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Environmental Protection	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
	Leisure	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Parks and Countryside	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
	Risk and Insurance	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Finance	Elections and Electoral Services	4 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Information Governance	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Housing	Environmental Health	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
	Housing services	6 (15%)	33 (85%)
HR, IT and Corporate Projects	Compliments and Complaints	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Planning	Planning Services	11 (37%)	19 (63%)
	Building Control	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Property Services	Property and Development	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
	Business Rates Processing	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Contact Centre	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
	Council Tax Processing	26 (84%)	5 (16%)
	Debt Recovery	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
	Financial Assessment	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	5 (83%)	1 (17%)
	Libraries	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Registrars	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	Total	190 (60%)	129 (40%)

3.25 Timescales for some services that received complaints have declined since 2018-19. For many service areas however, the small number of complaints received means that slight differences can look more significant than they actually are.

Revenues and Benefits

3.26 Revenues and Benefits response rates remained high with 88% of complaints responded to within timescales, maintaining the improvement seen in 2018/19.

Library and Resident Services

3.27 Library and Resident Services also remained high at 94%. Complaints are prioritised as they are received. All complaints are reviewed by the Library and Resident Services management team to track the robustness and timeliness of complaints and ensure that

any lessons arising are included in training. The reduction in complaints has enabled colleagues within the team to give greater attention to those received so that mistakes are corrected quickly. This good practice is being replicated across some other areas of the council as appropriate.

Communities

- 3.28 For teams in Communities, the total number of complaints received and responded to within timescales was very similar year on year.

Commissioning Infrastructure

- 3.29 Response times in the Commissioning Infrastructure service areas have also continued to improve across all teams with an overall rise from 55% in 2018/19 to 61% in 2019/20. The service has improved processes around the allocation and monitoring of complaints and will continue to seek further improvement in meeting timescales. Highways complaints are often complex and require detailed investigation and resolution. Where this is the case and can be identified early, an extension will be requested.

Housing Services

- 3.30 Housing Services response rates were low at 15%, in 2019/20, which is a decline from around 50% in 2018/19. During 2019/20 there were a number of staffing issues, both in the delivery of services as well as changes in the management of complaint responses within the service, which impacted on SLAs. Improvements initiated in 2019-20 are already showing improvement in 2020-21.
- 3.31 Remedial action was taken by bringing in a part time member of staff to focus on ensuring response times sit within the SLA and that action is taken to implement learning from responses. Complaints are now prioritised when they are received and responded to in a timely manner. Housing services have now adopted a 360-degree approach to complaints, to ensure that the whole team are provided with training where required, services are amended to take into account the learning from the complaint and staff are fully engaged in the new approach.

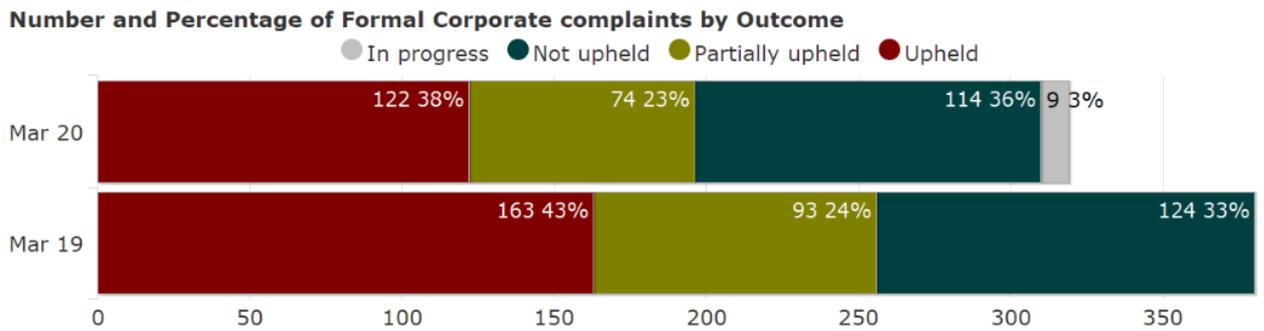
Planning

- 3.32 Planning has seen a decline in complaints completed within timescales following a rise to 51% in 2018/19 down to 37% in 2019/20. The new Head of Service has put in processes including oversight by a senior manager to ensure that complaints are prioritised and responded to more timely and we are already seeing improvements in Quarter 1.
- 3.33 Numbers of complaints and responses within timescales are shared in Heads of Service meetings on a quarterly basis. Weekly email updates of current open complaints continue to be sent to all service areas and dashboards are being built by the Strategy and Performance Team to enable routine monitoring of performance through InPhase.

Outcomes

- 3.34 Figure 15 sets out the overall outcomes reached for all Formal Corporate complaints. Note that 2.8% (9/319) Formal Corporate complaints had not reached a decision at the time of data extraction for the preparation of this report.

Figure 15: Overall outcomes for Formal Corporate complaints



3.35 Figure 16 sets out the outcomes reached for all Formal Corporate complaints broken down by service and remit. Note that 2.8% (9/319) Formal Corporate complaints where a decision had not been reached at the time of data extraction for the preparation of this report.

Figure 16: Outcomes: breakdown by service area

2019/20 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit and outcome

		In progress	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld
Commissioning - Infrastructure	Car Parks Management			6 (30%)	12 (60%)
	Highways, Streetcare and Streetlighting			13 (30%)	17 (39%)
	Waste Management			11 (13%)	52 (63%)
Communities	Arboriculture	1 (20%)	1 (20%)		3 (60%)
	Community Engagement and Partnerships				1 (100%)
	Community Protection			3 (60%)	1 (20%)
	Environmental Protection		1 (25%)		2 (50%)
	Leisure				1 (100%)
	Parks and Countryside			1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Finance	Risk and Insurance				1 (100%)
Governance	Elections and Electoral Services				4 (100%)
	Information Governance				1 (100%)
Housing	Environmental Health	1 (10%)	3 (30%)		6 (60%)
	Housing services			15 (38%)	11 (28%)
HR, IT and Corporate Projects	Compliments and Complaints				1 (100%)
Planning	Planning Services	2 (7%)			24 (80%)
Property Services	Building Control				1 (100%)
	Property and Development				1 (100%)
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Business Rates Processing				1 (100%)
	Contact Centre			3 (25%)	7 (58%)
	Council Tax Processing		6 (19%)		9 (29%)
	Debt Recovery			3 (33%)	6 (67%)
	Financial Assessment			1 (50%)	1 (50%)
	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support			2 (33%)	1 (17%)
	Libraries			1 (33%)	2 (67%)
	Registrars				2 (100%)
		Registrars			
Total	Total			74 (23%)	122 (38%)

3.36 Across corporate services there has been a drop in the percentage of complaints that were fully or partially upheld from 67% in 2018/19 to 61% in 2019/20. The percentage of upheld complaints gives a focus for services to learn from complaints.

Stage 2 complaints

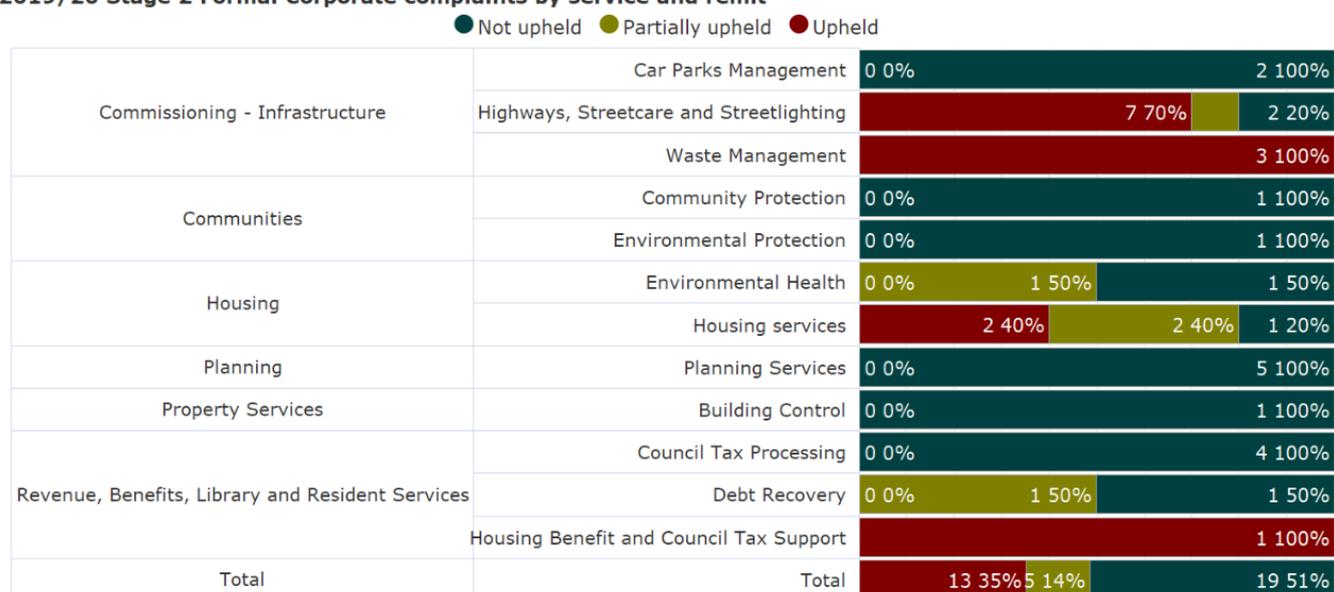
3.37 If a complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving a response at stage 1 of the corporate

complaints process they may request a review by the service director.

- 3.38 The percentage of formal corporate complaints that were escalated to stage 2 rose from 12% in 2018/19 to 15% in 2019/20.
- 3.39 The timescale for response at stage 2 is within 20 working days. 96% of formal corporate complaints that went to stage 2 were answered within timescales. This is very much higher than the response rate in timescales at stage 1. It is not clear why this is, however the lead time for a response is 10 working days longer than given at stage 1. Additionally there are considerably fewer complaints at stage 2 which may mean that these can be prioritised more easily.
- 3.40 The number of upheld and partially upheld Stage 2 complaints is shown in Figure 17. In addition there are two Stage 2 complaints that are in progress.

Figure 17: Stage 2 Formal Corporate complaints by service, remit and outcome

2019/20 Stage 2 Formal Corporate complaints by service and remit



Complaints to the LGSCO

- 3.41 The LGSCO made decisions about 30 complaints and enquiries for corporate services. 9 were decided following detailed enquiries and of these, 3 were upheld and 6 were not upheld. This leaves 16 that were not fully investigated. See appendix 1 for details on 2019/20 decisions.

Learning from complaints

- 3.42 An important part of the complaints process is capturing the learning and embedding good practice across the council. There were four key areas of learning from corporate complaints in 2018-2019 and an update on implementation is:

Environmental Health

- For cases of suspected food poisoning, the environmental health team will revisit procedures in order to reduce the risk of any delays.

Staff are now clearer with customers that information is required before we can take any further actions/investigate/visit the site etc. As a result of this there has been no further complaints made on this subject.

Housing

- All housing staff are receiving ongoing training on service standards and managing expectations to ensure a prompt response to enquiries and requests for updates.
- Customers have access to mobile numbers and email addresses for their case officers.
- Managers continue to closely manage cases.

There have been a number of changes in the housing team since the annual report 2018/19 was written. A review of services in housing is being undertaken; training and processes are being put in place to ensure that contact with customers takes place in a timely manner. It is thought that these improvements will show in next year's annual report.

This is reflected in the drop in the number of complaints to the Housing Service since 2018/19.

Waste

- The website and web form for van permits to be used at household waste and recycling centres has been updated to clarify the acceptable size and type of vehicle.

The website and web form for van permits to be used at household waste and recycling centres has been updated to clarify the acceptable size and type of vehicle.

The form changes were made in Feb 2019. These changes were to add additional vehicle types, and 'dead end' the form if a non-allowed one was picked.

In 2018/19 there were three complaints recorded about size and type of vehicle for van permits. The final complaint was in February 2019. In 2019/20 there were 0no complaints on this subject.

Planning

- The Planning department has updated its enforcement policy and templates to better set expectations of timeframes for investigations and what we can and can't investigate.
- Performance with regards determination of applications is high due to investment and improvements in service delivery. This has reduced complaints with regards applications.

The changes to the enforcement policy and templates along with the investment in resources around planning applications means that the number of planning complaints has been decreasing over the last 3 years:

- 2017/18: 63
- 2018/19: 39
- 2019/20: 30

3.43 Table 3 picks up some of the learning across corporate services during 2019/20.

Table 3: Learning from corporate complaints

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Housing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New measures have been implemented to ensure a triage service is provided to all customers, all customers then provided with accommodation or support within homelessness have full access to their data through a customer portal which is reducing enquiries and complaints
Libraries and Resident Contact	<p>Issuing of Advantage cards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 22nd August 2019, library staff accepted proofs of address from the last 12 months, instead of 3 months as well as valid driving licences. <p>Understanding the Waste processes better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An advisor spent time with Waste to improve the team's understanding. Flow charts and information sessions have also been implemented <p>Improved de-escalation techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different de-escalation techniques were reviewed and assessed and an internal de-escalation process was implemented that made a significant impact on the number of complaints logged. <p>Staff training, coaching and mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One hour on a Wed morning is focused on staff training, coaching, mentoring and team-building. This has had a significant impact on staff morale, confidence and their ability to deal with complex enquiries. <p>Volunteer upskilling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where complaints have involved volunteers, volunteer awareness has been improved to ensure customers can expect a basic level of knowledge from volunteers.
Revenues and Benefits	<p>Clarity of letters to customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff advised that letters with standard text to be edited to ensure they are clear about what they are asking and the information to be provided.
Permitting and licensing	<p>Maintenance of trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website and the way reports are raised/received has been reviewed • Procedures in place to ensure queries received in error are promptly assigned to the right department.

Complaint area	Actions and learning
Highways	<p>Bus timetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of the council's reporting system to ensure that all reports are received and dealt with promptly.
Environmental Health	<p>Skin piercing licenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved on our website, to detail the steps including associated timescales that the Council needs to undertake to be able to issue a licence, Staff procedures updated to ensure that timescales are set for each stage of the process to ensure that customers are provided with an efficient and effective service.
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Panel	<p>DFG panel processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information on our website, to detail the steps including associated timescales that the Council needs to undertake to be able to issue a licence, Staff procedures updated to ensure that timescales are set for each stage of the process to ensure that customers are provided with an efficient and effective service.

Compliments

3.44 Corporate services received 356 compliments during 2019/20, a decrease on the 452 received in 2018/19. A full comparison of compliments by service and remit across 2018/19 and 2019/20 is not possible due to the changes to the organisation structure in October 2019. Figures 18 and 19 show the volume of compliments received by service and remit based on the organisation structure at the end of 2019/20.

Figure 18: Compliments by service

2019/20 Compliments received (RBWM services)

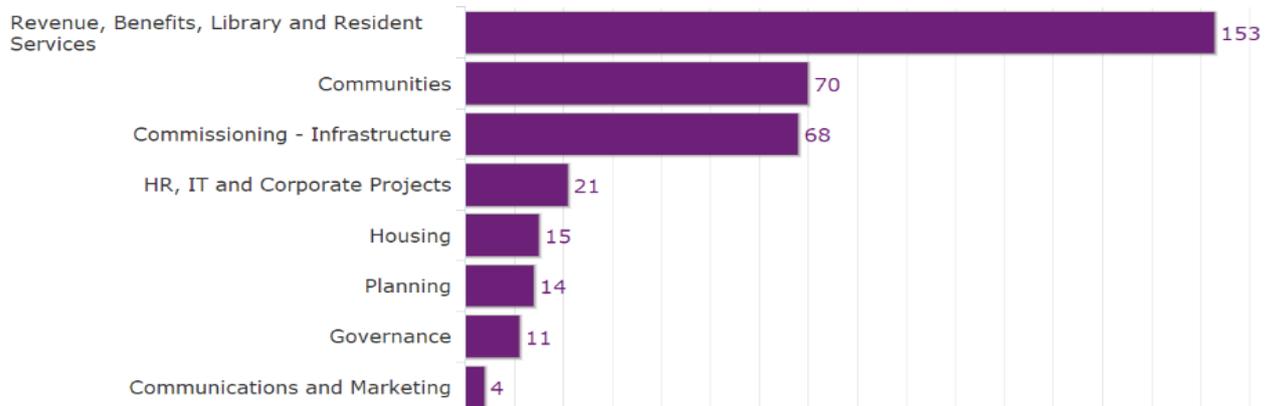


Figure 19: Compliments by service and remit

2019/20 Compliments received (RBWM services)

Commissioning - Infrastructure	Car Parks Management	3
	Highways, Streetcare and Streetlighting	41
	Waste Management	24
Communications and Marketing	Communications and Marketing	3
	Digital Services	1
	Arboriculture	3
Communities	Community Engagement and Partnerships	1
	Community Protection	52
	Parks and Countryside	10
	Trading Standards & Licensing	4
Governance	Civic and Mayoral Office	1
	Democratic Services	7
	Elections and Electoral Services	2
	Information Governance	1
Housing	Environmental Health	2
	Environmental Protection	8
	Housing services	5
HR, IT and Corporate Projects	Compliments and Complaints	7
	Corporate Projects	4
	HR Employee Relations	3
	HR People Services	5
	IT Support Services	2
Planning	Planning services	14
	Business Rates Processing	3
Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	Contact Centre	24
	Council Tax Processing	23
	Debt Recovery	7
	Deputy & Appointee	2
	Financial Assessment	5
	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	7
	Libraries	81
	Registrars	1

Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services

3.45 Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services received 42.9% (153/356) of all compliments for corporate services in 2019/20. Advisors are supported to exceed rather than meet the expectation of the customer whenever possible which results in high levels of compliments being received

Communities

3.46 The Communities service received 19.7% (70/356) of all compliments for corporate services in 2019/20, and 74.3% of these compliments were for the Community Protection team. This shows the very positive support for the Community Wardens who deal with diverse issues in often difficult circumstances.

Commissioning Infrastructure

3.47 The Commissioning Infrastructure service received 19.1% (68/356) of all compliments for corporate services in 2019/20. Highways, streetcare and streetlighting particularly stands out with 60.3% (41/68) of all compliments to Commissioning-Infrastructure. These compliments reflect the helpful approach officers demonstrate with residents, and the support of service-providers to resolve enquiries.

3.48 Table 4 outlines some 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 4: Examples of compliments received

Service	Compliment received
Parks and Countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for always keeping the parks and hanging baskets around Windsor looking so lovely. It really makes Windsor look wonderful and makes us happy much appreciated.
Arboriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for superb planting as your work and communication with the community paid off. Many years ago you replaced some dangerous leylandii trees with a beautiful maple style tree which comes into its own at this time of year. You have delivered Autumn colour to our village. A great illustration to your team of superb planting choice.
Control Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just wanted to let you know of the exemplary work your Control Room Operators have performed over the last couple of days. They have both prevented and helped us detect a number of shopliftings (some of which were high value bulk thefts) and have gone the extra mile to help a member of our team.
Community wardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just wanted to say a massive thank you to all of the team for having me the past two days at RBWM and for giving me the opportunity to see the many different roles that the community safety team perform on a daily basis. It was very useful to see the different roles within community safety, and also how the team work closely with TVP to help keep our communities safe and involved. • Your job literally saves lives, and that is exactly what you did yesterday. You saved my puppy's life or at very least, saved me from spending a small fortune. [...] You arrived super-fast, put me at ease, took control of, what for me was a hopeless situation and not only offered the best solution but actually made it happen. I've always loved our little town but even more so now. We have a special place here and thanks to people like you, who has the vocation and genuinely enjoy what they do, make our town the place it is.
Trading Standards and Licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had you not contacted us we would have continued these payments, not realising that this was a fraudulent transaction, and we are grateful to you for this. Regrettably, as a couple of OAPs, we're not as alert as we used to be!
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident thinks RBWM website is fantastic. Easy to use and everything required is on there to be used.
Customer contact centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have had problems scanning my Advantage Card since the installation of the new machines in the Royal Borough Car Parks in Windsor, in Alma Road and Alexandra Gardens. Last week on two occasions, and on the second in Alexandra Gardens when it was raining. Not only I, but two other residents were experiencing the same. The machine was not recognising our cards. I then called your Customer Services Number and spoke with an adviser in Library and Resident Services. She was more than helpful and immediately

Service	Compliment received
	progressed my issue and emailed me immediately to update me. She has since diligently followed it through.
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very happy customer of yours from Windsor has visited today to leave you a box of chocs. You advised her in Windsor about a council tax valuation query & she was able to resolve the issue because of your expert guidance. Awesome work. Well done.

3.49 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.

4. ADULT SERVICES

Overall adult complaints summary

4.1 In 2019/20 there were 27 complaints about the provision of adult social care services, compared to 19 in 2018/19. This represents 7% of all complaints received by the Council.

Internal process

- 22% of complaints were fully upheld
- 30% of complaints were partially upheld
- 48% of complaints were not upheld
- 56% were responded to within timescales.
- 21 compliments were received.

External process

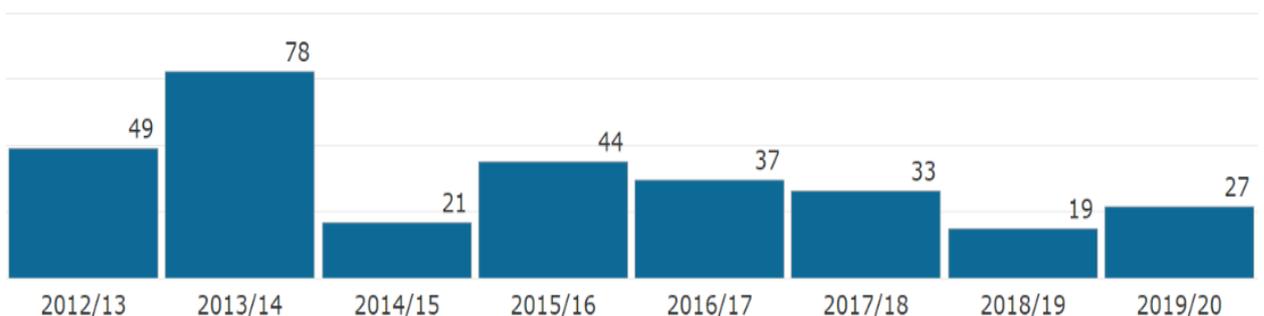
- Six complaints or enquiries were decided by the LGSCO
 - Four were fully investigated.
 - Four were upheld.
 - Zero were not upheld.

Complaints received

4.2 Although there was a rise in the number of complaints received for adult services from 2018/19, Figure 20 shows that over the last eight years there has only been two years where the numbers of complaints were lower. Analysis of the complaints would suggest that the rise related to seeking further explanation on issues that were unclear in relation to assessments or invoicing. The new Director of Statutory Services in Optalis is prioritising resolution of issues at an earlier stage and in particular clearer explanations of what are sometimes complex financial and care issues.

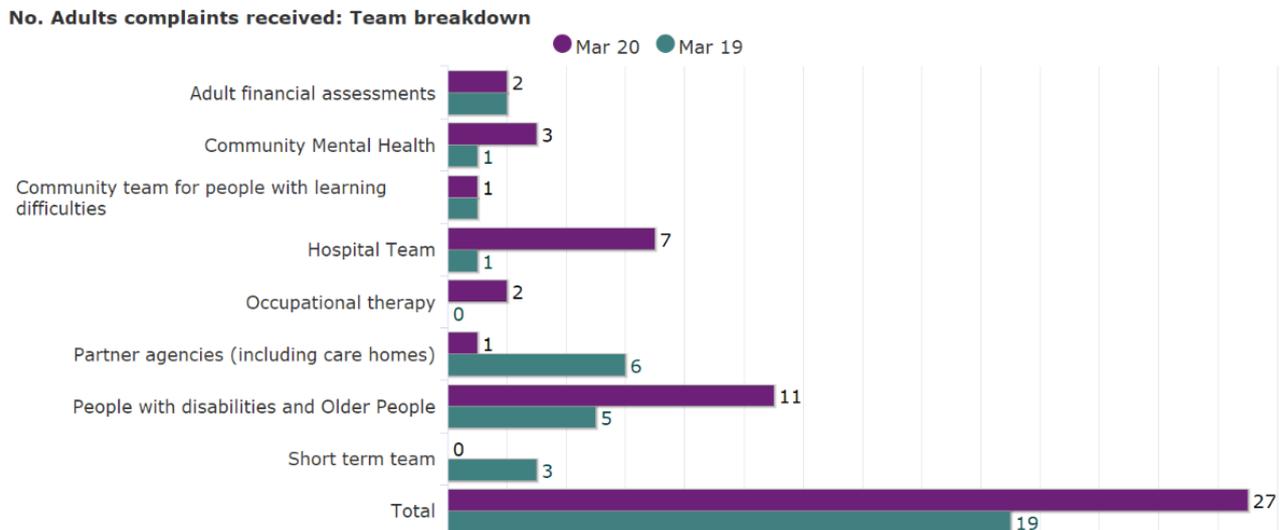
Figure 20: Total number of adult complaints, 2012/13-2019/20

Total volume of complaints (Adults)



4.3 Figure 21 details the volume of stage 1 complaints received by each team.

Figure 21: Volume of Adult complaints received by team



4.4 Most of the complaints to teams remained at a similar number to 2018/19; however, complaints to the People with Disabilities and Older People’s team increased from five to 11 and complaints to the Hospital team rose from one to seven. Teams provide care and support to the highest number of residents on a day to day basis and it is understandable that they receive the highest numbers of complaints

4.5 It is worth noting that the overall number of complaints for adult social care is very low compared to the number of people that are supported. Whilst the most complaints were dealt with by the People with disabilities and Older people’s team, 11 (41% of all adults complaints), at any one time in the year, 1,400 people are supported by this team.

4.6 A number of the complaints were about the information provided to service users and families in respect of the charging process. A review of how this information is provided will be undertaken in 2020/21 to ensure the process is more understandable and effective.

4.7 The number of complaints received by the council relating to external care providers (domiciliary care providers and care homes) has fallen from six to one or 32% to 4% of all adult complaints and is low compared to the number of people being provided with ongoing support- domiciliary providers deliver over 3,500 hours of care per week to 350 people in the community.

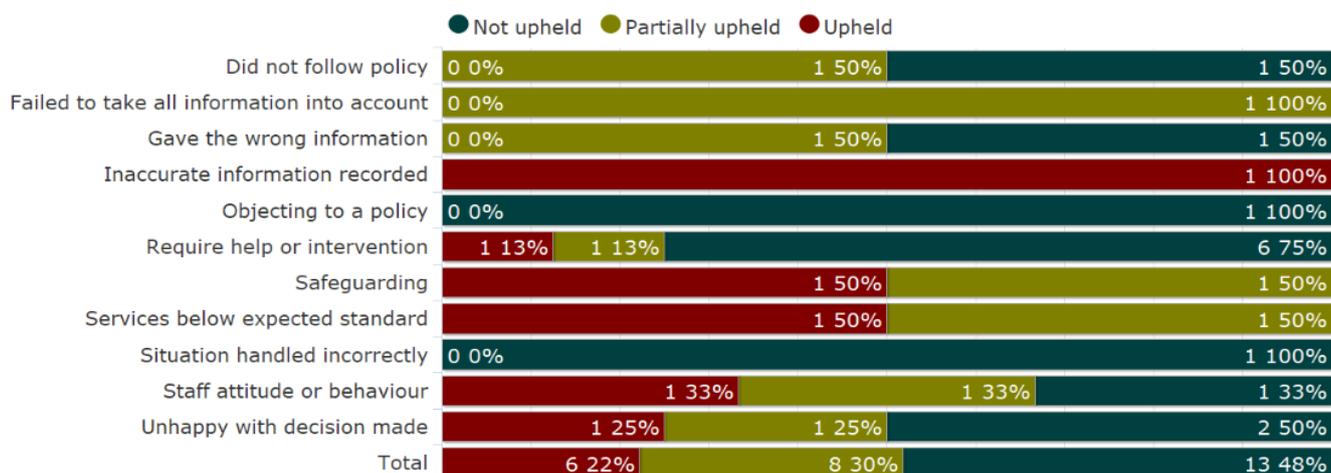
4.8 All complaints received relating to these external providers are managed through the contract monitoring process. Over the last year, the council and Optalis have worked in close and regular collaboration with the main providers, looking at their care practice and working with them to facilitate improvements in the management and delivery of their care services. Any issues or concerns arising from care delivered in the community are openly discussed between the provider and the council, or the provider and the person receiving the care service, so that improvements and changes can be made and agreed informally, wherever possible, without recourse to the complaints process.

Themes and outcomes

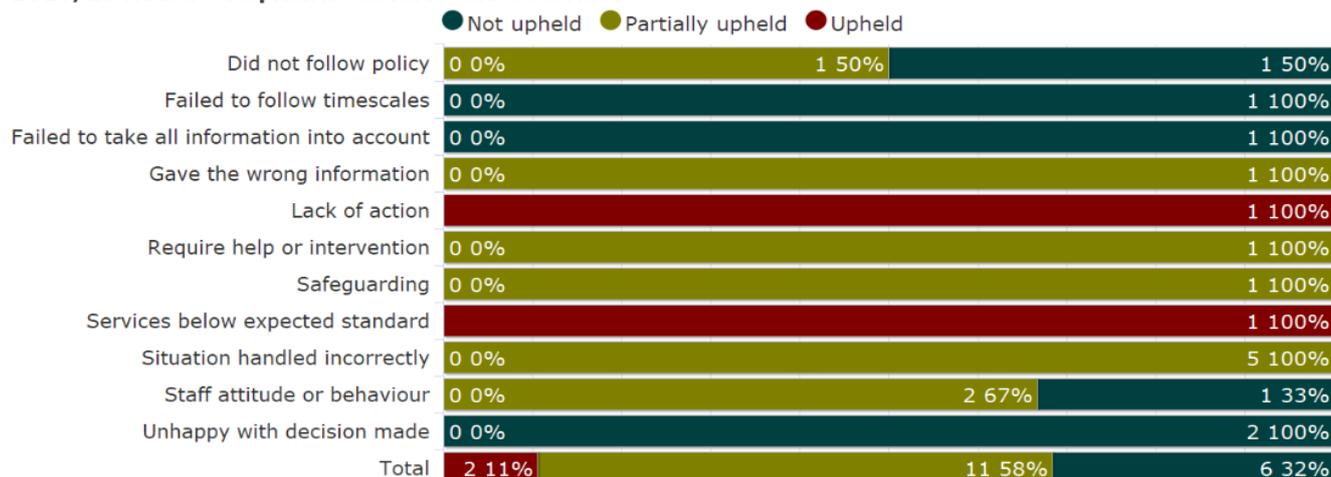
- 4.9 Figure 22 details the volume and percentage of complaints received to the Adults complaints process with a breakdown of both theme and outcome for both 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Figure 22: Breakdown of Adults complaints by theme and outcome

2019/20 Adults Complaints: Themes and Outcomes



2018/19 Adults Complaints: Themes and Outcomes



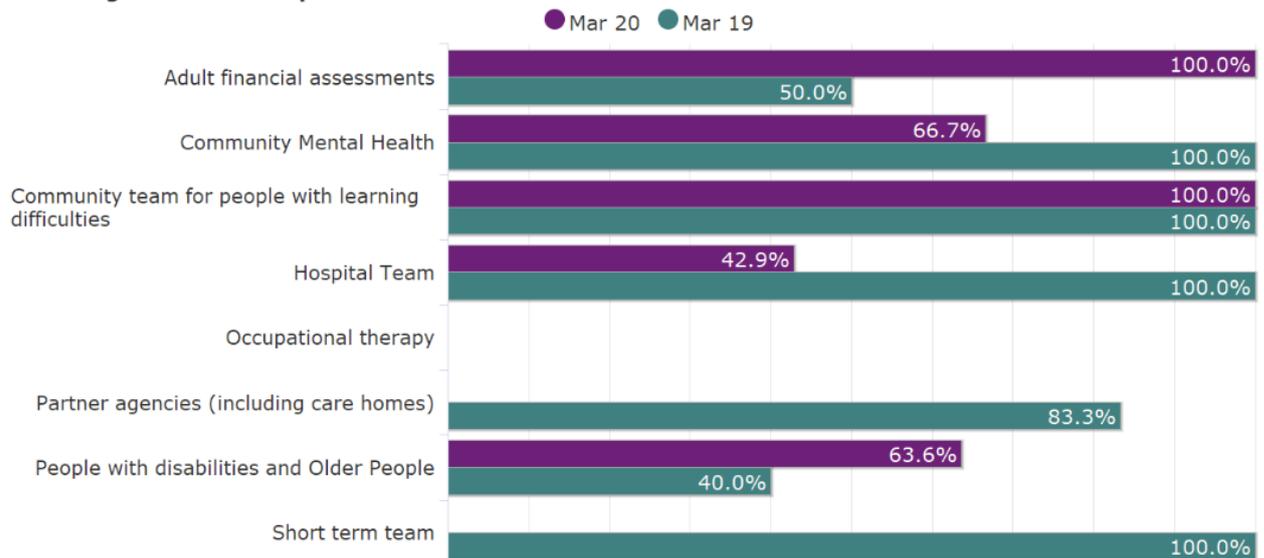
- 4.10 The highest number of complaints received were recorded under the theme of 'require help or intervention'. This is double the next highest theme. Most of the complaints in this category did not actively request a complaint; many were requesting an explanation of some issue that was not understood, for example invoicing. The need for clearer information and explanation has already been identified as a priority for 2020/21. In addition, work will be undertaken with the complaints team to refine the categories for complaints to better identify emerging themes that need addressing.

Timescales

- 4.11 Although there is no specified limit for statutory complaints about adult social care, the council's target for dealing with adult services complaints is 10 to 20 working days. This timescale may be increased for complaints that are particularly complicated. Of the 27 complaints received during 2019/20, 56% (15) were responded to within agreed timescales. This is a drop from 2018/19 where 74% were responded to within timescales. Figure 23 provides a breakdown of responses within timescale for each team.

Figure 23: Percentage of complaints dealt with within timescale

Percentage of Adults complaints within timescale: Team breakdown

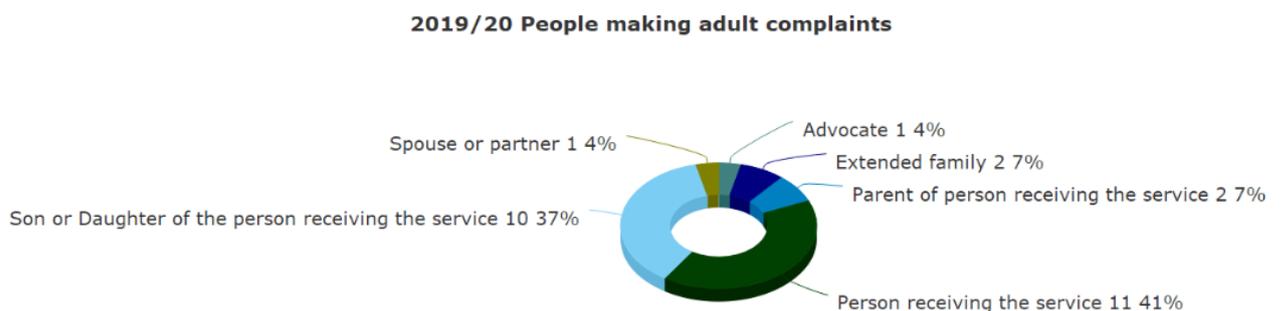


4.12 The response times in 2019/20 were longer due to staffing capacity pressures and the complexity of some of the complaints. Complaints in the hospital team primarily involved charging and finance matters which were complex to resolve. The service will review the process for managing these complaints and how the timescales are set to ensure that performance is more optimal going forward. It is of note that the percentage of complaints fully or partially upheld reduced from 2018/19 which indicates that more initial decisions were correct.

Complainants

4.13 The majority of complaints made in 2019/20 were by the person receiving a service, followed by the son or daughter of the person receiving the service. Figure 24 provides a full breakdown.

Figure 24: People making adult complaints



Complaints and enquiries to the LGSCO

4.14 The LGSCO made decisions about nine complaints and enquiries for adult services that were referred to them following complaints that were made about services provided by or on behalf of adult social care. Four were decided following detailed enquiries and of these, four were upheld. The remaining five were closed without a full investigation. See appendix 1 for details on decisions.

4.15 This is half the number of decisions about adult service that were decided by the LGSCO in 2018/19.

4.16 It is pleasing that the number of LGSCO decisions has reduced since 2018/19 largely due to more robust local investigation. However, in four cases, the Ombudsman upheld the complaint, which indicates a need to keep our approach under review.

Learning from complaints

4.17 There were four key areas of learning from complaints in 2018/19 and an update on implementation is:

Day centre:

- The service has been asked to re-look at their procedure when customers go into hospital, to ensure that the process is clear for all staff to follow, with a simple check list in place.

Following a complaint, the service implemented a simple check list to ensure that staff were clear on the procedure to be followed when a service user went into hospital. The checklist is fully embedded and forms part of the induction training for new staff. There have been no further complaints on this subject.

Domiciliary care:

- The council has implemented an action plan to improve the service from a care agency. This includes monitoring the care agency’s daily records for three months to ensure it is delivering the service expected

Further intensive support measures were introduced, including monthly meetings with the care agency, facilitated by the council and Optalis; and quality monitoring across all aspects of the care agency’s practice. Since then, the service has significantly improved. Sample monitoring of daily records forms part of the ongoing contract monitoring for all providers. Complaints regarding domiciliary care have dropped from 32% to 4% of all adult complaints.

People with Disabilities and Older People’s Team and General training:

- Training was successfully delivered around duties under the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and refresher training is built into the ongoing training and development programme.
- There is ongoing training with staff to ensure that any issues are resolved at the earliest point to prevent complaints arising.

Mental capacity is discussed in supervisions, team meetings and on a case by case basis. Staff are supported by seniors and service managers. The team are also in the process of securing new training for all new staff. Refresher training will also be available.

Evidence from 2019/20 complaints suggests that more work is required and this is a priority for the new Director of Statutory Services in Optalis

4.18 Table 5 picks up some of the learning across adult services during 2019/20.

Table 5: Learning from adult complaints during 2019-20

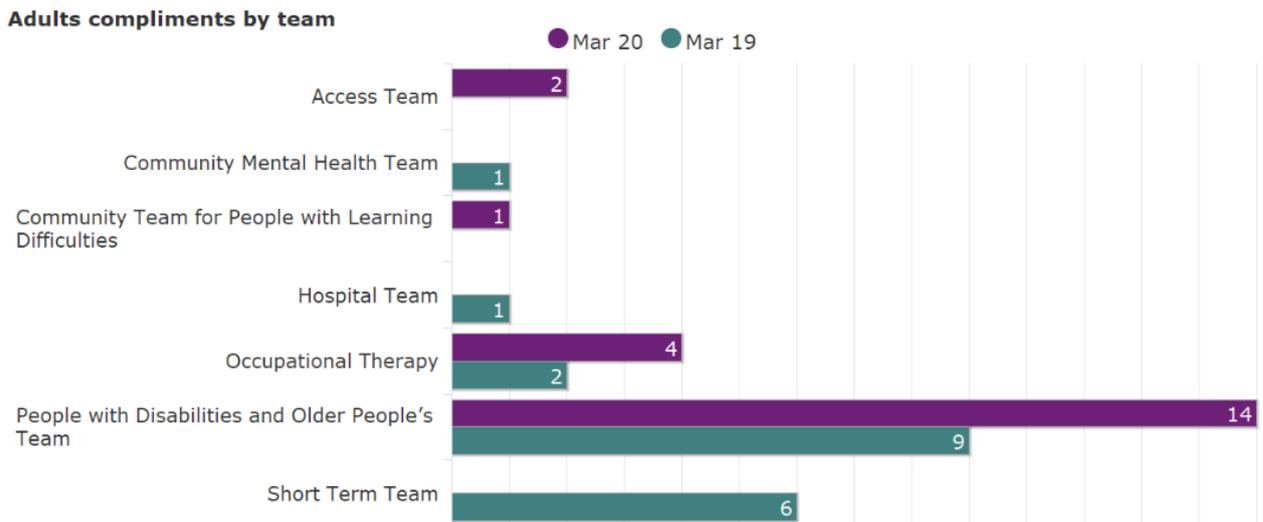
Complaint area	Actions and learning
Day centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service has implemented a simple check list, which includes ‘can the service be safely manned

Complaint area	Actions and learning
	by reducing staffing levels to escort a customer'.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have introduced a Quality Assurance Panel that assures senior management that the Every Step Together (EST) approach is fully understood and provides checks that carers and relatives are included at all stages and in all aspects of a person's life.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the Strength Based Approach: Optalis QA team visit providers on a regular basis, they check recording when visiting the home in order to ensure that the home is compliant with CQC requirements and those required by RBWM commissioners of service. Should they feel that communication of this nature is lacking in any way then they will inform the responsible manager.
Too many complaints are exceeding agreed timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service will introduce a revised quality assurance and process monitoring framework to ensure that complaints are responded to in a timely way by September 2020
Services provided by an external domiciliary care agency that had been sub-contracted to another provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council now commissions all care directly, it does not allow providers to subcontract and all providers are monitored directly
Some complaints indicate potential variability in information provision to services users and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service will introduce a revised quality assurance and process monitoring framework to ensure that information is provided to services users and families in a clear and consistent manner by September 2020

Compliments

4.19 Adult services received 21 compliments during 2019/20. This is similar to 2018/19 when there were 19 compliments received. Figure 25 shows the breakdown of compliments across adult services.

Figure 25: Compliments by service



- 4.20 As with complaints, the highest number of compliments received were for the people with disabilities and older people's team.
- 4.21 There were 21 compliments in 2019/20, which was similar level to 2018/19. This compares with higher compliment numbers in 2017/18 where 57 compliments were recorded. It is not clear why the number of compliments has fallen; but is possible that they are not being passed to the compliments and complaints team for logging. Reminders to send compliments on is being reiterated in team meetings and it is hoped this will be reflected in next year's annual report.
- 4.22 Table 6 shows examples of compliments received across adult services.

Table 6: Examples of compliments received

Service	Compliment received
Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He commented that RBWM adult social services are "knocking it out of the park". He stated he's had such a speedy and positive experience since walking into the reception on Friday and has felt supported.
PDOPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is more than ok. I cannot express my thanks to you for organizing this. You have been brilliant, and I would appreciate you sharing this email with your Manager. You really are a credit to your organization- thank you.

5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Overall children's complaints summary

- 5.1 In 2019/20 there were 54 children's complaints, 19 of these followed the statutory children's complaints process and 35 followed the formal corporate complaints process. This compares to 38 children's complaints in 2018/19 (28 statutory and 10 corporate).

Internal process

- 19% of complaints were upheld
- 44% of complaints were partially upheld
- 17% of complaints were not upheld
- 56% were responded to within timescales.
- 63 compliments were received

External process

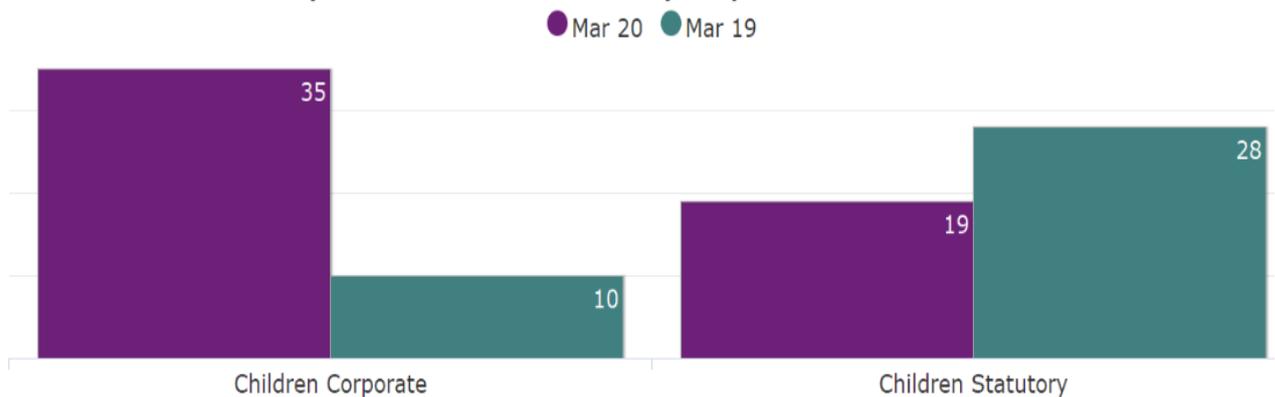
- four complaints or enquiries were decided by the LGSCO.
 - two were fully investigated
 - None were upheld
 - two were not upheld.

Complaints received

- 5.2 Figure 26 provides a breakdown of the total volumes of Children's Statutory and Children's Corporate complaints received in both 2019/20 and 2018/19. There is a change seen in the balance of complaints with a drop in children's statutory complaints (from 28 to 19) and a rise in children's corporate complaints (from 10 to 35).

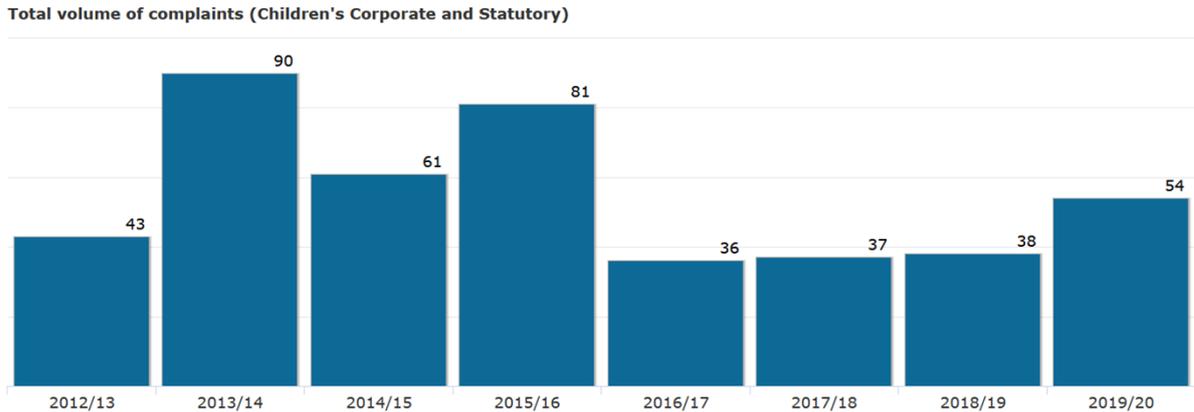
Figure 26: Children Services overview

Volumes of Children's Corporate and Children's Statutory complaints



- 5.3 The number of complaints relating to children's services has varied over the last eight years, peaking at 90 in 2013/14, see Figure 27 for an annual breakdown for the period 2012/20.

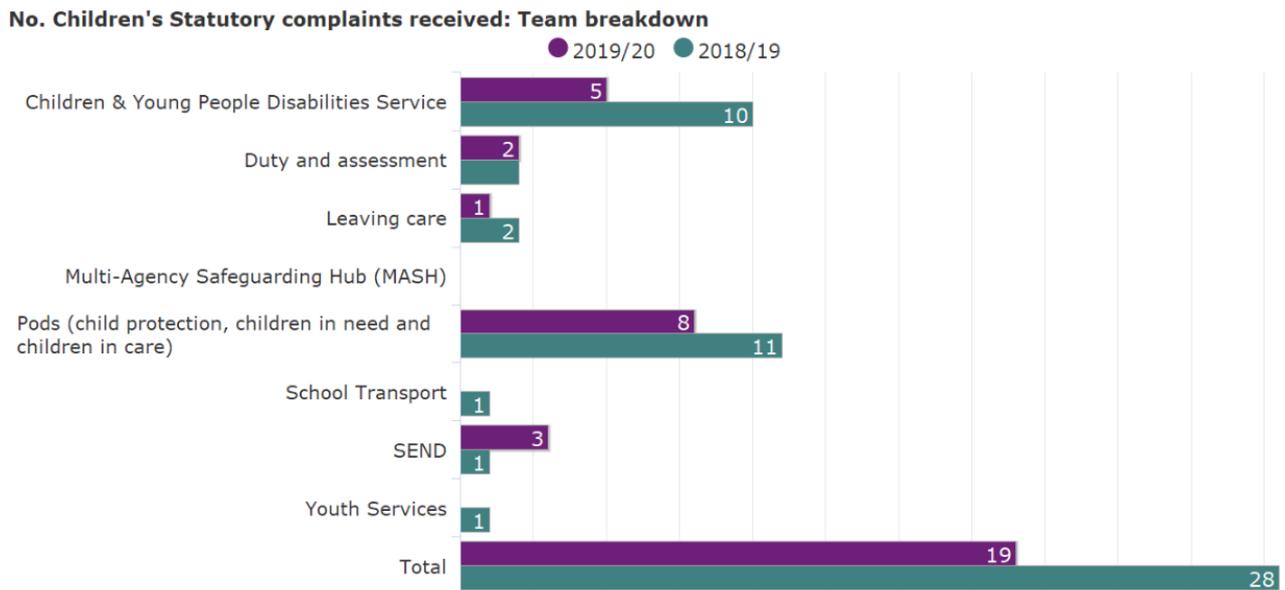
Figure 27: Complaints received comparison 2012/13-2019/20



5.4 The rise is seen mainly in the number of complaints to the SEND team, where the number of complaints rose from 7 to 17 (3 statutory and 14 corporate). There was some churn in staff during 2019/20. The team is more stable now and this should be reflected in next year's annual report.

5.5 Figure 28 provides a breakdown of Children's Statutory complaints by team.

Figure 28: Statutory complaints received in 2019/20 and 2018/19

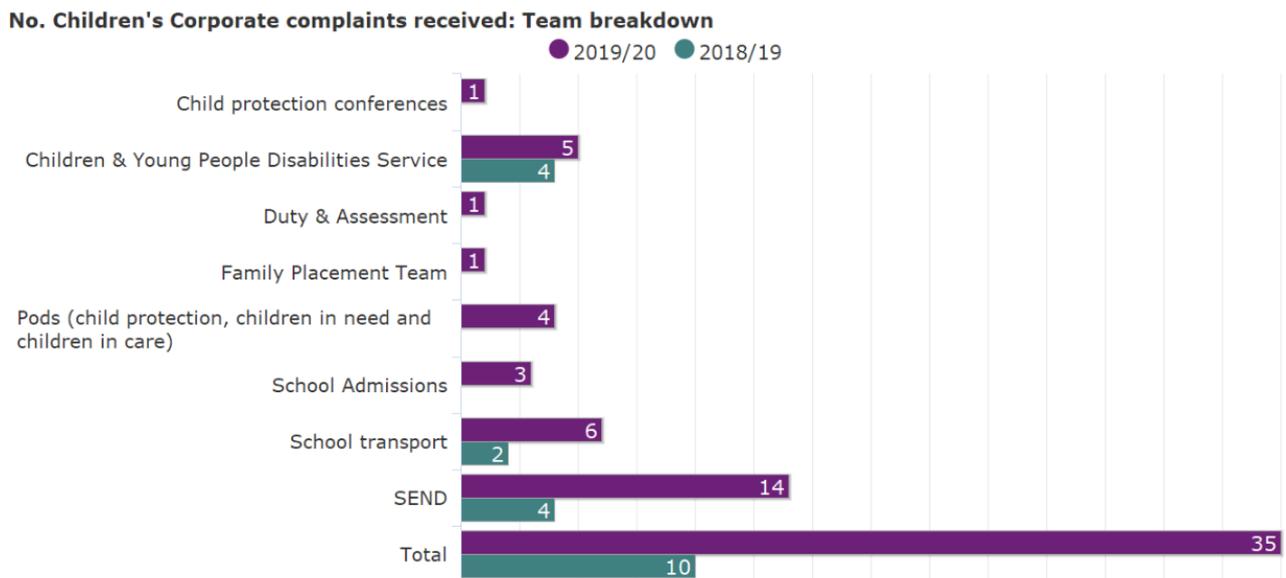


5.6 Statutory complaints are taken where a complaint is made by or on behalf of a child or young person who is receiving a statutory service from children's social care. In 2019/20, the majority of statutory complaints received related to Pods, with slightly fewer in CYPDS. These teams carry the majority of statutory cases.

5.7 During this year there was a high turn-over of staff and this has had an impact on the consistent delivery of some of our services, leading to associated complaints. It also had an impact on how complaints have been responded to, due to the movement of managers. However, we now have a more stable staff group, particularly managers and this in itself should lead to a more consistent delivery of services and response to complaints.

5.8 Figure 29 provides a breakdown of Children’s Corporate complaints by team.

Figure 29: Corporate complaints received in 2019/20 and 2018/19



5.9 Children’s corporate complaints are taken where a complaint is made by or on behalf of a child or young person who does not receive a statutory service from children’s social care, or where the complaint is not on behalf of the child or young person. The majority of children’s corporate complaints received related to the SEND team. This has more than doubled since 2018/19. These varied from complaints about school placements to delays in completing a child or young person’s Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

5.10 There are approximately 1000 children with EHCPs and there has been a significant national growth in the demand for these from schools and parents. The SEN Code of Practice states that we have to take into account the efficient use of public resources when identifying school placements, which can cause disappointment and dissatisfaction for some families when we aren’t able to agree with their school preference. In a year of significant staff turnover there have also occasionally been delays in the management of some cases, which has impacted on the number of complaints received within this service. The service’s staffing is now more settled, and training is in place, so it is anticipated that this will be reflected in the number of complaints reported in next year’s annual report. Where any service deficit has impacted upon the young person we have acknowledged this and apologised to the family.

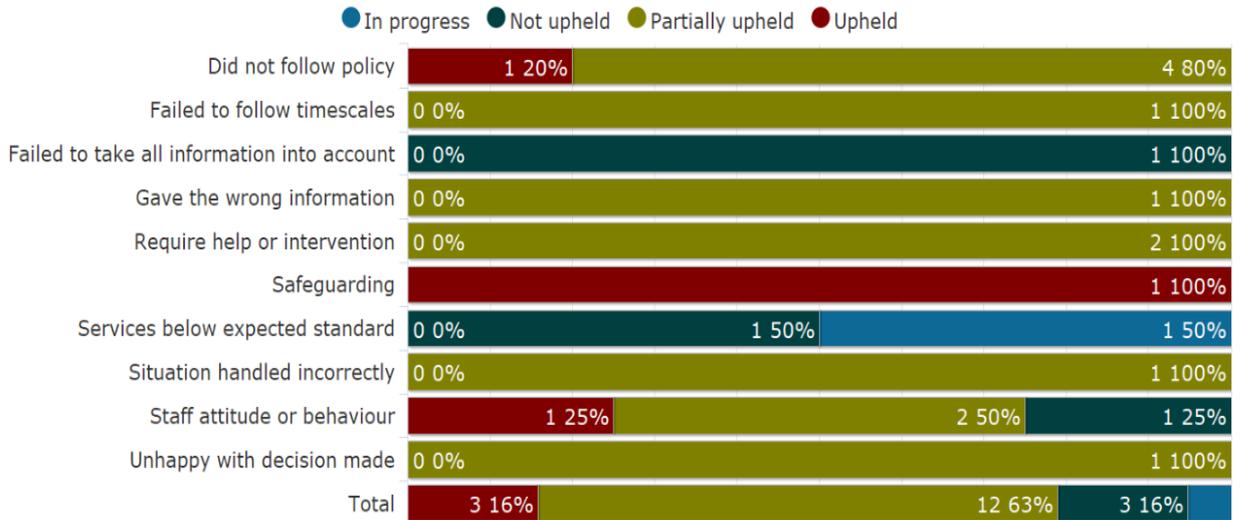
Themes and outcomes

5.11 Figures 30 and 31 set out the themes of children’s statutory and corporate complaints during 2019/20. Themes of complaints are in the main self-selected by the person making a complaint and not all complaints fit neatly into a single category. In 2019/20 there was one children’s corporate complaint relating to staff attitude or behaviour where there was no finding as a result of insufficient evidence. There was one children’s corporate complaint regarding failure to follow timescales which was still in progress at the time of this report’s preparation, and therefore there is no outcome listed. Similarly, there is one children’s statutory complaint relating to services below expected standard that was in progress at the time of this report’s preparation and therefore there is no

outcome listed.

Figure 30: 2019/20 Children’s Statutory complaints by theme and outcome

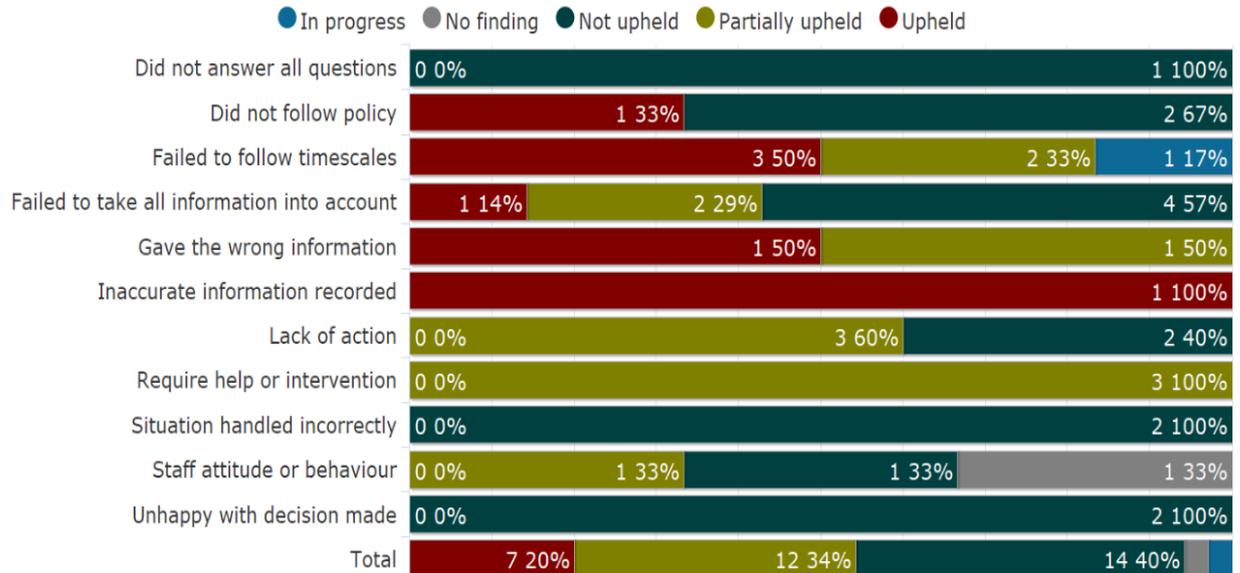
2019/20 Children's Statutory Complaints: Themes and Outcomes



5.12 For children’s statutory complaints, the highest volume of complaints received related to the theme “did not follow policy” (5), followed by “staff attitude or behaviour” (4). Although the numbers are small, they are indicative of many of the complaints received where they may be differences of opinion between families and the teams they are working with. It is also noted that only two of these seven complaints was fully upheld.

Figure 31: 2019/20 Children’s Corporate complaints by theme and outcome

2019/20 Children's Corporate Complaints: Themes and Outcomes



5.13 For children’s corporate complaints, the highest volume of complaints received related to the theme “failed to take all information into account” (7), followed by “failed to follow timescales” (6) and “lack of action” (5). When a parental school preference is not agreed the complaint is often that the service has failed to take all information into account, even though all information has been considered when reaching a view. In other cases the relevant information was not made available at the time of the original

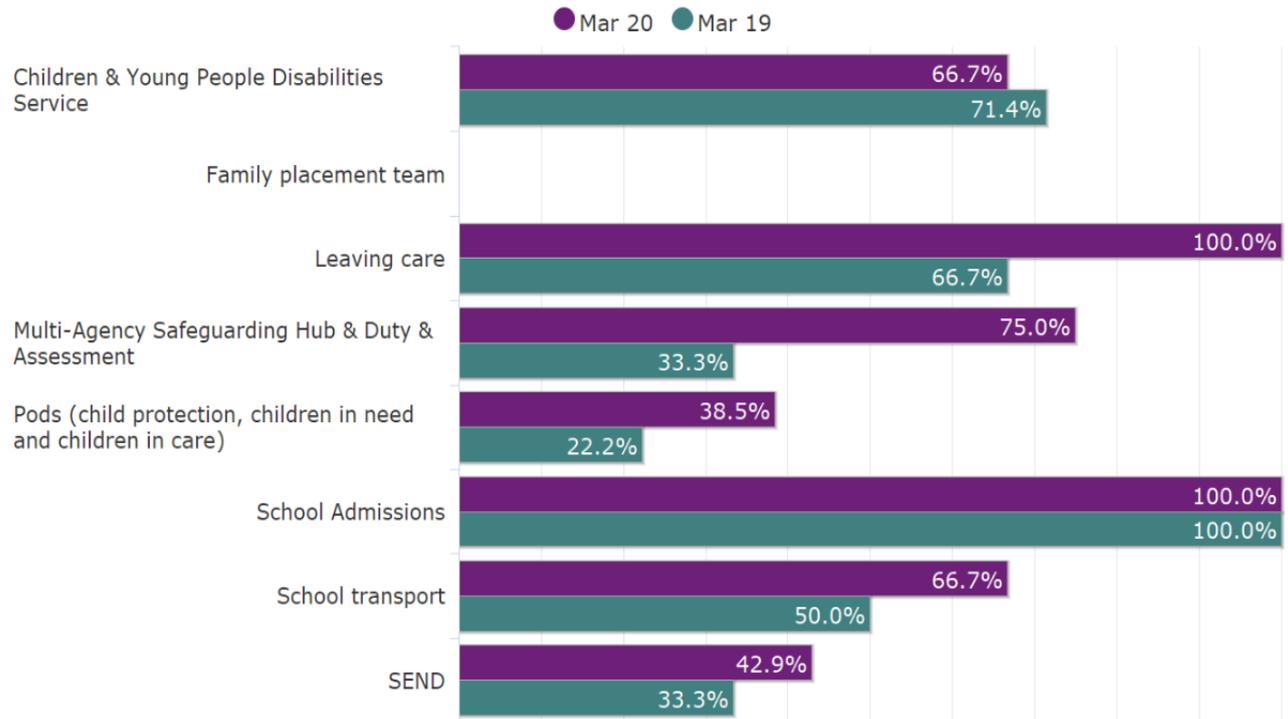
decision.

Timescales

- 5.14 The timescale for dealing with children’s statutory and children’s corporate stage 1 complaints is 10 working days. However, this can be extended to 20 working days for more complex complaints or if additional time is required.
- 5.15 Figure 32 details the number and percentage of complaints responded to within timescales for each service.

Figure 32: Response timescales

Percentage of Children’s complaints within timescale: Team breakdown



- 5.16 Of the 54 complaints that were received during 2019/20, 56% were responded to within timescales, which is an improvement from 2018/19 when 47% were responded to within timescales
- 5.17 Those responding to complaints are advised to give sufficient time to respond to the complaint and to ensure that all elements of each complaint are addressed. Based on this, some complaints have not been upheld, because there is limited evidence to support them. However, complaints will be upheld if there is evidence to demonstrate that actions fell short of our usual high standards
- 5.18 The complaints and compliments team continue to send weekly reports of outstanding complaints to heads of services and directors. They also meet with the managers investigating complaints to clarify the complaint and ensure the scope of this is understood. Staff have provided some reassuring feedback on the relationship with the complaints team and this collaborative relationship has had a good impact on timeliness and quality.

Outcomes

- 5.19 See Figure 33 for the breakdown of children’s statutory complaints by outcome and Figure 34 for the breakdown of children’s corporate complaints by outcome. It should

be noted that at the time of this report's preparation one Children's Statutory complaint was still in progress and so an outcome is not shown here. Similarly, there is one Children's Corporate complaint still in progress and one where there was no finding as a result of insufficient evidence.

Figure 33: Outcome of children's statutory complaints

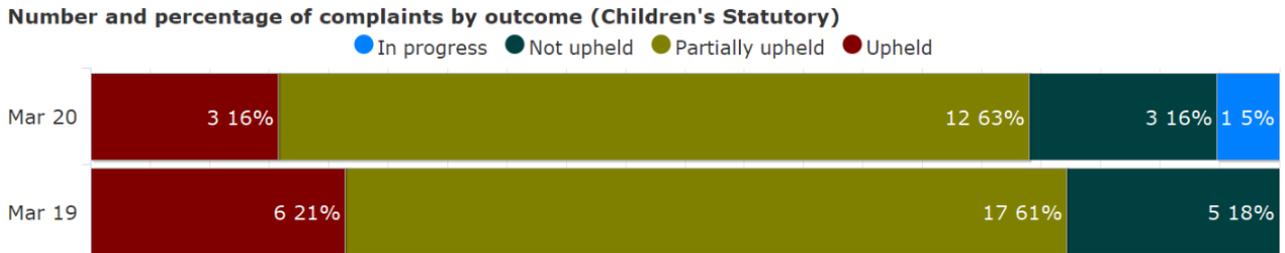
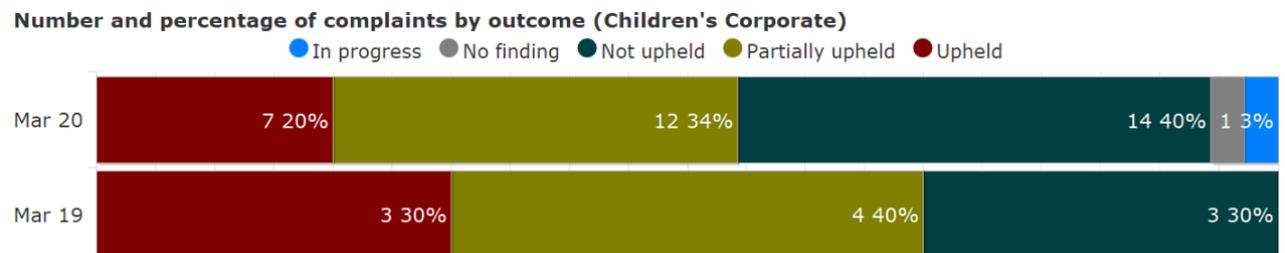


Figure 34: Outcome of children's corporate complaints

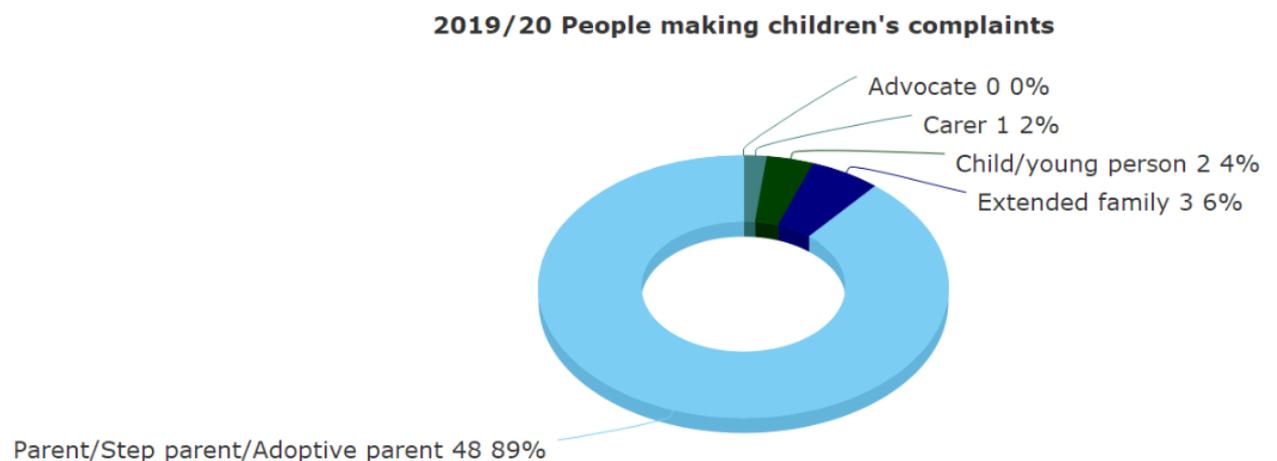


5.20 Achieving for Children as a learning organisation take complaints that have an element of wider learning which are used as examples to improve practice

Complainants

5.21 The vast majority of complaints (89%) made in 2019/20 were by parents. Two formal complaints were made by young people, no complaints were made by advocates. Figure 35 provides a breakdown of complainants.

Figure 35: People making children's complaints



Stage 2 complaints

5.22 Seven complaints were resolved at stage 2 during 2019/20. Two of these were investigated under the statutory children's complaints process; both were partially upheld. Five were investigated under the children's formal corporate complaints

process; two were fully upheld, one was partially upheld and one was not upheld. One statutory complaint remains in progress.

5.23 Zero statutory complaints were resolved at stage 3 in 2019/20.

5.24 Complaints resolved under the formal corporate complaints process are reported within the children's services annual report to give an overview of all complaints about children's services.

Complaints and enquiries to the LGSCO

5.25 The LGSCO made decisions on 10 enquiries regarding complaints for children's services during 2019/20. None of these decisions was upheld, six were referred back for local resolution, one was closed after initial enquiries, one was invalid and two were not upheld. See appendix 1 for details on 2019/20 decisions.

Representations

5.26 Representations are comments by children and young people, normally within a child's review. These can be positive or negative and are acted upon by referring these comments to the social care team working with the child or young person so this can be acted upon and responded to by that team.

5.27 A new electronic feedback system for seeking feedback from children, young people and families is now in place, although it is still early days. This will replace the ad hoc arrangements that previously existed for gathering feedback. One week in every month, those who attend child protection conferences and reviews for children in care are also asked to complete an electronic feedback form. Feedback was also received from our children in care and care Leavers in February 2020 in the form of a questionnaire. The Director of Social Care and Early Help continues to offer to meet with any child or young person who makes a formal complaint.

5.28 If a child or young person makes a complaint they are supported to appropriately use the compliments and complaints service.

Case concerns

5.29 In addition to complaints under the children's services statutory complaints and the formal corporate complaints processes, we have captured information regarding case concerns. Case concerns are recorded when an issue has been raised with the complaints and compliments team but has been dealt with informally by children's services.

5.30 Figures for case concerns do not count towards the overall number of complaints but are useful to help identify issues and help promote timely resolutions. In addition they can show if there is a pattern if a complaint is raised later.

5.31 In 2019/20 there were 11 case concerns recorded. Table 7 shows the split across children's services for case concerns received.

Table 7: Case concerns across children's services 2019/20

Leaving care	Pods	CYPDS	MASH/Duty and Assessment
1	3	3	4

Learning from complaints

5.32 There were four key areas of learning from complaints in 2018-2019 and an update on

implementation is:

Children and young people disability service

- Consideration will always be given to each parent regarding sharing of email content and other information between separated parents without agreement, unless there are immediate safeguarding concerns.
- Further documentation is being developed to clarify the difference between supported contact, rather than supervised contact for young people over 18 years of age.

There have been no further complaints on these issues in 2019-20.

Leaving Care team

- The Local Authority now have a designated 16+/ Care Leavers team which will ensure that young people in care and young asylum seekers are given the right support and work is progressed as quickly as possible.

This is embedded and progressing to 15+ which will support even better and earlier focus for young people in care. Although small numbers, complaints against the 15+/Care Leavers team have dropped from two in 2018/19 to one in 2019/20.

Pods

- Any Child in Need meetings or similar is now chaired by a Manager.
- Within Team Meetings we have discussed with the managers and staff the importance of agreed actions being followed up within timescales, alongside realistic timescales being initially set.

CiN Meetings were discussed at a huddle and it was agreed that ATM's/TM's will chair the first CiN Meeting and the midway review CiN meeting. The number of statutory complaints to children's services fell in 2019-20.

General

- Actions from responses are now being captured. Meetings are being put in place with the complaints team in order to ensure that all learning is captured and acted upon.
- Actions and recommendations have been raised with teams for updating as learnings from complaints.

There is now a mechanism for the children's teams to keep the compliments and complaints team updated with regards to actions.

5.33 Table 8 sets out learning from children's complaints

Table 8: Learning from children's complaints

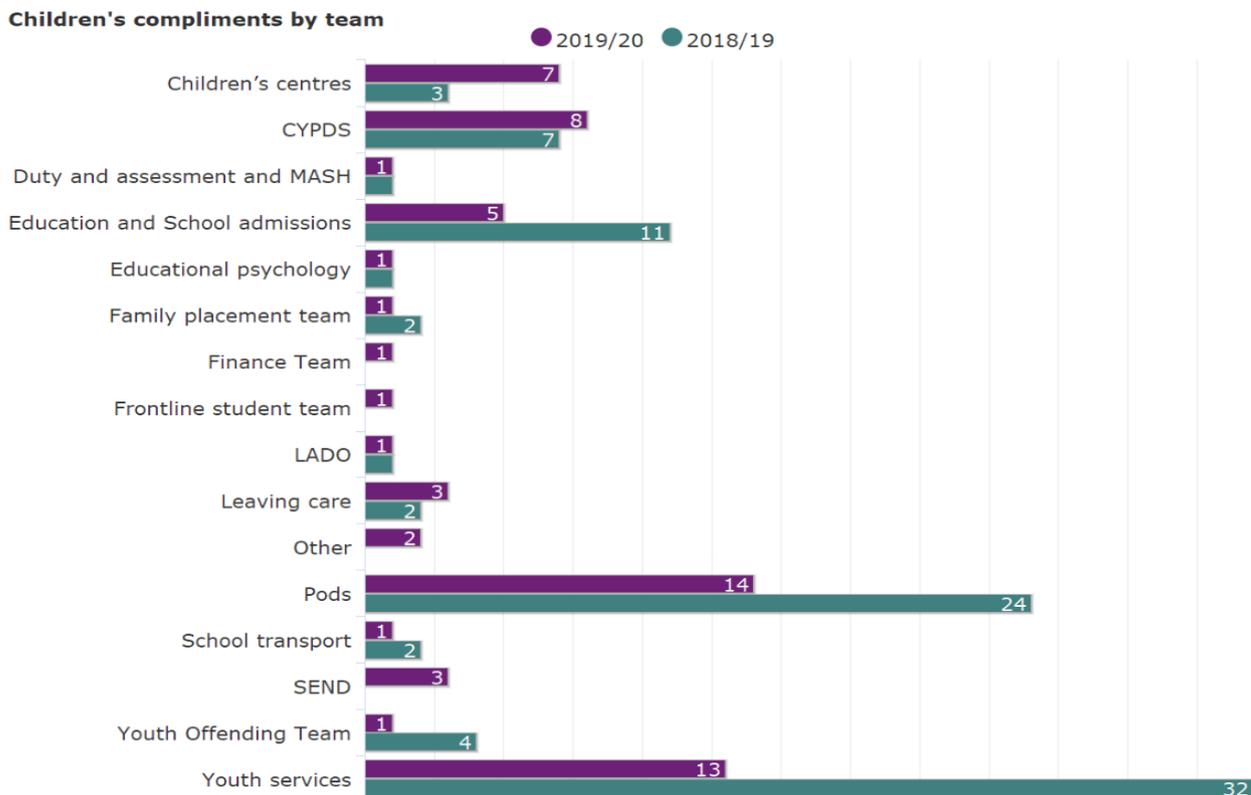
Complaint area	Actions and learning
Children and young people disability service	OT Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organisation has had a discussion with our key partner agencies i.e. Health to try and address the issue that we are facing in recruiting and retaining an Occupational Therapist.
SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All final EHCPs are forwarded to the CYPDS inbox after signing so they can be sent out promptly.• Ensure that we approach a number of potential school

Complaint area	Actions and learning
	<p>placements at the same time rather than on an individual basis to minimise the time taken.</p> <p>Keep parents better informed about the placement search process and the likelihood of schools being able to offer a place so that parents do not spend time visiting schools unnecessarily.</p>
Pods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents are clearly made aware of whether they are expected to supervise contact between their grandchildren and their parents and have a written agreement in place to reflect this. • Revisited the training offered in respect of our duties as part of the transition into adulthood. This included expectations around the reviewing of packages of care and support. • We are exploring how as a service for our Children in Care we can centralise all the Pod arranged contacts through the Contact Service to ensure consistency across the board and have contingency plans, should circumstances change. Our Contact Service supports with all contacts for looked after children that are placed out of area. This will ensure better oversight and communication to ensure contacts can run efficiently. We encourage staff to think more creatively on how we can keep consistency for our children in care.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYPDS staff received further training from School Transport around the transport application process and criteria.
CYPDS	<p>Respite support packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of communications with parents around the internal panel process.

Compliments

5.34 63 compliments were recorded for children's service in 2019/20. This is lower than the 90 compliments recorded in 2018/19. It is not clear why this is, however, teams within the organisation will continue to be encouraged to share compliments they receive with the compliments and complaints team so that they can be logged. Figure 36 provides a breakdown of compliments received by team.

Figure 36: Number of compliments by children’s services teams



5.35 Table 9 shows examples of compliments received across children’s services.

Table 9: Examples of compliments received

Service	Compliment received
Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In December 2018 a review was undertaken and it was decided that our child didn’t need any support from Social Services. The Social Worker offered a referral to a Youth Worker, [...] who contacted us immediately by phone to introduce himself and arrange to meet with our child. He was very accommodating and was able to meet within a week. Our child was very positive after the first meeting and arranged for a follow up session. We are only disappointed that our child couldn’t have been referred to a youth worker many months ago when unable to attend school and would have really benefited from the support.
SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would like to express our Thanx and heartfelt appreciation for the time, Care and genuine accuracy taken over our sons report for submission to the borough for his EHCP. It reads brilliantly and takes into account All the expert reports as well as our thoughts And experiences as his parents, as well as your skill and time spent with him at our home. We could not have asked for More. Thank you ...
Leaving Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't imagine anything greater than catching my dream. I also can't imagine having all these achievements without your help and support. It's been four long years for me waiting for this day to say a huge thank you to you, for all your encouragements,

Service	Compliment received
	guidance, emotional and financial supports. You are the best person out there.
Frontline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We really don't know where to start to say thank you. Your professional caring and understanding manner towards us has ensured we have one very happy little child. You have been such a huge support during tough times. You have constantly been on hand and on the phone. With your help we now have X in a stable environment to face the future ahead. Your guidance is so appreciated. For what you have done, are doing and will continue to do we all thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Appendices

Appendix A: LGSCO Annual Letter 2019-20

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

22 July 2020

By email

Mr Sharkey
Managing Director
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council

Dear Mr Sharkey

Annual Review letter 2020

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the exceptional pressures under which local authorities have been working over recent months, I thought carefully about whether it was still appropriate to send you this annual update. However, now, more than ever, I believe that it is essential that the public experience of local services is at the heart of our thinking. So, I hope that this feedback, which provides unique insight into the lived experience of your Council's services, will be useful as you continue to deal with the current situation and plan for the future.

Complaint statistics

This year, we continue to place our focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have made several changes over recent years to improve the data we capture and report. We focus our statistics on these three key areas:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated. A focus on how often things go wrong, rather than simple volumes of complaints provides a clearer indicator of performance.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault and we monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority - We want to encourage the early resolution of complaints and to credit authorities that have a positive and open approach to

resolving complaints. We recognise cases where an authority has taken steps to put things right before the complaint came to us. The authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

This data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 29 July 2020, and our Review of Local Government Complaints. For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#).

Resources to help you get it right

There are a range of resources available that can support you to place the learning from complaints, about your authority and others, at the heart of your system of corporate governance. [Your council's performance](#) launched last year and puts our data and information about councils in one place. Again, the emphasis is on learning, not numbers. You can find the decisions we have made, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the tool with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

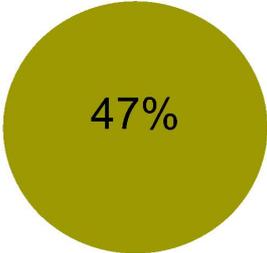
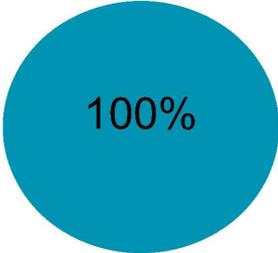
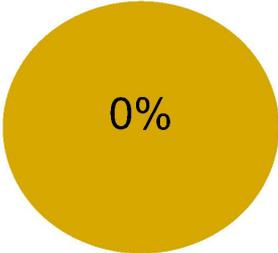
Earlier this year, we held our link officer seminars in London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Attended by 178 delegates from 143 local authorities, we focused on maximising the impact of complaints, making sure the right person is involved with complaints at the right time, and how to overcome common challenges.

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. During the year, we delivered 118 courses, training more than 1,400 people. This is 47 more courses than we delivered last year and included more training to adult social care providers than ever before. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Yours sincerely,



Michael King
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaints upheld		
	<p>47% of complaints we investigated were upheld.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 56% in similar authorities.</p>	<p>7 upheld decisions</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 15 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</p>
Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations		
	<p>In 100% of cases we were satisfied the authority had successfully implemented our recommendations.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 99% in similar authorities.</p>	<p>Statistics are based on a total of 5 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.		
Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority		
	<p>In 0% of upheld cases we found the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 11% in similar authorities.</p>	<p>0 satisfactory remedy decisions</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 15 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</p>

Appendix B: COUNCIL'S COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

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 someone has the right to complain and the complaints process has different stages dependant on the area of service the complaint is about.

Complaints made about the council's services are dealt with under three processes. The formal corporate complaints process for general council activity such as: council tax; housing; highways; communications; democratic services and so on; and the statutory adult and statutory children's processes.

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 and Social Care Ombudsman. The different stages are:

The formal corporate complaints process contains two stages.

- The adult complaints process contains one stage
- The children's complaints process contains three stages.

Although customers can refer complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) at any stage, the LGSCO will not normally investigate until the council have exhausted their complaints processes.

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.

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.

The council's complaints process is managed through one team. This means the team is independent of the two statutory adult and children's services, ensures independence from services, removes the possibility of conflicts of interest and secures impartial challenges.

Quality assurance

Effective complaint management is crucial to allow confidence on the part of complainants to submit complaints in the understanding that the council will take these seriously and respond.

When a complaint is received the complaints and compliments team focus on ensuring:

- The process for investigating the complaint is followed and on time.
- Complaint responses answer the questions asked and are clear and easy to read.
- 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.
- Any actions or recommendations are noted on Jadu and monitored.

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	Statutory No specific timescale but aim to respond within 10 working days. Response from Service Manager or higher.	Statutory 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	Statutory 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	Statutory 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
LGSCO	Can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman			N/A
Alternative appeal process	N/A	N/A	N/A	Customer given timescales for response

Appendix C: NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Formal corporate complaints

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

Adult services

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.

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

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).

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.'

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