

Report Title:	Annual Complaints and Compliments report (People) 2022/23
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Hill, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre & Employment
Meeting and Date:	People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 12 October 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Elizabeth Griffiths, Executive Director of Resources and S151 and Nikki Craig, Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT
Wards affected:	None

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The purpose of the report is to share with People Overview and Scrutiny the annual complaints and compliments report for 2022/23 before it is published on the council's website. Whilst Local Authorities are not required to produce an annual report on complaints relating to corporate activities, and are only required to do so on those submitted about Adults and Children's Services, this report details all compliments and complaints made by or on behalf of customers, that are investigated under the:

- Adults Statutory Complaints process
- Children's Statutory Complaints process
- Children's Corporate Complaints process
- RBWM's Formal Corporate Complaints policy

This report supports the council's corporate Value of 'Empowered to improve: Taking ownership of problems, focusing on outcomes, celebrating success and learning lessons when things don't quite work out, innovating and trying new things'. The Lessons Learned section of the report demonstrates the council's commitment to continually strive to make improvements.

### **1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and agrees:

- i) That the report is published on the council's website.
- ii) That the annual report continues to be produced and presented at future Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

### **2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**Options**

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
That the report is published on the council's website and that the annual report continues to be produced and presented at Overview and Scrutiny panels. <b>This is the recommended option</b>	This is a requirement for Children's and Adults annual complaints information and good practice for other complaints areas.
That the report is not published on the council's website and that the annual report continues to be produced and presented at Overview and Scrutiny panels. <b>This is not the recommended option</b>	Not publishing the annual complaints report on the council's website is against statutory requirements.

- 2.1 The council's complaints and compliments report is compiled annually. Whilst there is a statutory requirement to publish information on Adult and Children's complaints and compliments, and no requirement to publish information on about other services provided by the council, the decision has been taken to include all areas in the annual report. This promotes transparency and provides an opportunity to ensure we maximise the learning opportunities from any outcomes from complaints. The report for April 2022 – March 2023 will be published in October 2023 (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The report contains details of:
- complaints received
  - themes of complaints
  - timeliness of complaint responses
  - outcomes of complaints
  - learning from complaints
  - number of complaints made to and decided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)
  - numbers of compliments received
- 2.3 Table 2 shows the number of complaints received across the council for 2022/23. This is a significant reduction on 2021/22 when 399 complaints were received.

**Table 2: All complaints received**

<b>Process</b>	<b>No. of complaints</b>
Adults Statutory	16
Children's Statutory	11
Children's Corporate	74
RBWM Formal Corporate	168
<b>Overall</b>	<b>269</b>

**Key implication targets**

- 2.4 The 2021/22 key implications targets were met, with the exception of completing complaints within published timescales, which was unmet.

**Complaints to be considered by People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

2.5 Whilst all council complaints are included in Table 2, the complaints to be considered at People Overview and Scrutiny Panel are for Adults and Children's only.

### Complaints highlights (People)

2.6 The overall number of complaints received across the council is shown in Appendix 1, 2.3. This shows an overall decrease from 399 in 2021/22 to 269.

#### Adult Services

- The number of complaints reduced slightly in the last year from 22 in 2021/22 to 16
- The main reasons for complaints was 'Require help / intervention / guidance' and 'You are unhappy with a decision that has been made'
- Overall, 3 LGSCO Adults complaints and enquiries were received
- Responding to complaints within timescales has improved from 32% in 2021/22 to 50%

#### Children's

- The number of complaints have increased in the last year from 75 in 2021/22 to 85
- The main reasons for complaints is 'You are unhappy with a decision that has been made'
- Overall, 10 LGSCO complaints and enquiries for Education and Children's Services were received
- Responding to complaints within timescales has reduced from 69% in 2021/22 to 45% for Children's Statutory and 44% in 2021/22 to 39% for Children's Corporate

### Complaints made to and decisions made by the LGSCO

2.7 Appendix 1, section 2.4 shows the LGSCO received a total of 49 complaints and enquiries about the Council in 2022/23 (Appendix A), a decrease on 2021/22, which was 52 complaints.

2.8 As well as specific feedback given by the Ombudsman on remedies and service improvement recommendations, an overview of Services' learnings from upheld or partially upheld complaints are included in Appendix 1, 5.1 and 8.1.

## 3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 For 2023/24, the intention is to achieve the following improvements and outcomes:

**Table 3: Key Implications**

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Reduced percentage of upheld complaints	60 -100%	59%	50-58%	<75%	31 March 2024
Increased percentage of complaints	0 - 60%	61%	62-75%	>75%	31 March 2024

completed within timescales					
Reduced percentage of complaints to the LGSCO are upheld	70 - 100%	69%	50-68%	<50%	31 March 2024

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in the publishing of the annual report. There are implications for the council in getting things wrong including resources within Services being redirected to complaints handling, remedy payments and reputational damage.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The publishing of children's and adult complaints reports is statutory.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 None

#### **7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

- 7.1 Equalities. There are no implications under the equality act arising from this report.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability. There are no climate change or sustainability implications arising from this report.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no data protections/GDPR implications arising from this report as no personal data has been processed.

#### **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Consultation has happened with CLT in August 2023 and the report will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny panels in September and October 2023.

#### **9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1 The annual report will be published on the Council website in October 2023.

#### **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 This report is supported by 1 appendix:
- Appendix 1 – Annual complaints and compliments report and LGSCO letter

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by LGSCO Annual Letter (see Appendix A). These are the annual summary of statistics on the complaint on complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about the authority for the year ending 31 March 2023. The annual letters and corresponding data tables were published on LGSCO website on 26 July 2023.

## 12. CONSULTATION

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance/ interim S151 Officer	14.08.23	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law & Governance/ Interim Monitoring Officer	14.08.23	18.08.23
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Julian McGovern	Senior Business Partner - Finance	18.08.23	18.08.23
<i>Mandatory: Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>			
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager		
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer		
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	14.08.23	18.08.23
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	14.08.23	18.08.23
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	14.08.23	24.08.23
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	14.08.23	24.08.23
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	14.08.23	18.08.23
Elizabeth Griffiths	Executive Director of Resources	01.09.23	
<i>Assistant Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Rebecca Hatch	Assistant Director of Strategy	04.08.23	
Louise Freeth	Assistant Director of Revenue, Benefits, Library and Resident Services	04.08.23	24.08.23
Nikki Craig	Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT	04.08.23	

Alysse Strachan	Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services	04.08.23	
Adrien Waite	Assistant Director of Planning	04.08.23	24.08.23
Chris Joyce	Assistant Director of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	04.08.23	
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
N/A			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Highways and Transport, Customer Service Centre & Employment	Yes
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## REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	No

Report Author: Vanessa Faulkner, Service Lead – HR People Services, 01628685622



# Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

## Annual Complaints and Compliments Report **Adult and Children's Services** 2022-23

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Every year the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) publishes an Annual complaints and compliments report, which gives an overview of the complaints the Council has received and how they were dealt with. RBWM welcomes customer feedback, as it helps to identify and address problems for customers, and to improve services. This report, covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, details all compliments and complaints made by or on behalf of customers that are investigated under the:
  - Adults Statutory Complaints process
  - Children’s Statutory Complaints process
  - Children’s Corporate Complaints process
  - RBWM’s Formal Corporate Complaints policy
- 1.2. Whilst Local Authorities are required under statute to report complaints submitted on Adults and Children’s services, they are not required to produce an annual report on complaints relating to corporate activities, however the Compliments and Complaints team produces an annual report detailing the volumes of all complaints and compliments, including insights into response rates and the reasons for complaints. This allows the Council to assess how residents experience the Council in its entirety and can inform service improvement.
- 1.3. This report provides an overall summary of the contacts into RBWM, but only provides detailed information relating to the Children’s and Adult’s complaints and compliments. A separate report relating to Formal Corporate complaints has been produced and is available here [Annual Report - 2022-23 Formal Corporate.docx](#)

## 2. Summary of Council-wide activity

- 2.1. In 2022/23 the Council received 1,408 contacts from customers that were initially logged as complaints. This is a 9.5% decrease in contacts to the compliments and complaints team from 2021/22 (1,556) and reflects a continued downward trend since 2020. Contacts that were not progressed as complaints were signposted to an alternative means of resolution, for example a service request or via a specific appeals process, such as parking appeals or statutory tribunals or were withdrawn.
- 2.2. The total volume of complaints progressed through Stage 1 of the complaints process was 269 in 2022/23, a decrease of 32.6% on 2021/22 (399). This decrease could reflect the number enquiries and cases being resolved directly by the Compliments and Complaints team, rather than going to Stage 1. Stage 2 and 3 complaints are escalations of Stage 1 and so are therefore not counted as new complaints.
- 2.3. **Error! Reference source not found.** summarises the total volume of complaints at Stage 1 over the year, that were recorded by the Compliments and Complaints team, these have been broken down by outcome. The table contains a comparison to 2021/22 (in brackets):

**Table 1: 2022/23 Summary of complaints at Stage 1 (2021/22 in brackets)**

Process	No. of complaints	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	No Finding	In progress at the time of reporting	Responded to within timescales
<b>Adults Statutory</b>	16 ↓ (22)	25% ↓ (27%)	19% ↓ (23%)	56% ↑ (45%)	0% ↔ (0%)	0%	50% ↑ (32%)
<b>Children's Statutory</b>	11 ↓ (13)	0% ↔ (0%)	82% ↑ (54%)	18% ↓ (38%)	0% ↔ (0%)	0%	45% ↓ (69%)
<b>Children's Corporate</b>	74 ↑ (62)	22% ↑ (6%)	41% ↓ (47%)	38% ↑ (35%)	0% ↔ (0%)	0%	39% ↓ (44%)
<b>RBWM Formal Corporate</b>	168 ↓ (302)	22% ↓ (27%)	22% ↓ (23%)	42% ↑ (40%)	3% ↑ (0%)	11%	42% ↓ (46%)
<b>Overall</b>	269 ↓ (399)	21% ↓ (23%)	29% ↑ (27%)	41% ↑ (39%)	2% ↑ (0%)	7%	42% ↓ (46%)

**Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) letter**

2.4. The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) received 49 complaints and enquiries about the Council in 2022/23 (Appendix A), a decrease on 2021/22 (52).

**Error! Reference source not found.**2 details the breakdown as:

**Table 2: LGSCO complaints received**

Service	Complaints and enquiries
Adult Care Services	3
Benefits & Tax	1
Corporate & Other Services	5
Education & Children's Services	10
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	5
Highways & Transport	7
Housing	8
Null / Other	1
Planning & Development	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

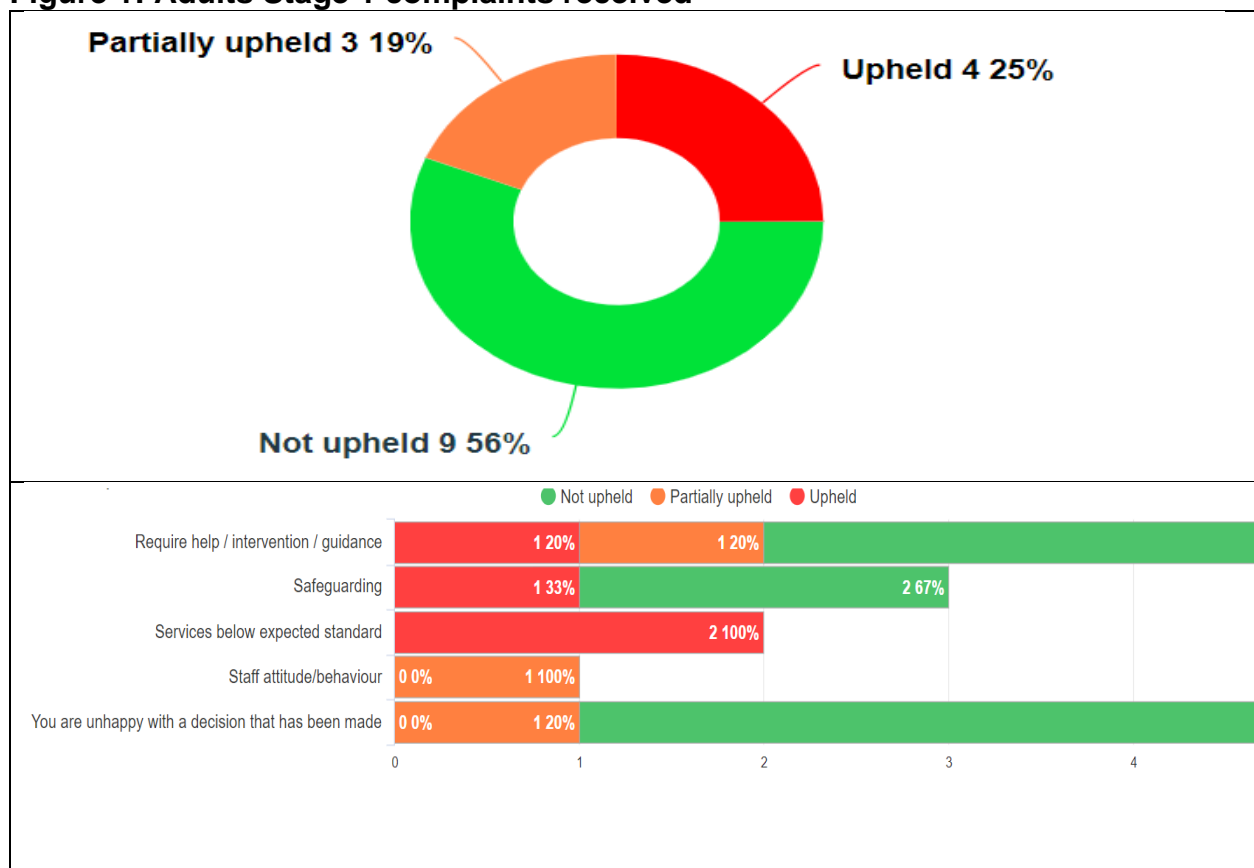
**3. Statutory Adults complaints received**

**Stage 1 complaints received**

3.1. 16 Adults' complaints were received in 2022/23, a 27.3% decrease on 2021/22 (22). The majority of Stage 1 Adults complaints (56%) into the Council were not upheld. Figure 1 shows the most reasons for complaints related to 'Require help / intervention / guidance', and 'You are unhappy with a decision that has been made' (5 complaints each) they also had the greatest number not upheld. This can be attributed to the joint

challenges of meeting the cost of care and the shortage of choice of placements, along with the timeliness of services due to challenges with staff recruitment.

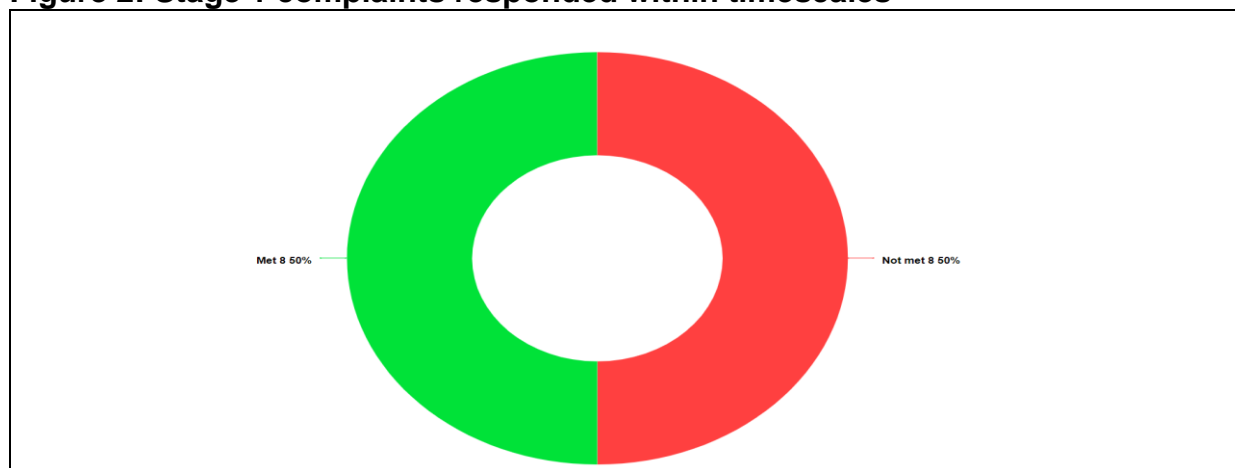
**Figure 1: Adults Stage 1 complaints received**



**Stage 1 timescales**

3.5 Of the 16 Adults complaints received, 50% of them were responded to within timescales, which is an increase on 2021/22 (32%). See Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Stage 1 complaints responded within timescales**



**4. Adults Services compliments received**

4.1 In 2022/23, Adults received 38 compliments, a significant increase on 2021/22 (16). The team now regularly forward compliments for logging.

## 5. Lessons learned from Adults Services complaints

- 5.1 An important part of the complaints process is capturing the learning and embedding good practice across the Council. Following are the learning that have been identified by Adult Services:

<b>Adult Social Care (Optalis)</b>
<p>A number of complaints relate to the contribution individuals make towards the cost of their care. This means-tested process often takes place after care needs have been assessed, leading people to be confused or surprised by the scale of the contributions they are expected to make.</p> <p>As a result, Optalis have created a post within the service to increase the information shared initially by the social work teams and supporting them to reduce the misinformation at the heart of some of these complaints. This post started work in July 2023.</p> <p>It should be noted that the cost of living crisis is impacting some people's ability to make the assessed contributions and we would expect to see an increase in this type of complaint.</p>

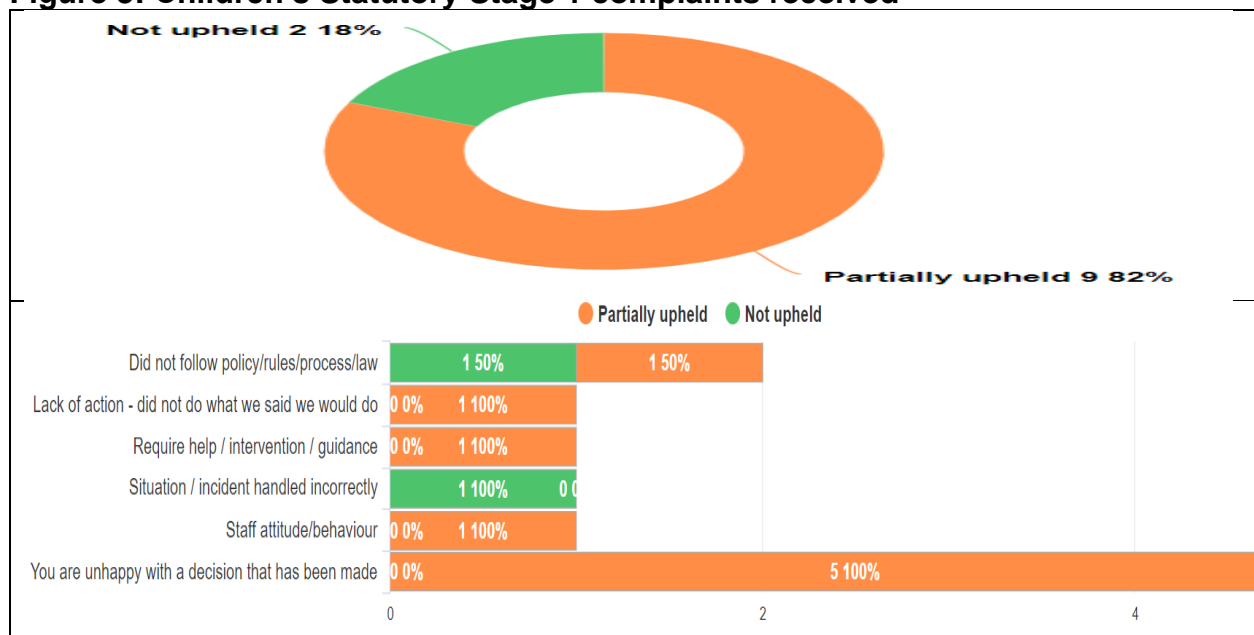
## 6. Children's Complaints received (Statutory and Corporate)

- 6.1. This section relates to only Children's complaints, both Statutory and Corporate.

### Stage 1 Children's Statutory complaints received

- 6.2. 11 Children's Statutory complaints were received in 2022/23, a slight decrease on 2021/22 (13).
- 6.3. The majority of Stage 1 Children's Statutory complaints (82%) into the Council were partially upheld. Figure 3 shows the main reason for complaints was because of 'You were unhappy with a decision that has been made'.

**Figure 3: Children's Statutory Stage 1 complaints received**



### Stage 1 Children's Statutory timescales

6.5 Of the 11 Children's Statutory complaints received, 45% of them were responded to within timescales, which is a reduction on 2021/22 (69%). See Figure 4.

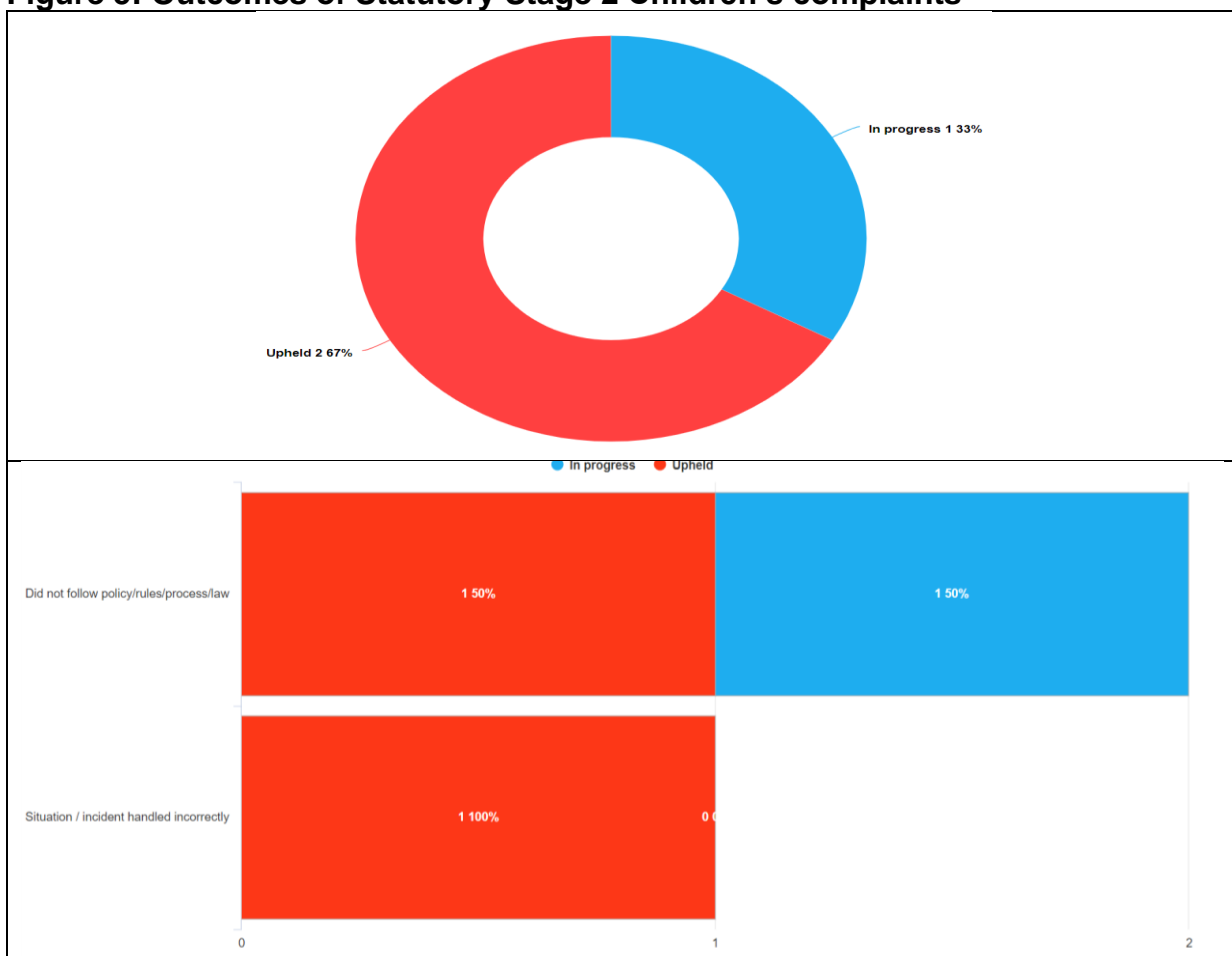
**Figure 4: Stage 1 Children's Statutory complaints responded within timescales**



### Stage 2 Children's Statutory complaints received

6.6 Figure 5 shows that of the 11 Stage 1 Statutory children's complaints, 3 of them progressed to Stage 2, of which 67% were upheld. Whilst small numbers, the primary reason was 'Did not follow policy/rules/procedures/law'.

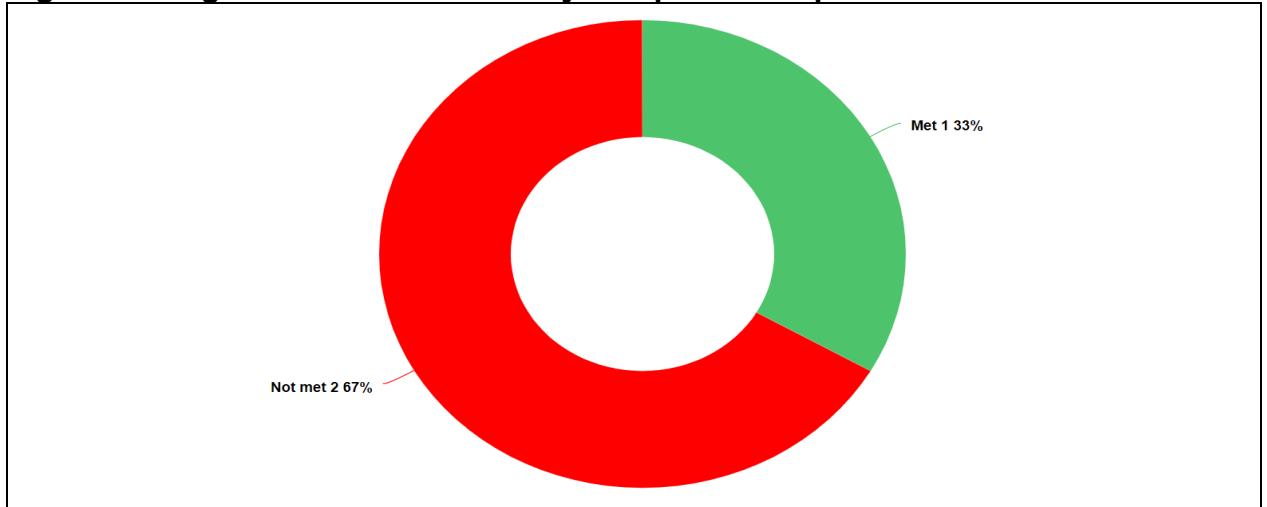
**Figure 5: Outcomes of Statutory Stage 2 Children's complaints**



## Stage 2 Children's Statutory timescales

6.7 Of the 3 Stage 2 complaints received, 67% of them were not responded to within timescales. See Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Stage 2 Children's Statutory complaints responded within timescales**

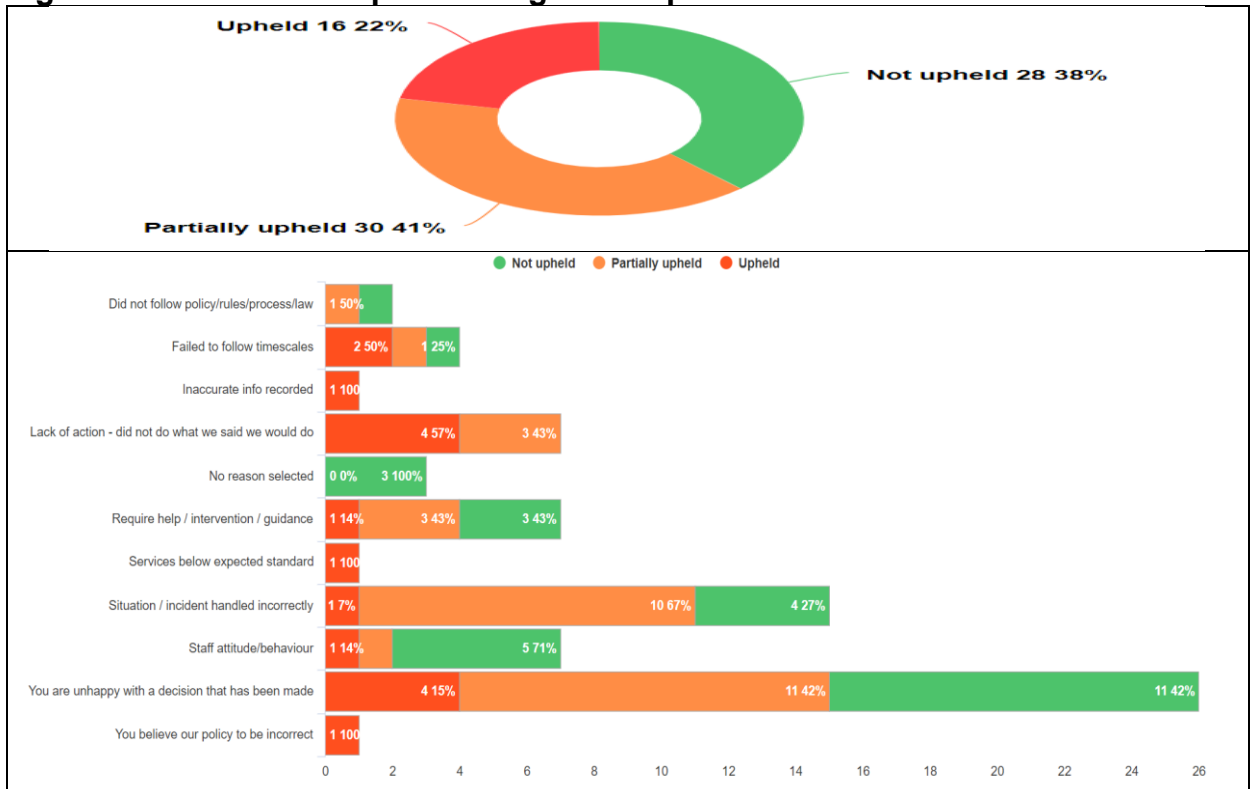


## Stage 1 Children's Corporate complaints received

6.8 74 Children's Corporate complaints were received in 2022/23, a slight increase on 2021/22 (62). Historically Children's Corporate and Formal Corporate complaints were reported together, however for 2022/23 these have been separated.

6.9 The majority of Stage 1 Children's Corporate complaints (41%) into the Council were partially upheld. Figure 7 shows the main reason for complaints was because of 'You were unhappy with a decision that has been made' and this can be attributed the complainant not accepting the final decision.

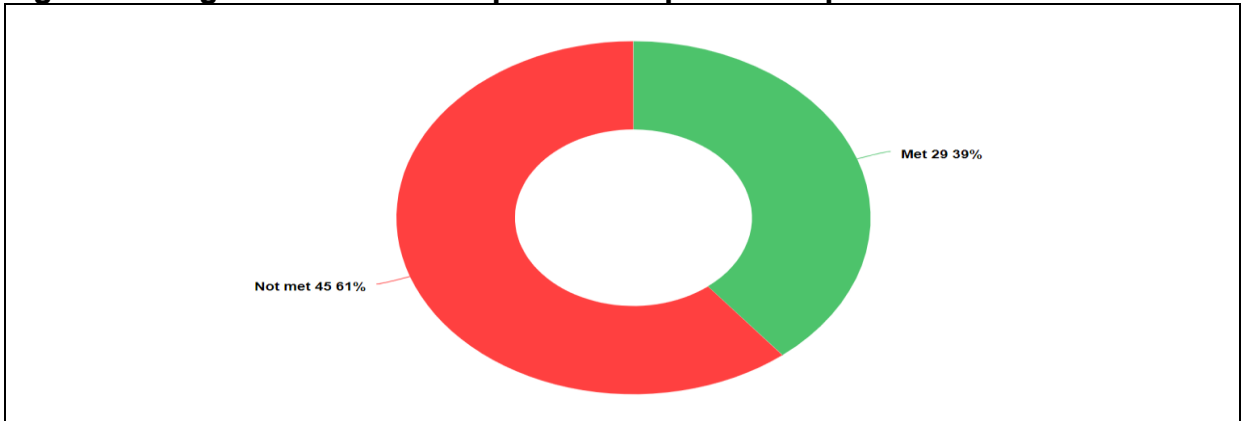
**Figure 7: Children's Corporate Stage 1 complaints received**



### Stage 1 Children's Corporate timescales

6.10 Of the 74 Stage 1 complaints received, 39% were responded to within timescales, which is a decrease on 2021/22 (44%). See Figure 8.

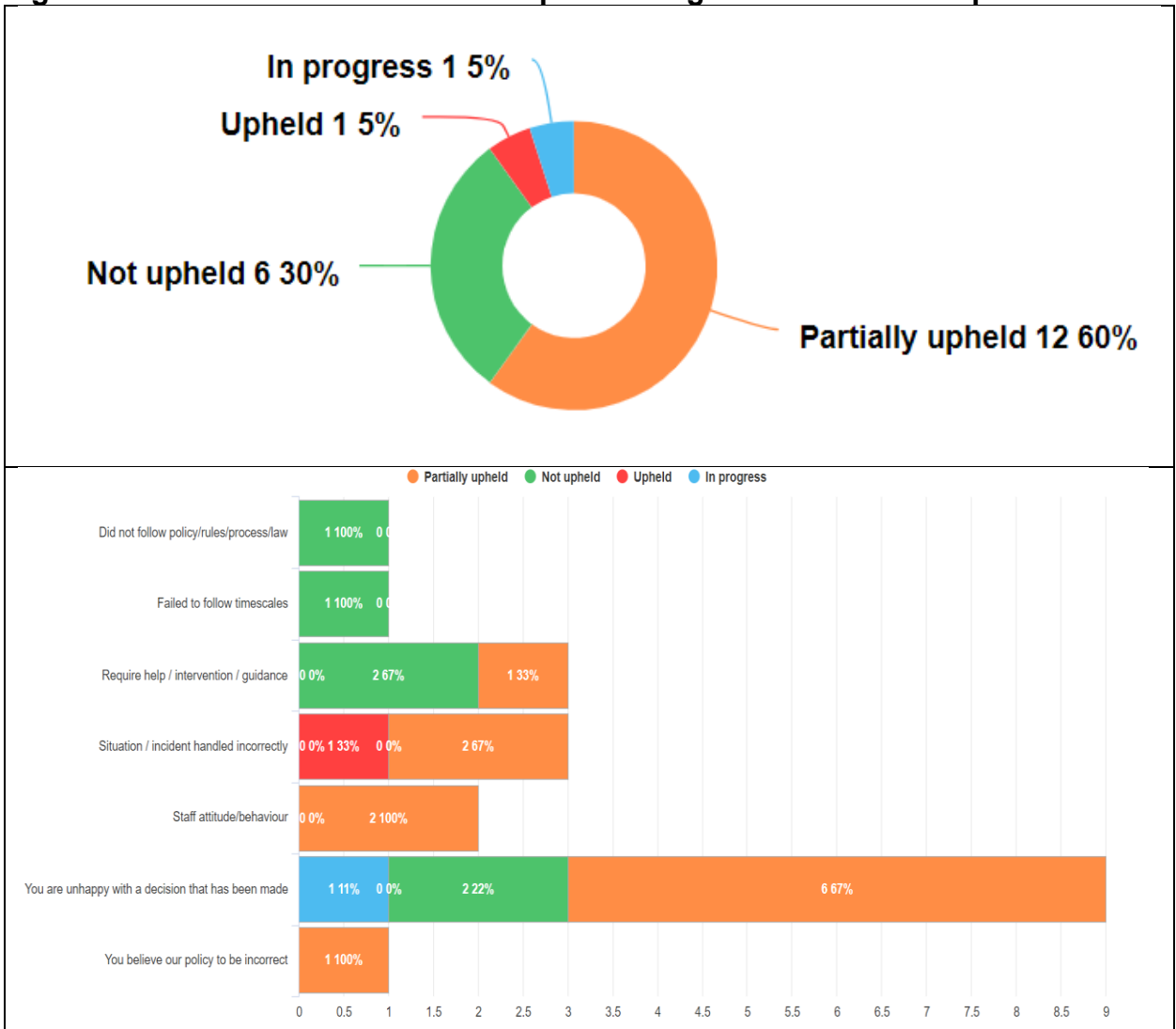
**Figure 8: Stage 1 Children's Corporate complaints responded within timescales**



### Stage 2 Children's Corporate complaints received

6.11 Figure 9 shows that of the 74 Stage 1 Statutory children's complaints, 20 of them progressed to Stage 2, of which 60% were partially upheld. The primary reason was 'You are unhappy with a decision that has been made'.

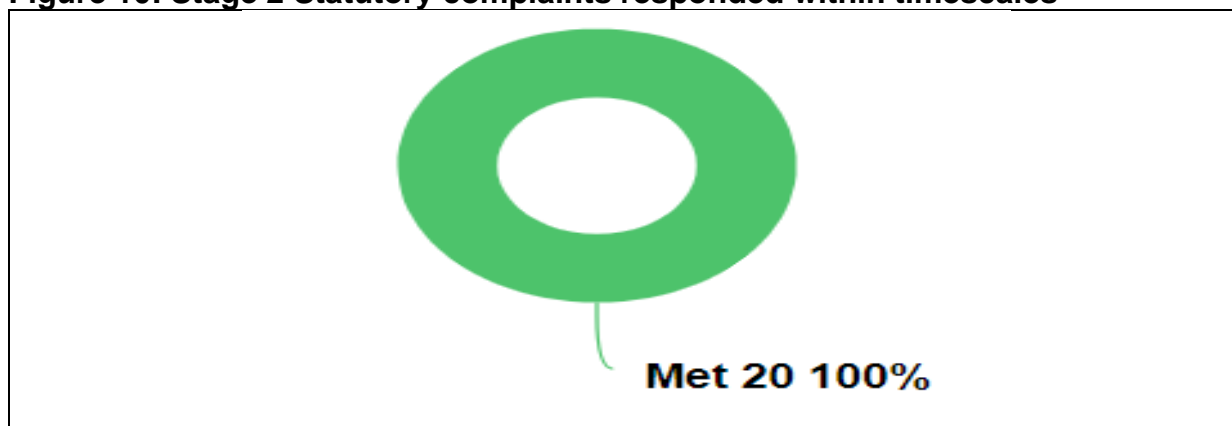
**Figure 9: Outcomes of Children's Corporate Stage 2 Children's complaints**



## Stage 2 Children's Corporate complaints timescales

6.12 Of the 20 Children's Corporate complaints received, 100% were responded to within timescales, which is an improvement on 2021/22 (64%). Figure 10.

**Figure 10: Stage 2 Statutory complaints responded within timescales**



## 7. Children's Services compliments received

7.1 In 2022/23, Children's Services received 69 compliments. Whilst many are received throughout the year, staff sometimes fail to record the compliments they receive; however they do obtain them and are regularly encouraged to log them.

## 8. Lessons learned from Children's Services complaints

8.1 An important part of the complaints process is capturing the learning and embedding good practice across the Council. Listed below are some of the learnings from the Children's complaints:

### Children's Social Care & Early Help

In the last year there has been some significant across service learning from some complaints in particular:

- We have continued to embed regular workshops/meetings between the Complaints/ Compliments Team and service staff
- Regular meetings between the new Deputy Director and Complaints/ Compliments Team are in place which are supporting oversight and tracking of complex and overdue complaints
- We have completed a piece of work, on the back of a complaint, on how we record and communicate with parents on any decision to exclude parents from Children in Care Reviews.
- Our training offer to AfC staff is shaped and influenced through learning from complaints and we continue to review the themes and individual actions/recommendations and capture this in our mandatory training offer to all staff.
- An example of an improvement:
  - 16 Feb 23 - Actions Monitoring – AfC – D&A Reference: xxxxx. Following my review of your complaint I am making the following recommendations, which will be monitored to improve our services: xxxxx's failure to respond to communication from a parent to be addressed within supervision.



### **Support and Safeguarding Service and Early Help**

As a result of a number of complaints, the following training has been provided to staff, including both group sessions and 1:1 sessions in supervision.

- The importance of timely email communication.
- Training on working with blended families and also non-resident parents, so that lines of communication and issues of confidentiality and consent are clear at the start of any involvement.
- Training on the role of Children's Social Care in Private Law Proceedings and the importance of making parents/carers aware of the limited role that social workers can have, in order to avoid unrealistic expectations.
- The importance of checking factual inaccuracies in assessments.
- Working with families in a non-oppressive and non-judgemental way.
- Workshop on Home Education
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, processes and procedures at the start of any involvement with families, so they can be clear about expectations.
- When a parent/carer is due to attend a training course, to ensure that expectations are clear from the start and that reasons for not admitting a participant to a training event are communicated clearly, with a clear rationale.
- As a result of one complaint, work was undertaken with advocates to ensure that they know to contact a Manager in the event that they need to escalate an issue.

### **SEND Team and Children with Disabilities Team**

- A new practice standard was put in place in relation to EST assessments, including the expectation for them to be progressed within 45 working days.
- Consent to always be obtained at the start of any assessment process, for information sharing between agencies.
- Staff were reminded not to use any language, other than that spoken by the child when a child is present.
- Training on the use of language when talking about mental health issues.
- No family to pay for Alternative Provision without this being discussed beforehand with the local authority and clarity about costs so there are no misunderstandings.

### **School Transport**

- A new tracking system was put into place to ensure that responses are communicated within target timescales.
- Processes within the Council's Customer Contact Centre were reviewed and updated to better support communications, including escalation processes.
- Application forms were reviewed and updated to capture all needs, in order to avoid delay.
- Regular meetings between the School Transport Team and the Public Transport Team were established to improve information sharing and route/public bus planning to assist journeys to and from school.

## **9. Lessons learned – final summary**

- 9.1. The Council welcomes and recognises the importance of complaints and all customer feedback. We use this in discussion at our leadership meetings and to help drive our services forward. Our complaints processes and procedures are regularly reviewed, and whilst found to be compliant a small number of improvements have been made. This includes the centralisation of the complaint's management processes under the

responsibility of the Deputy Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer. In addition, complaints data is being reviewed on a monthly basis by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for performance and improvement purposes.

- 9.2 These initiatives will ensure a consistent methodology to the reporting, investigation and response to all complaints made to the council. Over the next 18 months a new computer system will be procured, which will lead to improved monitoring, better performance recording and the ability to react earlier to patterns and trends highlighted within the complaints report.

## 10. Appendix A: LGSCO Annual Review 2023 letter

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

19 July 2023

*By email*

Mr Evans  
Chief Executive  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council

Dear Mr Evans

### Annual Review letter 2022-23

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2023. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As always, I would encourage you to consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

The end of the reporting year, saw the retirement of Michael King, drawing his tenure as Local Government Ombudsman to a close. I was delighted to be appointed to the role of Interim Ombudsman in April and look forward to working with you and colleagues across the local government sector in the coming months. I will be building on the strong foundations already in place and will continue to focus on promoting improvement through our work.

### Complaint statistics

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

Over the past two years, we have reviewed our processes to ensure we do the most we can with the resources we have. One outcome is that we are more selective about the complaints we look at in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. While providing a more sustainable way for us to work, it has meant that changes in uphold rates this year are not solely down to the nature of the cases

coming to us. We are less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, so we are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

Our average uphold rate for all investigations has increased this year and you may find that your organisation's uphold rate is higher than previous years. This means that comparing uphold rates with previous years carries a note of caution. Therefore, I recommend comparing this statistic with that of similar organisations, rather than previous years, to better understand your organisation's performance.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we were satisfied with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 26 July 2023. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

## Your organisation's performance

During the year, we [issued a public report](#) about your Council's failure to properly manage Free Early Education Entitlement after a parent raised concerns they were being charged a top-up fee. We also found the Council failed to ensure the nursery administered clear and transparent invoices. We recommended the Council should apologise and make payments to the complainant, and work with the nursery to ensure its invoices are clear and transparent. I am satisfied with the Council's actions in this case.

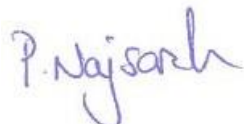
During the year some responses to our enquiries were late. These included three out of four responses from your Children's Services department and a long delay in a response from the Housing department. Investigations that are delayed can further frustrate complainants and I ask that you consider what steps can be taken to address these matters so that your liaison with us improves.

## Supporting complaint and service improvement

I know that complaints offer organisations a rich source of intelligence and insight that has the potential to be transformational. These insights can indicate a problem with a specific area of service delivery or, more broadly, provide a perspective on an organisation's culture and ability to learn. To realise the potential complaints have to support service improvements, organisations need to have the fundamentals of complaint handling in place. To support you to do so, we have continued our work with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code that will provide a standard for organisations to work to. We will consult on the code and its implications prior to launch and will be in touch with further details.

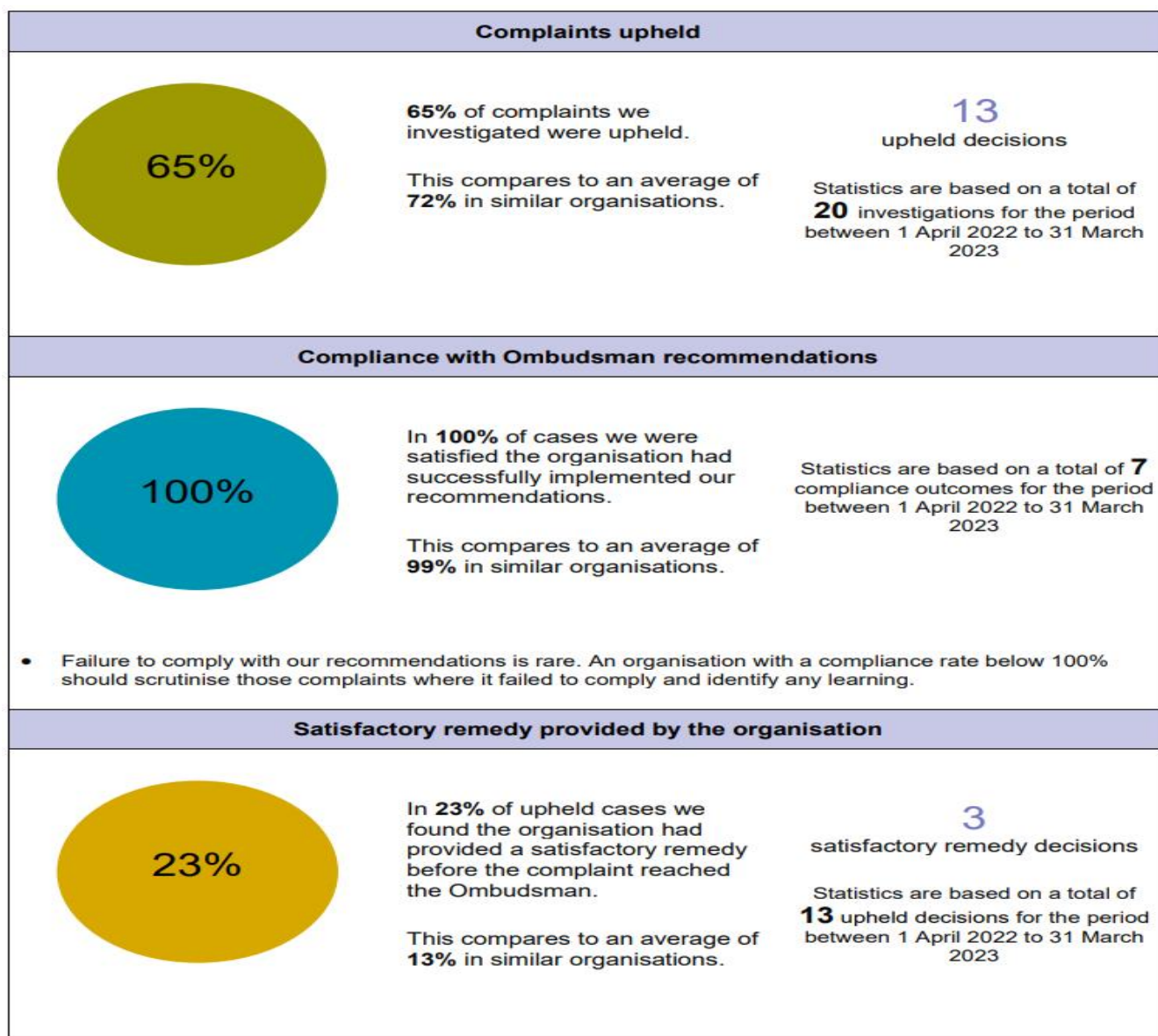
In addition, our successful training programme includes practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We can also offer tailored support and bespoke training to target specific issues your organisation might have identified. We delivered 105 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1350 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training) or get in touch at [training@lgo.org.uk](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Paul Najsarek  
 Interim Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
 Interim Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

**Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council**  
**For the period ending 31/03/23**



## 11. Appendix B: Council's complaints processes

The stages of the Council's process is detailed in the table below:

Stages	Adult services complaints	Children's services complaints	Formal Corporate complaints	Not within the formal complaints process
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Statutory</b> No specific timescale but aim to respond within 10 working days. Response from Service Manager or higher.	<b>Statutory</b> Up to 10 working days. Can agree extension for a further 10 working days. Response from Head of Service.	Up to 20 working days. Can agree extension for a further 10 working days. Response from Head of Service.	N/A
<b>Stage 2</b>	N/A	<b>Statutory</b> 25-65 working days. Completed by independent complaints investigators and report produced. Adjudicating letter in response to report completed by Children's Director of Social Care.	Up to 20 working days. Review of stage 1 complaint and response by Director.	N/A
<b>Stage 3</b>	N/A	<b>Statutory</b> Stage 3 independent panel. Up to 70 working days. Panel of three independent members who produce a report. Letter in response to the report completed by the Directors of Children's Services.	N/A	N/A
<b>LGSCO</b>	Can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	Can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	Can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	N/A
<b>Alternative appeal process</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Customer given timescales for response