

Meeting of:	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 20 July 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2020/21
Purpose of Report:	To allow consideration of corporate complaints received from customers and the Public Service Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the corresponding period
Report Owner:	Managing Director
Responsible Officer:	Managing Director
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	There are no matters in this report which relate to an individual ward
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for executive decision
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council adopted the Welsh Government's Model Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy in July 2013. There is a two-stage process. Complaints at Stage 1 should be responded to within 10 working days. Stage 2 complaints should be responded to within 20 working days. Complainants are able to contact the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), if still unsatisfied. In May 2021 the PSOW confirmed that the Council's policy conformed with its model policy. All Corporate Complaints and Compliments are recorded on Oracle CRM and feed into the Complaints and Compliments Dashboards. These exclude Social Services complaints which are resolved via a different procedure and are reported separately. The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act (2021) includes details of the role of the Governance and Audit Committee in relation to corporate complaints. The legislation requires the Governance and Audit Committee to review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively. These provisions are included in Part 6 of the legislation relating to the Performance and Governance of Principal Councils and Duty of Principal Council to keep its performance under review. 	

- The purpose of the policy is to ensure that complainants experience a consistent and fair response. Recording and monitoring of complaints allows the council to:
 - Gain insight into citizens' satisfaction with services provided.
 - Understand how satisfied customers are with how we investigate complaints.
 - Monitor responsiveness to statutory guidance and customer expectations regarding how quickly we complete complaints investigations.
 - Identify potential for improving service by analysing what has been learned from complaints.
- Analysis of complaints information for 2020/21 indicates that the Coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on complaint volumes, with numbers received significantly lower than the long-term trend.
 - Complainants are satisfied with how complaints are investigated
 - Responsiveness, in terms of adherence to deadlines, continues to decline
 - Complaint handling is meeting the requirements of statutory bodies
 - An increased focus on learning from complaints is required
- During the year the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) received 38 complaints relating to the council. An increase of 8 in the previous year but in line with longer-term averages. 4 complaints were resolved through Early Resolution and 10 were considered to be Premature. 9 were out of jurisdiction and 14 were other cases closed after initial consideration. 1 complaint was taken into investigation during 2020/21, this involved Children and Young People Services The annual report details complaint performance for directorates for 2020/21 and includes performance trends since 2014/15.

Recommendations

1. That Governance and Audit Committee note the contents of the report and Appendix A (Annual Complaints & Compliments Report).
2. That Governance and Audit Committee continues to receive an annual update in relation to Corporate Complaints and Compliments.
3. That Governance and Audit Committee refer this report and the comments of the Committee to Cabinet for their consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. & 2 To ensure effective monitoring of corporate complaints as an indicator of citizen satisfaction with services provided.
3. In order that Cabinet can be apprised of the report and the comments made by Audit Committee and reply to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Letter.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council operates a two stage process for handling complaints from residents. Should the complainant remain unsatisfied at the end of this process they are advised to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).
- 1.2 The contents of this report are generated from data entered on to Oracle Customer Relationship Management system by Customer Relations and service based staff.
- 1.3 Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly updates on local performance indicators relating to complaint handling, including those escalated to the PSOW.
- 1.4 Operational Managers have been provided with a real time dashboard to enable them to better monitor and manage complaints relating to their own services.
- 1.5 An annual complaints and compliments report has been produced for the seven financial years since 2014/15. Appendix A provides Committee with the Annual Complaints and Compliments Report for 2020/21, including detailed performance information. Following feedback from the Committee last year, the format of the report has been changed to provide a statistical summary, executive summary, detailed information and case studies for consideration.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The Coronavirus pandemic during the reporting period will have had an impact on how services have been delivered and residents willingness to raise complaints.

- 2.2** It is difficult to assess the precise impact of the pandemic, however the number of complaints received during the year reduced to 338 from 559 in 2019/20. This is contrast to the upward trend in complaint volumes for the previous 5 years.
- 2.3** A key indicator of how satisfied complainants are with the standard of investigation and the fairness of outcomes is the level of escalation from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the process. Analysis indicates that corporate complaints continued to be investigated well and effectively by the Council during 2020/21 with 90.2% (93.4% in 2019/20) of complaints being resolved at Stage 1. While a slight drop reduction compared to 2019/20, this figure is in line with the long-term average of 90.03%.
- 2.4** Complaints were not received equally across all services. 80% of complaints received related to Environment and Housing directorate, 19% for Managing Director and Resources and 0.88% for Learning and Skills. This ratio is in line with previous trends.
- 2.5** Given the extremely high volume of individual interactions with residents by Environment and Housing services it is not surprising that the highest volume of complaints within the Council are received in this area. While complaint volumes have increased in this area the numbers still represent a very small proportion of the total number of interactions.
- 2.6** Social Services received a total of 90 (2019/20 115) complaints and enquiries during the same period, of which complaints totalled 43.
- 2.7** Managing Director and Resources had the highest percentage of complaints upheld in full at 38.5% (42.5% 2019/20) during the year while Environment and Housing upheld 38.1% (2019/29: 41.9%) of complaints in full. This continues a downward trend from 49.7% in 2014/15.
- 2.8** For the Council as a whole the percentage of enquiries upheld in full has remained relatively consistent at around 40% over the past 5 years.
- 2.9** Services have been able to monitor their own complaint performance since September 2016 and responsiveness has continued to show a downward trend during the year. 68% of complaints were resolved within target compared to 56.7% in the previous year.
- 2.10** Learning and Skills directorate resolved the highest number of complaints within target at 66.7%. Although this is a significant reduction on previous performance of 81.8%, it is based on only 3 complaints for the year. MD and Resources and Environment and Housing each showed a reduction in this area at 56.9% (63%) and 64.2% (68.4%) respectively.
- 2.11** It is significant to note that no complaints have been raised by complainants regarding the time taken to respond to complaints over the past four financial years. This suggests that while there is room for improvement, customer expectations are being met and that outcomes may be more important than speed of response to complainants.
- 2.12** This area of performance is coming under increasing focus with the establishment of the PSOW Compliance Standards Authority. Councils are now

required to provide quarterly data on the numbers, types and outcome of complaints together with speed of response.

- 2.13** Learning from complaints is a key area for improvement as it provides the opportunity for services to manage customer expectations and make improvements in service delivery where possible.
- 2.14** The percentage of complaints which did not have a recorded cause remained high at 61.4% (61.5% 2019/20). Consequently, the level of confidence in data relating to the causes of complaints for the council overall remains low.
- 2.15** For the Managing Director and Resources directorate only 30.6% of complaints had a cause recorded and Environment and Housing 41.4% (2019/20 39.7% and 48.8%).
- 2.16** This performance is reflected in recording of learning outcomes with 85.8% (2019/20: 83.4%) of complaints having no learning outcome recorded. This is a continuation of a long-term trend. In 2014/15 only 39.3% of complaints had no learning outcome. Where outcomes are recorded the most popular is "Staff Training" at 5.3% (2019/20 8.2%) of all complaints, followed by " Review Service Standards" at 2.4% (2019/20 5.7%).
- 2.17** During the period the PSOW received 38 complaints from Vale of Glamorgan residents, an increase of 8 on the previous year. This is broadly in line with the number that the PSOW would expect to receive based on the authority's population.
- 2.18** Only one complaint, relating to Children's and Young People Services was taken into investigation by the PSOW during the year and this was upheld. 4 complaints were resolved through the Early Resolution process,
- 2.19** The year saw complaint received via the Welsh Language Commissioner remain low at 2 (in 2019/20 there was one). Neither complaint has reached a resolution at the time of producing this report.
- 2.20** Outcomes from complaints received by the PSOW and Welsh Language Commissioner indicate that the Council is meeting the requirements of these statutory bodies in relation to the investigation and resolution of complaints.
- 2.21** The lack of information recorded regarding the cause of and lessons learned from complaints means that the Council is unable to evidence improvements made to individual service provision or to formulate corporate wide responses to address recurring and persistent issues.
- 2.22** Overall the analysis of performance indicates that complaint investigation and performance is meeting customer expectations. Responsiveness is improving and outcomes from escalated issues indicate that we are meeting the requirements and expectations of statutory bodies in relation to complaint handling.
- 2.23** During 2021/22 the council will take advantage of functionality provided by its new Digital Customer Experience Platform to improve performance in relation to meeting target deadlines, capturing reasons for the causes of complaints and the learning outcomes and in increasing the amount of equalities data.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Listening to and understanding complaints is a key source of the "voice of the customer", what they need from us and involving them in decisions about how we deliver services.
- 3.2** Learning from complaints is a key way in which the council can develop services that meet the changing needs of residents and are sustainable. Similarly, services can be improved to prevent complaints occurring in the future and improve access to and delivery of services.
- 3.3** The Council's Corporate Plan (and Annual Delivery Plan) include commitments to improving customer service and engagement with our communities. Learning from and effectively handling complaints is a key element of this work.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.
- 4.2** The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales has powers to require the council to compensate complainants financially should it be found guilty of maladministration. Effective investigation and management of complaints will minimise the risk of this happening.

Employment

- 4.3** There are no matters in this report relating to employment matters

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** There is no statutory requirement to adopt the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guidance for Public Service providers in Wales. However the Welsh Government and Public Services Ombudsman for Wales have commended its adoption.
- 4.5** The Council's complaints process is promoted online and via leaflets at reception points. Complaints can be registered on the website, using the mobile app, by post and by telephone. This ensures that all residents are aware of and have access to the complaints process irrespective of age, gender, belief or disability.

5. Background Papers

None.



Vale of Glamorgan Council

**Annual Complaints
&
Compliments Report
2020/21**

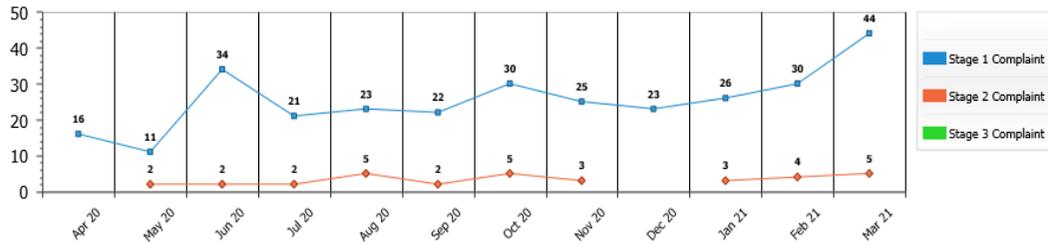
Corporate Complaints – Summary 2020 / 21

ANNUAL DIRECTORATE TOTALS

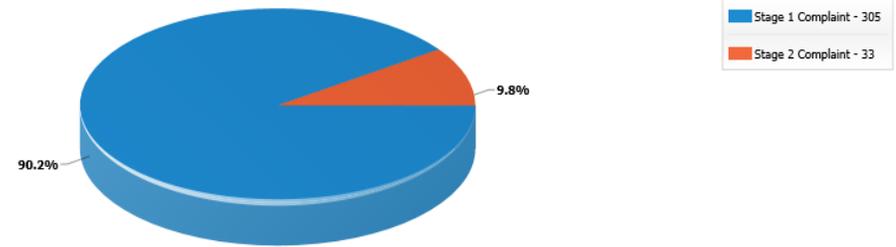
Environment & Housing: 270 (475)
 Managing Director & Resources: 65 (73)

Learning & Skills: 3 (11)
 Total: 338 (599)

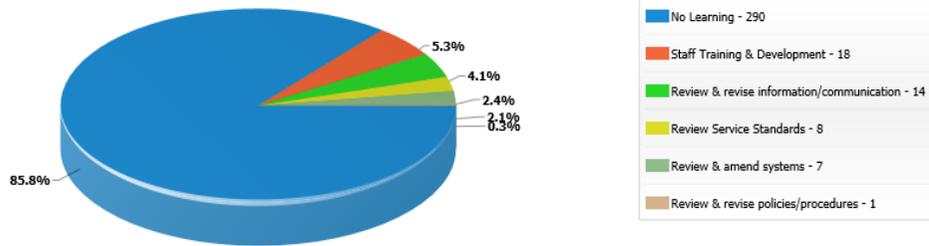
Monthly Complaints



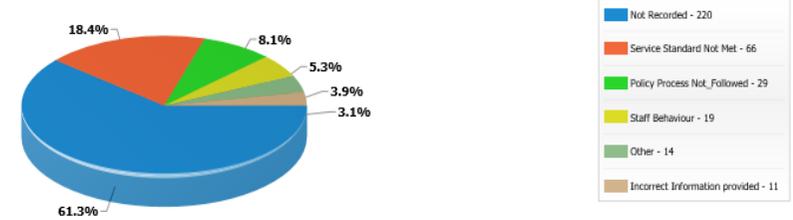
Complaint Resolution Stage



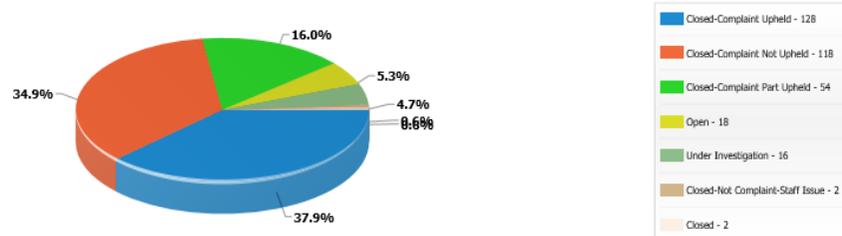
Key Learning Points



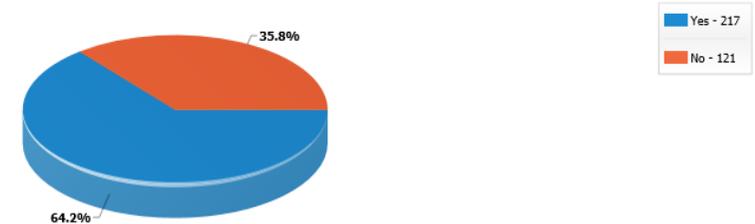
Cause Of Complaint



Complaints by Outcome



On Target



Vale of Glamorgan Council – Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2020/21

Executive Summary

This is the seventh annual report on Corporate Complaints and Compliments under the current Policy. This Report details all formal complaints recorded on the Oracle CRM system for the Council (this excludes Social Services as complaints for that Directorate follow a different policy) that were handled through the Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy during the financial year 2020/21. Complaints Dashboard information for 2020/21 is also included for each Directorate in Appendices 1, 2 and 3. The figures for 2019/20 are indicated in brackets throughout the report for comparison. Complaints handled through alternative statutory, processes are excluded from this Report.

The reporting period entirely coincides with changes to service provision other impacts associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. This appears to have had an impact on numbers of complaints received, which reduced significantly during the period against a longer-term trend of increasing numbers. While it is difficult to be certain about the reasons for this reduction, it may perhaps be as a result of resident's positive attitude towards public services during the pandemic and because fewer individual services were delivered.

A summary of Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) complaints, complaints received from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Social Services complaints is provided for completeness (page 4).

The number of compliments received and recorded during 2020/21 (**excluding Social Services**) is also set out in the Report.

To improve understanding of the types of complaints being received a number of anonymised case studies of have been included in appendix 4. These complaints were chosen at random.

The analysis of the data for 2020/21 shows that:

- The number of complaints received is a **very small proportion of the Council's total interactions** with residents and other service users.
- **Complainants are satisfied** with how their complaints are investigated – 90.2% were resolved at Stage 1.
- **Responsiveness is decreasing** – percentage of investigations completed within target continued the longer term downward trend. The number of complaints resolved within target peaked in 2016/17 at 75.1%, compared to 64.2% in 2020/21 (68%)
- **Complaint volumes decreased** – including 186 complaints directly related to significant changes to waste management processes, underlying complaint volumes fell to 338 from 559 (2019/20), bucking the longer-term trend of increasing complaint volumes.
- **Complaints are meeting requirements of statutory bodies** – neither the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales nor the Welsh Language Commissioner found against the council during the year.

- **The long term under reporting of the causes of and learning from complaints continues** – only 38.8% of complaints have a cause recorded and only 14.2% of complaints have a learning outcome recorded. This continues ongoing poor performance in these areas.

Improvement activities will therefore focus on:

- Percentage of complaints received with target time scale
- Identifying causes of complaints
- Identifying learning outcomes from complaints

The Council received **305 Stage 1** and **33 Stage 2 Corporate Complaints** during 2020/21. This is a total **of 338** (559 in 2019/20), which is a decrease of **221** complaints compared to the previous year. The reduction in annual complaints is counter to the increasing trend over the seven years of reporting, which saw an 86% increase between 2014/15 and 2019/20 (300 to 559). Given the trend it is highly likely that the reduction in complaints is associated with the Coronavirus pandemic.

Analysis indicates that corporate complaints continue to be investigated well and effectively by the Council with **90.2%** (93.4% in 2019/20) of complaints being resolved at Stage 1. While a slight reduction compared to 2019/20, this figure is in line with **the long-term average of 90.03%**.

64.2% (68% in 2019/20) of Stages 1 and 2 complaint investigations were **completed within target** response timescales. This continues a decreasing performance trend in this area. However, it is worth noting, that there have been no customer complaints regarding the time taken to respond to corporate complaints during the year indicating that we are meeting customer expectations.

Since September 2016 it has been possible for services to monitor their own complaint performance using real time information from the Complaints Dashboard. This has improved the management information that is available about complaints. The performance of replying to complaints within the target time has decreased slightly by nearly **3.8%** in the last year. (In 2019/20 the response time was 68%).

This performance area is coming under increased scrutiny as the PSOW Compliance Standards Authority requires all local authorities to regularly report on whether they have met speed of response guidelines. A quarterly report is submitted providing a breakdown of departmental complaints. This report includes the response times and the number of open complaints from the previous reporting period.

Of the 338 corporate complaints in **2020/21, 270 or 80%** (475 or 85% in 2019/20) were received by the **Environment and Housing** directorate. **Waste Management** generated **178** (381) Stage 1 and **8** (15) Stage 2 complaints i.e. a **total of 186** (a total of 396 in 2019/20) during the period representing **68.8%** (83.4% in 2019/20) of the directorate total and **55%** (70.8% in 2019/20) of the Council total.

It should be noted that these services undertake an extremely high volume of interactions with residents and while complaint volumes have increased they still represent a small proportion of the total number of interactions.

Compared to 2019/20 the **Waste Management** service has received 210 fewer complaints. The highest number of complaints for this service were received during the months of June 2020 and

January, February and March 2021 (23, 21, 21 and 22 respectively). This coincides with the introduction of significant changes to the collection service.

The Waste Management service's compliance to replying within the target time for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints is better than the Council as a whole at **77.4%** (75.8% in 2019/20) on target compared to **64.3%**. Performance has improved by **1.6%** points compared to 2019/20, despite having 210 less complaints.

Learning and Skills received the fewest number of complaints, **totalling 3** (2 Stage 1 and 1 Stage 2) in 2020/21 (8 in 2019/20) or **0.88%** (1.97% in 2019/20) of the total. The Stage 2 complaint related to Libraries, while the remaining 2 Stage 1 complaints related Libraries, School Improvement and School Admissions.

Managing Director & Resources received **59** Stage 1 Complaints and **6** Stage 2 complaints (this compares to 67 Stage 1 and 6 Stage 2 in 2019/20). Customer Relations accounted for 15 Stage 1 and 1 Stage 2 complaints with Financial Services receiving 26 and 2 respectively. For the directorate as a whole **56.9%** were responded to within target; compared to the Corporate figure of **64.2%**. The Directorate's performance has decreased on the previous year when 63% of complaints were responded to within target.

37.9% (41.8% in 2019/20) of all recorded corporate complaints were fully upheld, while **34.9%** (58.2% in 2019/20) were not upheld.

In total **61.4%** (**61.5% in 2019/20**) of complaints did not have the cause of the complaint recorded. This figure is **0.1% points** lower than in 2019/20. 'Service Standards not met' accounted for **18.3%**, Policy and Process not followed **8.1%**, **5.3%** Staff Behaviour and 'other' accounted for **3.9%** of the causes of complaints. (In 2019/20 the top two causes were Policy and Process not followed at 7% and 'Service Standards not met' at 21%). Discrimination, as a cause of complaint, started to be monitored in January 2017. There was 0 recorded during 2020/21, and 1 was recorded in 2019/20.

'No learning' was recorded against **85.8%** (83.4% in 2019/20) of complaints. The main key learning point categories were Staff Training – **5.3%** and Review and Revise Information/Communication – **4.1%**. (In 2019/20 the top two learning points recorded were Review Service Standards 5.7% and Staff Training at 8.2%).

Public Services Ombudsman Complaints, Welsh Language Complaints and Social Services Complaints

38 (30 in 2019/20) complaints in respect of the Council were received by the PSOW during 2020/21, which is an increase of **8** on the previous year. **4** complaints were resolved through **Early Resolution** and **10** were considered to be **Premature**. **9** were out of jurisdiction and **14** were other cases closed after initial consideration. **1** complaint was taken into investigation during 2020/21, this involved Children and Young People Services.

A total of 2 complaints were received via the Welsh Language Commissioner (1 in 2019/20 which was cancelled). Several informal comments from members of the public were responded to directly. The first formal complaint related to the issue of Street Naming and we are awaiting the outcome of that investigation. We have drafted a new policy on this subject which will be presented to Cabinet once we receive the Commissioner's decision.

The second complaint was received late in March 2021 and related to a sign painted on the highway. This was immediately resolved but we have not yet received the Commissioner's comments.

The 2 complaints are not recorded on Oracle CRM so it is not reflected in the total of **338**.

Social Service representations and complaints are dealt with under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.

As at 31 March 2021, 43 complaints were received which is slightly lower than in the previous year when there were 52 complaints. Out of the 43 complaints received, 22 were for Adult Services, 17 were for Children and Young People Services and 4 related to the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division. Out of the 43 Complaints, 5 were investigated directly as Stage 2 Investigations and 4 Stage 1 investigations were also investigated at Stage 2. 55% of these complaints were resolved within the designated timescales. During this period 6 complaints were referred onto the Ombudsman. Due to Covid Restrictions there were no face to face discussions with complainants.

The table shown below provides a full breakdown of all enquiries and complaints received during 2020/2021

Service Division	Enquiries	Complaints Stage 1	Complaints Stage 2	PSOW	Responded to in Timescales	Total Complaints and Enquiries Received
Adult Services	18	19	3	3	11	40
Children and Young People Services	26	15	6	3	9	42
Resource Management & Safeguarding	2	4	0	0	4	6

During 2020/21 the highest number of Stage 1 complaints received by type of complaint were in relation to the quality/level of service (9), followed by staff member complaints (8), unhappy with the care provided (6) and lack of response (5). The table below provides a breakdown of the nature of complaints by Division.

Type of Complaint	Adult Services	Children and Young People Services	Resource Management and Safeguarding	Total Complaints by Nature of Complaint
Charges for services	2	0	2	4
Lack of response	3	2	0	5
Quality/level of service	3	6	0	9
Staff complaint	3	4	1	8

Unhappy with care provided	5	1	0	6
Communication	2	2	0	4
Other	1	0	1	2

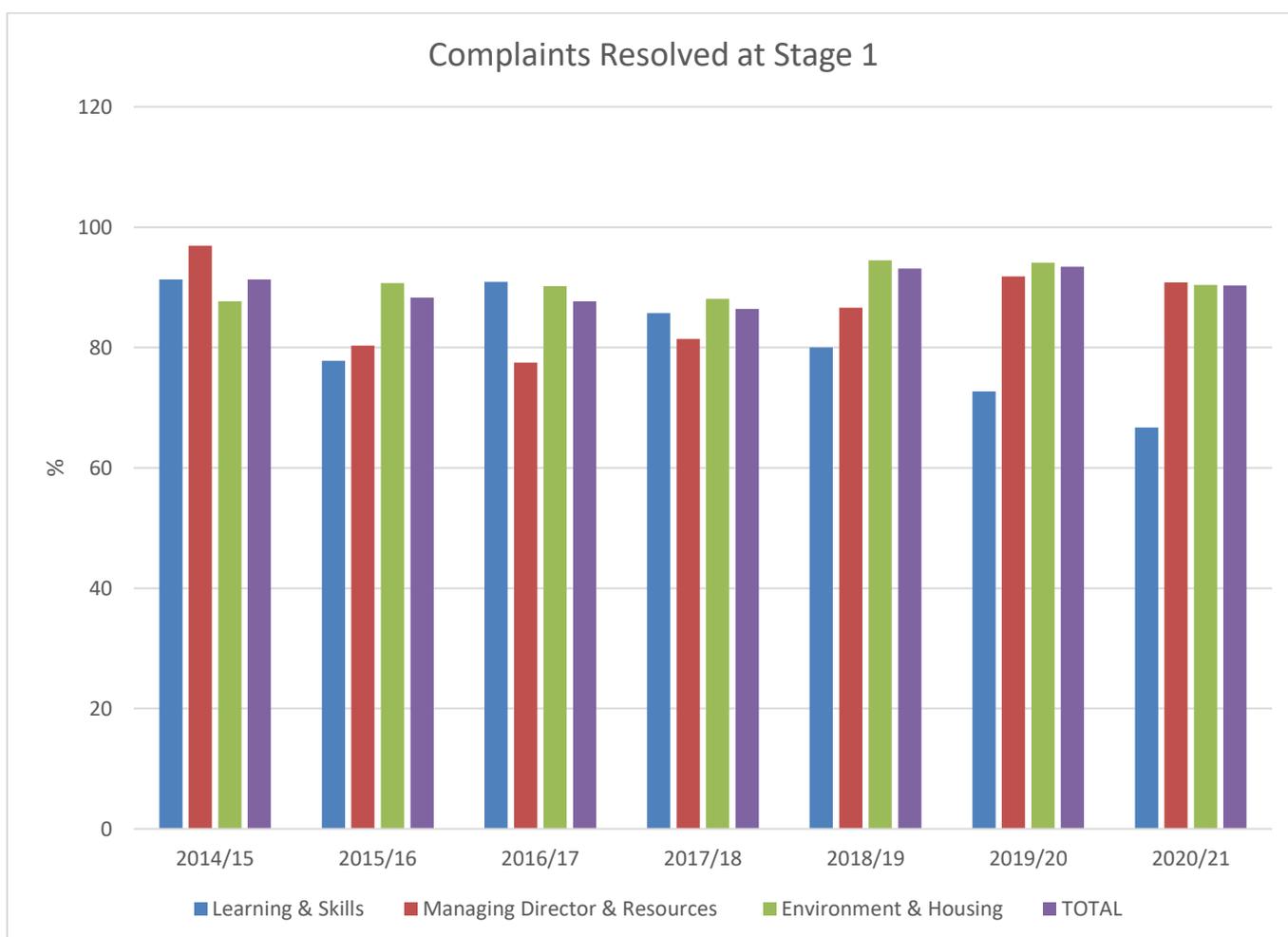
During 2020/21 a summary of Social Services key lessons learnt include:

- The importance of effective communication with families/service users.
- The importance of responding in a timely manner to requests for information/enquiries/complaints.
- The importance of managing the expectations of families/service users, specifically in relation to timescales for providing care and the limitations on what can be provided.
- Ensure that all factual information in reports is correct and explain how a service user/family can challenge the content of reports if appropriate.
- Remind staff of the importance of being aware of how we speak to families/services users at all times.
- Ensure that any changes to levels of care are fully explained to families/services users and are conveyed in a timely manner.

Performance Commentary

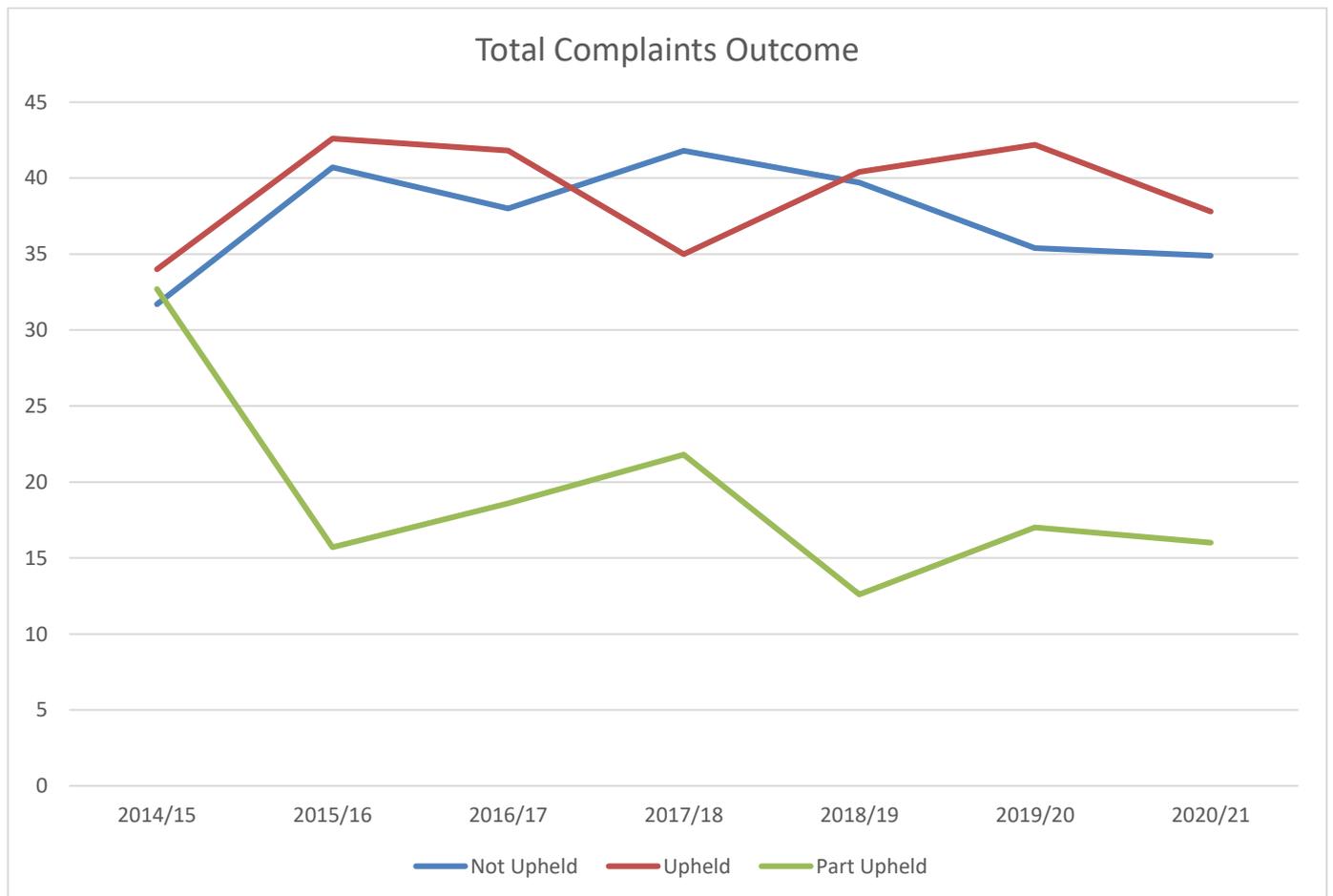
The average number of corporate complaints received per month is **28** (46 in 2019/20), which represents a reduction of 4 complaints against the long-term average of 32. March 2021 had the highest number of complaints made in a single month with 44 complaints. May 2020 showed the lowest number of complaints received, at 11. This continues a seasonal trend of increased complaints in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 and lower number in number in quarters 1 and 2. With regards to Stage 2 complaints – there is an average of **3 per month**. This compares with an average of 3 per month in 2019/20.

Learning and Skills resolved the lowest number of complaints at Stage 1 at **66.7%**. However, this is based on receiving only 2 Stage 1 complaints. Managing Director & Resources resolved **90.8%** complaints at Stage 1. Environment and Housing resolved **90.4%** of complaints at Stage 1 in 2020/21. This compares to 94.1% in 2019/20.



Directorate	Percentage (%) Resolved at Stage 1						
	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Learning & Skills	66.7	72.7	80	85.7	90.9	77.8	91.3
Managing Director & Resources	90.8	91.8	86.6	81.4	77.5	80.3	96.9
Environment & Housing	90.4	94.1	94.5	88.1	90.2	90.7	87.7
TOTAL	90.2	93.4	93.1	86.4	87.7	88.3	91.3

Environment and Housing had the highest percentage of complaints upheld in full or part at **54%**. Managing Director and Resources had the second highest percentage at **53.9%**. Learning and skills had the lowest percentage at **33.3%** this is due to the small number of complaints, 3 in total.

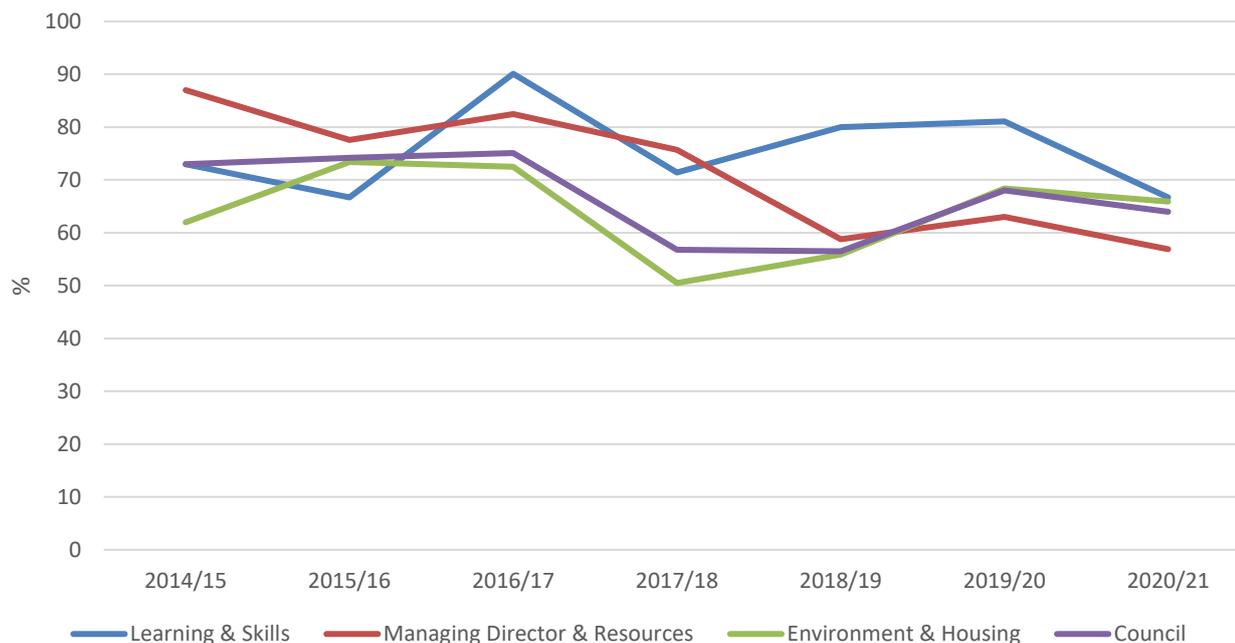


Directorate	Not Upheld (%)	Upheld (%)	Part Upheld (%)
Learning & Skills			
2020/21	66.7	0	33.3
2019/20	18.2	54.4	27.3
2018/19	60	0	40
2017/18	28.6	35.7	35.7
2016/17	54.5	27.3	18.2
2015/16	0	44.4	55.6
2014/15	31.7	34	32.7
Managing Director & Resources			
2020/21	32.3	38.5	15.4
2019/20	30.1	42.5	19.2
2018/19	57.4	22.1	11.8
2017/18	51.4	30	18.6
2016/17	56.3	26.3	17.5
2015/16	53.9	18.4	27.6
2014/15	23.7	15.3	61.1
Environment & Housing			
2020/21	35.2	38.1	15.6
2019/20	36.6	41.9	16.4
2018/19	36.0	44.7	12.4
2017/18	39.5	36.7	21.9
2016/17	32.7	46.7	18.6
2015/16	38.3	49	11.4
2014/15	37.4	49.7	9.8
	Not Upheld (%)	Upheld (%)	Part Upheld (%)
Total (excluding Social Services)			
2020/21	34.9	37.9	16
2019/20	35.4	42.2	17.0
2018/19	39.7	40.4	12.6
2017/18	41.8	35	21.8
2016/17	38	41.8	18.6
2015/16	40.7	42.6	15.7
2014/15	31.7	34	32.7

NB: At the time of this report some complaints received during 2020/21 have not yet been resolved.

The percentage of complaints resolved within target time scales for the Council stands at **64.2%** (68%). This is a 3.8%point decrease in performance, compared to the previous year.

Percentage of Complaints Resolved on Target



Directorate	Resolved within target (%)						
	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Learning & Skills	66.7	81.8	80	71.4	90.1	66.7	73
Managing Director & Resources	56.9	63	58.8	75.7	82.5	77.6	87
Environment & Housing	65.9	68.4	55.9	50.5	72.5	73.4	62
Council	64.2	68	56.5	56.8	75.1	74.2	73

Learning and Skills performance was **66.7%**, a 15.1%point decrease based on 2019/20. Environment and Housing achieved the second highest percentage of complaints resolved within target at **65.9%**; this is a decrease of 2.5%points on the previous year. The corporate average is **64.2%**.

What were the causes of complaints?

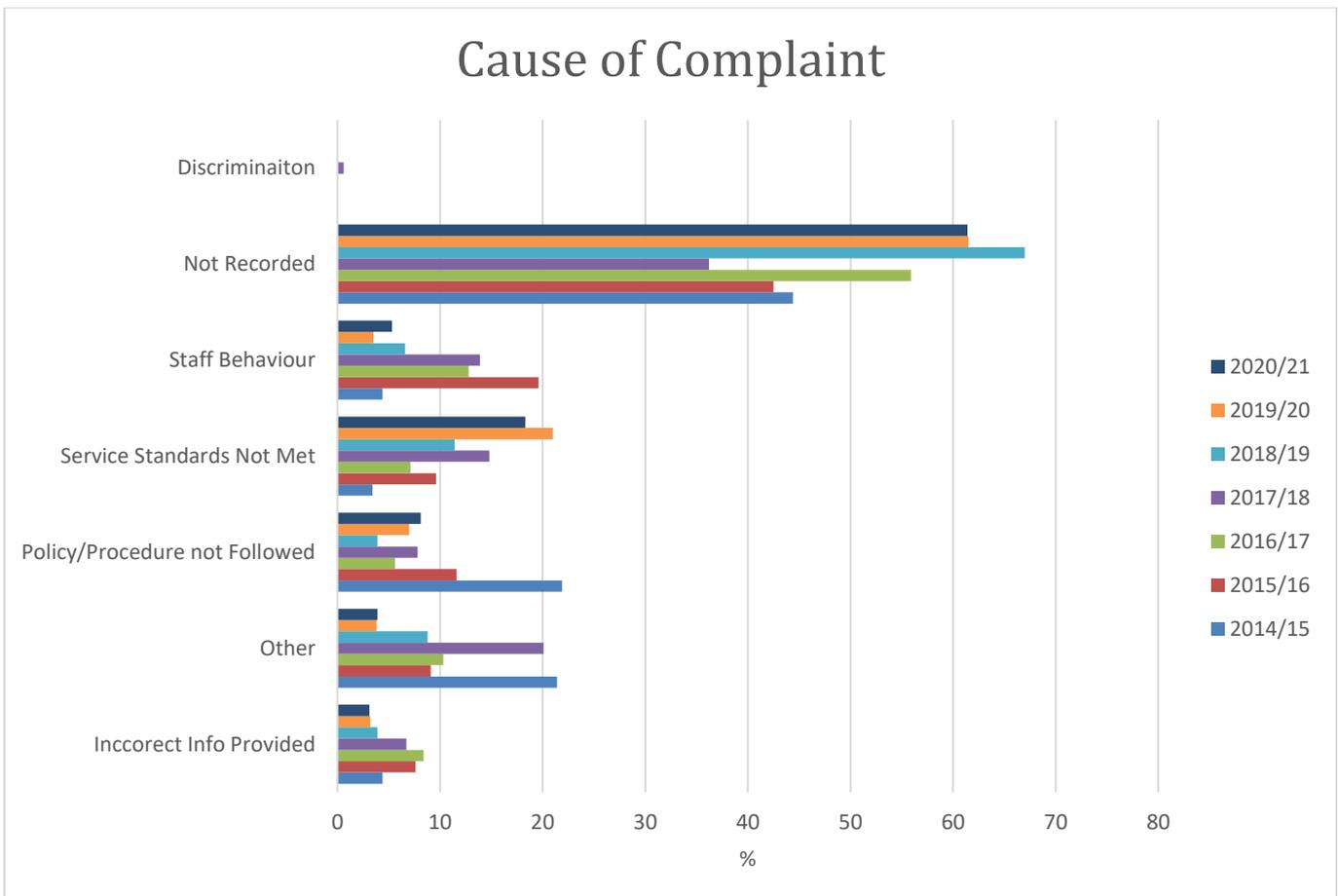
There may be more than one cause of a complaint. The Oracle CRM system is set up to reflect this. In total, the cause of complaint was recorded in only **38.8%** (34.7% in 2019/20) of cases. This is an increase of **4.1% points** compared to 2019/20. **61.3%** were not recorded and represents an area for improvement going forward. More information of this type being recorded will provide a greater insight into what customers want from our services and how we might be able to improve to reduce the number of complaints being received in the future.

Reasons for the generation of complaints are categorised as:

- Incorrect Information provided
- Other
- Policy / Procedure Not Followed
- Service Standards Not Met
- Staff Behaviour
- Discrimination (since January 2017)

Where recorded (**61.3% were not recorded**) the highest reason for the cause of complaints at council level is Service Standards Not Met at **18.4%**. Staff Behaviour was up to **5.3%** from 3.5% in 2019/20. The least frequent cause was Incorrect Information provided at **3.1%** (3.2% in 2019/20).

Where recorded the most frequent cause of complaint in Environment and Housing was Service Standards Not Met at **20.8%** (in 2019/20 the most frequent cause was Service Standards Not Met at 23.1%). Learning and Skills did not have the cause of complaint recorded (in 2019/20 most frequent cause was Incorrect Information Provided and Staff Behaviour both at 3.8%). In Managing Director & Resources the most frequent cause related to Service Standards not met and Staff Behaviour both at **9.7%** (in 2019/20 – it was Service Standards not met at 10.3%).



Area	Year	Incorrect Info provided (%)	Other (%)	Policy / Procedure not Followed (%)	Service Standards not met (%)	Staff Behaviour (%)	Not recorded (%)	Discrimination (%)
Learning & Skills	2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2019/20	8.3	0	0	0	8.3	83.3	0
	2018/19	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
	2017/18	13.6	0	13.6	18.2	18.2	36.4	0
	2016/17	17.6	11.8	11.8	5.9	29.4	23.5	-
	2015/16	12.5	0	18.8	18.8	12.5	37.5	-
	2014/15	0	0	100	0	0	0	-
Managing Director & Resources	2020/21	2.8	2.8	5.6	9.7	9.7	69.4	0
	2019/20	6.4	6.4	9	10.3	7.7	60.3	0
	2018/19	1.3	14.5	9.2	18.4	9.2	47.4	0
	2017/18	12	12	13	20.7	18.5	22.8	1.1
	2016/17	17.2	14.7	12.1	10.3	25.9	19.8	-
	2015/16	10.6	11.7	9.6	12.8	16	39.4	-
	2014/15	2	35.8	37.3	2.9	3.9	18.1	-
Environment & Housing	2020/21	3.2	4.2	8.8	20.8	4.2	58.8	0
	2019/20	2.5	3.5	6.9	23.1	2.7	61.2	0
	2018/19	2.9	7.7	6.1	10.1	6.1	70.4	0
	2017/18	4	24.9	5.3	12.2	11.8	41.2	0.4
	2016/17	4.8	8.7	3	6	7.5	70.1	-
	2015/16	6.5	8.6	11.8	8.3	21	43.8	-
	2014/15	7.5	5.2	2.9	4	5.2	75.1	-
Total	2020/21	3.1	3.9	8.1	18.4	5.3	61.3	0
	2019/20	3.2	3.8	7	21	3.5	61.5	0
	2018/19	3.9	8.8	3.9	11.4	6.6	67	0
	2017/18	6.7	20.1	7.8	14.8	13.9	36.2	0.6
	2016/17	8.4	10.3	5.6	7.1	12.8	55.9	-
	2015/16	7.6	9.1	11.6	9.6	19.6	42.5	-
	2014/15	4.4	21.4	21.9	3.4	4.4	44.4	-

What was learnt from the complaints?

Actions taken as a result of complaints broadly reflect the causes. Key Learning Points are categorised as:

- Review & Amend Systems
- Review & Revise Information / Communication
- Review & Revise Policies / Procedures
- Review Service Standards
- Staff Training & Development
- No Learning (previously Not Applicable)

A total of **85.8%** (83.4% in 2019/20) of complaints had no learning point recorded. This is 2.4%points higher than in 2019/20. These responses are mostly associated with complaints that were upheld/part upheld (182 complaints). The remaining figures were 118 not upheld and 34 open or under investigation. Whilst there is sufficient data on which to analyse the corporate response to complaints, more information would provide for a higher level of confidence in drawing conclusions from this data.

Learning and Skills had the largest percentage of complaints with no learning at **100%** (60% in 2019/20), whereas the lowest figure was Managing Director and Resources at **67.7%** (56.2% in 2019/20).

Where there was learning from complaints (in **14.2%** of complaints) the information at a Council level shows 2 main areas, namely Staff Training and Development at **5.3%** (8.2% in 2019/20) and Review and Revise Information at **4.1%** (1.3% in 2019/20). Comparing the performance in 2019/20 to 2020/21 there was a decrease in the Staff Training and Development of **2.9%** and an increase in Review and Revise Information of **2.8%**. The others at Council level in 2020/21 varied between **2.4%** (Review Service Standards), **2.1%** (Review and Amend Systems) and **0.3%** (Review and Revise Policies/Procedures).

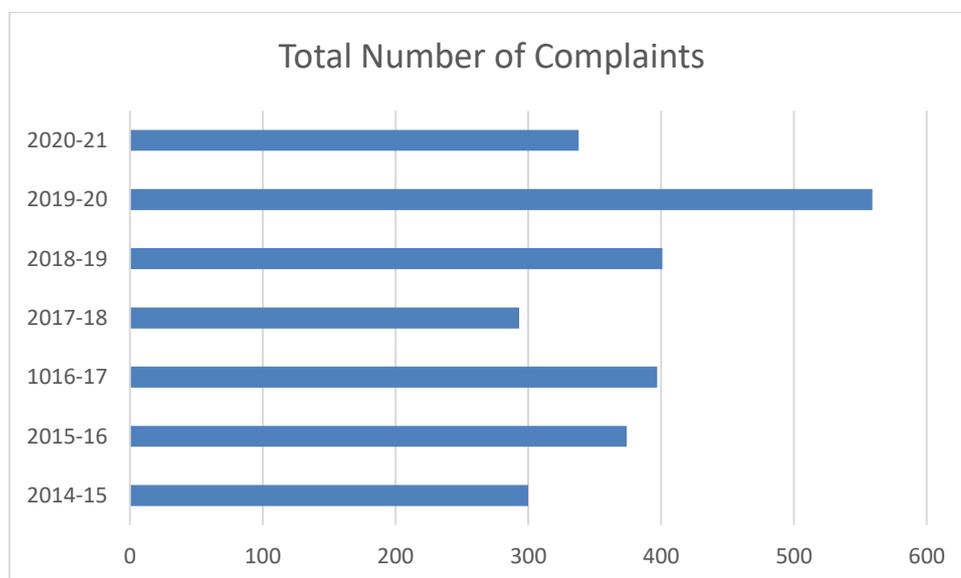
Service Standards Not Met was the highest figure in Environment and Housing at **20.8%** (23.5% in 2019/20), which showed a decrease of 2.7%. Incorrect Information Provided the lowest in Managing Director and Resources at **2.8%** (6.8% in 2019/20).

Area	Year	No Learning (%)	Review Systems (%)	Review Information (%)	Review procedures (%)	Review Service Standards (%)	Staff Training (%)
Learning & Skills	2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2019/20	27.3	18.2	18.2	0	9.1	27.3
	2018/19	60	40	0	0	0	0
	2017/18	42.9	7.1	14.3	14.3	0	21.4
	2016/17	54.5	9.1	27.3	9.1	0	0
	2015/16	66.7	11.1	11.1	0	0	11.1
	2014/15	66.7	0	16.7	0	0	16.7
Managing Director & Resources	2020/21	67.7	3.1	4.6	1.5	3.1	20
	2019/20	56.2	4.1	4.1	1.4	11	23.3
	2018/19	73.5	0	2.9	1.5	10.3	11.8
	2017/18	45.7	0	12.9	2.9	1.4	37.1
	2016/17	60	6.3	12.5	5	2.5	13.8
	2015/16	64.5	6.6	5.3	1.3	0	22.4
	2014/15	33.6	2.3	55	2.3	0	6.9
Environment & Housing	2020/21	90	1.9	4.1	0	2.2	1.9
	2019/20	88.8	0	0.4	0.4	4.8	5.5
	2018/19	64	2	3.5	0.3	19	11.2
	2017/18	65.7	1	10	4.3	3.3	15.7
	2016/17	42.2	2.9	7.2	2	25.8	19.9
	2015/16	41	5.5	4.1	6.2	1.4	41.7
	2014/15	39.3	8.6	10.4	2.5	1.2	38
Council	2020/21	85.8	2.1	4.1	0.3	2.4	5.3
	2019/20	83.4	0.9	1.3	0.5	5.7	8.2
	2018/19	65.6	2.1	3.3	0.5	17.3	11.2
	2017/18	59.9	1	10.9	4.4	2.7	21.1
	2016/17	46.1	3.8	8.8	2.8	20.4	18.1
	2015/16	46.5	5.9	4.5	5.1	1.1	37
	2014/15	37.3	5.7	30	2.3	0.7	24

Lessons Learned

The top issue for customers when making a complaint is service standards are not met, policies and processes not followed is the second highest area.

Conclusion



Year	Number of Complaints
2014/15	300
2015/16	374
2016/17	397
2017/18	293
2018/19	401
2019/20	559
2020/21	338

It is extremely likely that changes to service provision and customer expectations during the Corona Virus pandemic has had an impact on the number of complaints received during the year and on the Council's response performance.

The number of recorded Corporate complaints has decreased by **221** since 2019/20. The 2020/21 figure of **338** complaints have been recorded on Oracle CRM.

Customer satisfaction with the way complaints are investigated appears to continue to be high with over 90% not escalating past Stage 1 of the policy, following the long-term trend.

Declining trends in the percentage of complaints that are resolved against target time scales and in the percentage of complaints where a cause and learning outcome are recorded have been continued.

Equality Survey

An Equality Survey of complaints has not taken place to date due to COVID 19. An online Equality Survey is available for members of the public to complete following the submission of the online complaints form. As of the date of this report 22 responses have been received.

It is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the accessibility of the complaints process based on this very small sample size.

Of those who provided data, there 50% were male, 36% were female and 14% preferred not to say. The following age range completed the online form (2 people did not provide the information):

18 to 25 - 1 person

26 to 35 - 1 person

36 to 45 - 1 person

46 to 55 - 5 people

56 to 65 years – 4 people

66 to 75 – 7 people

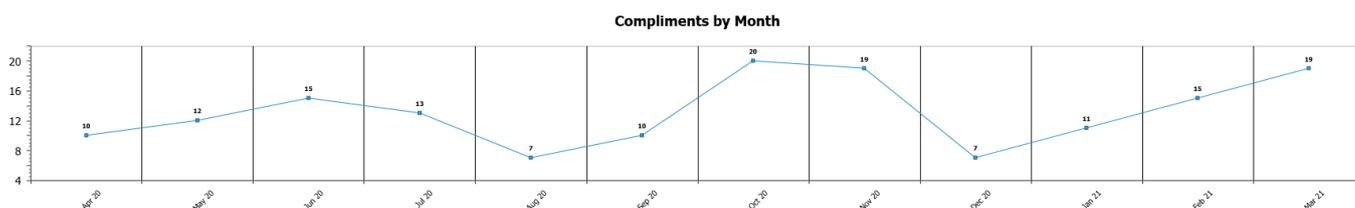
75+ - 1 person

78% of the complainants were aged 46 or over. Only 2 complaints were received from customers aged in their 20 to mid-30s. To reflect this, an App to record Corporate Complaints was issued by the council, it was also added to the online Complaints Form for completion. It was anticipated that this form of contact might encourage younger people to submit complaints. Further promotional work will be undertaken in 2021/22 to ensure that under-represented groups, and in particular younger citizens, are aware of the complaints process and how it can be accessed. 32% of the complaints were from customers whose day to day activities were limited by some form of disability.

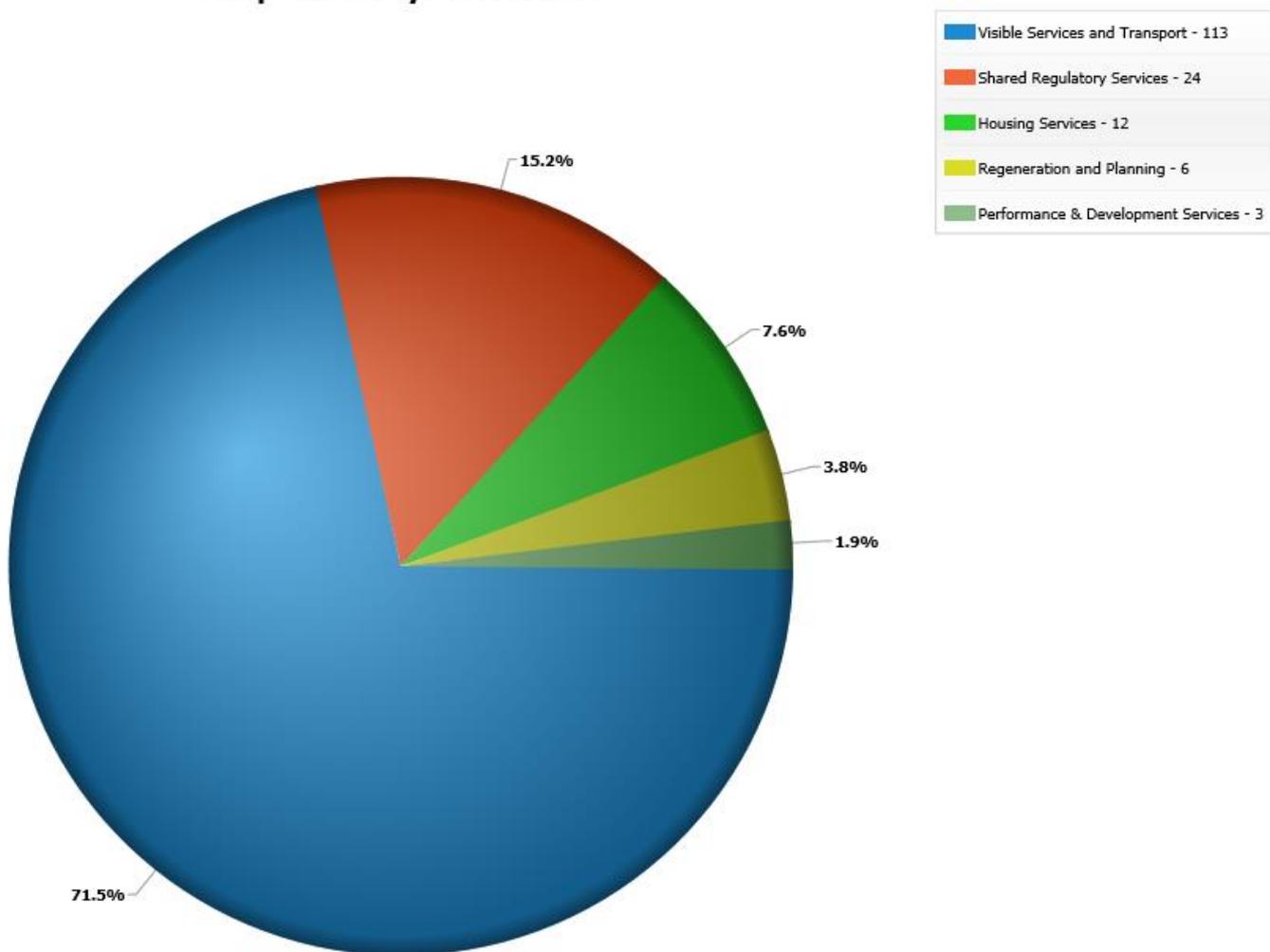
Compliments

Compliments can be recorded using Oracle CRM. The compliments received from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 are set out below by Service Request Type and Service Area. During 2020/21 a total of **158** (166 in 2019/20) compliments were received and recorded. The Service Areas that had the top 3 number of compliments are listed, namely Environment and Housing received 125 compliments, which was 79.1% of the total. Shared Regulatory Services 24 (19) Regeneration and Planning received 6 (20).

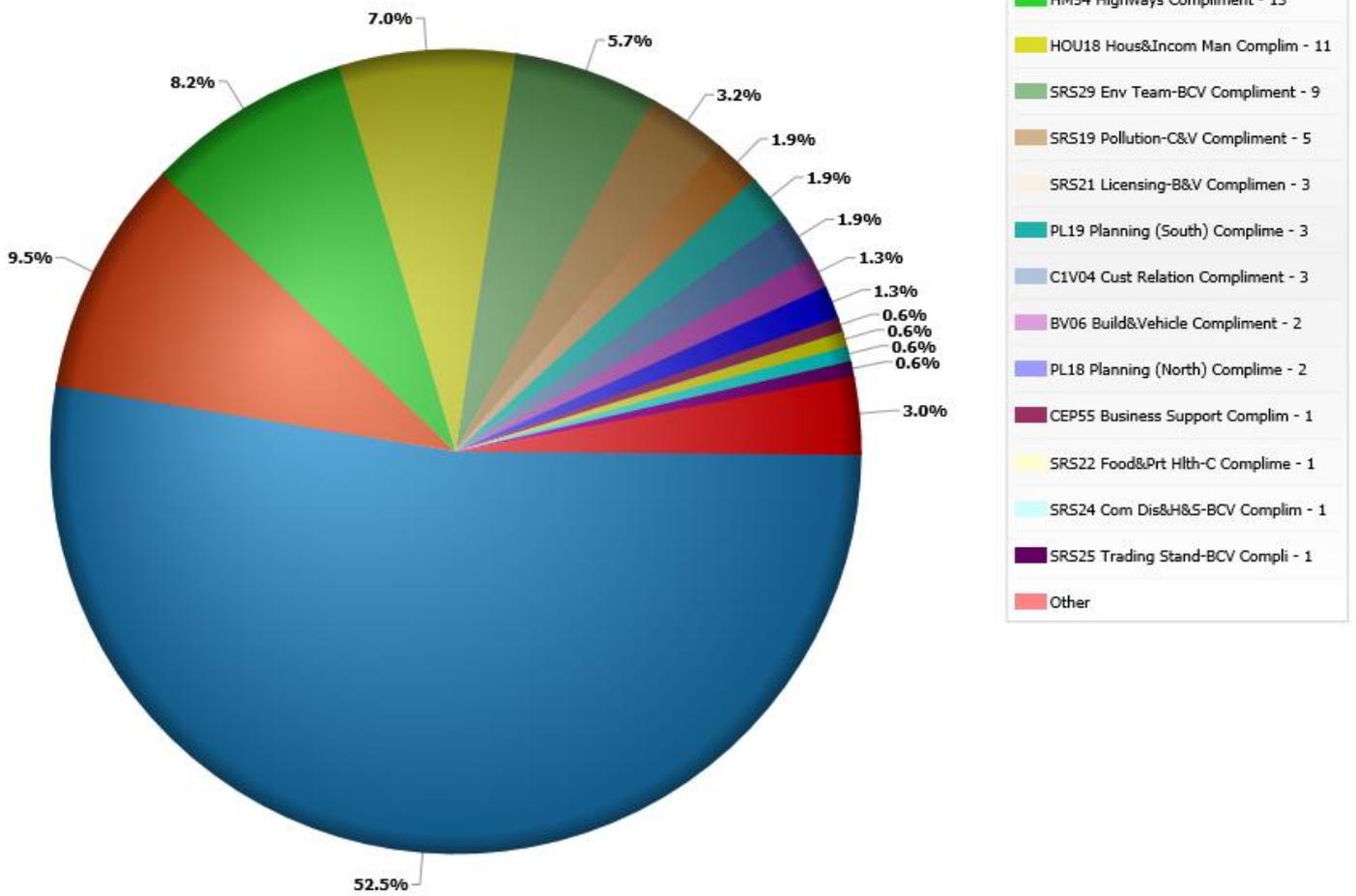
The top 3 Service Request Types, in respect of the number of compliments received during 2020/21 were **83** for Waste Management; this is 52.5% of the total recorded. Parks and Grounds received **15** compliments and Highways received **13**.



Compliments by Service Area



Compliments by SR Type



Areas for future work

As previously stated in this report the key focus of performance improvement are:

- Percentage of complaints received with target time scale
- Identifying causes of complaints
- Identifying learning outcomes from complaints

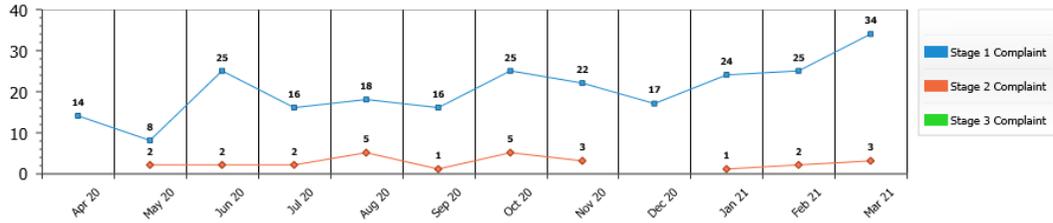
In addition to these effort is required to increase the amount of equalities data collected to ensure that all sections of our community are able to access and utilise the complaints procedure.

During 2021/20 the Council will be implementing a new Digital Customer Experience Platform to replace Oracle CRM. The new platform will provide additional functionality which can be harnessed to improve performance in the area's highlighted.

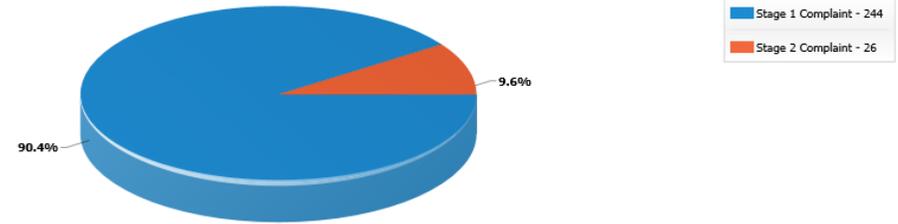
- Email notifications to complaint owners and managers based on resolution deadlines
- Ability to "stop the clock" on complaints when waiting for information from the customer to progress
- Allowing residents to record and track progress of their own complaints via a customer portal
- Ensuring that the cause of complaints must be recorded prior to a complaint being closed
- Ensuring that the cause of complaints must be recorded prior to a complaint being closed
- Providing managers with real time reports on complaints
- Automatic email to complainants on resolution with a link to an equalities form to improve the volume and quality of data received.

APPENDIX 1 - Environment and Housing 2020-21

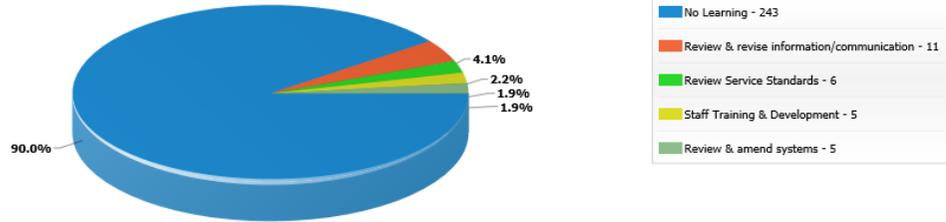
Monthly Complaints



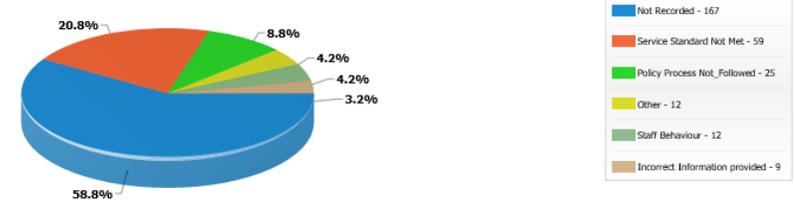
Complaint Resolution Stage



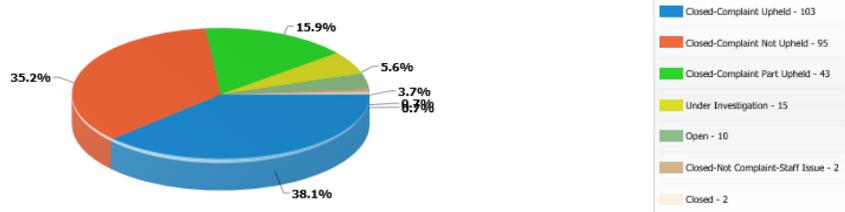
Key Learning Points



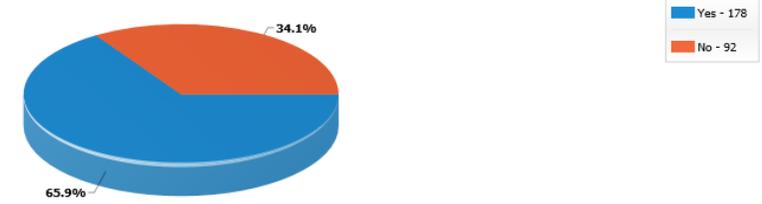
Cause Of Complaint



Complaints by Outcome

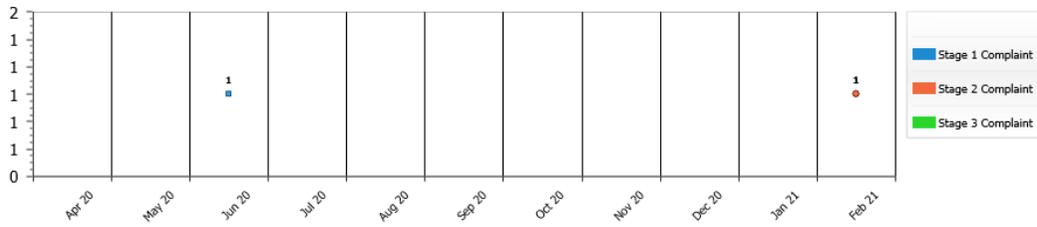


On Target

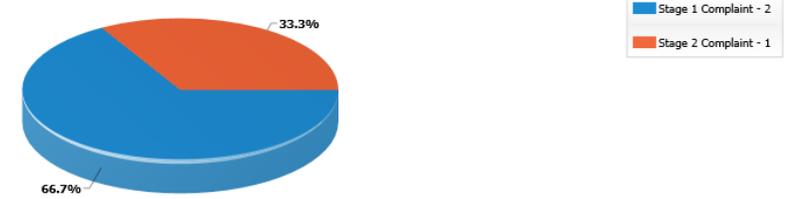


APPENDIX 2 - Learning and Skills 2020-21

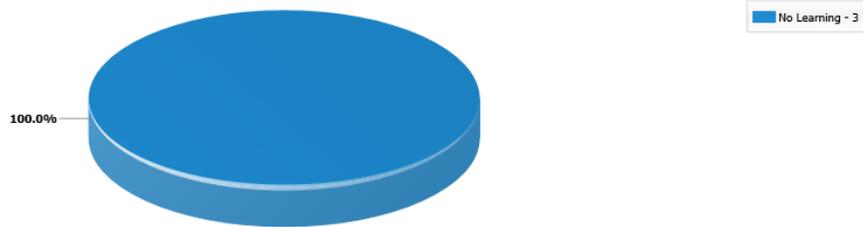
Monthly Complaints



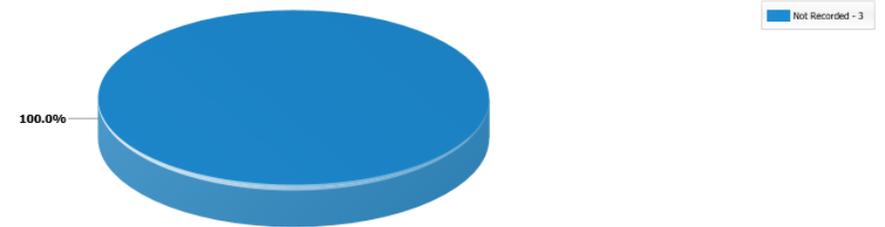
Complaint Resolution Stage



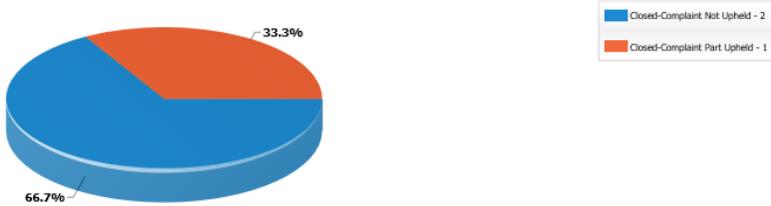
Key Learning Points



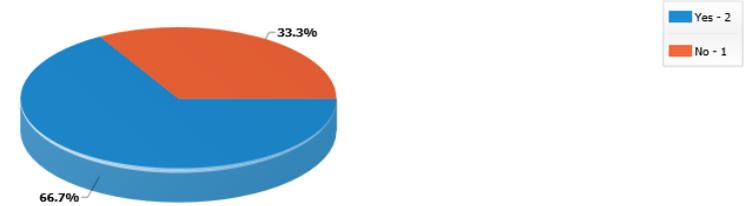
Cause Of Complaint



Complaints by Outcome

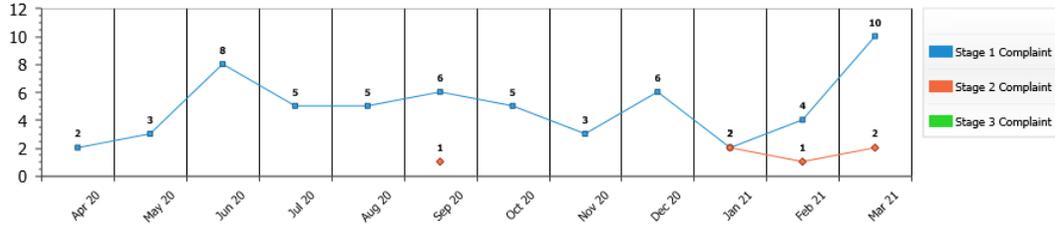


On Target

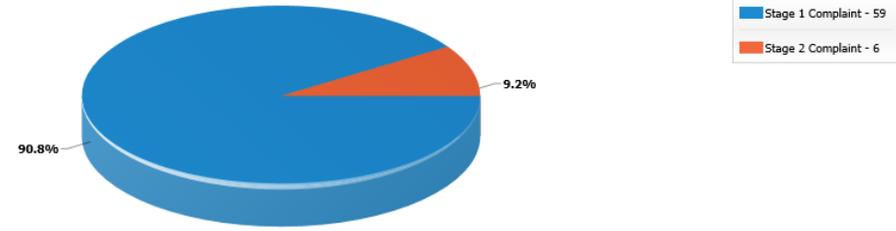


APPENDIX 3 - Managing Director & Resources 2020-21

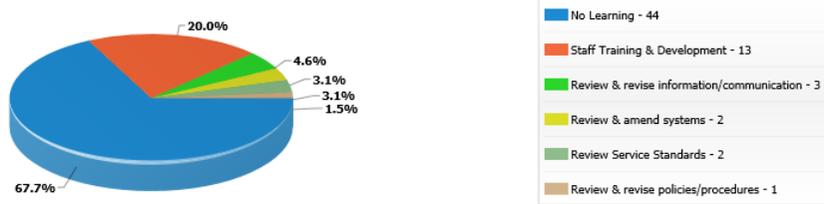
Monthly Complaints



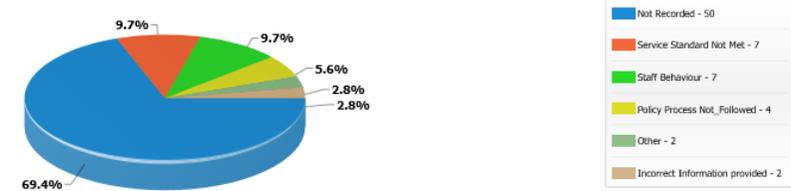
Complaint Resolution Stage



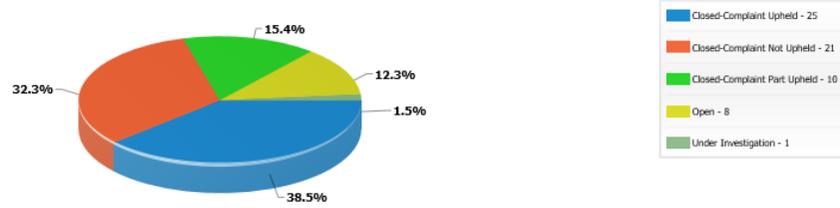
Key Learning Points



Cause Of Complaint



Complaints by Outcome



On Target



APPENDIX 4 – Case Studies 2020-21

Complaint Ref:	7485748
Service	Waste Management
Date Created	3.11.20
Date Resolved	4.11.20
Nature of Complaint	Delay in the collection of refuse
Ward	Cowbridge
Situation	Customer has experienced continued delays with a doorstep collection. Three previous service requests made to resolve.
How Long to Resolve	1 Day
Outcome	Upheld
Action	Supervisor instructed to have waste collected immediately in order to resolve the problem.
Learning Outcome	Staff training
Complaint Channel	Telephone

Complaint Ref:	7455650
Service	Waste Management
Date Created	29.7.20
Date Resolved	6.8.20
Nature of Complaint	Missed Collections
Ward	Cowbridge
Situation Summary	<p>Not collecting waste or recycling on the collection days. This has continued for a few months. Stress caused having to report the missed collections, requesting that someone contact the customer to discuss the situation to see if there is anything different that can be done to assist the crew. The customer had not received any contact or apology. The location alongside a busy road is causing danger whenever the recycling has blown onto the road despite trying to secure the bags. Animals rip open the bags and the complainant has to clean it.</p> <p>Complainant requested a telephone call to confirm that the waste is always collected on the route that is scheduled and also requested an apology.</p>
How Long to Resolve	9 Days
Outcome	Upheld
Action Summary	<p>Apology issued. Recognition of missed collections dating back to December 2019.</p> <p>Supervisor has spoken with Waste Crew you should see a significant improvement with your collections. Property has also been placed onto our monitoring list for an 8 week period in order to best ensure any possible issues are quickly identified and resolved.</p>
Learning Outcome	None identified
Channel	Form

SR Number	7452004
Department	Waste Management
Date Created	16.7.20
Date Resolved	20.7.20
Nature of Complaint	Issues with crew driving waste vehicle on a private drive
Ward	Rhoose
Situation	The customer was advised by the crew that they needed to use the drive because someone has a doorstep collection however the customer advised that the crew should be walking and not driving onto drive.
How Long to Resolve	5 Days
Outcome	Upheld
Action Summary	<p>Waste Management spoke to the customer, he advised that he wasn't going to complain about the crew driving onto the private driveway (as they have been told in the past not to drive onto private driveway on numerous occasions), but his blue bag was stickered and not collected, The customer refuses to recycle in the future. The customer was asked how he would manage when the Council reverts back to the two black bag limit per house if he does not recycle. The customer advised he could manage and would not discuss recycling.</p> <p>Waste Management reminded the crew that they are not to drive onto any private driveway when they collect.</p> <p>The crew supervisor will monitor the collections for the next month in order to ensure he is satisfied that the crew are following the appropriate collection procedures.</p> <p>Waste Management apologised for any upset and inconvenience caused.</p>
Learning Outcome	Staff training
Channel	Telephone

SR Number	7438676
Department	Housing Services
Date Created	1.6.20
Date Resolved	29.6.20
Nature of Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint Housing Application
Ward	Penarth
Situation Summary	<p>In response to the Stage 1 complaint a Stage 2 was requested. The findings in the response to the customer advised of the incorrect email address that the customer was provided. An explanation was not provided on what happened with the other copies that were handed in and sent to the homes4u email address. The customer did not find this reason to be acceptable due to the fact that multiple messages were left on the phone and at the front desk and were sent them to the homes4u email as well.</p> <p>The customer questioned the assessment and why he was not classed as a terminally ill disabled person and why wasn't help offered to him. The customer advised that he was wrongly assessed and also questioned why he did not get the right support or information from staff. The customer complained that staff repeatedly advised him on the incorrect information and that he was lied to.</p> <p>The customer was banded to gold medical priority, and back dated it from March and questioned why it was not back dated to January.</p> <p>The customer advised that the housing situation is having a massive detrimental effect on his mental and physical well-being.</p>
How Long to Resolve	20 Working Days
Outcome	Upheld
Action Summary	<p>The customer was advised of the following: Refresher training is to be provided to all the Housing Solutions Team on what support is available (including mental health support) and should be offered by the team, if appropriate.</p> <p>Refresher training is provided to the Housing Solutions Team on the Social Services & Well Being Act (Wales) 2014, our duty as a local authority to undertake care and support assessments and how staff can make a referral to Social Services for that assessment.</p> <p>All Housing Solutions and Homes4U staff are reminded of the local procedures on what action should be taken if a client threatens suicide through individual supervisions, team meetings and additional training and guidance.</p> <p>All Housing Solutions and Homes4U staff are reminded of the Council's Homes4U Allocations Policy through individual supervisions, team meetings and additional training to ensure that practice reflects policy and applicants are not advised that they cannot bid on general needs properties with an accessible banding or that properties will not be</p>

	<p>adapted, but that the appropriateness of any housing should be considered on an individual case basis.</p> <p>A face to face assessment is completed by the Housing Services Occupational Therapist.</p> <p>The establishment of a Medical / Accessible Housing Panel which will be made up of specialist staff including the Mental Health Caseworker and Occupational Therapist as well as Homes4U staff and the Housing Solutions Manager to review Homes4U banding for complex cases.</p>
Learning Outcome	Training
Channel	Email

SR Number	7402762
Department	Waste Management
Date Created	27.1.20
Date Resolved	30.1.20
Nature of Complaint	Recycling not collected
Ward	Dinas Powys
Situation Summary	Recycling not collected because it was placed in a plastic bag
How Long to Resolve	4 Days
Outcome	Not Upheld
Action Summary	<p>The customer was sent the following letter:</p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience this issue has caused you. On the 19th August 2019 the Waste Department introduced new requirements for all residents which entailed the prohibition of single-use plastic bag usage for recycling purposes. Prior to this date the Vale of Glamorgan Council also sent out a letter to every resident in the Vale of Glamorgan advising them of the upcoming changes. We did allow a grace period of a few weeks-months after this date in order to allow some residents to get used to the new recycling standards. Instead of using single-use plastic bags for recycling residents were advised in letter, Twitter and through the Vale of Glamorgan Website that they would need to collect blue recycling bags provided by the Vale of Glamorgan Council free of charge from their local libraries.</p> <p>At the point our grace period was phased out, as this period was temporary not granted indefinitely, our crews were advised to begin rejecting recycling placed out in single-use plastic bags as contaminated.</p> <p>These measures were brought in to improve the environment for every resident within the Vale and in order to adhere to recycling targets set out by the Welsh Government that the Vale of Glamorgan's Waste Department must meet by specific dates.</p> <p>As a gesture of goodwill we will return to collect your rejected recycling in order to save you the trouble of disposing it via our recycling centres</p>

	or emptying it out into the correct containers. Going forward, I would advise that if you have any plastic bags you want to discard of they will need to be placed into your black bag waste. You can also obtain recycling bags and boxes from any of the Vale libraries.
Learning Outcome	Not Recorded
Channel	Telephone

SR Number	7420786
Department	Building Services
Date Created	10.3.20
Date Resolved	31.3.20
Nature of Complaint	Leak in the roof
Ward	Penarth
Situation Summary	Leak in the roof
How Long to Resolve	21 Days
Outcome	Not a complaint.
Outcome Summary	Fixed leaking roof
Learning Outcome	n/a
Channel	Form