

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	<h1>Governance and Ethics Committee</h1> <p>5 September 2024</p>
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Report title	Complaints Annual Report – 2023-2024	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield, Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
Originating service	Transformation	
Accountable employee(s)	Sarah Campbell Tel Email	Customer Engagement Manager 01902 551090 sarah.campbell@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Leadership Team Meetings: Finance, Governance, Regeneration, Joint Families (Adult, Children's & Education, Public Health), Resident Services, People, City Assets and Transformation	August 2024

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is asked to note:

1. The contents of the complaints progress update for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, including:
 - a. The Statutory Complaints Activity for Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health
 - b. All the other complaints activity governed by the Corporate Complaints Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the complaints, including Local Government and Social Care/Housing Ombudsman enquiries received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council's complaints team handles complaints, compliments and service enquiries from members of the public. Those relating to children's, adults and public health matters fall under a statutory framework, while the remainder are handled under the council's corporate complaints policy.

3.0 Summary Statement

- 3.1 The complaints team has continued to work effectively and build strong relationships with council services and Leadership Teams ensuring they meet the corporate and statutory functions and deadlines.
- 3.2 The council will continue to maintain a professional relationship in their role as the link officer with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO); this will ensure that the process works effectively for both the council and the Ombudsman whilst resolving complaints quickly and improving public services through learning from complaints.

4.0 Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

[CO/30072024/Z]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The statutory complaints procedure must comply with various statutes. These include:
- Children and Family Services - The Children Act 1989, Representations
 - Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Local Authority functions covered include services provided under Parts III, IV and V of the Children Act 1989
 - Adult Social Care – The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009; which came into force on 1 April 2009.
 - Public Health - The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

Legal Code: [SZ/01082024/P]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 No equalities implications have been identified, either through actions or recommendations of this report or from the data presented within it.

7.0 All Other Implications

7.1 The complaints element of the social care and corporate procedure is part of a wider assurance process supporting quality in service delivery standards. This can then be a positive experience for people and contribute to their health and well-being. For those occasions where the experience which has led to a complaint is a less positive one, then there is an opportunity for appropriate action or redress so that the health and well-being of the complainant and/or relevant others is secured. The compliments process allows customers to note great practice by the Council; positive experience of officers working in many different settings will support improved experience of health and well-being for individuals as well as for staff who can be satisfied that their work is appreciated.

8.0 Human Resources

8.1 There are no human resource implications identified. As part of their operational management duties, Managers will continue to monitor and encourage take up of the complaint training and take necessary action accordingly.

9.0 Schedule of Background Papers

9.1 None for consideration.

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appended to this covering report are the following documents:

10.2 Appendix 1 – Complaints Annual Report 2023-2024

Appendix 2 – Complaint Dashboards 2023-2024

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City of Wolverhampton Council

2023 - 2024 Annual Complaints Report



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The council will ensure that the link officer role works effectively for both the council and the Ombudsman whilst resolving complaints quickly and improving public services through learning from complaints; we will also continue to maintain a professional relationship for the link officer role with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO). The Customer Liaison Team has continued to work effectively to build strong relationships with council services and Leadership Teams to maintain corporate and statutory functions and deadlines.

During this period complaint numbers have increased. An increase in complaints can be seen as an indication of an open culture around feedback with the council's complaints procedure being simple, accessible, clear and straightforward. The service is currently reviewing the customer's journey and working with council services to determine if any changes can be made to our complaint handling. Any learning that we have established from our upheld complaints has led to service improvements across the authority and has contributed to the council's future planning.

Forward plan

The focus for 2023-2024 is to continue to achieve all statutory and corporate requirements and in doing so maintain the council's complaint standards and reputation. Complaint process training will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and promoted across the council to ensure officer awareness of complaint handling and processes. The council's complaint procedures and complaint information resources will be further developed and reviewed under a complaint policy framework ensuring they are fit for purpose and meet the corporate and statutory guidelines.

The service secured a new complaint case management system which was launched in September 2023; this has transformed ways of working and improved efficiencies in process for the complaints function across the council. Directorates across the council will continue to be supported by the service providing complaint guidance and advice on complaint enquiries/cases on an ad hoc basis.

Introduction

The council has an accessible central complaint function which addresses all corporate and social care statutory requirements, whilst maintaining the council's standards and reputation. The council continues to be committed to effective complaint handling, whilst adopting best practice in line with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) guidelines and ensuring good practice is embedded into the council's functions.

This annual report provides an overview of the council's handling of complaints, compliments and service requests/informal complaints from members of the public, including LGSCO /Housing Ombudsman (HO) enquiries received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Those relating to children's, adults and public health matters fall under a statutory framework, while the remainder are handled under the council's corporate complaints policy. This report provides an update of the council's performance and an overview of what is going well and where improvements can be made.

The Annual Report provides an update on;

- Statutory complaints activity for Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health
- Complaints activity governed by the Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO) cases
- Complaint training for council officers via the council's learning hub
- Learning from complaints to improve performance across council services
- Managing unreasonable customer behaviour procedure
- Review of complaint policies and procedure and information
- Complaint handling code

Statutory and Regulatory Complaints

The council is required by statute to provide or undertake certain functions in line with the following statutory complaints procedure which must comply with the following. These include:

- Children and Family Services - The Children Act 1989, Representations
- Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Local Authority functions covered include services provided under Parts III, IV and V of the Children Act 1989
- Adult Social Care – The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009; which came into force on 1 April 2009.
- Public Health - The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

The remainder of complaints are handled under the council's corporate complaints policy and procedure.

Children's and Education Complaints Activity

Informal Complaints

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for young people/children, parents, advocates and carers to raise issues of concern without those matters being treated as formal complaints, as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner. These are referred to as informal complaints.

86 informal complaints were received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 compared to 91 informal complaints received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023; a decrease of five cases.

Stage one complaints

The council received 71 stage one Children's and Education Services complaints compared to 41 during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, an increase of 30 cases. The 71 complaints received during this period refer to 22 separate service areas. The highest figure of nine cases referred to Education, SEND Team, followed by CYPiC Team 3 and Adoption@heart both receiving eight cases. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful

attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. Out of the 71 complaints cases received, 17 (24%) cases were investigated under our statutory procedure and 54 (76%) cases were investigated under our corporate complaints policy.

In accordance with Ombudsman's reporting good practice, the following customer groups submitted complaints to the council; carers (6); child/young person (2); family member (2); foster carer (3); grandparent (2); guardian (1); parent (48); resident (7). During this period, one complaint was submitted via an advocacy service for a stage two complaint and one for a stage three panel complaint.

Out of the 71 complaints logged and investigated during this period, 13 (18%) cases were upheld (at fault), 17 (23%) cases were partially upheld (partially at fault), 37 (52%) cases not upheld (not at fault), two cases withdrawn, one resolved and one rejected (7%). The 13 cases upheld were for the following service areas; Adoption@heart (4); SEND (3); MASH (1); Court Team (1); Fostering (1); Intensive Family Support (1); Social Worker in School (SSWIS) (1) and Children and Young People in Care (CYPiC) Team 2 (1).

Timescales

Out of the 71 cases received in total, 66 cases were responded to within the timescales. Cases responded to outside of the timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, scheduled meetings, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint. The reporting periods on cases received covers the financial year, however, cases closed outside of that year will be reported in different timeframes.

Stage two complaints

The council received a total of eight Children's stage two complaint cases.

Out of the eight stage two cases received, the council received one (12%) statutory stage two complaints in accordance with our statutory children's procedure; this is in comparison to four cases received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The council received seven (88%) corporate stage two complaints in accordance with our corporate complaints policy; this is in comparison to two corporate cases received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Out of the total eight cases received, one (12.5%) case was upheld, one (12.5%) case was partially upheld and four (50%) cases not upheld; two (25%) cases are currently under investigation.

Seven Children's Corporate Stage two complaints received are as follows:

- Education, SEND Team received one complaint in relation to outcome of meetings re; delays with amended plan and delays with transition plan; outcome, partially upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Education, SEND Team received one complaint in relation to EHCP plan; the information provided in stage one response was incorrect and school was very unsupportive; outcome, not upheld
- Education, SEND Team received one complaint in relation to EHCP review and personal budget; outcome, upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

- Strengthening Families, Child Assessment Team received one complaint in relation to experience with social services, not issuing a report and no engagement; outcome, not upheld
- Strengthening Families, Child Assessment Team received one complaint in relation to care plan, foster care service and EHCP; outcome, not upheld
- Children and Young People in Care, CYPiC Team Three received one complaint in relation to officer conduct from CWC Social Worker and allegations; outcome, not upheld
- Director of Children's Services received one complaint in relation to change of use for a residential home; outcome currently under investigation, awaiting final report

One Children's Statutory stage two complaint received as follows:

- Special Support, Specialist Intensive Support Service received one complaint in relation to various actions and decisions of social workers and support teams; outcome, currently under investigation, awaiting final report

Stage three complaints

Where a statutory children's stage two complaint investigation has been carried out and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to request matters proceed to the final stage of the statutory complaints procedure; a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel.

During 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 one case escalated to a stage three panel during this period; this is in comparison to no cases received for the previous year 2022/23. This stage three case was in relation to the council providing consent for a hospital operation; the council has taken on board the findings of the stage three panel and carried out the appropriate learning and recommendations.

Complaint Category

Based on the complaint details received the top three complaint categories for Children's Services are Conduct/Attitude, Failure in Service and Quality of Service.

Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Liaison Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. 50 compliments were received for Children's Services. Children and Young People in Care received the highest, followed by Strengthening Families and Safeguarding teams.

Public Health – Complaint Activity

Regionally and nationally councils receive very few complaints in relation to Public Health Services. A typical complaint would be where a council has commissioned a service for local people through a Clinic or GP practice. Complaints in relation to GP's and Hospitals are dealt with through a separate complaint process managed by Health Services.

Informal complaints

Eight informal complaints were received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024; this is in comparison to four cases received for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Stage one complaints

The council received six complaints during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This is in comparison to one complaint received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Out of the six complaints received, two (33%) cases were upheld; Leisure Centre (1); Central Library (1); one (17%) case partially upheld; three (50%) cases not upheld.

Adult Services – Complaint Activity

Informal complaints

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for adult complaints to be resolved informally utilising a number of resolution methods as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

During 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 the council received 80 informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to 72 informal complaints received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, an increase of eight cases.

Stage one complaints

The council received 57 formal complaints compared to 25 during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, representing an increase of 32 cases during this period. The 57 complaints received covered 15 separate service areas. The highest figure of 15 cases referred to Adult Services and Health Partnership, East Team, followed by Adult MASH receiving eight cases, and Adult North and Independent Living Service both receiving six cases. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. During this period, eight complaints received were in relation to commissioned services.

Out of the 57 cases logged and investigated during this period, ten (17.5%) cases were upheld, 20 (35%) cases partially upheld, 12 (21%) cases not upheld, two (3.5%) cases currently still under investigation, seven withdrawn, five rejected and one resolved on receipt (total 23%). The ten (17.5%) cases upheld were for the following service areas; North Locality Team (2); East Locality Team (2); Independent Living Service (2); West Locality Team (1); MASH team (1); Commissioned Service (2).

Out of the 57 complaints cases received, 45 (79%) cases were investigated under our statutory procedure and 12 (21%) cases were investigated under our corporate complaints policy.

Stage two complaints

Adult Provision, Community Financial Support, received one corporate stage two complaint in relation to financial assessments for a family member; outcome partially upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out.

Complaint category

Based on the complaint details received the top three complaint categories for Adult Services are Charges/Fees, Conduct/Attitude/Allegations and Quality of Service.

Timescales

Out of the 57 cases received in total, 52 (91%) cases were responded to within the timescales. Cases responded to outside of the timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, scheduled meetings, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint. The reporting periods on cases received covers the financial year, however, cases closed outside of that year will be reported in different timeframes.

Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Liaison Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. 145 compliments were received for Adult Services; Community Finance received the highest number, followed by East Locality and Hospital Social Work Team.

Adult Services Community Finance Team has confirmed that their customer satisfaction survey has been undertaken during this period and 333 feedback cards have been received from customers; this data includes positive compliment customer feedback.

Areas of Learning from Complaints

See attached Dashboard for learning.

Corporate Complaints Activity

Informal complaint enquiries/service request enquiries

The Customer Liaison Team works alongside the service involved and the customer complaining to resolve the complaint informally, preventing it becoming a formal complaint. 2,046 informal complaints and service request enquiries were logged with the Customer Liaison Team in line with our corporate complaints policy during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, compared to 1,279 received during 1 April 2022 to 30 March 2023. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, missed bin collection, contaminated bins, appeals, parking enquiries, licensing enquiries, litter or general enquiries that fall outside of the corporate complaints policy jurisdiction. All enquiries are logged and resolved informally, or sign posted to the correct process without going through the corporate complaints policy; this provides a swift outcome and resolution for the customer by resolving concerns at service level.

Corporate stage one complaints

The council received 200 stage one corporate complaints compared to 90 received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023; an increase of 110 number of complaints received. Out of the 200 cases logged and investigated, 50 (25%) cases were upheld (at fault), 19 (9.5%) partially upheld (partly at fault), 111 (55.5%) not upheld (not at fault), ten withdrawn, eight rejected and two resolved (total 10%). The 50 cases upheld were for the following service areas; Waste Services (10); Revenues and Benefits (9); Customer Services (5); Bereavement (3); Highways (3); Public Protection (3); Street Cleansing (3); Information Governance (2); Licensing (2); Network Management (2); Parking Services (2); City Assets (1); Arbor (1); Ground Maintenance (1); Housing (1); Private Sector Housing (1); Registrars (1). The 200 complaints cover 32 separate service areas; the highest figure of 46 complaints refer to

Waste Management followed by Licensing receiving 25 and Revenues and Benefits receiving 24 cases.

Corporate complaint category

Based on the complaint details received the top three complaint categories for Corporate Complaints are Communication/Information, Conduct/Attitude and Failure in Service.

Corporate timescales

Out of the 200 cases received in total, 190 (95%) were responded to within the timescales. Cases responded to outside of the timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, scheduled meetings, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint. The reporting periods on cases received covers the financial year, however, cases closed outside of that year will be reported in different timeframes.

Stage two corporate complaints

The council received 29 stage two corporate complaints compared to 14 cases for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, an increase of 15 cases in comparison to the previous year. Out of the 29 cases received, three (10%) cases were upheld (at fault), four (14%) cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and 22 (76%) cases not upheld (not at fault).

Stage two complaints received are as follows:

Governance received the following:

- Legal Services received a complaint in relation to data breach and officer conduct; outcome not upheld

Finance received the following:

- Insurance received one complaint in relation to handling of a claim by a council officer; outcome, not upheld
- Revenues and Benefits received one complaint in relation to business rate charges; outcome, not upheld
- Revenues and Benefits received one complaint in relation to lack of response from the empty properties team, conduct of call handlers within customer services and premium applied by Council Tax; outcome, partially upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Regeneration received the following:

- Planning received one complaint in relation to planning application for neighbours property; outcome, not upheld
- Planning received one case in relation to concerns regarding the planning application and actions of the planning officer; outcome, not upheld
- Planning received one case in relation to the handling of a planning breach; outcome, not upheld
- Planning received one case in relation to process and procedure of planning application; outcome, not upheld

- Enterprise received one case in relation to failings by the council in relation to a business; outcome, partially upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Resident Services received the following:

- Arboriculture received one case in relation to health and safety of a tree location on land by a resident's property; outcome, not upheld
- Licensing Team received one case in relation to the request to join trade group being declined; outcome, not upheld
- Licensing Team received one case in relation to premises licence application; outcome, not upheld
- Licensing Team received one case in relation to the council not following legislation around taxi operators correctly; outcome, not upheld
- Licensing received one case in relation to licensing badges cancelled without notice; outcome, upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Licensing received one case in relation to poor service received by licensing officers; outcome, not upheld
- Licensing received one case in relation to taxi operators licensed with Wolverhampton with no working office based in Wolverhampton as required; outcome, not upheld
- Private Sector Housing received one case in relation to officer conduct of council officer; outcome, upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Environmental Services received one case in relation to paying for pest control service; outcome, not upheld
- Highways received one case in relation to a request to extend a dropped kerb; outcome, not upheld
- Public Protection received one case in relation to lack of contact from the Public Protection Service; outcome, not upheld
- Public Protection received one case in relation to garden waste on privately owned land with traces of asbestos; outcome, not upheld
- Transportation received one complaint in relation to parking and housing concerns; outcome, not upheld
- Waste Services received one case in relation to missed bins for assisted refuse collection; outcome, not upheld
- Waste Services received one case in relation to non-collection of bins; outcome, not upheld
- Waste Services received one case in relation to repeated missed bin collection; outcome, not upheld
- Waste Services received one case in relation to non-collection of recycling bins; outcome, upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Waste Services received one case in relation to service received by waste management; outcome, not upheld

Economy received the following:

- Customer Services received one case in relation delay and lack of communication from blue badge department with handling and processing family member's application; outcome, partially upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Customer Services received one case in relation to incorrect information being given; outcome, partially upheld, appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Corporate compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Liaison Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. The council received 191 compliments; Planning Department received the highest number, followed by Customer Services and Licensing Team.

Area of learning for corporate complaints

See attached Dashboard for complaint learning.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Enquiries (LGSCO)

The council received four Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries as outlined below; out of the four cases received three cases were upheld and one case not upheld.

Adult Services received one complaint as follows:

- Adult Services and Communities received one case in relation to the council's communication regarding the process and financial implications of moving into residential care; outcome, upheld, fault and injustice; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint as follows:

- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint about priority the council awarded to the complainant's application to the housing register; outcome not upheld, no fault

Children's Services (Education) received one complaint as follows:

- SEND team received one complaint in relation to delays with EHCP plan; outcome upheld, fault and injustice; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Resident Services received one complaint as follows:

- Network Management received one complaint in relation to ownership of a path, public right of way and access issues; outcome, upheld, fault and injustice; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) assessment enquiries

The council received 37 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman initial assessment enquiries. Out of the 37 initial assessment enquiries received the outcomes were as follows; closed after initial enquiries no further action (17); premature complaint (9); closed after initial enquiries out of jurisdiction (7); passed to investigation team for further consideration (4).

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) annual letter

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publishes annual complaint statistics for each local authority. The LGSCO provided decisions on 51 enquiries during 2023/24 in relation to this council; this is in comparison to 44 during 2022/23. The outcome on the following 51 enquiries is as follows: advice given (3); closed after initial enquiries (24); incomplete/invalid (1); referred back for local resolution (16); upheld (6) and not upheld (1). Out of the 51 enquiries from the LGSCO, they carried out seven detailed investigations of the complaints they received about the City of Wolverhampton Council for 2023/24; this is in comparison to 11 detailed investigations received for 2022/23. Out of the seven detailed (full) investigations carried out, the LGSCO has recorded six cases findings of fault (upheld) and one case (not upheld) for the council during 2023/24. City of Wolverhampton Council's upheld rate has increased by 4%, from 82% for 2022/23 to 86% for 2023/24. The average upheld rate for similar authorities is 80%. However, this year, the LGSCO has provided the number of upheld complaints per 100,000 population. This has been adjusted for City of Wolverhampton Council's population; 2.2 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The annual report confirms that the council is 100% compliant with carrying out the LGSCO's upheld remedies and recommendations; this compares to an average of 99% in similar organisations. In 0% of upheld cases, the council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the LGSCO; this compares to an average of 14% in similar authorities.

Service Area	Upheld	Not upheld	Total number of detailed (full) investigations	Total number of enquiries
Adult Care Services	1	0	1	9
Benefits and Tax	0	0	0	4
Corporate and Other	0	0	0	2
Education and Children's Services	2	0	2	12
Environmental, Public Protection and Reg	1	0	1	7
Highways and Transport	1	0	1	4
Housing	1	1	2	10
Planning and Development	0	0	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	6	1	7	51

The LGSCO has confirmed that the numbers of cases which they report will not necessarily match the complaints data that we hold as statistics are recorded by the LGSCO in different annual year business periods. Not all cases are published due to confidentiality.

In 2022/23 the LGSCO has previously advised that they have reviewed and changed their investigation process and are more selective in the cases that they look at in detail; they are less likely to carry out investigations on borderline cases, therefore, they are finding a higher portion of fault overall across all complaints.

City of Wolverhampton Council's performance for 2023/24 can be compared with neighbouring and other authorities via the LGSCO's interactive map; this interactive tool shows data and information, including annual performance data, about councils in one place. The map also provides links to published decision statements, public interest reports, annual letters and information about service improvements that have been agreed by each council. This interactive tool assists the council to monitor the service improvements they agree to make following the LGSCO's investigations. See link to interactive map as follows: [your council's performance interactive map](#).

Housing Ombudsman (HO) Enquiries

The council received a total of 14 enquiries; out of the 14 enquiries, 13 enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman were received for Wolverhampton Homes and one enquiry for Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) as outlined below; out of the 14 enquiries received, we are currently awaiting the outcome of three cases. All outcomes of the 11 cases are outlined below.

The 14 cases received were as follows:

Wolverhampton Homes received 13 enquiries as follows:

- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's request and the subsequent installation of a hard standing and the landlord's handling of the complaint; outcome, maladministration by the landlord in the way it responded to the resident's request for a hardstanding driveway and no maladministration by the landlord in the way it responded to the resident's complaint; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of and response to the resident's request for compensation, including property damage and the landlord's complaint handling; outcome, no maladministration by the landlord in respect of its response to the resident's complaint about damage to contents and maladministration by the landlord in its complaint handling; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of the repair of the resident's bathroom, reports of patio area not draining properly and water ingress, removal company's actions and contractors work and request for compensation; outcome, falls outside of HO jurisdiction
- Complaint in relation to landlord's handling of the resident's reports about leaks affecting their home; outcome, HO confirmed that Wolverhampton Homes has, satisfactorily resolved the complaint about its handling of a roof leak, maladministration in the landlord's complaint handling; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of reports of damp and mould in the bedroom, reports of damage to personal belongings from the damp and mould and request for compensation; outcome, currently awaiting the final decision from a review of the decision
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's concerns involving shared access and harassment from a neighbour; outcome, maladministration by the landlord in its handling of the issue regarding shared access to a gate between neighbouring properties and maladministration by the landlord in its complaints handling; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Complaint is in relation the landlord's handling of a request to install a mobility scooter shed and the decision reached; outcome, no maladministration
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's response regarding a request for reinstatement of leaseholder forum meetings and access to information about building insurance and painting contracts; outcome, no maladministration and service failure
- Complaint in relation to the landlords handling of installation of a water meter, request to install laminate flooring, defective ventilation between properties, reports of anti-social behaviour and reports to the communal door; outcome, currently awaiting the final decision
- Complaint in relation to landlord's responsive repairs service, handling of reports of damp and mould, handling of the resident's complaint, handling of a fence replacement

and availability of appointments for which the landlord has failed to attend; outcome, maladministration and service failure; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

- Complaint in relation to landlord's response to a request for fencing to be installed in relation to reports of anti-social behaviour; outcome maladministration and service failure; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out
- Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of a response to the resident's request for costs associated with items removed from the property; outcome, no maladministration
- Complaint in relation to landlord's handling of reports of damp and mould and request for a refund of recharges in relation to guttering repairs; outcome, currently awaiting the final decision

Dovecotes TMO received one enquiry as follows:

- Complaint in relation to the landlord's response to the resident's request to install a fence; outcome severe maladministration by the landlord in respect of its response to the resident's request to install fencing around the boundary of the front garden; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Housing Ombudsman (HO) assessment enquiries

The council received 20 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries. Out of the 20 initial assessment enquiries received 16 enquiries were premature complaints, two fell outside of the HO's jurisdiction and two enquiries progressed to a full investigation.

Housing Ombudsman (HO) annual performance report

The Housing Ombudsman publish an annual performance report. The council is currently awaiting their draft report for 2023/24; once received the council will verify the data and liaise with Wolverhampton Homes.

Overall Council

Service Improvements and Learning from Complaints

Where complaints highlight that things have gone wrong, heads of service, managers and the Customer Liaison Team are required to identify these areas, implement remedies and review processes/procedures where necessary. Customer Liaison Team and Directorates are committed to learning and require the completion of a corrective actions log from each complaint we find at fault. When a complaint is upheld/partially upheld (council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a financial remedy, change to policy or service delivery at any stage of the complaints process or at Ombudsman stage, the Customer Liaison Team arrange for the implementation of the correction actions to be logged, recorded and any action to be undertaken. Recommendations within these corrective actions are agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Manager/Director to ensure appropriate remedies and changes to policy/service delivery are implemented and compliant with any Ombudsman's recommendations and remedies.

The Customer Liaison Team also attend regular meetings across the council; Adults, Children's and Education Services Quality Assurance Meetings, Children's Services Head of Service/Deputy Director complaint meetings, SEND Complaints and Compliance meetings and Waste Liaison meetings to ensure they use the learning from complaints to drive service

improvements and implement learning into their practice improvement plans/terms of reference. See attached dashboard for HO/LGSCO learning from complaints. Please see below an overview of service improvements across all council directorates that have been undertaken as a result of upheld complaint outcomes.

Service improvements for complaint cases 2023/2024	Directorates		
	Adults, Commissioning & Public Health	Children's & Education	Corporate
Arrange staff training or guidance	5 cases	4 cases	21 cases
Change or review equipment	0 cases	0 cases	2 cases
Change or review policy and procedure	3 cases	2 cases	0 cases
Change or review service	7 cases	4 cases	2 cases
Discuss concerns at team meeting	5 cases	5 cases	4 cases
Performance management – staff member	0 cases	2 cases	4 cases
Review resources	0 cases	1 case	4 cases

Complaints Training

Corporate, Childrens and Adults complaint handling process training for council officers is available via the council's learning hub. Complaint handling training will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and promoted across the council to ensure officer awareness of complaint handling and processes. Bespoke complaint handling training is also available to services upon request. Work will be undertaken with the Organisational Development Team to review the existing training packages. This will ensure that training via the learning portal is monitored on a regular basis and training promoted and undertaken by the appropriate council officers. LGSCO external training will also be attended by customer engagement officers to improve and enhance complaint handling.

Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Procedure

The management of unreasonable complainant behaviour procedure has been active since February 2015. During this period, the Customer Liaison Team has managed a total of 16 cases in line with this procedure. Out of the 16 cases, ten warning letters were submitted to customers and six contact restrictions were put in place.

Complaints Policies and Procedures

The council's complaints policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to reflect current working practices and legislation. During this review process, consultations and equality analysis have been carried out and policies presented to the relevant leadership teams and democratic process for approval.

An adults 'easy read' compliments, suggestions and complaints leaflet has been compiled and was launched in February 2024. This is available via the Customer Liaison Team, adult services or via the council's website.

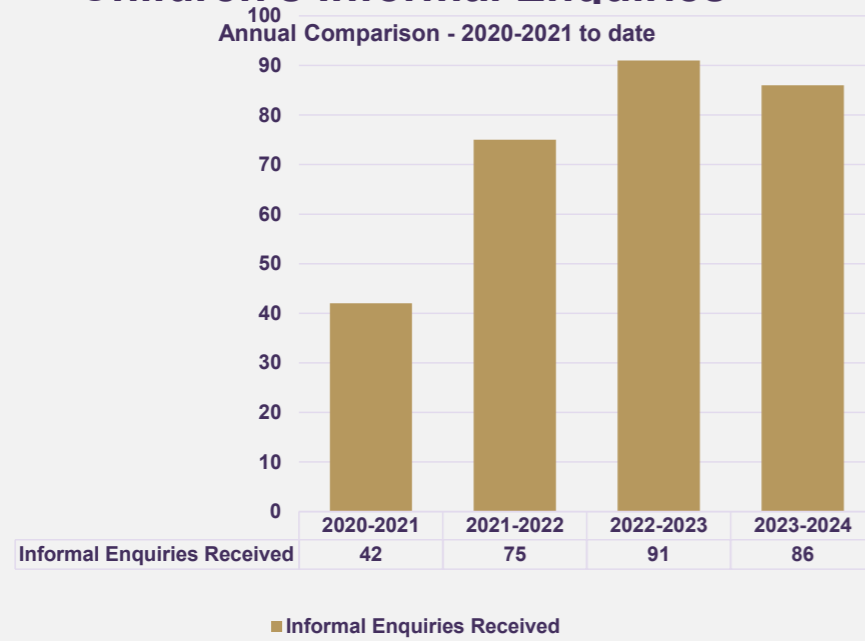
Complaint Handling Code

A complaint handling code has been launched for both LGSCO and HO; this will provide a standard for authorities to work to. The HO launched their code in April 2024 and Wolverhampton Homes has implemented the code into their complaint process and procedure. The LGSCO launched their code in February 2024 and will start considering the code as part of their process from April 2026. The LGSCO is currently working with a number of pilot councils to understand the impact of the code and provide local authorities with further support and guidance. The Council has started considering and preparing for the code as part of their complaint processes to ensure they can adopt the code successfully into their working practice from 1 April 2025.

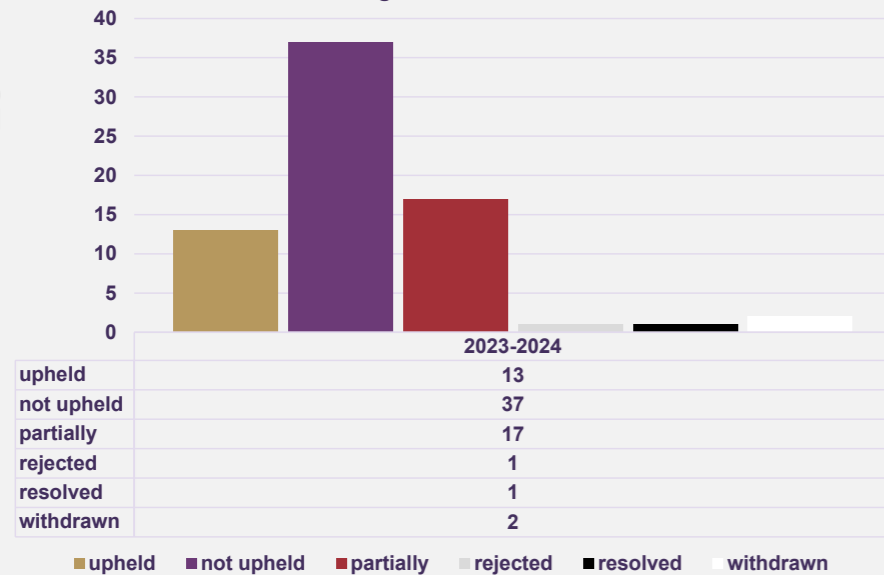
Children's and Education Complaints

Annual 2023-2024

Children's Informal Enquiries



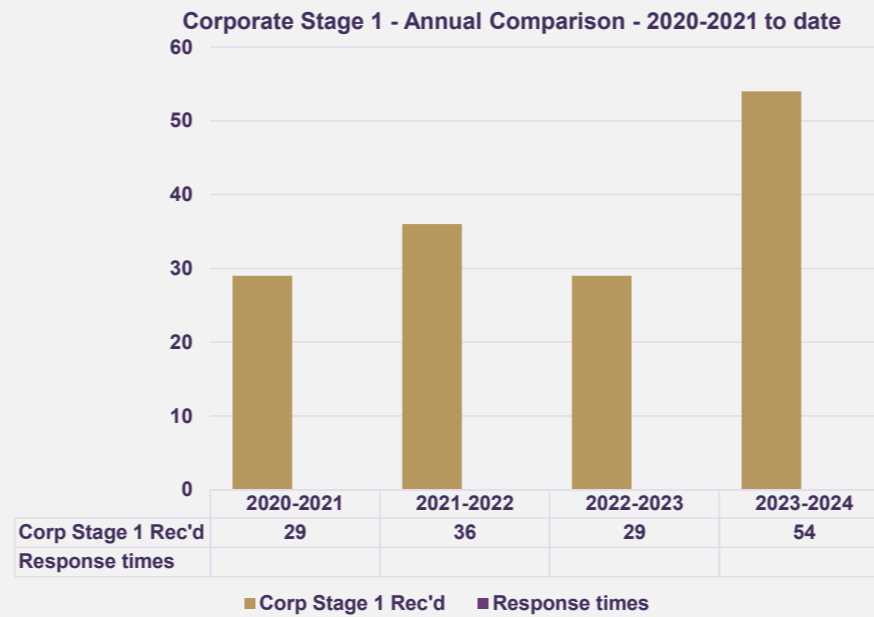
Total number of cases received Stage 1 Outcomes



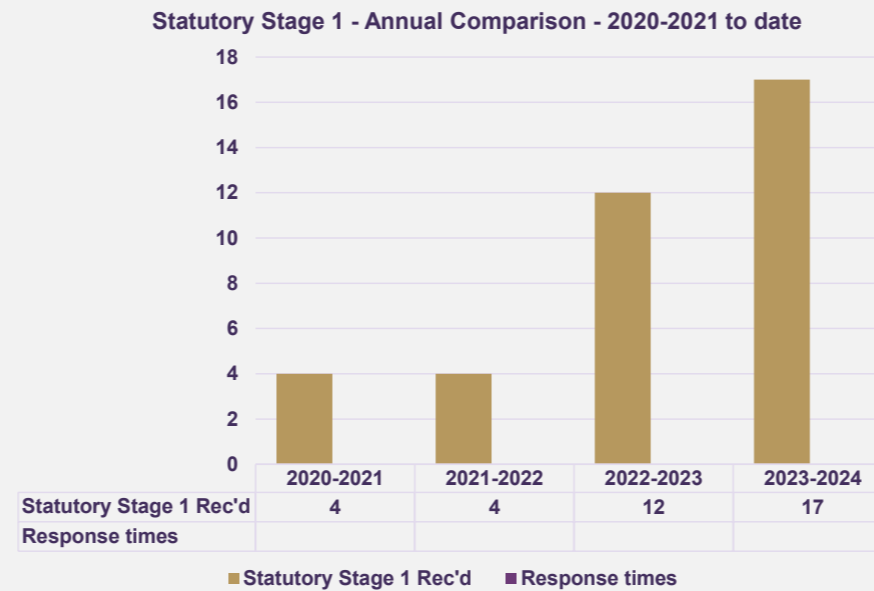
Page 27

Upheld rate - out of the 71 cases received, 13 cases were upheld and 17 cases partially upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Children's Corp Stage 1



Children's Statutory Stage 1

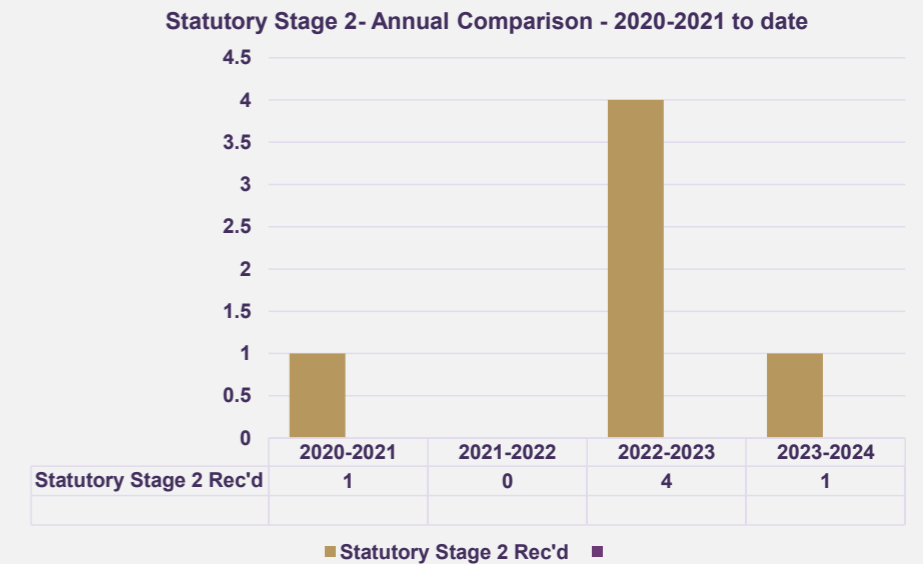


Response Timescales for Children's stage one cases - For 2023/24 Out of the total of 71 cases received, 66 cases were responded to within the timescales. Other financial years not provided as outlined as an average response time in previous reports

Children's Corp Stage 2



Children's Statutory Stage 2

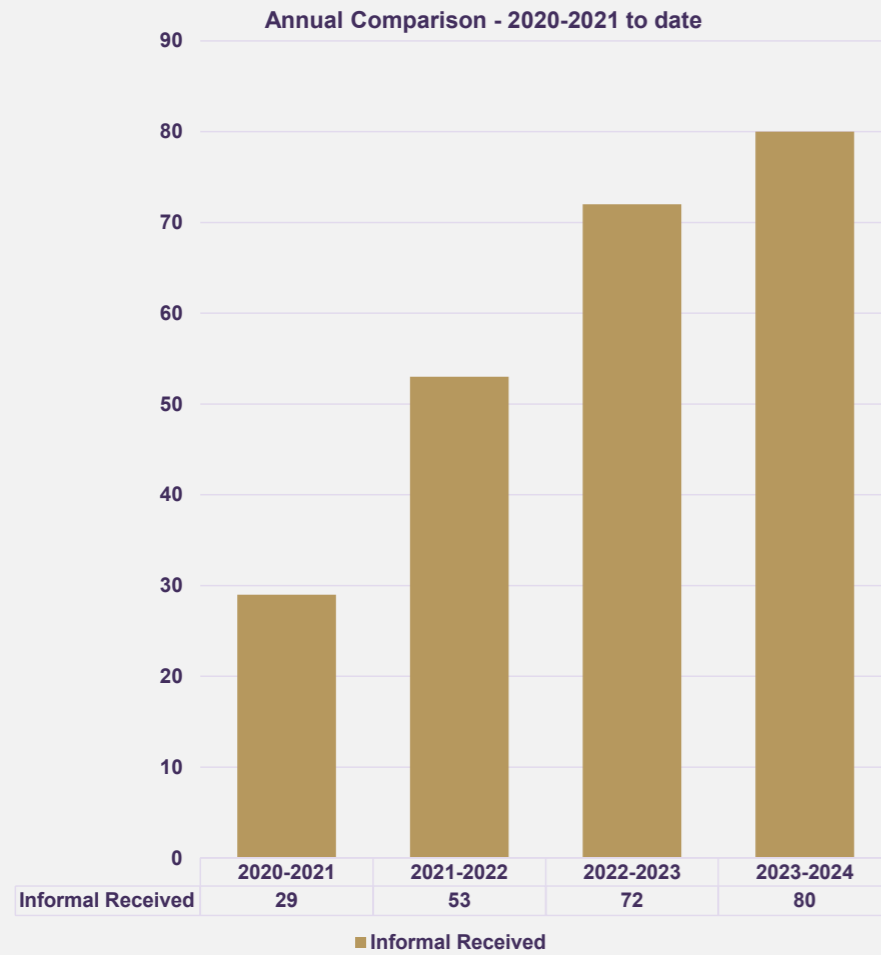


Upheld rate - out of the total 8 cases received, 1 case was upheld, 1 case was partially upheld and 4 cases not upheld; 2 cases are currently under investigation; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Adult and Public Health Complaints

Annual 2023-2024

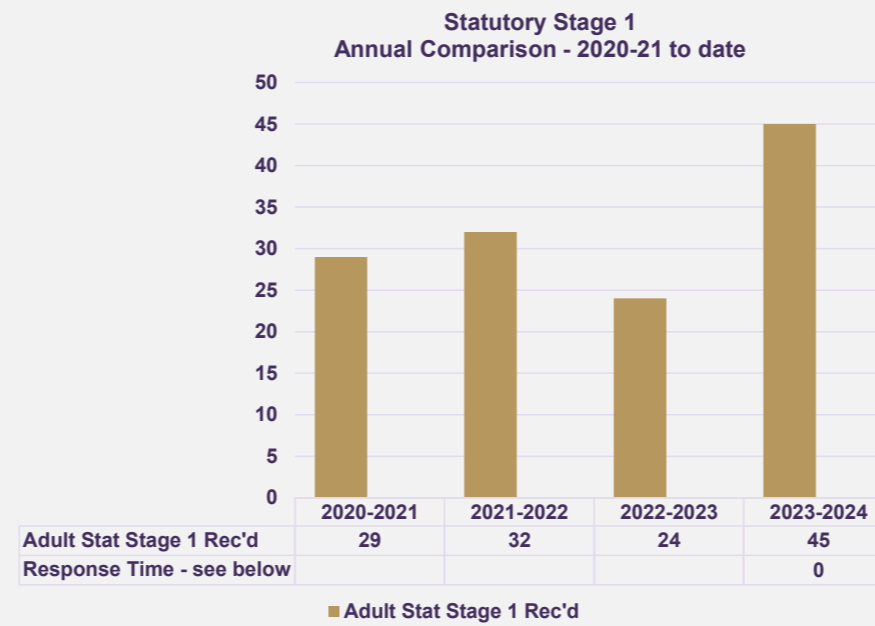
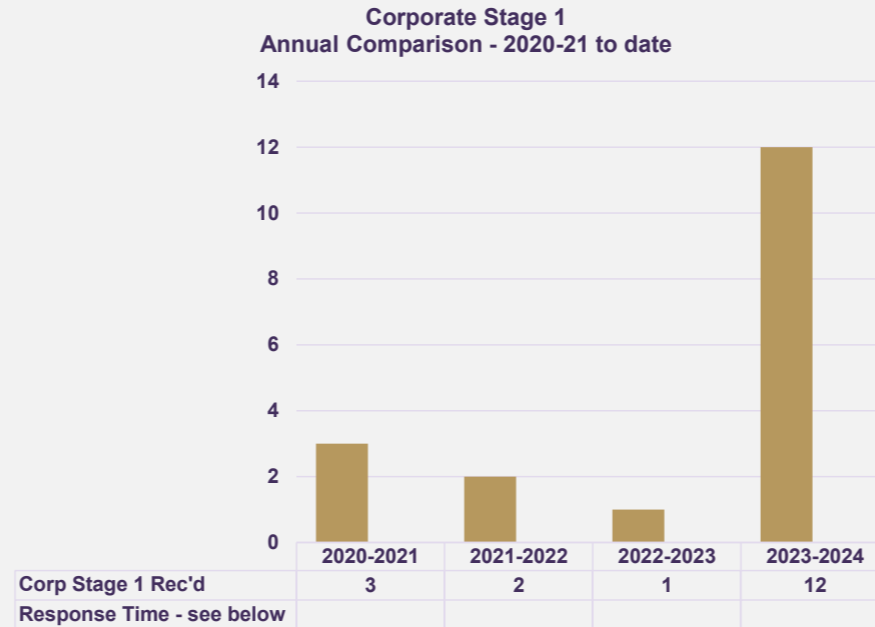
Adult Informal



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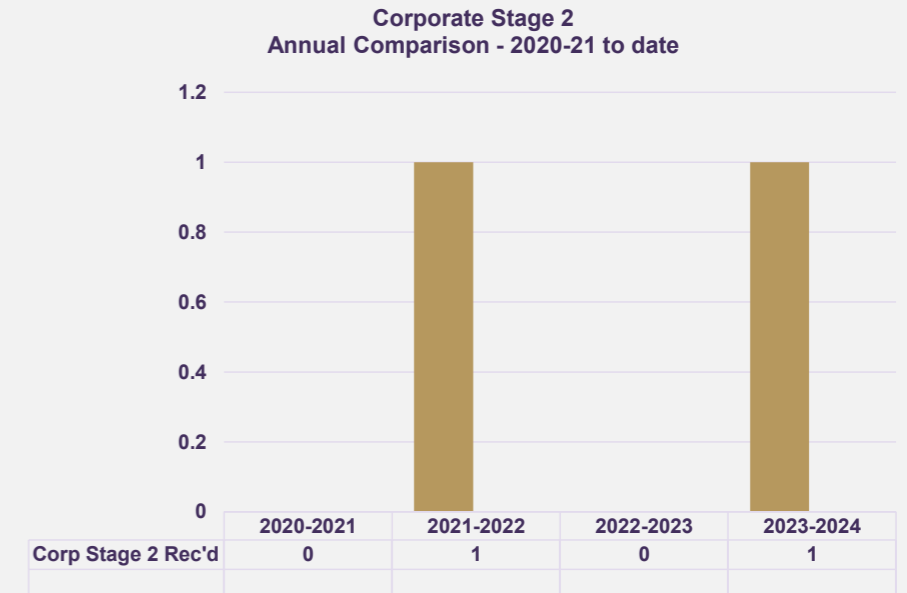
Annual Statement - Public Health - Regionally and nationally councils receive very few complaints in relation to Public Health Services. Eight informal complaints were received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024; this is in comparison to four cases received for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Six stage one complaints were received during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This is in comparison to one complaint received during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Out of the six complaints received, two cases were upheld; Leisure Centre (1); Central Library (1).

Adult Stage 1



Response Timescales for Adult stage one cases - For 2023/24 Out of the total of 57 cases received, 52 cases were responded to within the timescales. Other financial years not provided as outlined as an average response time in previous reports

Adult Stage 2

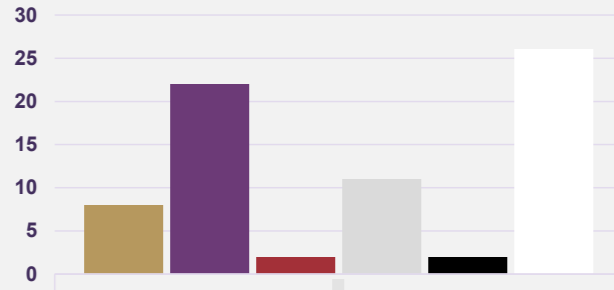


Upheld rate - out of the 57 cases received, 10 cases were upheld and 20 cases partially upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Adults/Public Health/Childrens and Education Stage 1 Complaints

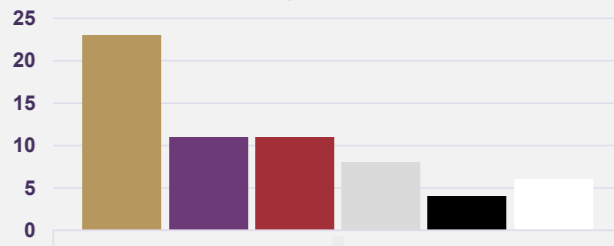
Annual 2023-2024

Children and Education Head of Service Level - Stage 1



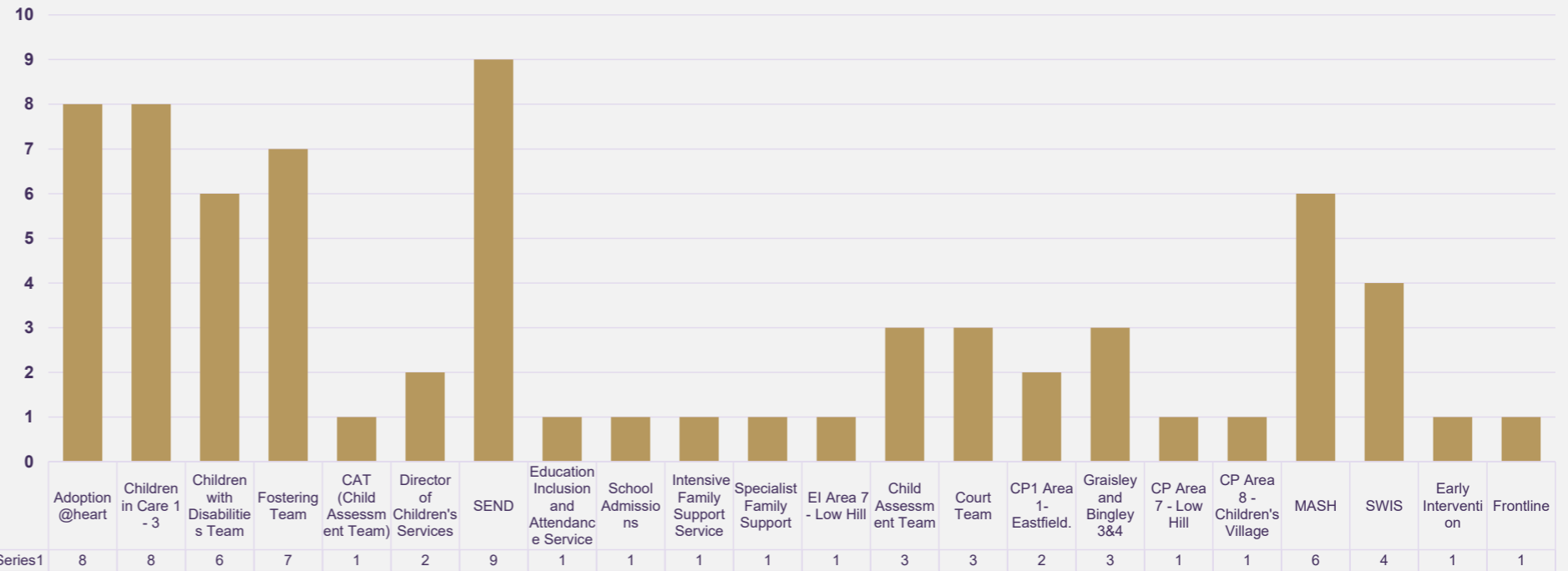
Adoption@heart	8
CYPIC	22
Director of Children's Services	2
Education	11
Specialist Support	2
Strengthening Families	26

Adults Head of Service Level - Stage 1

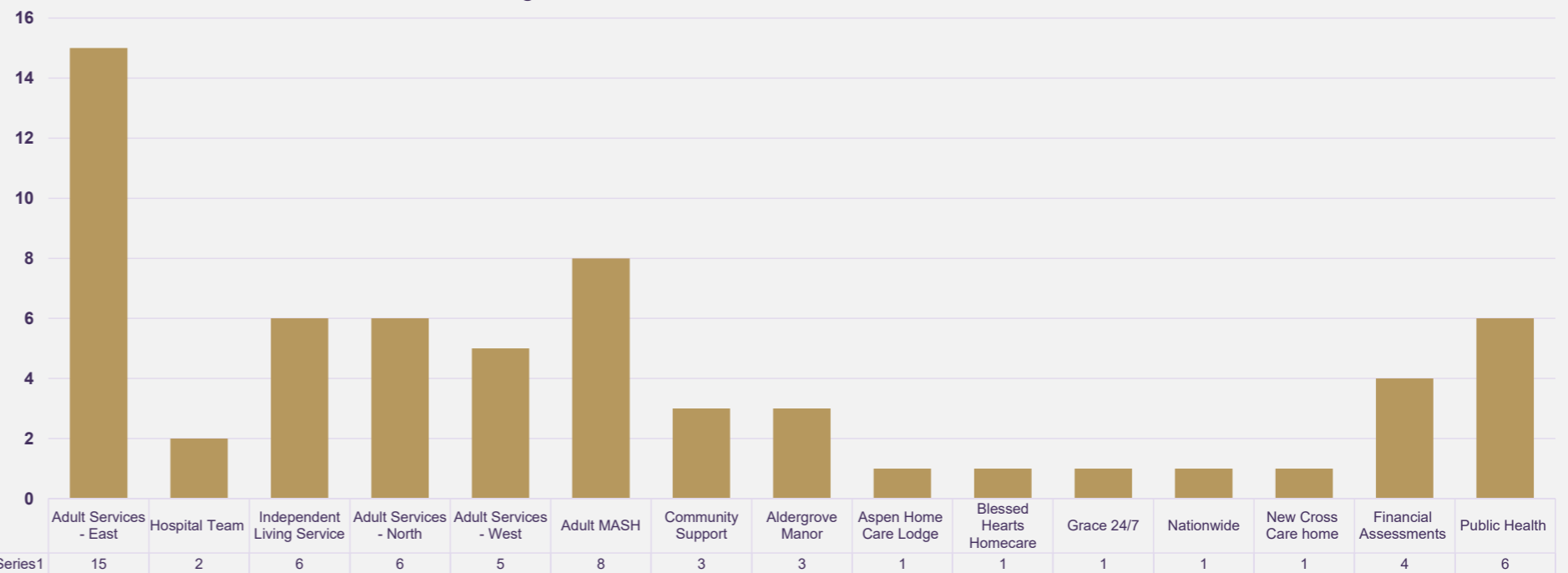


Adult Services and Health Partnerships	23
Adult Services and Communities	11
Mental Health	11
Commissioned Services	8
Community Financial Support	4
Public Health	6

Children and Education - Stage 1



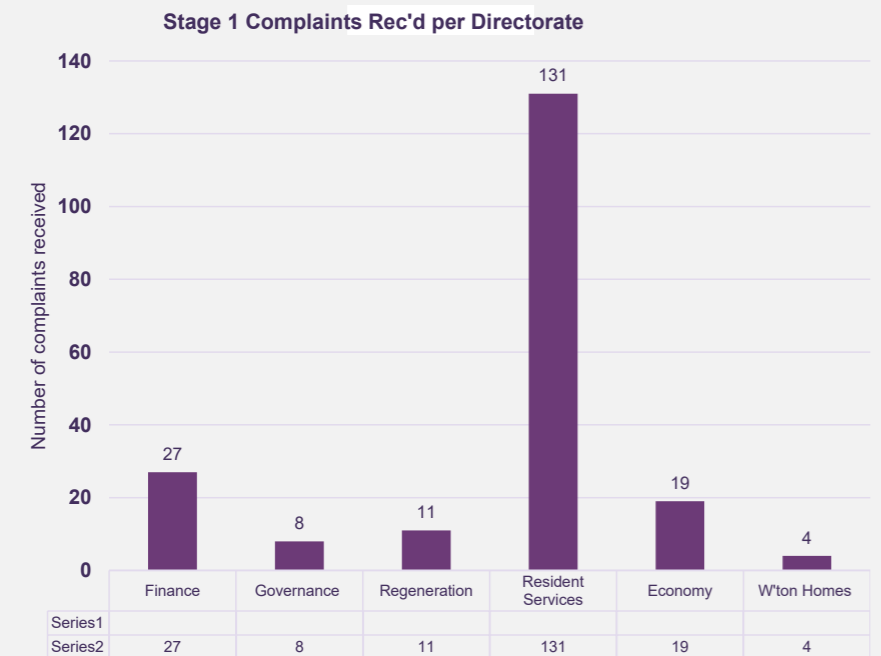
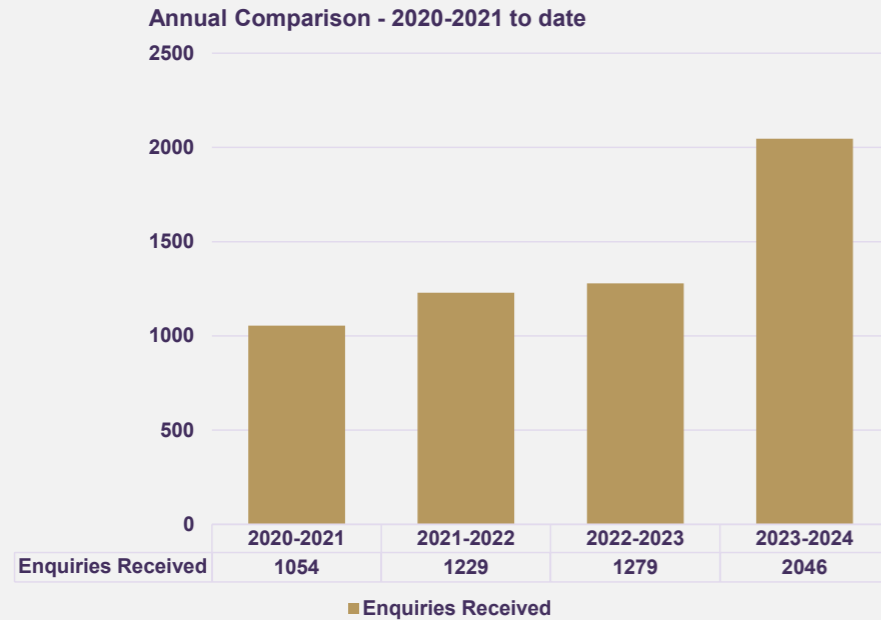
Adult and Public Health - Stage 1



Corporate Complaints

Annual 2023-2024

Corporate Service Requests / Enquiries



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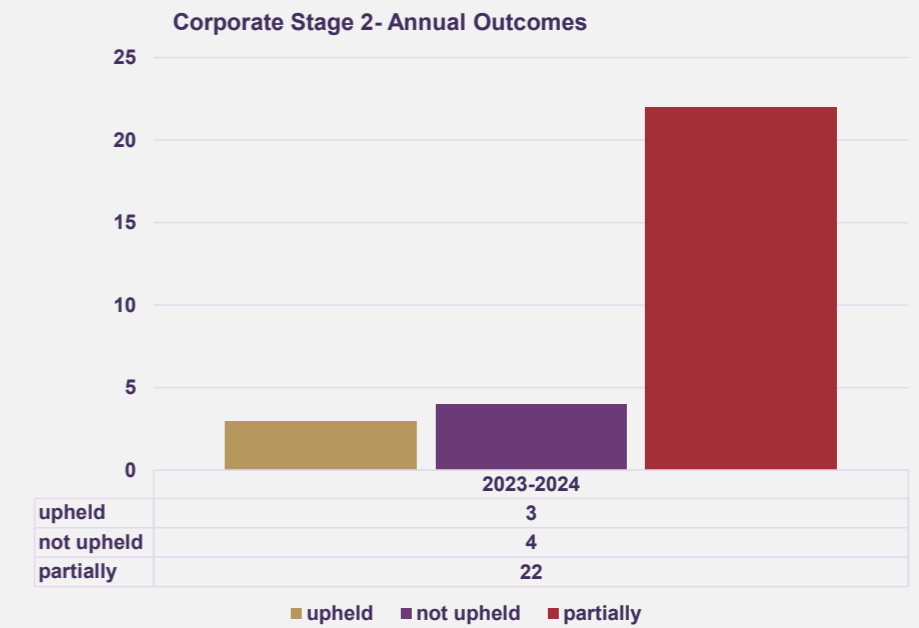
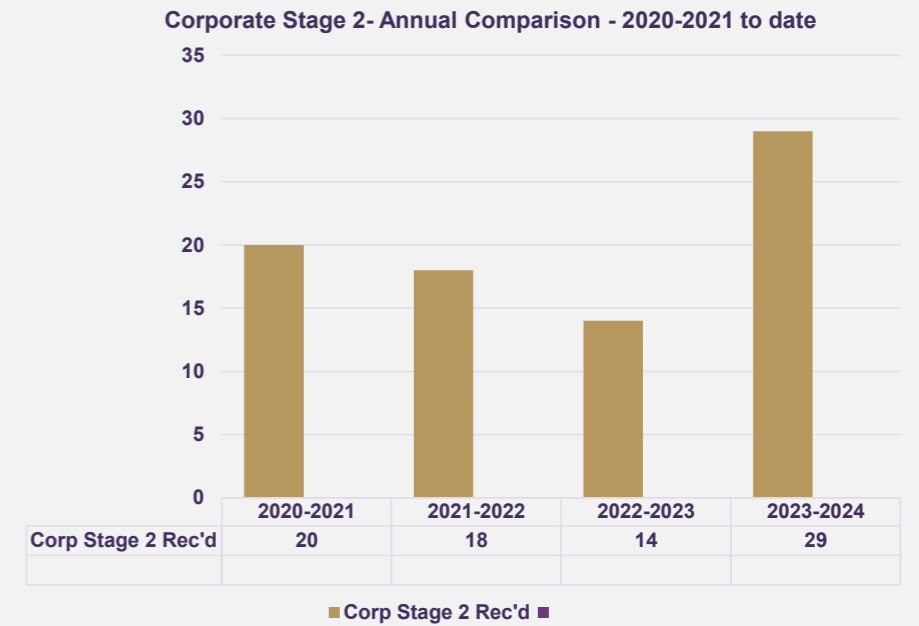
Response Timescales for Corporate stage one cases - Out of the total of 200 cases received, 190 cases were responded to within the timescales. Other financial years not provided as outlined as an average response time in previous reports

Corporate Stage 1



Upheld rate stage 1 - out of the 200 cases received, 50 cases were upheld and 19 cases partially upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out.

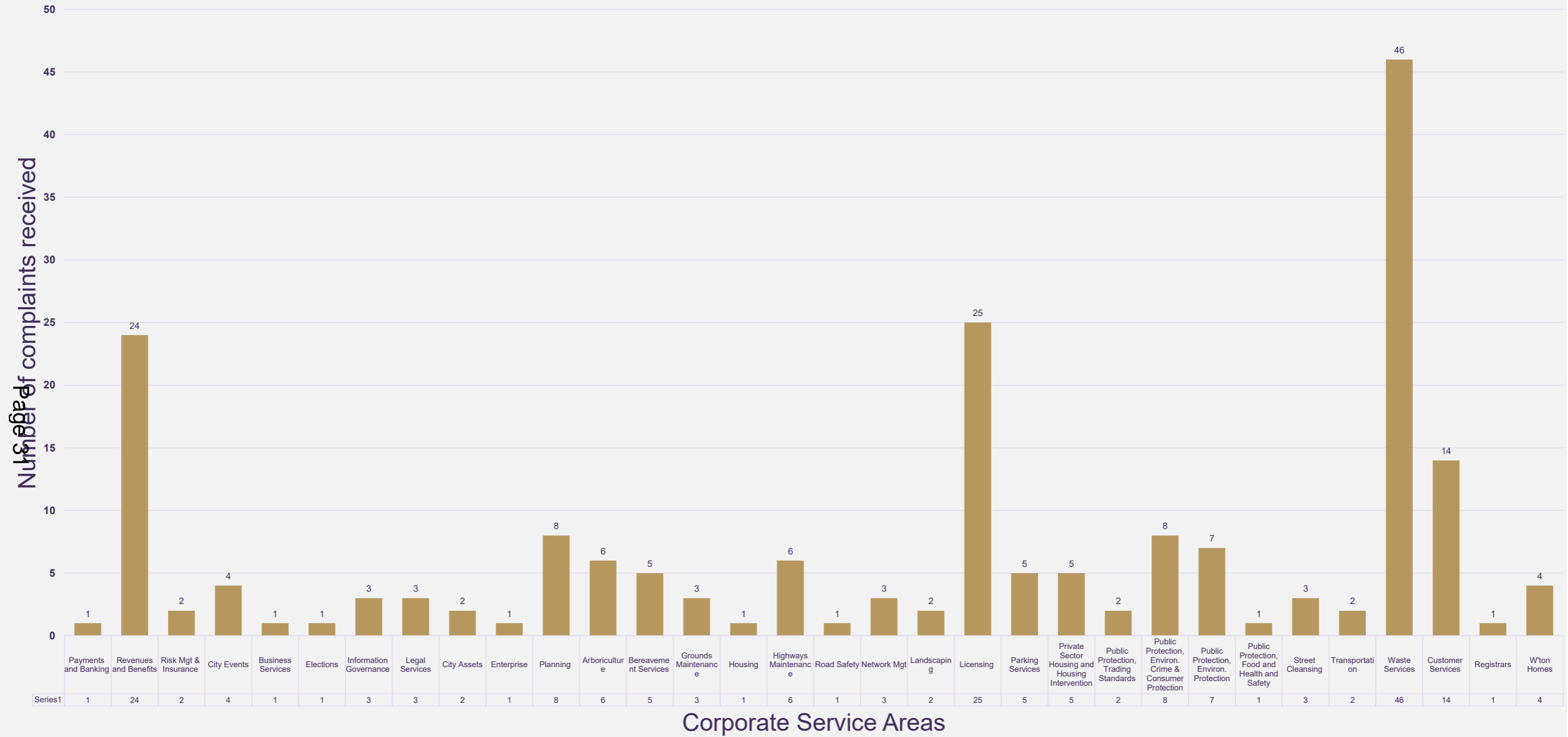
Corporate Stage 2



Upheld rate stage 2 - Out of the 29 cases received, 3 cases were upheld, 4 cases were partially upheld and 22 cases not upheld; appropriate remedies and recommendations have been carried out

Corporate Stage 1 Complaints

Annual 2023-2024

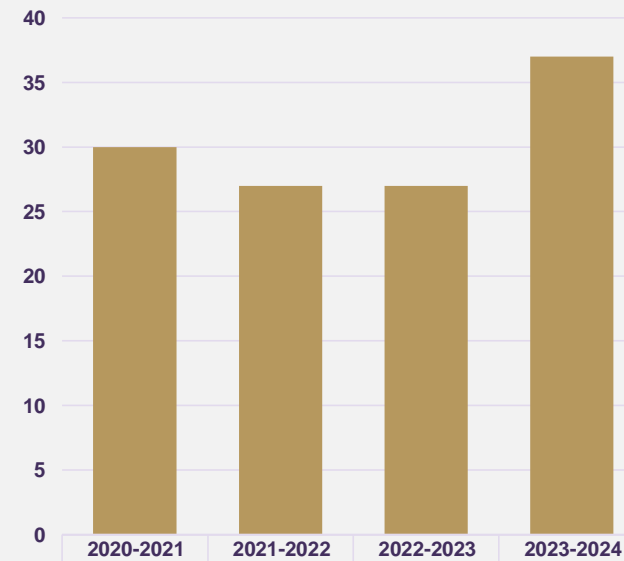


LGSCO and HO initial enquiries and investigations

Annual 2023-2024

LGSCO initial enquiries

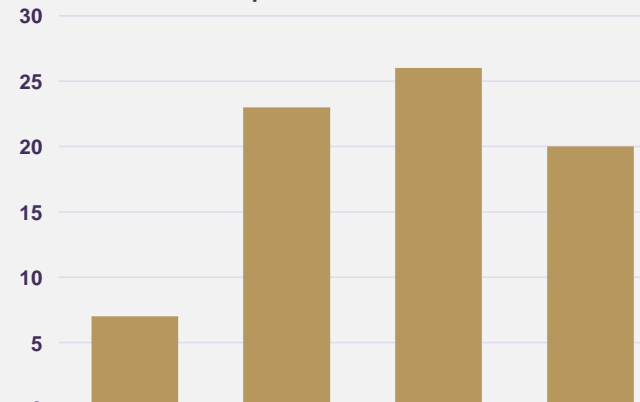
Annual Comparison - 2020-21 to date



Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
LGSCO initial enquiries rec'd	30	27	27	37

HO

Annual Comparison - 2020-21 to date

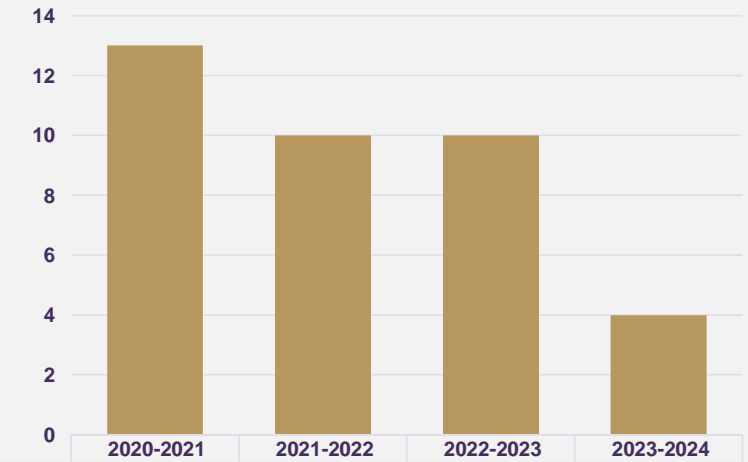


Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
HO initial enquiries rec'd	7	23	26	20

■ HO initial enquiries rec'd

LGSCO full investigations

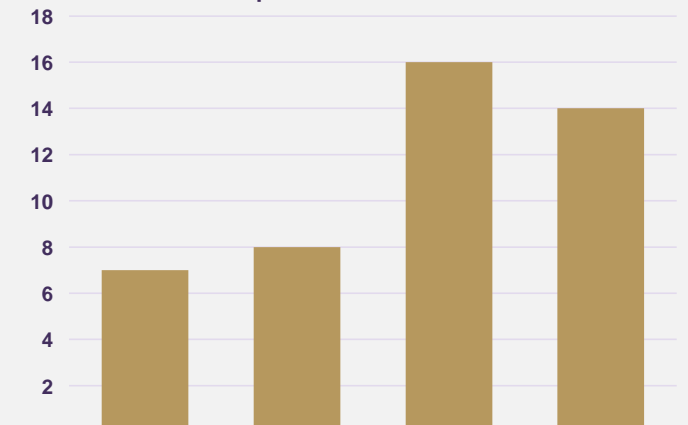
Annual Comparison - 2020-21 to date



Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
LGSCO full investigations rec'd	13	10	10	4

HO

Annual Comparison - 2020-21 to date



Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
HO full investigations rec'd	7	8	16	14

■ HO full investigations rec'd

Complaint details	Ombudsman Outcome/Requirement	Learning/Action
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's request and the subsequent installation of a hard standing and the landlord's handling of the complaint</p>	<p>HO Outcome - maladministration by the landlord in the way it responded to the resident's request for a hardstanding driveway and no maladministration by the landlord in the way it responded to the resident's complaint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pay the resident £500 compensation for poor communication and failure to progress required works to the hardstanding within a reasonable timeframe · Apologise to the resident in writing for the failure to acknowledge the impact, the poor communication and the delays in works being progressed
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of and response to the resident's request for compensation, including property damage and the landlord's complaint handling</p>	<p>HO Outcome - no maladministration by the landlord in respect of its response to the resident's complaint about damage to contents and maladministration by the landlord in its complaint handling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In light of its poor complaint handling the landlord is ordered to pay the resident £150 compensation within four weeks of this report - Review this case to identify how it has improved its complaint handling processes since the resident's complaint, in order to ensure the experiences are not repeated
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's concerns involving shared access and harassment from her neighbour</p>	<p>HO Outcome - maladministration by the landlord in its handling of the issue regarding shared access to a gate between neighbouring properties and maladministration by the landlord in its complaints handling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay the resident the amount of £500 in compensation which comprises of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £300 for the resident's distress and inconvenience caused by its delay in resolving the access issue - £200 for the resident's time and trouble caused by its ineffective complaints handling

Complaint details	Ombudsman Outcome/Requirement	Learning/Action
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to landlord's response to a request for fencing to be installed in relation to reports of anti-social behaviour</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>HO Outcome - maladministration and service failure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise to the resident for the key failures: the landlord's ASB handling and fence communication, complaint handling issues - Pay the resident £200 in compensation within 4 weeks for ASB handling, communication in relation to requests for tall fencing, complaint handling delays and failures - Update the resident on its current position in relation to the ASB and the solutions available - The Landlord should also consider completing a risk assessment and an action plan. - Review its ASB policy - The Landlord to share the report's key findings with its relevant staff for learning and improvement purposes - Address the failure to check whether a complaint was already underway, and its subsequent failure to consider its own complaint handling during its investigation
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to the landlord's response regarding a request for reinstatement of leaseholder forum meetings and access to information about building insurance and painting contracts</p>	<p>HO Outcome - no maladministration and service failure (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise to the resident in writing for failures highlighted - Pay directly to the resident a total of £100 (£50 for the delay in providing responses to complaints at stage 1 and stage 2 of its process and £50 for the delay in providing the policy and contract requested) - The landlord to carry out refresher training to staff on the requirements of its complaints policy and the new Complaint Code

Complaint details	Ombudsman Outcome/Requirement	Learning/Action
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to landlord's handling of the resident's reports about leaks affecting their home</p>	<p>HO Outcome - HO confirmed that the service has satisfactorily resolved the complaint about its handling of a roof leak, maladministration in the landlord's complaint handling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise to the resident for its complaint handling - Pay the resident £200 compensation for its complaint handling - Provide staff training on complaint handling in line with its complaints policy - Pay the resident £250 compensation (£200 for reimbursement of costs associated with the dehumidifier and £50 for its handling of a roof leak) if not already done so. The reasonable redress finding is made on the basis of this sum being paid to the resident, as it recognised genuine elements of service failure by the landlord
<p>Wolverhampton Homes - Complaint in relation to landlord's responsive repairs services, handling of reports of damp and mould, handling of the resident's complaint, handling of a fence replacement and availability of appointments for which the landlord has failed to attend</p>	<p>HO Outcome - maladministration and service failure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise to the resident to recognise the key failures - To complete a full inspection of the property - Pay the resident a total of £900 for outstanding repairs, damp and mould, fencing renewal works and response to the resident's various health and welfare concerns, landlord's complaint handling which the landlord previously awarded the resident at stage 2 - Ensure its records accurately reflect the resident's vulnerabilities - To share the report's key findings with its relevant staff for learning & improvement - Ensure it responds to reports around vulnerabilities and health impacts promptly - To consider appointing an internal SPOC to manage complaint handling

Complaint details	Ombudsman Outcome/Requirement	Learning/Action
<p>Dovecotes TMO - Complaint in relation to the landlord's response to the resident's request to install a fence</p>	<p>HO Outcome - severe maladministration by the landlord in respect of its response to the resident's request to install fencing around the boundary of the front garden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay the resident £700 to reflect the distress and inconvenience caused to the resident, because of the repeated barriers placed to obtain approval to install a fence around the boundary of the front garden. - Provide the resident with a written apology for the failures identified within the report. - Carry out empathy and equality training with its staff to ensure it is upholding its obligation and commitment to 'actively consider equality and inclusion in very practical ways.' - Arrange for a senior management review to be conducted into this case to identify any additional learning and improvement, and report to the HO the outcome. - The landlord should review its record keeping practices and its fencing policy
<p>Adult Services - Adult Services and Communities received one complaint in relation to the council's communication regarding the process and financial implications of moving into residential care</p>	<p>LGSCO Outcome - upheld, fault and injustice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise for uncertainty caused by the delay in assessing any eligible needs under the Care Act and for the distress caused by failing to request funding respite care - Apologise for the uncertainty caused by not notifying its decision on whether to refer for a further carer's assessment - Backdate the Council's assistance with the fees for the care home placement - Review assessed contribution and notify of the correct assessed contribution - Review its record keeping procedures to ensure officers record all key decisions relating to a person's care needs, such as whether a person has eligible needs under the Care Act 2014 and notify the client of the decision - Via training or other means remind officers to provide key information about care home funding in writing following conversations with clients regarding funding arrangements

Complaint details	Ombudsman Outcome/Requirement	Learning/Action
<p>Children's Services (Education) - SEND Team received one complaint in relation to delays with an EHCP plan</p>	<p>LGSCO Outcome - upheld, fault and injustice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise for any injustice caused by its delays in finalising the EHCP - Pay £350 in recognition of the avoidable distress and uncertainty caused
<p>Resident Services - Network Management received one complaint in relation to the ownership of a path, public right of way and access issues</p>	<p>LGSCO Outcome - upheld, fault and injustice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apologise and pay complainant £300 to remedy the injustice caused - Take steps to introduce a PSPO in relation to the footpath if the locked gates are to remain in place - Review the other PSPOs which replaced previous gating orders and expired in October 2020 to determine if they need to be re-made

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