



ANNUAL REPORT COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018

www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints

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1 INTRODUCTION

Rotherham Council is committed to being a responsive organisation that listens to customers and treats everyone with respect. Therefore, both customer feedback and the way that the Council responds to this feedback are vital indicators of the overall performance of the organisation.

The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that the Council received 1st April 2017-31st March 2018, including key themes in customer feedback and identifying trends over five years.

It should be noted that based on the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the annual report for 2016/17 and a review of complaints that was undertaken by the Commissioners' Office in 2017/18, there have been a number of changes in the way that this report is presented. These changes include using graphs and infographics to present the data more visually and reducing the volume of text.

The most notable change has been eliminating the distinction between 'informal' and 'formal' complaints and moving towards one classification. This means that the overall complaints figures within this report refer to all of the complaints received by the Complaints Team each year, regardless of whether or not they were taken through the formal complaints procedures.

Whilst customer feedback provides a valuable insight into how the Council is performing, complaints and compliments figures do not reflect the full picture. This report should therefore, be understood within the context of the number of customers interacting with each service, key developments that occurred within 2017/18 and the quarterly performance reports on the Council Plan.

2 KEY HEADLINES 2017/18

20 more complaints

More complaints were received (1,304 in 2017/18 compared with 1,284 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 1.56%)



More compliments were received (1,064 in 2017/18 compared with 979 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 8.68%)



More complaints were upheld at 262 (203 upheld in 2016/17)



79% of complaints were responded to within timescales (compared with 80% in 2016/17)



A historically low number of complaints were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman (5 in 2017/18 in comparison with 13 in 2016/17)



More complaints around quality of service (an increase of 27.12%)



Fewer complaints around actions of staff (a decrease of 18.66%)



More complaints relating to Regeneration and Environment Services and Children's and Young People's Services



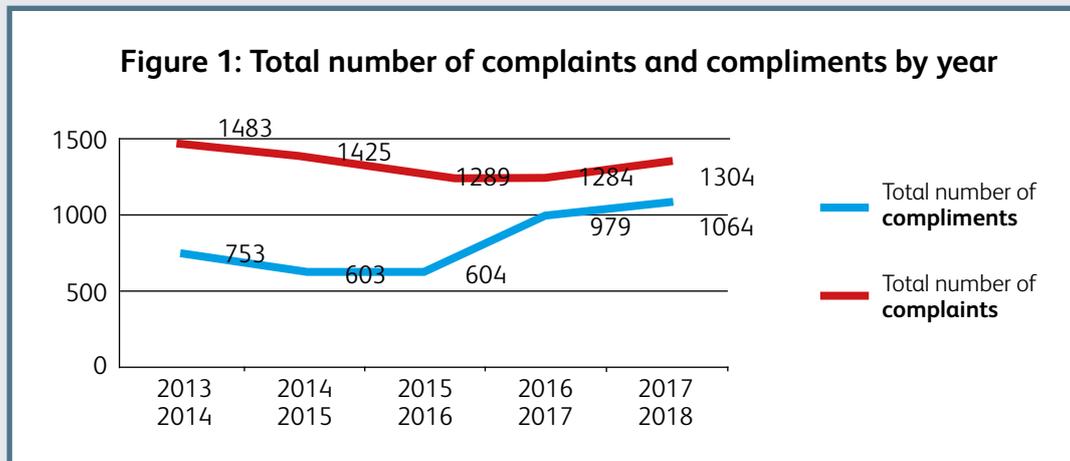
Fewer complaints relating to Finance and Customer Services and Adult Social Care Services



Approximately the same number of complaints received for Housing Services and Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

3 OVERVIEW

3.1 Summary



In 2017/18, the overall number of complaints received by the Council increased by 1.56%, going from 1,284 in 2016/17 to 1,304. However, this moderate increase has not brought the total volume of complaints up to the numbers recorded in 2014/15 and the preceding financial year. Furthermore, Rotherham Council provides a wide variety of services to over 263,400 residents. In this context, 1,304 complaints is only a fraction of the number of customers interacting with services each year (see Appendix Two which provides an indication of the number of customer contacts received through the Council's customer service centres in 2017/18).

The number of compliments received by the Council also increased, from 979 in 2016/17 to 1,064 (amounting to an increase of 8.68%). The fact that both compliments and complaints increased over the year is a positive indicator that the Council is making it easy and accessible for customers to provide feedback. Additionally, the fact that compliments are increasing at a faster pace than complaints reflects positively on the performance of the organisation.

The overall increase in complaints is explained by a rise in two areas: Regeneration and Environment Services which received 39 more complaints in comparison with 2016/17 and Children and Young People's Services which received 21 more. In contrast, complaints regarding Adult's Services and Finance and Customer Services both decreased over the year, with complaints for Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate and Housing remaining approximately the same. Further details are available within each of the Directorate sections.

Subsequently, there was an increase in compliments received for most areas.

The following diagrams show the breakdown of complaints and compliments by Directorate in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Figure 2: Total number of complaints by Directorate – 2016/2017 and 2017/2018

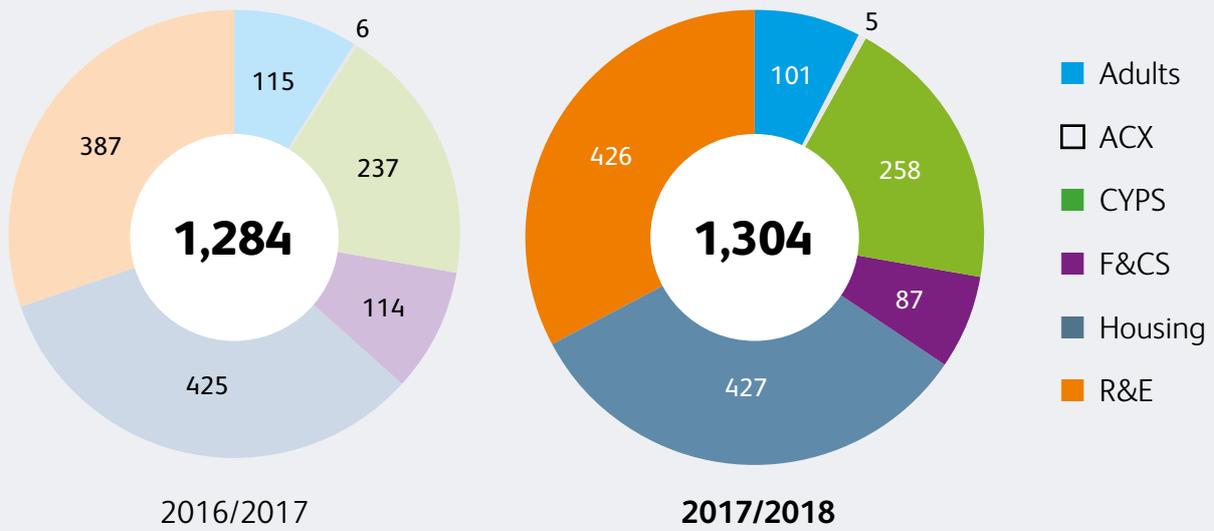


Figure 3: Total number of compliments by Directorate – 2016/2017 and 2017/2018

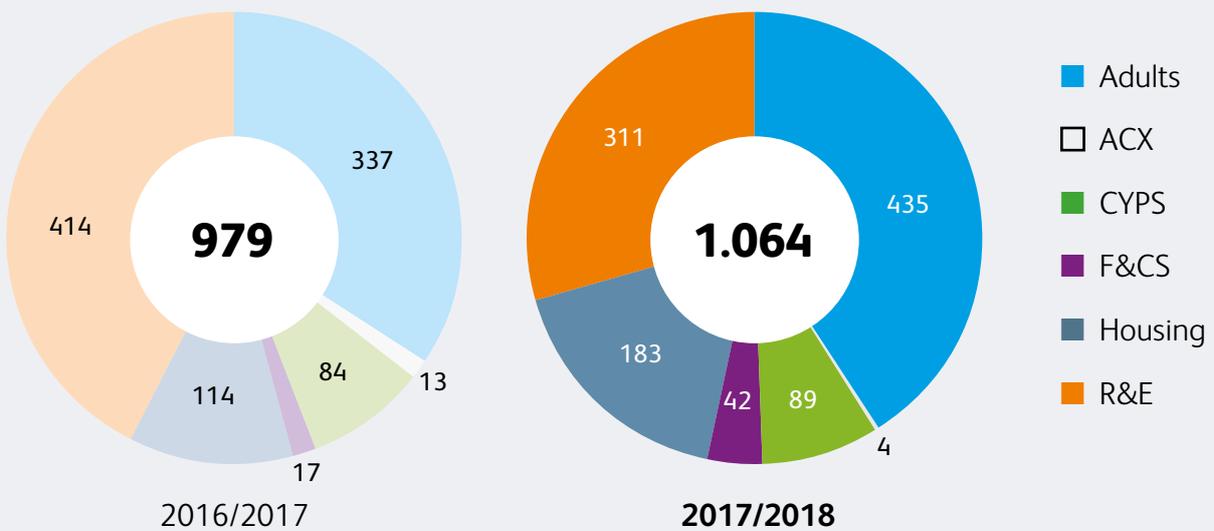
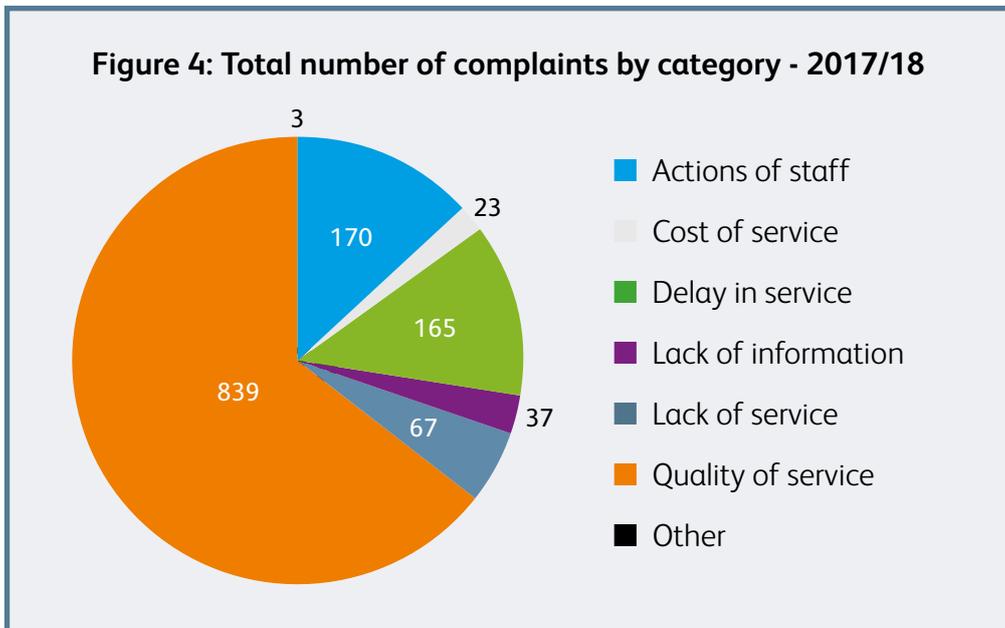


Figure 2 demonstrates that the two highest areas for complaints were Housing and Regeneration and Environment Services, followed by Children and Young People’s Services. This is consistent with previous years’ figures, as these three areas typically receive the highest volume of complaints.

It is also evident from these diagrams that some areas receive a lower volume of overall customer feedback and this is generally correlated to the number of customers that are served by the Directorate. Therefore, a Directorate receiving a higher volume of complaints is not necessarily reflective of poor performance and should be understood within the context of services provided as well as the overall direction of travel of the figures.

As part of the process of monitoring and handling customer feedback, the Complaints Team is responsible for categorising complaints based on the subject matter. The following diagram outlines the categories of complaints received in 2017/18.



Approximately 64 % of all complaints were categorised as quality of service. Moreover, complaints within this category have increased from 660 in 2016/17 to 839 in 2017/18 (which is an increase of 27.12 %).

On the other hand, complaints around actions of staff decreased from the previous year, with 170 complaints in 2017/18 in contrast with 209 complaints in 2016/17 (which is a decrease of 18.66 %).

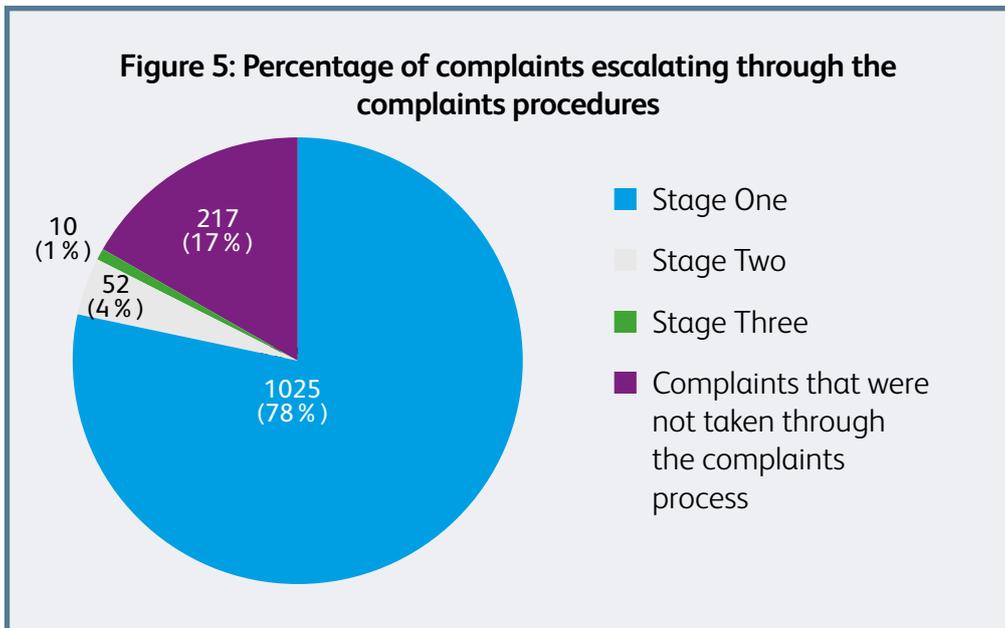
Delays in service also accounted for a substantial portion of complaints, with 165 complaints (or 12.65 % falling into this category). Whilst quality of service and actions of staff were significant categories across all Directorates, delays in service emerged as a prevalent category within Housing Services in particular, with 116 of the 165 complaints around delays in service coming from this area (see section 7).

These categories are broad and aim to give a high-level overview which reflects the standard approach taken to complaint categorisation taken within other local authorities. However, due to the fact that these categories are broad, it is important to acknowledge that that they don't necessarily capture the complexities of each complaint. Reviewing the approach to complaints categorisation is one of the key areas for improvement for 2018/19, as outlined in section 11.

3.2 Dealing with Complaints

RMBC follows four different complaints procedures: housing, children's social care, adult social care and the corporate complaints procedure. The former three complaints procedures are legislative and involve individual statutory requirements around timescales.

A relatively small portion of complaints are not taken through the formal complaints procedure – (formally referred to as informal complaints). These are complaints that are in relation to Council policy or decisions that have been formally approved in Cabinet. In these cases, the complaint is not taken through the formal procedure as it cannot be upheld, however all complainants receive a formal response. This report includes these complaints in the overall total figures. In 2017/18, this amounted to 217 out of a total of 1,304 complaints.

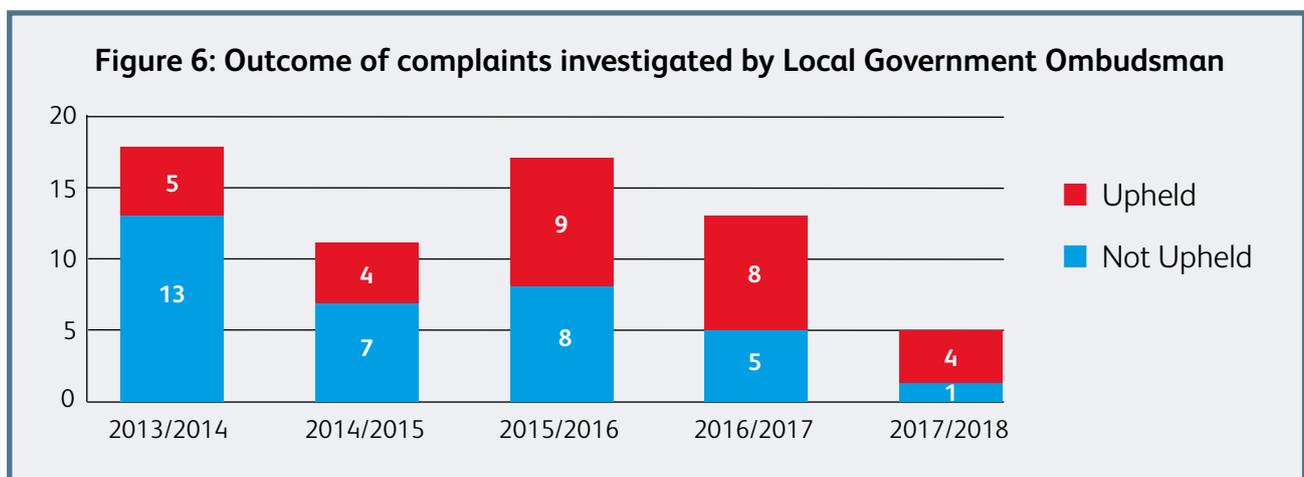


The diagram above outlines the number of complaints that reached the various stages of the complaints procedures.

The extent to which complaints escalate through the complaints procedure is an important measure, as it is preferable to find resolutions for customers at the earliest possible stage. In comparison with the previous year, in 2017/18, more complaints escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure, at 52 (in contrast with 38 in 2016/17). Additionally, of the 1,087 complaints that were taken through the Council's formal complaints procedures, more were upheld in 2017/18 at 260 or 24% in contrast with 209 or 20% in 2016/17.

3.4 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If complainants are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint as investigated through the Council's complaints procedures, they can involve the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). 58 complaints and enquiries were directed to the LGO in 2017/18, and of these 58, the LGO only investigated 5 which is a historically low figure. Figure 6 (see below) provides some context; on average, approximately 15 complaints were investigated by the LGO per year between the financial years of 2013/14 and 2016/17.



The unusually low figure in 2017/18 meant that although a greater percentage of investigated complaints were upheld by the LGO (80% in contrast with 62% in 2016/17) this still amounted to fewer complaints being upheld overall (4 in contrast with 8 in 2016/17).

Appendix One outlines the LGO decisions for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council for 2017/18 and how these compare with statistical neighbour authorities.

This demonstrates that in 2017/18, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was subject to fewer LGO investigations than all statistical neighbours. Furthermore, it shows that the majority of complaints that were brought to the LGO were deemed invalid or incomplete, referred back for local resolution or closed after initial enquiries. This along with the low number of investigations reflects positively that the Council's complaints procedures are working effectively to find fair and appropriate local resolutions.

Of the 4 complaints that were investigated and upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman, one was related to Children and Young People's Services, one was related to Adult Services, one was related to Finance and Customer Services and another was related to Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate. The complaint that was investigated and not upheld was in relation to Children and Young People's Services.

3.4 Housing Ombudsman

From April 2013, the Housing Ombudsman has dealt with all complaints regarding social housing. There was one decision taken by the Housing Ombudsman in 2017/18. This complaint was in relation to vandalism at the complainant's property and was not upheld.

4 PERFORMANCE

4.1 Performance Overview

Performance relating to complaints is monitored via the Council Plan and reported to the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The plan includes the following actions and measures:

Priority 3 – A strong community in a clean, safe environment

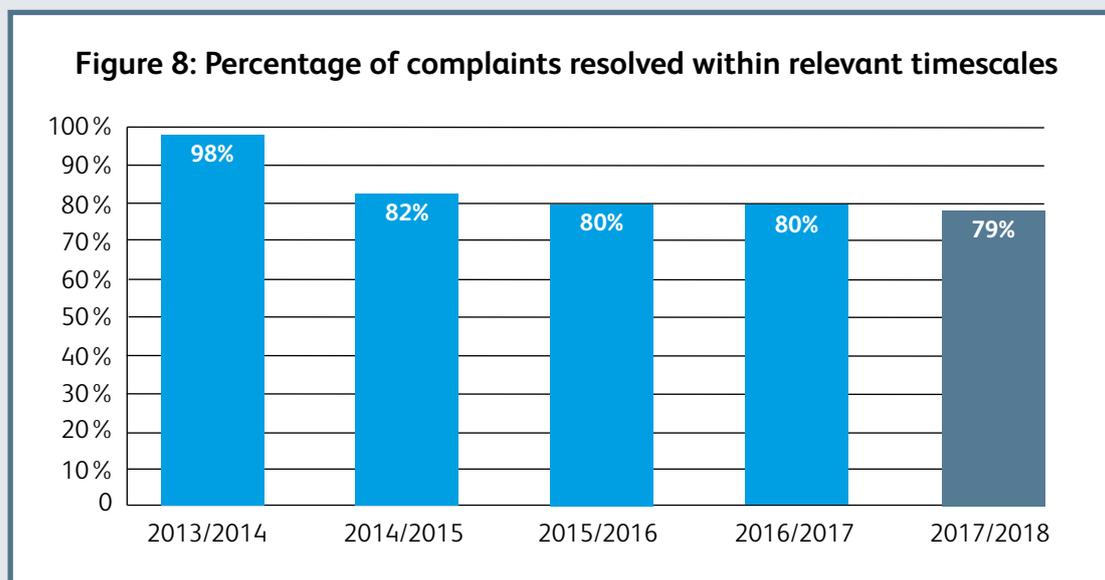
- Action – Deliver a cleaner, greener Rotherham to ensure that it is a safe and attractive place to live, work and visit
 - Measure - Total number of customer contacts by service area and overall total – Service areas include a) Street Cleansing, b) Grounds Maintenance, c) Litter, d) Waste Management. Contacts measured are: i) Official complaints, ii) Compliments received, iii) Service Requests (75 cumulative official complaints target)

Priority 5 – A modern efficient council

- Action – Treating customer complaints with respect and dealing with them in an efficient and outcome-focussed way
 - Measure - % of complaints closed within timescale (85 % target)

Performance is also monitored through service plans and regular (monthly or quarterly) performance reports are presented to Directorate Leadership Team meetings.

The following graph compares the overall Council performance against timescales for the past five years:



Despite the increase in complaints in 2017/18, performance remained roughly stable with 79% of complaints being responded to within timescales – (80% were responded to within timescales in 2016/17). However, this means that the percentage of complaints closed within the relevant timescale remained short of the target within the Council Plan of 85%. Performance was partially caused by challenges in responding to complaints within Regeneration and Environment Services, Adult Services and Children and Young People's Services. Despite not achieving the target, performance improved during the quarter 4 period.

There is also a separate measure within the Council Plan to monitor the number of customer contacts for street cleansing, grounds maintenance, litter and waste management. In 2017/18, 84 complaints were taken through the complaints procedure for these areas against a target of 75.

4.2 How we are improving

Improving the way that complaints are dealt with requires a whole-Council approach, with services prioritising complaints and making improvements based on the feedback from customers. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every service to make responding to complaints and learning from customer feedback a priority.

A number of service improvements have been made over the year based on feedback from our customers. Key themes of service improvements have included the training and performance management of staff; reviews of processes and policies; and the revision of communication materials. More detail is provided on the specific lessons learned and service improvements that have been made within each Directorate section.

Further work will be undertaken in 2018/19 to continue to improve the approach to dealing with complaints. This is outlined in the 'Next Steps, 2018/19' section at the end of this report.

5 ADULT SERVICES

Figure 9: Total number of complaints and compliments relating to Adult Social Care

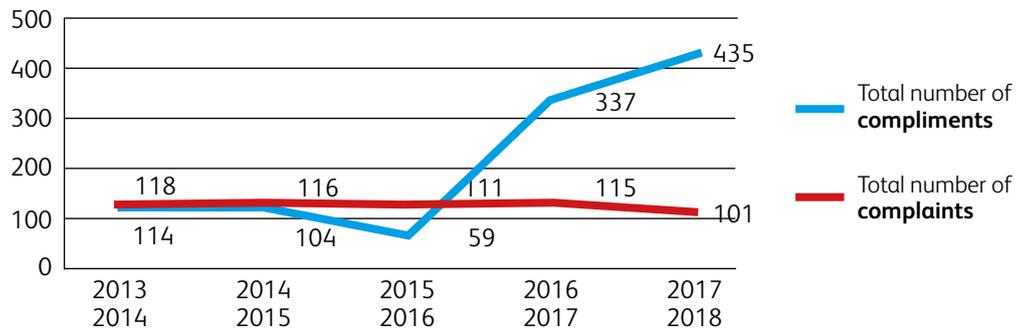


Figure 10: Percentage of complaints relating to Adult Services responded to within timescales

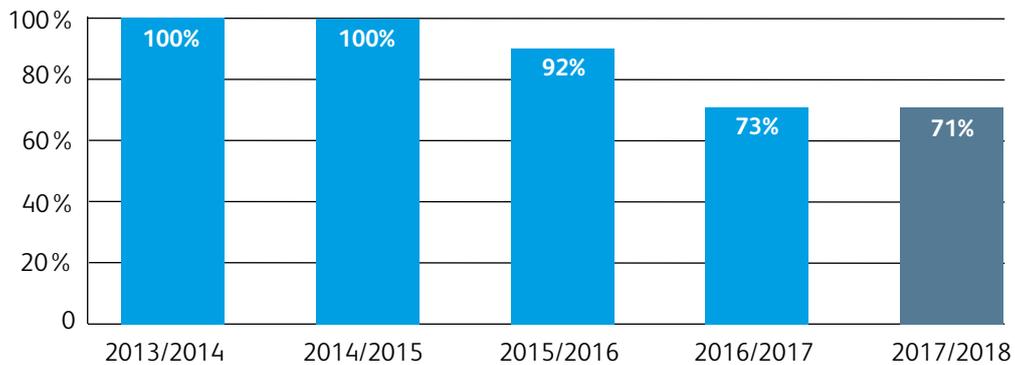
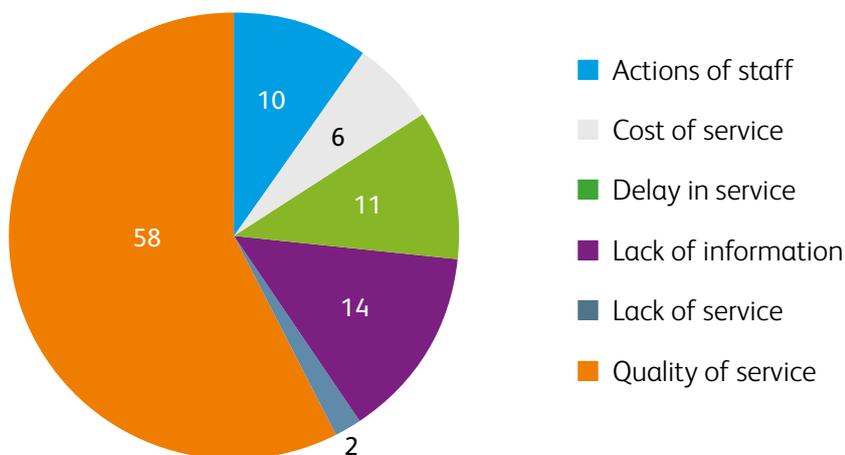


Figure 11: Complaints about Adult Services by category - 2017/18

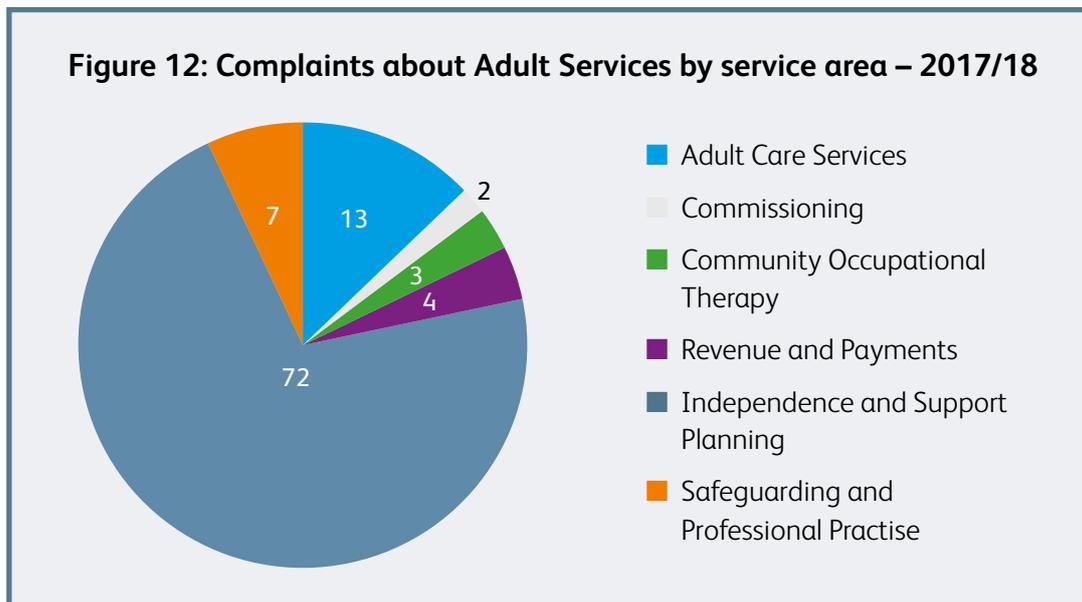


5.1 Key Headlines

- Fewer complaints about Adult Services were received (101 in 2017/18 compared with 115 in 2016/17, which is a decrease of approximately 12.17 %).
- More compliments were received about Adult Services (435 in 2017/18 compared with 337 in 2016/17 and amounting to an increase of 29.08 %).
- 91 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure. Of these complaints, 81 reached Stage One, 8 reached Stage Two and 2 reached Stage Three.
- More complaints were upheld (25 in 2017/18 compared with 14 in 2016/17).
- One complaint was investigated and upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Over half of complaints were regarding quality of service (58 of 101 complaints).
- 71 % of complaints were responded to within statutory timescales (65 of the 91 complaints).

5.2 Complaints

The following diagram outlines the complaints within Adult Services in 2017/18 by service area:



The highest number of complaints received was in relation to Independence and Support Planning services, with this area accounting for over 70% of all complaints relating to Adult Services. The high proportion of complaints relating to this area is consistent with previous years, and is reflective of both the nature of the services provided by this area and the high volume of customers using the service. Comparatively, the other areas received a relatively minimal number of complaints.

The overall decrease from 2016/17 in complaints relating to Adult Services is explained by a moderate decrease in every area, with the exception of Community Occupational Therapy which received the same number of complaints and Revenue and Payments which received two more complaints than the previous year.

Of the 91 complaints that were taken through the formal complaints procedures, 25 were upheld and 32 were partially upheld. Examining the themes within upheld and partially upheld complaints is particularly important to determine how the service can be improved. Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Adult Services complaints were:

- Delays in service, including around transitions and assessments
- Lack of contact and poor communication
- Inaccuracies around information provided

It is therefore recommended that these are key themes for Adult Services to monitor and address in 2018/19.

Furthermore, 71% of complaints were responded to within timescales. This is below the Council average of 79% and falls short of the Council Plan target of 85%. This is partially explained by the more complex process relating to the adult social care complaints procedure and the complexity of some of the complaints that are received for this area.

It is a statutory requirement to report annually on the complaints received for Public Health services. No complaints were received in 2017/18 in relation to Public Health.

5.3 Lessons Learned

Adult Services has made several service improvements in 2017/18 following the feedback from customers. Examples of these are outlined below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
Lack of information about changes to care package following discharge.	Improvements were made to invoicing to include a weekly breakdown of charges due. This was implemented from October 2017.
Little or no communication from the Locality Teams and had the complainant not made enquiries to the Financial Assessment Team, they would have continued to assume that their family member was in temporary care.	It was identified that these issues may have arisen due to the pressures in the system across localities, backlogs and the volume of work assessments. To address this, six teams have become three, and this has enabled a more controlled and efficient approach. Additionally, temporary and crisis cases are at the centre of a review programme.
Standard of care at Davies Court.	Individual supervisions were completed with the team and communication and dignity was discussed. A review of communication between NHS, Therapists and RMBC staff was also undertaken which has led to the introduction of conference calls each morning. The feedback on this has been positive as it has established improved lines of communication.
Concerns over the way the customer advice leaflet 'Access to Rotherham' is written, specifically the advice around 24 hour care in the home.	The distribution of the booklet was stopped pending a review of the content. The content was reviewed and revised. This has helped to ensure the information distributed is clear and consistent.

Case Study: Approach to Transitions

Complaints were received over transitions and the way this had been handled. Shaped by this customer feedback, a new Transitions Team was established in October 2017, to work with Children and Young People's Services, Health and Housing colleagues to ensure improved outcomes for young adults.

The purpose of the Transitions Team is to:

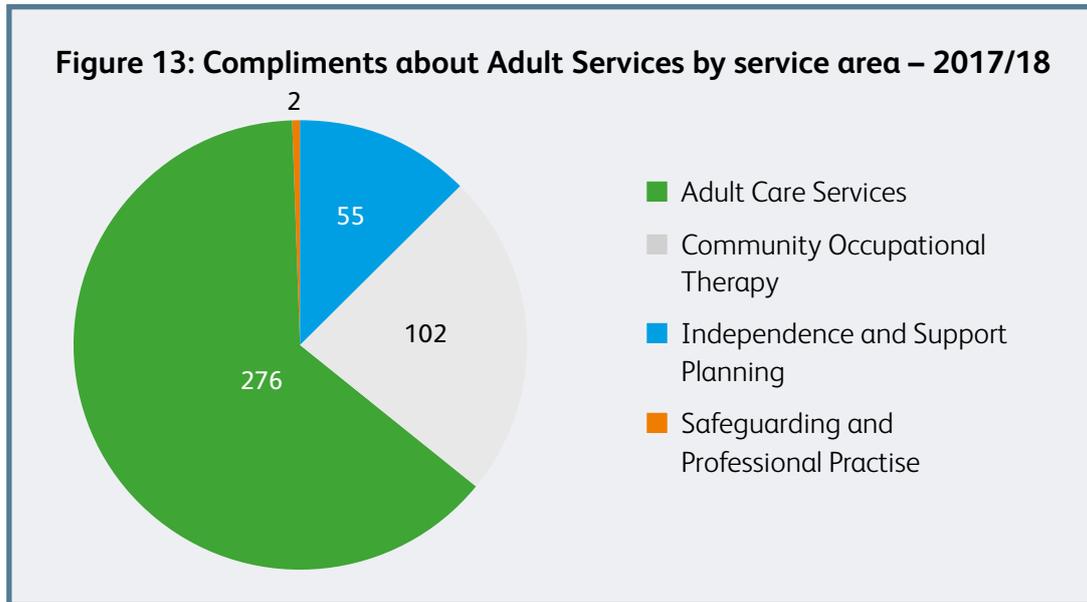
- Take lead responsibility for the young person when they reach 18 years
- Maintain responsibility for young adults on an education, health and care plan who remain in education and have social care needs

- Complete a full Care Act assessment prior to transferring the cases to locality teams for ongoing reviews.

The team now attend joint meetings with Children and Young People's Services around current cases, have clear lines of communication and actively work in partnership with involved professionals. It has been evidenced (following audits) that the standards of assessments and support planning are of an excellent standard. The team is also now an integral part of the local special educational needs and disability offer. There are future plans to recruit an additional full time social worker to further improve timeliness of response and reinforce the Council's post-18 provision.

5.4 Compliments

The following diagram outlines the compliments received about Adult Services by area:



The area that received the highest volume of compliments was Adult Care Services, at 276 (or over 63%). Within Adult Care Services, Enablement Services (Provider) received a significant portion of these compliments at 123.

It is also notable that Community Occupational Therapy, which only received 3 complaints over the year, also received a significant volume of compliments at 102 (or approximately 23%). This is a positive indicator that this area is achieving positive outcomes for Rotherham residents.

Examples of compliments received are outlined below.

Adult Care Services:

- “All the carers were efficient, caring and friendly. They made you feel you were supported at this difficult episode in your life....very comforting knowing you could get the help and advice you needed. Thank you all so much.”
- “I can honestly say I have never been looked after by such professional caring and thoughtful people - thank you all of you”
- “My grateful thanks for the way you have responded and cared for my mother, you cared for me as well giving me peace of mind knowing you would be there for her 24 hours a day - you are outstanding.”

Community Occupational Therapy:

- “The service could not have been any better, I was surprised by the speed that it was carried out, thank you very much”
- “Sincere thanks for the improvement made to my home thanks to the auspices of your department.... everyone concerned acted most professionally and the works were carried out with a minimum of disruption and without any mess”

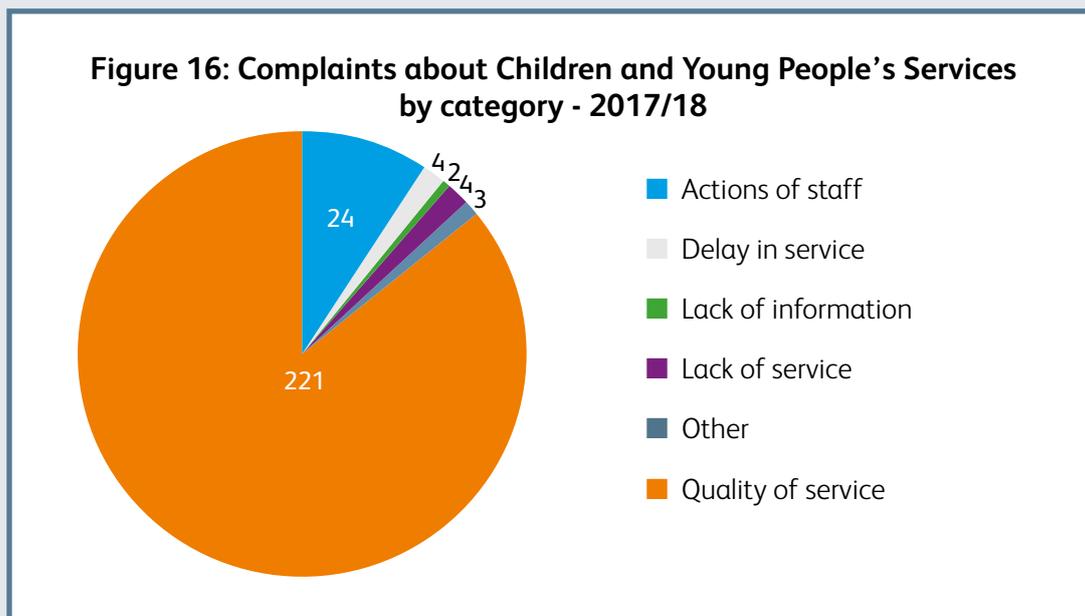
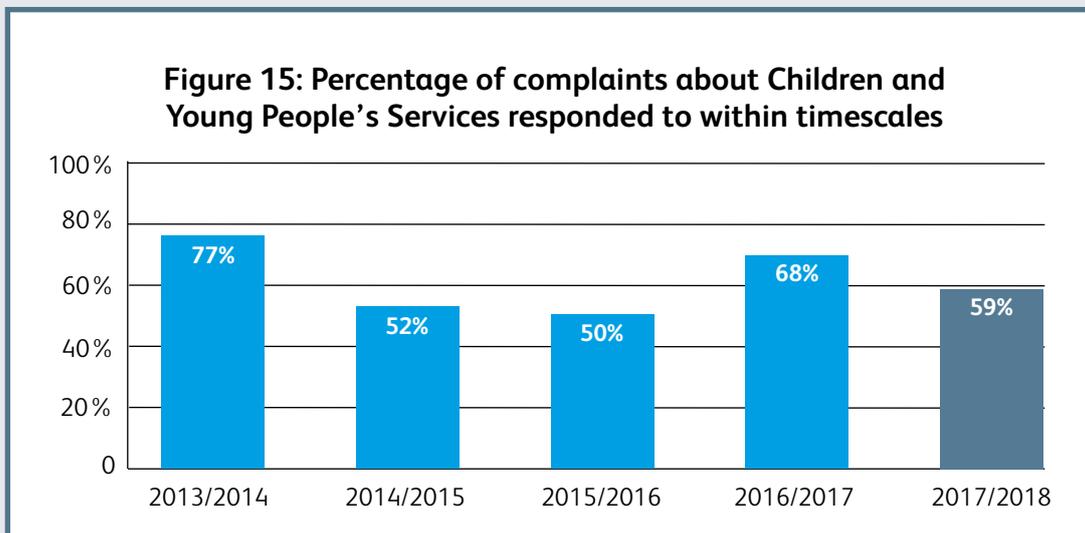
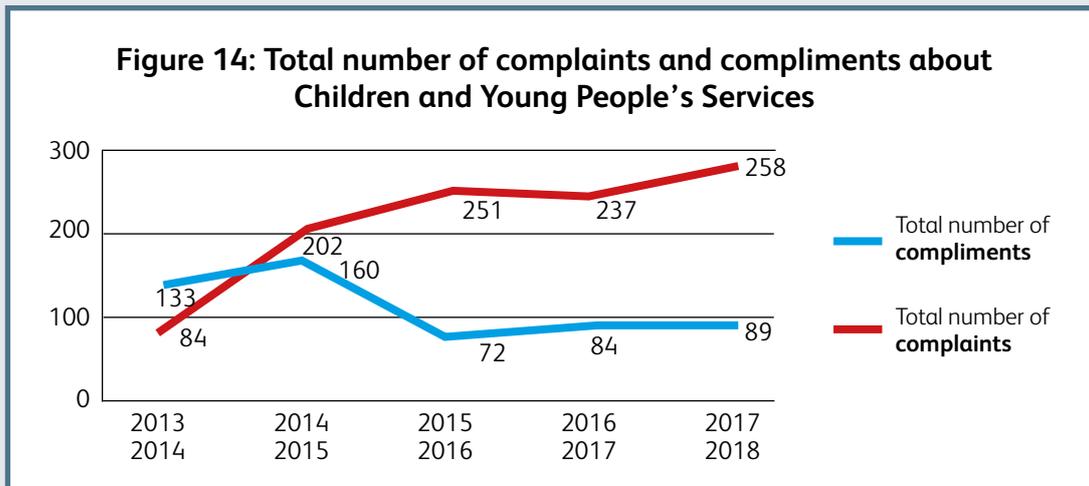
Independence and Support Planning:

- “Thank you for your prompt response and dealing with this emergency at such short notice”
- “The understanding and compassion you showed us made what to us was a traumatic experience more bearable...we will not forget your concern and kindness.”
- “Hi Jo, we just wanted to reiterate a very big THANK YOU to you. You have got so much done for Sash in the short space of time you’ve been dealing with us. Like I said some people are lovely both inside and out and go that bit further for someone else, you are one of those people and we will not forget you.”

Safeguarding and Professional Practice:

- “Sincerely grateful for the professionalism and kindness of Liz and her colleagues - they were calm, clear and professional - thank you so much.”

6 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

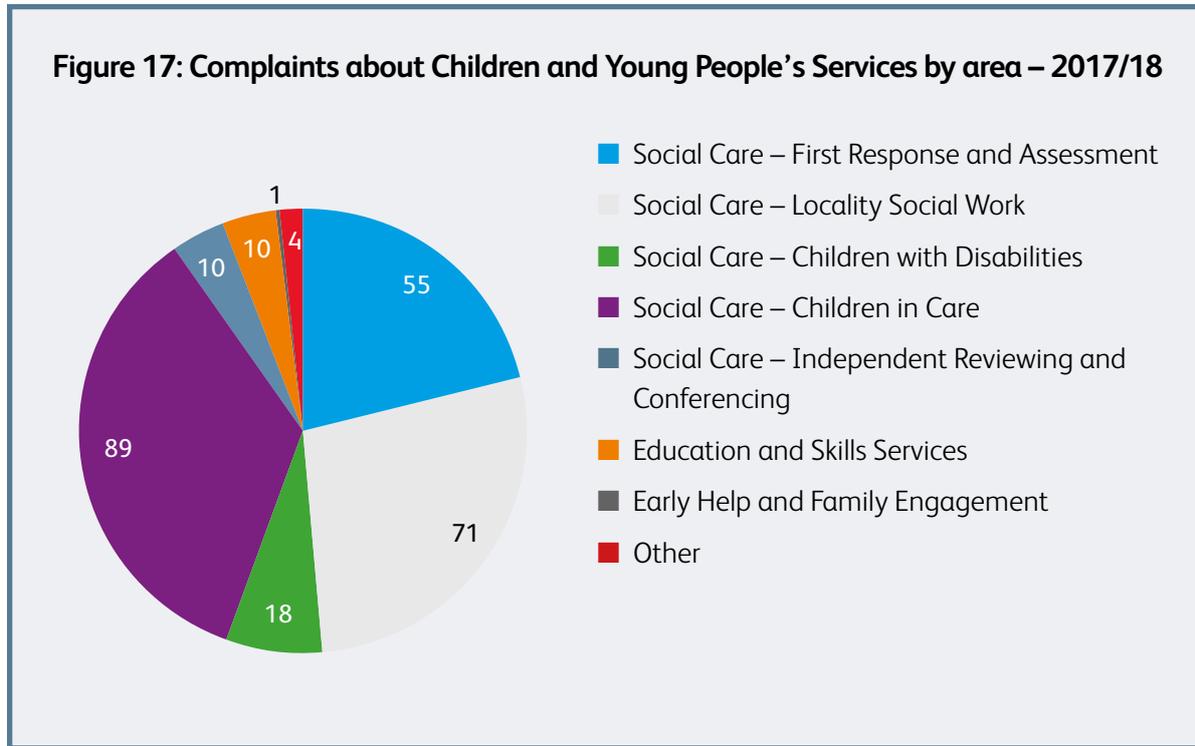


6.1 Key Headlines

- More complaints about Children and Young People's Services were received (258 in 2017/18 compared with 237 in 2016/17, which is an increase of approximately 8.86%).
- More compliments about Children and Young People's Services were received (89 compared in 2017/18 compared with 84 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 5.95%).
- Out of all of the complaints received, 33 were from children and young people and 29 of these 33 complaints were made with the assistance of an advocate from the Council's Children's Rights Service in 2017/18.
- 237 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure. Of these complaints, 214 reached Stage One, 19 reached Stage Two and 4 reached Stage Three.
- More complaints were upheld (33 in 2017/18 compared with 26 in 2016/17).
- Two complaints were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2017/18. One was upheld and one was not upheld.
- 59% of complaints were resolved within statutory timescales (140 of 237 complaints).

6.2 Complaints

The following diagram breaks down the complaints received for Children and Young People's Services by area:



The three highest areas for volume of complaints received were First Response and Assessment, Locality Social Work and Children in Care. For all of these areas, quality of service was the highest category. These three areas were also the highest areas for 2016/17, which is reflective of the sensitivity of the work handled by these services. Comparatively, the remaining areas received a relatively small number of complaints.

Complaints for Children and Young People's Services increased by 8.86% in 2017/18, going from 237 in 2016/17 to 258. The most significant increase was for Children in Care services which received 23 more complaints than the previous year (64 complaints were received in 2016/17 and this rose to 87 in 2017/18). There were also moderate rises within other areas, but no significant increases.

Of the 237 complaints taken through the complaints procedure, 33 were upheld and 65 were partially upheld. This means that more complaints were upheld in comparison with the previous year, but fewer were partially upheld (in 2016/17 26 were upheld, whilst 73 were partially upheld). Examining the themes within upheld and partially upheld complaints is particularly important to determine how the service can be improved. Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Children and Young People's Services complaints were:

- Dissatisfaction around the sharing of information
- Lack of contact and communication
- Delays and lack of progress
- Dissatisfaction with decisions made

It is therefore recommended that these are key themes for Children and Young People's Services to monitor and address in 2018/19.

Supporting the voice of the child is a priority for the Council and a key element of this is ensuring that children and young people are able to tell us what they think and that the Council takes this into account when making decisions about services. The Ofsted report which was released in January 2018 found that children are well supported to make complaints.

Out of all of the complaints received, 33 were from children and young people (22 from Looked After Children, 7 from Care Leavers and 4 from other young people). This is an increase of 50% from 2016/17 when 22 complaints were received from children and young people. Of the complaints received from children and young people 28 were around quality of service, 2 were around actions of staff and 1 was in relation to delays in service.

When expressing concerns either directly to the services and people who support them or to the Complaints Team, children are informed of their right to support from an advocate. The Council's Children's Rights Service provides support to young people to sort out problems when they request help and to make complaints where they have been unable to resolve concerns. 29 of the 33 complaints received from children and young people were made with the assistance of an advocate from the Council's Children's Rights Service, in 2017/18.

Furthermore, 59% of complaints were responded to within the relevant timescales in 2017/18 which is significantly lower than the Council-wide average and the target within the Council Plan of 85%. To a large extent, this is explained by the complexity of some of the complaints received within this area as well as the fact that the children's social care complaints regulations have additional requirements to the other complaints procedures. However, performance has worsened since last year, whereby 68% of complaints were closed within timescales, which indicates that more work should be done to ensure timely resolutions of complaints.

6.3 Lessons Learned

Following an inspection of Children and Young People's Services in 2017, Ofsted found that lessons from complaints are used by managers to improve the quality of the service. Examples of the service improvements made by Children and Young People's Services are outlined below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
The Child's Multi-Agency Assessment completed by Children's Social Care did not include exploration into alleged domestic violence by a child's mother towards the father.	The Council reviewed its working practices and identification of male victims of domestic abuse. This included a renewed strategy in relation to Domestic Abuse which will now be incorporated into all future training for social workers.
Following a complaint investigation it was found that social workers when completing a multi-agency assessment on a child had used incorrect terminology in reference to online child abuse offences.	<p>The Council has made plans to undertake training in relation to the use of correct terminology and understanding of IT specifically in relation to offences against children and young people on the internet.</p> <p>The training will take place to all staff at a service event, which is focused on the area of assessing persons who pose a risk to children. The training will cover indecent images of children, and the technicalities around this. This is scheduled for the November 2018 and will be delivered to all social care staff.</p>
While acknowledging the challenge and complexity of investigating complaints, a Stage 3 Review Panel noted that the way in which a Stage 2 Complaint Statement had been written by an Independent Investigating Officer had resulted in findings and conclusions not being reached.	<p>It was recommended that the Council consider support, guidance and training of Stage Two Investigating Officers in order that they are able to scope complainants' concerns effectively so that they are straightforward to evidence and conclude with clarity.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing a toolkit for investigating officers and has scheduled training for all independent investigating officers to be delivered by December 2018. This will have a specific focus on planning complaint investigation and compiling complaint statements which should result in better quality investigations and consistent approaches.</p>

Case Study: Improved record-keeping

Following a complaint investigation it was found that the Council's approach to record-keeping contributed to a misunderstanding whereby a parent believed that the Council had agreed to pay their children's nursery fees. The Council apologised to the parent for the confusion caused.

The Council has in place a quality assurance framework and a revised version of the framework has been published following the complaint. The framework includes regular auditing of case records by managers and practice audit consultants which are undertaken

on both random samples of children's social care cases and basic information and record-keeping forms part of all audits.

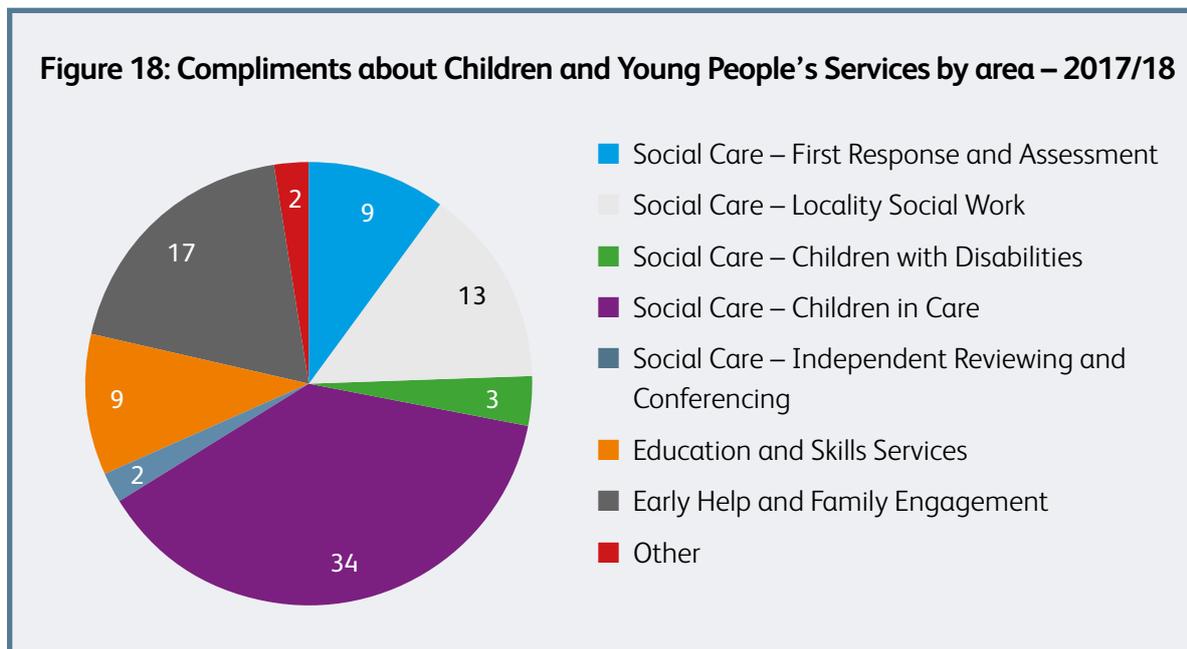
As part of the quality assurance framework, practice audit consultants work with social work professionals to address thematic issues and practice learning days are led by senior managers to address these issues.

The Council has scheduled training with social work professionals focussed on social work basics which includes record-keeping.

It is anticipated that the improvements made will reduce the possibility of similar problems occurring in the future.

6.4 Compliments

The following diagram breaks down the compliments relating to Children and Young People's Services by area:



Compliments were relatively widespread across Children and Young People's Services. The area receiving the highest volume of compliments was Children in Care services, followed by the Early Help Services and Locality Social Work Services.

Examples of compliments received include:

Social Care – First Response and Assessment:

- “You were there for me when it felt like no-one else was – I’m going to miss you lots”

Social Care – Locality Social Work:

- “Sara is active and determined - she made us see light at the end of the tunnel”
- “Thank you to Sara for making it such a positive experience. She displayed empathy and excellent communication in dealing with us”
- “Forever grateful for the help and support you have given myself and my children in order for me to become a stronger person and parent”

Social Care – Children in Care:

- “Thank you to the whole team for the support we have received which has been amazing. The service is invaluable”
- “Thank you as always for your quality input for the children we work with - we couldn't do it without you”
- “The care and attention that has gone into this book was fabulous to see and is an absolutely beautiful example of a meaningful memory book. All the little bits or art work in it shows just how much she cares about the children she looks after and I hope when this little one grows up, she will be able to recognise this in what has been put together for her. The little touches say a lot.”

Social Care – Children’s Disability Service:

- “Massive thank you for all the love, care and support you have given. It has really helped me keep strong and positive”

Early Help:

- “Beth has helped and supported me in ways that have made a huge difference in my life and for that I am very grateful”
- “Thank you for working closely with my daughter providing excellent support and guidance”

7 HOUSING SERVICES

Figure 19: Total number of complaints and compliments relating to Housing Services

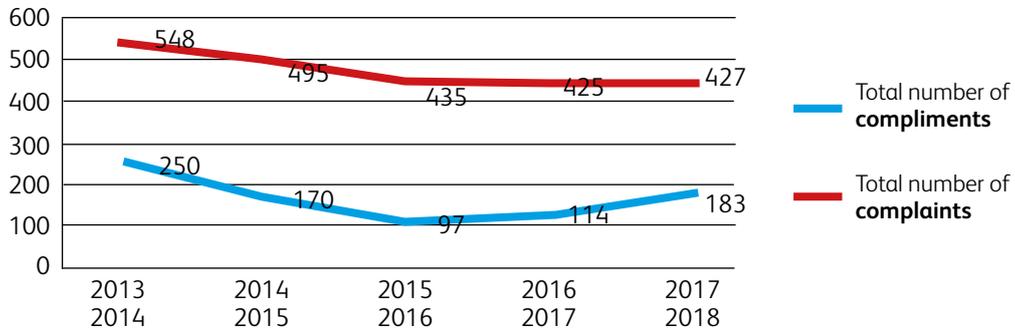


Figure 20: Percentage of complaints responded to within timescales

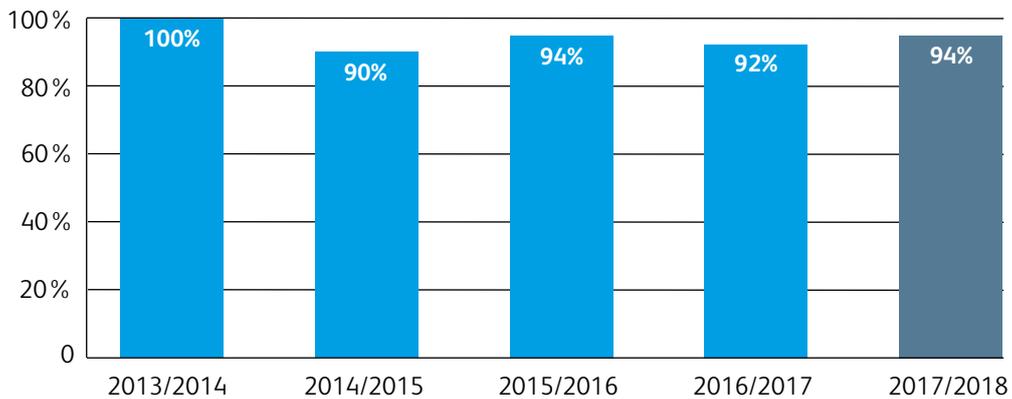
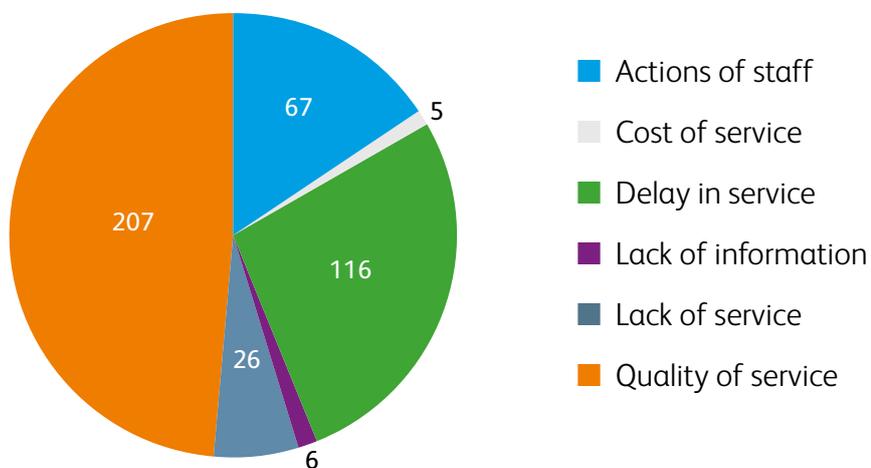


Figure 21: Complaints for Housing Services by category - 2017/18

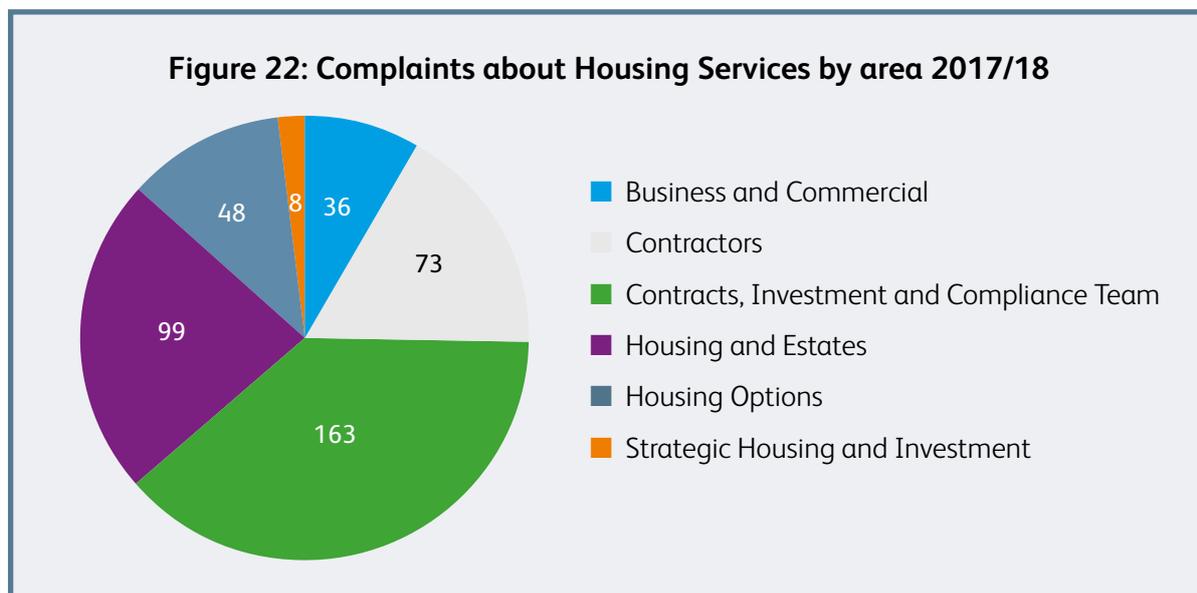


7.1 Key Headlines

- Approximately the same number of complaints about Housing Services were received (427 in 2017/18 compared with 425 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 0.47%).
- More compliments about Housing Services were received (183 in 2017/18 compared with 114 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 60.53%).
- 395 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure. Of these, 383 reached Stage One, 11 reached Stage Two and 1 reached Stage Three.
- More complaints were upheld (120 in 2017/18 compared with 108 in 2016/17).
- One decision was received by the Housing Ombudsman. The complaint was not upheld.
- Quality of service accounted for almost half of complaints (207 of 425) with delays in service also accounting for a substantial portion (116 of 425).
- 94% of complaints were responded to within statutory timescales (371 of the 395 complaints taken through the complaints procedure).

7.2 Complaints

A total of 427 complaints about Housing Services were received in 2017/18. The following diagram breaks these down by service area:



The highest category for complaints within Housing Services for 2017/18 was quality of service, followed by delay in service and actions of staff. In comparison with other Council service areas, delay in service was a much more prevalent theme within complaints relating to Housing Services.

The three areas receiving the highest volume of complaints accounted for over three quarters of all complaints received for Housing Services. These areas were the Contracts, Investment and Compliance Team, the Housing and Estates Team and Contractors Services. The other areas received a relatively small portion of the overall complaints.

Overall, complaints for Housing Services increased over the year; however this was a minimal decrease of 2 complaints or 0.47% so is likely to be an insignificant fluctuation.

Of the 395 complaints taken through the formal complaints procedures, 120 were upheld and 61 were partially upheld. In comparison, in 2016/17, 103 complaints were upheld and 63 were partially upheld, meaning there has been a slight increase on the combined upheld and partially upheld figures for Housing Services complaints in 2017/18.

Examining the themes within upheld and partially upheld complaints is particularly important to determine how the service can be improved. Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Housing Services complaints were:

- Issues relating to repairs or the need for repairs
- Delays in service
- Lack of communication

It is therefore recommended that these are key themes for Housing Services to monitor and address in 2018/19.

94% of complaints for Housing Services were responded to within relevant timescales. This significantly exceeds the Council Plan target of 85% and the Council-wide average of 79%. In the context that Housing Services received the highest volume of complaints across the authority in 2017/18, this indicates that these services make responding to customer feedback quickly a key priority.

7.3 Lessons Learned

Housing Services has made several service improvements in 2017/18 following the feedback from customers. Examples of these are outlined below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
An applicant for disabled adaptations was advised that under occupation meant the adaptations could not progress and suitable alternative occupation would have to be sought. However, the policy states that this advice is only appropriate where there is a reasonable chance of being rehoused within six months, and in this case the probability was very low.	As a direct impact and influence of this and other similar complaints, the process is now agreed that all requests that may have been refused on under occupancy will be reviewed to ensure the timeline of 6 months is achievable for re-housing, if not the adaptations will be processed. All OTs have been briefed on this.
Avoidable delay around the termination of a tenancy whereby the tenant became too unwell to sign the termination form, which caused distress for the next of kin.	The termination process has subsequently been rewritten and subject to approval, will allow the service to respond more compassionately and effectively to this type of situation. This should mean that this type of complaint will be avoided in the future.
Rushed property viewing.	The viewing time has now been extended by 5 minutes to 20 minutes.
Unhappy with paying the full leasehold charge for the year when they had only purchased the property in late March.	The calculation was correct in line with the terms of the lease and the policy, meaning that the complaint came from a misunderstanding around these terms. To address this issue pre-sale correspondence for both Right to Buy and Leasehold-to-Leasehold sales has been updated to better explain how the calculation of service charges works for new leaseholders.

Case Study: Repairs during the Big Freeze

During March 2018, there were a number of complaints received relating to broken down boilers, including around the length of time taken to attend to the repairs. Delays were caused by the high demand and the extremely challenging conditions.

In response to these complaints, the service:

- Cancelled all gas servicing/non-emergency jobs so that all qualified operatives were placed on emergencies only.
- Brought in an additional sub-contractor.
- Had qualified CIC staff working full time until the emergency was over.

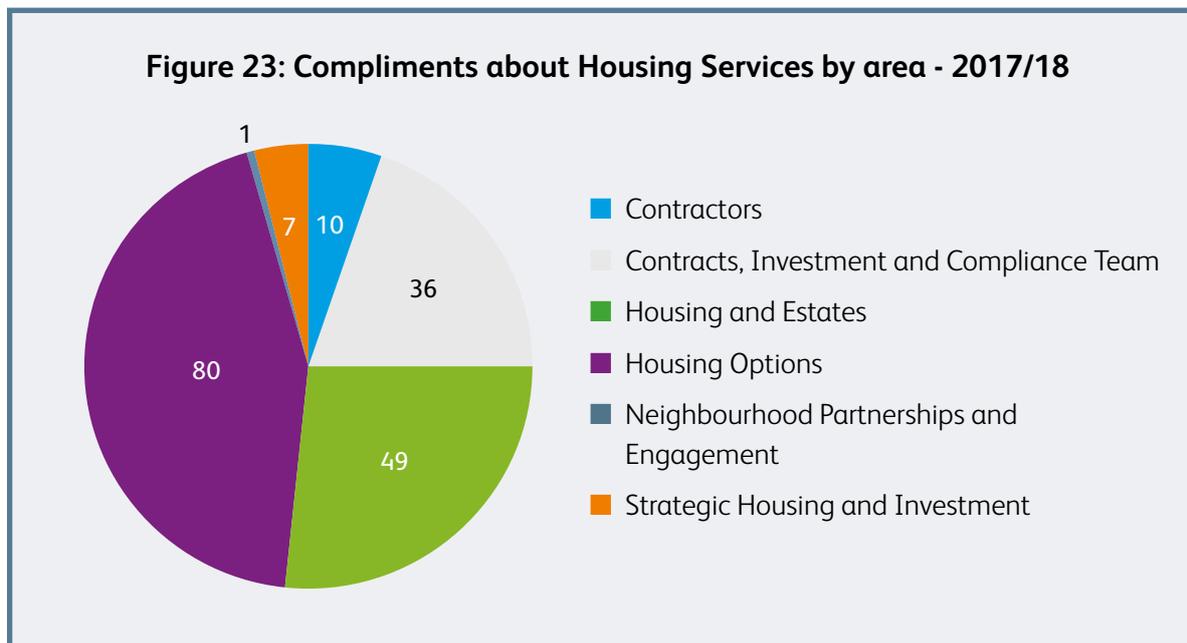
- Provided advice and updated the website on how to prevent condensate pipes freezing.
- Prioritised vulnerable customers.

The impact of these actions was significant to ensure that the repairs were dealt with as quickly as they possibly could be.

Additionally, the lessons learned from complaints in previous years also had an impact on the way that the service dealt with the adverse weather conditions. During the last big freeze in 2011, 3,500 boilers froze and the learning from that time resulted in work to improve the condensate pipes on boilers. This work along with the advice given to prevent freezing condensate pipes clearly had an effect because the number of boilers freezing was less than 20% of those that froze in 2011.

7.4 Compliments

The following chart outlines the compliments about Housing Services by area:



Housing Options received the highest volume of compliments, and this is particularly positive considering that this area received relatively few complaints in comparison with other Housing Services.

Furthermore, two of the top three highest areas for complaints (the Contracts, Investment and Compliance Team and the Housing and Estates Team) were also within the top three highest areas for volume of compliments received, which indicates that a high level of feedback overall is received for these services. In contrast, Contractors received relatively few compliments.

Examples of compliments received in 2017/18 are outlined below:

Contractors:

- “Andy was very professional and respected our home - he was very obliging and did an excellent job, any questions we asked he answered.”

Contracts, Investment and Compliance Team:

- “Would like to express our gratitude to you and your team. The standard of work is of the highest order carried out by a very professional and friendly group of guys”
- “Well done to Rotherham Council Housing repairs- reported emergency repair and within 2 hrs all sorted”

Housing and Estates:

- “Big thank you - you have both been fantastic helping me”
- “Angela has done so much to make me and my daughter feel safe - she is kind, understanding, reassuring, helpful and considerate”

Housing Options:

- “Helen was patient and listened carefully and checked to make sure she understood. She made a difficult situation a positive experience”
- “A true 5* experience!”
- For a Homelessness Officer from a customer who was assisted to find supported accommodation - “you have changed my life”

Neighbourhood Partnerships and Engagement:

- “I have to tell you that I think Jill is an absolutely marvellous ambassador for the Council – she comes across as a really genuine, caring person and the work involved in running the annual competition is staggering.”

Strategic Housing and Investment:

- “Thank you for your kindness and compassion - we couldn't have got through this difficult time without your help”

8 REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

Figure 24: Total number of compliments and complaints about Regeneration and Environment services

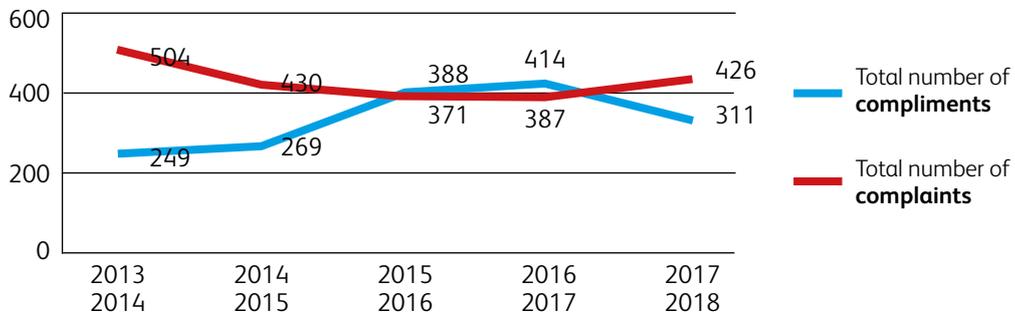


Figure 25: Percentage of complaints about Regeneration and Environment Services responded to within timescales - 2017/18

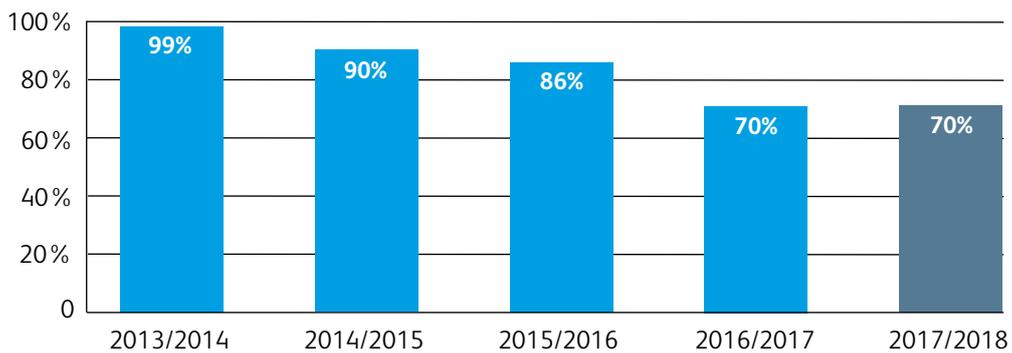
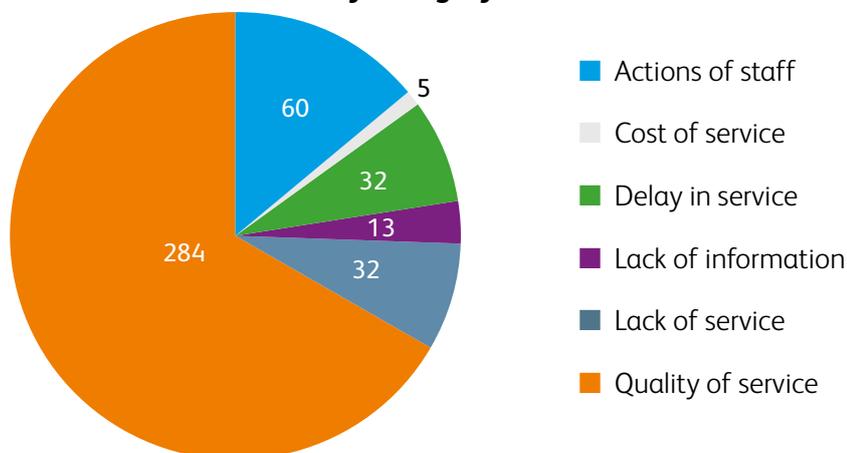


Figure 26: Complaints for Regeneration and Environment Services by category - 2017/18

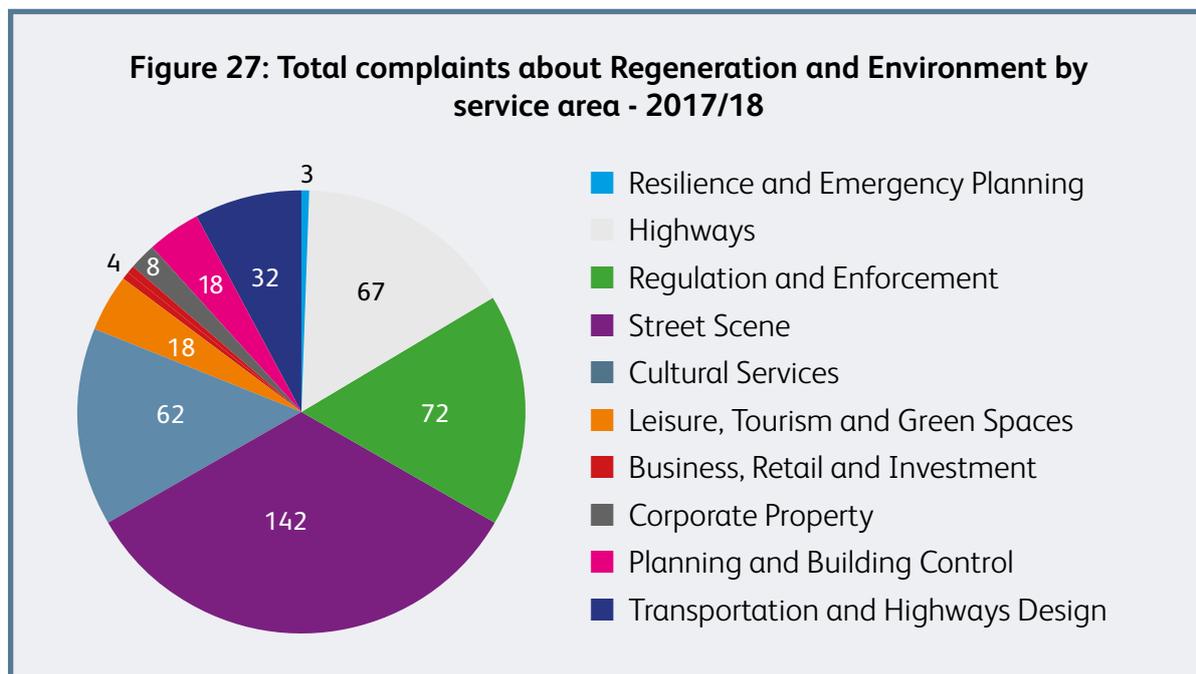


8.1 Key Headlines

- More complaints about Regeneration and Environment Services were received (426 in 2017/18 compared with 387 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 10.08%).
- Fewer compliments about Regeneration and Environment Services were received (311 in 2017/18 compared with 414 in 2016/17, which is a decrease of 24.88%).
- 288 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure. Of these, 272 reached Stage One, 13 reached Stage Two and 3 reached Stage Three.
- More complaints were upheld (75 in 2017/18 compared with 31 in 2016/17).
- No complaints were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Over half of complaints were regarding quality of service (284 of 426 complaints).
- 70% of complaints were responded to within statutory timescales (203 of the 288 complaints taken through the formal complaints procedures).

8.2 Complaints

The following diagram outlines the complaints received for Regeneration and Environment in 2017/18 by service area:



The highest volume of complaints was received by Street Scene, which is consistent with previous years and reflective of the high volume of customers being served by this area. Furthermore, it should be noted that fewer complaints were received for Street Scene in 2017/18 in comparison with the previous year (142 compared with 147 in 2016/17).

After Street Scene, Regulation and Enforcement, Highways and Cultural Services received the highest volume of complaints. The remaining areas all received relatively minimal numbers of complaints in comparison.

The overall increase in complaints from 2016/17 came from increases in several areas, in particular:

- Regulation and Enforcement which received 72 complaints in 2017/18 (increasing from 39 in 2016/17)
- Cultural Services which received 62 complaints in 2017/18 (increasing from 31 in 2016/17)
- Transportation and Highways Design which received 32 complaints in 2017/18 (increasing from 16 in 2016/17)

Of the 288 complaints that were taken through the formal complaints procedures, 75 were upheld and 23 were partially upheld. In comparison, in 2016/17 42 were upheld and 39 were partially upheld. This means that the combined total of upheld and partially upheld complaints for Regeneration and Environment Services increased in 2017/18.

Examining the themes within upheld and partially upheld complaints is particularly important to determine how the service can be improved. Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Regeneration and Environment Services complaints were:

- Lack of service particularly with regards to refuse collection and to address environmental issues
- Delays in service
- Actions of staff

It is therefore recommended that these are key themes for Regeneration and Environment Services to monitor and address in 2018/19.

Furthermore, 70% of complaints were responded to within timescales. This is below the Council average of 79% and falls short of the Council Plan target of 85%. Improving performance against this target should be another key priority for 2018/19.

8.3 Lessons Learned

Regeneration and Environment has made several service improvements based on customer feedback in 2017/18. Examples of these improvements are outlined in the table and within the case studies below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
Poor customer service when seeking to renew Rothercard.	After investigating further, it became clear that there were out of date instructions at some libraries and customer service sites. Correct information was sent out to these sites to ensure that poor service can be avoided in the future.
Loss of bug samples, which led to delays in the tackling of a bug infestation.	Adjustments have been made to the way that the Council deals with such samples, including more secure storage facilities.
Non-collection of recycling.	A new leaflet was produced to leave for customers who put the wrong items in the containers or do not separate their recycling.
Pattern of non-collection of bins on a specific street.	A site visit found that parked cars were causing access issues to the street. A letter was then sent out to all residents of the street asking for their cooperation on collection day and for residents to be mindful when parking to allow space for refuse/recycling vehicles through. Residents supported this initiative and collections have been undertaken regularly since.
The complainant drove to Rother Valley Country Park to find it closed when nothing on the website said this.	Following this complaint, the website details were amended.
DVDs missing from the reservation shelf in the library.	The reservation shelf was relocated to be in view of the Reception Desk. Any reserved DVDs will now be placed in a secure location behind the counter until the customer collects them.
Delay in provision of copy of birth certificate.	A senior officer from the Contact Centre investigated and identified a procedural error. A memo was provided to all Contact Centre staff around the correct procedure and a separate memo was provided to Registration staff on how to spot errors should they occur.

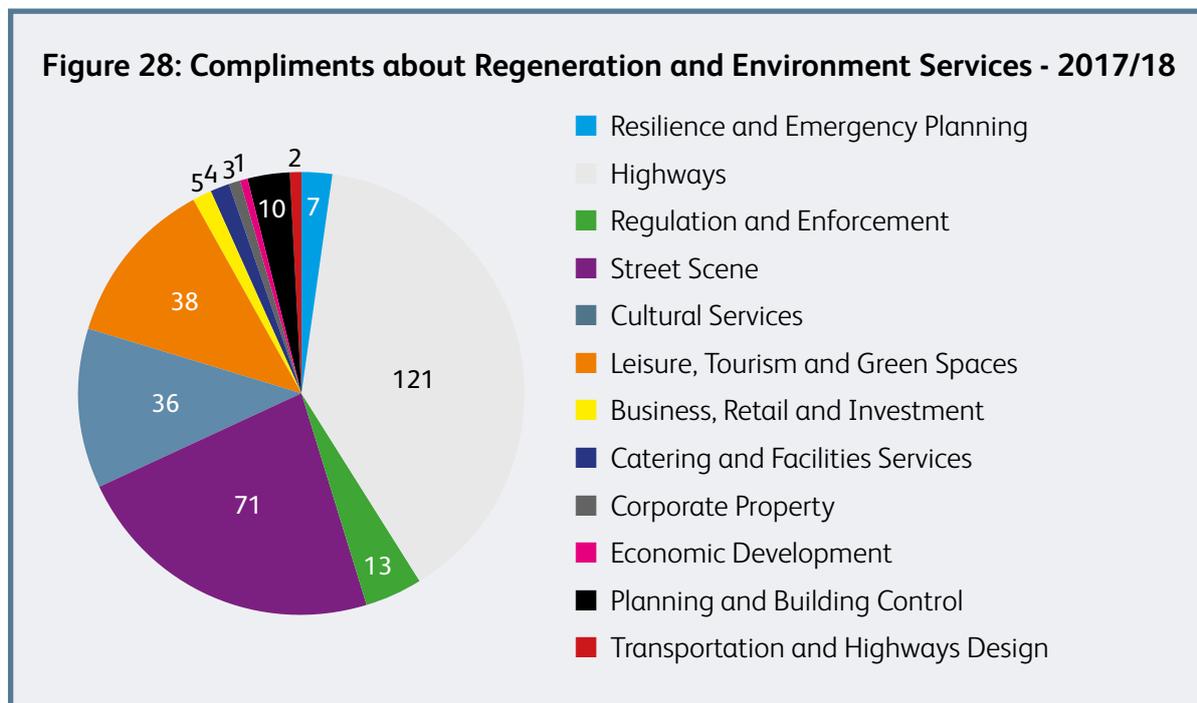
Case Study: Reducing Queue Times

A complaint had been received around excessive queue times to collect taxi plates. In order to reduce waiting times, a new process was piloted where taxi plates are pre-printed and prepared as soon as the driver books their compliance (MOT test). Upon arrival at Riverside House, provided the driver produces their pass certificate and the relevant paperwork, the plate will have already been printed days in advance and it is waiting in the Contact Centre for immediate issue.

This pilot was a success as this new process has ensured that plates are ready instantly, provided all documentation is in order. It has also reduced the impact on licensing staff having to break off from work they are doing when a driver calls in for a plate. Ultimately, this has meant that the Contact Centre has been able to provide a much quicker and more efficient service for customers in Rotherham.

8.4 Compliments

A total of 311 compliments were received for Regeneration and Environment Services in 2017/18. The following diagram breaks these compliments down by area:



The two highest areas in terms of volume of compliments were Highways and Street Scene – both of which featured in the top three highest areas for complaints. This shows that these services receive a high volume of customer feedback in general, meaning that the volume of complaints may not necessarily indicate poor performance overall.

Other areas that received high volumes of compliments were the Leisure, Tourism and Green Spaces Services and Cultural Services.

Examples of some of the compliments received are outlined below:

Highways:

- “I would like to congratulate all the people who worked on the Bulls Head Brampton roundabout and to say what a superb job they have done”
- “I just wanted to thank you for the fantastic work that has been carried out on Quarry Lane. The new posts look brilliant! ... As for the work itself, even that was carried out with the minimum of disruption, with the Streetpride team being very considerate about residents and where they parked the lorry.”
- “HUGE BIG THANK YOU to everyone that has kept the roads clear and gritted around the borough of Rotherham! Please pass on my sincere thanks to everyone for their efforts to keep us safe and moving. Well done all.

Street Scene:

- “Wants to say ‘thank you’ to you for arranging her Sanpro Bin delivery. She also wanted to say that the person who delivered it also brought it right up to her house and she is very grateful for this.”
- “Thank you for attending to this enquiry so promptly, I drove home last night and all the road markings had been painted and it is a 100% better and could not believe how much easier it was to drive on the road so thank you again, I would just like to say I am very impressed with the service I have received from Rotherham Council”
- “Praise for the Streetpride Operative clearing rubbish and weeds in the town centre - fantastic job - so meticulous”

Cultural Services:

- “Brilliant to see the council promoting the arts and investing in the town centre. Have noticed a huge change in the town centre”
- “We look going to activities led by Kate at Thurcroft Library - brilliantly organised and appropriately caters for all ages. Tonight’s Christmas one was lovely - 5**”

Leisure, Tourism and Green Spaces:

- “Vintage Hop - best even I have ever attended, amazing planning and turnout - I didn’t want it to end”.
- “Mega Active Sports Camp, Todwick was a fantastic camp. My son was originally only booked in for 2 days but he loved it that much he asked to go back on the 3rd day and has asked to go to another camp. The staff were amazing. Would highly recommend.”.

Community Safety, Regulation and Enforcement:

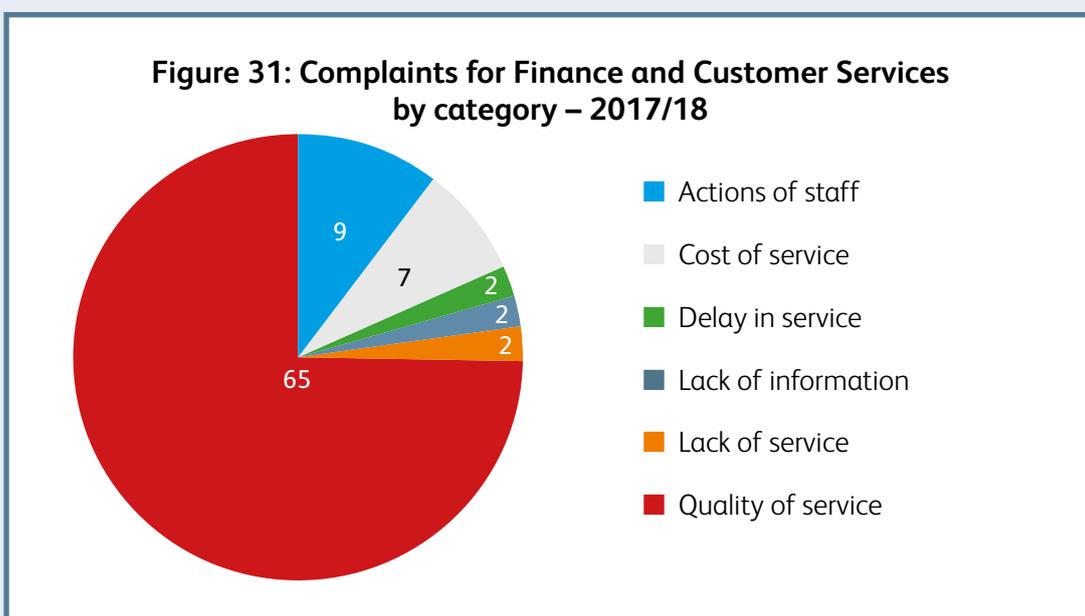
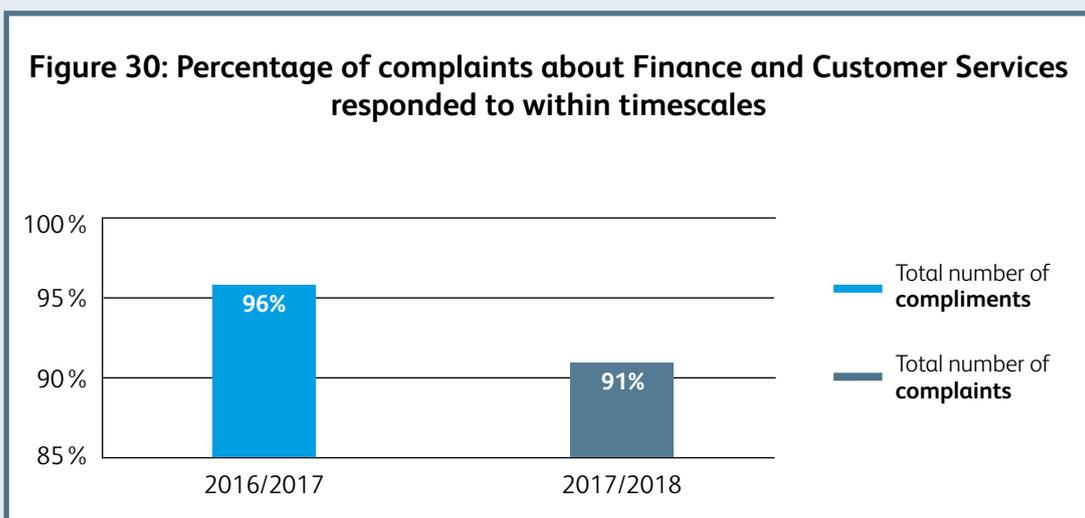
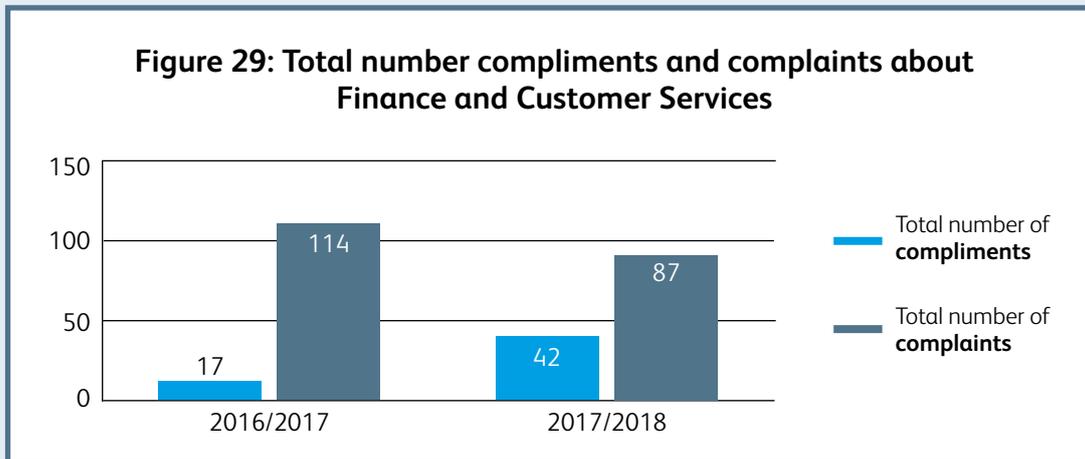
- “I would like to thank you and your department in dealing with this problem so swiftly, and I hope the peace and quiet continues”

Planning and Building Control:

- “Thank you also for your help on this application. You have reinforced my conclusion that Rotherham remain one of the most professional and approachable Councils to work with”.

9 FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

The comparison for both Finance and Customer Services and Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate is based on the previous financial year only, due to the fact that they formerly sat within one Directorate. Due to this restructure and the way that complaints were previously recorded, it is not possible to accurately extrapolate complaints relating to the services covered by these two Directorates before 2016/17.

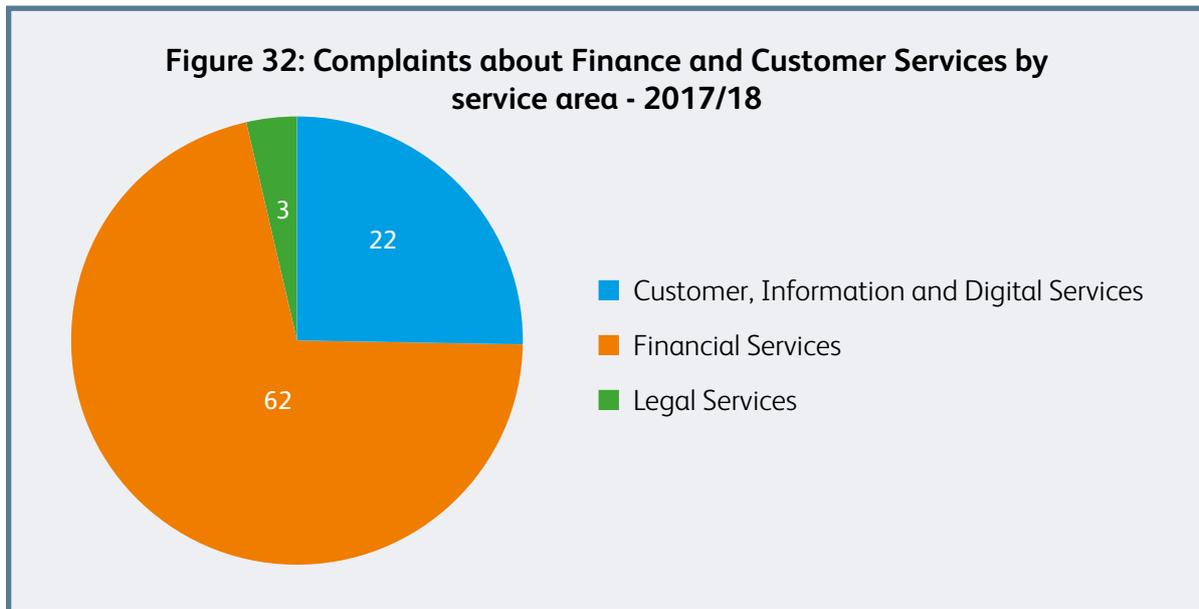


9.1 Key Headlines

- Fewer complaints about Finance and Customer Services were received (87 in 2017/18 compared with 114 received in 2016/17, which is a decrease of approximately 23.68%).
- More compliments about Finance and Customer Services were received (42 in 2017/18 compared with 17 in 2016/17, which is an increase of 147.06%).
- 74 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure. Of these complaints, 73 reached Stage One and 1 reached Stage Two.
- Fewer complaints were upheld (7 in 2017/18 compared with 23 in 2016/17).
- One complaint was investigated and upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 91% of complaints were responded to responded to timescales (67 of 74 complaints taken through the formal complaints procedures).

9.2 Complaints

The following diagram breaks down the complaints for Finance and Customer Services by area for 2017/18:



Over 71 % of complaints about Finance and Customer Services were in relation to Financial Services, with the majority of these specifically relating to Revenue and Benefits (59 of the 62 complaints received). It should be noted however, that this area typically receives a high volume of customer contacts due to the nature of the services provided.

Furthermore, complaints for Revenue and Benefits have significantly decreased over the year – whilst 84 complaints were received in 2016/17, only 59 were received in 2017/18, amounting to a decrease of 29.76 %. This substantial decrease for complaints within Revenue and Benefits has contributed to an overall decrease in complaints for the Directorate of 23.68 %.

Complaints for legal services also decreased over the year, going from 6 in 2016/17 to 3 in 2017/18. Customer, Information and Digital Services remained approximately stable, receiving only one more complaint in 2017/18.

Of the 74 complaints taken through the formal complaints procedure, 7 were upheld and 10 were partially upheld. This means that fewer complaints were upheld or partially upheld in 2017/18 in comparison with the previous year; in 2016/17, 12 were upheld and 8 were partially upheld.

Examining the themes within upheld and partially upheld complaints is particularly important to determine how the service can be improved. Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Finance and Customer Services complaints were:

- Issues around payments or charges
- Lack of service and communication

It is therefore recommended that these are key themes for Finance and Customer Services to monitor and address in 2018/19.

91 % of complaints for Finance and Customer Services were dealt with in the relevant timescales in 2017/18. Whilst this is a decrease on the performance from 2016/17 whereby 96 % were responded to within timescales, 91 % is still strong performance in comparison with the Council Plan target of 85 % and the Council average of 79 %. Maintaining this high performance will be another key priority for 2018/19.

9.3 Lessons Learned

Finance and Customer Services has made several service improvements in 2017/18 following the feedback from customers. Examples of these are outlined below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
Customer complained that they had informed the Council of a change of address on several occasions but their Council Tax account had not been amended.	It was found that the customer had written to Benefits and Account Management with this information and that this was not shared with Local Taxation. A reminder was provided in team meetings that if a letter includes important information, this needs to be passed on to the relevant team.
Customer complained about the customer service provided by the Benefits Service which had not been what they would have expected.	An investigation confirmed that the officer was polite and helpful throughout the call. However, it was agreed that the officer taking the call should have given a warning before they terminated the call. The Team Leaders for Benefits Assessment reminded staff about the protocols around terminating phone calls.
Receiving no contact after requesting a copy invoice and receiving contact from collection agents.	Investigating this complaint found that it was unfortunately processed against another reference number, and due to this mistake a decision was made to refer the outstanding balances to collection agents as it appeared that no contact had been received following this particular account number. To address this, staff were reminded to check details are correct when processing payments.

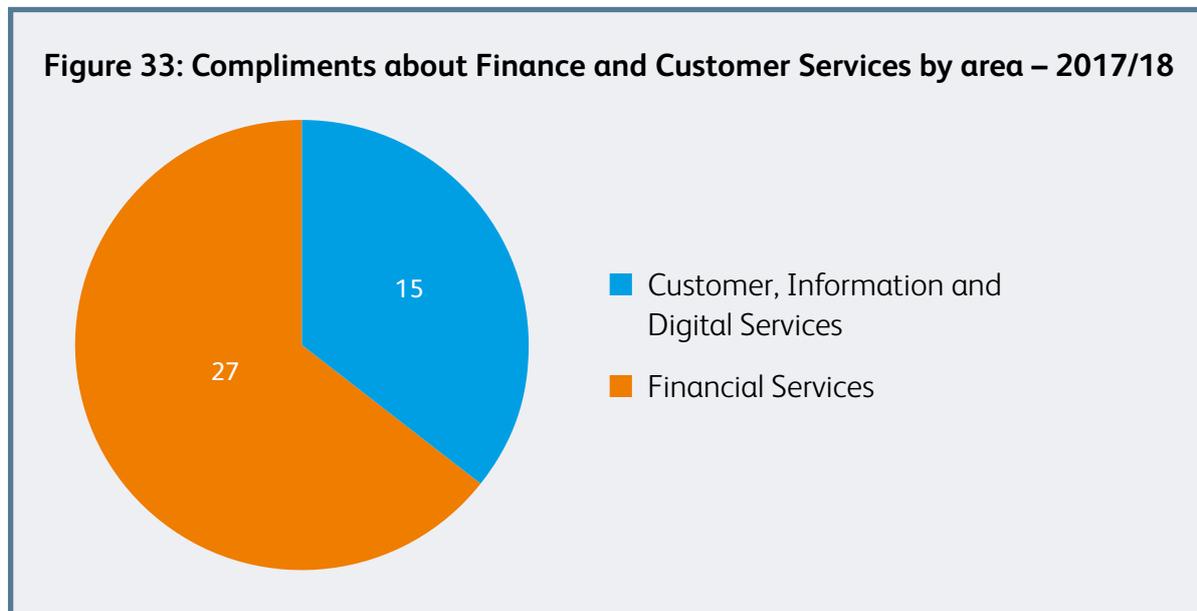
Case Study: Keeping complainants informed

A customer complained that they were not kept informed as to the progress of their complaints following a meeting with an officer from Legal Services. The customer also complained that the officer provided unnecessary information to the Parish Council which informed their actions against them. The complainant was also unhappy about the time it took for their complaints to be dealt with.

A new procedure for handling standards complaints was approved by Full Council on 18 October 2017. The revised procedure imposes further time limits for the various stages of the process. In future, where there is delay in responses from subject members, without appropriate justification, the process will simply proceed without those responses. The new procedure agreed by Council provides more focus on the timely resolution of complaints.

9.4 Compliments

The following diagram breaks down the compliments relating to Finance and Customer Services by area.



The area that received the highest volume of compliments was Financial Services at 27, followed by Customer, Information and Digital Services. The majority of these compliments were regarding the helpfulness of staff and the quality of service.

Some examples of compliments are:

Financial Services:

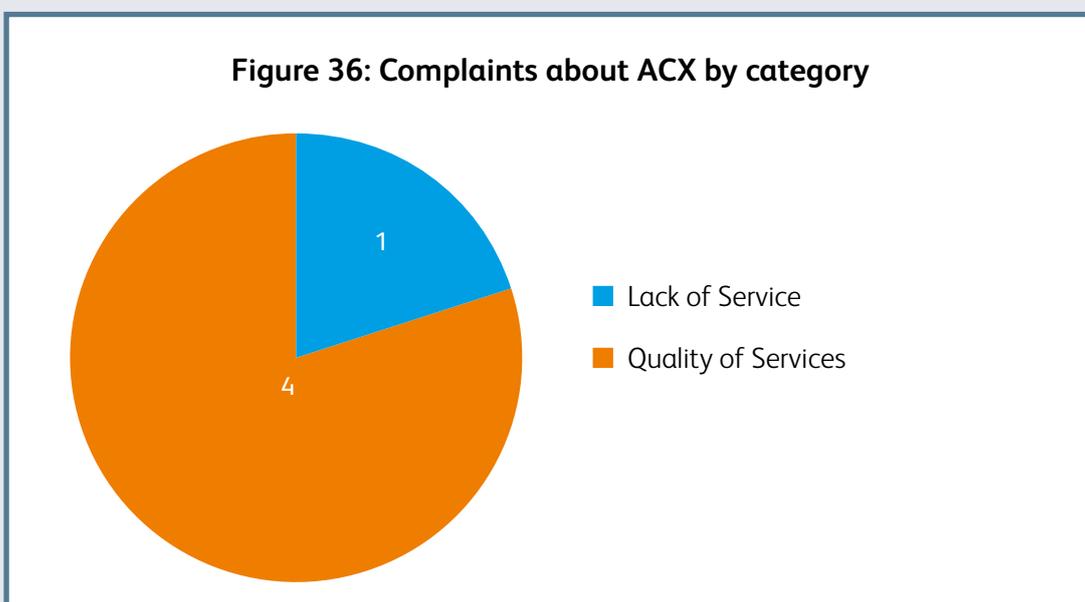
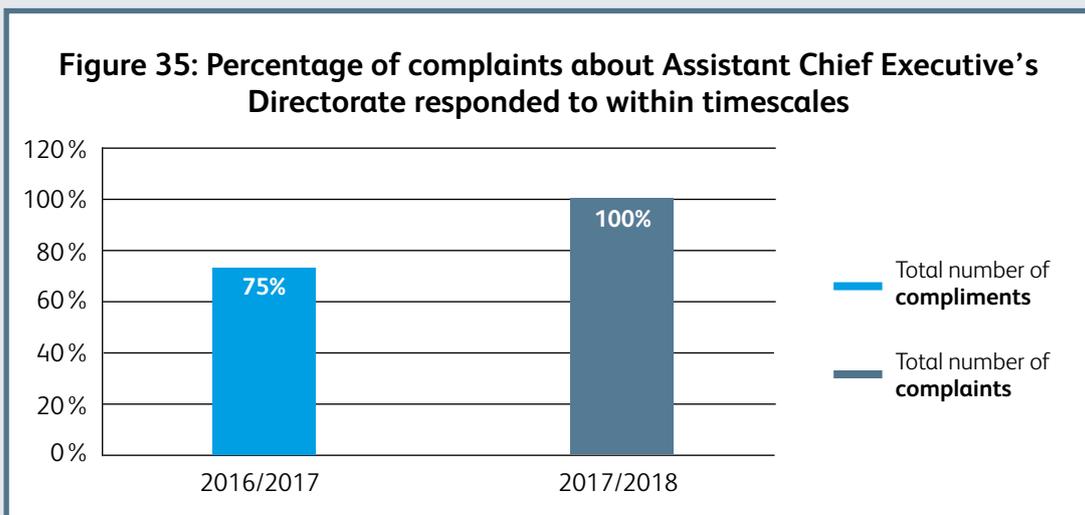
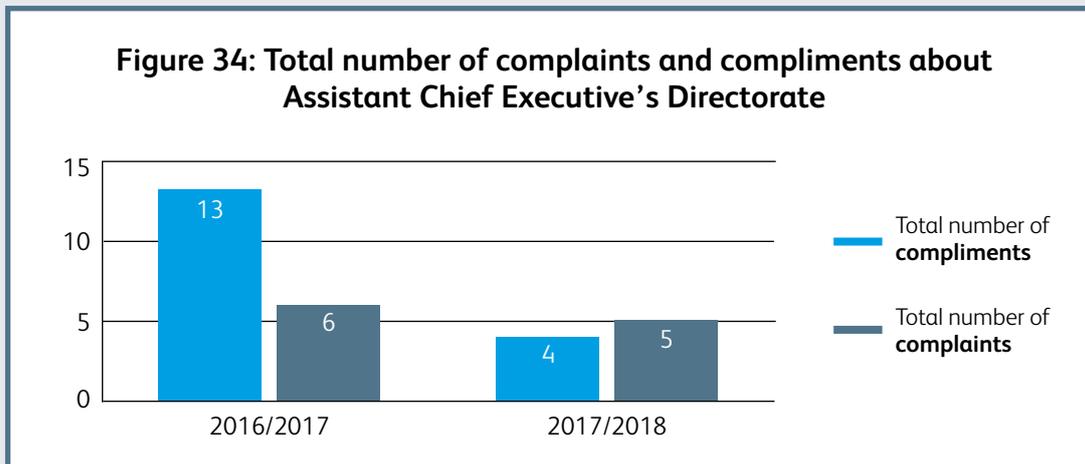
- “Once again thank you to both advisors you have both relieved a lot of stress and worry of me and my family”
- “Having someone like you at the end of the phone makes the world of difference - I wish there were a hell of a lot more people like you - thank you for being so understanding”
- “She was brilliant, very professional and put me at ease”

Customer, Information and Digital Services:

- “Please can I say that when I called you to book an appointment to remove a rat from my house, the gentleman who answered the phone was really helpful and polite and a pleasure to deal with”.
- “Thank you for listening and fixing the website”
- “The lady on the repair help line today was really helpful. We had no heating and have two disabled people in our house. She talked me through doing the water pressure. Which I was really glad as it was Sunday morning and really cold.”

10 ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE

The comparison for both Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate and Finance and Customer Services is based on the previous financial year only, due to the fact that they formerly sat within one Directorate. Due to this restructure and the way that complaints were previously recorded, it is not possible to accurately extrapolate complaints relating to the services covered by these two Directorates before 2016/17.

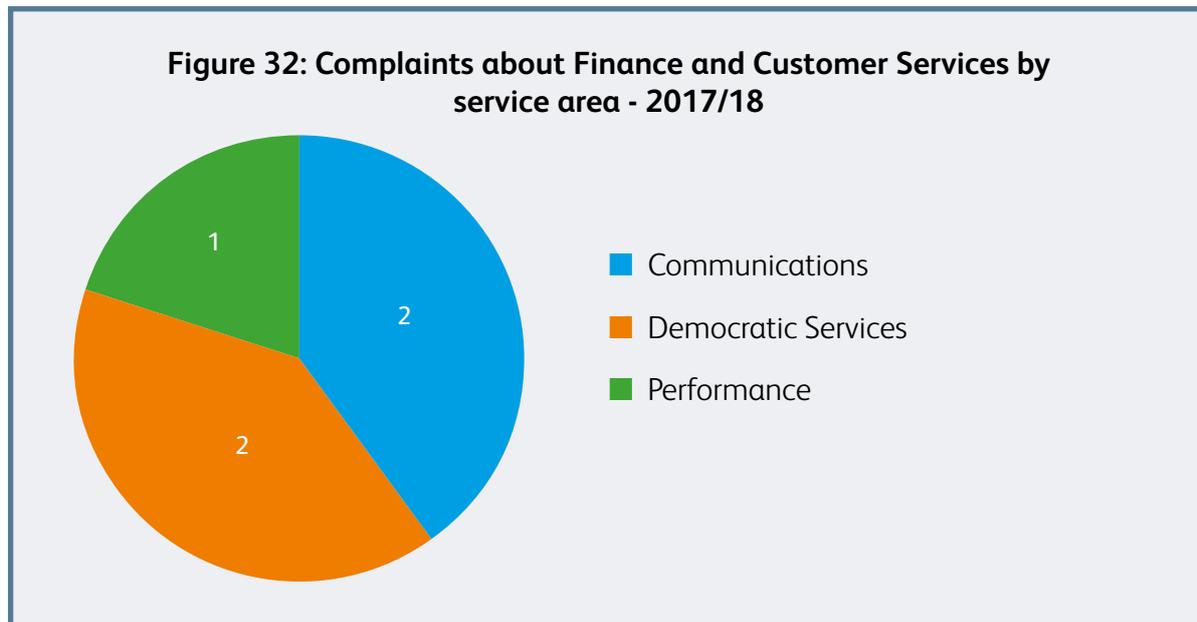


10.1 Key Headlines

- Approximately the same number of complaints about Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate were received (5 in 2017/18 compared with 6 in 2016/17, which is a decrease of 16.67 %).
- Fewer compliments about Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate were received (4 in contrast with 13 in 2016/17, which is a decrease of 69.23 %).
- 2 complaints were taken through the formal complaints procedure and both of these were Stage One complaints.
- More complaints were upheld (2 in 2017/18 compared with 1 in 2016/17).
- One complaint was investigated and upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 100% of complaints were responded to within statutory timescales (both of the 2 complaints taken through the formal complaints procedures).

10.2 Complaints

The following diagram outlines the complaints made about the Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate by service area:



A total of 5 complaints were made about the Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate in 2017/18, 4 of which were in relation to quality of service and 1 which was around lack of service. Of these complaints, two were regarding Democratic Services, two were regarding the Communications and Marketing Team, and one was about the Performance, Intelligence and Improvement function.

The subject matter of each of these complaints is listed below:

- Recruitment practices (Communications and Marketing)
- The Council spending money on printed materials (Communications and Marketing)
- Approach taken in a public meeting and the treatment of objecters (Democratic Services)
- Failure to respond (Democratic Services)
- Receipt of survey when not appropriate (Performance, Intelligence and Improvement)

9.3 Lessons Learned

The Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate provides cross-cutting support to the organisation and this includes the Complaints Team. This team leads on the handling and reporting on customer feedback for all services across the authority, including identifying lessons learned and driving key service improvements from customer feedback. Ultimately therefore, the Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate plays an integral role in ensuring that the Council is responsive to customers to understand and relate to their needs.

The Complaints Team have made several improvements over the year in terms of the way that complaints are dealt with. In 2017/18, a review of the Complaints service was conducted by the Commissioners' Office which found that the corporate complaints procedure and complaints policy are both fit for purpose.

There were several recommendations made as part of this review to improve the approach to dealing with complaints. Several of these recommendations reflected the feedback received from Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the 2016/17 Annual Report. Progress has been made to action these recommendations, including that:

- Equality and diversity data is now gathered by the Complaints Team for customer feedback received for all Directorates. This data will be reported on as part of Directorate Leadership Team Meetings as well as within the next Annual Report for 2018/19.
- A briefing note has been produced to ensure that the wider workforce has a robust understanding of dealing with complaints.
- The annual report has been redesigned for 2017/18 including graphs that demonstrate trends over longer periods.
- There is no longer a distinction made between 'informal' and 'formal' complaints.

The Complaints Team will continue to lead on the improvements being made to dealing with complaints in 2018/19, as outlined in section 11.

As well as supporting other Directorate to make service improvements, the Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate has also made improvements in 2017/18 following the feedback from customers. Examples of this are outlined below:

Complaint	Lessons Learned
A survey was sent to a severely disabled resident.	<p>The resident was added to a locally-held list to ensure that they don't receive surveys from the team in the future.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the service is not able to remove customers based on their disability as it is a national statutory return and this could lead to survey bias but the comments were directed to the Department of Health so they can be considered in future survey guidance.</p>
The Council spending money on printed materials.	<p>Communications and Marketing forwarded the complaint, as this was specifically regarding the Housing newsletter 'Home Matters.'</p> <p>The service has reviewed the content to ensure it is more engaging for residents. The Annual Tenants Satisfaction Survey found that the majority of tenants are satisfied with the magazine. Furthermore, just over a quarter of tenants said they would be willing to receive their newsletter via email whilst just under a half (49%) said they would not be happy to. The service is working to use these findings to continually meet the necessary improvements and also to ensure that tenants can access the newsletter through email and online to reduce costs.</p>

Case Study: Planning Board Meeting

The Planning Board meetings take place every three weeks on a Thursday. The Planning Board is responsible for determining planning applications which do not fall within the agreed scheme of delegation.

In October 2017 a complaint was received in respect to the way that a planning board meeting was conducted, including the conduct of the public within the meeting and the treatment of objectors. A number of areas of learning were identified from this complaint and action has since been taken to improve the approach, including:

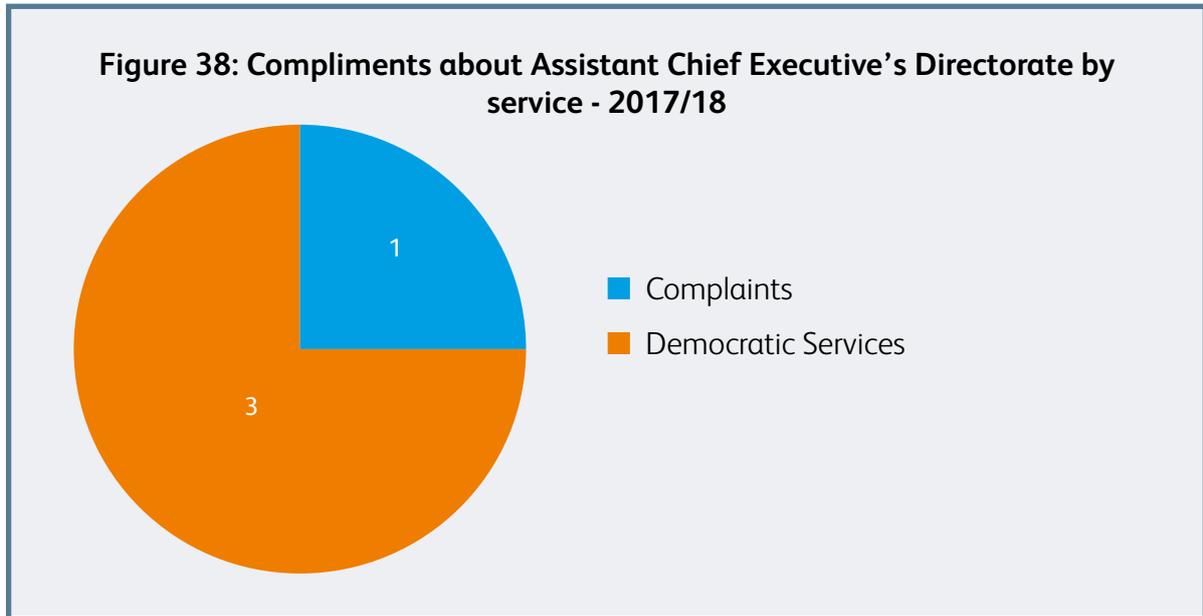
- A copy of the Planning Regulatory Board 'Public Right To Speak' leaflet is now sent out with the invitation letter to attendees and a copy included within the information pack

- Information regarding the public right to speak is displayed on the Council's website
- All Planning Board Members receive training, at the start and throughout the year, to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and are aware of the procedure for speaking
- At the start of every meeting the Chair reminds attendees of the importance to remain calm, courteous and respectful
- To assist in dealing with disorder during meetings a legal representative now sits with the Chair to advise the Chair on any legal matters.

The improvements have had a positive impact and attendees are now made aware of the regulations in place. Since the changes were implemented, there have been no further issues with regards to how the meetings are conducted.

10.4 Compliments

The following diagram outlines the compliments received by Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate by service area:



All of the compliments received for the Directorate are listed below:

Complaints Team:

- Following acknowledgement of a complaint, "Many thanks for the swift response"

Democratic Services:

- "Big thanks to Madam Mayor and Dean for hosting ourselves and our international visitors last Wednesday at the town hall. They found the visit incredibly valuable; learning about the role of our mayor and the charities that she supports. We always receive such a warm welcome and learning about the history is fascinating. They were particularly thrilled to leave with a plaque from Rotherham, a lovely gift."
- "Just wanted to put on record our thanks for the 2 visits that we embarked on to the Town Hall to meet up with the Mayor (& Tony!). All of our guys were thrilled to have experienced a morning with the Mayor and the 'grand tour' that we had of the building. Nothing was too much trouble for anybody that we met / spoke to on the day and the knowledge and history that was talked about was quite inspiring."

"Thank you and to the many others who have helped and had patience during this time"

11 NEXT STEPS 2018/19

During 2017/18 the overall number of complaints increased for the first time in several years. This is not surprising due to the changes being made to how services are delivered. The Council will continue to face further challenges during 2018/19 due to the delivery of the budget savings and this is likely to have a negative impact on the public perceptions of the Council. It is therefore important that customer expectations are managed and complaints responded to in a timely manner.

Further steps will be taken in 2018/19 to ensure that the approach the Council takes to dealing with complaints and responding to customer feedback continues to improve. Key actions will include:

- Exploring how the new e-case management system can be utilised to keep Elected Members routinely appraised of progress regarding complaints.
- Developing the training offer for officers who sit outside of the Complaints Team.
- Focussing more on the lessons learned from upheld complaints and how these can be addressed effectively.
- Continuing to report the key themes emerging from customer feedback into Directorate Leadership Teams.
- Working to improve performance within statutory timescales.
- Reporting on improved intelligence around complainants, particularly with regards to equality and diversity information.
- Developing further the way that complaints are categorised and tracked, to better reflect the complexity and diversity of the feedback received.
- Using the new neighbourhood working model to work with residents on the issues that matter most to them, including any opportunities to learn from feedback and complaints.

Appendix One: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions 2017/18, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and statistical neighbours

Table One: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and statistical neighbours)											
Authority Name	Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Total	Uphold Rate (%)	Total	Complaints Remedied by LGO	Complaints Remedied by Authority
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	11	2	26	14	1	4	5	80	58	3	0
Halton Borough Council	1	0	16	12	3	3	6	50	35	1	0
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	3	1	27	12	3	3	6	50	49	3	0
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	1	0	18	3	2	5	7	71	29	3	1
Telford & Wrekin Council	3	1	25	10	8	0	8	0	47	0	1
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	5	1	38	18	3	6	9	67	71	3	3
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	1	0	21	16	2	8	10	80	48	4	2
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	3	4	48	10	4	6	10	60	75	6	0
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	2	4	21	13	4	7	11	64	51	4	2
Wakefield City Council	1	3	18	19	13	1	14	7	55	1	0
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	2	1	35	14	6	8	14	57	66	6	1
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	3	2	15	10	7	8	15	53	45	7	0
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	4	3	24	21	12	3	15	20	67	3	0
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	4	2	34	20	5	10	15	67	75	4	5
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	1	0	30	21	11	12	23	52	75	8	1
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	1	2	31	24	12	13	25	52	83	11	2

Appendix Two: Customer contacts 2017/18

Below is a summary of the customer contacts received during 2017/18 via some of the Council's key customer services (within Riverside House and localities). It should be noted that this document does not provide a comprehensive overview and those listed are only a proportion of the customer contacts which the Council received.

Face to face	
Appointment New Claim/COA	1696
Benefit Queries	10922
Blue Car Badges	4294
Casual Caller	54193
Concessionary Travel	762
Council Tax	5485
Forms & Evidence	737
Housing	12542
Licensing	8556
Non Domestic Rates	81
Parking Services	331
Planning and Building	105
Rothercard	152
Total	99856

Cashiers	18,966
Property shop	8,542
Total	127,364

Telephony	
Contact Centre Calls	643,701
Adult Services	267,465
Children's Services	374,392
Council Tax	96,614
Recovery	45,302
Benefits	67,052
Property Shop	1,268
Housing Advice	34,200
Planning	13,653
Building Control	14,057
Licensing	14,098
Total	1,571,802

Self-serve	
Email accounts	37,870
Automated Payments	65,505
E forms	116,370
Kiosk	77,335
PayPoint	232,840
Internet Payments (Incl Paypal)	98,114
Unique Web Visitors	937,063
Total	1,565,097

Overall total	3,264,263
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