

Appendix 1
Paper No. 23-323

Wandsworth Borough Council Corporate Complaints Report 2022-23

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the overall numbers of complaints made to the Council and to provide a snapshot of how many and the types of the complaints which progress through each of the three complaints procedures for Wandsworth Council, and those which result in an investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Complaints are counted in the year in which they were closed.
- 1.2 In 2022-23, the LGSCO upheld an average of 77% of complaints across all London boroughs. This is higher than the average of 71% last year because, to ensure best use of resources, the LGSCO is now being more selective about the cases they investigate and only choosing those which are high risk or are in the public interest. The LGSCO have advised in their Annual Review letter dated 19 July 2023 that Council's should expect a higher uphold rate due to this change of approach and should compare uphold rates with local authorities of a similar size, rather than last year's performance data.
- 1.3 For Wandsworth 83% were upheld (or 15 out of 18 investigations, decisions were made on 84 cases in total). Whilst this is slightly higher, broadly, Wandsworth continues to perform well in line with the number of complaints it receives and responds to compared to similar local authorities¹. Including Wandsworth, the three boroughs of a similar size (Lambeth, Bromley and Enfield) show an average of 81% upheld; the average number of actual investigations upheld is 28 across all 4 of these boroughs. Overall, Wandsworth had the lowest number of complaints that the LGSCO chose to investigate; 18 compared to 54 in Lambeth, 38 in Bromley and 28 in Enfield. As Wandsworth received a lower number of investigations than the average, this has disproportionately increased the uphold rate if comparing by the number of actual formal investigations.
- 1.4 In terms of the number of Public Reports issues by the LGSCO against the Council, Wandsworth is in line with its neighbouring boroughs with 2 over the last five years. No new Public Reports were issued against Wandsworth in 2022-23.
- 1.5 In 2022-23 the Housing Ombudsman have reported in their annual Landlord Report that Wandsworth Council has performed 'very well' when compared to similar landlords by size and type Wandsworth's maladministration rate is only 33% compared to a national rate (by size) of 55%.
- 1.6 For Wandsworth, there were 8 determinations (decisions) and 10 orders made.

¹ Similar local authorities refer to statistical neighbours, which are London boroughs of a similar population size, taken from the 2021 Census results. For Wandsworth with a population of 327500, comparisons have been made with Lambeth (population 327,500), Bromley (population 330000) and Enfield (population 330000).

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- 1.7 It should be noted that it is only a very small proportion of interactions and contacts with the Council that result in formal complaints, such context has been set out in greater detail in the report below. Overall, Wandsworth completed **921** complaints this year which is a 7% reduction on the **995** completed last yet.
- 1.8 The Corporate Complaints Team's role is to support the organisation to ensure that the Council has effective and efficient complaints procedures, in line with best practice and statutory requirements. The Complaints Team also have responsibility to train and support Council officers to respond effectively to complaints and ensure learning from complaints feeds directly into service improvement.
- 1.9 The Council's response to complaints it receives remains a key element of its approach to the delivery of quality services. Dealing positively and swiftly with complaints continues to be a high priority task for Directors, managers and staff at all levels. The Council encourages residents and businesses to provide feedback on services, to make a complaint or comment or to submit a suggestion, through various channels and online arrangements.
- 1.10 A key part of an effective complaints system is to highlight areas of learning from those complaints as that information can inform ongoing improvement of services. Common themes in terms of learning from complaints have tended to focus on staff training, improving the quality and timeliness of communication, updating procedures, and ensuring data quality. Further Directorate level insight and narrative on the data and learning from their complaints are included further in the report and at appendix 6.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 All councils in England and Wales are required to provide a complaints procedure for people who are in receipt of council services. Wandsworth Borough Council follows three complaints procedures:
- a) The Corporate complaints procedure, the three-step process was replaced by a two-stage process on 1 January 2021
 - b) The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaint Regulations 2009
 - c) The Children Act 1989 Complaints Procedure .
- 2.2 The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual report for the complaints procedures at (b) and (c) above – these are submitted separately to the Health Committee and to the Education and Children Services Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.3 Data gathered for both the Adult and Children's Social Care annual reports has been included in this report to provide a complete picture of all complaints that the Council dealt with during the past year, from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 2.4 There is a statutory duty on Monitoring Officers to report to Council Members where there has been maladministration or service failure. This annual corporate complaints report details the organisation's performance against internal performance measures as well as steps being taken to continually improve.

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- 2.5 This year the council did not achieve 100% compliance as the Council, with advice from the Monitoring Officer and Chief Legal Advisor, challenged the LGSCO's original decision about the way the Council investigated a noise nuisance complaint.
- 2.6 The council's corporate complaints procedure is available on the public webpages. A useful definition of a complaint is provided below, along with a description of other enquiries which follow different procedures and are therefore not considered under Wandsworth's Council's corporate complaints procedure.
- 2.7 A complaint is:
- "...an expression of dissatisfaction about a council service (whether that service is provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response".*
- 2.8 Other enquiries: In line with LGSCO guidance, the council now logs minor matters such as missed refuse collections, street related issues, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and fly tipping as '**faults**' or '**service requests**'. However, if the same issue occurs repeatedly (more than twice), it is elevated to a formal stage 1 complaint.
- 2.9 Other matters which have a separate appeals procedure are:
- Housing Benefit appeals
 - Council Tax disputes
 - Planning application appeals
 - School admission appeals
 - School exclusions
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability decisions (Education, Health and Care Plan appeals)
 - Penalty Charge Notice appeals
 - Homelessness decisions
- 2.10 Wherever possible, a complaint should be dealt with at stage 1². If, however, the complainant is not satisfied with the response received or the action taken, the matter can be referred to a senior manager for a review of the way the complaint was handled (stage 2).
- 2.11 The timescale to respond at stage 1 is 20 working days and the review at stage 2 is currently 15 working days (total 35 days). Further recourse is open to the complainant through the LGSCO or the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), who may choose to investigate the matter to see if there has been evidence of fault leading to injustice by the Council or possible maladministration.
- 2.12 In April 2023 the council implemented an adaptation of the stage 2 part of the corporate complaints process. This was supported at the Finance Committee in November 2022 and implemented at the start of the year. The timescale was increased from 15 to 25 working

² There are separate complaint regulations for Adult Social Care complaints and some statutory functions for Children's Social Care

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days, the KPI target increased from 50% completed on time to 80% completed on time. Additionally, to bring the sign-off process in line with the relevant Director (or delegated senior manager) rather than the Chief Executive. The purpose of these changes was to allow more time for quality responses that focus on learning and to have a more realistic KPI target, both of which are in line with the direction of travel in other London boroughs.

- 2.13 Later this year, the complaints team will be undertaking a review of how these changes have improved the stage 2 corporate complaint process, and further benchmarking to understand whether the 80% on time KPI is realistic.

3 OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 This section sets out the key messages regarding the number of complaints, the types of complaints, the timescales in which they were responded to, and a summary of the outcomes and learning. Timescales for Adult and children's statutory complaints have been pulled out separately as they follow a different process. Complaint types have also been amended for the purpose of this report as some categories for statutory complaints are different to the ones used for Corporate complaints. Both Adult and Children's statutory complaints have a separate more detailed report as required by the complaints legislation. These reports will go separately to the relevant Adult and Children's Scrutiny Committees³.
- 3.2 This report looks at the Council's performance in dealing with complaints over the past year. Where possible, data is compared to the previous year, although the changes to the corporate complaints process from January 2021 and in Wandsworth, the separation of service requests for Housing Regeneration Directorate and Environment and Community Services from April 2021, make comparisons difficult prior to 2021-22.
- 3.3 Where available, specific examples are explored for each Directorate in section 4 below but some common themes across both years are outlined below:
- **Housing Regeneration Directorate** have created a written procedure setting out the criteria used to prioritise applicants on the temporary accommodation transfer list and held a training session for staff on the new procedure.
 - **Environment and Community Services** have issued guidance to staff reminding them to alert complainants to their rights under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act at an early stage of any nuisance investigations and the importance of recording decisions around when to prosecute if someone fails to comply with or contravenes the requirements of a noise abatement.
 - The **Adult Social Care** Transformation Team has developed an Accessible Information Policy and ensured that all relevant policies and procedures make clear reference to the need to provide any documentation and support plans in an accessible format.

³ Health Committee 9th November 2023 and Children's Committee 16th November 2023

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- **Children’s Social Care** have set up an independently facilitated forum for parents to gather direct feedback on their experiences of being involved in social care.
- **Resources Directorate** is introducing a facility to allow leaseholders to update their payment accounts for major works on-line. This facility is being developed in two phases. Phase one is currently under way and will allow the customer to set up a direct debit over the phone with an Accounts Receivable Officer.
- In the **Chief Executive’s Directorate**, the Community Safety team has reviewed the Community Trigger process and procedures and as a result, more officers have been trained to coordinate and respond to Anti-Social Case Reviews to improve customer service for residents making Community Trigger applications and ensure the service can respond to demands more effectively.

3.4 Appendix 2 to this report provides figures for the whole Council and shows all corporate complaints by type, level and time and includes information on complaints received via the statutory reporting processes and equalities data. Appendix 3 provides the learning arising from upheld LGSCO complaints. Appendix 4 provides the LGSCO Annual Review letter in respect of Wandsworth Borough Council. Appendix 5 provides a summary of the outcomes of investigations by the HOS during 2022-23. A link is provided to the Council’s self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s complaint handling code⁴. Appendix 6 provides examples of learning from upheld or partly upheld complaints across all directorates.

Table 1: WBC total number of complaints 2019-20 to 2022-23

Year	Number of Complaints
2019/20	5571
2020/21	5600
2021/22	995
2022/23	921

3.5 As table 1 above shows, the number of complaints has decreased in the last 4 years. However, in 2021-22 service requests were separated from formal complaints as including them was giving a distorted picture of the types of concerns the Council receives. Now, lower-level issues (service requests) are resolved quickly, leaving the complaints process for more serious matters that require a full investigation.

3.6 The volume of complaints should be set in context by looking at the wider picture of the level of contact and interaction the Council has with its residents and services users. For

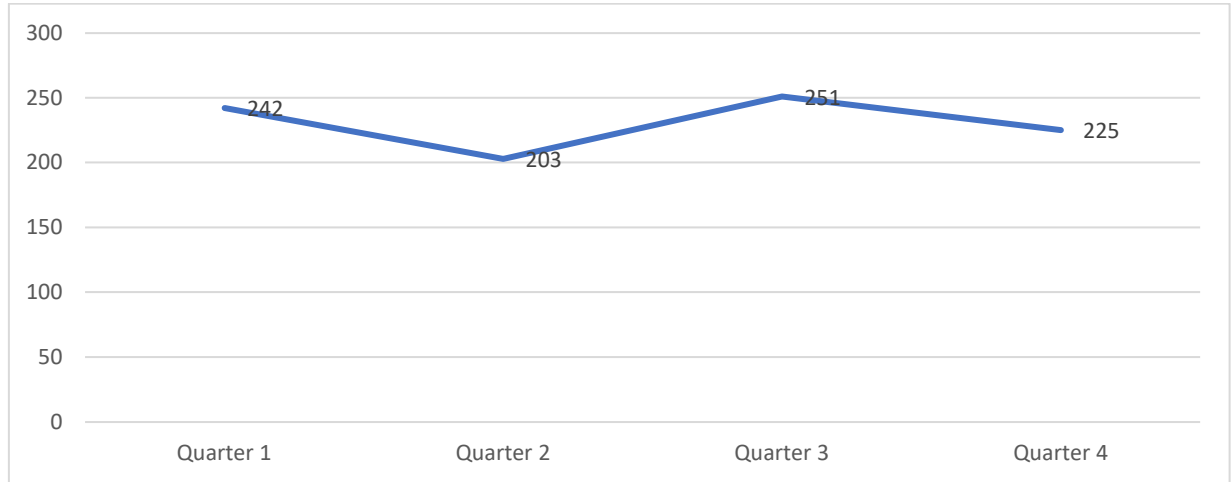
⁴ The Council’s self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code was approved at Housing Committee on 21st June 2023

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=765&MId=8845&Ver=4> Item 13.

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example, complaint numbers are low given that the Council’s Customer Services handled 195,923 customer calls (and 9,498 callback requests), 3,841 emails and 23,533 webchats. This year Wandsworth Council also handled 10,439 Member Enquiries.

Chart 1: Total number of complaints across corporate and statutory process by quarters 2022-23



3.7 As **Chart 1** demonstrates, the 921 complaints completed this year were fairly consistent across all four quarters.

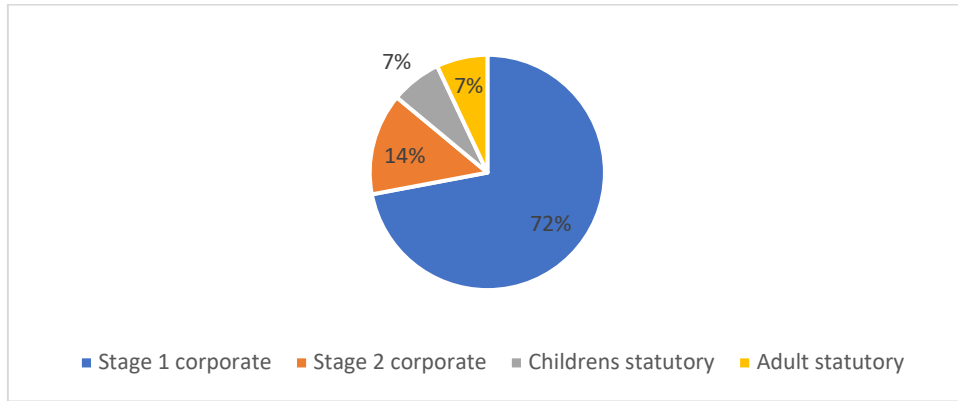
3.8 Whilst a detailed breakdown and analysis across directorates is provided later in the report, **Chart 2** below sets out the proportion of the 921 complaints across stages 1 and 2 corporate process and both statutory processes.

- Stage 1 corporate complaints accounted for most complaints. 662 complaints (72%) were completed which is a 5% reduction on the 699 completed last year.
- Stage 2 corporate complaints accounted for 131 (14%) complaints, which is a 13% reduction on the 151 completed last year.
- Children’s statutory complaints⁵ accounted for 62 (7%) of complaints which is a 35% reduction on the 96 completed last year.
- Adult statutory complaints accounted for 66 (7%) of complaints which is a 18% reduction on the 80 completed last year.

⁵ Across all 3 stages

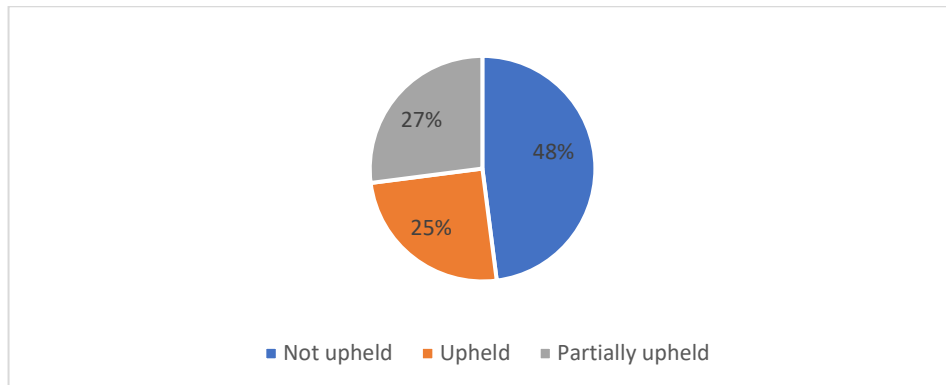
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Chart 2: Percentage of complaints split by Corporate and Statutory processes 2022-23



- 3.9 Statutory complaint numbers and trends are examined in detail in the Adult and Children’s Statutory Complaints reports 2022-23 and a brief summary is provided in the commentary for the two directorates later in this report. However, the biggest decrease this year is complaints for the Adult and Children’s social care directorates, both statutory and corporate, which has reduced the number of complaints overall.
- 3.10 This year 131 corporate complaints (or 14%) escalated from stage 1 to stage 2. Last year 15% of complaints escalated to stage 2. Therefore, whilst overall complaint numbers have dropped, proportionally the number of corporate complaints escalating to stage 2 has remained consistent.
- 3.11 Across all stages and processes, this year 438 complaints were not upheld (48%), 234 were upheld (25%) and 249 (27%) were partially upheld. **Chart 3** below details the split by percentage. Overall, 52% of complaints either upheld or partially upheld issues. Complaints can be multi-faceted, and often complaints are partially upheld because there may be an element of the complaint, such as communication, that could be improved even if the substantive issue is not upheld. This is to be expected in a large and diverse organisation and demonstrates a healthy complaints culture that listens to its residents and seeks opportunities to improve services.

Chart 3: Complaint outcomes across all stages and processes 2022-23



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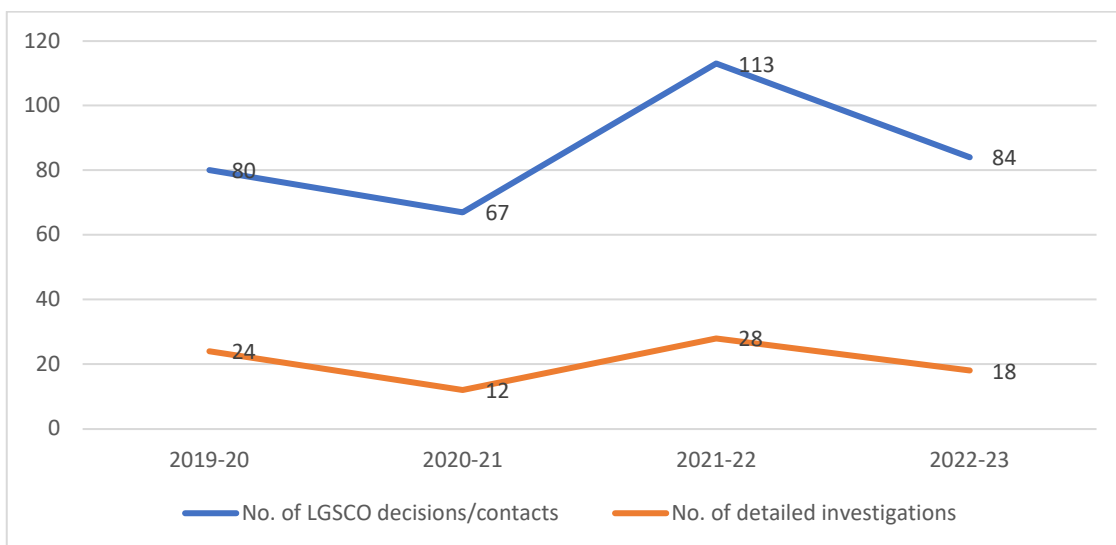
3.12 **Table 2** below shows outcome of complaints from for the past two years, following the removal of service requests from the complaints process. Across all three complaint outcomes, proportionally the numbers are similar.

Table 2 Complaints by outcome 2021/22 to 2022/23

Outcome	2021/21	2022/23
Upheld	277 (28%)	234 (25%)
Partially Upheld	218 (22%)	249 (27%)
Not Upheld	500 (50%)	438 (48%)
Total	995	921

3.13 In **2022-23** the LGSCO made decisions on 84 Wandsworth cases which resulted in 18 investigations, of which 15 were upheld. This equates to a 26% decrease on the 113 decisions and a 36% decrease on the 28 detailed investigations in the previous year.

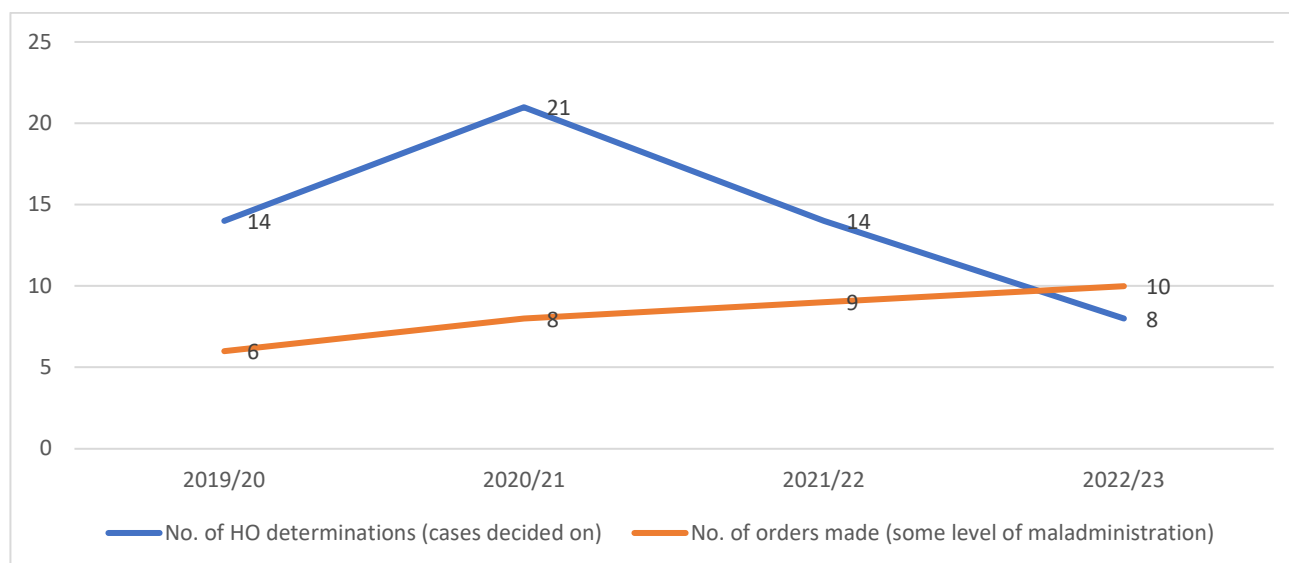
Chart 4 Number of LGSCO decisions and investigations: 2019/20 – 2022/23



3.14 In 2022-23 the HO made determinations on 8 cases which resulted in 10 orders (some level of maladministration). The 8 determinations is a 43% decrease on the 14 determinations last year. However, 10 orders made from the 8 determinations is slightly higher than the 9 orders made last year. This has resulted in an overall maladministration rate of 33% compared to 28% last year. This compares to a national maladministration rate of 55% when comparing to landlords of a similar size and type. These numbers exclude any cases which were determined as outside jurisdiction or withdrawn.

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Chart 5: Number of Housing Ombudsman cases closed 2019/20 – 2022/23



Type of complaints by directorate

3.15 This section sets out the type of complaints received, and the categories used for recording. There were six types or categories of complaint used by Wandsworth under the old 3 step corporate complaints process which changed in January 2021 (quarter 4), when the new 2 stage process was introduced. **Table 3** below shows the type of complaints under the old process since 2019-20. These are combined for both statutory and corporate complaints. The separate annual statutory complaint reports do use slightly different complaint types but these have been adjusted in this report to fit the corporate categories.

Table 3: Types of complaints under the old step 3 process 2019/20 – 2020-21

Type of complaint	2019-20	2020-21
Procedure or system error	4,785	4,942
Beyond service delivery level	158	128
Staff error	129	167
Staff attitude	98	122
Complaint re policy or SLA	23	66
Council not lead authority	7	4
Total	5,200	5,470

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- 3.16 **Table 4** below shows the types of complaints last year from when the corporate process was changed in January 2021 and the types of complaints updated.

Table 4: Types of corporate complaints under new process from Jan 2021

Type of Complaint 2021-22	2021-22	2022-23
Service delay or failure	593 (60%)	584 (63%)
Outside service procedure	98 (10%)	84 (9%)
Staff error/attitude	97 (10%)	97 (11%)
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment	64 (6%)	52 (6%)
Financial charges/billings/costs	95 (9%)	56 (6%)
Poor/incorrect information	48 (5 %)	48 (5%)
TOTAL	995	921

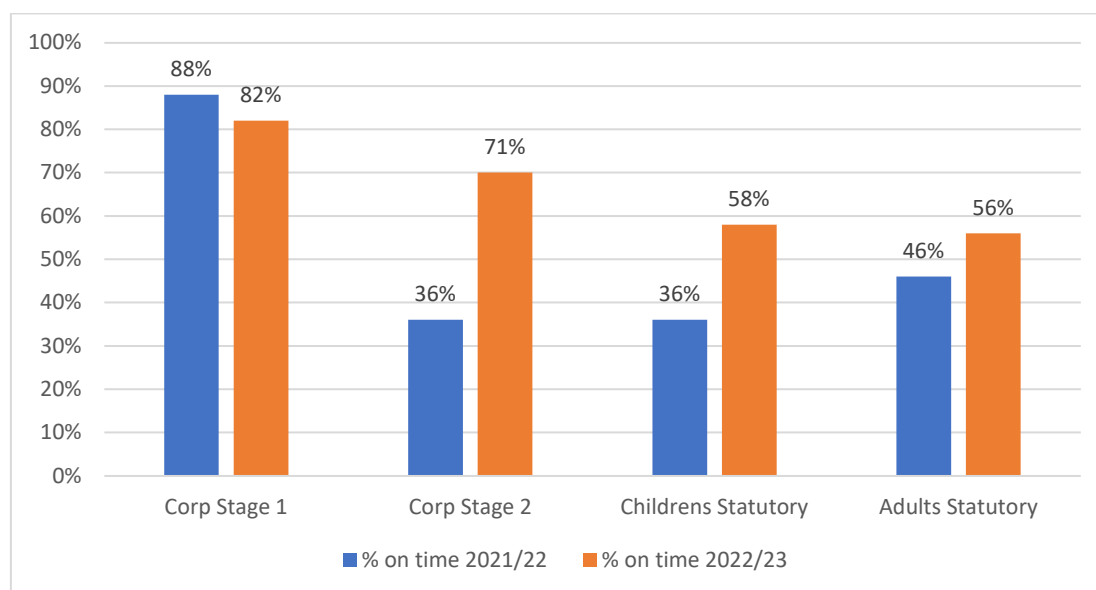
- 3.17 This year, the most frequently identified type of complaint is ‘service delay or failure’, accounting for 63% of complaints – the same as last year. Given that the Council dealt with 256,835 contacts overall during the year, complaints about delays and/or failure in services are low within this context.
- 3.18 Complaints about ‘staff error/attitude’ accounted for 11% of complaints, which again is the same as last year. Other types of complaints are shown above.
- 3.19 It is recognized that ‘service delay or failure’ is a broad category and it may be beneficial to split this out in future years so we can be clearer if complaints are mostly about delays or failures to deliver services in accordance with council procedures.

Timescales for responding to complaints

- 3.20 This section sets out the timescales of complaints responded to. When analysing the proportion of complaints completed within the target timescales, statutory social care (Adults and Children’s) complaints are also shown separately in Chart 8 as they follow different procedures and timescales.
- 3.21 The proportion of complaints completed on time this year over all stages and processes is 709 or 77%. This is an improvement on the 72% completed on time last year. Most notable is the significant improvement in corporate stage 2 timescales. This year 71% were on time compared to 36% the year before. Also, timescales have improved for both adult and children’s statutory complaints. **Chart 6** below provides a breakdown of the percentage of complaints on time compared to last year.

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Chart 6: Percentage of complaints on time by complaint processes and corporate stages 2021/22 and 2022/23



- 3.22 Stage 1 of the corporate process has a timescale of 20 working days to investigate and respond. This year, 543 (82%) of the 662 stage 1 complaints were completed on time. Whilst this is lower than the 88% on time last year, it is only a slight reduction.
- 3.23 At stage 2 of the corporate process, the Council has 15 working days to undertake a review of the stage 1 investigation and respond. Of the 131 stage 2 complaints, 93 (71%) were completed on time. Wandsworth Council measures corporate stage 2 complaints performance against a KPI which prescribes that 50% (minimum) of stage 2 complaints should be sent on time (within 15 working days). This improved performance is significant and credit should be given to Directorates and to the Complaints Team who have worked effectively together to drive up performance⁶.
- 3.24 Statutory social care complaints (Adults and Children's) have also seen significant improvements in timescales. Adults completed 37 complaints on time (56%) compared to 46% last year⁷. Across all 3 stages, children's services completed 36 complaints on time (58%) compared to 36% last year. It is important to highlight that timeliness to stage 1 statutory complaints was excellent; 69% were completed on time.
- 3.25 As Chief Executive's Directorate only completed one formal complaint this year, there is no further analysis in the directorate breakdown section of the report. However below is a case study from that one complaint, as there was valuable learning for the Community Safety team.

⁶ From 1st April 2023 the KPI is increasing to 80% on time and the timescale to complete the review, increasing from 15 to 25 working days. Following a benchmarking exercise, this is more in line with other London Boroughs.

⁷ For Adult Social Care Statutory complaints, whilst the legislation provides six months to resolve a complaint, the Council aims to respond in writing within 25 working days which is a local target. All complaints were completed well within the statutory six month timeframe.

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Learning from complaints: Case study – Community Safety

Background

A complaint about the Community Trigger (Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review) process escalated to stage 2 as a resident was unhappy with how a Community Trigger was handled, which included delays in communication by the Community Safety Team and a lack of clarity about who to contact. The Community Trigger was raised by a number of residents about businesses occupying the residential building they lived in.

Learning

The stage 2 review found that the process could have been handled better by the Community Safety Team but due to demands on the service at the time, some emails from the residents were not dealt with effectively, the Community Trigger Panel did not clarify that Community Safety do not investigate anti-social behaviour (the multi-agency Panel review if previous reports of anti-social behaviour have been properly addressed), there was a lack of coordination between agencies and other options such as mediation should have been considered to help resolve the dispute.

Following the complaint, officers were reminded of the Council's service standard about acknowledging and responding to resident's correspondence in a timely way and to make sure residents are clear about their point of contact for each service/team following a Community Trigger Panel.

The complaint also resulted in a service review of the Community Trigger process and procedures and as a result, more officers have been trained to coordinate and respond to Anti-Social Case Reviews to improve customer service for residents making Community Trigger applications. This now means the service can respond to demands more effectively and communicate in line with Customer Standards to avoid the same mistakes from repeating.

4 BREAKDOWN BY DIRECTORATE

- 4.1 This section focuses on numbers of complaints, the timescales, and any directorate specific context that will give context to the complaint numbers. **Table 5** below shows the breakdown of complaints per Directorate (and includes statutory complaints) for 2022/23.

Table 5: Volume of Corporate complaints by directorate 2022-23

	Directorate Totals				% +/-
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	
Environment and Community Services	4,622	4,714	273	244	-11%
Resources	322	255	185	188	+2%
Housing and Regeneration	227	342	276	291	+5%
Children's Service and Adult Social Services and Public Health – Corporate (combined pre 2020/21)	161				

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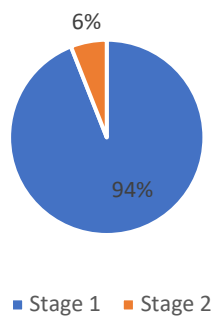
Children's Services Corporate ⁸		111	59	63	+7%
Adult Social Care Corporate		7	18	6	-66%
Children's Service - Statutory	124	91	96	62	-35%
Adults Social Care - Statutory	86	80	80	66	-18%
Chief Executives Group	29	1	8	1	-88%
Total	5,571	5,600	995	921	

- 4.2 This year Housing and Regeneration completed the most complaints and saw a 5% increase on last year. This is to be expected as the demand for housing has increased significantly and some of the issues complained about have a high profile, e.g. damp and mould. There has also been a 7% increase in corporate complaints for Children’s Services. These relate to complaints for SEND services and is to be expected due to the challenges in putting EHCP provisions in place, which is discussed later in the report. Whilst Environment and Community Services accounted for most complaints last year the directorate has seen an 11% reduction this year.
- 4.5 Statutory complaints for Children’s and Adult Services have decreased. Children’s services reported a decrease of 35% and Adult Services a decrease of 18%. For Adults, the decrease is due to work undertaken to reduce waiting times for assessments and improve the duty system in the Wandsworth East Locality Team. A more detailed breakdown and analysis is within the 2022-23 annual statutory complaint reports.

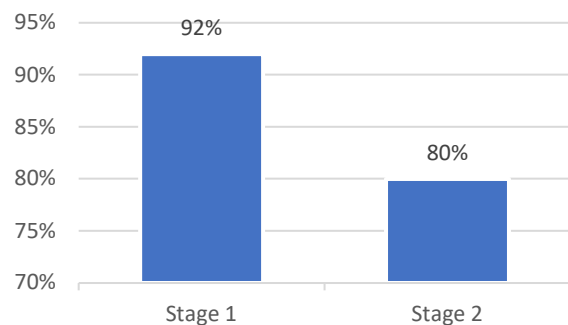
Environment and Community Services (ECS)

Chart 7: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and 'on time' for ESC 2022/23

% of complaints by stage



Complaints 'on time' by stage



- 4.6 This year ECS completed 244 complaints compared to 273 last year which is an 11% decrease. Of the 244 complaints, 229 (94%) were completed at stage 1. This is a 9% decrease on the 251 stage 1 complaints completed last year. Also, 15 (7%) complaints were completed at stage 2. This is a 32% decrease on the 22 stage complaints that escalated to stage 2 last year.

⁸ Numbers of corporate complaints for the adult and children’s social care directorates were combined in previous reports. Going forward these two separate functions will be separated for reporting purposes.

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- 4.7 As well as the 244 complaints, ESC handed 3,396 Member Enquiries this year.
- 4.8 Whilst inevitably some complaints will escalate, the low numbers after stage 1 demonstrate the Directorate's commitment to putting things right at stage 1.
- 4.9 In terms of timeliness, 211 (92%) stage 1 complaints were completed on time and 12 (80%) stage 2 complaints were completed on time.
- 4.9 The type of complaint raised most often this year was 'service delay or failure' which was raised 172 times (70%). Other notable types are 'outside service procedure' which was raised 43 times (17%) and 'staff error/attitude' which was raised 16 times (7%). The complaints relating to 'service delay or failure' and 'outside service procedure' were primarily related to Parks within the borough. Wandsworth's Parks, open spaces and leisure facilities are very well used and enjoyed by the public. The very hot summer experienced in June - September 2022 meant levels of visitors to our parks were elevated which created more pressure on service delivery and led to an increased number of complaints about this service.
- 4.10 Within Q3 there was a notable increase in the volume of complaints relating to events within Parks and Open Spaces responsibility, with a number related to the fireworks in November 2022, which were all dealt with as stage 1 complaints. Some of these complaints related to events held in Council parks with several complaints referring to timings of the event, and gate closures.
- 4.11 Learning from complaints resulted in the directorate seeking to enhance regular review and consolidation of complaints which will allow us to identify areas of improvement and to address causes of concerns even where a complaint is not upheld. Where appropriate dedicated duty officers will oversee incoming resident contact which will help to ensure a responsive and timely service.

Table 6: Types of complaint Environment & Community Services 2021-22 and 2022-23

Type of complaint	Times raised 2021-22	%	Times raised 2022-23	%
Service Delay or Failure	173	63%	172	70%
Outside Service Procedure	62	23%	43	17%
Staff Error/Attitude	23	8%	16	7%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	8	3%	5	2%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	5	2%	4	2%
Poor/Incorrect Information	2	0.7%	4	2%
	273		244	

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2022-23**Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 1 'Parks and Open Spaces'****Background:**

A resident complained at stage 1 about the cleaning maintenance vehicle in Coronation Gardens. The complainant explained that the vehicle is driven into the gardens every morning at 8.30am which coincides with pupils from Riverside School arriving at school and that the vehicle might partially obstruct the path between Coronation Gardens and Merton Road while emptying a bin in this location. This prevents safe passage for families to pass.

Learning:

As a result of the Stage 1 investigation the drivers schedule was reviewed and it was confirmed that the Coronation Gardens bin collection did coincide with pupils arriving at Riverside School.

Upon this investigation it was decided that the driver's schedule could be reviewed and changes implemented. It was agreed that the driver would enter the gardens at a different time so as not to clash with school opening, nor closing times, thus creating a safer environment for the school children.

The change of schedule was introduced with immediate effect. This measure was taken to ensure the safety of the public. The speedy resolution to this complaint demonstrates the Directorates commitment to putting things right as quickly as practicable.

Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 2 - Parking**Background**

A complaint escalated to stage 2 because the Council's contractor, responsible for parking enforcement, had suspended a parking bay without adequately informing residents or putting in place suspension notices 72 hours before the parking was suspended to allow adequate time for local residents to be aware of the change. This resulted in the Council's contractor issuing Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) to local residents who were not aware that the parking bay had been suspended.

Learning

The stage 2 review found that the Council's contractor had not erected the suspension notices within the 72-hour timeframe. As a result of the complaint the contractor was reminded that if suspension notices are not erected by the agreed timescale PCNs should not be issued. Any PCNs issued relating to this complaint were cancelled.

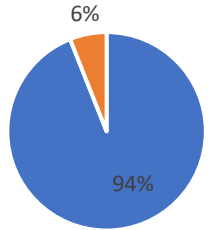
Also, to prevent further reoccurrence of the error, the information on the Council's website was updated to make the 72-hour rule clearer and a review of the suspension application process was undertaken which resulted in stronger procedures to ensure contractors meet their Service Level Agreements.

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Resources Directorate

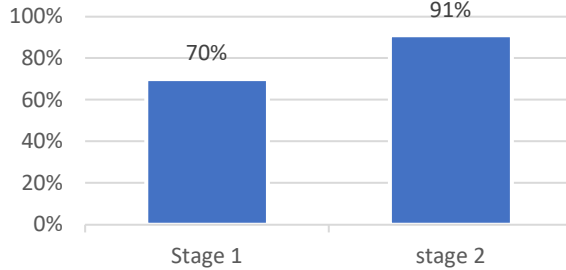
Chart 8: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and 'on time' for Resources 2022/23

% of complaints by stage



■ Stage 1 ■ Stage 2

% of complaints 'on time' by stage



■ Stage 1 ■ stage 2

- 4.12 In 2022-23 Resources completed 188 complaints which remains static on the 185 completed last year. The directorate is responsible for processing in excess of 139,000 parking permits annually (resident, business and visitors permits) and also deals with other high-volume areas including over 30,000 benefit claims, and over 150,000 Council Tax accounts.
- 4.13 177 (94%) were completed at stage 1 compared to 162 (88%) last year. Only 11 (6%) escalated to stage 2 of the process compared to 23 (12%) last year. Therefore, the Directorate continues to resolve most complaints at stage 1.
- 4.14 In terms of timeliness, 124 (70%) were on time at stage 1 compared to 162 (95%) last year. In Q3 2021-22 Technical Support had a 500% increase in Covid Self-Isolation Payments applications, processed the new Fuel Support Payments scheme for approximately 9000 customers, and had an increase in requests for assistance with Discretionary Housing Payments. There were limited resources to deal with the increase in demand, so delays in processing occurred which caused complaints. As all resources were prioritised to processing applications, there were delays in dealing with complaints, therefore the responses were sent in Q1 22-23, although complaints were received in the previous quarters. At stage 2, only 1 complaint was late; 11 (91%) were on time. This is compared to 6 (26%) completed on time last year.
- 4.15 The most raised type of complaint was 'service delay or failure' which was raised 91 times (48%). Half of these related to the delays in processing Self Isolation Payments, Fuel Support Grants and Discretionary Housing payments as above. There were also 15 in regard to delays or issues obtaining permits and 12 in relation to Benefits with incorrect information being requested which delayed processing. For context over 100,000 Benefit change in circumstances and new claims were processed last year. Complaints about Financial Charges were raised 31 times mainly in relation to invoicing and bills. 'Outside service procedure' was raised 30 times and included disputing Council policy on parking permits and eligibility for grants and payments. Poor/Incorrect information included queries regarding website content and incorrect correspondence received.

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- 4.16 For Resources Directorate, the main learning from the complaints completed during 2022/23 was in relation to carrying out individual officer training and reviewing the allocation of resources to any future projects such as for the Self Isolation Payments scheme. Following issues with delays processing appeals, the learning outcome has resulted in creating a new part time post from the reduced hours on the team, which has improved the turnaround time. In addition, when issues are related to third party providers such as IT and postal services, they have been raised and prompt resolution monitored.

Table 7: Types of complaint Resources 2022/23

Type of complaint	Times raised 2021-22	%	Times raised 2022-23	%
Service Delay or Failure	69	37%	91	48%
Outside Service Procedure	19	10%	30	16%
Staff Error/Attitude	19	10%	14	7%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	2	2%	0	0%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	59	32%	31	16%
Poor/Incorrect Information	17	9%	22	12%
	185		188	

Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 2

Background

A stage 2 review took place into a complaint that the Rent Collection Service provided a resident with the wrong details, causing them to be in arrears.

Learning

The stage 2 review found that delays in communication were the cause of the problems. Robust monitoring of the expected response timeframes to incoming emails took place within the Rent Collection Service to ensure that staff maintain prompt communication to assist tenants in the resolution of rent arrears.

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Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 1 - Payment of Major Works Invoices by Direct Debit

Background

A resident leaseholder received a major works invoice for a significant sum which was payable over 10 monthly instalments. The resident wanted to make payment by direct debit in instalments, which was their preferred payment method, and had sent in a direct debit mandate and covering e-mail to facilitate payment to the Council’s contractor. However, the mandate did not appear to have been received by the Contractor and the initial payment date was missed resulting in a reminder being issued. Upon reviewing their correspondence, the officer dealing with the enquiry noticed that the resident wanted to pay the major works invoice by direct debit. As their service charge account was historically paid by direct debit these bank details were used for the major works invoice, but the instalment plan was not rescheduled and unfortunately the total amount due was collected. This left the Resident inconvenienced as the whole amount was collected shortly before the festive period.

Learning for the Council

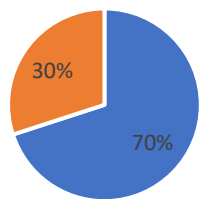
The matter was raised with the Council’s contractor who are responsible for the collection of major works invoices as the error caused a considerable inconvenience to the leaseholder. The contractor has now implemented changes to their systems to prevent a future recurrence of the issue.

To make further improvements, the Council is also introducing a facility to allow leaseholders to update their accounts on-line; this facility is being developed in two-phases. Phase one is currently under way and will allow the customer to set up a direct debit over the phone with an Accounts Receivable Officer. This is envisaged to be operational in time for the next annual service charge billing in October 2023. Once this phase has been completed, phase 2 will begin which will allow customers to set up direct debit online directly, cutting out the need to contact a Council officer.

Housing and Regeneration Directorate

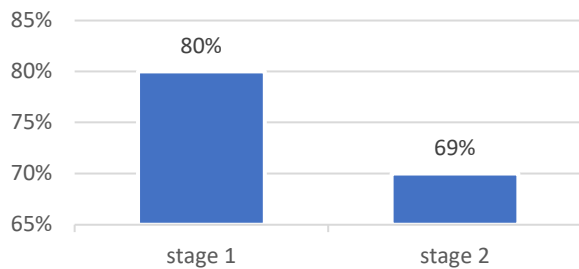
Chart 9: Percentage of corporate complaints completed by stage and ‘on time’ or Housing and Regeneration 2022/23

% of complaints by stage



■ Stage 1 ■ stage 2

% of complaints 'on time' by stage



■ stage 1 ■ stage 2

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- 4.17 In 2022-23, the directorate completed 291 complaints which is a 5% increase on the 276 completed last year. As well as the 291 complaints, HRD handled 6,194 Member Enquiries.
- 4.18 This year, 205 (70%) were completed at stage 1 compared to 192 (70%) last year. 86 (30%) escalated to stage 2 compared to 84 (30%) last year. In 2020-21 (prior to the complaints process changing to a two-stage process), 115 (34%) complaints were dealt with at step 2 and step 3. Therefore, the number of complaints escalating has reduced slightly in line with the reduction in complaints, but still account for a higher proportion of stage 2s overall across all directorates.
- 4.19 In the Housing Services division, many complaints relate to residents seeking updates on their housing assessments or having issue with communication with various teams within the service. The demand for housing has increased significantly, and as such recruitment was undertaken to mitigate the impact on the service. In the Housing Management division, many complaints relate to staff not responding to emails and the delay in the resolution of repairs, in addition to delays in resolving anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance complaints. It is worth noting that repairs can take time to be fully completed, particularly as a result of contractor performance and trying to agree suitable times with both contractors and tenants to undertake necessary repairs. With regard to anti-social behaviour complaints, it can also take a significant time to resolve these, and by their nature, it is not always possible to resolve a case to the resident's satisfaction. Communication issues have arisen from an increase in demand on the service. The Area Teams have increased the number of staff in their teams to mitigate the impact this has had on their service.
- 4.20 During the later months of Q3 and continuing into Q4, the department had received more complaints from leaseholders regarding their major works. Many of these had centred on the cost of the works. It is inevitable that, because the cost of living is increasing, leaseholders will scrutinise bills more thoroughly. Due to factors such as Covid and Brexit, tender prices are often higher than estimated, and this can be very concerning in the current climate. This has resulted in some leaseholders challenging the costs and necessity of works. The Council is mindful of the need to balance the necessity of carrying out works to maintain its stock whilst trying to minimise the financial burden placed on leaseholders. Tenders and specifications are carefully scrutinised to exclude unnecessary works and schemes will be reprogrammed, where possible, to avoid leaseholder receiving multiple bills in succession.
- 4.21 The high proportion of stage 2s can possibly be attributed to the above. The Housing Management Division see the majority of complaints escalated to stage 2 compared to other divisions; 45 (52%) of the 86 stage 2 complaints were logged to their teams. It is worth noting, however, that most of those complaints – 22 (49%) – were not upheld, with 9 upheld (20%) and 14 partially upheld (31%) respectively.
- 4.22 Where learning is shown, it is mostly with regards to prompt communication with residents and following up on repair orders in the Housing Management division. While it can take time for repair orders to be completed by contractors due to various reasons, such as access issues, communication to residents via the Area Housing Teams is crucial to offering reassurance to them that their repairs are being progressed as promptly as is possible. The Housing Services division also recorded a number of stage 2 complaints throughout the year and had similar learning to Housing Management, mostly in the form of offering

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prompt communication to clients in Temporary Accommodation, awaiting reassessments or applicants awaiting social housing. While it can take time for officers to respond based on the exceedingly high demand for social housing, providing updates to clients and applicants can offer reassurance that their applications have been received and are being progressed, that assessment of any newly submitted evidence is being considered, as well as ensuring clients in temporary accommodation receive good service.

- 4.23 In terms of timeliness, 165 (80%) stage 1 complaints were completed on time compared to 148 (77%) last year. At stage 2, 59 (69%) were completed on time compared to 28 (33%) last year. On both stages, there was improvement, significantly more so on stage 2 responses, building on the improvement noticed in Q4 2021/22. This improvement in timeliness also occurred during a year of increased complaints at stage 1 and 2 and overall increased demand on its services. Due to the increased demand for stage 1 and 2 complaints this last year, Housing Management colleagues have conducted various analyses of the stats to look at areas that could be improved.
- 4.24 For context, services were to an extent significantly affected by new demands upon it during the year, in particular within Housing Services. As mentioned above, there has been an extraordinary increase in the demand for housing and recruitment has been undertaken to mitigate the impact it has on the service. Managers across the Department are aware of the importance of complaints and meeting response deadlines and this has been shown in the above response timeframes improving significantly from last year.
- 4.25 The common topics that have been summarised in the category of 'Service Delay or Failure' are communication issues with residents and clients, delays on repairs or unsatisfactory quality of repairs carried out, dissatisfaction with the way their caseworker or estate managers have handled their logged calls and issues with the suitability of their temporary accommodation. The common theme to be drawn from this is communication, and keeping clients updated effectively. The most common complaint topic was the delays on repairs or the unsatisfactory quality of repairs made. The Housing Management division as above has had increased demand and challenges throughout the year. There is an added level of challenge with contractors either missing appointments or not being provided access properties to make repairs. Learning has been found throughout the year from complaints, to enhance the way the Council works with its contractors to deliver a better repair service to residents.

Table 8: Types of complaint Housing & Regeneration 2022-23

Type of complaint	Times raised 2021-22	%	Times raised 2022-23	%
Service Delay or Failure	211	76	197	68%
Outside Service Procedure	3	2%	9	3%
Staff Error/Attitude	32	12%	41	14%
Disagreement with/failure to	20	7%	33	11%

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implement assessment within timescales				
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	4	2%	4	1%
Poor/Incorrect Information	6	2%	7	2%
	276		291	

Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 1 - Repairs in temporary accommodation and communication issues

Background

Temporary accommodation was provided to a tenant who made a complainant about the standard of the temporary accommodation. Despite the complainant looking after the flat the best they could, they reported an ongoing leak as nothing had been done to resolve the matter and the leak caused mould to form. The resident also had problems with a fault light switch which resulted in an electric shock.

When trying to report the light switch, the tenant was told to contact several numbers, and when they contacted the emergency line they were asked to contact the Temporary Accommodation Team, only to be pointed back to the emergency line. Any emails sent to the Property Management Team bounced back and their assigned Property Management Officer had not responded to his emails or contact.

Learning

The complaint was upheld, and the Housing Directorate concluded that anyone who is struggling to make contact with regards to repairs or has communication issues has not been supported well enough at the outset by being provided with the correct methods of communication. This Housing Team sincerely regretted that these issues had caused the resident discomfort because they did not have a smooth repairs service that the Housing Team strive to provide to all customers.

The Property Manager agreed as learning to review the experience as a case study for the team to make sure all officers are clear about how the impact of an issue such as this can have on our residents and to reflect about how communication and the repairs journey can be improved.

The Property Manager also improved processes because of the complaint; the sign-up process with tenants now includes a full discussion about methods of contact for each type of issue our phone arrangements and ensured that the team log onto phones and have duty systems in place.

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Learning from complaints: Case study stage 2 - Housing repairs

Background

A complaint about delays in repairing a roof leak escalated to a stage 2 review. The complainant was unhappy that, after waiting 1 year for repairs, they were told that the repairs could not be carried out on the agreed date due to rain. The resident, who had been liaising with the Council's contractor, was left unsure how their concerns were being dealt with and said that the issue was having a detrimental effect on the family who were concerned that the leak would spread if the rain continued.

Learning

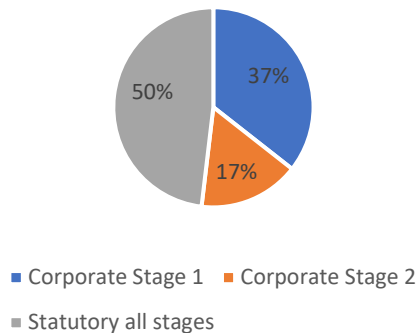
The stage 2 review found that there was a lack of timely response from the Council, following contact from the tenant and the managing agent. Also, an IT problem with the Council's ordering system delaying repairs by several months.

The Area Team fully appreciated the distress caused to the family who had been actively liaising with the Council's contractor to have the repairs addressed. The Area Team were reminded of the importance of ensuring repair orders are followed up within agreed timeframes and that residents are kept informed. The case was discussed with the contractor and new monitoring arrangements were put in place to ensure their performance also improved and no such delays occur in future. The resident was also provided with a £200 financial remedy in recognition of their distress.

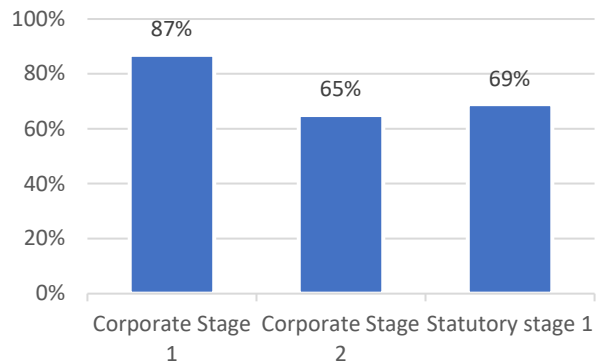
Education and Children's Services

Chart 10: Percentage of corporate (by stage) and statutory complaints completed and 'on time' for Education and Children's Services 2022/23

% of complaints by corporate stages and processes



% of complaints 'on time' by corporate stages and processes



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- 4.26 The department receives two types of complaint and deals with them under separate processes:
- (i) Corporate complaints: these relate to non-statutory services which have not met the expectations of clients, perceived or actual attitudes of staff, or where clients have not achieved the outcome, they desired. These can be received from any service user or parent using any Education or Children's Service, e.g., education welfare, school admissions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) etc.
 - (ii) Children's statutory complaints relate to complaints made by a child, young person (or their representative), who receives or is entitled to receive, a service relating to specialist provision covered under the Children Act 1989 and subsequent amendments made in 2004 and 2006, delivered by children's services. Where a complainant is not eligible to access this statutory procedure, the Council's corporate complaints procedure is applied.
- 4.27 In total, the Directorate completed 125 complaints which is a 19% decrease on the 155 complaints completed last year. As well as the 125 complaints, Childrens Services handled 180 Member Enquiries.
- 46 (37%) were at stage 1 of the corporate process which is a 10% increase on the 42 (27%) last year
 - 17 (14%) were at stage 2 of the corporate process, which is the same as the 17 (11%) completed last year.
 - 62 (50%) were completed through the statutory process compared to 96 (62%) last year. Statutory complaints have decreased from 96 complaints to 62 (-35%)⁹
- 4.28 As the number of corporate complaints have increased by 10% at stage 1, the overall decrease is due to a reduction in stage 1 statutory complaints which have decreased from 68 last year to 36; a 47% reduction.
- 4.29 There has been a notable improvement in the timeliness of responding to corporate and statutory complaints:
- 40 (87%) stage 1 corporate complaints were completed on time compared to 71% last year
 - 11 (65%) stage 2 corporate complaints were completed on time compared to 35% last year
 - Statutory stage 1 complaints have performed particularly well; 25 (69%) were responded to on time
 - Across all stages of the statutory process, 36 (58%) complaints were on time compared to 44% last year. Timescales at stage 2 and 3 can present a challenge and often there

⁹ A full breakdown of statutory complaints across stages is provided in the Children's Services Annual Statutory Complaints report 2022/23 submitted to Children's Scrutiny Committee.

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are delays due to the availability and capacity of externally commissioned independent investigators¹⁰

4.30 At stage 1 of the corporate process stage 1 complaints were split as follows:

- SEND: 27 stage 1 complaints which is 42% increase on the 19 last year¹¹.
- Education (pupil services): 8 stage 1 complaints compared to 3 last year.
- Children's social care: 5 stage 1 complaints which is 55% lower than the 11 completed last year and reflective in the overall drop of complaints for children's social care.
- Business Resources: 5 stage 1 complaints which is slightly lower than the 6 completed last year.
- Early Help: 1 complaint, slightly less than the 3 completed last year.

Table 9: Types of complaint Children's Services across both corporate and statutory procedures

Type of complaint	Times raised 2021-22	%	Times raised 2022-23	%
Service Delay or Failure	97	63%	92	74%
Outside Service Procedure	11	7%	1	1%
Staff Error/Attitude	14	9%	17	14%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	19	12%	8	6%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	7	5%	1	1%
Poor/Incorrect Information	7	5%	6	5%
	155		125	

4.31 Whilst there were a small number of complaints relating to the school admissions process, complaints for Education were mostly about the EHCP process or related to children with a special educational need. Examples are delays in the EHCP process, e.g. putting in provisions such as therapeutic services and communication issues with families.

¹⁰ Statutory stage 2 requires an Independent Person to oversee the investigation. The Council also use Independent Officers to carry out the main investigation. Statutory stage 3 involves a complaints panel made up of 3 Independent Officers and the Independent Officer and Independent Person appointed to carry out the stage 2 investigation.

¹¹ In the 2021-22 Annual Corporate Complaints Report SEND complaints were combined with Education. This year they have been separated out to provide more accurate analysis.

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- 4.32 The Local Authority is responsible for a child in their borough if that child has been identified as having special educational needs. If a child meets the threshold for an EHCP, the process from start to finish is 20 weeks. EHCP require input from health, social care and other external agencies. Sometimes there are delays in putting provisions in place, for example, there are a shortage of therapy providers across both children's and adult services. To improve the SEND service and minimise any delays, this year managers have restructured the teams, increased capacity to deal with outstanding work and made changes to internal processes. The service has also recruited new permanent staff to reduce the reliance on agency staff, as this can result in a disjointed service to families.
- 4.33 Where complaints are specifically about the outcome of an EHCP assessment, or the threshold for receiving an EHCP assessment, these are dealt with through the EHCP tribunals procedure.
- 4.34 For SEND/Education services key learning focused on:
- Improving training and guidance for SEND officers who are working with families who have, or wish to receive a Personal Budget (and ensuring officers are aware of the importance of signposting to the Local Offer¹² which provides more information and advice about Personal Budgets)
 - A full review of current commissioning arrangements for therapeutical services identified in EHCPs to increase the capacity to deliver therapy in a timely manner.
 - Improving the accessibility of the SEND service by ensuring all officers have their landline and mobile numbers on email signatures and fully utilising the new telephone software introduced across Wandsworth Council (this links landlines to individual laptops so phones can be answered when officers are working away from the office).
 - Reviewing processes to ensure that documents submitted by parents are reviewed promptly by SEND officers, particularly where concerns relate to the suitability of education being provided.
 - Further training for the SEND Team about Early Years referrals and the 15-hour entitlement for pre-school children who potentially have special needs to avoid delays in referrals which might impact on an individual child's 15-hour offer.
- 4.35 For social care, complaints were split across teams as follows:
- The Family Safeguarding and Disabled Children's Service, which covers Child in Need, Child Protection and disabled children, investigated and completed 16 stage 1 complaints (44%).
 - The Advice, Support and Help service which covers the Referral and Assessment Teams and MASH, completed 12 stage 1 complaints (or 33%).

¹² <https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/kb5/wandsworth/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=2>

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- The Children Looked After service completed 8 stage 1 complaints (22%). The Safeguarding Standards team completed 1 stage 1 complaint.
- At stage 2 and 3, most complaints were completed by the Family Safeguarding and Supporting Disabled Children Services which support Children in Need and Child Protection and Disabled Children (7 stage 2 complaints and 7 stage 3 complaints).

4.36 Complaints can be made by a young person receiving a direct service or by a person on their behalf such as an advocate or family member.

4.37 The Statutory Complaints Manager works closely with the Quality Assurance and Improvement Manager and Head of Participation in Children's social care to discuss learning from complaints on a quarterly basis. Learning is triangulated with the work undertaken by Quality Assurance and fed back to senior managers. This ensures that learning from complaints feeds directly into service improvements. This year, key learning focused on:

- Setting up an independently facilitated forum for parents to gather direct feedback on their experiences of being involved in social care.
- Ensuring that families are given suitable notice of a change of social worker and that managers support social workers to deliver planned handovers.
- Improving communication with parents by being more mindful of how information can leave parents feeling anxious, avoiding gaps in communication, explaining decisions and the reasons for referrals clearly, and ensuring that both parents' views feature in assessments.
- Considering referrals to Adult social care for parents who may require a carers assessment if they are experiencing poor physical or mental health.
- Sharing reports and minutes in a timely way, particularly to ensure that parents have time to read and respond to reports before meetings.
- Reviewing and improving the Induction Programme for all new social workers.
- Ensuring that social work teams follow the stage 1 statutory complaints process when complaints are raised directly in services, that managers are aware of complaint timescales and that information provided to families also includes information about how to make a complaint.

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2022-23**Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 2 - Foster Carers****Background**

A complaint from a foster carer escalated to stage 2 of the corporate complaints process as they were unhappy with how the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) handled allegations made against them by a foster child. The complaint was related to an incident where the Metropolitan Police attended the home of the foster carer. The foster carer felt humiliated and discriminated against due to the approach that was taken by both the LADO and the police.

Learning

Whilst the Council could not comment on how the Police handled the matter, the stage 2 review found faults in the way the LADO process was undertaken. The investigation found that the foster carer should have had more opportunity to present their view of events to the Fostering Service and the LADO made their findings against the foster carer, without considering all of the evidence presented, and before the Police investigation had concluded.

As a result of the complaint, the LADO service have strengthened their processes to ensure that no LADO investigation is concluded before the Police have made their findings and that support to foster carers during LADO and/or Police investigations is explicitly arranged rather than just signposting, as was the case for this foster carer.

The Complaints Team worked with Children's Service to determine a suitable monetary award from the LGSCO remedies guidance to recognise the unnecessary distress caused by failures in the LADO process. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the Deputy Director for Children's Service also had a follow up meeting with the foster carers to spend more time listening to their experience and to discuss how the department could support them to continue in their valuable role as foster carers.

Learning from complaints: Case study Stage 2 - EHCP

A parent complained to the SEND Team that their child's EHCP had not been updated since 2016, despite the school undertaking yearly reviews and updating the child's outcomes. During this time, the young person's behaviour and attendance at school declined and they were referred to the Youth Offending Team. The parent felt that the SEND Team had not considered further options when it became apparent that engagement with the current school was failing.

Learning

Whilst the stage 1 investigation found that the school had completed yearly reviews and made changes to the young person's provision, the EHCP had not been updated to reflect this. To ensure that the service made improvements to prevent this from happening again, the SEND training plan was updated to include supporting young people with chronic non-attendance and the requirement to seek alternative provision when a school placement has broken down. The Youth Offending Team also contributed to this training to ensure the SEND team now have clear links/signposting when a young person is within the Justice system.

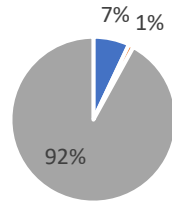
This year, the SEND team training plan has also covered the requirement to ensure Annual Reviews are undertaken in a timely way, that EHCPs are updated if there is a change in need or provision, and ways to support families with Personal Budgets and Early Years referrals.

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Adult Social Care and Public Health

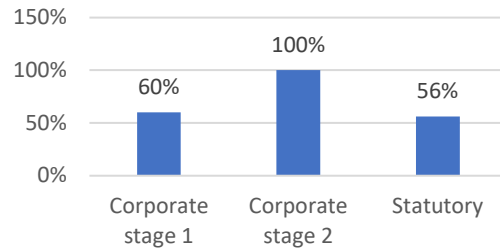
Chart 11: Percentage of corporate (by stage) and statutory complaints completed and 'on time' for Adult Social Care and Public Health 2022/23

% of complaints by corporate stages and processes



■ Corporate Stage 1 ■ Corporate Stage 2
■ Statutory

% of complaints 'on time' by process and stage



■ % of complaints 'on time' by process and stage

4.40 This year the Directorate completed 72 complaints which is a 27% decrease on the 98 complaints completed last year. All the corporate complaints were for Adult Social Care (no complaints were received for Public Health). As well as the 72 complaints, Adult Social Care handled 299 Member Enquiries.

- 66 complaints (92%) were dealt with through the statutory process, which is a 18% decrease on the 80 statutory complaints last year.
- 5 (7%) complaints were at stage 1 of the corporate process which is a 67% decrease on the 15 stage 1 corporate complaints completed last year.
- Only 1 (1%) stage 2 corporate complaint was completed compared to 3 last year.

4.41 The overall decrease from 80 to 66 complaints (14 complaints) this year is due to a reduction in statutory complaints for the Wandsworth East Locality Team. The East Locality Team has seen a 73% reduction from 22 to 6 complaints. This is mainly as a result of actions taken to reduce waiting times for assessment and to more efficiently manage the high level of incoming safeguarding concerns, including recruitment and retention measures, improving the resilience and effectiveness of the Duty system and moving safeguarding screening to the Community Advice and Support Team.

4.42 Overall, corporate complaint numbers are low as most complaints for adult services are processed through the statutory complaint's procedure.

4.42 There has been a notable improvement in timeliness. Broken down by stages:

- 37 (56%) of the 66 statutory complaints were completed within the 25-day local target¹³. This compares to 46% on time last year.
- 3 (60%) of the 5 stage 1 corporate complaints were on time and the 1 stage 2 complaint was completed on time.

¹³ The statutory procedure allows 6 months to resolve a complaint.

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- 4.43 When considering the response times for Adult Social Care statutory complaints, the Statutory complaints legislation does not provide a required timescale to respond to complaints, other than to risk assess complaints and respond within an appropriate timescale (full resolution should be achieved within six months). This recognises the complexity of Adult Social Care complaints, which often require input from multiple teams, and at times, partner organisations. The focus within Adult Social Care is the quality of responses and achieving resolution within this process with no defined stages.
- 4.39 The department receives two types of complaint and deals with them under separate processes:
- Corporate complaints: these relate to complaints from people who have contacted Adult Social Care but are not receiving statutory social care services. An example could be a relative of a service user who is unhappy with how the Department has treated them personally but is not about any statutory social care provision.
 - Adult statutory complaints relate to complaints made by a service user, i.e. a person in receipt of social care services under the Care Act 2014 (or their representative if they have consent and are acting in the person's best interests)¹⁴.
- 4.38 For Adult statutory complaints this year, some key examples of learning are below:
- Social worker handover processes have been strengthened to avoid unnecessary delays and inconsistent service.
 - To reduce delays in discharge from hospital for people requiring a care home, social workers can now use temporary step-down placements if there are delays in sourcing permanent care homes.
 - There have been improvements to the quality of information about financial contributions provided to people when discharged from hospital with care packages to ensure clarity that Adult Social Care is a chargeable service.
 - When a person requires a new care provider urgently, for example if their current provider is unable to meet an increase in their needs, social workers will escalate to team managers so that these cases can be prioritised by the Service Acquisition Team.
 - Social workers have been reminded of the importance of writing up assessments promptly and to check that information recorded is accurate at the time of the assessment.
 - Teams received refresher training on good complaint handling by the Complaints Team which emphasised the importance of signposting service users to the complaints process when they wish to raise a complaint.
 - Transition processes for young adults moving from Children's to Adult Social Care have been improved through the use of a 'tracking system'. The shared tracker monitors young people from 14 who may need social care once they reach 18, highlighting agreed timeframes for key actions to take place on their journey.
 - The Mental Health Team have strengthened processes to ensure an inclusive and accessible service so that people receiving an assessment have their voices heard and

¹⁴ A full breakdown and analysis of complaints made through the Adult Statutory Process is in the Statutory Annual Report 2022/23.

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recorded, advocacy is provided if needed, final assessments and outcomes are shared promptly and unavoidable delays are communicated.

- 4.44 The majority of complaints fell to service delay or failure (39%). These complaints were mainly about delays in social care processes, for example, waiting times for assessments, or delays in communication. Whilst overall numbers are low, the next raised issue was 'staff error/attitude'. Some of these complaints relate to locum Social Workers who were either not fully appraised of processes and procedures or not meeting expected standards of practice. However Adult Social Care do have some competent, motivated and skilled locums working with them in vacant posts.

Table 10: Types of complaints Adult Social Care across both Corporate and Statutory complaint procedures

Type of complaint	Times raised 2021-22	%	Times raised 2022-23	%
Service Delay or Failure	41	42%	32	44%
Outside Service Procedure	0	0	1	1%
Staff Error/Attitude	8	8%	9	13%
Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales	14	14%	6	8%
Financial Charges/Billings/Costs	20	20%	16	22%
Poor/Incorrect Information	15	15%	8	11%
	98		72	

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Learning from complaints: Case study Statutory - Care home placement delays

Background

A statutory complaint was raised about delays in finding a suitable alternative care home for an elderly service user after their care needs increased and the current home could no longer meet their complex needs. The relative who made the complaint, also felt that the care home was not communicating effectively with the family because the Court of Protection were involved. The complaint was investigated jointly by the Adult Social Care Locality Team, and the issues about the quality of care were reported to Quality Assurance and Contract Monitoring Team, who undertook unannounced visit to the home.

Learning

There were two main findings from the investigation. Firstly, it was apparent that the Council could have been more proactive in identifying a new care home once it became clear that the person's care needs had changed following a review. This was discussed with social workers and a process agreed to ensure that in future, social workers alert their manager when a change in care need requires more urgent action to find a new care provider. Team managers will then then escalate with the Service Acquisition Team (responsible for sourcing placements) to ensure the sourcing of the placement is treated as a priority.

The Quality and Contracts Team also found that the care home was wrong to restrict contact with the family. This was raised with the registered manager to ensure that in future, other families who are concerned about the care their relative, receive effective and timely communication.

5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

LGSCO decisions

- 5.1 The LGSCO issued Wandsworth's Annual Review letter for 2022-23 on 19 July and all Councils' review letters were published on their website on 26 July 2023. In 2022/23 the LGSCO registered 15,488 complaints and enquiries. This compares to 15,826 complaints and enquiries in 2021/22 and 11,830 in 2020/21 (numbers were lower in 20/21 due to the pause on casework during the Covid-19 pandemic).
- 5.2 This year's Annual Letter sets out that in the last 12 months, the key areas of concern included complaints about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision and Adult Social Care. The South East made up the largest proportion of its complaints about children and education (33%) whereas in London, this accounts for 12% of residents' complaints. In London, housing and homelessness are the biggest cause of complaints to the LGSCO (26%).
- 5.3 Towards the end of the year, Michael King, ended his tenure as Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and currently Paul Najsarek is acting as Interim Ombudsman. In the Annual Letter, the interim Ombudsman relays the importance of complaints as they offer organisations intelligence which has the potential to transform services, highlight problems with service delivery and provide a perspective on how well the organisation has a culture that nurtures the ability to learn from complaints.

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- 5.4 In the Annual Letter, the Ombudsman states that their average uphold rates for all investigations has increased this year. From the 15,488 complaints and enquiries 2,412 recommendations were made to improve services and 4,907 recommendations to remedy personal injustice, such as apologies and reimbursements. The uphold rate has increased because, make best use of their resources, the LGSCO has been more selective about the complaints they look at in detail, and prioritising complaints that are high risk or in the public interest. The LGSCO has said that this will make comparing uphold rates with previous years less reliable and recommends comparing statistics with similar local authorities.
- 5.5 Whilst the LGSCO issued 38 public interest reports, with Education and Children's Services, Adult Care Services and Housing the subject matter in most cases. Education and Children's Services remain some of the most high-profile cases, featuring in more than half of the LGSCO public interest reports, it is positive that no new public interest reports have been published this year concerning Wandsworth Council.

LGSCO local level decisions and learning from complaints

- 5.6 In 2022-23 the LGSCO received 92 enquires on Wandsworth case and it made decisions on 84 Wandsworth cases and compared to 113 in 2021-22. However, only 18 resulted in detailed investigation which is a 36% decrease on the 28 detailed investigations last year. The 18 detailed investigations resulted in **15 upheld decisions**, which is an uphold rate of 83%. This compares to 77% across all London Boroughs (this does not take account of population size).
- 5.7 The total number of decisions for Wandsworth (84) remains below the average number of cases across London (114) and of similar sized boroughs (137).
- 5.8 The 83% uphold rate is very similar to last year's results for Wandsworth, when 82% were upheld (23 of the 28 cases investigated were upheld). The Ombudsman made recommendations in most of the upheld cases, and Wandsworth Council had a compliance rate of 92% with those recommendations. This year Wandsworth did not achieve 100% compliance as the Council, with advice from the Monitoring Officer, challenged the LGSCO's original decision about the way the Council investigated a noise nuisance complaint. Learning from these cases can be found in Appendix 3.
- 5.9 The Council is still performing well in relation to similar sized boroughs. The average 'upheld' rate for the three statistical neighbouring boroughs with the closest profile to Wandsworth (Lambeth, Bromley and Enfield) is 81%. Whilst Wandsworth's uphold rate was 83%, the Council only received 18 formal investigations compared to an average of 35 across its statistical neighbours. As the LGSCO has confirmed they are selecting higher risk cases for investigation, the low number of investigations for Wandsworth does disproportionately push up the uphold rate when compared to boroughs which received a higher number of investigations.
- 5.10 With regards to the 84 decisions made by the LGSCO, setting aside the 18 detailed investigations (15 upheld, 3 not upheld), advice was given on 11 cases, 3 cases were

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invalid, 27 were referred back for local resolution (premature) and 25 were closed after initial enquiries.

5.11 In terms of the number of Public Reports issued by the LGSCO against the Council, Wandsworth is in line with the average for its three statistical neighbours, receiving two Public Report in the last 5 years. No new public reports were issued this year.

5.12 A summary of 2022/23 LGSCO activity is at **Appendix 3**. Examples of key practice changes from LGSCO investigations are as follows:

- The Adult Social Care Transformation Team have ensured that all relevant policies and procedures make clear reference to the need to provide any documentation and support plans in an accessible format and have developed an Accessible Information Policy. This was in relation to a service user with sight difficulties who was not provided with information in a format suitable for their needs.
- Environment and Community Services have issued guidance to staff reminding them to alert complainants to their rights under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act at an early stage of any nuisance investigations and the importance of recording decisions around when to prosecute if someone fails to comply with or contravenes the requirements of a noise abatement (and communicating that decision).
- Adult Social Care held a multi-disciplinary training session with the NHS to discuss the Pressure Ulcer Protocol and when a safeguarding concern should be instigated to ensure that in future, service users receive a speedy and appropriate response to mitigate against developing pressure ulcers.
- Housing Services in the Housing and Regeneration directorate created a written procedure setting out the criteria used to prioritise applicants on the temporary accommodation transfer list and held a training session for staff on the procedure.
- Housing Services provided further staff training on new Temporary Accommodation guidelines so that officers were fully aware that any decision that temporary accommodation is suitable for a tenant also sets out that there is a statutory right to review this decision and appeal to court. Template letters were amended to reflect this.

6 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

6.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) looks at all complaints about social housing, including local housing authorities, housing associations, and other landlords, housing managers and agents. However, some complaints that relate to a council's wider duties, such as its statutory duties around homelessness, are still considered by the LGSCO.

6.2 The HOS had its jurisdiction under the Localism Act 2011 extended to all social housing in England from 1 April 2013. Since then, it has dealt with complaints involving local councils where the council acts as a landlord. The HOS offers impartial dispute resolution in rented housing, working with others to improve landlord and tenant relations. It has developed principles and learning media to help landlords, tenants, and designated persons resolve disputes locally.

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- 6.3 Wandsworth Council has a large housing stock with over 33,000 properties. The borough is split into 4 localities for management purposes, Central area, Western area, Eastern area and Southern area. Each of these areas has an Area Housing Manager who deals with local issues, such as repairs and maintenance and is also responsible for responding to any formal complaints.
- 6.4 The Council closed a total of **11 complaints in 2022-23**. However, 3 of these were outside of jurisdiction, so in total there were **8 determinations**. Details of cases closed during the year are attached at Appendix 5. The Council recorded a 100% compliance rate with the recommended actions required by the Housing Ombudsman.
- 6.5 The 8 determinations resulted in 10 orders (some level of maladministration). The 8 determinations is a 43% decrease on the 14 determinations last year. However, 10 orders made from the 8 determinations is slightly higher than the 9 orders made last year.
- 6.6 The Housing Ombudsman has reported in their annual Landlord Report that Wandsworth Council has performed 'very well' with a maladministration rate of 33% compared to a national rate of 55% when comparing to landlords of a similar size, which are those with housing units above 10,000.
- 6.7 Whilst the 33% maladministration rate is slightly higher than the 28% reported in 2021-22, this year 10 orders were made compared to 9 last year. Overall performance continues to remain high. The Housing Ombudsman have been working with a significant backlog of cases and have been prioritising those which are higher risk and therefore the numbers of determinations are likely to rise next year.
- 6.8 In the autumn of 2020 the HOS introduced their **Complaint Handling Code** which all landlords must comply with. In May 2023 the Complaints Team and HRD directorate completed a new self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure Wandsworth Council's two stage corporate process is in line with the requirements of the HOS's Code. The self-assessment was submitted to the Housing Committee on 21 June 2023 and is available at: <https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=765&MId=8845&Ver=4>
- 6.9 The Council is aware that Wandsworth's corporate complaints procedure follows different timescales to those in the Code: stage 1 is 20 working days and stage 2 was 15 working days last year (25 working days since 1 April 2023). The Code stipulates **10 working days at stage 1**, which can be extended to 20 days for complex cases, and **20 working days at stage 2**. The HO accepted last year that Council's may have differing timescales in place. However this year all landlords are expected to adhere to the Complaint Handling Code so the Council is now operating separate timescales for complaints which have HO appeal rights to bring our practice in line with the Code. As of 1 April 2023, residents are provided with the relevant timescales at the start of their complaint, depending on whether their complaint comes under the HO or the LGSCO. Information on the different HO timescales is now publicised on the website.
- 6.10 At the end of the two stage process, complainants are provided with the contact details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman

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Service (HOS), depending on the subject matter. The Ombudsman wrote to landlords in September 2022 to explain that changes to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme would take effect from 1 October 2022. The changes included the removal of the 'democratic filter'. This means that residents no longer have to contact a designated person or wait eight weeks before referring their complaint to the HOS if they remain dissatisfied at the end of their landlord's complaint process.

7 GOING FORWARD: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022-23 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023-24

7.1 Below are some of the key achievements from this year:

- We have worked with services to drive up complaints performance which has resulted in stronger adherence to timescales across all complaint types. Of particular note are corporate stage 2 complaints; 68% were responded to on time across the year (against a KPI of 50% on time) compared to 36% on time in 2021-22. The co-ordinated focus on performance by the central team and directorates resulted in particularly strong results in the last two quarter of 2022/23 with 78% and 83% of stage 2 complaints responded to on time.
- The Complaints Manager has progressed work on learning from complaints to ensure that it provides added value by directly feeding into service improvement. For example, in Children's Services, quarterly meetings take place with the Head of Participation and the Quality Assurance Manager to triangulate themes and learning from complaints with work undertaken by the Children's Quality Assurance Team. This is then fed into quarterly Senior Management Team meetings, chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care to complete the information loop.
- The new Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy was launched in 2021 and is now being embedded. The policy provides a structure for the Complaints Team to manage complainants who take up a disproportionate amount of time, freeing up resources for other complainants to ensure a fair and equitable service. The policy has been aligned with the Unreasonable Customer Behaviour policy, which is overseen by Customer Services, and there is now a bi-monthly high level working group meeting which reviews customers who have had their communication restricted under either or both policies to ensure that decisions have been made fairly, reviewed regularly and staff are applying a consistent approach.
- Our external webpages, complaint leaflets, and internal staff guidance on complaints handling have been reviewed and improved to ensure the complaints service remains inclusive and accessible.
- Information on the Council's complaints processes is now included in Member Induction (following 2022 elections) and will be included in mandatory staff induction for all new starters from 1 April 2024. Both actions help to support a healthy complaints culture within the organisation.

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7.2 In 2023-24 our priorities will be to:

- Support directorates through the changes at stage 2 of the corporate complaints process so that their current high performance continues. From 1 April 2023 the new timeframe of 25 working days (from 15 working days) will allow more time to provide quality reviews and identify further learning. However, the KPI of '50% on time' will be increased to 80% on time, which, following a benchmarking exercise, is in line with other boroughs.
- Work closely with both Ombudsman to ensure our complaint handling remains effective. This includes reviewing, updating and publishing the Council's self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and preparing to respond to a consultation in the autumn 2023 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman who are proposing a new joint complaint handling code with the Housing Ombudsman.
- Further strengthen our complaint training offer to Directorates for both statutory and corporate complaints. Statutory: The Complaints Team are already planning, in liaison with the Children's Services Quality Assurance and Multi Agency Safeguarding Lead, to host a training event for team managers and supervisors on good complaints practice and with Adult Services, a bespoke complaints training session for the Learning Disabilities service. Corporate: Briefings on the corporate process are available to all council-wide services but have not been delivered in the last six months due to limited team resources following a noticeable increase in stage 2 complaints and LGSCO and HO investigations. There will be renewed promotion of the briefings to services which have shown they would benefit from training, and these will include the recent changes to the stage 2 process.
- Developing complaints procedures, policies and literature into Easy Read to further improve the accessibility of the complaints service.
- Creation of public facing adult and children's statutory complaint procedures that set out how the Council apply the Statutory Complaint Regulations when making decisions on how to manage complaints, and any exceptions or cross-over with other policies/rights of appeal.
- Work with colleagues in the Consultation Team to explore opportunities to engage with residents to obtain feedback on the accessibility of complaints processes.
- Further roll out of Respond Case Management System to Corporate complaints to enhance strategic oversight and streamlined responsive reporting. The system is now operational for Adult complaints and Freedom of Information Requests.
- Enhance work on learning from complaints to include detailed learning case studies in reports and ensure that learning from Ombudsman complaints is included in quarterly complaint insight reports for senior managers.

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8 COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

- 8.1 The cost of dealing with all complaints is met from within existing approved resources.

9 COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer maintains an oversight of decisions of the LGSCO where the complaint is upheld; in most cases, provided the recommendations of the LGSCO are followed, there will be no need for further action. In Wandsworth case, the Councils compliance rate was 92% with those recommendations. This year Wandsworth did not achieve 100% compliance due to a challenge of the LGSCO's original decision about the way the Council investigated a noise nuisance complaint.

Further Appendices

Appendix 2 – Data tables

Appendix 3 – LGSCO Upheld Decisions 2022-23

Appendix 4 – LGSCO Annual Review Letter 2022-23

Appendix 5 – HOS closed cases 2022-23

Appendix 6 – Examples of learning from complaints across all directorates

WBC year end totals 2022-23

		Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Total	overall totals
Chief Executive's Office						
stage 1	Community Safety/Support Services/Workmatch/Comms				0	
stage 2			1		1	1
Resources						
stage 1	Housing Benefits, C Tax, business rates	17	1	33	51	
	HR/Pensions/Electoral Services/trans serv/Tech sup	49	2	24	75	
	Customer services - Arts - Enable- Insurance	4	2	2	8	
	parking/parking permits	10	1	32	43	177
stage 2	Housing Benefits/Council tax/Business rates		1	2	3	
	HR/Pensions/Electoral Services/trans serv			1	1	
	Customer services/Arts/Enable/Fraud		1		1	
	parking/parking permits		1	5	6	11
Childrens Corporate						
stage 1	Admissions		2		2	
	SEN, Early Years	3	16	13	32	
	Education Welfare Service, Pupil Support	4	3	5	12	46
stage 2	Admissions				0	
	SEN, Early Years	5	4	5	14	
	Ed Welfare/Pupil support		3		3	17
Childrens Stat - Specialist Children's Services						
stage 1	Referral & Assmt/Child prot/Disabled Ch team	1	11	3	15	
	Looked after children/Adoption/Youth Offending team		4	4	8	
	Child protection/Family support/MASH	2	3	8	13	
stage 2			9	7	16	
stage 3			7	3	10	62
Environment						
stage 1	Highways, traffic and transport planning/RSP	2		6	8	
	Sports and Leisure	2	4	4	10	
	Street Cleansing/waste mgt/street scene	2		2	4	
	Development control/planning/construction			7	7	
	Licensing OR Parking/permits		3	3	6	
	Facilities Management- business support/operations		1		1	
	Trading standards/tourism/Events/Film	1	4	38	43	
	Registrars/pollution service/libraries/env health	28	30	33	91	
	Properties/ Parks - Cemeteries/IT	16	17	26	59	229
stage 2	Planning/ Devel Control/Bldg control		1	3	4	
	Highways and Transport/Parking/Construction	1	1	2	4	
	Facilities Management/ Env Health/RSP			5	5	
	Street Environment/Registrars/Libraries/Sports				0	
	Parks and Open spaces/Waste&Recycling		1	1	2	15

Official

Adult Social Care - Statutory						
stage 1 only	Commissioning and Quality Standards		2		2	
	Reablement or After Hours or OT/day services/Safeguarding		1	2		3
	In house care provision/Community Service/Hospital teams	1				1
	Locality Team East and West /Reviews	6	5	3		14
	MH and Learning disabilities PLD/Prep for Adulthood	5	16	8		29
	Finance or providers or Access team	7	6	4		17
						66
Adult Social Care - Corporate						
stage 1	Public Health, Qual Assurance, all other Adults corp	1	1	3		5
stage 2	Public Health, Qual Assurance, all other Adults corp			1		1
Housing						
stage 1	Housing options/ temp accomm/neighbour nuisance	25	31	42		98
	Residential team/EH/housing provision/pest control/HIA	27	28	52		107
stage 2	Housing options, Housing provision	15	25	46		86
TOTAL					921	921

SUMMARY: Corporate	
Total stage 1	662
Total stage 2	131
	793
Statutory children's	
Total stage 1	36
Total stage 2	16
Total stage 3	10
	62
Statutory adults	
Total stage 1 (only 1 stage)	66
Total (ALL complaints)	921

Official

WBC 2022-23

Not upheld					Q1		
	stage 1	stage 2	stage 3	total			
Quarter 1	79	15	1	95	Not upheld	95	
Quarter 2	75	15		90	Upheld	72	
Quarter 3	108	23	2	133	Partially upheld	75	
Quarter 4	95	24	1	120			
	357	77	4	438		242	242
Upheld					Q2		
	stage 1	stage 2	stage 3	total			
Quarter 1	70	2		72	Not upheld	90	
Quarter 2	52	7		59	Upheld	59	
Quarter 3	50	7		57	Partially upheld	54	
Quarter 4	46			46			
	218	16	0	234		203	203
Partially upheld					Q3		
	stage 1	stage 2	stage 3	total			
Quarter 1	64	10	1	75	Not upheld	133	
Quarter 2	40	11	3	54	Upheld	57	
Quarter 3	46	12	3	61	Partially upheld	61	
Quarter 4	58	1		59			
	208	34	7	249		251	251
					Q4		
					Not upheld	120	
					Upheld	46	
					Partially upheld	59	
						225	225
				921			921

2021-22

Stage 1

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
CEO		1	4	2	7
Resources	41	48	37	36	162
CSS	27	34	22	27	110
Env	44	44	131	32	251
ACS	30	22	28	15	95
Housing	45	48	48	51	192
Total	187	197	270	163	817

Stage 2

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
CEO	0	1	0		1
Resources	10	4	5	4	23
CSS	10	9	11	9	39
Env	4	7	4	7	22
ACS	0	1	1	1	3
Housing	14	29	20	21	84
Total	38	51	41	42	172

Stage 3

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
AfC	2	2	2	0	6
Total	2	2	2		6
Total (all)	227	250	313	205	995

2022-23

Stage 1

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
CEO	0	0			0
Resources	66	35	32	44	177
CSS/Corp	12	9	15	10	46
CSS/Stat	15	8	5	8	36
Env	59	50	75	45	229
ACS/Corp	0	0	3	2	5
ACS/Stat	13	19	16	18	66
Housing	48	46	58	53	205
Total	213	167	204	180	764

Stage 2

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
CEO	1	0	0		1
Resources	1	4	2	4	11
CSS/Corp	2	4	4	7	17
CSS/Stat	5	3	5	3	16
Env	6	1	6	2	15
ACS/Corp	0	0	0	1	1
ACS/Stat	0	0	0		0
Housing	12	21	26	27	86
Total	27	33	43	44	147

Stage 3

Quarters	1	2	3	4	Total
CSS	2	3	4	1	10
Total	2	3	4	1	10
Total (all)	242	203	251	225	921

WBC 2022-23

	Qu1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	%	
Type of Complaint					0	0%
101 Service Delay or Failure	185	115	158	126	584	63%
102 Outside Service Procedure	12	29	28	15	84	9%
103 Staff Error/Attitude	18	26	24	29	97	11%
104 Disagreement with/failure to implement asses	9	10	17	16	52	6%
105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs	9	11	10	26	56	6%
106 Poor/incorrect information	9	12	14	13	48	5%
	242	203	251	225	921	100%

	Qtr 1 %s	Qtr 2 %s	Qtr 3 %s	Qtr 4 %s
Summary by percentage				
101 Service Delay or Failure	75%	57%	63%	56%
102 Outside Service Procedure	4%	14%	11%	7%
103 Staff Error/Attitude	7%	13%	10%	13%
104 Disagreement with/failure to implement asses	3%	5%	7%	7%
105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs	4%	5%	4%	12%
106 Poor/incorrect information	6%	6%	6%	6%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Total by Directorate	CEO	Resources	Children's SS-Corp	Children's SS- Stat	Env	Adult SC & PH-Corp	Adult SC - Stat	Housing	Total
Type of Complaint									
101 Service Delay or Failure		91	49	43	172	1	31	197	584
102 Outside Service Procedure		30	1	0	43	1	0	9	84
103 Staff Error/Attitude		14	7	10	16	1	8	41	97
104 Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales		0	2	6	5	2	4	33	52
105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs		31	1	0	4	1	15	4	56
106 Poor/incorrect information	1	22	3	3	4		8	7	48
TOTALS	1	188	63	62	244	6	66	291	921

Total by quarter	
Quarter 1 =	242
Quarter 2 =	203
Quarter 3 =	
	251
Quarter 4 =	225
TOTAL	921

Resources data

Q1		CEO	Resources	Children's SS-Corp	Children's SS- Stat	Env	Adult SC & PH-Corp	Adult SC - Stat	Housing	Total
Type of Complaint										
49	101 Service Delay or Failure		49	12	19	53		8	44	185
6	102 Outside Service Procedure		6	0	0	3		0	3	12
3	103 Staff Error/Attitude		3	2	2	4		1	6	18
0	104 Disagreement with/failure to		0	0	1	1		2	5	9
6	105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs		6	0	0	2		1	0	9
3	106 Poor/incorrect information	1	3	0	0	2		1	2	9
67	TOTALS		67	14	22	65	0	13	60	242

Q2		CEO	Resources	CSS/Corp	CSS- STAT	Env	ACS-Corp	ACS+PH- Stat	Housing	Total
Type of Complaint										
14	101 Service Delay or Failure		14	8	10	32		8	43	115
10	102 Outside Service Procedure		10			17			2	29
4	103 Staff Error/Attitude		4	2	1	2		3	14	26
0	104 Disagreement with/failure to		0	1	2			1	6	10
8	105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs		8					3		11
4	106 Poor/incorrect information		3	2	1			4	2	12
40	TOTALS	0	39	13	14	51	0	19	67	203

Q3		CEO	Resources	CSS/Corp	CSS- STAT	Env	ACS-Corp	ACS+PH- Stat	Housing	Total
Type of Complaint										
12	101 Service Delay or Failure		12	16	8	55		9	58	158
8	102 Outside Service Procedure		8			15	1		4	28
2	103 Staff Error/Attitude		2	1	2	7	1	1	10	24
0	104 Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales		0	1	3	2	1	1	9	17
4	105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs		4	1		1		4		10
7	106 Poor/incorrect information		8		1	1		1	3	14
33	TOTALS	0	34	19	14	81	3	16	84	251

Q4		CEO	Resources	CSS/Corp	CSS- STAT	Env	ACS-Corp	ACS+PH- Stat	Housing	Total
Type of Complaint										
16	101 Service Delay or Failure		16	13	6	32	1	6	52	126
6	102 Outside Service Procedure		6	1		8				15
5	103 Staff Error/Attitude		5	2	5	3		3	11	29
0	104 Disagreement with/failure to implement assessment within timescales		0			2	1		13	16
13	105 Financial Charges/Billing/Costs		13			1	1	7	4	26
8	106 Poor/incorrect information		8	1	1	1		2		13
48	TOTALS	0	48	17	12	47	3	18	80	225

2021-22

Ethnicity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
White					
400 White British (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish)	22	22	18	23	85
401 White Irish	1	3		1	5
402 White Gypsy/Irish Traveller					0
403 White Roma					0
404 White Other	2	2	8	1	13
Mixed					
405 Mixed White & Black Caribbean	1	1	1	2	5
406 Mixed White & Black African					0
407 Mixed White & Asian	2		1		3
408 Mixed Other	2		4	1	7
Asian					
409 Indian			2	4	6
410 Pakistani			1		1
411 Bangladeshi	1	1			2
412 Chinese				1	1
413 Other					0
Black/Caribbean/African/Black British					
414 Black Caribbean	1	5	2	7	15
415 Black African	2	4	3	3	12
416 Other Black/Caribbean/African		2			2
Other Ethnic Group					0
417 Arab					0
418 Other Ethnicity	1		1	1	3
					0
Prefer not to say	20	24	19	16	79
Not disclosed	172	186	253	145	756
Total	227	250	313	205	995

2022-23

Ethnicity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
White					
400 White British (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish)	31	18	22	37	108
401 White Irish	1			2	3
402 White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0				0
403 White Roma	1		1	2	4
404 White Other	5	3	3	3	14
Mixed	0				0
405 Mixed White & Black Caribbean	3	1	2	2	8
406 Mixed White & Black African	0				0
407 Mixed White & Asian	0	1	1	1	3
408 Mixed Other	1	2	5		8
Asian	0				0
409 Indian	1	2	2		5
410 Pakistani	4		1	1	6
411 Bangladeshi	0			1	1
412 Chinese	0				0
413 Other	1	1		3	5
Black/Caribbean/African/Black British					
	0				0
414 Black Caribbean	8	5	6	3	22
415 Black African	5	2	7	4	18
416 Other Black/Caribbean/African	3			2	5
Other Ethnic Group	0				0
417 Arab	0			2	2
418 Other Ethnicity	2	2	2	1	7
	0				0
Prefer not to say	47	41	43	33	164
Not disclosed	129	125	156	128	538
Total	242	203	251	225	921

Gender	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Female	96	91	109	88	384
Male	62	41	69	47	219
Self-describe	2				2
Not disclosed	60	103	122	63	348
Prefer not to say	7	15	13	7	42
Total	227	250	313	205	995

Disability	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Yes	17	18	16	18	69
No	19	29	27	30	105
Prefer not to say	44	7	19	15	85
Not disclosed	147	196	251	142	736
Total	227	250	313	205	995

Age	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
under 18		1	1		2
18 - 24	1	4	1	2	8
25 - 34	13	20	10	16	59
35 - 44	8	6	16	14	44
45 - 54	13	12	8	11	44
55 - 64	6	4	13	11	34
65 - 74	3	6	1	1	11
75+	3	5	1	2	11
Prefer not to say	12	13	10	10	45
Not Disclosed	168	179	252	138	737
Total	227	250	313	205	995

Racial incidents	0	0	0	0	0
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Gender	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Female	96	77	90	105	368
Male	59	57	49	60	225
Self-describe	0	1			1
Not disclosed	26	39	84	35	184
Prefer not to say	61	29	28	25	143
Total	242	203	251	225	921

Disability	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Yes	32	10	25	18	85
No	39	29	18	37	123
Prefer not to say	35	42	37	38	152
Not disclosed	136	122	171	132	561
Total	242	203	251	225	921

Age	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
under 18	0		1	1	2
18 - 24	8	3	5	2	18
25 - 34	23	11	10	14	58
35 - 44	21	9	18	24	72
45 - 54	12	9	16	9	46
55 - 64	11	10	10	15	46
65 - 74	6	5	5	9	25
75+	3	3		5	11
Prefer not to say	31	37	35	29	132
Not Disclosed	127	116	151	117	511
Total	242	203	251	225	921

Racial incidents	0	0	0	0	0
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Sexual orientation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Heterosexual/straight	22	32	35	33	122
Gay/Lesbian		1	1	2	4
Bisexual	2		1		3
Self-describe					0
Prefer not to say	24	24	25	27	100
Not disclosed	179	193	251	143	766
	227	250	313	205	995

Religion	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
No religion	13	17	17	11	58
Christian	8	10	16	18	52
Muslim	3	3	3	4	13
Hindu					0
Sikh					0
Jewish					0
Buddhist		1			1
Other	3		1	3	7
Not disclosed	177	156	259	109	701
Prefer not to say	23	63	17	60	163
Total	227	250	313	205	995

Status	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Single	14	23	23	19	79
Married/Civil Partnership/Co	16				
		12	16	15	59
Other	4	2	1	3	10
Not disclosed	177	156	253	145	731
Prefer not to say	16	57	20	23	116
Total	227	250	313	205	995

Sexual orientation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Heterosexual/straight	55	21	35	43	154
Gay/Lesbian	3	10	2	2	17
Bisexual	0		1	1	2
Self-describe	0		1		1
Prefer not to say	51	46	52	42	191
Not disclosed	133	126	160	137	556
	242	203	251	225	921

Religion	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
No religion	29	5	15	21	70
Christian	24	23	22	23	92
Muslim	6	3	4	7	20
Hindu	0		2	1	3
Sikh	0	1			1
Jewish	0				0
Buddhist	0		2		2
Other	2				2
Not disclosed	115	124	163	127	529
Prefer not to say	66	47	43	46	202
Total	242	203	251	225	921

Marital Status	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Single	39	14	24	28	105
Married/Civil	23				
Partnership/Co-habiting		19	12	19	73
Other	3	1		1	5
Not disclosed	117	126	178	135	556
Prefer not to say	60	43	37	42	182
Total	242	203	251	225	921

2019/2020	Timescale - in time				overall % in time?	st 1% in time	st 2 % in time	0% correct as at
	Total	stage 1	stage 2	stage 3				
Q1				0	0.00%	0%	0%	0% correct as at
Q2				0	0.00%	0%	0%	
Q3				0	0.00%	0%	0%	
Q4				0	0.00%	0%	0%	0% correct as at
	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0%	0%	
		0.00%	0.00%					

WBC - Timescales 2022-23

Directorate	In time				Total in time
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Chief Execs Office					
Stage 1					0
Stage 2					0
Resources					
Stage 1	29	31	24	40	124
Stage 2	1	4	2	3	10
CSS - Corp					
Stage 1	10	8	13	9	40
Stage 2	1	3	2	5	11
CSS - Stat					
stage 1	10	7	2	6	25
stage 2	3	1	2	3	9
stage 3	1	0		1	2
Environment					
Stage 1	56	48	70	37	211
Stage 2	6	0	5	1	12
Adult - Corp					
Stage 1			2	1	3
Stage 2			0	1	1
Adult - Stat					
Stage 1 only	5	13	6	13	37
Housing					
Stage 1	35	40	46	44	165
Stage 2	10	16	12	21	59
Total	167	171	186	185	709

Not in time				Total not in time	
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
				0	
1				1	
37	4	8	4	53	
	0	0	1	1	
2	1	2	1	6	
1	1	2	2	6	
5	1	3	2	11	
2	2	3	0	7	
1	3	4	0	8	
3	2	5	8	18	
	1	1	1	3	
		1	1	2	
		0	0	0	
8	6	9	3	29	
13	6	12	9	40	
2	5	14	6	27	
TOTAL	75	32	64	38	212

TOTAL 921

Corporate	636	157	793	80%
Statutory	73	55	128	57%
Total	709	212	921	77%

2022-23 Summary all 4 quarters				
		in time	not in time	total
Corporate only				
stage 1		543	119	662
stage 2		93	38	131
		636	157	793
		80%	20%	
Adults and children's social care only				
stage 1		62	40	102
stage 2		9	7	16
stage 3		2	8	10
		73	55	128
		57%	43%	

Wandsworth - compliments

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Chief Exec	1	0	0	0	1
Resources	0	0	0	0	0
Children's corp	0	0	0	0	0
Children's stat	0	0	0	0	0
Environment	10	30	0	0	40
Adult corp	0	0	0	0	0
Adult stat	0	0	3	0	3
Public Health	0	0	0	0	0
Housing	0	4	4	7	15
Total	11	34	7	7	59

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

19 July 2023

By email

Mr Jackson
Chief Executive
London Borough of Wandsworth

Dear Mr Jackson

Annual Review letter 2022-23

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

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

Complaint statistics

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

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

Over the past two years, we have reviewed our processes to ensure we do the most we can with the resources we have. One outcome is that we are more selective about the complaints we look at in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. While providing a more sustainable way for us to work, it has meant that changes in uphold rates this year are not solely down to the nature of the cases coming to us. We are less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, so we are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

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

that of similar organisations, rather than previous years, to better understand your organisation's performance.

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

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

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

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

Your organisation's performance

I am pleased to note we recorded our satisfaction with your Council's compliance in most of the cases where we made a recommendation to remedy a complaint. However, I am very concerned to note there was one case where our recommendations were not complied with.

To remedy a complaint about noise nuisance, we recommended your Council should carry out a comprehensive noise nuisance investigation within four weeks. You carried out actions short of the agreed comprehensive investigation and the complainant told us he was still experiencing noise issues. After we wrote to you to express our concerns you were unable to provide evidence to satisfy us you had done what had been agreed. As a result, we registered a new complaint to investigate non-compliance with our recommendations.

Non-compliance with our recommendations is taken very seriously; it reflects extremely poorly on the Council and undermines residents' confidence that it is genuinely willing and committed to putting matters right when it has been at fault. I ask you to ensure your Council has robust mechanisms in place to enable it to fully evidence compliance with the recommendations it agrees to and to reduce any repeat of these failings.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

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

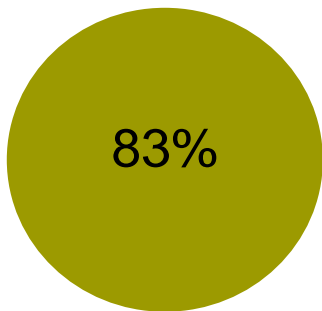
In addition, our successful training programme includes practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We can also offer tailored support and bespoke training to target specific issues your organisation might have identified. We delivered 105 online workshops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

Yours sincerely,



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

Complaints upheld



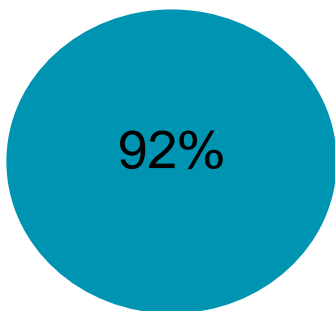
83% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **77%** in similar organisations.

15
upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **18** investigations for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



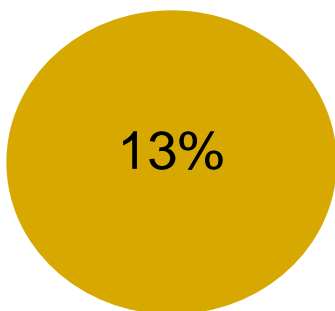
In **92%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **12** compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **13%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **15%** in similar organisations.

2
satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **15** upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Housing Ombudsman Service: complaints closed 2022-23

Ref	Date Received	Date Closed	Service	Directorate	Complaint details	Outcome	Compensation amount	Learning
HO115	26-Apr-22	17-May-22	Housing Management	HRD	The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of noise nuisance from a neighbouring property.	No maladministration by the landlord in respect of its handling of the resident's reports of noise nuisance.		
HO032	30-Jun-22	26-Jul-22	Housing Management	HRD	Complaint about the way the Council handled: a) Reports of repairs to the property, including to address damp and mould. b) Reports of pest issues in the property. c) Request to be moved to a larger property. d) The associated formal complaint raised.	There was a) service failure in handling of the resident's report of repairs & b) maladministration in the handling of the associated formal complaint on the issues. Review outcome: original determination & orders upheld.	£500	
HO117	26-Aug-22	26-Aug-22	Housing Management - Eastern Area Team	HRD	The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of noise nuisance by a neighbour.	No maladministration by the landlord in respect of its handling of the resident's reports of noise nuisance.		No orders given. Recommendation - It is recommended that the landlord consider installing noise recording equipment within the resident's property if it has not already done so.
HO109	15-Dec-22	25-Jan-23	Housing Management - Area Team	HRD	Complaint about the way the Council has handled problems at a resident's property regarding a downstairs leak - they have not received a reply to their complaint. They also raised concerns about the window across the building façade being defective and wants to know what protection will be in place during the winter if remediation works take place	No maladministration by the landlord in respect of its handling of its request to access the resident's property due to a leak in the neighbour's property but there was service failure; there was maladministration in respect of the LL handling of the resident's reports that the windows in the property required renewal. The LL landlord was ordered to pay the resident £400 in compensation.	£400	Orders: LL was ordered to pay resident £400 in compensation within 4 weeks of decision date: £150 already offered, further £150 in respect of failures identified in following up, £100 for complaint handling

HO139	10-Oct-22	26-Jan-23	Housing Management	HRD	The complaint is about the landlord's response to the resident's concerns about the lift breaking down in the block of flats where they live.	No maladministration by the landlord in respect of its response to the resident's concerns about the lift breaking down in the block of flats where they live.		Recommendations: a. Contact the resident to confirm what, if any, vulnerabilities, including disabilities, the resident or their household may have. b. Write to all residents of the building to confirm what, if any, assistance it can provide to help disabled residents if the lift is out of service in future.
HO156	14-Feb-23	17-Mar-23	Housing Management	HRD	Complainant unhappy with condition of paving and states that their child cannot play outside safely.	Upheld		Recommendations: remind team that paving in tenanted properties are the responsibility of the area team and that they must ensure that they are made safe
HO108	08-Nov-21	21-Mar-23	HS - Allocations and Nominations Team	HRD	The complaint is about: - The landlord's handling of a cash incentive to move properties - The landlord's response to the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour from their neighbours - The landlord's handling of the resident's rent account - Correspondence received from the landlord threatening eviction	There was no maladministration by the landlord in respect of: a. How it responded to the resident's reports of ASB. b. The information it provided to the resident relating to incentive payments for downsizing properties.		Recommendations: •Ensure resident's are up to date •Ensure that any vulnerabilities and/or disabilities are correctly recorded • Notify what help and support is available to assist in the purchase of furniture for the property
HO161	01-Mar-23	28-Mar-23	Housing Management	HRD	The Council's handling of : - Reports of ongoing damp and mould issues within the property causing severe health concerns - Reports of poor communication and customer service.	Not upheld		The installation of PIV systems in tenanted properties is a relatively recent change in the Council's policy and would not have been available to previous officers, but now for properties with persistent mould issues

Appendix : Wandsworth: LGSCO complaints upheld 2022-23

Reference	Authority	Category	Decided	Decision	Details
20007935	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	20/04/2022	Upheld	<p>Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Improved BinJ remedy,Procedure or policy change/review,Provide training and/or guidance</p> <p>Complaint that since approving the complainant as a suitable adopter, the Council failed to: a) keep their adoption file up to date with accurate information; b) act on the promises it gave them following a meeting in 2019; c) act on a request for information from the adoption panel; d) provide them with a social worker for 2 years; provide their file when requested. As a result, they felt humiliated, unfairly treated, suffered stress, and had the uncertainty of not knowing whether they would have had an older child placed with them. In addition, they also lost the opportunity of having their own family.</p> <p>Outcome The LGSCO found fault with the Council</p> <p>Agreed action The Council apologised, paid £1450, reviewed her case and made service improvements</p>
20012200	London Borough of Wandsworth	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	24/05/2022	Upheld	<p>Apology,Reassessment,Provide training and/or guidance</p> <p>Complaint about playground installed outside his property. Complainant says that they were not told that a planning application to build three blocks of flats would include a playground in this location and so had no opportunity to object to it. Complainant says the playground is around 5 metres from his bedroom and the Council has failed to properly consider how they will be affected by the noise from children playing there.</p> <p>Outcome LGSCO found fault</p> <p>Agreed actions The Council apologised, and was asked to conduct a comprehensive noise nuisance investigation and make training/service improvements</p>
21001259	London Borough of Wandsworth	Adult Care Services	12/04/2022	Upheld	<p>Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Provide training and/or guidance</p> <p>Complaint about the care provided to a parent, by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (the Trust) between September and November 2020. The complainant was also unhappy about the safeguarding investigation undertaken by the Council.</p> <p>Outcome LGSCO found fault.</p> <p>Agreed action The Council apologised, made service improvements and a financial payment of £250 was made by each organisation</p>
21002915	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	26/05/2022	Upheld	<p>Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Procedure or policy change/review,Provide training and/or guidance</p> <p>Complaint that the Council left a parent and their young child for too long in temporary accommodation which it accepted was unsuitable and too small for their needs. The lack of space caused the parent to become depressed and anxious and it limited their child's opportunities to play at home.</p> <p>Outcome LGSCO found service failure caused injustice</p> <p>Agreed action The Council apologised, paid £600, reviewed the process and briefed staff</p>
21010485	London Borough of Wandsworth	Highways & Transport	16/08/2022	Upheld	<p>NA</p> <p>Complaint regarding the Council's consultation for a traffic regulation order in 2020, 2021 and 2022 which was insufficient and unfairly disadvantaged people who did not use the internet. Also that the Council failed to properly consider the impact of the order on elderly and disabled residents.</p> <p>Outcome There was no fault in how the Council implemented the traffic orders or how they considered their impact. There was fault in how the Council responded to the complainant, however this did not cause the complainant an injustice.</p> <p>Agreed action N/A</p>
21014132	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	04/10/2022	Upheld	<p>Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Procedure or policy change/review</p> <p>Complained that the Council made errors in nursery's Early Years' funding and clawed back an overpayment, causing distress and financial difficulties.</p> <p>Outcome Fault found with the Council for making late and inaccurate payments.</p> <p>Agreed action The Council apologised, paid £150, reviewed its processes and made improvements.</p>

21014566	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	25/07/2022	Upheld	Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Financial redress: Loss of service,Provide information/advice to person affected,Provide training and/or guidance,Procedure or policy change/review	Complained that the Council delayed making necessary repairs to temporary accommodation. Also complained about the Council not having properly assessed priority on the housing register and did not register the complainants need to be rehoused into a specific type of property. Outcome Fault found against the Council's delay completing extensive repairs and for failing to review the suitability of the accommodation. Agreed action The Council apologised, completed outstanding repairs, paid £5,900 and made service improvements
21017504	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	13/07/2022	Upheld	New appeal/review or reconsidered decision	Complaint about the Council's decision to offer home to school transport to their child as a travel assistance budget. Outcome LGSCO discontinued its investigation. The Council offered a discretionary place in a taxi to and from school and decided there was no injustice to remedy even if they had gone on to find fault. Agreed action N/A
21018851	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	27/07/2022	Upheld	New appeal/review or reconsidered decision	Complained the Council failed to properly consider transport appeal for a child. Outcome The Council had taken action which resolved the outstanding issue and no further action by the Ombudsman was needed. Agreed action N/A
21018855	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	27/06/2022	Upheld	NA	Complained that the Council failed to reassess medical information for housing needs and it failed to move the complainant to a different property due to a risk of domestic abuse. Outcome Fault found with the way the Council assessed medical information, but it no significant injustice was caused. Agreed action N/A
21018881	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	13/04/2022	Upheld	NA	The Council failed to adequately compensate when it admitted to applying an incorrect date to the complainants application for housing. Outcome LGSCO decided not to investigate the complaint because any investigation would not lead to a different outcome and we cannot achieve what the complainant wants. Agreed action N/A
22001927	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	22/03/2023	Upheld	Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss,Improved BinJ remedy,Provide information/ advice to person affected,Procedure or policy change/review,Provide training and/or guidance	Complaint about the Council's handling of a homelessness application Outcome Fault found, evidence of fault by the Council causing injustice. Agreed action The Council apologised, paid £2500 and £6233, discussed reasonable adjustments, sent a reminder to staff, invited complainant to submit a housing register application and provided complainant with information.
22002574	London Borough of Wandsworth	Housing	20/03/2023	Upheld	Apology,Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss,Provide services to person affected	Complaint about placement in temporary accommodation in November 2019 which was infested with bedbugs and the problem was ongoing. Outcome Fault found, the Council failed to treat the property in August 2018, but do not consider this caused complainant an injustice. Agreed action The Council apologised, offered nest control treatment, refunded £216 and amended records
22003501	London Borough of Wandsworth	Education & Childrens Services	31/01/2023	Upheld	Apology,Procedure or policy change/review,Provide services/information to others affected	Complaint about how the Council considered appeal for free school transport. Outcome Found fault leading to personal injustice Agreed action The Council apologised, reviewed information, created template and reminded staff of procedure

22006601	London Borough of Wandsworth	Benefits & Tax	06/09/2022	Upheld	NA	<p>Complaint that the Council had begun enforcement action against them in October 2021 to recover housing benefit, which it said it had overpaid in 2011.</p> <p>Outcome LGSCO decided not to investigate because it was satisfied with the actions the Council had taken to remedy the complaint.</p> <p>Agreed action N/A</p>
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KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD COMPLAINTS 2022/23

	Service complained about	Outcome	Summary of Issue to be addressed	Learning from this complaint	Management response
Adult social care (examples from statutory)					
	Wandsworth East Locality Team	Partially upheld	Complaint about delays in finding a suitable alternative care home when the current care provider could no longer meet the service users care needs.	Delays and the quality of externally provided care	Finding suitable placements can be challenging in the current pressurised care market. In this case, the search for a new placement should have been given a higher priority because the person's needs were so high their provider was struggling to meet their needs. All staff have been reminded to escalate to their line managers when new placements are very urgent so that managers can liaise directly with the Service Acquisition Team (the team with responsibility for sourcing care) to ensure that urgent cases are prioritised.
	Mental Health	Partially upheld	A service user who received a home visit for a care assessment complained about delays in finalising their support assessment after the visit and communication by the social worker. They were also unhappy that the social worker contacted their GP without their consent.	Delays, communication	The social worker should have contacted the service user to obtain their views on the draft assessment after it was completed during the home visit it.Teams have been reminded about the importance of ensuring that completed assessments are always shared and that the outcome is communicated in a timely manner. Also, it would have been good practice for the social worker to contact the service user for consent before contacting the GP to clarify medical discrepancies from the assesment even though the resident had previously consented to communication with their GP and the practitioner had assumed consent was on-going. This fell below departmental standards and this learning was shared across the team to avoid a similar mistake in the future.
	External care provider (investigated by the Council's Quality Assurance/Contract Monitoring Team).	Partially upheld	Complaint about the standard of care provided by two domiciliary care agencies during a transition to a new care agency. The service user was unaware of what times carers will be arriving, visits were missed, carers did not have PPE.	Quality of externally provided care	Care workers have been reminded of the code of conduct and infection control using PPE, field supervisors have been asked to increase their monitoring of care workers and undertake spot checks and care providers have been reminded to report all cancelled calls using the available online reporting form. This was communicated to all providers.
	Access Team	Upheld	About the lack of support a service user received following discharge from hospital. The complaint raised several concerns including mixed messages from different social care teams and delays responding to a safeguarding and then subsequent care needs.	Delays and lack of support	Processes at the front door have been streamlined to support greater responsiveness. The Community Advice and Support Team has taken on some new functions including safeguarding screening. Initially there were staffing vacancies within the new structure that contributed to delays. The errors that arose from the complaint have now been addressed both structurally and locally. The learning has also been shared more widely and at staff induction.
Children's Services					
	Special Needs Assessment Service (SNAS)	Partially Upheld	Failure to provide Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy	Service not provided	Internal supervision and performance processes to be tightened to pick up issues and team managers to be reminded to ensure they are aware of key issues or pending actions required. A full review of current commissioning arrangements for therapies has been arranged to increase the capacity to actively deliver therapy in a timely manner. The SNAS team will ensure the internal supervision and performance processes picks up these issues.
	SEND-EHCP	Partially upheld	Complaint that the SEND team did not deal promptly with request for a personal budget and the steps following the request were also not followed properly.	Poor information	The complainant should have been directed to the Local Offer which includes more information on advice and support on the request for a personal budget. The SEND team has recently undergone training at the SEND Service Day on personal budgets and internal guidance has been sent to the team.

KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD COMPLAINTS 2022/23

	Service complained about	Outcome	Summary of issue to be addressed	Learning from this complaint	Management response
	Wellbeing and Early Years	Upheld	Complaint regarding staff at a Children's Centre handling and touching son in an over familiar way, concerns about hygiene, staff behaved unprofessionally when concerns were raised.	Communication	Clear communication is essential when working with children and families and an action plan will be followed to ensure improvements are made at the Children's Centre
	Children services - MASH- Referral & Assessment	Partially upheld	Complaint about a school based social worker, and break down in communication	Consent - support - communication	Social Workers have been reminded to always discuss with parents and get written consent when they wish to carry out direct work with their children. Senior managers will work with the Social Workers in Schools Team to ensure that they are clear on this position. When parents are no longer in a relationship, professionals will reflect on how information sharing and communication with one, may be seen from the other parent's perspective. The Clinical Lead for the Service to support this piece of work.
	Special Needs Assessment Service (SNAS)	Partially upheld	Complaint about how the EHCP process has been managed, particularly regarding the naming of a school placement for their child.	Clearer communication to clarify issues before starting complaints process	At the point of acknowledging a stage 1 complaint, clarification will now be provided if there are issues that should be addressed through the First Tier Tribunal Process rather than the complaints process. We hope that this will set clearer expectations of what the complaints process can achieve and the correct routes of redress for concerns about EHCP decisions.
	Education Inclusion & Participation	Partially upheld	Poor communication and practice by the Education Welfare Service	Communication	The Education Welfare Service will review the process by which documents submitted by parents are shared and reviewed to ensure a timely response to these, particularly in cases where there are concerns in relation to the suitability of education provided. Staff will also be reminded of the importance of sending teachers reviews of provided evidence in a timely fashion.
	SEND team	Not upheld	Dissatisfaction with finding their child a 15 hours per week free nursery place entitlement and the subsequent lack of SEN support.	Delay	The SEND Team will receive further training in 2023 linked to Early Years referrals and the 15 hour entitlement for pre-school children with potential special educational needs as it is imperative that referrals are not delayed, which may impact on the individual child's 15 hour offer.
	Children's Social Services - Referral & Assessment	Partially upheld	Request to know how and when Children's services became involved with his late sister and her children and why SS chose to deal with the children's father rather than him, as he was her next of kin. Concerns about the attitude of the father and how Children's services have managed these.	Communication Failures & lack of information provision.	Reminders will be issued to appropriate staff to ensure that requests for information and issues requiring family meetings are responded to promptly to prevent escalation of issues.

KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD COMPLAINTS 2022/23

	Service complained about	Outcome	Summary of issue to be addressed	Learning from this complaint	Management response
Housing & Regeneration					
	HRD - Housing Management	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding issues with outstanding repairs, contractor appointments and communication - was not notified by contractor of a cancelled appointment, had to decorate room herself. Stage 1 complaint response sent by post rather than email.	Communication	Communication between contractors and residents to be monitored more closely and complaints to be responded to in a consistent format.
	HRD - Home Ownership Team	Partially upheld	Complaint about the way the Council has handled the Right to Buy process. Feels that the Council has hindered her from purchasing the property and caused her unnecessary anxiety and stress.	Delay	There are procedures and an up-to-date workflow system in place to ensure RTB cases meet the statutory deadlines, but it was recognised that these need to be reviewed regularly. The complaint highlighted the need for comprehensive procedures to cover instances where the Council is not the freeholder. Existing RTB procedures will be reviewed, and will include the need to ensure RTB cases referred to the District Valuer's office are always checked by a senior officer before submitting. The Legal team will be engaged earlier in the RTB process if an application is received where the Council is not the freeholder.
	HRD - Housing Management	Partially upheld	The Council has failed to maintain and carry out effective property repairs under the provisions of the lease particularly the main walls, party walls, roof, foundations, and all structural part, which has resulted in severe water ingress over the last 4 years.	Quality of service and delay	The team has been reminded of the importance of ensuring that repair orders are followed up promptly, and that they are monitored, and post inspected to ensure that they have been satisfactorily completed.
	HRD - Housing Options	Upheld	Complaint regarding severe delays in responding to correspondence & lack of explanation & clarity in Housing needs reassessments applications.	Delay	Complaint highlighted the importance of considering potential reassessments & replying to correspondence within a prompt timeframe
	HRD - Housing Management	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding on-going repair issues	Delay	It was agreed that the cracked balcony outlet could have been identified more quickly. In future, any investigations into repeated complaints of mould issues in properties should be more thorough and consider causes other than condensation.
	HRD - Housing Assessments	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding the banding awarded to a housing register application. The Council did not consider why he wanted to move to be nearer family, he was told that anyone living outside of the borough is placed in band D. He provided lots of medical information but the Council has not taken this into consideration.	Delay	Complaint highlights the importance of promptly following through with actions highlighted during the Council's complaint procedure.
	HRD - Housing Management	Upheld	Complaint about anti-social behaviour and failed duty of care by the Council	Communication and delay and record keeping	Service has been reminded of the importance of ensuring that residents are supported when investigating anti-social behaviour and that victims are regularly updated, and their correspondence promptly replied to. This will be regularly reviewed by the team to ensure that service standards are maintained moving forward.

KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD COMPLAINTS 2022/23

	Service complained about	Outcome	Summary of issue to be addressed	Learning from this complaint	Management response
	HRD - Housing Assessments and adaptations	Partially upheld	Complaint about the way the homeless application was handled including failures in: communication; lacking consideration and support; access to stored possession and a feeling of discrimination.	Customer care and time management	The complaint highlighted issues with prioritising cases. Staff dealing with homelessness to receive targeted training around the importance of customer care and effective time management to prioritise work effectively.
	HRD - Estate Management	Upheld	Complaint regarding the communal lighting	Repeated problems with lighting	Estate Services Officers have already received further instruction on the setting of both old and new model timeclocks, with practical one-to-one advice taking place. The Estate Manager has also asked that other premises visited by those officers be checked for any similar adjustments. Officers will provide as much detail as possible in future when responding at stage 1.
	HRD - Housing Management	Partially upheld	Complaint about the landlord's handling of outstanding repairs, the resident has stated that due to a leaking roof in two places, there is internal damage to 3 rooms in the property. The resident has asked for the following as a resolution to the complaint: • For the repairs to be completed. • For the rooms that have been damaged to be re decorated. • To be compensated for the cost of putting the damage right.	Delay in dealing with repairs; poor complaint handling	The Area Housing Teams and Co-operative managers have been reminded that residents should not be advised to make insurance claims when those claims have no prospect of success. Co-op Homes and the other Co-operative Managers have been reminded of how they should respond to complaints.
	HRD - Customer Services & Housing options	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding Housing Application and removal from Sheltered Housing queue erroneously.	Communication - failure to notify decisions & impact on statutory duty	Officers will be reminded of the processes in closing sheltered relief applications, should a homeless application be closed. Officers shall also be reminded to ensure that notifications are also sent to all applicants when applicable.
	HRD - Housing Services, Assessment & Housing Options	Partially Upheld	Incorrect info held regarding breakdown of joint tenancy and need for rehousing. State of temp accommodation (mould & damp) and location has had adverse effect on complainant's mental health which has impacted on family life, finances and schooling of children.	Delays and misrepresentation of facts	New staff are being trained so that they can understand the impact of, and avoid future delays being experienced when processing Housing applications.
	HRD - Housing Management	Partially Upheld	Alleges that the Housing Team are not liaising with Zurich insurance in order for the leaks in the flat above to be repaired. Conditions in the property are now a health risk due to humidity and mould growth.	Timely communication failures with insurers & lack of repair progress	Staff to be reminded of the need to update the Council's insurers in a timely fashion to ensure the insurers keep the claimant adequately informed.
	HRD - Property Management	Partially upheld	Remains unhappy that the property he leases to the council requires repairs to damp issues and can't be let until he has completed these. Feels that the Council is being heavy handed and that there was a	Communication and service delays	The manager will be raising the importance of clear and timely communication by officers in the Property Management Team to prevent similar issues in the future. They will also be reviewing the procedures around reporting and monitoring landlord repairs to make sure these are clear
Environment & Community Services					
	ECS - Parking Operations	Upheld	Complaint regarding parking suspension rules, breaches by Wandsworth Council, complaints process and Council Officer's repeated communication failures, including at senior level	Communication	The Council will review the parking bay suspension process and put stronger procedures in place to ensure contractors are meeting their agreed Service Level Agreements. Officers will be reminded of the need to respond to complaints in a timely manner, and to obtain information from colleagues in other teams where there are complaints that do not concern their service area.
	ECS - Waste management	Partially upheld	Serco failed to contact complainant to arrange a visit and discuss rubbish removal access as requested. Wandsworth staff did not arrange a visit to the property as promised. The Council did not respond to initial complaint within the 20 days. Wandsworth complaints procedure not being followed.	Monitoring and timescales not being followed	Greater monitoring of complaints submitted to the waste management team for Wandsworth is required to ensure that responses are provided in a timely manner in the future. This has been raised with the relevant service manager for action within that team.

KEY LEARNING SUMMARY FROM UPHELD AND PARTIALLY UPHELD COMPLAINTS 2022/23

	Service complained about	Outcome	Summary of issue to be addressed	Learning from this complaint	Management response
	ECS - Building Control	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding: the lack of care, breach of GDPR/confidentiality, breach of timing duties, breach of contract, distortion and false statements of facts, and not following protocol and guidelines.	Timeframes	Staff will be reminded of the need to ensure correspondence is responded to within a reasonable timeframe.
	ECS - Parking Ops & Residential Parking	Partially upheld	Complaint regarding PCNs - did not receive a reply when made enquiries about 3 PCNs, believes the parking dept has been negligent when issuing them, and no dates for events were posted to people who had parked their vehicles correctly in the vicinity.	Provision of call-backs	Staff to be reminded of the importance of providing call backs when requested.
Resources Directorate					
	Resources - Financial Services SWLFP	Partially upheld	Complainant says he was misled during a fraud investigation, and that officers had not correctly followed PACE. Interview was carried out in a threatening and aggressive manner. Documents and names were withheld, repetitive questions. He was accused of making things up. Initial response to his complaint was very late.	Complaint handling	Agreed that complaint response was sent well beyond expected response time, but main complaint that he was misled and officers had not followed correct procedure was not upheld. The service has been reminded of the importance of keeping to expected complaint response times to avoid any delays to future complaint responses. The Fraud team are to be given training on the corporate complaints procedure in the near future.
	Resources - Parking	Partially upheld	Confusion caused following differing responses to PCN challenges	Staff to follow correct protocol	Staff will be reminded of the correct protocol to be followed when handling motorist representations against PCNs issued and, the importance of adhering to the correct process.
	Resources - Financial Services SWLFP	Not upheld	The location & process used to conduct an interview under caution. Incorrect information held & used within investigation report.	Preparation	Colleagues within the investigation service will be reminded of the need to confirm that the location, setup, and temperature of any area designated for future IUCs ensures the comfort of all parties in attendance prior to the commencement of the interview.
	Resources - Revenue Services	Partially upheld	Issues regarding rent payments. Alleges that an officer provided her with the wrong details causing her to be in arrears and believes the Council should waive the outstanding amount on account as a gesture of goodwill.	Communication failures re response to emails	More robust monitoring of the delivery of the expected response timeframes to incoming emails will be maintained to assist tenants with the resolution of arrears in a more timely manner.
Chief Executive					
	Ch Exec - Community Safety	Partially upheld	Unhappy with the handling of the Community Trigger dated September 2021 that was raised by complainant and his neighbours against 2 businesses occupying their residential buildings (includes a failure to communicate and act on recommendations).	Delay and communication	Staff have been reminded of the Council's service standards, including the importance of acknowledging and ensuring residents are clear who their point of contact is for each service/team following a Panel. To prevent follow-up action being overlooked in the future, a service review resulted in the following actions being agreed: a) To increase the number of officers who are able to coordinate the ASB Case Reviews (Community Trigger) through training, this has been completed b) To undertake a review of the ASB Case Review (Community Trigger) policy and procedures.