

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time :- Wednesday, 25 October 2017 at 11.00 a.m.
Venue:- Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
Membership:- Councillors Brookes, Clark, Cowles, Cusworth, Evans, Mallinder, Napper, Sheppard, Short, Steele (Chair) Walsh and Wyatt.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 and 27 September (Pages 1 - 26)
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press
5. To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

For Discussion/Decision:-

6. Rotherham MBC Annual Report - Compliments and Complaints 2016-17 (Pages 27 - 118)
7. Sustainability Strategy for Children's Services 2016 to 2021 - Progress Report (Pages 119 - 128)
8. The Implementation of the Revised Foster Carers Payments Scheme (Pages 129 - 135)

For Information/Monitoring:-

9. Youth Cabinet/Young People's Issues
10. Work in Progress (Chairs of Select Commissions to report)
11. Call-in Issues - to consider any issues referred for call-in

12. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
13. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 11.00a.m. at Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kemp". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 6th September, 2017

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Brookes, Clark, Cowles, Evans, Napper, Sheppard, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Cusworth and Mallinder.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 AUGUST 2017

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2017 be agreed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF ANY PART OF THE AGENDA.

The Chair reported that there were no items on the agenda that would require the press or public to be excluded from the meeting.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the press or public.

36. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO POLICY FOR HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to carry out consultation on all aspects of home to school transport in Rotherham.

The Council has a statutory duty under various Acts and Guidance to provide education transport to eligible students. Home to school in Rotherham takes two main forms; the issue of passes on service buses and direct travel assistance. The Council spends approximately £3.3m per annum for 1,795 children and young people.

The report outlined benchmarking information with comparable unitary and city councils which identified that Rotherham is in the upper quartile of cost comparators, spending an average per student of £4,260. Rotherham also had the highest number of single occupancy journeys.

Based on increasing school population and number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) , it is anticipated that greater numbers of students will require transport to support attendance for educational provision. This raises the possibility of potential increased transport costs in the future.

In considering any changes to services, the policy must contribute to the Council's priority of ensuring every child has the best start in life and the following principles:

- Safeguarding
- Promoting independence
- Choice
- Maximising attendance at school and arriving at school ready to learn
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Value for money and sustainability

The proposals outlined the following options for consultation:

- General eligibility for children and young people
- Independent travel training
- Personal travel budgets
- Post 16 transport policies
- Benefits related to mobility

Consultation would be undertaken with parents and carers; children and young people, schools, the Rotherham Parents Forum and other relevant stakeholders.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

Support was given to the principle of independent travel training as a way of promoting independence and developing life skills. Assurances were sought that the independent travel training assessment reflects that level of support that the student requires based on their EHCP and in discussion with parents/carers and relevant agencies. Increasing numbers of local authorities are exploring the option of independent travel training and the use of third sector organisations to support this training was being explored;

Consultation would take place across transport providers, including taxi-providers to seek views. Parent/carers would also be consulted on the use of elements of Disability Living Allowances or mobility vehicles to encourage families to take their child to school. There would be a number of children and young people whose travel arrangements would remain unchanged, however, the intention would be that the policy would lead to greater choice and flexibility.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:-
 - That approval be given to carry out a consultation on all aspects of home to school transport in Rotherham.
 - That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet meeting in December 2017 detailing the outcome of the consultation exercise and presenting the recommended policy options for approval.
2. That the proposals for changes to the policy for Home to School Transport be submitted to this Board prior to its submission to Cabinet for decision.

37. INTRODUCTION OF A PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) FOR ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for a period of three years following consideration of the public consultation and relevant legal requirements.

Concerns had been raised by town centre businesses, the public and ward members regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Rotherham Town Centre and Clifton Park. Formal data from South Yorkshire Police has been collated to give an accurate reflection of reported incidents (824 in 2016); attached as Appendix 1. The majority of incidents (93%) take place during the day time which is likely to have a greater impact on local businesses and a larger number of people who visit or work in the town. A significant number of these reports relate to rowdy or considerate behaviour; with begging/vagrancy, vehicle nuisance and street drinking also highlighted as concerns.

Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the Act) enables local authorities to address anti-social behaviours in public places by use of a PSPO. These orders are designed to tackle the behaviour of individuals or groups where their behaviours has, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those within the locality.

Following this process, 9 prohibitions setting out behavioural boundaries were consulted on. These are as follows:

- A. Behaving in such a way or using language that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to another person.
- B. Drinking alcohol other than in a licenced premises or event.
- C. Spitting saliva or any other product from the mouth
- D. Face to face fundraising and marketing carried out by organisations without prior written permission of the Council.

- E. Failing to keep a dog on a leash and under control
- F. Using or carrying controlled drugs otherwise than in accordance with a valid prescription
- G. Littering
- H. Using a vehicle to cause a nuisance by gathering in groups, playing loud music or otherwise impacting the quality of life in the locality
- I. Urinating or defecating in a public place

These prohibitions were proposed to apply to all those living in or visiting the Town Centre and at all times and in all areas covered by the Town Centre and Clifton Park.

In order to fulfil the consultative requirements, the Council has undertaken a public consultation, which commenced on the 19th July 2017 and closed on the 16th August 2017.

The consultation was publicised using various mechanisms including online, social media and traditional print and broadcast media. Feedback was invited primarily via the Council's website, as well as inviting feedback in the form of a questionnaire and comment box.

The Community Safety Unit also undertook a range of additional activities in order to capture as many views as possible. These activities included:

- A members' seminar, held on the 1st August
- Attendance at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
- Two informal drop in sessions, one within the Town Centre and another in Riverside House reception
- Attendance at the National Citizenship Scheme (both for under 16's and 16 – 18 year olds)
- Consultation with staff and colleagues working within the area
- Attendance at the Rotherham Youth Cabinet
- Visits to 82 town centre businesses

A full breakdown of responses to the consultation was provided. In total, officers had gathered 525 responses through the various methods outlined above. Of those responses, 492 (93.7%) were in favour of the introduction of the PSPO. The online survey attracted a total of 151 respondents. Of these 126 (83%) were in favour of the order.

Following the consultation, each of the prohibitions were recommended for inclusion in the order with the exception of:

- Using or carrying controlled drugs otherwise than in accordance with a valid prescription
- Using a vehicle to cause a nuisance by gathering in groups, playing loud music or otherwise impacting the quality of life in the locality

A timetable for implementation will work towards enacting the PSPO on the 1st October 2017. Due to the risk posed by displacement of issues, with this order focussing on the Town Centre only, it is furthermore recommended that a review is scheduled for 12 months post-implementation, during October 2018.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

Concerns were raised about whether the response was sufficiently representative and the methodology underpinning the research was robust. The officer was satisfied that statutory requirements for consultation had been met and the response rate was in line with, if not better than, most public consultation exercises undertaken by the council.

Questions were asked in respect of the removal of the following prohibition of using a vehicle to cause a nuisance by gathering in groups, playing loud music or otherwise impacting the quality of life in the locality from the order. Although assurances were given that its future inclusion would be reassessed following further evidence gathering and consultation, it was felt that this prohibition should be included in the current order.

Enforcement of the order would be carried out by defined personnel, including police constables, Police Community Safety Officer and designated RMBC staff or external agencies. Assurances were sought that guidance would be issued to all enforcement agencies to ensure that breaches to the orders and issuing of any fines were dealt with consistently and transparently.

Concerns were expressed about the vulnerability of many of the people who may be subject to this order, particularly in respect of street drinking or disorderly behaviour; further to this would the order displace this problem to other parts of the borough. Assurances were given that individuals would be referred to appropriate agencies for further support – e.g. mental health service. The 12 month review would establish if the order had displaced prohibited behaviours to other parts of the borough outside of the defined area.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported, subject to the following insertion being made:
 - That the condition of using a vehicle to cause a nuisance by gathering in groups, playing loud music or otherwise impacting the quality of life in the locality (as outlined in Paragraph 7.8) be included in the Order.

- That a single code of practice in respect of enforcement activity and issuing of penalties be adopted by the Council or any external body undertaking these functions on behalf of the Council.

2. That the post-implementation 12 month review be submitted to this Board for consideration.

38. SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Superintendent Steve Chapman (Operating Superintendent – South Yorkshire Police) with Sam Barstow, Head of Community Safety, Resilience and Emergency Planning, introduced the Annual Report on behalf of the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP).

The Annual Report provides a high level overview of SRP activity over the year; listing its priorities over the previous twelve months.

Details were provided of the in-depth reviews undertaken to provide assurance that the partnership was working effectively. This has included a thorough review of domestic abuse cases, which examined how individual cases had been handled and areas of improvement. The SRP has also undergone a peer review by Blackburn with Darwin Council. This review provided a high level of assurance as to how the partnership works. Areas of improvement included joint commissioning and engaging with communities.

Continued work across partners to address anti-social behaviour has led to a further reduction by 6% during 2016-17, which is in contrast to most other geographical areas. The Partnership has identified a number of areas of improvement including joint-working processes and shared risk management. Although there is an overall reduction, there are types of ASB where there has been an increase, including environmental ASB and arson incidents.

South Yorkshire Police, along with other members of the partnership, are strengthening and enhancing community policing within Rotherham. Neighbourhood Policing in Rotherham provides communities with teams of dedicated, local police officers together with police community support officers, who listen to and work with the public, community groups, partner agencies and businesses to reduce crime, protect the vulnerable and enhance community safety through problem-solving approaches. The Council are also looking to drive this development through the way its services are delivered with the hope of implementing a neighbourhood working model in line with partners.

The area of domestic abuse has also been subject to intensive scrutiny by Councillors, Commissioners and partners alike. This work has identified gaps in terms of the strategic direction of this priority, the partnership focus and the need to work better together both operationally and in respect of commissioning.

The following areas of improvement have been identified:

- A joint strategy being pulled together across the partnership
- A single process for people suffering domestic abuse being developed (RMBC)
- A proposal developed for a perpetrator programme across the county
- A significant improvement plan undertaken by Police following an inspection report

A bid for £1.3m of government funds was made during the last financial year in order to help the Partnership address community tensions. This bid was successful and plans are in motion to put resources in place to begin delivery. The data at the end of this report shows a significant increase in hate crime reporting (37%). This is something that can also be seen nationally, to varying levels. During the financial year 2016/17, there were 138 hate crime awareness raising meetings and events delivered by the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) Hate Crime Coordinator and other partners. These sessions were delivered to partner agencies, voluntary and community sector organisations and communities. These aimed to build public confidence to report hate crimes and incidents to the Police.

Outcomes for victims of CSE increased by 15% for 2016 – 17. A number of police and partner operations have been taking place to identify those at risk, alongside locations. Partners have also been continuing to strengthen referral processes and partnership working practices. Services continue to develop positive relationships with those they work with as can be seen by the feedback provided. Additional work also includes;

- New multiagency plan based on reviews/learning events
- 8 convictions for 16 CSE offences in November 2016
- Prosecution for online contacts and CSE offences

It was outlined that Rotherham has seen 15% increase in crime (compare with a 19% increase across South Yorkshire). The increase was attributed to the standardised way in which data was being collated. For example, incidents which were recorded previously as ASB are now recorded as crime.

The quality of investigations and satisfaction levels were identified as key areas of improvement. The level of confidence in SYP's visibility and engagements has decreased but it was felt that changes to neighbourhood policing would improve this. A clear focus was improving victim care, including the standard and timeliness of feedback to victims of crime.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

Concerns were expressed at the layout of the report, accessibility of its language for the general public and level of detail. A suggestion was made that contact details, linked to priorities, should be included in future reports to assist the public to report incidents. A request was made to report crime/ASB statistics over a longer period to identify trends (for example a five year period) with information broken down at a ward level

Questions were asked about the non-attendance of SRP members and if there were barriers which hindered their participation and engagement. A commitment was given to exploring this further.

Whilst there had been an average increase of 15%, concerns were raised that there were areas where the increases were significantly higher; particularly in the area of sexual offences. This was viewed as a positive development as it indicated increased reporting of incidents. However, repeat incidents continued to be a concern. New developments such as cyber-crime, were showing an increase. In respect of hate crime relating to ethnicity, over 80% of reported incidents were experienced by people from the BME communities in Rotherham.

Concerns were raised about the timeliness of responses to 101 calls and the ability of the police to respond to reports of anti-social off-road biking. Assurances were given of improvements to the 101 services and details outlined of how agencies tackle nuisance off-road biking.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That consideration be given to including contact details for support services and ensuring that the language and layout are accessible in future SRP annual reports.
3. That a further report be provided detailing key areas of SRP improvement and performance; with a breakdown of data at a ward level and crime/ASB trends over a five year period.

- 39. TO DETERMINE ANY ITEM WHICH THE CHAIRMAN IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items that required the Board's consideration at the meeting.

- 40. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:-

That the next scheduled meeting be held on Wednesday 27 September 2017 at 11.00a.m.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 27th September, 2017

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Brookes, Cowles, Cusworth, Evans, Mallinder, Napper, Short and Walsh.

Also in attendance were:- Councillors Alam, Beck, Read and Roche.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Clark, Sheppard and Wyatt.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

2. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting.

3. COUNCIL PLAN 2017/18 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Leader of the Council detailing performance against the targets and priorities within the Corporate Plan 2017-18 for the first quarter of the year from 1st April to 30th June, 2017.

The Performance Report and Performance Scorecard, set out in Appendices A and B to the report, provided an analysis of the Council's current performance against 14 key delivery outcomes and 72 measures. The report was based on the current position of available data, along with an overview of progress on key projects and activities which also contributed towards the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

It was noted that, at the end of the first quarter (April – June 2017), 27 measures had either met or had exceeded the target set in the Corporate Plan. Although this represented only 37.5% of the total number of measures in the Plan, it equated to 47.4% of the total number of indicators where data was available or where targets had been set. A total of 16 (27.6% of those measured in the quarter) performance measures had not hit their target for the year (22.2% overall).

The Leader made reference to the mixed performance headlines which were set out clearly as part of the report and appendices.

Members took the opportunity to review the performance report, narrative and data and identified a number of areas for questioning, which included:-

- There appeared to be no marked improvement with progress remaining steadfastly below 50%. What was the Strategic Leadership Team's view of the progress of performance indicators, was this being taken seriously and why was the Council settling for a "mixed bag" for progress.

It was explained the Council was at that point of its improvement journey. Easier targets could have been set, but measures had been identified across a range of Council measures. The Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet Members met and discussed performance on a regular basis with a decision made, based on the end of year report, that a forensic piece of work would be undertaken with Strategic and Assistant Directors of each measure that was off track establishing interventions/additional support required etc. There was no complacency.

- Why was Early Help Service not impacting on the numbers of Looked After Children, Children in Need and Children on Child Protection?

It was noted there was some impact being seen; as of yesterday the Children In Need numbers, where you would expect to see the biggest impact of Early Help, had reduced to 1400, a decrease of approximately 300. Early Help co-worked in a number of Social Care cases. There were a range of different projects that would impact on the Edge of Care on care numbers. The investments put in place were starting to impact but not sufficiently to register in the first quarter figures.

There was a new process in place in which cases were stepped up or down between Early Help and Social Care and would see an impact in a more positive way so Social Care only working with families that would benefit from Social Work Service and were legally required to provide Social Care Service. It would also be expected to impact upon the repeat Child Protection referral figures.

- Was there any evidence to suggest that there was a link between Fixed Term Exclusions and the length of time for EHCPs to be completed?

There was no obvious link, but this would be investigated further.

With an ever increasing number of Academies it became more difficult for the Authority to become involved in their performance unless it was a school of concern, however, the majority were quite happy to work with the service. Where the Authority had the right to intervene the service was making a difference.

- **1.C1 Smoking – what work was being done to move the framing of this term of reference to nicotine consumption rather than smoking?

There was a myth out there that e-cigarettes were a safe alternative – they were still a health risk. Consideration had not yet been given to changing the definition, but this would be discussed with the Strategic Director. Work was taking place in chunks to make it manageable to encourage people to stop smoking in pregnancy.

From Public Health point of view the first thing was to address nicotine and any addiction. Any measures to tackle tobacco use must also consider illicit tobacco and the amount of chemicals contained within. This was a challenging target and nicotine replacement still needed to be provided during the weaning process.

- Was there anything that could be done to tackle the increasing number of young people smoking?

The whole thrust of Adult Social Care, Public Health, and the CCG was prevention. The figure went down to 12.1% last year. One of the reasons why this was so challenging was budget pressures. The service had been reduced as much as it could be and discussions had taken place with the team looking to see if savings could be made elsewhere.

To prevent more people taking up smoking action needed to be targeted at more deprived areas. Young people were more likely to start if others smoked in the household. Consistent work was needed in schools alongside retailers to prevent any underage sales and counterfeits.

- How far behind local comparators were Rotherham in terms of reductions in drug and alcohol treatment in opiate and non-opiate drug therapies and how was that exacerbating the problem?

For the full year Rotherham was red on opiate users due to people having been through treatment and not re-entered treatment for at least six months. There was no local target and the aim was that people that been addicted to opiates and been through the whole treatment process and not re-entered the service for six months. This had been successful, but had since decreased. There was increased performance monitoring and a great deal more work with GP shared care and monitoring of vulnerable substance users on supervised consumption of methodone etc.

- What were the key risks to 2.B3 (number of people provided with information and advice at first point of contact) being off target.

Overall the performance for Adult Social Care was good, but continued to face demanding pressures. Response had been positive, but had created a backlog of unallocated work, which was being addressed to progress this forward.

Positive actions in the Improvement Plan included reviewing the Single Point of Access team. Changes had already been in place including additional social care and occupational staff in order to provide an improved and speedy response.

- Increase of the living wage and the potential for increased costs for home care.

The Government's Living Wage initiative put additional pressure on care homes and the need for additional funding.

Domiciliary care workers were paid hourly rates and changes had been made to sleeping arrangements for 24 hour supported living. Where previously staff were paid a flat rate, the national minimum wage now applied.

- What other activities were the Council undertaking to bring different communities together to make one big strong community.

A partnership programme of work had commenced "Building Stronger Communities" which stimulated opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together. The small grants programme supported small voluntary sector organisations and different groups in facilitating and attending events, opening doors and facilitating interaction.

A bid had also been successful from the Government's "Control Migration" fund which would assist a number of schemes that dealt with various issues and allowed for children coming together. Further information could be provided.

- 3.A5 - Rotherham survey on satisfaction levels which depicted a 66% of residents satisfied with their local area and where they lived, as opposed to 34% who were not satisfied. Were there any national statistics to compare?

The survey had been funded by the LGA and whilst there had been some freedom on the questions none were potentially indicators. The responses were split into three areas – very satisfied, quite satisfied or neutral.

Nationally the LGA had aggregated the figures and areas were not always fairly compared.

- 3.12 – How many incidents of hate crime had been reported.

No actual figures were to hand, but this would be followed up and confirmed.

- 4.A7 – Narrowing the gap on the rate of the working age population economically active in the borough. Was this target achievable and what action had been done to achieve this.

The target was set to reduce economic inactivity. This was a challenging figure due to the vulnerable cohort as this was much wider than the Council itself and required a partnership approach.

Terri Roche was the lead for this work as part of a Sheffield City Region internal working group looking how to support people back into the job market.

Agencies and voluntary based services and the Local Implementation Board were reviewing cases and how vulnerable people could best be helped. This was not an easy piece of work due to the different people involved and the policy changes longer term.

- 4.B1 – Was the number of new homes delivery during this year on target given that only 130 had been built so far.

The target was reliant on property developers, but site cluster proposals had been agreed committing the Council's resources to deliver new housing across seven sites and a further 250 homes were soon to be delivered at Waverley.

The Local Plan would also be on line next year when swathes of land would be released with the target increasing to 900 new homes with a 10% increase year on year.

Whilst there were no national figures to compare with Rotherham on a South Yorkshire basis the figures were similar with Doncaster being slightly ahead.

Rotherham was ahead of the game in terms of its Local Plan proposals and a surge of housing applications may come forward. People working in Sheffield may seek accommodation in Rotherham which could bring value and wealth into this area.

In delivering housing growth there was a need to work with the developers in delivering affordable housing.

A development summit was also to be held on the 11th October, 2017 at New York Stadium inviting developers to discuss the delivery of new homes, improve investor confidence and to work in partnership.

Further consideration would also need to be given to land and staffing capacity and the utilisation of resources. The Government's own growth agenda included additional monies for shared ownership

and how the housing infrastructure could further be resourced through the Housing Revenue Account.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to stimulate housing development as this was reliant on the land available and the viability of delivery.

- 4.B3 – With regards to selective licensing 223 houses had been inspected in the first quarter and how many had been done in total.

This figure had changed significantly and further work was now taking place on inspections. The selection licensing scheme had now been running for two years and was improving management standards.

In other areas more active enforcement had been effective.

- Where did a bad tenant go.

Support was provided, where required, for matters related to tenant displacement. There was no single solution for assisting or resolving matters related to dysfunctional communities.

- How were complaints being dealt with and whether there was a need for further training.

A detailed report was scheduled to be submitted to the next meeting on complaints and would deal with complaints at Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Additional training was provided for people dealing with complaints and responding to customers.

One of the areas concerned was around the percentage of complaints closed within the timescale which was not being progressed in accordance with the target set. This was as a result of some complexities in the complaints received. Further work was taking place on understanding the nature of the complaint and how best to address the issues.

- How far off target were the completion of PDR's.

Q1 was on target at 95% and the appraisals were not just a tick box exercise and concentrated more on values. This was to ensure the process was more improved. The reasons for why the target was not 100% was due to sickness and where people had left the authority. Currently the figure was at 96% and on return from sick leave PDR's were undertaken.

- What steps were being taken to manage sickness given the budget pressures and changes to services.

A target had been set of 10.3 days lost FTE. Currently performance was at 10.41, which was an improvement on last year's figure of 10.97. Progress was being made and training had been provided to managers on managing sickness and helping staff return to work.

- What were other Local Authorities' targets for sickness.

Rotherham benchmarked itself against CIPD around 10 days per FTE. In the public sector the average was 10.6 FTE. A detailed report had been presented to the Strategic Leadership Team on the current position.

- 5.C5 – expectation of payment of bills on line from 2018.

Residents would not be expected to complete all online payments alone without support. Visitors to Riverside were assisted through the process. A further report would be brought outlining specific areas of what was moving online and the expectations in the future.

Benefit claims had a different verification process to payment of bills to minimise risk. Safeguards were in place to minimise fraud and some calls were recorded and monitored.

For those customers not able to fill forms out online there was still the opportunity to be supported in Riverside House or even in their own home to streamline the process. Services were being moved more to self-service and direct debit.

Resolved:- (1) That officers be thanked for their attendance and information today and the overall position and direction of travel in relation to performance be noted.

(2) That consideration be given to measures which have not progressed in accordance with the target set and the actions required to improve performance, including future performance clinics

(3) That the performance repotting timetable for 2017/18 be noted.

(4) That a further report on online transactions be submitted to the Board in due course.

4. JULY 2017/18 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the financial position for the Revenue Budget at the end of July, 2017 based on actual costs and income for the first four months of 2017/18 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year.

It was reported that, as at July 2017, the Council had a forecast overspend on General Fund of £3.4m. The majority of the £24m budget

savings approved within the 2017/18 were being achieved, with £11.9m of those savings were directorate budget savings. However, it was reported that, in addition to those budget savings, directorates also had to achieve £5.4m of budget savings in 2017/18 which were agreed in previous budgets. Total directorate savings for 2017/18 therefore were £17.3m. The current position indicated that around £5.2m of those total savings were at risk of not being achieved in the current financial year (and were reflected in the current overspend projection).

It was further reported that work would continue to identify alternative or additional savings in order to maintain a balanced budget position. Management actions would also continue to address areas of overspend. The overall budget position would continue to be monitored closely with regular updates on progress in maintaining a balanced budget position reported regularly through financial monitoring reports.

The forecast overspend should be set against a backdrop of the Council having successfully addressed cost pressures of £138m over the last six financial years and having to save a further £24m in the current year and to deliver an additional £42m in efficiencies and savings in the following two financial years in order to balance the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget by 2019/20.

It was noted that a significant in-year pressure of £6.460m on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block continued to be an issue. A recovery strategy set in place last year would, however, resolve £3m of the deficit and mitigate the in-year pressure through a series of measures including: a revised Special School funding model; a review of high cost out of authority education provision with a view to reducing cost and moving children back into Rotherham provision where possible; and a review of inclusion services provided by the Council. Whilst the pressure would not directly affect the Council's financial position, it was considered imperative that the recovery strategy was implemented in order to address the position and avoid any risk to the Council in the future.

Control over spending was critical to maintaining a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy and avoiding unplanned spending impact on the Council's reserves. All services would continue to develop mitigating actions and alternative savings to compensate for financial pressures and delays in delivering the full amount of savings.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Some of the savings achieved during the financial year were not achieved in the areas as previously agreed as part of the budget exercise.
- Savings would not be achieved due to the delay of the Phase 2 restructure of Early Help.

- Work was taking place on “fine tuning” the joint ‘Fusion Centre’ bid for Government funding. There was still confidence that the Children’s element of the bid would be successful, but this could be affected by any Government Ministerial post changes. If unsuccessful it would have to be managed through normal services but with consideration as to how compliance would be achieved, the length of time to process work, statutory thresholds.
- Where the NCA had concerns these were thoroughly investigated to ensure protection of the children concerned.
- The money being sought through the bid was nowhere near enough for what would have to be put into services.
- Currently there were insufficient education placements for the children with significant needs. The Sufficiency Strategy was under review aiming to better map children with significant educational needs and with a view to the commissioning of additional placements.
- The consultation on the Early Years restructure would commence in January, 2018. The estimated cost of the delay was approximately £175,000.
- The further delays on achieving budget savings in respect of Care Enabling within Extra Care Housing and the review of Rothercare and Assistive Technology provision.
- Savings to be re-profiled to ensure they were achieved and where this as not possible plans put in place to ensure savings were achieved from other projects or new pieces of work.
- Numbers of children in high cost out of authority education provision.
- Sufficiency strategy and special education provision.
- Pupil projections and the numbers of available places.
- Consultation process for Early Years commencing in January, 2018.

Resolved:- (1) That the current forecast overspend for 2017/18 of £3.4m be noted.

(2) That management actions be noted and they continue to be developed to address areas of overspend and to identify alternative and additional savings to mitigate shortfalls in achieving planned savings in 2017/18.

(3) That the detailed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Recovery Strategy

be noted which will transfer £3m in 2017/18 to reduce the forecast High Needs Block deficit and mitigate the in-year pressure through a series of measures has been set in place.

(4) That the current forecast outturn position on the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 and 2018-2022 be noted.

5. ADULT SOCIAL CARE - BUDGET UPDATE

Councillor Roche, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, supported by Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director for Adult Care and Housing, introduced the report which highlighted the budget pressures and actions being taken in relation to the Adult Social Care budget.

There was a forecast overspend of £5.169m against a net revenue budget of £62.675m for Adult Social Services. The main budget pressures were due to the increase in demand for services mainly in respect of direct payments, domiciliary and residential care plus anticipated shortfall in delivering the 2017/18 budget savings within the current financial year.

One of the main budget savings measures identified was the continued review of out of area and high cost care packages across all services to identify opportunities to reduce costs and rigorously pursue all Continuing Health Care funding applications with the Clinical Commissioning Group. Any change to an individual care package required by law a reassessment of need and, therefore, a systems change would take time if sustainable change was to take place and a planned approach required.

Budget meetings were held with senior managers to review in detail the budget forecasts, monitor demographic pressures, to identify further savings opportunities and to mitigate pressures. Options being considered towards the recovery of the current overspend included:-

- A detailed review of all expenditure within in-house provider services.
- Review of Direct Payments including auditing of individual bank accounts with the aim of clawing back any accumulated surpluses.
- Further review of all budgets across the Directorate to determine any expenditure that could be either stopped, delayed or reduced to mitigate the impact of in year budget pressures.
- Vacancy management which was not integral to the improvement plan.
- Strengthening the process for Continuing Health Care (CHC) to enable income to be recovered more efficiently.
- Target the new teams to where there could be cost avoidance and monitor the impact to develop better value personalised care.

Progress continued on the delivery of the Adult Services Improvement Programme to improve the current practice and processes and increase capacity to support frontline pressures and additional reports on a range

of options for future service delivery, including consultation with service users and carers.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The residential and nursing care budgets including a mixture of residential, nursing and supported living the latter due to clients moving into supported living and never moving on. A dedicated piece of work was required in the future with regard to encouraging providers to help people live independently.
- Clarification of the Direct Payment budget pressures was part of the £60M budget and was not separate. This was part of the assessment of a client to assess their level of need, ascertain their indicative budget and how they would like to receive services. Some would chose a domiciliary package and others would want Direct Payments to choose how their services was provided. It was coded differently because of the indicators that had to be counted.
- Adult Care faced an increase in demand for services with an ageing population and Rotherham was likely to increase about the national average. The vision of Adult Social Care was, that despite the elderly adult numbers rising, the numbers going into institutionalised care should reduce.
- It was a statutory requirement that the Health and Wellbeing Board consider the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Partnership working with commissioning with the TRFT and CCG KPMG on cohort segmentation across Health and Social Care and the Borough would also identify the JSNA to give demography trends in conjunction with the Council Plan.
- Although the assessment for Continuing Health Care funding was a joint assessment with the Local Authority sitting on the Panel, it was a Health decision. There needed to be improved robust and stronger processes to bring the funding in quicker once it was agreed and work was taking place with that aim currently.
- The situation and Recovery Strategy were being monitored. There was now a new overall action plan for Adult Social Care as well as an impending refresh of the vision of Adult Social Care.
- The savings target for this year and some of last year were not met in relation mainly to Learning Disabilities. Work was being carried out in terms of re-profiling when those savings were likely to come through with scenario building in relation to activity. The Interim Assistant Director had been tasked with pushing some of the projects but they would be reliant upon individual assessments. The Authority was also working with, and had oversight from, the LGA's national lead on Risk and Finances. A meeting had been held

recently to consider Rotherham's saving proposals and he was very clear that the Service had to re-profile; he considered them to be achievable but not in terms of how they were currently profiled. He considered that there were flexibilities as the budget currently stood and would be able to deliver a good Adult Social Care but some of the "legacy" issues needed to be sorted and would provide a much more efficient Adult Care Service.

- As part of the improved Better Care Fund the Authority, alongside Health colleagues, in terms of areas of work where the impact of Winter Pressures could be mitigated. This included investment further in Social Prescribing, Age UK front door at A&E, a contingency for Winter Pressures within the IBCS and Interim Director attendance at the A&E Delivery Board.
- Public Health work with Directorates with respect to all frontline workers receiving vouchers for flu jabs. It had also been agreed that work would take place with providers to ascertain if the voucher scheme could be extended.

Resolved:- (1) That the latest financial forecast against budget for 2017/18 and the progress being made to mitigate the budget pressures be noted.

(2) That the Chairman of this Board and Chairman of the Health Select Commission meet with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and the Strategic Director for Adult Social Care and Housing and relevant officers to discuss future reporting of the budget.

6. DAY CARE AND TRANSPORT CHARGES

Further to Minute No. 113 of the Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making meeting held on 14th November, 2016, Councillor Roche, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, together with Anne-Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care and Housing, presented an update on the impact of the original increase to £15 per session in January, 2017.

There were currently 373 customers accessing a learning disability day centre provision which had remained unchanged since the increase was introduced as from January, 2017. There were currently 222 customers who did not financially contribute towards their support needs and 151 who contributed an amount based on their individual financial assessment. 18 customers paid the full charge for their day care totals and who would see the greatest impact of any further increase in charge.

The actual cost of a day care placement ranged from £50 to £60 per session and this was reflective across internal and external providers for day care provision.

Whilst the previous report agreed the increase of the charges over a period of time there would be a requirement to remind customers, family carers and the services affected of any further increase in charges.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The proposed increase, as part of the budget process, would result in per session being £30.
- Other authorities charged between £28 and £40 per session so would be less than other authorities. Consideration had not been given as yet to linking the charges to inflation.
- A user of the service would not pay if they had savings/earnings less than £23,250; the majority of users did not pay.
- A further report would be provided, following the closing of the Learning Disability Service consultation, to ascertain how many users had stopped using the Service following the increased charge.

Resolved:- That the impact of the increase in day care charges in January, 2017, be noted.

7. **REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE - FEES AND CHARGES - PROGRESS IN RESPECT OF FULL COST RECOVERY**

In accordance with Minute No. 189 of the 13th March, 2017, Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making meeting, Damien Wilson, Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment, presented an update on progress regarding the full cost recovery in respect of the Regeneration and Environment Directorate fees and charges.

The update set out progress made towards setting charges to ensure full cost recovery as well as the impact of changes to Pest Control fees and charges which had been an area of concern.

In terms of the specific service areas it was noted:-

Planning and Building Control Service – A new charge has been introduced from July 2017 in respect of property addressing, on the basis of covering the cost of officer working hours, correspondence with relevant authorities and officiated bodies, production of plans and integration of naming and numbering into the Council's GIS systems. As this was a new charge, take-up was being assessed and would help mitigate the £12k shortfall on the budget.

Property Search Fees – These were as a result of changes through the Law Society. The new fees reflected the additional questions and an assessment of the extra officer time required and were based on the actual cost of providing and maintaining the information, as directed by

the Local Authorities (England) (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008. The increase in charges had impacted on the number of customers using the service and work was ongoing to increase the customer base. Currently a £25k shortfall against the budget is being reported.

Building Regulation Charges – This service was self-funding with no current pressures.

Community Protection Charges – The service was subject to different charges following a re-structure how it charged for some services.

Customer Services – Registration Services – The demand for Registration Services was difficult to predict. Currently a £14k pressure was being reported in the Financial Monitoring Report in respect of this Service, due to a reduced number of bookings in the calendar currently.

Business Regulation Charges – These were on track with no pressure.

Pest Control Fees – Pest control fees in 2017/18 were increased across a range of pest control services including rats, mice, moles, fleas, cockroaches and wasps nests.

Development of fees and charges for the 2018/19 financial year were currently being developed as part of the 2018/19 budget savings proposals and would be submitted to the February, 2018 Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making meeting.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Clarification of the position with regard to the payment of Council tenants for the removal of rats from properties.
- Need for key messages that could be conveyed to the public with regard to the feeding of birds etc. that attracted rats .
- Pricing structure for the treatment of bedbugs changing from an hourly rate to a fixed charge for a maximum of 4 treatments.
- Numbers of rats inside/outside properties. There was significant variance between the years, but this was dependent upon the seasons.
- No noticeable drop when the increased charges had been introduced in 2015/16 with the same level of interest. There had been no complaints/Freedom of Information requests leading to the conclusion that the charges had had very little impact.
- Service charges applied by the Council were very competitive with external exterminator companies

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the update on fees and charges be noted.

(2) That the progress made towards full cost recovery in respect of Regeneration and Environment fees and charges be noted.

8. ROTHERHAM CONSTRUCTION PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Consideration was given to the report presented by Damien Wilson, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, which provided an update on the RCP Framework awarded on 23rd May 2017.

Background information was provided the Council's building construction procured through the YORbuild framework which was used for small scale projects.

The Council's own approved lists (for building works up to £150k and mechanical and electrical works up to £500k) expired in May 2016. As such there was no alternative in place as a fall-back to using the YORbuild framework without issuing open tenders.

In terms of marketing the framework, so far meetings have been held with the University of Sheffield, Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. The feedback so far has been positive and there was a will to procure from the framework should a suitable project be identified. Discussions have also taken place with St. Leger Homes and internal colleagues in Neighbourhoods to promote the use of the Rotherham Construction Partnership framework.

A marketing strategy was to be worked up including a brochure that highlighted the advantage to clients in using the framework and also to promote the other available trading services within Asset Management and the Council as a whole.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

9. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

A meeting was to be arranged with the Youth Cabinet with regard to the recent Children's Commissioner takeover day and their recommendations around transport.

A full update would be submitted in November, 2017.

10. WORK IN PROGRESS

Improving Places Select Commission

Councillor Mallinder reported that since the last meeting Improving Places

had:-

- Met with Cabinet Members Beck, Hoddinott and Lelliott to look at work the Select Commission had in progress and to check that it followed Rotherham Plan.
- Work with Asset Management was ongoing.
- Looking at targets of savings and closer relationship with regard to budget working.
- A report containing fifteen recommendations was to be submitted to this Board from Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group.
- The new Emergency Plan was to be submitted to the Select Commission to see how it referred to the Task and Finish Group's fifteen recommendations.
- There was potential for holding an information day to look at housing issues and for the Commission to pick out certain items that it could then talk to officers about.
- Councillor Mallinder and Councillor Cusworth had attended an information day on how to use data and turn that into performance management.
- Councillor Mallinder and Councillor Cusworth had attended a scrutiny meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs in London to look at forward ways of incorporating into Scrutiny.
- A report back from Dignity was still awaited.

Improving Lives Select Commission

Councillor Cusworth reported that since the last meeting there had been discussion on:-

- Domestic Abuse for which progress appeared to be made.
- The Chair had presented a report on alternative management arrangements for Children's Services.
- CYPS Quarter 1 performance.
- Educational provision for special educational needs and disabilities.
- Future consideration would be given to the Regional Adoption Agency, more detail on the Direct School Grants and High Needs Block, Home to School Transport and attention on Complex Abuse.

Health Select Commission

Councillor Evans reported that since the last meeting there had been discussion on:-

- Adult People and Older Peoples' Mental Health Transformation.
- Care Co-ordination Centre and Initial Rapid Response Team.
- Overview of RDaSH Care Group Transformation.
- Delayed Transfers of Care.
- New National Ambulance Standards.
- The next meeting would look at the evaluation of School's Mental

Health Pilot and the Scrutiny Review of CAMHS.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

11. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN

No issues had been referred for call-in.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Wednesday, 11th October, 2017 at 11.00 a.m.

Summary Sheet

Name of Committee and Date of Committee Meeting
Overview & Scrutiny Management Board – 25 October 2017

Report Title

Rotherham MBC Annual Report – Compliments and Complaints 2016-17

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

This is not a key decision

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Stuart Purcell, Performance and Improvement Officer
01709 822661 or stuart.purcell@rotherham.gov.uk

Jackie Mould, Head of Performance, Intelligence and Improvement
01709 823618 or jackie.mould@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

The Council's Annual Report - Compliments and Complaints 2016/17 (hereafter referred to as 'the annual report') sets out information about complaints made to the Council under the Corporate Complaints Procedure, Housing Complaint Procedure and the Adult and Children's Services Complaint Regulations.

It also sets out information on compliments received about council services across adults, children's, housing regeneration and environment.

It provides analysis on the particular trends in the complaints received, by service area, and in terms of the timescales in which responses were provided; as well as about the escalation of complaints.

It also highlights examples of key learning points from the complaints received, which have been used over the last year in regular reports to senior managers to address or correct any mistakes and improve services or procedures as a result.

Recommendations

That the content and key messages of the Annual Report – Compliments and Complaints 2016/17 be noted, including in particular the proposed service and performance improvement actions for 2017/18; and provide any further comments on areas for further and continuous improvement which can be delivered in partnership with service teams and members moving forward.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix – RMBC Annual Report – Compliments and Complaints 2016-17

Background Papers

Nil

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham MBC Annual Complaint report 2016-17

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the content and key messages of the Annual Report – Compliments and Complaints 2016/17 be noted, including in particular the proposed service and performance improvement actions for 2017/18; and provide any further comments on areas for further and continuous improvement which can be delivered in partnership with service teams and members moving forward.

2. Background

- 2.1 All councils need to provide complaint procedures to respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales.
- 2.2 The annual report details how the Council has responded to complaints and customer feedback in line with the Rotherham MBC complaints procedures and customer care standards during 2016/17. These complaints and associated processes for managing them allow the Council to monitor performance and provide customers with clear expectations with regard to how their complaint will be responded to.
- 2.3 The annual report explains how the Council has performed against these standards and how it has learnt and improved the services it provides. In addition the report provides a summary of the compliments received by the council for each service area and examples of good practice.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The annual report presents information about complaints made to the council between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 under the Corporate Complaints Procedure, Housing Complaint Procedure and the Adult and Children's Services Complaint Regulations.
- 3.2 The figures in the report include details of the number of complaints received, numbers of compliments received, and information on those complaints that have escalated to be considered by the relevant Ombudsman. The information includes detailed breakdowns of complaints and enquiries received for each Council Directorate.
- 3.3 The key headlines of the report can be summarised as follows:
 - i. Overall, **the number of complaints received by the Council increased significantly by 304 (44%) from the 695 received in 2015-16, to 999**. This compares to **692** received in 2014-15. However, it should be noted that the number of complaints classified as informal significantly reduced from **594** in 2015-16 to **275 (54% decrease – please see page 5 paragraph 20 of the appended complaint report for an explanation regarding the change in classification)**. The combined figures for all complaints (informal and formal) received in 2016-17 was **1274, a decrease of just 15 (1%)** on the 1289 received in 2015-16.

- ii. **Overall 80% of all complaints were responded to within the required timescales, which means that 2015-16 performance was maintained despite the increase in formal complaints.** It should be noted that the 2016-17 Corporate Plan set the Council a target of responding to at least **85%** of complaints within the required timescales and performance is reported and tracked quarterly.
- iii. The percentage of complaints upheld reduced slightly from 21% in 2015-16 to 20% in 2017-18. In addition, **fewer complaints were escalated** to further stages (4%, or 38, compared to 6%, or 45, escalated in 2015-16) indicating that more complainants were satisfied with initial responses. 29 complaints were referred to the Ombudsman compared to 30 in 2015-16, with 9 upheld compared to 8 in 2015-16.
- iv. In terms of the specific Ombudsman cases there was an increase **in the amount of financial remediation** awards: up to £15,060 from £12,000, most of which related to reimbursed overpayments or incorrect fees.
- v. The council has seen an increase in the number of compliments received across services areas: 908 were recorded in 2016/17 compared to 604 in 2015-16.

3.4 Further performance results, from April 2016 to March 2017, can be summarised as follows:

- i. Slightly more complaints for Adult Services received, at **90** (76 received in 2015-16). An increase in compliments from 59 last year to 337 in 2016-17.
- ii. More complaints for Housing and Neighbourhood Services, at 368 (268 received in 2015-16). An increase in compliments from 97 last year to 114 in 2016/17.
- iii. More complaints for Finance and Customer services at **91** (39 in 2015-16). The service received 17 compliments, an increase from 5 in 2015-16.
- iv. Slightly more complaints for Children and Young People's Services, at **222** (204 received 2015-16). Compliments have increased from 72 last year to 84 in 2016/17.
- v. More complaints for Regeneration and Environment at **239** (108 in 2015-16). The number of compliments increased from 371 last year to 414 in 2016/17.

4. Options considered and recommended proposals

- 4.1 The format of the Annual Report broadly follows those published in previous years. It provides an overall summary of performance across the entire Council, followed by themed summaries of performance by Directorate, including more detailed annexes for each Directorate.

- 4.2 All Councils are required to provide complaint procedures to respond to customers' concerns in an open and transparent way and within defined timescales. These procedures are informed by the relevant local government legislation and differ depending on the service area in question.
- 4.3 Rotherham Council's standards and procedures are made available to the public on the website – see www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200025/complaints - and allow the Council to monitor performance and provide customers with clear expectations regarding how their complaint will be handled.
- 4.4 The Council has four established procedures covering: Corporate Complaints, Housing Complaints, Adult Services and Children's Services. These set out what customers should expect in terms of when their issues will be acknowledged, how they will be contacted to get all relevant information, when they should expect a response, and what they can do if they remain dissatisfied. A summary of these procedures are in Table 1 below:

Table1: Overview of the four complaints procedures adopted by the Council¹:

Service Area / Procedure	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Children and young People's Services (statutory process)	Line/Service Manager response – within 10 working days where possible (or within 20 days for most complex cases)	Investigation by person independent of the Council - with response issued within 25 working days (or, for most complex cases, within 65 working days)	Independent Complaints Review Panel – may take up to 50 working days to reach a conclusion
Adult Social Care (statutory process)	Agree with complainant who should investigate the issue – with a response provided within 10 working days (or no later than 20 days for most complex cases)	A more senior officer investigation (or an external consultant if required) – with a response issued within 45 working days	A further, more senior (usually Director) level investigation - with a response issued within 20 days
Housing (statutory process)	Line/Service Manager response - within 10 working days (where this is not possible, complainant is written to with full details for delay and a revised date)	Independent Council officer investigation (usually Complaints Team) – with response issued within 25 working days of receipt.	No third stage for Housing complaints
Corporate Complaints (discretionary process)	Line/Service Manager response - within 10 working days of receipt	Investigation by senior independent officer (usually Complaints Team) – full written response within 25 days of receipt	Elected member complaints review panel – date set within 20 days of receipt and report provided within 5 days of panel hearing

¹ Full details of all four procedures are set out on the Council's website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/119/complaints_procedures

- 4.5 The Council is able to compare in general terms its performance nationally by considering the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review letter. This demonstrates that, based on a national average, the Council is performing well, with the Ombudsman receiving more complaints in the last year and also upholding more, at 54%, of those investigated. The Council received fewer Ombudsman enquiries and 62% of those investigated were upheld (8 out of 13 investigated). This compares to 53% upheld in 2015-16 (9 out of 17 investigated).
- 4.6 The 2018-19 Corporate Plan continues the target to achieve 85% performance for in-time responses in the current year. This has helped to maintain the performance rate at 80% despite an increase in formal complaints.
- 4.7 There has also been a continuing emphasis over the last year on learning from complaints, and the re-instatement of management reporting , which have aimed to improve levels of management oversight and information.
- 4.8 The Complaints Team working with services and Elected Members will ensure a constant focus on improving the way that the Council manages complaints and learns from them in 2017-18. Some example outline improvement actions are noted as follows:
- i. Improve in-time responses to complaints with a target of 85% (corporate target) in the next year.
 - ii. Ensure better learning from complaints by capturing more qualitative information and supporting managers to drive through service improvements.
 - iii. Continue to support the learning and service improvement framework currently managed by the CYPS Performance Team.
 - iv. Continue to report performance as part of the Council's corporate performance framework.
 - v. Review the current council complaints policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.
 - vi. Revise current Council procedures to ensure that equalities information is captured and included in future performance reports.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Directorate sections in the annexes of the Annual Report have been reported to each Directorate Management Team across the Council, building on the complaint monitoring information which is now reported regularly to these senior managers. This enables progress to be tracked and key learning points to be emphasised. In CYPS, Adults and Housing, complaints are also reported to the Directorate Management Team on a weekly basis.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Improvements to the way the Council manages complaints and learns from them, as set out in the report, will be implemented within year 2017-18 for the next Annual Report in the summer of 2018.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The enclosed Annual Report details financial remuneration payments made as a result of complaint investigations, with a greater amount noted as awarded overall in 2016-17 (£15,060.02 compared to £12,376.85 in 2015-16). The majority of this - £13,117.07 - was a result of refunds of charges and fees; with £1,942.95 awarded in *ex-gratia* payments for distress and inconvenience caused.
- 7.2 An increase in external complaint investigation costs in Children & Young People's Services is also noted – i.e. **£32,096.43** (£12,350 in 2015-16 and £20,956 in 2014-15).

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Council's approach to handling complaints is informed by the following key pieces of legislation:
- i. Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).
 - ii. The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
 - iii. Localism Act 2011 (for Housing Services complaints)

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The statutory complaints procedure for Children's and Adult Social Care provides an opportunity for children and young people and vulnerable adults to have their voices heard and to improve service delivery.
- 10.2 In Children and Young People's Services the performance management process includes: a weekly complaints report to the Directorate Leadership Team, highlighting outstanding enquiries which require a response; issuing of weekly reminders for all enquiries; and a process acting swiftly to resolve those complaints which are at risk of not being responded to within statutory requirements.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 Investigations through the complaint procedure will consider all relevant policy and legislation, including those relating to equalities and human rights. All complaints are investigated with due consideration to the Council's policies and legislation. As noted in paragraph 4.8 above, the complaints procedure will be reviewed to ensure that equalities information is captured and included in future performance reports and that service improvements are made accordingly.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The enclosed report is applicable to all Directorates and the information contained within it – specifically the relevant Directorate annexes - have been considered by all Directorate Management Teams and Service Management Teams where appropriate.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Although positive management of complaints has been achieved, the number and type of complaints received is sometimes determined by circumstances beyond the control of the services and Corporate Complaints Team. Regardless of any external factors, the services are required to maintain a high level of performance and excellent customer care.

13.2 In addition, as the Council continues to deal with significant funding reductions and the impacts this may have on service provision going forward, there is a risk of an increased level of complaints from clients and customers, which the corporate complaints team and service leads will need to manage. It will be important to ensure an ongoing good level of service to the public that ensures complaints can continue to be handled with appropriate levels of care and consideration, in line with required timescales and legal requirements.

14. Accountable Officer

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Annual Report Compliments and Complaints

1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Contents

Page 2 – Summary and performance headlines

Page 5 – Complaint trends

Page 6 – Improvements & learning from complaints

Page 7 – Adult Social Services - Summary

Page 7 – Housing Services - Summary

Page 8 - Children & Young People's Services - Summary

Page 8 – Regeneration & Environment - Summary

Page 9 – Finance and Customer Services - Summary

Page 10 – Assistant Chief Executive – Summary

Page 10 – Public Health - Summary

Page 10 - New Developments in 2016-17

Page 11 - 2017-18 Outline improvement actions

Page 13 – Appendix I - Adult Social Services – All information

Page 21 – Appendix II – Housing Services – All information

Page 33 – Appendix III – Children's & Young Peoples Services – All information

Page 60 – Appendix IV - Regeneration & Environment – All information

Page 77 – Appendix V - Finance and Customer Services – All information

Summary and performance headlines

1. This annual report details how the Council has responded to complaints and customer feedback in line with the Rotherham MBC complaint procedures and customer care standards. It sets out how the Council has performed against these standards and how it has learnt and improved the services it provides.
2. The report provides information about complaints made between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, as dealt with through the Council's procedures for Adult Social Services, Children's Social Services, Housing and Corporate complaints. It also provides information about the compliments received by the council for each service area and examples of good practice.
3. The figures in the report include details of the number of customers and the number of complaints they have made. For each Council Directorate, further information and a break-down summary of performance is provided. Tailored annual complaint reports by Directorate have also been presented to relevant senior management teams within Directorates, building on the regular management information on complaints that is provided to these management teams on an ongoing basis (see Appendices 1 to 5 for overviews of these Directorate reports).
4. The combined figure for all complaints (informal and formal) received in 2016-17 was 1,274 and in 2015-16 was 1,289, this is a decrease of 15 (1%) complaints. In 2016-17 the number of formal complaints received by the Council increased significantly by 304 (44%) from the 695 in 2015-16, to 999. These compare to 692 received in 2014-15. However, it should be noted that the number of complaints classified as informal significantly reduced from 594 in 2015-16 to 275 (54% decrease – please see page 5 paragraph 19 for an explanation regarding the change in classification).
5. Overall 80% of all complaints were responded to within the required timescales, which means that performance was maintained at the same level as 2015-16 (despite an increase in formal complaints). However, this falls short of the 2016-17 Council Plan target of responding to at least 85% of complaints within the required timescales.
6. The Corporate Complaints Team continue to work in line with a standardised approach to complaint handling with a focus on consistency, improving the way that complaints are managed and responded to across the Council, and ensuring a system of learning from complaints within services. The small corporate team (3 FTE complaint managers, with 1.3FTE administrative and business support) works closely with the responsible managers in service areas to respond to complaints effectively and efficiently, in line with the standards and procedures that are set out. Complaints are quality assured and all are reviewed for learning and service improvement, with management information provided on a regular basis (depending on the needs and requirements of the service) to Directorate and other management teams.
7. The Complaints Team work for the customer to ensure that they receive a good level of service and the most appropriate response to their complaint. The team has maintained a focus in 2016-17 on improving the way complaints are dealt with and there have been a number of positive developments over the last 12 months, including: fewer Ombudsman complaints, fewer "informal" complaints, fewer complaints upheld overall and an improvement in performance in Children and Young People's Services.

8. It is the continuing aim of the Council to provide a high quality of service offered to customers; and that complaints are responded to on time and the responses inform service improvement. In addition, there is a continuing focus on improving the experience of customers, ensuring that it is easy to register complaints and allowing the public every opportunity to have their views considered and responded to through an open and transparent process.
9. External benchmarking information is available for complaints relating to Children's and Adults Social Care and Housing Services. Information was made available in 2016 from the Housemark network, from the Yorkshire and Humberside regional benchmarking group and from the ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Care) Sector Led Improvement initiative. Details are contained in the Directorate information appendices in the report.
10. The overall response rate of complaints responded to has stayed at 80%. Both Adult Social Services and Regeneration and Environment Directorate performance figures have decreased to 73% and 67% across 2016-17, down from 92% and 86% in 2015-16 respectively. This is set against an improvement in other areas, most notably in CYPs whose performance increased to 68% from 50%. It should be noted that in all areas and most notably in Regeneration and Environment more complaints were responded through formal complaint procedures.
11. However, it is important to recognise that third and fourth quarter performance in Regeneration and Environment showed significant improvement as focus was applied via the management team following concerns raised via reporting by the Complaint Team. In Adult Social Services qualitative indicators show that although performance has slipped, fewer complaints are escalating through the complaint procedure and less are being investigated by the Ombudsman. The Complaints Team will contribute to work with the Directorate in 2017-18 to achieve both the quality in complaint handling and excellent performance.
12. The Complaints Team will continue to work with services and managers across all Council Directorates to analyse the reasons for response times not being met, in order to better understand the causes of delays and determine ways to improve performance in 2017-18.
13. There remains a focus on learning from complaints, with the team continuing to work with services to ensure that all complaints are considered for learning and service improvement, and that all upheld and part upheld complaints learning is recorded. However, it is still the case that improvements can be made to the quality of the learning recorded and that Investigating Managers need increased support to identify more issues that will lead to positive change for their service and the Council as a whole. The Complaints Team is committed to providing the support managers require and will work with Council Management Teams to ensure that identified learning issues lead to positive change and service improvement.
14. In addition, the Council recorded a significant increase in the number of compliments it received at 980 (604 recorded in 2015). This was due in part to an improvement in reporting and staff knowledge of the process of reporting and recording compliments. Compliments are used in our staff recognition initiatives. Details of the compliments received can be found in Appendices I-IV.

Summary of Rotherham MBC Complaints performance, 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

↑	More formal complaints (at all levels) received, at 999 (695 received in 2015-16)**
↓	Fewer “informal” complaints* received, at 275 (594 received in 2015-16, 732 received 2014-15 and 811 received 2013-14)**
↔	The same % of complaints were responded to within timescales, at 80% (80% in 2015-16)
↑	Slightly more complaints for Adult Services received, at 90 (76 received in 2015-16)
↑	More complaints for Housing and Neighbourhood Services, at 368 (268 received in 2015-16)**
↑	More complaints for Finance and Customer services at 91 (39 in 2015-16)**
↑	Slightly more complaints for Children and Young People’s Services received, at 222 (204 received 2015-16)
↑	More complaints for Regeneration and Environment at 239 (108 in 2015-16)**
↑	More complaints (at all stages) were upheld, at 209 (20%) (152, or 21%, upheld 2015-16)
↓	Fewer Stage 1 complaints required to be escalated to Stage 2, at 4% , or 38 . (7%, 45 escalated in 2015-16)
↑	More complaints about quality of service were received, at 660 (385 received 2015-16)
↑	More complaints about actions of staff were received, at 209 (135 received 2015-16)
↓	The Ombudsman investigated fewer complaints, at 29 ; though upheld more, at 9 , or 31% (30 investigated and 8 (26%) upheld in 2015-16)
↑	More financial remediation to complainants was made; totalling £15,060.02 (£12,376.85 in 2015-16)
↑	An increase in external complaint investigation costs in CYPS, at £32,096.43 (£12,350 in 2015-16).
↑	More compliments recorded by the Complaints Team, at 980 (604 recorded in 2015-16)

* Please note, “informal” complaints are defined as contacts by customers who are expressing dissatisfaction but the Council has been previously unaware of the concern and has not had an opportunity to put things right. These complaints have been dealt with and resolved to the customer’s satisfaction at their first point of contact and as a result the customer has not wanted to enter formal complaint proceedings. This is done with the agreement of the customer and it means that a large number of enquiries are dealt with much quicker and at less cost to the Council (an example would be a report of an outstanding repair to a Council property). They are also complaints that are specifically excluded from the formal complaint procedure, such as a complaint that directly relates to a decision made by Council Cabinet.

**the increase in formal complaints has been met with a corresponding decrease in informal complaints.

15. The headline improvements achieved during 2016-17 can be summarised as follows:

- Continued learning from complaints to identify service improvements with a focus on tracking the impact of the improvements in Children and Young People’s Services
- A review of informal complaints has reduced the numbers received
- Fewer Ombudsman complaints received
- Fewer complaints escalating through the complaints procedure
- A response rate that benchmarks well with other authorities, including the participation of the new regional Sector Led Improvement initiative in Adult Social Care
- Continued provision of guidance and training to all investigating managers
- A continue focus on overall complaints performance in the 2016-17 Corporate Plan, including quarterly performance updates
- Continued work with Directorates, taking into account restructure, IT and personnel changes.

Complaint trends

16. The Council continues to look for ways to improve the way it responds to customer and public complaints, through a collaborative approach between the small corporate Complaints Team and service managers in terms of how complaints are managed and monitored (for performance and learning points).
17. A key performance headline for 2016-17 has been the further increase in the number of complaints received across all Directorates, with particular reference to increases in Housing and Regeneration and Environment.
18. Numbers of complaints have increased significantly at 999, a 44% increase (695 in 2015-16).
19. All formal complaints are considered for learning and improvement and are subject to quality assurance by the Complaints Team. This has again meant that the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure (i.e. where complainants are not happy with their initial response) has remained at a relatively low level and the number of complaints being investigated by the Ombudsman services has reduced to 29 (from 30).
20. As explained, there has been a significant reduction in “informal complaints” (see also note on page 4 for a definition of what this term relates to). This is due to an effort by the Complaints Team to make sure that only a very small number of enquiries received by the team are dealt with outside the formal complaint procedure. Only those enquiries that can either be responded to immediately, with the agreement of the customer, or are specifically excluded under the exceptions set out within the relevant complaint procedure, will be considered via this route. Unless it is entirely clear that the complainant’s issue can be resolved without going through the formal procedures, the focus is on ensuring the issue raised is treated robustly and transparently through the publicised process, as a formal complaint. This has the effect of potentially adding to the numbers of formal complaints – but positively so, in the interests of the complainant.
21. Despite the increase in formal complaints, performance to response timescale has maintained due to a drop in performance in Regeneration and Environment and Adult Social Services but an increase in performance in Children’s Social Services. This indicates that performance measures introduced, in CYPS, in the last two years are proving successful. Management teams in Regeneration and Environment and Adult Social Services are aware and have been supported by the Complaints Team to improve performance in 2017-18.
22. The number of complaints escalating through the relevant procedures (i.e. where the complainant was unhappy with their response and wished to take matters further) was reduced to 4% from 7% in 2015-16, with the number of complaints upheld after investigation slightly reduced from 21% to 20%. This demonstrates positive performance, dealing with the vast majority of initial complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant.
23. Similarly, slightly fewer complaints were investigated this year by the Ombudsman – 29, compared to 30 last year, fewer issues needing to be escalated by the complainant to this stage of investigation. However, the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman that were upheld did increase, from 8 (27%) in 2015-16 to 9

(31%). This appears to follow a national trend highlighted by the Local Government Ombudsman in its 2015-16 annual report, which upheld more complaints nationally in the last year - up to 51% from 46%. Despite this increase, Rotherham MBC performance is still lower than this national average.

24. In terms of the overall number of complaints received, apart from those relating to Housing and Regeneration and Environment (as noted above), other Directorates received increased numbers of informal complaints and on the same subject areas as previous years. The largest increase was in Finance and Customer services: this was mostly due to the reclassification of complaints from informal to formal but a small part of the increase was due to restructuring of the department (Revenues and Benefits), which led to some additional complaints about delay. Complaints in Social Care, both Children's and Adults, increased but at a lower level, in part due to the reclassification of complaints and in part due to the continued effect of structural and IT changes. The new system, combined with a change in management structures, caused additional complaints relating to delay and breakdowns in communication.

Appendices I to V provide further detail and analysis of the complaints received by each council directorate.

Improvements & learning from complaints

25. Complaints are an opportunity for the Council not only to put things right for its customers and members of the public, but to learn lessons and improve the service it can offer. These learning and improvement points are the subject of regular reporting to Directorate management teams throughout the year. Examples of the service changes that have been made as a result of complaint investigations are set out below. (Further details and additional learning points are also set out in the 'learning from complaints' sections in Appendices 1 to 5).
26. Some examples are as follows:
- We have changed the opening hours and procedures of the Single Point of Access team to improve communication between Social Workers and customers.
 - We have improved the standard of advice provided by staff regarding Council Tax enquiries and in particular the Single Person Discount
 - The garage void process has been changed so that each garage is inspected by an Area Technical Officer before letting rather than an inspection by the Housing and Estates service. The Area Technical Officer cross references the garage site review and issues appropriate repair orders based on the Red, Amber or Green status of each site. The Area Technical Officer will issue repair orders for garages in sustainable sites and advise the Housing Administration team accordingly.
 - We now provide a private space to customers who are discussing sensitive and private details in our Customer Service Centres.
 - We have used a complaint to improve practice regarding contact visits for looked after children and their families.

Adult Social Services

27. The total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services was 90 (76 received in 2015-16). 73% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales (92% in 2015-16).
28. Complaints in Adult Social Services reflect the wide range of services offered by the Directorate. However, 66% of complaints were received by the Independent and Support Planning Service area with 45% of complaints received by the Locality Social Work Teams. This is an annual trend in Adult Social Care and reflects the number of customers that are processed through those service areas and the nature of the service that is provided, i.e. assessment of care, often to customers and their families who are new to Social Care services.
29. Common themes were communication, the quality of information provided, attitude of staff and cost of service. Delays in the assessment process were a significant cause of a number of complaints (17 complaints were received regarding delays and 12 were received in Independent and Support Planning). Complaints were also received regarding the outcome of assessments. In these cases the complaint procedure functions as an appeals process for customers unhappy with decisions made and their care outcomes. These include disagreements about what type and how much care is appropriate, reductions in care or decisions to decline additional care resources.
30. Despite performance being maintained, the number of complaints upheld has continued to reduce and the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure has also reduced. There are also a very low number of complaints being considered by the Ombudsman. Overall these measures indicate good complaint handling and improvements in the way in which the Directorate responds to formal complaints.

See Appendix I for further details of Adult Services complaints

Housing and Neighbourhood Services

31. The number of formal complaints increased by 37% in the year, from 268 to **368**. The number of complaints fully upheld (103) and partially upheld (63) also increased. At the same time, the number of cases progressing to Stage 2 remained the same, resulting in a reduced percentage (3.7%) of complainants escalating their complaint. The figures suggest a continued improvement in case handling. The performance on answering complaints in time was approximately 92%; all teams met or exceeded the corporate target of 85%.
32. The highest increase in complaints was connected to services managed by Contract and Service Delivery Team and Repair Contractors who saw the number of complaints increase by 60 (84.5%) and 32 (123%) respectively. The two main causes of the increase related to the priority given to certain types of repair and missed appointments caused when one of the contractors changed its IT system. Both issues have now been addressed.

33. The increase in complaints will in part be affected by the redefining of Informal Complaints, in line with advice given by the Housing and Local Government Ombudsman in relation to two separate cases. The number of Informal Complaints reduced by 60%; however the correlation between the reduction in Informal complaints and increase in formal complaints is not straightforward because two teams saw the number of formal complaints also decrease.

See Appendix II for further details of Housing Services complaints

Children & Young People's Services

34. In total, 222 formal complaints were received, an increase from 204 in 2015-16. This continues the anticipated upward trend following the release of the Jay report in 2014-15 and the subsequent report from the Corporate Governance Inspection. Whilst the 2016-17 increase is significant, it is much lower than the 32% increase in 2015-16 and indicates that the increase in complaints observed since 2014-15 is stabilising.
35. The restructuring of some services (vacancies and the employment of temporary staff and managers) within CYPS was assessed to have had an impact in 2016/17 on complaints performance, in terms of meeting required timescales for responses. For example, there has been an increase in the timeliness of response in 2016-17 with 68% of complaints responded to in timescales; compared to 50% responded to in timescales in 2015-16. This is as a result of the continuation of performance management arrangements. However, performance is still below the corporate performance target of 85% of complaints being responded to in time.
36. In terms of the types of complaints received, the Service continues to receive complaints about communication with customers and timeliness of assessments. In addition, complaints continue to be received regarding the conduct and professionalism of staff, and the content and accuracy of reports completed with families.
37. Concerns raised by young people include issues about the level of support or communication from their social worker, decisions around contact with friends and family members, decisions made regarding their placement and the transition between placements; and support from the Leaving Care Service.

See Appendix III for further details of CYPS complaints

Regeneration and Environment

38. The total number of complaints received was **239**. This represents a **121%** increase over the last year from **108**. However the number of complaints classified as informal complaints has decreased **38%** from **240** last year to **148**. Overall **70%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales compared with **86%** in 2015-16.
39. Most complaints were received in the Community Safety and Street Scene service area (**149**) and were regarding Street Scene services, the vast majority relating to services provided by the Waste Management section. Despite the increase in the number of formal complaints, it is usual that the majority of the complaints for the Directorate are within this service area. The complaints related to missed bin

collections, delay in receiving replacement bins and conduct of refuse collectors, almost half of which were fully or partially upheld.

40. The second highest number of complaints were received in Planning, Regeneration and Transportation service area (**50**). The majority of complaints were received by Planning and Building control (56% of Planning Regeneration and Transportation complaints); they were mostly regarding complaints from customers who have been affected by developments. Complaints were received if they felt that full consideration had not been applied to the issues that they had identified. Complaints were also received regarding action in respect of enforcement requests. 21% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld.
41. The Culture, Sport and Tourism service area received **34** complaints. The majority of complaints were received by Cultural Services (67% of CST complaints), and were mostly received by Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs (47% of CST complaints). Complaints related to the way that customers felt they had been treated by staff, information and advice provided, and delays in receiving service. 30% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld.

See Appendix IV for further details of Regeneration and Environment complaints

Finance and Customer Services

42. The total number of complaints received for these services was 91, which represents an increase over the last year from 39. In addition, **23** informal complaints have also been received which is a decrease from **65** received in 2015-16.
43. There is a clear correlation between the increase in Stage 1 complaints and the reduction in complaints being dealt with informally. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of complaint enquiries received in 2016-17; the trend of more complaints being dealt with formally is one that has been broadly replicated Council-wide following criticism from the LGO on some cases.
44. Overall, **96%** of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to **95%** in 2015-16.
45. 68 of the 91 complaints received by the directorate were about Revenues and Benefits; of which 14 were either upheld or partially upheld.
46. The majority of complaints which were either upheld or partially upheld were regarding staff error in the administration and management of accounts; particularly in Local Taxation and Benefits Assessment. Typically, these complaints concern full advice not being provided regarding an issue rather than the wrong advice being provided. These also include administrative errors by staff on individual accounts.
47. A small number of complaints which were either upheld or partially upheld concerned delays in processing either claims or changes to accounts; and on one occasion a complaint was upheld in relation to a system error which resulted in incorrect calculations of liability and incorrect billing and correspondence.

See Appendix V for further details of Finance and Customer Services complaints

Assistant Chief Executive

48. Only **6** complaints were received. They were received by the Human Resources and Communications services.
49. **4** complaints were responded to and **2** withdrawn (a response was provided outside the complaint procedure). **1** complaint was upheld and **2** complaints were partially upheld. **3** out of **4** (**75%**) complaints were responded to on time. **1** complaint escalated to Stage 2 of the complaint procedure.
50. The complaints were regarding conduct of staff in HR meetings at schools, a mistake on an advert and incorrect advice provided in respect of HR policy.
51. **13** compliments were received, examples are as follows:
 - Compliment for the Events Team: "big thank you to you and all your teams for the hard work and organisation that you've put in to the vintage hop. I've spent a lovely day in the town centre listening to great music and watching people having a good time."
 - Compliment for Communications Team: "I wasn't aware RMBC Press did so many different duties for us until following LGA Our Day - well done!"
 - Compliment for Human Resources: "thank you for work with our apprentice and supporting her to build her confidence, skills and knowledge."

Public Health

52. Received **1** formal complaint and **4** informal complaints. The formal complaint was partially upheld and was regarding treatment received at RIO.
53. **3** compliments were received:
 - "Thank you for setting up the "Shape Up" programme at Maltby Leisure Centre - keep up the great work!"
 - 2 compliments for a member of staff: "As always your work is balanced, proactive and superb. I know you will grimace at being complimented but you are so professional". " xx's updates were well received and provided valuable insight"

New Developments in 2016-17

54. The Council has continued to make improvements in complaint handling, and to work to make sure that customers receive the best response possible; continuing to look for ways to improve the service to customers, through consultation with managers, staff training, learning from complaints and customer feedback.

55. 2016-17 has seen the Council continue to deliver on previous year-on-year improvements, including through the following:
- A reduced number of “informal” complaints received while continuing to improve the process for filtering out “non-complaint” service requests received by the Complaints Team at point of contact so that they are dealt with promptly and more effectively for the customer.
 - Continued to improve learning and service improvement opportunities from customer feedback, reviewing current Directorate and management team reporting in the light of new management appointments and the wider feedback received.
 - New, regular monitoring of headline complaints performance for the Council through the new 2016-17 Corporate Plan reporting arrangements, and supporting Strategic Leadership Team to focus on reviewing organisational performance data on a more robust and regular basis.
 - Ensured that all customer responses (from all Directorates) continue to be quality assured, with an enhanced focus on enforcing high quality standards in line with senior management, member and commissioner expectations; to further reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
 - We have revised our contact details on the Council website and young persons’ complaint leaflet to promote the various methods young people can use to contact the complaints team, including the dedicated text message number.
 - The Complaints Team contributed to a training session in the first quarter of 2017- looking at how responses to complaints and councillor enquiries could be improved.

2017-18 Outline improvement actions

56. Given the need to ensure a constant focus on improving the way that the Council manages complaints and learns from them, the following improvement actions are proposed:
1. Improve in-time responses to complaints with a target of 85% (corporate target) in the next year.
 2. Ensure better learning from complaints by capturing more qualitative information and supporting managers to drive through service improvements.
 3. Continue to support the learning and service improvement framework currently managed by the CYPS Performance Team.
 4. Continue to report performance as part of the Council’s Corporate Performance Framework.
 5. Review the current Council complaints policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.
 6. Revise current Council procedures to ensure equalities information is captured and included in future performance reports.
 7. Ensure that all customer responses (from all Directorates) continue to be quality assured, with an enhanced focus on enforcing high quality standards working with senior management and members; to further reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
 8. Provide specific training and feedback to staff (including investigating officers) and elected members to further improve the quality of investigations and responses.
 9. Develop an online complaints handling e-learning package for all staff and managers.
 10. Work to further improve complaint experience of customers raising complaints with private providers and contractors, reflecting an increased focus on commissioned services across the Council.

11. Include complaints data in reports to CYPs Performance Board to encourage greater accountability and improve performance and wider learning.
12. Improve access to the complaints procedure for children and young people, including children with disabilities, by reviewing and improving the quality of information provided to them and increasing opportunities for them to tell us their views.

Appendix I

Adult Social Services – Complaints and Customer enquiries 2016-17
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Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services was **90** (Total received in 2015-16 - **76**)

Overall 73% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales. (92% in 2015-16)

Headline Results 2016-17

↑	Number of complaints, 90, increase from 76 received 2015-16.
↓	Number of informal complaints received, 25, decrease from 35 received in 2015-16.
↓	The number of complaints (at all stages) upheld, 14 (16%), decrease from 18 (24%) upheld in 2015-16.
↓	The number of complaints escalating, (6%), 5 Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2, from 82 Stage 1 complaints. Decrease from 10% in 2015-16. (7 Stage 2 complaints and 68 Stage 1 complaints)
↑	Complaints about quality of service, 40, increase from 34 received in 2015-16.
↓	Complaints about actions of staff 7 decrease from 9 in 2015-16.
↓	3 Upheld Ombudsman complaints from 4 decisions. 2 Upheld from 6 decisions in 2015-16.
↑	Total financial remediation awarded was £4808.79, increase from £2274.57 in 2015-16.
↔	External complaint investigation costs, £0
↑	Number of Compliments received was 337, increase from 59 in 2015-16.
↑	Benchmarked 34th out of 185 LA's nationally for number of Ombudsman complaints received per 100,000 population and 1st out of 15 LA's in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. (2015-16 information – published in 2016)

Adult Social Services has maintained the improvements in the following areas:

- Reduced the number of upheld complaints.
- Reduced the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Reduced number of Ombudsman complaints.
- Reduced the number of informal complaints.
- No external investigation cost.
- Learning from complaints – all complaints interrogated for learning.
- Reduced the amount of financial remediation awarded
- In the top quarter nationally in terms of number of Ombudsman decisions received.

Top complaint issues

Complaints in Adult Social Services continue to reflect the wide range of services offered by the Directorate. However, 66% of complaints were received by the Independent and Support Planning Service area with 45% of complaints were received by the Locality Social Work Teams. This is an annual trend in Adult Social Care; it reflects the number of customers that are processed through the service area and the nature of the service that is provided, i.e. assessment of care, often to customers and their families who are new to Social Care services.

Common themes were again regarding communication, the quality of information provided, attitude of staff and cost of service. Complaints about delays in the assessment process was a significant cause of a number of complaints. (17 complaints were received regarding delay and 12 were received in Independent and Support Planning).

A continuing, year-on-year trend, are complaints received regarding the outcome of assessments. In these cases the complaint procedure functions as an appeals process for customers unhappy with decisions made and their care outcomes. These include disagreements about what type and how much care is appropriate, reductions in care or decisions to decline additional care resources.

As explained complaints were also received regarding delays in the assessments and concerns about the impact of the delay in respect of the care provided based on the circumstances of the customer.

Complaints were also received regarding the quality of service provided and disagreements over decisions made in respect of the service. Customers complained as they felt concerned about the service they received, they disputed the action taken or if they felt that they were not in receipt of information and advice within a reasonable period of time.

Continuing from the previous year; restructuring in the Directorate in part explains the small increase in complaints that has continued into year 16-17. Some of the complaints received regarding a delay in providing service or around communication, were due to the structural and staffing changes undertaken. In addition the introduction of a new IT system also had an underlying impact in terms of the number of complaints received.

As explained the majority of complaints received were dealt with by Independence & Support Planning under the new current structure, receiving **59** out of **90** complaints, with the majority being dealt with by the Locality Teams, **41** complaints (Locality Teams received 35 complaints in 2015-16). This is explained by the nature of the work the team provides and their increased remit as, for example, they are now also providing assessment for former LD service customers. They are dealing with the majority of the customers within the Directorate and are providing services that can lead to disagreements over care outcomes and cost of care. Any delays in the assessment process will also lead to an increased number of complaints.

The second highest number of complaints, **12**, were received in Adult Care Services (14 received in equivalent services in 2015-16). Complaints were received evenly across the service, no one service / unit received more than 3 complaints. The types of complaints received reflected the service provided in each of the teams and were in most part related to the quality of the service provided.

Safeguarding and Professional Practice received the third highest number of complaints, **9** complaints received (5 received in 2015-16). They were regarding the outcome of safeguarding investigations or delays in respect of investigation. The Vulnerable Persons Team received **3** complaints, regarding disagreements in respect of the level of support provided and regarding confidentiality.

In terms the types of complaints received the highest number of complaints were regarding the Quality of Service provided, **40** complaints received. Customers complained when their expectations of service were not met or they had experienced continuing problems on separate occasions. This also applies to complaints regarding a disagreement in the outcome of an assessment, with customers referring to perceived problems with the way an assessment had been completed.

17 complaints were regarding Delay in Providing Service, as explained, these were in main from customers who felt they were waiting too long for assessment and there was a negative impact associated to the delay.

15 complaints were received relating to Cost of Service; these were regarding the cost of care and financial procedures. Customers complained if they felt there were not given enough information about the cost of care or if there were delays in processing financial assessments or disagreements over contributions. Obviously, it is through these complaints that the Council was required to offer financial remediation, agreeing to meet care costs or reimbursing for a financial impact caused by a delay in assessment.

The amount of financial remediation has increased. The amount relates to care charges and benefit payments, **£4808.79**, there were no compensation payments. Two cases resulted in remediation payments; **£1234.50** for a delay in a long stay decision which had meant that we had delayed their claim for attendance allowance and **£3574.29** for payment of residential fees (for respite care) due to poor practice by a social worker (incomplete record keeping and evidence of misleading advice).

For all complaints, including those that are not upheld, there is consideration applied for any learning and service improvement by the investigating manager supported by the Complaints Team. This means that there is either immediate action taken to remedy the complaint or work is completed by the service to improve procedures and processes to the benefit of all customers. These are reported to the Directorate Management Team for further consideration which allows opportunity for learning across all Services within the Directorate.

Councillor Surgeries

The Complaint Team discontinued its management of the Council's Surgery IT system in September 2016. Councillor Surgeries are now managed and responded to under a new process. The figures presented below are from April 2016 to September 2016 only.

9 Councillor Surgery enquiries were received regarding Adult Social Care Services (**12** received April to September in 2015-16).

They were all regarding requests for assessment. They raised requests for Occupational Therapy assessments (**3** received) and for social care assessments. (**6** received)

Ombudsman decisions

The Directorate received a total of **4** decisions from investigations completed by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2016-17. **3** decisions were upheld against the Council, (**6** decisions and **2** upheld in 2015-16), detail as follows;

- The Ombudsman concluded that there was some fault in the actions of the Council contracted advocacy service (Healthwatch Rotherham) used to assist a customer in complaining about Rotherham health authority services. The advocacy service had already apologised and taken action to prevent a recurrence of the faults. This was considered to be an appropriate and proportionate response.
- The Ombudsman considered that the Council took too long to respond to a customer's request for respite care. It should have considered visiting the customer when they were discharged from hospital to assess their situation as a carer for a

family member. The Council has agreed to explain to the customer how it has improved practice to prevent this fault occurring in the future.

- The Ombudsman found that there was no evidence of fault in the way the Council assessed the customer's family member's needs or adjusted their Direct Payments accordingly. The Ombudsman noted that the Council refunded Council Tax benefit for the period the family member was in temporary residential care and so they did not suffer any lasting injustice as a result. It concluded that the Council did not comply with the regulations (in the way it expected them to pay the care home direct) and the Council has now agreed to reconsider its policy, but that did not cause injustice.

Compliments

337 compliments were received regarding Adult Social Care Services (A significant increase on the **59** received last year); some examples are as follows;

Compliment for Davies Court, "happy atmosphere, both patients and staff contribute to this. Constant banter, laughter, singing etc, help the patients temporarily forget some of their problems. If ever I had the misfortune to need help in the future I would be extremely happy to know I was coming to Davies Court"

Compliment for staff at Davies Court, "thank you to all the staff for all their caring, you are one great team and I can't thank you enough"

Compliment for Enabling Service, "an efficient and skilled workforce that provide a vital service to revitalise and support members of the community who really need care at a difficult period in their lives".

Compliment for Enabling Service, "the girls were lovely they were such a help. Always happy and courteous, well-mannered and respectful. They were a joy to see. I am glad I am now well and grateful to them all but I will miss them."

Compliment for Rothercare, "we wish to thank the two ladies who attended my mother; they were very friendly and cheerful. They were organised, efficient and very professional. Once again many thanks for your professional service."

Compliment for a Community Occupational Therapist, "they were very helpful, capable, informed and caring and professional at all times, good job"

Compliments for the Community Occupational Therapist, "lovely lady, explained everything clearly" "very kind and helped with more than we needed".

Compliment for the Locality Social Workers, "he wanted to me to pass on his thanks on the excellent service and support he has received for the past 3-4years whilst his wife's health has been failing. He commended all staff involved."

Compliment for a Locality Social Worker, "many thanks for all your care and consideration....thank you once more for helping and guiding us we really do appreciate you"

Compliment for Single Point of Access Team, "thank you for all your help and for getting things sorted so quickly, they are very grateful, you are a lovely person."

Learning from complaints

1. Their son was allowed to travel unaccompanied by a member of staff from the centre (REACH) who had responsibility for his care at that time.

In response to their concerns;

- We apologised and agreed a new protocol. The resolution to this complaint was reached through speaking with the customer and their carers and reaching a personalised solution. This personal approach was used to discuss the issue of hospital admissions with all customers and their carer's. A personalised solution was agreed in each case. In addition staff now have a better understanding of their responsibilities.

2. Unhappy with the short notice provided to family members for an assessment meeting – only 3 hours.

In response to their concerns;

- We apologised and explained what went wrong. We have reviewed the service provided and the procedures relating to requests for assessments. We have also changed the opening hours and procedures of the Single Point of Access team to improve communication between Social Workers and customers.

3. The council did not thoroughly check the current financial background of the customer and provided incorrect information and advice.

In response to their concerns;

- We apologised and resolved the problems experienced. We have raised our staff's awareness and knowledge through provision of training in this area in regards to financial regulations; for example - deferred payments.

4. Received poor service, having to make repeat contacts in respect of their family members care. Frequently chasing delayed responses.

In response to their concerns;

- We apologised and explained what went wrong. The Council's IT system will be improved to register and highlight multiple contacts from customers and their families.

5. Delay to assessment, concerned that the delay is putting their family member at risk.

In response to their concerns;

- We apologised and resolved the problems experienced. We have considered ways of supporting staff to improve the way that they are able to manage their cases. We have implemented weekly meetings as well as monthly supervision with the member of staff. This also operates as a quality control exercise also to make sure that any work is planned and completed within accepted timeframes.

- The number of complaints upheld has continued to reduce and the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure has also reduced again. There are also a very low number of complaints being considered by the Ombudsman. These measures indicate good complaint handling and improvements in the way in which the Directorate responds to formal complaints.
- Learning from complaint procedures continue to be strengthened, all complaints are considered for learning and service improvement. All upheld and part upheld complaints have learning issues recorded.
- The Complaint Team continues to work closely with the Directorate, taking into account restructure and IT changes.

2017-18 Improvement Actions

- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform learning and service improvements.
- Continue to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Improve performance in complaint response to timescale. Expect to achieve at least 85% (corporate target) in the next year.
- Will consider appropriate complaints handling and investigation training for all staff and managers.
- Ongoing work to improve complaint experience of customers raising complaints with private providers.
- We will work with regional partners to improve our responses to complaints and participate in peer to peer review and benchmarking activity.

Appendix 1

All enquiries

Service Area / Team	CLr Surgery	Commissioner Enquiry	Compliment	Contracting Concern	Informal Complaint	LGO	MP Enquiry	Pre Complaint	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Grand Total
Adult Care Services			111		3	1		1	1	10	1		128
Addison Day Centre			2							1			3
Davies Court			15							2			17
Enabling/Out-of-Hours			71		1					1			73
Lord Hardy Court			1										1
Rothercare Direct			18							2			20
Shared Lives			1		1	1				1	1		5
Transport Services										1			1
Day Services			1		1					1			3
Extra Care Housing								1		1			2
Transport									1				1
Visual Impairment Services			2										2
Commissioning			2	6	4	1		1		4	1		19
Contracting & Quality Assurance			1	6	1			1			1		10
Operational Commissioning			1		2	1				4			8
Performance					1								1
Community Occupational Therapy	3		68					1		3			75
Community Occupational Therapy	3		68					1		3			75
Finance			1							2			3
Revenues & Payments			1							2			3
Independence and Support Planning	6	1	153		15	2	7	11	7	56	3	1	264
Early Planning			1							1			2
Enabling/Out-of-Hours			115		1					1			117
Intermediate Care		1	3										5
Locality One	1		10		5	1	5	5	1	24	1	1	54
Locality Two			11		4	1		3	1	14	1		35
Single Point of Access	4		10		4			1	2	4	5		30
Supported Discharge Pathways			2					1		8	1		12
Supported Living and High Cost Placement									1	1			2
Transitions			1		1			1		2			5
Safeguarding and Professional Practice			2					4	4	7	1	1	19
Mental Health			1							2			3
Safeguarding			1					4	4	4			13
Vulnerable Persons Team										1	1	1	3
Grand Total	9	1	337	6	22	4	8	17	12	82	6	2	506

Page 14

Appendix 2

Upheld complaints

Row Labels	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Outstanding	Grand Total
Adult Care Services	8	2	2			12
Addison Day Centre	1					1
Davies Court	2					2
Enabling/Out-of-Hours			1			1
Rothercare Direct		2				2
Shared Lives	3					3
Transport Services	1					1
Day Services			1			1
Extra Care Housing	1					1
Commissioning	3			1		4
Contracting & Quality Assurance				1		1
Operational Commissioning	3					3
Community Occupational Therapy	2				1	3
Community Occupational Therapy	2				1	3
Finance	1	1				2
Revenues & Payments	1	1				2
Independence and Support Planning	28	19	11		1	59
Early Planning	1					1
Enabling/Out-of-Hours		1				1
Locality One	11	10	5			26
Locality Two	7	4	3		1	15
Single Point of Access	3	2				5
Supported Discharge Pathways	5	2	1			8
Supported Living and High Cost Placement			1			1
Transitions	1		1			2
Public Health		1				1
Improvement		1				1
Safeguarding and Professional Practice	7	1	1			9
Mental Health		1	1			2
Safeguarding	4					4
Vulnerable Persons Team	3					3
Grand Total	49	24	14	1	2	90

Housing & Neighbourhood Services

Directorate Performance in 2016-17

Housing and Neighbourhood Services' complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint Procedure and Housing Complaint Regulations, Localism Act 2011.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Housing and Neighbourhood Services was 368 (Total received in 2015/16- 268)

Overall 91.58% of all complaints were responded to within the corporate timescales.

There was a **37%** increase in the number of formal complaints, the number of upheld and partially upheld cases also increased. The quality of complaint investigations and resolution remains high with only 3.7% of complaints progressing to stage 2. The number of Informal Complaints reduced by 60%. Two Ombudsman investigations from the previous year were upheld both were without loss to the complainant.

Headline Results 2016-17

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) was 368 representing a 37% increase on the 268 received in 2015/16
↑	355 New (stage 1) complaints were received representing a 39% increase on the 255 received in 2015/16.
↑	The total number of complaints fully upheld at all levels was 103 , an increase from the 66 fully upheld in 2015/16. The combined total of upheld and partially upheld complaints was 166 compared to 100 in 2015/16.
↔	13 complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 the same number as in 2015/16.
↓	There were 57 Informal complaints, compared to 142 housing related enquiries received in 2015/16.
↓	Complaints about lack of service reduced to 20 compared to 27 in 2015/16.
↑	Complaints about delays in service increased from 44 in 2015/16 to 82 .
↔	Complaints about the actions of staff were almost the same at 55 compared to 53 in 2015/16.
↑	Complaints about the quality of service were 190 compared to 116 in 2015/16.
↔	There was just 1 complaint about the lack of information the same as in 2015/16.
↓	There were 7 complaints about the cost of the service compared to 14 in 2015/16.
↓	£1,778.36 was paid in financial remediation, compared to £2,281.48 in 2015/16.

↑	8 LGO/Housing Ombudsman judgements were received, two decisions were upheld against the Council compared to none in 2015/16.
↓	The number of Service Requests received was 105 compared to 171 in 2015/16.
↑	The number of Compliments received was 114 , compared to 97 in 2015/16.

Stage 1 complaints

The number of stage 1 complaints increased by 39% in 2016/17. The teams with the largest increases in the number of formal complaints are; Contract and Service Development, up 60 or 84.5%, the two Repair & Maintenance Contractors up 32 or 123% and Housing & Estates up 31 (48%). Two services, Business and Commercial and the Connect Call Centre reduced in the year. All teams met or exceeded the corporate service standard to respond to 85% of complaints within 10 working days. The trends for stage 1 complaints by service area and performance against response time are shown in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area

Service Area	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	% of total complaints
Business & Commercial	19	23	23	5.35%
Contract & Service Development (C&SD)	131	71	107	36.90%
Contractors	58	26	32	16.34%
Housing & Estates	95	64	79	26.76%
Housing Options	39	31	34	10.99%
Strategic Housing Investment (SHI)	11	6	8	3.10%
CSC/Connect	2	5	4	0.56%
Total	355	255	306	100%

Table 2: Stage 1 Complaints dealt with in time

Service Area	Received	Out of time	In time	% in time
Business & Commercial	19	1	18	95%
Contract & Service Development (C&SD)	131	1	130	99%
Contractors	58	4	54	93%
Housing & Estates	95	9	86	91%
Housing Options	39	6	33	85%
Strategic Housing Investment (SHI)	11	0	11	100%
CSC/Connect	2	1	1	100%
Total	355	22	333	93.80%

Summary of complaints by service area

2016/17 has seen a sharp increase in the number of formal complaints following several years of declining levels of complaints, causal factors by service area are identified below. The increase has been partly affected by classifying some complaints previously classed under the Council's complaints procedure as Informal Complaints as Formal Complaints, this includes complaints such as complaints about repair priorities and the Allocation Policy. This action has contributed to a 60% reduction in Informal complaints. The change follows advice received from the Local Government Ombudsman. In cases such as the correct application of Council policy the standard ending of the Stage1 complaint letter has been amended to advise the complaint cannot proceed through the Council's formal complaints procedure, because it is about a Council policy which has been correctly applied, but they can if they wish escalate the complaint to the Housing/Local Government Ombudsman.

Contract and Service Development

Complaints about Contract and Service Development (CSD) form the largest number of complaints, this is in common with other social landlords and reflects the level of repairs visits in the year (approximately 50,000 non-gas and 19,000 gas visits). It should also be noted issues crossing the boundary between the C&SD service and the repairs contractors are now logged to the C&SD Team; this approach was adopted in 2014/15 to improve the co-ordination of investigations and response to more complex complaints.

The top three complaint issues¹ recorded were; delayed repair (42), quality of repair (25) and damp (12). The increase in complaints for the service, in part, reflects the increase in complaints about repair delays, this appears to be associated with an increase in emergency priority repairs from October and into the winter. The increase in emergency repairs has had a knock on effect on the contractor's capacity to deliver repairs categorised in the 28 day appointable repair category, which in turn highlighted certain repairs which should reasonably have been awarded a higher priority when changes were made to the priorities in 2015. The action to address this issue is highlighted on page 30. The damp issues relate to the ongoing problem of condensation related issues which are closely linked to fuel poverty.

45% of all complaints about the service were upheld or partially upheld, an increase from 39% in the previous year, two thirds of repair delay complaints were partially or fully upheld, the main apparent cause being the problems experienced with 28 day appointable repairs in the third quarter of the year. The service has actions in place to reduce this type of complaint and regular feedback and lessons learned are shared between the Council and its contract partners.

The figures for partially and fully upheld complaints for all service areas are shown in table 3 on the following page.

Table 3: Stage 1 Complaints by service Area and Outcome

Service Area	Total received	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	% Partially or fully upheld
Business & Commercial	19	9	3	6	1	47%
C&SD	131	48	30	51	2	62%
Contractors	58	25	14	18	1	55%
Housing & Estates	95*	60	12	19	3	33%
Housing Options	39	20	2	7	1	23%
S&HI	11	7	1	2	1	27%
CSC/Connect	2	1	1	0	0	50%
Total	355*	179	63	103	9	48%

- One case had not been completed due to the complainant's illness.

1. It should be noted that the prime issue only is recorded; this is to avoid double or triple counting. A customer may complain about more than one issue, for example a customer complaining about the quality of a repair could also be complaining about the delay in completing the repair. This should be taken into account when considering the issue figures.

Repair Contractor Performance

The number of complaints about the contractors had reduced over the previous four years and reached a low base of 26 in 2015/16 but in 2016/17 they increased by 123% to 58. The increase appears to be as a result of the knock on effect of the increase in emergency jobs which had a particular impact in the winter, and more importantly an increase in missed appointments (16), the majority of which were missed in December. The reason for this increase is primarily due to Fortem installing a new IT system in December and problems caused by the transfer of data from the old system and staff becoming familiar with the new system which resulted in some existing appointments not being communicated to the operatives. This issue has since been resolved and the new IT system is working effectively. At the end of the year the combined contractor's performance on appointments made and kept was 99.54%

An indication of how the repair issues described have impacted on the overall figures is that the combined percentage of C&SD and Contractor complaints rose from 38% in 2015/16 to 53% of all complaints in 2016/17. The service is confident that the cause of the spike in complaints has been identified and the service is being remodelled to prevent similar complaint trends in the future. How the service has addressed complaint trends and responded to individual complaints is highlighted from page 30.

The service is working hard to manage tenant expectations and is driving the contractor's resources, ensuring the appropriate trade operatives are in place to deal with non-emergency but more urgent jobs.

The service is also constantly liaising with the Contact Centre and Partners ensuring the repair service is joined up and provides a positive first response.

Housing and Estates

The second highest number of complaints by service area was about the Housing and Estates service. The single largest cause of complaints was about the perceived poor management of anti-social behaviour/ tenancy issues as defined by the Respect Standard (30), in addition there were a number of complaints about the actions of staff which related to ASB and tenancy enforcement. These types of complaints were made by both the reporters of the ASB or tenancy breach who thought they had received insufficient service, and the alleged perpetrators who perceived they had been unfairly treated. 23% of this type of complaint were fully or partially upheld, further analysis shows that half of these were as a result of administrative type errors rather than the failure to take timely action or adhere to agreed processes. As an example in one complaint a duplicate ASB case was established and when the error was recognised the case was closed, rather than cancelled, which generated a case closed survey, which made the customer think the Council had prematurely closed the case.

The remaining upheld or partially upheld complaints cases which were not due to administrative error were addressed individually by team managers. The number of complaints should be compared against 2,433 ASB/Tenancy enforcement cases closed in 2016/17, this figure does not include cases that were opened in the year and were still ongoing at the 31st March 2017.

The next issue with the most complaints was about termination of tenancies primarily relating to elderly or deceased tenants. Seven of the eight complaints of this nature were partially or fully upheld. This issue is addressed in the identifying complaint trends section below.

Housing Options

The number of complaints about the Housing Options service has increased by 8 to 39. The service has the lowest number of complaints which were fully or partially upheld (18%). The three issues with the largest number of complaints were; delay's in letting (7), Adaptations (6) and Homelessness (6). The delay in letting issue related to the time taken to let a property after a successful candidate had been notified, the improvement issued identified was to keep customers informed when unforeseen delays such as when structural issues occur. The relatively low number of complaints along with the low number of upheld complaints mean it is difficult to identify trends.

Business and Commercial

The number of complaints about the Business and Commercial service decreased by 17% to 19 in 2016/17. This reduction appears to be mainly as result of a decrease in complaints about district heating compared to the previous year, a year when the tariffs for the Fitzwilliam estate were increased to reflect the cost of the service. The highest number of complaints related to tenants complaining about rent arrears issues (6), the actions of staff administering the rent arrears procedure (6) and district heating (3).

Strategic Housing Services

The number of recorded complaints for the year was 11, this is an increase on last year's six complaints, but it has taken responsibility for part of the service previously provided by the Asset Management Service who were temporarily managed within the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service.

Customer services/connect

Only two complaints about the Rotherham Connect were received that were wholly about the handling of housing issues.

Financial remediation

The payments to complainants through the complaints procedure reduced from £2,281 in 2015/16 to £1,778.36 last year. Just under half of this amount £885.41 was reimbursement, almost all for rent related payments. £892.95 of the reimbursement was made in compensation/good will payments. The single largest amount was £250 paid at stage 2 of the complaints procedure in relation to a homeless complaint. The next largest payment was £200 to a homeowner as a result of reroofing the adjoining Council tenancy and £100 was paid as a result of damage to a carpet. The figures do not include payments that may have been made by as a result of insurance claims.

Stage 2's

13 stage 1 complaints, progressed to stage 2 in 2016/17, this is the same number as last year, although in percentage terms it shows significantly less cases (3.7%) have progressed to Stage 2. The service places an emphasis on the quality of Stage 1 responses and the relatively low number of cases going to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure suggest the investigation officers are becoming more effectively communicating the rationale for their decision to the customer.

Stage 3's

As a result of the Localism Act 2011 the complaints procedure for most of the landlord function ends at stage 2 for the complaints procedure, meaning there were no stage 3 hearings for Housing and Neighbourhood Services.

Ombudsman decisions

The Directorate received a total of eight decisions from investigations completed by the Housing or Local Government Ombudsman in 2015-16. Six investigations resulted in not upheld judgements and two were upheld but with no loss, resulting in the authority being instructed to make "time and trouble" payments of £50 in both cases.

The first was a complaint about the incorrect issuing of gas "no access" letters caused by a fault on an operative's PDA. The operative did attend and complete the work but the fault resulted in no access being recorded, the complainant also did not like the fact the attending contractor was based in North Yorkshire. It had been initially categorised as an

informal complaint and an apology given, but then escalated to a Stage 2 complaint when the customer was dissatisfied with the response.

The informal classification was allocated because it was thought the complainant could be given a quick resolution because it was about a simple misunderstanding that could be remedied by an apology. As a consequence the complaints team have reviewed its categorisation of informal complaints and if the Council is unable to respond to a complaint under the formal complaint procedure for any reason this is explained with full information given about the options for further escalation.

The second upheld judgement by the Local Government Ombudsman related to a complaint from a customer who claimed they had been unfairly accused of aggressive behaviour. The case included a warning letter that was never sent. The Ombudsman found the service had not notified the complainant of its concerns about the complainant's behaviour in a timely or appropriate manner.

Identifying complaint trends and introducing improvements

The service has treated every complaint as a learning opportunity and has sought to improve the customers experience by targeting emerging complaint trends and remodelling the service in light of customer insight. The following are examples of how the service has responded to complaint trends that emerged during the year.

Complaints about delays and jobs allocated to the 28 day repair priority

To improve the efficiency of the repair service, and in line with good practice, there has been a year on year drive to reduce the ratio of emergency to standard repair jobs. This drive has been alongside improving the amount of planned works, which act in a preventative way and have helped reduced the number of non-gas related responsive repairs from 53,325 in 2011/12 to 50,279 in 2016/17.

In 2010/11 the ratio of emergency repairs to other responsive repairs was an unsustainable 60/40. In the second and third quarter of 2015/16 the 3 day, 5 day and 9 day orders along with the end of the next working day emergency priorities were phased out resulting in a ratio of 24/76. As a result of this change some of the type of jobs previously categorised as "end of the next working day" were put into the 4 hour category and the remainder into 28 day appointable job category. The changes resulted in a manageable increase in 4 hour emergency orders, reducing costs to RMBC.

The advantage of reducing the percentage of emergency repairs is that it is more cost effective and a greater percentage of jobs become appointable repairs. However, a rise in the number of emergency orders in October 2016 began to impact on the contractor's ability to make appointments nearer the start of the 28 day priority rather than the end. This caused a considerable spike in complaints and has resulted in the service reviewing complaint patterns and moving specified types of repairs from the 28 day category into the 4 hour emergency category. Two examples are issues with communal lighting which expose the customer and service to risk and level access showers, which are the only form of bathing. Both of these jobs have now been included in the 4 hour emergency category.

The Service is working with partners ensuring the appropriate numbers of trade operatives are available for urgent but non-emergency jobs and is continuing to monitor the work flow and will re-engineer the service in line with customer feedback and best practice. To do this the service is, in conjunction with its partners, analysing jobs allocated to the categories, reviewing scripts to enhance diagnosis and allocation and reviewing resources to ensure they are aligned to demand.

At the end of the year the ratio of emergency repairs to standard repairs had reduced to 14/86 – this is a massive improvement.

Damp

The service has reported improvements it has made in addressing damp over the last few years, but condensation related damp and black mould complaints are still significant. It is believed that the cause is a combination of a lack of understanding of the causes of condensation, poor house-keeping and increased energy prices and fuel poverty.

In 2016/17 the Contract and Service Development Team augmented its damp services by procuring a mould/condensation specialist, The Mould Doctor, to assess excessive mould and condensation issues and advise on the solution. The service provided by the Mould Doctor has been particularly useful in identifying traditionally built archetypes with cold spots that are more prone to condensation and using innovative products to make a difference. The specialist, independence and expertise have also proved effective at getting across the causes of condensation and preventative actions tenants can take.

The service also has a detailed process for dealing with damp and condensation issues, which Technical Officers have been trained in and meet regularly to review and improve performance.

It is believed the ongoing improvements to the responsive repair services response to damp; along with the ongoing External Wall Insulation programme for non-traditional properties will have a positive impact on the number of future, condensation related damp complaints.

Termination of tenancies and succession

The Housing and Estates Service received a number of complaints about the termination of tenancies, mostly about termination on death or when an elderly resident was moving for care reasons. To address this type of complaint the service has:

- Re-engineered its process for deaths reported through the Registrars “Tell us once process”. This should eliminate delays in receiving the notice of death from the “Tell Us Once” service.
- Reviewed the process of serving a Notice to Quit on tenants without capacity and no executor. To reduce the distress of personal service, the Council now serves the NTQ on the tenants property
- Introducing electronic BACS payments to speed up responses from the Public Trustees Office and remove the 6-7 week delays which have been experienced awaiting the Trustees Offices response.
- Held a meeting with the Social Care Managers in March 2017 and produced a briefing note for M2 and M3 managers. The meeting and briefing note set out the

issues for social workers on who can and cannot terminate a tenancy and the process of termination on death and when an individual goes into care.

It is believed that these improvements will reduce the number of complaints relating to the termination process.

Trees

Although there were not a significant number of formal complaints about trees in the year, the issue became prominent when Councillor and MP enquiries were collated for the first half of the year. Currently the pruning and removal of trees is conducted, on the services behalf, by the Tree Services Team within Regeneration and Environment Directorate with the administration managed by Housing and Estates. The aim for 2017/18 is to stream line the service, by reviewing the service level agreement and remove avoidable delays by transferring the administration and budget to the Tree Services Team. This approach will increase the resource for the assessment of request and along with the Tree Services Teams purchase of a new administrative system will enhance budget management including the review and timely release of work for Amber, advisable but non-urgent cases category of jobs.

Learning from individual complaints

All complaints are analysed for learning opportunities, the following are a sample of how complaints have helped reshape and improve the service.

Learning from complaints case studies

1. Several complaints were received about garages which required programmed works. In response to the complaints the service has:
 - Reviewed the viability of its garage and garage sites. Those garages becoming empty on those sites that are not viable will not be let pending site development/disposal.
 - The garage void process has been changed so that each garage is inspected by an Area Technical Officer before letting rather than an inspection by the Housing and Estates service. The Area Technical Officer cross references the garage site review and issue appropriate repair orders based on the Red, Amber or Green status of each site. The Area Technical Officer will issue repair orders for garages in sustainable sites and advise the Housing Administration team accordingly.
2. A complaint was caused when it was discovered that, due to human error, an empty property had been advertised with significant disabled adaptations that had not been recorded in its description. This meant the property could not be reasonably let to the individual who had successfully bid for it.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Made an apology and used the case as learning opportunity to raise vigilance when manually creating adverts.
- Included the requirement for CIVICA to uplift property attributes into Abitras advert in its specification for the phased implementation of CIVICA, when introduced it will eliminate human error and ensure the adverts reflect the updated attributes recorded on the

property data base. .

3. A complaint was received about a delay gaining access to a block of flats after a Modem failed on an electronic security system. In response and to avoid future delays sourcing parts the service has bought and provided the contractors with specialist parts packs, with an instruction they are immediately replaced to ensure there will be no future delays.
4. A complaint caused by the loss of a weight from a weightlifting kit which had been stored in a garage with other household items following an eviction.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Apologised and reimbursed the complaint £48.95.
 - Reviewed the storage of possessions process, accompanying forms, along with the IT and flow charts, raised the awareness of staff with an intention of the revised procedure going live in the first quarter of 2017/18.
5. A complaint caused after a customer was awarded Medical Priority for a transfer for reasons of mobility, crucial to the award was the distance the applicant could reasonably walk to a bus stop. The complainant was matched to a property and was blocked from bidding for other tenancies while the property was being made ready for letting. At the "Its Your Move" interview it was discovered the nearest bus stop was not significantly closer than the one near their existing property and it could not be reasonably let to them on grounds of Medical Priority.

In response to the complaint the service:

- Apologised for the delay and the complainant was rehoused in an appropriate tenancy.
 - The process has been reviewed and in future the Housing Occupational Therapist will be consulted at the short listing stage where mobility problems are an important factor in establishing the suitability of a property and its surroundings.
6. A complaint was received about the delay in taking remedial action to deal with an overhanging tree. After assessment the council had agreed to undertake the work, but it did not present an immediate risk and it was placed on a programme. The complaint was partially upheld because the customer was not advised of the programme or the Countryside and Wildlife Acts guidelines on nesting birds which meant the programme would not commence until September.

In response to the complaint the service:

- Apologised and advised of the programme.
- No access arrangements have been revised and customers are now advised that non-urgent works are completed on a programme outside of the recognised nesting season.

Councillor Enquiries

The Complaint Team discontinued its management of the Council's Surgery IT system in September 2016. Councillor Surgeries are now managed and responded to under a new process. The figures presented below are from April 2016 to 1st September 2016 only.

In the period there were 125 enquiries recorded as being received through the councillor enquiry system, this compares to 466 received in the whole of 2015/16. The enquiries received were as follows; Housing & Estates (48), Contract & Service Development (41), Housing Options (32) and Strategic Housing Investment (5).

Compliments

114 compliments were received regarding Housing and Neighbourhood Services compared to 97 in 2015/16, some examples are as follows;

A compliment for CSD Team and the Mould Doctor - *"The work done has been life changing and has made a massive difference to my life. I feel like I am no longer walking into a fridge when entering the bedroom. I am very happy"*.

A compliment for Contract and Service Development Team – *"I would like to thank all who have participated in the work, for their hard work, courtesy and helpfulness. I feel a lot happier knowing my house is now free of damp"*.

A compliment for Fortem, Repairs contractor - *"Thank you for your quick response regarding my broken heating at Longfellow Drive, the heating was reported and fixed on the same day"*

A compliment for the Mears, Repairs Contractors Caretaking Team – *"XXXXX attended Robert Street on Friday. He has carried out works that normally takes a team of five. Has returned today and should be recognised and praised for his work and efforts"*.

A compliment for Housing & Estates - *"XXX has been very good in supporting me all way through"* – A victim on conclusion of a Verbal Abuse & Harassment & Intimidation case

A compliment for Housing & Estates - *"Many thanks again for your help!!! Kind of restores my faith in how helpful people can be!!!! You're a star"* – On the conclusion of a tenancy management case.

A compliment for Housing Administration - *"I would like to note the very good customer service I received from XXX. He explained everything for me and responded to my requests for information he was very knowledgeable"*.

A compliment for the Adaptations Team. *"I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the adaptations team who have been involved with arranging the work to be done, I am very pleased with the shower room which helps me enormously to live a more independent life. I would also like to express my gratitude to Jordan Knott and Richard they have worked tirelessly to get the job completed as soon as possible for me, I know it was difficult with the bathroom being so small and such a bad shape, They respected my home and privacy and I would not hesitate to recommend them in the future to anyone. Once again my sincere thanks to everyone."*

A compliment for Housing Solutions *"I met a lovely lady, without her I wouldn't have got a lovely flat. XXXX and all the Riverside team helped me from the very start and are*

continuing with their help and support in this terrible stage in my life. Thank you to all at Riverside and Rotherham Council. Thank you so much XXX”

A compliment for Housing Advice. *“I would like to take this opportunity to thank XXX for the time and effort that she put into dealing with my complaint. Luckily XXX went above and beyond her role and quickly and effectively sorted this matter out! So I have taken the time to email you hoping that she will be given praise for her amazing work and the ability to make me feel at ease”.*

Compliment for, Employment Solutions - *“I got the job with your help and valuable support, big, big thanks, I just wanted to let you know you gave me such valuable support”.*

New Developments during 2016-17

- All complaints continue to be subject to learning from complaint procedures. Stage 2 complaints are subject to special consideration by the services responsible in collaboration with the Complaints Team.
- The Transfer of the allocation and administration of Councillor and MP enquiries took place in September 2016 to allow investigating officers to concentrate on that part of the service that adds value to the Council
- The service will reviewed its use of informal complaints, in the light of recent LGO and Housing Ombudsman findings
- The service investigated improving the efficiency of the service through the implementation of a new CIVICA complaints IT but decided the cost of implementing the module was not justifiable in view of the current financial restrictions.
- The Service has met with Councillor Allen and Williams and a joint meeting was held with Housing staff to explore how the response to complaints and councillor enquiries could be improved. The outcome resulted in a joint training session in the first quarter of 2017/18 with a view to the service rolling out similar sessions.

Improvement Actions 2017-18

- The service will raise the awareness of how to complain to all tenants by including the information in “Home Matters”, the Tenant and Leaseholder newsletter.
- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform service improvements and the Complaints Team’s focus. The Service will monitor the implementation of improvement plans generated by individual complaints.
- The service will continue to focus on the quality of response to stage one complaints to improve customer satisfaction and reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- The Complaints Team will continue to identify service sector best practice by attending the Housemark Complaints benchmarking group to aid service improvements.
- The Complaints Team continue to liaise with the Housing Ombudsman to understand its approach to complaints and trends of complaints received by other social landlords.

Appendix III

Children and Young People's Services

This Annual Report provides details of complaints made to Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and Corporate Complaints Procedure; alongside comparisons with previous years.

Over the last 12 months the total number of Stage 1 complaints received for Children and Young People's Services has increased from 192 to 217, which is a 13% increase.

In total 222 formal complaints were received, whereas 204 were received in 2015-16.

The increase in the number of complaints has continued the trend which followed the publication of the Jay report and the subsequent report from the Corporate Governance Inspection although the rate of increase in the number of complaints has decreased. The impact on public perception of services and the impact of the restructuring and redesigning of services led to a continued but lesser increase in the number of complaints and enquiries received in 2016-17.

Whilst performance in responding to complaints within statutory timescales has increased from 50% in the previous year to 68% in 2016-17; the continuation of performance management arrangements has meant that performance initially improved to the point where 98% of complaints were responded to in time between April and June 2016. However performance declined from October 2016 so that only 40% of complaints were responded to in timescales from that point onwards.

In terms of the types of complaints received, the Service continues to receive complaints about communication with customers and timeliness of assessments. In addition, complaints continue to be received regarding the conduct and professionalism of staff, the content, accuracy of reports completed with families.

Concerns raised by young people include issues raised about the level of support or communication from their social worker, decisions around contact with friends and family members, decisions made regarding their placement and the transition between placements; and support from Leaving Care Service.

Headline Results 2016-17

Direction of Travel	RAG Status	Details
↓	A	Number of school complaint enquiries, 47 . Decreased from 76 in 2015-16.
↓	G	Number of enquiries from Local Government Ombudsman, 7, 2 Upheld . Decreased from 10, 1 Upheld in 2015-16.
↑	A	Number of complaints at all levels, 222 . Increased from 204 in 2015-16.
↑	A	Number of Stage 1 complaints, 217 . Increased from 192 in 2015-16.
↓	G	Number of Stage 2 complaints, 5 . Decreased from 10 from 2015-16.
↓	G	Number of Stage 3 complaints, 0 . Decreased from 2 in 2015-16.
↓	G	Number of complaints escalating from Stage 1 to Stage 2, 5, 2% . Decreased from 10, 5% in 2015-16.
↔	A	Number of complaints upheld (26) and partially upheld (73) at all levels, 113, 52% . Maintained at 52% in 2015-16.
↑	G	Percentage of complaints at all levels responded to in timescales, 68% . Increased from 50% in 2015-16.
↑	R	External complaint investigation costs, £32,096.43 . Increased from £12,350 in 2015-16.
↓	G	Number of informal complaints received, 15 . Decreased from 47 in 2015-16.
↑	G	Number of compliments received 84 . Increased from 72 received in 2015-16.
↓	G	Total compensation paid £8,169.75 in respect of 3 complaints. Decreased from £8,274 compensation paid in 2015-16.
↑	R	Complaints about quality of service, 190 , increased from 147 received in 2015-16.
↓	G	Complaints about actions of staff, 19 , decreased from 37 received in 2015-16.

See Appendix A for data for all enquiries received.

Performance and details

1. Complaints and other enquiries from Children and Young People

The number of Stage 1 complaints received from children and young people was **29** in 2016-17. This has increased from 17 received in 2015-16. Only 1 complaint from a young person was considered at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

25 complaints from children and young people were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1. This has increased from 12 in 2015-16.

The proportion of complaints at Stage 1 from children and young people which were responded to in timescales is **52%**. This has increased from 33% in 2015-16.

However this is still lower than the proportion of all complaints which were responded to in timescales.

In some cases this does not necessarily reflect that the complaint was not being actively dealt with and that the manager dealing with the complaint had not engaged with the young person within that time frame; but that the final response to the complaint and resolution was not achieved within the timescale. This is a reflection of the complexity of dealing with complaints and resolving issues from children and young people; and it should be noted that none of the complaints from young people which were considered at Stage 1 were escalated by the young person which indicates that issues were ultimately resolved to their satisfaction or that they accepted the response to their complaint.

However it is also clear that the transition in management arrangements within Looked After Children's Teams has had a measurable impact on the timeliness of responses to complaints which were assigned in this area. 9 of the 11 complaints from children and young people, which were dealt with outside of timescales, were dealt with by managers of Looked After Children's Teams.

A large piece of work is underway to review and revise the complaints process to ensure that it is young person-friendly. As well as addressing issues of accessibility and usability of the complaints procedure for young people; this work will also address the issue of timeliness of responses and a set of standards will be adopted to underpin the revised process.

Proportionally, 79% of complaints from children and young people received in 2016-17 related to Looked After Children Teams and Leaving Care Services. This is broadly similar to previous years. 86% of complaints from children and young people were upheld or partially upheld; which has increased from 71% of complaints in 2015-16. This is an indication of the strong focus on resolving complaints and addressing issues which means that the likelihood of complaints from children and young people being upheld is higher; and also a reflection of the transition and changes within Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services in particular.

Analysis of the details of complaints received from children and young people highlights a number of key themes including:

- Young people unhappy with the level of support or communication from their social worker.
- Young people unhappy with decisions around contact with friends and family members.
- Young people unhappy with decisions made regarding their placement and the transition between placements.
- Support from Leaving Care Service.

2. Stage 1 complaints

The number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2016-17 has increased by **13%**; from 146 in 2015-16 to **217** (Including 29 from children and young people). Whilst this is still a significant increase in the number of complaints it is as expected, less than the

32% increase observed in 2015-16 and indicates that the increase in complaints observed since 2014-15 is stabilising.

See Appendix B for data regarding Stage 1 complaints received.

Whilst there has been an increase in the timeliness of response in 2016-17 with 68% of complaints responded to in timescales; compared to 50% responded to in timescales in 2015-16; performance is still below the corporate performance target of 85% of complaint being responded to in time.

Following the introduction of new performance management processes in October 2015 performance initially improved substantially. For the 3 months between October 2015 and December 2015, 59% of complaints were responded to in timescale; and for the 3 months between January 2016 and March 2016, **90%** of complaints were responded to in timescale. The improvement in performance continued between April 2016 and June 2016 where **94%** of complaints were responded to in timescales.

However in October 2016 performance dropped to 52% and continued to drop further in December 2016 and January 2017 where performance was 39% and 43% respectively. Cumulatively only 40% of complaints were responded to in timescale between October 2016 and March 2017.

Further analysis reveals that Borough Wide (56%), Children in Care (58%), Children's Disability Service (63%) and South – Children in Need (79%) which underperformed in responding to complaints within timescales.

In Borough Wide it is understood that the impact of caseload pressures in August/September 2016 led to an increased number of complaints and a reduced capacity to respond to concerns. However capacity has been increased with the implementation of a fifth Duty and Referral Team.

The transition in management arrangements within Looked After Children's Teams has had a measurable impact on the timeliness of responses to complaints which were assigned in this area. Similarly work, including complaint case-tracking, is being undertaken to identify issues in complaint handling by the service.

Further work is being undertaken to identify ways to address the issues in these services which includes reviewing a sample of complaints that were not dealt with in a timely manner and tracking the actions taken to identify issues in complaint handling by the service. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of September 2017.

See Appendices C and D for data regarding Stage 1 Complaints closed.

The proportion of complaints which were upheld or partially upheld in 2016-17 has remained at **52%** which is consistent with the figure of 52% observed in 2015-16.

See Appendix E for data regarding complaint outcomes.

86% (190) of complaints received in 2016-17 related to the quality of service. This is an increase from 74% of complaints in 2015-16. **9%** (19) of complaints received in 2016-17 related to the actions of staff. This is a decrease from 20% of complaints in 2015-16.

See Appendix F for data regarding categories of complaint.

28% (61) complaints related to Borough Wide Duty and Referral Teams (Including Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Evolve). This has increased from 26% (49) in 2015-16. **29%** (63) of complaints received related to Locality Social Work Teams This has decreased from 37% (72) in 2015-16. Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service also received **27%** (58) of complaints in 2016-17. This has increased from 19% (37) in 2015-16.

See Appendix B for data regarding Stage 1 complaints received by Services.

The above statistics reflect the impact on services of the changes being made which are leading to improvements in services in the medium and long-term. For example the transitional arrangements in management in Looked After Children's Teams have in the short-term resulted in an increase in the number of complaints and a corresponding decrease in performance. However given that a permanent management team has now been appointed in this service issues with performance will be addressed.

Whilst there has been much improvement and transformation work undertaken in Duty and Referral, this remains an area of concern in terms of performance in responding to complaints in time and work is currently being undertaken to further explore the underlying reasons and put in place measures to address the causes of poor performance.

3. Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

In 2016-17, **5** complaints were escalated to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. This has decreased from 10 in 2015-16. Proportionally fewer (2% in 2016-17 compared to 5% in 2015-16) complaints have escalated.

In 2016-17, **0** complaints were escalated to Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. This has decreased from 2 in 2015-16.

Only **40%** of complaints at Stage 2 were responded to in timescales. This has increased from 29% in 2015-16. Whilst this is partly a reflection of the complexity of the complaints which are dealt with at this stage and performance has improved, this remains an issue which needs to be addressed.

The proportion of complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 2 is **80%** (4). This has increased from 57% in 2015-16. Further analysis of these complaints needs to be undertaken to understand, given the proportion that were upheld; whether there was an opportunity to resolve complaints at an earlier stage.

The cost of appointing independent persons to undertake the consideration of complaints at Stage 2 and 3 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was **£32,096** in 2015/16. This has increased significantly from **£12,350** in 2015-16 due to the cost of several complex investigations which were either wholly undertaken or partly undertaken and paid for in this financial year. In total costs were incurred for 11 complaint investigations in this financial year which includes 6 investigations which carried over from the previous financial year. The costs incurred for the investigation of complaints received only in 2016-17 was **£17,037**.

4. Local Government Ombudsman cases

In 2016-17, **7** enquiries were received from the Local Government Ombudsman. This has decreased from 10 in 2015-16.

7 decisions were received from the Local Government Ombudsman in 2016-17.

5 enquiries related to Children's Social Care Complaints and the following decisions were made:

- **2** complaints were upheld – maladministration and injustice.
- **2** complaints was not upheld – no maladministration.
- **1** enquiry was closed after initial enquiries with no further action.

The **2** complaints that were upheld related to historical issues with child protection processes and the provision of services to meet a young person's special educational needs.

2 enquiries related to school admission appeals panels. This is a decrease from **3** in **2015-16**. None of the **2** complaints were upheld.

4. Benchmarking

Benchmarking with other Local Authorities is carried out via the Yorkshire and Humber Complaints Manager Group.

At the time of writing this report full benchmarking data for the period April 2016 to March 2017 was not available.

However in the period April 2015 to March 2016, the Council benchmarked as having the **2nd** highest number of complaints in the region.

In the same period the Council also had the **2nd** highest number of complaints from looked after children.

Whilst it can be considered that the Council is an outlier in terms of regional performance in this period; all of the above reflects the fact that Children's Social Care has through a period of transition leading to improvement and this is also a reflection of the proactive approach which has been taken to complaints.

It should be seen as a positive in particular than customers are able and feel confident to complain and in particular that young people have a voice and are able to make complaints about the service.

It should be considered that this indicates that concerns regarding access to the complaint procedure have been addressed. That the numbers of complaint received prior to 2014-15 were too low and could be considered to be an inaccurate representation of the quality of service offered at that time.

5. Learning from Complaints

Lessons learned were identified from 49 Stage 1 Complaints in 2016-17. Proportionally this is 23% of all Stage 1 complaints. This has decreased from 51 in 2015-16 and proportionally from 27% of Stage 1 complaints.

Further work is therefore being undertaken to maximise the opportunities for learning to be captured from all complaints and from June 2017 learning from complaints will be reincorporated into complaints performance management.

Learning is also identified from Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints as well as complaints investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Recommendations were made by Investigating Officers/Senior Managers following 3 investigations of complaints at Stage 2; and consideration of 1 complaint at Stage 3. Learning was identified from these recommendations.

In addition learning was identified from consideration of complaints by the Local Government Ombudsman and the recommendations which they made.

See Appendix G for examples of Learning identified from complaints and actions taken.

7. School Complaint Enquiries

The Local Authority has no responsibility for dealing with complaints about schools however enquiries are recorded to reflect the service provided in giving advice to members of the public about the school complaints procedure.

The number of school complaint enquiries received in 2016-17 has decreased from 76 in 2015-16 to **47**. 17 enquiries related to complaints about Secondary Schools, 27 enquiries related to complaints about Primary Schools; and 2 enquiries related to complaints about Pupil Referral Units.

The Complaints Team has continued to improve the information and advice provided to parents to reduce avoidable contact with the Council regarding school issues; and has continued to provide support to schools through regular contact with school management staff and provision of annual training to school governors.

8. Compliments

84 compliments were received about services in 2015-16. This has increased from 72 in 2014-15 however still remains below level seen in 2014-15 when 160 compliments were received.

The decrease in the number of compliments received can be attributed to changes in processes for capturing feedback which has reduced the opportunity for positive feedback to be captured.

Further work is being undertaken with the Performance and Planning Team in Children and Young People's Services to ensure that the opportunities for feedback from young people and families are maximised and both positive and negative feedback are captured.

See Appendix H for data regarding compliments received and Appendix H for examples of compliments received.

9. Compensation

A total of **£8,169.75** was paid to 6 complainants as a result of complaints made in 2016-17. This has decreased slightly from £8,274 in 2015-16.

£7,069.75 was paid to complainants to reimburse money which they were entitled to or for quantifiable loss incurred.

£1,050 was paid to complainants in recognition of distress suffered as a result of their experience and for time and trouble in pursuing complaints.

10. Top complaint issues 2016-17

Customer Service

Complaints about phone calls not being returned or customers being unable to contact members of staff account for a significant proportion of all complaints received, particularly in relation to Children's Social care. These types of complaints are tending to form the main basis of complaint where previously they were supplementary issues.

Communication with families

- Customers unhappy with involvement or lack of involvement with individual family members particularly where there are separated parents involved and the child lives with one parent.
- Communication with extended family members and clarity around information shared with them and level of involvement.

Content and timeliness of assessments and reports

The most common types of assessments and reports which form the subject of complaints are Single Assessments:

- Customers unhappy with what is written about them in reports and assessments.
- Complaints about delay in social worker completing or in them receiving the assessment.

Actions, Conduct and Professionalism of Staff

Complaints about actions of staff have mainly been made supplementary to the main issues which the customer has complained about.

These types of complaints particularly refer to:

- Specific comments made by social workers which are viewed by the complainant as inappropriate.
- Social workers not carrying out actions that they have promised to do.
- Cancellation of meeting with short notice or no notice at all provided.

Information sharing and confidentiality

- Customers unhappy with their personal information being shared and decisions to share information.
- Customers unhappy that their details have not been kept anonymous when they have made a referral.

11. Developments in 2016-17

- A performance management regime has continued and has been strengthened by the Complaints Team working with the Directorate Leadership Team in Children and Young People's Services. The new performance management process includes a weekly complaints report to the Directorate Leadership Team highlighting outstanding enquiries which require a response, issuing of weekly reminders for all enquiries; and a process acting swiftly to resolve those complaints which are at risk of not being responded to within statutory requirements. This has been strengthened by the inclusion of senior management team members in reminders and by regular meetings between the Complaints Officer and Deputy Strategic Director.
- The Complaints Team have continued to produce a monthly Complaints and Customer Feedback Report to Directorate Leadership Team highlighting exceptions in performance and learning.
- Learning from Complaints is integrated into the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework.

- The beyond auditing innovative approach has been introduced to further strengthen quality assurance processes. This approach audits cases to strengthen learning opportunities and support practice improvements. Cases chosen for auditing for this approach will include cases where a complaint has been received from a child, a complaint is upheld or partially upheld. The learning from these complaints is built into the overall service improvement action plan.
- Learning from Complaints will also be included in Whole Service Events. The approach will be to take learning from Children & Young People complaints will be themed and discussed at quarterly meetings with practitioners to identify service improvements and provide feedback on the impact of improvements made.
- Complaints Training was commissioned by the Complaints Team in and delivered to Team and Service Managers in March/April 2016 focussing on response and resolution at Stage 1; to improve the quality and effectiveness of responses to complaints.
- Following a mystery shopping exercise carried out by the Young Inspectors we have improved the information on the Council website to make it more accessible to young people by revising the content and wording of the existing information and including specific information aimed at young people in care. We have also revised our contact details on the Council website and young persons' complaint leaflet to highlight promote the various methods which young people can use to contact the complaints team including the dedicated text message number.
- Development within Children's Social Care system for recording complaints and alerting staff; as well as associating complaints documents.

12. Planned Improvement Actions in 2016-17

In 2016/17 we will:

- Further develop our processes for learning lessons from complaints to ensure that actions identified translate into wider improvements in service which deliver better outcomes for children and young people, and their families. We will do this by working with the Performance and Planning Team in Children and Young People's Services to develop a process which identifies lessons which ensure that lessons are identified, actions taken and outcomes measured.
- Inclusion of complaints data in reports to Performance Board to encourage greater accountability and improve performance and wider learning.
- Improve access to the complaints procedure for children and young people including children with disabilities by reviewing and improving the quality of

information provided to them and opportunities to tell us their views; and review the entire complaints procedure to ensure that it is child-centred and child-friendly throughout. We have undertaken consultation with children and young people working with the Performance and Planning Team. The feedback received will be used to shape the complaints process going forward and an improved complaints process will be developed and feedback provided to young people prior to implementation.

- Implementation of new form in Children's Social Care system for all complaints.
- Deliver advice and guidance to front line staff about the complaints procedure and their obligations when dealing with young people and their families; to ensure that young people and their families are aware of their right to complain and are properly informed about how to do so.
- Revise the complaints information contained in the social care procedures to provide a practical guide for frontline staff and managers regarding the complaints process and their responsibilities; and include all the relevant templates.
- Work with Performance and Planning Team in Children and Young People's Services to ensure that options for capturing positive and negative feedback are maximised.

Appendix A – Number of enquiries received by month

Enquiry Type	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Total
Chief Executive						1							1
Compliment	5	1	5		10	16	21	7	4	4	4	7	84
Informal Complaint	1	2	2		2	2	1			1	4		15
LGO	1		2	3		1							7
School Complaint	6	12	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	6	47
Service Request		6	2	1	3							1	13
Stage 1 - Children's	22	7	14	14	13	26	12	21	5	15	23	22	194
Stage 1 - Corporate	4		4	1	3	4	4	2				1	23
Stage 2 - Children's					1		2			1			4
Stage 2 - Corporate					1								1
Grand Total	39	28	31	21	35	53	43	33	12	24	33	37	389

Appendix B – Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area/Team and month

Service Area/Team	2016									2017			Grand Total
	A pr	Ma y	Ju n	Ju l	A ug	Se p	O ct	N ov	D ec	Ja n	Fe b	Ma r	
Borough Wide	1	3	5	3	5	8	5	10	2	4	8	7	61
Duty Team 1			1		1		3					1	6
Duty Team 2	1		2		2			2	1			1	9
Duty Team 3		2		1	1	2	1	4			2	2	15
Duty Team 4			1	1		2		3		2	2	3	14
Evolve				1	1	2			1		2		7
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub		1	1			2	1	1		1	2		9
Out-of-Hours Team										1			1
Central - Children in Need	5		1	1		6		3	1	2	2	4	25
Central CIN Team 1								1					1
Central CIN Team 2	1					2							3
Central CIN Team 3	1									1	1		3
Central CIN Team 4	2			1		1		2	1	1	1		9
Central CIN Team 5	1		1			3						3	8
LAC Team 1												1	1
Children in Care	7		4	6	7	9	3	5	1	6	7	3	58
Adoption Service												1	1
LAC Team 1	1					2	1	1		1	1	1	8
LAC Team 2	1		4	3	3	3	1	1	1		2		19
LAC Team 3	4			1	3	3				3			14
LAC Team 4	1			2		1		2		2	1	1	10
Leaving Care Service					1		1	1			1		4
(blank)											2		2
Children's Disability Service	2		2	1		2	4	1				4	16
Children's Disability Team	2		2	1		2	3					4	14
Disability Family Support Service								1					1
Short Breaks							1						1
Early Help - Central			1										1
Early Help Team - Oakwood and Town Centre			1										1
Early Help - South										1			1
Early Help Team - Wales and Dinnington										1			1
Early Help - Troubled Families					1	1							2
Troubled Families					1	1							2
Fostering and Adoption	3		2	1		1							7
Adoption Service			2										2
Financial Allowances				1									1
Foster Carer	1												1
Fostering Team	1					1							2
Woodview	1												1
Inclusion Support Services		3	2										5
ECHAT		1	1										2
Education Psychology			1										1

Service Area/Team	2016									2017			Grand Total
	A pr	M ay	Ju n	Ju l	A ug	Se p	O ct	N ov	D ec	Ja n	Fe b	Ma r	
Skills and Learning		2											2
North - Children in Need	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2		2	3	4	19
Central CIN Team 2										1			1
North CIN Team 1	1				1							1	3
North CIN Team 2		1				1	1	1				1	5
North CIN Team 3			1	1		1		1			3	2	9
North CIN Team 5										1			1
Performance and Planning					1								1
Commissioning, Performance and Quality					1								1
Safeguarding								1			1		2
Case Conference Chair								1					1
Duty Team 3											1		1
South - Children in Need	7		1	1	1	1	3	1	1		2	1	19
South CIN Team 1	1			1		1	1	1	1				6
South CIN Team 2	2		1										3
South CIN Team 3	4				1		2				2	1	10
Virtual Schools				1									1
Virtual School				1									1
Grand Total	26	7	19	15	16	30	16	23	5	15	23	23	218

Appendix C – Stage 1 Complaints Closed in Time by Month (Performance exceptions highlighted in red)

Month	Complaints Closed in Time			
	N	Y	N (%)	Y (%)
Apr	16	16	50%	50%
May	1	13	7%	93%
Jun	1	18	5%	95%
Jul	3	10	23%	77%
Aug	3	11	21%	79%
Sep	3	15	17%	83%
Oct	12	13	48%	52%
Nov	8	9	47%	53%
Dec	11	7	61%	39%
Jan	4	3	57%	43%
Feb	1	18	5%	95%
Mar	6	13	32%	68%
Grand Total	69	146	32%	68%

Appendix D – Stage 1 Complaints Closed in Time by Service Area (Performance exceptions highlighted in red)

Service Area	N	Y	N (%)	Y (%)
Borough Wide	27	34	44%	56%
Central - Children in Need	4	21	16%	84%
Children in Care	23	32	42%	58%
Children's Disability Service	6	10	38%	63%
Early Help - Central		1	0%	100%
Early Help - South		1	0%	100%
Early Help - Troubled Families		2	0%	100%
Fostering and Adoption		7	0%	100%
Inclusion Support Services		5	0%	100%
North - Children in Need	3	16	16%	84%
Performance and Planning		1	0%	100%
Safeguarding	2		100%	0%
South - Children in Need	4	15	21%	79%
Virtual Schools		1	0%	100%
Grand Total	69	146	32%	68%

Appendix E – Outcome of Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area/Team (Performance exceptions highlighted in red)

Service Area/Team	Outcome				Grand Total
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	
Borough Wide	6	26	27	2	61
Duty Team 1		2	4		6
Duty Team 2	2	3	3	1	9
Duty Team 3	1	8	6		15
Duty Team 4	1	8	5		14
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	1	2	6		9
Evolve	1	3	2	1	7
Out-of-Hours Team			1		1
Central - Children in Need		8	17		25
Central CIN Team 2		1	2		3
Central CIN Team 3			3		3
Central CIN Team 4		2	7		9
Central CIN Team 5		4	4		8
LAC Team 1		1			1
Central CIN Team 1			1		1
Children's Disability Service	1	9	5		15
Children's Disability Team	1	7	5		13
Short Breaks		1			1
Disability Family Support Service		1			1
Early Help - Central		1			1
Early Help Team - Oakwood and Town Centre		1			1
Inclusion Support Services	2	2	1		5
Skills and Learning		1	1		2
ECHAT	1	1			2
Education Psychology	1				1
North - Children in Need		5	13	1	19
Central CIN Team 2		1			1
North CIN Team 1			3		3
North CIN Team 2		3	2		5
North CIN Team 3		1	7	1	9
North CIN Team 5			1		1
Safeguarding		1	1		2
Duty Team 3		1			1
Case Conference Chair			1		1
South - Children in Need		9	9	1	19
South CIN Team 1		2	4		6
South CIN Team 2		1	1	1	3
South CIN Team 3		6	4		10
Children in Care	6	29	22	1	58
LAC Team 1	1	4	3		8
LAC Team 2	1	9	8	1	19

Service Area/Team	Outcome				Grand Total
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	
LAC Team 3		8	6		14
LAC Team 4	2	4	4		10
(blank)		2			2
Adoption Service	1				1
Leaving Care Service	1	2	1		4
Fostering and Adoption	4	2	1		7
Foster Carer		1			1
Fostering Team	1	1			2
Woodview	1				1
Adoption Service	2				2
Financial Allowances			1		1
Virtual Schools		1			1
Virtual School		1			1
Performance and Planning			1		1
Commissioning, Performance and Quality			1		1
Early Help - South	1				1
Early Help Team - Wales and Dinnington	1				1
Early Help - Troubled Families			2		2
Troubled Families			2		2
Grand Total	20	93	99	5	217

Appendix F – Category of Stage 1 Complaints received by Service Area/Team

Service Area/Team	Category of complaint					Grand Total
	Actions of staff	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Quality of Service	
Borough Wide	8				53	61
Duty Team 1	2				4	6
Duty Team 2	2				7	9
Duty Team 3	3				12	15
Duty Team 4					14	14
Evolve					7	7
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	1				8	9
Out-of-Hours Team					1	1
Central - Children in Need	1	1			23	25
Central CIN Team 1					1	1
Central CIN Team 2					3	3
Central CIN Team 3	1				2	3
Central CIN Team 4		1			8	9
Central CIN Team 5					8	8
LAC Team 1					1	1
Children in Care	3	1	1	1	52	58
Adoption Service					1	1
LAC Team 1	1				7	8
LAC Team 2	1	1		1	16	19
LAC Team 3			1		13	14
LAC Team 4	1				9	10
Leaving Care Service					4	4
(blank)					2	2
Children's Disability Service					15	15
Children's Disability Team					13	13
Disability Family Support Service					1	1
Short Breaks					1	1
Early Help - Central					1	1
Early Help Team - Oakwood and Town Centre					1	1
Early Help - South					1	1
Early Help Team - Wales and Dinnington					1	1
Early Help - Troubled Families	1				1	2
Troubled Families	1				1	2
Fostering and Adoption		1			6	7
Adoption Service					2	2
Financial Allowances					1	1
Foster Carer					1	1
Fostering Team		1			1	2
Woodview					1	1
Inclusion Support Services				1	4	5
ECHAT				1	1	2
Education Psychology					1	1

Service Area/Team	Category of complaint					Grand Total
	Actions of staff	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Quality of Service	
Skills and Learning					2	2
North - Children in Need	1		1		17	19
Central CIN Team 2					1	1
North CIN Team 1					3	3
North CIN Team 2					5	5
North CIN Team 3	1		1		7	9
North CIN Team 5					1	1
Performance and Planning	1					1
Commissioning, Performance and Quality	1					1
Safeguarding		1			1	2
Case Conference Chair					1	1
Duty Team 3		1				1
South - Children in Need	4				15	19
South CIN Team 1	3				3	6
South CIN Team 2	1				2	3
South CIN Team 3					10	10
Virtual Schools					1	1
Virtual School					1	1
Grand Total	19	4	2	2	190	217

Appendix G – Compliments received by Service Area/Team

Row Labels	Number of Compliment Received
Borough Wide	2
Central - Children in Need	12
Children's Disability Service	1
Early Help - Central	6
Early Help - North	2
Inclusion Support Services	3
North - Children in Need	6
Safeguarding	
Schools	2
South - Children in Need	5
School Planning, Admissions and Appeals	
Children in Care	14
Fostering and Adoption	23
Virtual Schools	
Historical	
Performance and Planning	1
Early Help - South	2
Early Help - Troubled Families	1
School Improvement Service	2
Early Years and Childcare	2
Grand Total	84

Appendix H – Compliments Received

Compliment Details	Service Area
the enthusiasm that two officers XXXX and XXXX showed towards early help was lovely to see	Early Help - North
XXXX has been extremely supportive and is always available to discuss any issues	Fostering and Adoption
Thanks for all the hard work XXXX has doneXXXX has shown a commitment to XXXX beyond what would be expected and her continued involvement and contribution to our work has been invaluable at this very difficult time XXXX is clearly a credit to your service	Early Help - Central
I would like to say thank to RMBC for giving me the skills and knowledge to move forward	Children in Care
They described her as lovely, fantastic, offers advice and support, nothing is too much trouble, has really supported them. They don't feel rushed when she visits, she has made a big difference to how the carers feel.	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for XXXX "XXXX's involvement has been invaluable, he is extremely supportive and positive. He will be missed"	Children in Care
Thank you so much for your help and support and being so understanding you have been the best social worker	Central - Children in Need
Very helpful and supportive, helped get me through each day. I thank her for the support she gave me I am very grateful	Central - Children in Need
Cannot fault the commitment XXXX has shown - 10 out of 10 to XXXX	Central - Children in Need
I would like to praise and thank our Social worker XXXX for her dedication and caring nature she showed especially .. when she was at college and shouldn't have been on duty. XXXX is an asset to the Fostering team and this should be recognised by higher management. XXXX is highly motivated and is an inspiration to all who are lucky enough to work alongside her. Thank you XXXX for your much needed support	Fostering and Adoption
XXXX had provided the school with fantastic support in respect of a child in care, XXXX. She said that XXXX was very clear and consistent in her interactions with XXXX and that without her support XXXX would probably not still be at that school. She ended by saying that if all SWs were as committed as XXXX her job would be a lot easier.	Children in Care
Compliment for Social Worker....stated it was evident how much work and effort had been put in by the social worker in the case and that the report was a very good piece of work which was evident through the thorough and comprehensive report, which made it evident the Special Guardianship for the children was in their best interests.	South - Children in Need
The feedback in general is that XXXX was professional, knowledgeable, had a positive impact on the child and family and built on the school staff's confidence in social workers and they are sorry to hear that she is leaving	South - Children in Need
Compliment for staff at Early Help, - "Both my Children XXXX & XXXX have attended and I can't thank you enough for all the help, guidance and advice you have given to them, especially XXX, XXXX and XXXX. Your reception team XXXX, XXXX and XXXX who helps out are absolutely fabulous and put everyone at ease when they enter the building, they have made me feel very welcome. I would highly recommend your service, keep up the good work.	Early Help - Central

Compliment Details	Service Area
Compliment for Children in Need North Team 4 - I am writing to you to express how fantastic XXXX has been as our social worker. XXXX, has both restored my faith in the system and helped my family achieve a better outcome for my son and through this, a better outcome for the whole family	North - Children in Need
I wanted to write and thank the Rowan Centre for all the help and care and support they have shown...in the 20 months he has been there we have watched him grow from a shadow of an anxious boy to the confident teenager he now is.... The Rowan Centre is an invaluable resource.	Schools
Compliment for Foster carers XXXX and XXXX we were instantly welcomed with open arms which made all of our worries and apprehensions wash away, it felt like we had known them both forever! Straight away XXXX and XXXX made it clear that they would help us no matter what time of day it was or how far along the process we were they would be there to support and guide us. The love and affection they have shown our daughter goes above and beyond what they are asked to do as foster carers and it amazes me how they've both put their heart and soul into XXXX and every child after.	Fostering and Adoption
Compliment for School Improvement Service. "I would like to thank XXXX for all the help and support that she has provided us in the process of appointing our new Headteacher.... XXXX was pivotal in her role as she was able to advise us effectively through every step of the way. It is also worth noting that XXXX was flexible in her approach and was able to provide us with sound advice in our planning, interview and final selection"	School Improvement Service
Compliment for foster carer from social worker - "I gave XXXX time with parents in which she spoke and reassured them and they are now accepting of her caring for their baby. I am hoping this will make the discharge and handover a more positive experience for baby XXXX and easier for parents"	Fostering and Adoption
Compliment for Early Help - and Youth Start - "Thank you for your help, guidance and advice. Reception Team are absolutely fabulous and put everyone at ease. Highly recommend the service"	Early Help - Central
Actions of staff - Compliment for Children in Need Central Team5 "XXXX has asked that one of my Child In Need plans be anonymised and sent round as an example of good practice"	Central - Children in Need
Actions of staff - Compliment for Children in Need Central Team 5 - Compliments from the special guardians of a child when I have supported them in a court hearing	Central - Children in Need
Actions of staff - Compliment for social worker - she said she loved her social worker, she felt listened to, she said there are very few people who she can talk to but felt she could talk to you about anything and she really liked you.	Central - Children in Need
Compliment for Early Help Team - North - Mum spent quite some time praising the efforts, success and very personal service which the YOT team have delivered to both her child and her (specifically from case manager XXXX, REMEDI reparation co-ordinator XXXX, YOT nurse XXXX and REMEDI victim liaison officer XXXX)	Early Help - North
Compliment from Cafcass - From the very start of the proceedings your efforts in supporting the familywas greatly appreciated. You supported the family practically,	North - Children in Need

Compliment Details	Service Area
emotionallyYou pro-actively worked and managed this case to a high standard and I was impressed by your dynamic and creative attitudeEach visit I have made to the family, despite the at times increasing hostility in this matter, they have always maintained that you have been supportive, appropriate and a person they see as a trusted professional.	
Actions of staff - Want to publicly thank the Visual Impairment Team (Inclusion Services CYPS). Due to the training given to our staff about how to cater for this student's needs and the work XXXX and the rest of the VI team have consistently done with this student, her attendance improved and she was like a different person.	Inclusion Support Services
Compliment for EHC Assessment Team - I just want to say thank you for everything you have done on this case. I know it has not been the easiest of mediation cases and I appreciate the time and effort that has been put into it by you and your team.	Inclusion Support Services
Actions of staff - You pro-actively worked and managed this case to a high standard and I was impressed by your dynamic and creative attitude to increasing the family's engagementAs you know this case has not always been easy to manage and despite this you have maintained a level headed approach and always kept the best interests of the child as paramount concern.....	North - Children in Need
Compliment for Fostering Recruitment Thank you for all you have done we are so proud and excited to be part of Fostering Service	Fostering and Adoption
Compliment for Fostering Recruitment Thank you so much for everything you have done... your kind words, listening ear have been much appreciated.	Fostering and Adoption
Compliment for Safeguarding - XXXX gained positive engagement with the child straight away and this enabled us to achieve what we needed from a Police investigation perspective. This has led to the suspect (CA) pleading guilty to multiple offences.....In addition to that it has enabled the child to bring closure to these events. It is unlikely that we would have had the same result without XXXX's input.	Borough Wide
Compliment for Educational Psychologist - Outstanding work today! Several people made a point of telling me how much they enjoyed today's workshops. They liked your presentation; both in content and execution..... it was well worth coming!!!!	Inclusion Support Services
Compliment for LACC Team - Many Thanks for this information and advice I really appreciate it.	Children in Care
Compliment for Early Years - I spoke to a lovely lady yesterday called XXXX and another today called XXXX. Both were so helpful and friendly on the phone which is very rare these days when you speak to someone. When I was told I would be called back it happened in less than half an hour which again very rarely happens.....I wish everyone was as nice as you 2 ladies when you speak to them on the phone.	Early Years and Childcare
Quality of Service - "XXXX has been an amazing Social Worker, helping me and my family - she is the best Social Worker I have ever had"	Central - Children in Need
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for XXXX and Team "Congratulations - a sterling piece of work for my young man"	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - "The fostering social worker went to a	Fostering and Adoption

Compliment Details	Service Area
meeting with a foster carer and birth mother, where her child is being placed for adoption with a sibling. This is great news that this child is being placed with a sibling. How lovely but sad that the birth mother brought flowers and chocolates for the foster carer to say thank you for looking after her baby for well. Good on the foster carer for making birth mum feel so important during this process"	
Quality of Service - "Transitions training was fantastic and really enjoyable"	Children in Care
Quality of Service - "XXXX as a dream to work with , their rock , wonderful, always available, will offer support on non-working days , makes them feel valued"	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for XXXX "Everyone thought the EPP Training was excellent. Even those who had received the training previously felt they learnt something new."	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service "Just wanted to say also a big thank you for us having XXXX as our social worker. Myself and XXXX get on well with her and it has made our adoption process much more enjoyable, she is with us every step of the way and goes above and beyond	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for Young Inspectors "Their passion and commitment to this work is very clear and I really commend them for it. It is vital that the services we provide in this town are fit for purpose, and that the young people are listened to. So often I see services developed in isolation without even consulting the people they are for. This is clearly wrong and you are doing a lot to address that. I am glad that when the inspectors identify weaknesses and report them – action is taken. My grateful thanks to all the young people for making our services stronger."	Performance and Planning
Quality of Service - "I think the work she has done with this case is exceptional in moving plans forward for XXXX. She has shown her commitment to XXXX and had a good relationship with him which allowed him to open up to her. XXXX was good at communicating with the carers and myself which was greatly appreciated especially to the carers as they were new to fostering."	North - Children in Need
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for Early Help "She said that they all work well with families, have a positive approach and have had success with families."	Early Help - South
Quality of Service - Early Help Triage Team "She praised triage for their quick feedback on referrals that the school send through. She appreciates this."	Early Help - Central
Quality of Service - "Thank you for being there and supporting me - you have made me feel so proud of myself for what I have achieved"	Children in Care
Quality of Service - "XXXX is kind, very efficient and genuinely interested"	North - Children in Need
Quality of Service - Thank you to XXXX - excellent working practice and a real support to the work we have been championing"	Children in Care
Quality of Service - Family Assessment Team "She described XXXX and XXXX as very nice and supportive. She stated that throughout the assessment they have informed her about various concerns they have in relation to her parenting however felt and appreciated that they did it in a non-judgmental and helpful manner."	North - Children in Need
Quality of service - Borough Wide, Duty team 4 "For	Borough Wide

Compliment Details	Service Area
supporting our daughter and reassuring us things are ok everything done professionally"	
Actions of staff - The carers spoke very positively about the support from XXXX . They referred to her support as amazing, she has gone the extra mile, has contacted the police and hospitals on their behalf when they have needed information often in her own time, late at night. Nothing has been too much trouble.	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of service - She stood out by clearly putting the children's welfare first, she showed she cared and would strive for the best results for the family she was supporting.	Early Help - Central
Actions of staff - Just letting you know I was very impressed with the momentum that XXXX showed in completing the very detailed and lengthy chronology for the XXXX Conference"	Central - Children in Need
Quality of Service - "I just wanted to contact you all to say a massive thank you on behalf of the Temporary Migration Parental Network for taking part in our adoption and fostering event last week. The event was a real success and we have already received some fantastic feedback from staff who enjoyed the events, and from those who now are considering taking their interest in adoption or fostering to the next stage."	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - "She reports her to be exceptional, will go the extra step and is very quick to respond and return calls"	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - "XXXX was great, she was a really good social worker, never missed and always on time. Really interested in the baby. She held our hand all the way through our first adoption "	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - "Thank you for your input and offer of support for school and us."	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - "We were blown away last year and this year we have been equally impressed"	School Improvement Service
Actions of staff - "XXXX is a knowledgeable, calm and approachable therapist/SW. We have found that we are able to discuss anything that is of concern and success and discuss these effectively and with an understanding and listening ear. XXXX is passionate about her role and has been a great support to us and her over the last months. I wish we had more XXXX's that actually understand fully and the impact adoption has not just on the child but the adopters too. She is amazing"	children in care
Quality of Service - "A big thank you to everyone at Early Years - you all do a fantastic job for the borough and their families"	Early Years and Childcare
Quality of Service - "They were amazing - so thankful"	South - Children in Need
Actions of staff - Fostering Team "Thank you for everything you have done for our family. You have exceeded our expectations at every level"	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - looked after child wrote that she will miss her and thank you for helping her	Fostering and Adoption
Actions of staff - "thank you for all your help - I've enjoyed our sessions"	Children in Care
Actions of staff - "Mainly I wanted to say I thought you were brilliant with XXXX, particularly in explaining confidentiality and consent. I think you did a great job of trying to get her to see the potential benefits of working with you, and even if she chooses not to, I don't think anyone could have done any better in trying to convince her"	Early Help - Central
Quality of Service - "Your support was so positive it has	Central - Children in Need

Compliment Details	Service Area
given us the confidence to do it again"	
Quality of Service - "Biggest thank you to XXXX. Thanks to you my head is clear and fresh and I am now able to be the best for my 2 amazing children. I am forever grateful"	Central - Children in Need
Actions of staff - "I just wanted to send you a little note to express our sincere gratitude at the warmth and kindness shown to us by you"	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - "Thank you for your support it has turned our life around and also to Helping Hands"	Children's Disability Service
"Quality of Service - Words cannot convey our appreciation for the difference your diligence and empathy on the job made to our lives. You picked us up when we were both at our lowest. You provided answers to all our questions and dusted off our destitution with the right advice and support. You deserve to be a STAR over and over again because you made a difference in our world and empowered us to fight the odds of life. Even when we are still presently in the midst of the turmoil XXXX and I are ever so grateful that such Angels like you are still around providing lifesaving services to crushed ones like us. Your support has sure restored our trust in the system knowing there are still the few humane ones, who sees the need to go above and beyond the call of duty to tender assistance when most needed.	Early Help - Troubled Families
Once again XXXX and I want to say a heartfelt thank you for restoring our dignity.	Early Help - South
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for Early Help "I was amazed that in an unscheduled half an hour meeting we were listened to and our genuine concerns understood and supported. I would like to thank both XXXX and XXXX for their professionalism."	Children in Care
Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for South CIN Team 1 "Great meeting yesterday, you restored my faith in social services"	South - Children in Need
Quality of Service - "I wanted to say what an absolute pleasure it has been to work with you on the XXXX matter. You worked so hard on this case and filled all the professionals involved with confidence that you were managing the risks, the planning and were being proactive to avoid delay for the child. I was impressed with your work on this matter and I know that other's involved in this case were also incredibly pleased with how you have managed this matter given the at times complexities that arose."	Fostering and Adoption
Quality of Service - Adoption Team "Excellent training session - the day was extremely valuable and enjoyable. We are lucky in Rotherham to have such knowledgeable, experienced and personable adoption specialists"	Children in Care
Quality of Service - via XXXX who received "a glowing account of support and engagement"	Children in Care
Quality of Service - "She's proactive, goes above and beyond, diligent, is a doer, has built relationships. Visits are not rushed, she's calm paces her work, is in regular contact. "	Children in Care
Quality of Service - "Provided excellent support to her son. This work is impressive especially given the issues mum has been dealing with over the years. It appears that you have manage the situation incredibly well, especially given mum's disparaging view of statutory agencies historically in Rotherham"	Children in Care

Regeneration & Environment Services

Directorate Performance in 2016-17

Regeneration & Environment Services' complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received was **239**. This represents a **121%** increase over the last year from **108**. However the number of complaints classified as informal complaints has decreased **38%** from **240** last year to **148**.

Overall **70%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales compared with **86%** in 2015-16.

Headline Results 2016/17

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) increased to 239 from 108 in 2015-16
↓	Number of informal complaints decreased to 148 from 280 in 2015-16
↔	Complaints regarding Community Safety and Street Scene 156 , 66% of all complaints*
↔	Complaints regarding Planning, Regeneration and Transport 50 , 21% of all complaints*
↔	Complaints about Culture, Sport and Tourism 34 , 14% of all complaints*
↓	Total number of complaints upheld and part upheld decreased to 81 , 34% (2015-16, 47 , 44%)
↓	The number of complaints escalating was 4% , 10 Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2, from 225 Stage 1 complaints. Decrease from 12% in 2015-16. (11 Stage 2 complaints and 94 Stage 1 complaints)
↓	Percentage of complaints at all levels responded to in timescales, 70% . Decreased from 86% in 2015-16.
↑	Complaints categorised as Quality of Service increased to 171 , 72% (2015-16, 63 , 58%)
↓	Complaints categorised as Actions of Staff decreased to 32 , 13% (2015-16, 27 , 25%)
↔	No financial remediation awards were made. (2015-16, £0)
↑	Ombudsman upheld / part upheld 2 out of 9 complaints decisions made. Increase from No decisions upheld out of 3 complaints in 2015-16)

↑	Number of Councillor Surgery's received between April and September was 234. Increased from 231 , April to September in 2015-16
↑	Number of Compliments received increased to 414 (2015-16, 371).

* Unable to provide year on year comparison due to restructuring in the Directorate.

Top complaint issues by Service Area

Community Safety & Street Scene (Appendix 2)

Table 1 The Outcome of stage 1 complaint by Service Area

Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	% partially or fully upheld
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP	1	0	1	0	0	100%
CS Highways	39	30	3	5	1	21%
CS Regulation & Enforcement	30	22	5	1	2	20%
CS Street Scene	79	34	13	25	7	48%
Total	149	86	22	31	10	34%

Most complaints received were about Street Scene services, the vast majority relating to services provided by the Waste Management section. The complaints related to missed bin collections, delay in receiving replacement bins and conduct of refuse collectors, almost half of which were fully or partially upheld. (In 2015-16 Waste Management received 27% of all complaints received, the highest for any single service area)

The Highways Service received the next highest number of complaints; over 40% of the complaints were about Parking services mainly following the serving of Fixed Penalty Notices by Civil Enforcement Officers with only 12% being fully or partially upheld. The next highest area of complaints for Highways related to the Highway Delivery and Highway Inspection teams, overall the number of fully or partially upheld complaints was relatively low at 21%.

Regulation and Enforcement Services formed the third highest area of complaints, roughly a third related to Licensing, Food Health and Safety and Bereavement Services none of which were fully or partially upheld. The remainder were about Community Protection issues, the biggest proportion being about Environmental Health issues such as noise and either accusations of lack of action made by the reporters or unfair action made by the alleged perpetrators. One case involving a lack of feedback from a housing officer involved in a case was upheld.

Table 2 the percentage of stage 1 complaints closed in time by Service Area

Service Area	Received	In Time	Out of Time	% In Time
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP	1	1	0	100%
CS Highways	39	39	0	100%
CS Regulation & Enforcement	30	16	14	53%
CS Street Scene	79	42	37	53%
Total	149	98	51	66%

66% of Street Scene complaints were answered within the target time, the performance within the teams varied significantly from 100% of all Highways letters to 53% of Street Scene and Regulation and Enforcement complaint responses being issued in time. Analysis of the complaints for the two Regulation and Enforcement Teams show Community Protection achieved 63% and Licensing 36%.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints and Local Government Ombudsman investigations.

Four or under 3% of complaints progressed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure none of which were upheld. Two complaints progressed to Stage Three Review Panels neither were upheld, both took the option to proceed to the Local Government Ombudsman, one withdrew the complaint before judgement and the second was not upheld.

The percentage of escalated complaints suggests that complaints are being taken seriously by the service, reasonable outcomes are reached and the rationale for the outcome of the investigation is being effectively explained to the complainant.

Planning, Regeneration and Transportation (Appendix 3)

Table 1 The Outcome of stage 1 complaint by Service Area

Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	% partially or fully upheld
Business Retail & Investment	4	3	0	1	0	33%
Catering and Facilities Services	2	0	2	0	0	100%
Corporate Property	9	7	0	2	0	22%
Planning and Building Control	23	17	5	1	0	26%

Transportation & Highways Design	5	3	2	0	0	40%
Total	43	30	9	4	0	35%

Complaints were received by Planning, Regeneration and Transportation reflecting the wide range of services provided. In general they were regarding the quality of service provided or challenges / disputes relating to decisions made.

The majority of complaints were received by Planning and Building Control (56% of PRT complaints); they were mostly regarding complaints from customers who have been affected by developments. Complaints were received if they felt that full consideration had not been applied to the issues that they had identified. Complaints were also received regarding action in respect of enforcement requests, 21% of these complaints (all complaints) were fully or partially upheld.

The second highest number of complaints were received by Corporate Property Services (20% of PRT complaints); the majority received by the Estates and Asset Management Teams. Examples include a lack of response to enquiries, the attitude of a member of staff and a challenge of a decision relating to a valuation of a property, 30% of these complaints (all complaints) were fully or partially upheld.

Transportation and Highways design received the third highest number of complaints (10% of PRT complaints), they were regarding issues relating to the operation of traffic lights and road safety concerns regarding parking and regarding a section of Sheffield Road, 40% of their complaints (all complaints) were partially upheld.

Table 2 the percentage of stage 1 complaints closed in time by Service Area

Service Area	Received	In Time	Out of Time	% In Time
Business Retail & Investment	4	2	2	50%
Catering and Facilities Services	4	2	0	100%
Corporate Property	9	4	5	45%
Planning and Building Control	23	22	1	96%
Transportation & Highways Design	5	4	1	80%
Total	45	34	9	76%

96% of Planning and Building Control complaints, who dealt with the most complaints, were answered within the target time. The performance within the teams varied from 100% of all Catering and Facilities to only 45% of Corporate Property complaint responses being issued in time.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

6 complaints (14%) progressed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure. This is higher than the Directorate escalation at 4% but reflects nature of service provided, the majority regarding planning issues. Only 1 case progressed to a Stage Three Review Panel but 2 cases were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Culture Sport and Tourism

Table 1 The Outcome of stage 1 complaint by Service Area

Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	% partially or fully upheld
Cultural Services	22	13	4	5	0	32%
Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces	11	5	3	2	1	45%
Total	33	18	7	7	1	42%

Complaints received by Culture, Sport and Tourism were regarding the information and advice provided, attitude of staff and the delays in service.

The majority of complaints were received by the Cultural Services (67% of CST complaints), they were mostly received by Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs (47% of CST complaints) they received complaints regarding the way that customers felt they had been treated by staff, information and advice provided and delays in receiving service. 30% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld.

The next highest number of complaints were received by both Tree Services and Urban Green Spaces with 4 complaints each. (12% of CST complaints). Examples include service provided in parks / country parks and disagreements relating to the outcome of considerations regarding problems caused by trees. 50% of these complaints, for both teams, were fully or partially upheld.

Table 2 the percentage of stage 1 complaints closed in time by Service Area

Service Area	Received	In Time	Out of Time	% In Time
Cultural Services	22	17	5	77%
Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces	11	8	3	73%
Total	33	25	8	76%

Only 75% of Libraries and Information Hubs complaints' were answered within the target time. Urban Green Spaces responded to 50% of complaints in time and Tree Services responded to 100% in time.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

No complaints progressed to stage 2 of the complaint procedure. 1 complaint (received in year 15-16) escalated to a Stage Three Review Panel where the complaint was not upheld.

Learning from complaints case studies

1. A customer complained about an unnecessary journey caused by the late removal of traffic diversion signs after the completion of road works, and the time then taken to get through to the telephone contact centre.

In response to the complaint we have:

- The highways service apologised and met with the contractor to review their procedures to ensure prompt removal in the future.
- The contact centre has revised its automated telephone message to advise customers of their position in the queue.

2. A customer raised concerns over the Council's response to security incident in Riverside library

In response to the complaint we have:

- Apologised to the customer for their experience on that day.
- We have increased regular patrols of the Library wings by building security.
- We have included an additional work station positioned at the bottom of Wing A within the library to increase staff presence in that area.

3. Customer was unwilling to give out bank details within ear shot of other customers in a Council Customer Service Centre

In response to the complaint we have:

- Apologised to the customer.
- We will provide a room where the phone call can be made, which is offered to customers who are discussing sensitive details.

4. A customer did not receive notification of planning meeting to allow them to state their objections in person.

In response to the complaint the we have:

- Provided a full apology to the customer
- All Planning Officers have been reminded of correct procedure and the importance of making sure that all interested parties have received a notification.

Informal Complaints

Any complaint that is specifically excluded from a formal complaint procedure, such as a complaint about a Council Cabinet decision or could be completely resolved within 24 hours of receipt will be categorised as an informal complaint. Following advice from the Ombudsman, over the last two years efforts have been made to make sure that all complaints are correctly categorised.

148 contacts were received which were logged as Informal Complaints compared to **280** in 2015-16. The majority of these contacts related to services delivered by Street Scene (61), Highways (35), Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces (**13**), Transportation and Highways Design (**11**), Cultural Services (**9**) and Regulation & Enforcement (4).

Almost a third of informal contacts related to missed bin collections and green waste collection issues. Other causes of contact were, grounds maintenance, street cleansing, potholes, road resurfacing, parking, winter maintenance, request for double yellow lines, problems with traffic lights, problems relating to road diversions, enforcement of planning requirements, problems with the payment machine at Riverside, waiting in the reception area at Riverside, maintenance of facilities in parks and green spaces.

Councillors Surgeries

The Complaint Team discontinued its management of the Council's Surgery IT system in September 2016. Councillor Surgeries are now managed and responded to under a new process. The figures presented below are from April 2016 to September 2016 only.

234 enquiries were received April to September, compared with **231** received in 2015-16 April to September. The majority (160) being related to services delivered by Community Safety and Street Scene Issues, Highways (75), Street Scene (51), Regulation & Enforcement (31) and Community Safety (3).

Issues relating to Highways were concerned with potholes, condition of the highway and footpaths, street lighting and overhanging vegetation. Street Scene enquiries related to request to remove fly tipping, grounds maintenance issues and green bin recycling issues. Regulation and Enforcement enquiries were all about environmental enforcement issues with the main issue being noise nuisance.

Enquiries were also received relating to the Transportation and Highway Design Service (**31**) regarding road markings, request for traffic calming measures, noise and other concerns relating road traffic safety issues.

19 enquiries were received for Culture Sport and Tourism, all bar two were either request to prune or remove trees or about issues relating to urban green spaces.

Ombudsman decisions

In 2016-17, 9 decisions were received, compared to 3 decisions in 2015-16. 2 decisions were upheld or partially upheld (no decisions were upheld in 2015-16). The upheld / partially upheld decisions are as follows;

- There is no evidence the Council called the customer a liar when it wrote to him about events which took place when they tried to deliver documents to the Council. The Council accepts it failed to respond to Mr X's formal complaint about this specific issue (complaints were responded to at the time about other issues raised) and apologises for this.
- The Council's decision to abandon proposals for parking restrictions was considered not to be at fault although the Council delayed referring the matter to the strategic

director for decision and did not keep Mr C updated. An apology was considered to be a satisfactory remedy for the injustice caused.

Compliments

408 compliments were received, 371 received in 2015-16, some examples are as follows:-

Community Safety & Street Scene - 284

Community Safety – 3

Compliment for xxx of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit- *"It was clear yesterday from the work that xxx has been doing that he has been working extremely hard on this matter with great enthusiasm and determination and in reality actually doing the job that in the recent past would have been done by a good local community Police Officer. I did thank him in the meeting and personally at the end but I thought you should be made aware as well"*.

Highways - 162

Compliment for Highway Delivery - *Thank you for the repairs done to Church View. It is a great improvement. Thanks to the operatives for working so hard and professionally, especially in the warm weather conditions. Thank you very much*

Thank you to parking services - *We are seeing more of a presence from enforcers so again I must thank you for that.*

Compliment for Parking Services- *"Thank you for your help with regards to an untaxed vehicle - it is very much appreciated"*

Street Scene - 88

A Compliment for the Recycling Crew working on Warren Hill on 5.4.16 *"The crew did a good job and picked up items from bags and boxes which had spilled onto the highway"*

"Customer lives on Rossiter Road, Greasbrough, which overlooks Greasbrough Park called to say that the man who maintains the grassed area in Greasbrough Park takes a great deal of pride in his work. The grassed area looks brilliant".

"I just wanted to thank the green refuse team that collected on Flat Lane, Whiston today. The bins were neatly placed keeping the paths clear for wheelchair users and pram pushers as were the blue boxes with the blue bags placed upside down inside to keep their interiors dry. This effort by the team is much appreciated by those of us who use wheelchairs and can sometimes find it difficult to manoeuvre on the street. Well done and many thanks for being thoughtful"

Regulation & Enforcement – 31

Compliment for xxx - *thank you so much for whatever you said to the neighbour last week thank you once again, hopefully this is the last of it now*

Compliment for xxx - following work undertaken regarding noise nuisance *"I can state your actions are clear, to the point, unbiased and it is apparent your Unit upholds the RMBC dictum Where Everyone Matters"*

Culture, Sport & Tourism - 80

Compliment for the Security & Reception Staff in Riverside - *"I just wanted to say how welcoming the security guard and the receptionist, that are on duty first thing in the morning are. It's amazing how something as simple as their friendly hello, as you arrive in the building in the morning, can make such a positive impression."*

Compliment for Mowbray Gardens Library- *"I find it a very relaxing place to work and the staff are always welcoming and helpful. The atmosphere is conducive to working and there are so many ways to engage the young person, whether it is books or computer."*

"I just wanted to drop a line and say well done to the libraries team for the Harry Potter event at Rawmarsh last week."

Planning, Regeneration and Transport - 50

Compliment for RiDO - *"Thank you to xx and all the team at RiDO for their help - from initial business ideas to writing business plans. Cannot recommend RiDO's "Business Lift Off" project enough."*

Compliment for Kitchen Staff at Liberty House, *"Over the weekend I have had some amazing meals from our kitchen staff, xxx and xxx"*

New Developments 2016-17

- The number of complaints upheld has continued to reduce and the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure has also reduced again. These measures indicate good complaint handling and improvements in the way in which the Directorate responds to formal complaints.
- Learning from complaint procedures strengthened, all complaints considered for learning and service improvement. All upheld complaints have learning issues recorded.
- The Complaint Team continues to work closely with the Directorate, taking into account restructure and personnel changes.
- Numbers of complaints classified as informal reduced
- Councillor enquiries responded to under a new process.

2017-18 Improvement Actions

- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform learning and service improvements.
- Continue to reduce the numbers of complaints upheld and to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Continue to work with the Directorate to ensure more learning from complaints issues are identified.

- Continue to work with the Directorate to ensure an improvement in performance against timescale
- Bespoke training to be offered to Teams / Services where appropriate.

Appendix 1 - All enquiries

Service Area / Team	Chief Executive	CLlr Surgery	Commissioner Enquiry	Compliment	Informal Complaint	LGO	MP Enquiry	Pre Complaint	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Suggestion	Stage 2	Grand Total
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP		3		3			1		3	1					11
ASBU		3		3			1		2	1					10
H&S									1						1
CS Highways	2	75	1	162	35	2	3	5	47	39	1	1	1		374
Highway Assessment & Drainage		7		20	2		1	1	1	2					34
Highway Delivery		36		40	15	2	1	2	21	9			1		127
Highway Inspection & Enforcement	1	14		31	7			2	14	10	1	1			81
Parking Services		7		61	9				9	16					102
Street lighting	1	11	1	10	2		1		2	2					30
CS Regulation & Enforcement	4	31	1	31	4	3	8	2	45	30	2	1			162
Bereavement services		1				2				2					5
Env Health		21	1	28	2		5	1	26	12	1				97
Enviro Crime	1	7			1				1	2					12
Food Health & Safety										1					1
Food Safety & Standards						1			3		1	1			6
Licensing				1	1					8					10
Licensing App & Admin	1	1		1			1		1						5
Licensing Committee							1								1
Licensing Enforcement		1		1					11						13
Selective Licensing	1						1		1	5					8
Trading Standards	1							1	2						4
CS Street Scene	1	51	1	88	61		7	2	59	79	1		5		355
Education Transport		1		1	3		1			4					10
Grounds Maintenance		9		13	4		1	1	10	5					43
HWRC Management			1	31	3				4	1				2	42
Passenger Transport Services					1		1								2
Refuse Collection		11		11	44			1	13	57			2		139
Street Cleansing	1	28		31	5		4		36	9			1		115
Waste Management		1		1											2
Waste Strategy/behaviour Change		1			1										2
CST Cultural Services	1	1		55	9	2			1	22			5		96
Advocay & appeals				2						1					3
Events Team				1											1
Heritage services				10	1										11
Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs	1	1		32	7	2			1	16			5		65
Registrar				10	1					3					14
Theatre										2					2
CST Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces	1	21		25	13		1		13	11		1			86
Countryside Sites										1					1
Green Spaces Management										2					2
Landscape Design												1			1
Sport & Leisure		1		6					1						8
Sports Development				3					2						5
Tree services		10		7	1		1		3	4					26
Urban Green Spaces	1	10		9	12				7	4					43
PRT Business Retail & Investment				19	1	1			1	4	1				27
Business centres				4											4
Inward Investment				8											8
Markets					1	1				4	1				7
Retail Investment				7					1						8
PRT Catering and Facilities Services				8	3			2	1	2			1	1	18
Catering and Facilities				8	3			2	1	2			1	1	18
PRT Corporate Property		10		3	6		1		1	9	1				31
Asset Management		4		1	2				1	3					11
Building Design										1					1
Building Management		4		2	4					1					11
Capital Projects		1								1					2
Corporate Environmental Team										1					1
Estates		1					1			2	1				5
PRT Planning and Building Control	3	11		15	5		3	3	5	23	4	1			73
Building Regulation				2											2
Dangerous structures				1											1
Development Management		4		7	1		2	2	1	5					22
Economic Development				1											1
Land Charges				1											1
Planning Enforcement		3		1	3				3	6					16
Policy	3	1		5	1		1	1	1	12	4	1			30
PRT Transportation & Highways Design	2	31		5	11	1	1		5	5			1		62
Highway Design		4			1										5
Road Safety	1	10		2	2				2	1					18
Traffic Management	1	11		3	4	1	1		2	1			1		25
Transportation					1										1
Transportation Planning									1						6
UTC		1			3					3					7
Grand Total	14	234	3	414	148	9	25	14	181	225	10	4	13	1	1295

Appendix 2

Community Safety and Street scene

Service Area / Team	Chief Executive	Clr Surgery	Commissioner Enquiry	Compliment	Informal Complaint	LGO	MP Enquiry	Pre Complaint	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Suggestion	Grand Total
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP		3		3			1		3	1				11
ASBU		3		3			1		2	1				10
H&S									1					1
CS Highways	2	75	1	162	35	2	3	5	47	39	1	1	1	374
Highway Assessment & Drainage		7		20	2		1	1	1	2				34
Highway Delivery		36		40	15	2	1	2	21	9			1	127
Highway Inspection & Enforcement	1	14		31	7			2	14	10	1	1		81
Parking Services		7		61	9				9	16				102
Street lighting	1	11	1	10	2		1		2	2				30
CS Regulation & Enforcement	4	31	1	31	4	3	8	2	45	30	2	1		162
Bereavement services		1				2				2				5
Env Health		21	1	28	2		5	1	26	12	1			97
Enviro Crime	1	7			1				1	2				12
Food Health & Safety										1				1
Food Safety & Standards						1			3		1	1		6
Licensing				1	1					8				10
Licensing App & Admin	1	1		1			1		1					5
Licensing Committee							1							1
Licensing Enforcement		1		1					11					13
Selective Licensing	1						1		1	5				8
Trading Standards	1							1	2					4
CS Street Scene	1	51	1	88	61		7	2	59	79	1		5	355
Education Transport		1		1	3		1			4				10
Grounds Maintenance		9		13	4		1	1	10	5				43
HWRC Management			1	31	3					4	1		2	42
Passenger Transport Services					1		1							2
Refuse Collection		11		11	44			1	13	57			2	139
Street Cleansing	1	28		31	5		4		36	9			1	115
Waste Management		1		1										2
Waste Strategy/behaviour Change		1			1									2
Grand Total	7	160	3	284	100	5	19	9	154	149	4	2	6	902

Appendix 3

Planning Regeneration and Transport

Service Area / Team	Chief Executive	Clr Surgery	Compliment	Informal Complaint	LGO	MP Enquiry	Pre Complaint	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Suggestion	Stage 2	Grand Total
PRT Business Retail & Investment			19	1	1			1	4	1				27
Business centres			4											4
Inward Investment			8											8
Markets				1	1				4	1				7
Retail Investment			7					1						8
PRT Catering and Facilities Services			8	3			2	1	2			1	1	18
Catering and Facilities			8	3			2	1	2			1	1	18
PRT Corporate Property		10	3	6		1		1	9	1				31
Asset Management		4	1	2				1	3					11
Building Design									1					1
Building Management		4	2	4					1					11
Capital Projects		1							1					2
Corporate Environmental Team									1					1
Estates		1				1			2	1				5
PRT Planning and Building Control	3	11	15	5		3	3	5	23	4	1			73
Building Regulation		2												2
Dangerous structures		1												1
Development Management		4	7	1		2	2	1	5					22
Economic Development			1											1
Land Charges			1											1
Planning Enforcement		3	1	3				3	6					16
Policy	3	1	5	1		1	1	1	12	4	1			30
PRT Transportation & Highways Design	2	31	5	11	1	1		5	5			1		62
Highway Design		4		1										5
Road Safety	1	10	2	2				2	1					18
Traffic Management	1	11	3	4	1	1		2	1			1		25
Transportation				1										1
Transportation Planning		5						1						6
UTC		1		3					3					7
Grand Total	5	52	50	26	2	5	5	13	43	6	1	2	1	211

Appendix 4

Culture Sport and Tourism

Service Area / Team	Chief Executive	CLr Surgery	Compliment	Informal Complaint	LGO	MP Enquiry	Service Request	Stage 1	Stage 3	Suggestion	Grand Total
CST Cultural Services	1	1	55	9	2		1	22		5	96
Advocay & appeals			2					1			3
Events Team			1								1
Heritage services			10	1							11
Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs	1	1	32	7	2		1	16		5	65
Registrar			10	1				3			14
Theatre								2			2
CST Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces	1	21	25	13		1	13	11	1		86
Countryside Sites								1			1
Green Spaces Management								2			2
Landscape Design									1		1
Sport & Leisure		1	6				1				8
Sports Development			3					2			5
Tree services		10	7	1		1	3	4			26
Urban Green Spaces	1	10	9	12			7	4			43
Grand Total	2	22	80	22	2	1	14	33	1	5	182

Appendix 5

Complaints by Upheld status

Service Area / Team	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Outstanding	Grand Total
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP		1				1
ASBU		1				1
CS Highways	32	3	5	1		41
Highway Assessment & Drainage	1		1			2
Highway Delivery	5	1	2	1		9
Highway Inspection & Enforcement	11		1			12
Parking Services	14	1	1			16
Street lighting	1	1				2
CS Regulation & Enforcement	24	5	1	2	1	33
Bereavement services	2					2
Env Health	8	3	1		1	13
Enviro Crime	2					2
Food Health & Safety	1					1
Food Safety & Standards	2					2
Licensing	7			1		8
Selective Licensing	2	2		1		5
CS Street Scene	35	13	25	7		80
Education Transport	2	1	1			4
Grounds Maintenance	4		1			5
HWRC Management	2	1	2			5
Refuse Collection	24	8	19	6		57
Street Cleansing	3	3	2	1		9
CST Cultural Services	13	4	5			22
Advocay & appeals	1					1
Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs	10	3	3			16
Registrar	1	1	1			3
Theatre	1		1			2
CST Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces	6	3	2	1		12
Countryside Sites				1		1
Green Spaces Management	1		1			2
Landscape Design	1					1
Tree services	2	1	1			4
Urban Green Spaces	2	2				4
PRT Buisness Retail & Investment	4		1			5
Markets	4		1			5
PRT Catering and Facilities Services		2				2
Catering and Facilities		2				2
PRT Corporate Property	7	1	2			10
Asset Management	2		1			3
Building Design	1					1
Building Management			1			1
Capital Projects	1					1
Corporate Environmental Team	1					1
Estates	2	1				3
PRT Planning and Building Control	18	5	1	3	1	28
Development Management	3	2				5
Planning Enforcement	4	1	1			6
Policy	11	2		3	1	17
PRT Transportation & Highways Design	3	2				5
Road Safety	1					1
Traffic Management	1					1
UTC	1	2				3
Grand Total	142	39	42	14	2	239

Appendix 6

Complaints by Category

Service Area / Team	Actions of staff	Cost of service	Delay in service	Lack of information	Lack of service	Quality of service	Grand Total
CS Community Safety, Resilience & EP						1	1
ASBU						1	1
CS Highways	9	1	2	1		28	41
Highway Assessment & Drainage						2	2
Highway Delivery			1			8	9
Highway Inspection & Enforcement	1		1	1		9	12
Parking Services	8	1				7	16
Street lighting						2	2
CS Regulation & Enforcement	6		2		1	24	33
Bereavement services						2	2
Env Health	4					9	13
Enviro Crime					1	1	2
Food Health & Safety						1	1
Food Safety & Standards						2	2
Licensing	1		2			5	8
Selective Licensing	1					4	5
CS Street Scene	10		5		5	60	80
Education Transport			2			2	4
Grounds Maintenance	1				1	3	5
HWRC Management	2					3	5
Refuse Collection	7		2		4	44	57
Street Cleansing			1			8	9
CST Cultural Services	4			3	2	13	22
Advocay & appeals				1			1
Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs	3			1	2	10	16
Registrar	1					2	3
Theatre				1		1	2
CST Leisure Tourism and Green Spaces			1		1	10	12
Countryside Sites						1	1
Green Spaces Management						2	2
Landscape Design						1	1
Tree services			1		1	2	4
Urban Green Spaces						4	4
PRT Buisness Retail & Investment		1				4	5
Markets		1				4	5
PRT Catering and Facilities Services	1					1	2
Catering and Facilities	1					1	2
PRT Corporate Property						10	10
Asset Management						3	3
Building Design						1	1
Building Management						1	1
Capital Projects						1	1
Corporate Environmental Team						1	1
Estates						3	3
PRT Planning and Building Control	1		4	7		16	28
Development Management			1	4			5
Planning Enforcement	1		2			3	6
Policy			1	3		13	17
PRT Transportation & Highways Design	1					4	5
Road Safety						1	1
Traffic Management	1						1
UTC						3	3
Grand Total	32	2	14	11	9	171	239

Finance & Customer Services

Directorate Performance in 2016-17

Complaints about Finance and Customer Feedback are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure. This report contains information relating to all services which are now part of the directorate including customer services which was previously part of another directorate.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received was **91**. This represents an increase over the last year from **39**. In addition **23** informal complaints have also been received which is a decrease from **65** received in 2015-16.

There is a clear correlation between the increase in Stage 1 complaints and the reduction in complaints being dealt with informally. Cumulatively the service dealt with 114 complaint enquiries (Formal and informal complaints) in the last 12 months; and 104 in 2015-16. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of complaint enquiries received in 2016-17; the trend of more complaints being dealt with formally is one that has been broadly replicated Council-wide following criticism from the LGO on some cases.

Overall **96%** of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales compared to **95%** in 2015-16.

Headline Results 2016-17

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) was 91 , 133% increase from total in 2015-16 – 39 .
↑	Total number of complaints upheld was 23 , 25% compared to 19 , 28% in 2015-16.
↔	No change in the number of complaints escalating:- 4 (4%) Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2 in 2016-17. (4, 10% in 2015-16) 0 Stage 3 complaints was received in 2016-17. (1 in 2015-16.)
↑	67 , 74% of complaints about Quality of Service were received (25 , 64% in 2015-16.)
↓	8 , 9% of complaints about Actions of Staff were received (9 , 23% in 2015-16.)
↓	£303.12 in financial remedies awarded from 5 complaints. (1 award totalling £1506.80 in 2015-16.)
↓	0 Ombudsman decisions were received. 2 were upheld out of 3 decisions received in 2015-16.
↓	5 Councillor Surgery's received (8 in 2015-16.)
↑	17 Compliments received (5 in 2015-16.)
↓	23 informal complaints were received decrease from 65 in 2014-15.
↓	0 Commissioner enquiries received. (15 in 2015-16.)

Finance and Customer Services maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Maintained excellent performance against complaint timescales.
- Reduction in the number of complaints dealt with informally.
- Percentage of upheld complaints reduced.

- Reduced the amount of financial remediation awarded.
- More learning from all complaints issues identified and reported.
- All enquiries reported on a regular basis to Directorate Management Team.

Learning from complaints case studies

1. Customer understood that a repair would be attended to on the 24th December but contractors did not attend.

It was found that our Partners had moved the appointment within external works timescale, without notifying the customer and without customer being advised by staff member that this could happen.

In response;

- A meeting was arranged to discuss response times for communal lighting. Complaint would not have arisen had we been able to attend to repair in a more reasonable timeframe.

2. A customer complained after receiving an amended council tax bill and correspondence from an enforcement agent; that he had not received correct information regarding occupancy; had not been offered a Single Person Discount and the information he had received was incorrect.

It was found that a manual adjustment was made to Council Tax account to inform the enforcement agents that balance had been amended and the premium charge was included in the balance sent to the enforcement agents. This was an error.

In response;

- This will be discussed in the team meetings next Tuesday Wednesday are as all complaints

Stage 1 Complaints

Total of **87** complaints were dealt with at Stage 1 of the complaint procedure. This represents an increase from 34 in 2015-16.

To put this increase in to context there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of informal complaints received; from 63 in 2015-16 to **23** in 2016-17.

Whilst there has been an increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2016-17; the trend of more complaints being dealt with formally is one that has been broadly replicated Council-wide following criticism from the LGO on some cases.

68 complaints received related to Revenue and Benefits services. This has increased from 35 in 2015-16. **14** complaints received related to Customer Services. This has increased from 1 in 2015-16.

85 (out of 87) complaints at Stage 1; were closed within the required timescale which is **98%** performance. In 2015-16, 37 (out of 40) complaints were closed within the required timescale

which was 93% performance. This exceeds the corporate performance target of 85% closed within timescale. It should be noted that whilst more complaints have been dealt with through formal processes; performance has improved.

22 (out of 87) complaints at Stage 1; were either upheld or partially upheld; which is **25%** of complaints dealt with at this stage. In 2015-16 18 (out of 34) were upheld or partially upheld; which is 53%.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

4 Complaints escalated to Stage 2 in 2016-17; in comparison with 4 in 2015-16. Despite more complaints being dealt with formally in 2016-17; the number of complaints escalating has not increased and the proportion of complaints escalating to Stage 2 has decreased from 10% to 4%.

The focus on quality assurance of Stage 1 responses is an important factor which has contributed to the low proportion of complaints escalating.

No complaints escalated to Stage 3 in 2016-17; in comparison with 1 complaint which escalated to Stage 3 in 2015-16.

Top complaint issues

Revenue and Benefits

68 of the 91 complaints received by the directorate were about Revenue and Benefits; of which 14 were either upheld or partially upheld.

The majority of complaints which were either upheld or partially upheld, were regarding staff error in the administration and management of accounts; particularly in Local Taxation and Benefits Assessment. Typically these complaints concern full advice not being provided regarding an issue rather than the wrong advice being provided. These also include administrative errors by staff on individual accounts.

A small number of complaints which were either upheld or partially upheld concerned delays in processing either claims or changes to accounts; and on one occasion a complaint was upheld in relation to a system error which resulted in incorrect calculations of liability and incorrect billing and correspondence.

Customer Services

14 of the 91 complaints received by the directorate were about Customer Services; of which 4 were either upheld or partially upheld.

The complaints which were either upheld or partially upheld concerned difficulties making contact with the service, lack of response to enquiries or how calls were handled.

It should be noted that some complaint issues although responded to by the department were the result of actions by other Council services.

Councillor Surgeries

5 Councillor Surgery enquiries were received in the year compared to **8** in 2015-16.

The Complaint Team discontinued its management of the Council's Surgery IT system in September 2016. Councillor Surgeries are now managed and responded to under a new process. The figures presented are from April 2016 to September 2016 only.

Ombudsman enquiries

1 enquiry was received from the Local Government Ombudsman regarding;

- *Legal Services* - Mr X complained that the Council failed to adequately investigate and respond to two complaints he made in 2015.

The Ombudsman decided that 'there was a delay in the Council's response to Mr X's complaint about a Service Manager's comments and the Council should apologise to Mr X.'

The Council agreed to the Ombudsman's recommendations and apologised to the customer. The Council reviews its processes to ensure it deals with all complaints in line with its published procedures.

Informal Complaints

23 enquiries were dealt with as informal complaints in 2016-17; compared with **65** in 2015-16.

The trend of more complaints being dealt with formally is one that has been broadly replicated Council-wide following criticism from the LGO on some cases.

7 informal complaints received related to Local Taxation, 4 related to Account Management, 5 related to Benefits Assessment, 5 related to Customer Services, and 2 to Electoral Services.

Informal contacts related to low level disputes about claims and accounts, recovery action and delays in claims being processed.

Compliments

17 compliments were received, as follows;

- Revenues & Benefits - Account Management - I re-faxed the signed papers to you earlier this afternoon. I hope you have received them. You have been extremely helpful in this matter and indeed at times have gone beyond the call of your duty. Rotherham Council is lucky to have you. Thank you.
- Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation - Thank you for your response. Very professionally dealt with and written up.
- Customer Contact Centre - Thank you very much for the swift reply..... I've been totally surprise by the excellence service that had I've experienced each time. Not only getting what I need from you, but also speaking to some wonderful staff
- Revenues & Benefits - Account Management - "XXXX was very approachable and listened to all her concerns when sorting out her rent and Council Tax arrears"

- Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment - "Saw XXXX she was polite friendly, professional and a good listener"
- Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment - helpful and polite.
- Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment - May I say that notwithstanding the outcome I would like to record my appreciation of your courteous and professional, yet friendly, attitude."
- Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation (Ctax & NNDR) - "wanted to thank not only me but everyone she has spoken to in our office as we are all very helpful and kind"
- Customer Contact Centre - "Thank you to XXXX - he was very good and has done what was promised and now the lorry has to be covered when driving down her street".
- IT - "Thank you for your comprehensive investigations and detailed explanation "
- Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment – "I just wanted to let you know that XXXX was very professional, the knowledge she had of her job was extensive and she helped me a great deal by informing the family in a clear and concise way.
- Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation (Ctax & NNDR) - "Great member of staff - spoke very professionally and has done everything she said she would".
- Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation (Ctax & NNDR) - "Handled his call well and were very helpful - both excellent ambassadors for the Council"
- Customer Contact Centre - "Good service from Streetpride today re. bin collection - good information from call handler and problem sorted on the day"
- Customer Contact Centre – "Appreciation of support received from staff in the CSC during temporary relocation to Riverside House"
- Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment - "Thank you for clarification re. her discounts - you are doing a brilliant job and have explained everything really clearly"

New Developments 2016-17

- Improved quality assurance process for all responses including consideration of outcome. 100% of complaint response letters continue to be checked.
- Improved consistency in decision-making around correct route for addressing enquiries with more complaints being dealt with through formal complaints processes to provide recourse to customers who remain unhappy.
- Provided further clarity about correct route for responding to enquiries where there is a formal legal route to challenge decisions.
- All complaints and customer enquiries are reported on a quarterly basis to the Directorate Management Team.

2016-17 Improvement Actions

- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform learning and service improvements.
- Continue to improve consistency in decision-making around correct route for addressing enquiries by working closely with services.
- Improvement to timeliness to Stage 2 Investigations to ensure that they comply with timescales set out in complaints procedure.

Appendix 1

All enquiries

Service Area/Team	Enquiry Type										Grand Total
	Informal complaint	Stage 1	Stage 2	LGO	Cllr Surgery	MP Enquiry	Service Request	Compliment	Pre Complaint	Suggestion	
Financial Services	16	67	4	1	4	3	12	12	4		123
Financial Services		2	1						1		4
Revenues & Benefits - Account Management & Fraud	4	13	2		1		1	2	2		25
Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment	5	20		1	2	2	6	5			41
Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation (Ctax & NNDR)	7	32	1		1	1	5	5	1		53
Legal Services	2	4				1	2				9
Electoral Services	2	1									3
Legal Services		3				1	2				6
er, Information and	5	16			1		3	5	1	1	32
Customer Contact Centre	5	14			1		2	4		1	
IT		2					1	1	1		5
Grand Total	23	87	4	1	5	4	17	17	5	1	164

Appendix 2

Complaint Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Outcome				Grand Total
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	
Financial Services	8	6	55	2	71
Financial Services			3		3
Revenues & Benefits - Account Management & Fraud	1		14		15
Revenues & Benefits - Benefits Assessment	1	3	16		20
Revenues & Benefits - Local Taxation (Ctax & NNDR)	6	3	22	2	33
Legal Services	1	1	2		4
Electoral Services			1		1
Legal Services	1	1	1		3
Customer, Information and Digital	3	1	10	2	16
Customer Contact Centre	2		10	2	14
ICT	1	1			2
Grand Total	12	8	67	4	91

BRIEFING NOTE

Sustainability Strategy for Children's Services 2016 to 2021
Progress Report

Background

On 14th November 2016 Children and Young People's Budget Sustainability Proposals were presented to Cabinet as part of a wider report updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The proposals sought to set a realistic budget given the forecast of expenditure reported in the September 2016 Budget Monitoring Report which projected a £7.578m overspend in Children's Services with a further £0.270m overspend on associated legal costs. The report recommended setting a budget and financial plan over the period 2017/18 to 2020/21 which would enable the delivery of good quality sustainable children's social care services.

The robustness of the sustainability strategy was subject to comprehensive internal review and external challenge completed by the Practice Partner for Children's Improvement (Lincolnshire County Council).

The investment proposals were developed using a number of assumptions based on what we understood at the time about the demand levels in Rotherham. The number of Children in Need (CiN) was 1897, the number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) was 305, the number of Looked after Children (LAC) in September was 443 and a rise to 460 was predicted by the end of the financial year. It clearly stated that if the number of LAC increased beyond the estimated level then there would be further pressure on social care budgets and a risk that the reported position, and projections into future years, would be adversely affected.

The number of LAC placed at the end of each month from September 2016 to March 2017 is shown in Table 1. This growth in placements over and above 460 was a significant factor in the 2016/17 final outturn position for the directorate, a £2.344m over spend.

Table 1: Monthly Number of LAC Placements (Sep-16 to Mar-17)

Date	Number of LAC
30 th September 2016	443
21 st October 2016 *	460
30 th November 2016	472
31 st December 2016	488
31 st January 2017	482
28 th February 2017	486
31 st March 2017	487

* final information for October 2016 due to system implementation

In order to fund between 480 and 490 placements from April 2017, the Service with support from colleagues in Finance set the detailed budget for 2017/18 using zero based budgeting principles. Finance modelling was revisited and where possible additional funding transferred into the placement budget to fund the predicted costs associated with a care population of between 480 and 490.

Introduction

The investments chosen were based on a need to continue to improve the quality of practice and outcomes for children and young people whilst at the same time acknowledging that the Council was facing large budget reductions at the same time as increasing costs and demand.

The LAC placement baseline, on 1st April 2017, was 487 and it is from this baseline that impact of the investment in social care placements should be measured.

The future growth in placement numbers which was estimated in September 2016 predicted that, with no preventative action, Rotherham could expect an additional 48 placements during 2017/18 on top of the baseline starting position on 1st April 2017.

The Edge of Care initiatives developed as part of the CYPS plan for social care sustainability aimed to prevent 52 children entering (or remaining in) care in 2017/18. Therefore the net target reduction [*forecast number prevented from entering/(or remaining in) care, minus predicted growth (52 minus 48)*] in 2017/18 was 4 placements. Given a starting point of 487 placements and a reduction of 4 during the year; the target at year-end to meet financial sustainability was 483.

The cumulative net reduction in looked after children (edge of care prevention minus growth) over the four year period of the Sustainability Strategy 2017/18 to 2020/21 is 61 from the baseline position at the 1st April 2017. Assuming growth in numbers does not exceed the estimated 48 per year, the children in care population at the 31st March 2021 is estimated to be 426.

Table 2: Net Reduction in Looked After Children

Year	Net Reduction in Looked After Children
2017/18	(4)
2018/19	(13)
2019/20	(22)
2020/21	(22)
Total	487 – (61) = 426

Other placement based initiatives in the strategy were focused on reducing placement breakdown and increasing the proportion of looked after children in family based fostering settings which, in addition to giving children in care the best start in life, are more cost effective than residential settings outside of the local authority.

Progress of Sustainability Plan Initiatives

CYPS 1A – Foster Carer Payments Scheme, Support and Development

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		1.276	1.276	0.000
Cost Reduction (Gross £m)		(1.374)	(1.340)	0.034
Cost Reduction (Net £m)		(0.098)	(0.064)	0.034
Additional Foster Placements		15	15	0
LA Fostering placements (%)	43%	48%	42%	6%

The implementation of the allowances offer, better wraparound support and a dedicated marketing officer have all contributed to exceeding the targeted growth in the net number in local authority foster carers to date. However the expected corresponding fall in the number of LAC being placed in more expensive settings (Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) and Out of Authority Residential Homes) has not materialised; due to an unforeseen and extraordinary increase in the overall number of children in care. Additional places are being used for new entrants rather than “step down” of existing children from residential / external placements. The percentage of local authority foster places as a proportion of the overall care population has reduced as a direct consequence. The number of LA fostering places has increased by 7%; but overall LAC has gone up by 13% since the approval of the strategy.

By the end of July there were (a net) eight new in-house fostering placements. If the recruitment of foster carers continues at the same rate for the remainder of the year the forecast may well exceed 15. There are up to 13 residential placements ready now for ‘step down’ once we have the right foster carer matches available.

CYPS 1B – Therapeutic Service

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)	n/a	0.270	0.270	0.000

This budget investment was for additional clinical practitioners to deliver highly responsive and intensive interventions for Rotherham’s children in care identified as needing it most. It operates in conjunction with the fostering ‘offer’ and special guardianships whereby children ‘most at risk’ within Rotherham have the access they need to good quality and responsive wrap around therapeutic support to address specific emotional and mental well-being needs.

The recruitment process is complete and the Lead Therapeutic Social Worker, Therapeutic Worker and Therapeutic Intervention Worker are now in post. A Clinical Psychologist started in August, commissioned through Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust. The impact of the additional resource has been utilised to support children who have a high / very high strengths and difficulty questionnaire score. At present the additional support provided has meant the children in the cohort (10) have not experienced any further placement disruptions and 1 child has achieved a permanent match with a foster carer. The longer term outcomes for

these young people will be compared to a controlled group in Spring 2018 with a view to expanding this type of support if it demonstrates to improve outcomes to the child and reduce costs to the organisation.

CYPS 2 – Family Group Conferencing

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.164	0.164	0.000
Cost Reduction (Gross £m)		(0.165)	(0.330)	(0.165)
Cost Reduction (Net £m)		(0.001)	(0.166)	(0.165)
LAC Reduction	0	15	30	(15)

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is an effective tool for identifying and engaging with wider family members at an early stage of concern about a child. This service seeks to maximise the number of children able to live safely with their extended family and therefore reduce the number of children coming into care and for those in care on a voluntary basis, return them home sooner. This service improves outcomes for the children and young people and reduces the financial pressure within the LAC budget.

The service is being delivered through an in-house team. The target in terms of LAC prevention for Family Group Conferencing is 15 this year, increasing to between 25 and 30 in subsequent years. Performance to date suggests that this year the service will exceed its target and prevent 30 children entering care.

The Family Group Conferencing Team was established in April 2017. Following an intense period of training and shadowing, including support from Lincolnshire County Council and the Family Rights Group, the team began to receive referrals in May 2017.

At the end of August 2017, 54 referrals had been received by the team including: 22 families with a Child In Need (CIN) – including two CIN cases that were in the Public Law Outline (PLO) process; 18 families with children registered on a Child Protection Plan (including five in the PLO process); 4 where care proceedings have been issued; and 10 families where the children are Looked After. (The PLO process occurs when the family is told that if nothing changes the Council will make an application to the family court seeking removal of the child.)

18 conferences have taken place and three 6 week reviews have been successfully completed. Tracking is being implemented to demonstrate a de-escalation of need for all families who engage with the service. Evaluation of the first four months shows that currently 15 children have been prevented from an expected entry into care.

CYPS 3 – Special Guardianship Looked After Children

Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) offer the opportunity for family, friends or existing foster carers to give a permanent home to the child without Social Care input. This year there are two new SGO as at the end of July. There are currently 57

long term matched placements and 14 further placements. Each long term carer has been contacted with proposals to convert to SGO. A new SGO Support Officer post has been appointed. There is a reasonable expectation that up to 7 placements will convert during this financial year.

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.052	0.052	0.000
Cost Reduction (Gross £m)		(0.066)	(0.077)	(0.011)
Cost Reduction (Net £m)		(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.011)
LAC Reduction		6	7	(1)

CYPS 4 – Pause Project

Rotherham works with a number of mothers who have had multiple children taken into care. Pause, an organisation co-founded by Sophie Humphreys, former head of safeguarding at Hackney, works entirely outside of the usual local authority structure and independently of the social care services. The programme engages with mothers on a one-to-one basis, creating a bespoke programme of intensive therapeutic activities and practical support.

Women working with Pause are supported to focus on themselves to take control of their lives. To do this they are required to take Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) during the intervention, thereby creating a space to pause, reflect, learn and aspire.

The feasibility study identified 20 Rotherham women who have been the subject of a repeat removal of a child following pregnancy. Further consideration of this will be subject to a separate paper to Cabinet in the coming months but the initial work has indicated that between 5 and 10 placements might be avoided per year.

The Pause report was presented to DLT in June and identified that over a three year period 434 children were (or would have been) in scope.

CYPS 5 – Edge of Care

The Edge of Care team offer evidenced based family therapy and direct support to young people and their families in crisis, to enable them to remain within their immediate or wider extended family.

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)	N/A	0.350	0.204	(0.146)
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)	N/A	(0.165)	(0.096)	0.069
Net Saving	N/A	0.185	0.108	(0.077)
LAC Reduction	N/A	15	15	0

The Edge of Care Team has been established. The team will receive referrals in October 2017 and evidence of the team's impact will emerge in January 2018. The target number of 15 children who will avoid becoming looked after is ambitious in the remaining six months of the financial year. However there is capacity to work with 25 families, although the number of children in each family is unknown and will influence the outcomes.

CYPS 6 – Multi-systemic Therapy (MST)

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.000	0.000	0.000
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)		(0.044)	(0.088)	(0.044)
Net Saving		(0.044)	(0.088)	(0.044)
LAC Reduction		4	8	(4)

MST is an intensive therapeutic programme that works within the whole ecology of a young person. The MST therapist works with the whole family; the parents, the community and the school at the same time. The aim is to work in a solution-focused, strengths-based approach to empower the family to take responsibility for solving problems and to improve family functioning. The model acknowledges the fact that the family will be there for the young person into the future and beyond any service intervention.

A shared service agreement is in place between Barnsley and Rotherham, each authority shares fifty percent of the cost and fifty percent of the capacity. The cost of this to RMBC is met through the Troubled Families Grant and so there is no call on mainstream resources to fund this investment. Original estimates were that MST could prevent four children entering care per year.

Referrals to date include 5 Children in Need (CiN) cases and 4 Care Proceedings (CP) cases (including 1 at Public Law Outline (PLO), Pre-proceeding meeting). All referrers have indicated that the young person in question was 'at risk' of entering care or custody. It is forecast that there will be a LAC reduction of 8 in 2017/18 arising from this project (5 to the end of July).

CYPS 7 – Reunification Project

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.090	0	(0.090)
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)		(0.132)	0	0.132
Net Saving		(0.042)	0	0.042
LAC Reduction		12	0	12

The reunification scheme was delivered from April 2016 by the NSPCC and was due to run for two years. The second year was decommissioned at the end of March

2017 following a review of the expected outcomes. The expected reduction in number and cost of LAC from this service will instead come from the predicted overachievement of Family Group Conferencing.

An alternative reunification service is being developed through an application to the Life Chances Fund. The Council has received a grant in principle offer to contribute towards outcome payments should the new initiative get the go-ahead. It will involve delivery of a new adaptation of MST (Family Integrated Transition) and is earmarked for implementation in summer 2018.

CYPS 8 – Single Assessment Review Duty Team

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.166	0.166	0.000
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)		0.000	0.000	0.000
Net Saving		0.166	0.166	0.000

As part of the improvement journey the timeliness and quality of assessments has been a key focus. Moving from a four to a five Duty team structure and a cycle of 20 days between each duty week has improved the ability to progress work, it has maintained caseloads at a manageable level and afforded team managers sufficient time to provide robust management oversight and improve the quality of practice.

Duty Team 5 is in place, effective 1st April 2017.

CYPS 9 – Appointment of Newly Qualified Social Workers (x 22)

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)		0.900	0.900	0.000
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)		(0.330)	(0.330)	0.000
Net Saving		0.570	0.570	0.000
Agency reduction		22	22	0

In order to meet the demands of the Workforce Development Improvement actions in the Children and Young People's Service Improvement Plan, the Council recruited a cohort of 22 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) into the Children and Young People's Services in October 2016. It is business critical to continue this investment and the infrastructure is in place to support them with high quality placements and support. The recruitment of 22 permanent NQSWs has, and a new intake of 17 in Autumn 2017 will, fill existing social worker vacancies and help to reduce the use of agency workers over the next 12 months; reducing cost and creating a permanent stable workforce. As the end of their first year in practice approaches, of the 22 NQSWs recruited in October 2016, 21 remain in social work posts.

Continuing the strategy of growing experienced and qualified social workers will over the medium and longer term enable the transition from a significant reliance on agency staff, which has approached 20% of the workforce over the last two years, to

permanent employees. The percentage of agency staff is expected to fall below 10% from April 2018.

It is important to note that because of the statutory nature of social work, a need to keep caseloads manageable and to meet the statutory timescales for service delivery, a level of agency staff will always be required. The Directorate intends for this to be less than 10% - as noted above - against a national average of 16%.

The number of agency workers in Social Care has fallen from 77 at 1st April, to 62 at the end of August 2017. Of this 62, ten are in temporary posts approved for a time limited period to assist with the Complex Abuse and Operation Stovewood Investigations.

The CYPS, and significantly the Children's Social Care, employee budget is forecasting to underspend this financial year. Agency costs are expected to reduce by 26% compared to the amount spent in 2016/17, a cost reduction of £1.693m; and 40% (£3.232m) compared to spend in 2015/16.

CYPS10 – Workforce Development and Practice Improvement

	Baseline	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m) *		0.339	0.339	0.000
Investment (£m) **		0.489	0.489	0.000
Cost Reduction (Net) (£m)		0.000	0.000	0.000
Net Investment		0.828	0.828	0.000

* Includes the costs of an expanded learning and development structure; the commissioning of bespoke learning and practice improvement operating models; ** additional resources for backfill whilst training undertaken.

Professional social work practice in Rotherham has been the subject of much scrutiny in recent years. The quality and impact of Social Work was one of the key issues leading to the inadequate OFSTED judgement in 2014. In order to ensure that the quality of Social Work practice consistently and systematically improves, a learning and development programme for Social Workers – through the professional journey from Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), through the practitioner career and into Management and Leadership levels – is essential. The most improved local authorities (Hackney and Leeds) have demonstrated the importance of linking social work development to professional methodology in achieving better outcomes, both for children and on inspection.

It is essential that Rotherham Council provides training and development for its Social Workers in order to: improve practice and produce better outcomes for children, which could lead to longer term savings; reduce the risk of continued inadequate OFSTED judgements; and help to improve the retention of permanent Social Workers.

Across the directorate new methodologies including Signs of Safety and Restorative Practice are being rolled out. Leaving Care and Looked after Children Teams will also be trained in Social Pedagogy following the successful application for external partner funding which will pay for the pilot (first year).

Improvements in practice are expected to follow including good compliance levels, a majority of “good” (or better) case audits and an enhanced organisational culture with higher staff retention rates.

Overall summary / conclusion on the investments to date

All transformation projects are established (except Pause and Reunification which are both due for re-submission this financial year). The projects all have targets individually and collectively that are overseen by the CYPS Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) Transformation Board. All live projects are on target to deliver, or exceed original expectations; however the impact has to be seen in the light of unprecedented demand impacting on LAC numbers over and above the original growth and demand estimates in September 2016.

The overall change in the LAC numbers arising from these projects is a forecast net decrease of 8.

Summary of delivery against the targeted outcomes from the Sustainability Strategy in 2017/18

	Target 2017/18	Forecast 2017/18	(Favourable) / Adverse
Investment (£m)	4.096	3.860	(0.236)
Cost Reduction (Gross) (£m)	(2.276)	(2.261)	0.015
Net Investment/Saving (£m)	1.820	1.599	(0.221)
LAC Reduction	52	60	(8)

The individual projects are on target to deliver expected outcomes and achieve a reduction in expenditure compared to the alternative option of “do nothing”. However due to the significant increase in LAC to 521 (+7%) since 1st April 2017, there is a forecast net cost pressure on the CYPS budget of £2.592m. Without the initiatives in the Sustainability Strategy, the in-year pressure could have been more severe, a further £2.261m on top of the current overspend.

Monthly Number of LAC Placements (Mar-17 to Aug-17)

Date	Number of LAC
1 st April 2017	487
30 th April 2017	500
31 st May 2017	500
30 th June 2017	516
31 st July 2017	517
31 st August 2017	521

Complex Abuse

The significant increase in the number of looked after children referred to above is entirely due to the unforeseen and extraordinary impact of the complex abuse

inquiry, of which the costs are substantial. Without this, CYPS would be reporting a break-even budget position. However, instead the forecast at 31st July 2017 and reported to the September Cabinet was for a Directorate overspend of £2.592m.

The forecast includes 39 children and young people in care who are directly linked to the investigation. It does not incorporate any further placements, up to an additional 70 based on “worst case scenario” estimates, which could exacerbate the current position by up to £2.3m in this financial year.

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 25 October 2017

Report Title

The Implementation of the Revised Foster Carers Payments Scheme

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Ian Walker, Head of Service

Ward(s) Affected

All

Executive Summary

The Foster Carers Payments Support and Development Scheme was revised 12 months ago with the specific aim of boosting the recruitment of foster carers in Rotherham and to reduce the increasing reliance on the Independent Fostering Agency sector (IFAs). Whilst the revised scheme has broadly been successfully implemented it has coincided with a significant increase in the overall numbers of looked after children (LAC) so that there has been little impact on the use of IFA placements. However, without this revised Scheme it may well be that recruitment will have been less successful and the financial implications arising from the increase in LAC numbers will have been even more significant.

Recommendations

1. That the contents of this report be noted.
2. That Members raise any suggestions or challenge they deem appropriate to further progress the developments within the service.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

The Implementation of the Revised Foster Carers Payments Scheme

1. Recommendations

1.1 The OSMB are recommended to note the contents of this report and to raise any suggestions or challenge they deem appropriate to further progress the developments within the service.

2. Background

2.1 During 2016, RMBC's Fostering & Adoption (F&A) Service identified that a lower proportion of its children in care were placed with RMBC Foster Carers than in the majority of other comparable local authorities. A shortage of available placements was causing children to be placed in residential homes and with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) which, in addition to being a generally less satisfactory placement for the child, was a more expensive solution for RMBC.

2.2 The F&A service therefore concluded that a revised retention and recruitment incentive needed to be developed to create more placement opportunities within the Borough. This was to include a review not only of allowance payments but also of the level of training and support provided to new and existing carers. A six week consultation was undertaken in conjunction with a number of RMBC Foster Carers.

2.3 One element of this involved the benchmarking of a number of allowances paid to RMBC foster carers against those paid by comparable local authorities. This showed that RMBC carers received significantly less in a number of allowance types, but particularly so in respect of skills level allowances. In addition to this, the consultation undertaken with the foster carers indicated that they found the scope for progression through the allowance scheme including entitlement to any additional allowances to be confusing and something of a disincentive. As a result the Foster Carers Payment, Support and Development Policy was re-written with the objective of improving the recruitment and retention of foster carers in RMBC. Foster carers were consulted regularly throughout the process and were instrumental in designing the final model.

2.4 The findings of the consultation and recommendations for improving the offer to existing and prospective RMBC Foster Carers were ratified by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) on 2nd September 2016 when additional recommendations were also proposed. The policy was eventually approved by Cabinet on the 12th September 2017. The additional recommendations included the requirement for the Internal Audit team to review the implementation of the revised scheme to review whether:

- The revised foster care fees and allowances had been approved and accurately implemented.
- The implementation of enhanced support and training as part of the improved offer for Foster Carers was in delivery.
- The recruitment of additional foster carers was monitored and reported to establish the effectiveness of the revised scheme.

- Enquires as to the possibility of offering a Council Tax discount for RMBC foster carers, as per Commissioner Bradwell's recommendation, had been undertaken.
- Increased fees and allowances did not adversely affect carer's benefit payments, as per Commissioner Bradwell's recommendation.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 As part of the approval process it was clarified that any increase in fees and allowances would in fact not adversely affect the foster carer's benefit payments. As yet there has been little progress in respect of securing Council Tax discounts for foster carers as the Corporate Parenting Panel stated that priority for such consideration should be given to care leavers. In fact Council Tax Exemption was only recently achieved for Care Leavers and so consideration can now be given to extending this to foster carers.
- 3.2 It was unfortunate that the implementation of the revised scheme coincided with the introduction of the Liquid Logic case file management system upon which the payments of allowances was dependent. Given the implementation of two new systems at the same time it would be fair to state that there was some state of confusion with numerous systems errors being made which, in turn, led to some carers not being paid. However, a manual payment system was quickly established as back-up and over the course of the first month the payment errors were gradually eradicated. A further issue has arisen in that payments are linked to the placement recorded on Liquid Logic and when a young person changes placement unless the allocated social worker updates the system in a timely manner then because only one carer can be paid for a child the new carer will experience a delay receiving payment whilst the previous carer will receive an overpayment that has to be repaid. However, a 'safety net' is now in place whereby the collocated Placements and Commissioning Team and Fostering Duty Social Worker monitor the updating of the system so that any under/over payments are more promptly addressed.
- 3.3 The revised scheme has now been in operation for approximately 12 months and it has been broadly welcomed by the fostering community. It appears that the revised scheme has had the desired positive impact on recruitment of new carers. Over the course of the past 12 months recruitment has been so successful that the target was stretched from 15 to 25 new foster families. Thus far in 2017/18 13 new foster families have been approved with a further 4 to be presented to Panel before the end of the year. There are also a further 8 assessments in progress meaning that the target of 25 is eminently attainable. The fact that two foster families have transferred from an Independent Foster Agency (IFA) would also suggest that the levels of financial support available are less of a disincentive that they used to be. In addition the retention of foster carers would appear to be less of a risk factor. There have been only 8 de-registrations over the course of the financial year due to:
- 3 retirements due to ill-health.
 - 1 carer moved too far from the RMBC area to make any future placement viable
 - 1 further retirement of a longstanding foster carer after a long-term placement moved to independence.

- 1 resignation but the carer had not provided any placements for 2 years
- 1 Connected Carer resignation following the young person being rehabilitated to the care of their parents.
- 1 resignation as CYPS did not agree to split siblings to enable the younger child to be placed on a permanent basis with the foster carers (permanence was later secured for them together).

Thus, of these 8 resignations only 4 of them had been providing any placements in the previous 12 months meaning the net impact was minimal.

3.4 Conversely over the course of the financial year 12 new foster families have already been approved with 4 further assessments booked onto Foster Panel for approval and a further 8 assessments currently ongoing. With a further 5 months to go it is possible that the team will reach their stretch target of 25 new foster families over the course of the year.

3.5 The Internal Audit Team have only recently audited the implementation of the revised scheme and on a scale from No Re-assurance to Partial Re-assurance, Reasonable Re-assurance and Substantial Re-assurance their overall opinion was that there was Reasonable Re-assurance regarding this process. The Audit Team also made the following recommendations for further action:-

- i) Better identification and recovery of foster allowance overpayments.
- ii) Closer controls around initiating and ending placements on Liquid Logic.
- iii) Address the lack of documentary evidence to support skills level allowance payments.
- iv) Monitoring of recruitment figures.

As stated above issues i) and ii) have largely been addressed by the closer monitoring of the Liquid Logic system updates. Furthermore, the monitoring of recruitment figures occurs at the fortnightly LAC Service Performance Clinic. The report presented by the Fostering Recruitment Team includes updates regarding approvals, deregistration's and the number of void placements currently being held to support foster carers to return to being active carers in a more timely manner. These void placements can be caused by ill-health, bereavement, safeguarding concerns, holidays or foster carers 'just wanting a break' after a particularly challenging placement. At present the conversion rate from initial enquiries to approvals remains at only 11%. As a result the Recruitment Team has also developed a 'Recruitment Pipeline' to better identify the most significant points of leakage in the process and as a result the team are reviewing how they respond to the initial enquiry as it appears too many people drop out at this point.

3.6 As a result of this performance management approach there are currently 217 in-house placements which is the highest number ever recorded in Rotherham. Unfortunately there has also been a substantial rise in the overall number of looked after children so that the number of IFA placements has also risen to 198. Future recruitment is likely to be boosted by a number of other initiatives including the Mockingbird Project, Refer a Friend Scheme, Time Off for Council

Employees who Foster or Adopt and the recruitment of a marketing officer to raise the social media profile and refine the process for Foster Carer recruitment.

4. Options Considered And Recommended Proposal

4.1 There are no options to consider in respect of this report and OSMB is recommended to consider the contents of the report and raise any challenge it deems appropriate to further the development of the service.

5. Consultation

5.1 The revised policy was written following full consultation with partner agencies and the foster carers themselves.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Not applicable as the decision has already been implemented.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 Unless RMBC has a fit for purpose Foster Carer Payments Support and Development Scheme both the recruitment and the retention of foster carers is likely to be adversely affected. This in turn will increase the reliance on IFA placements which will present significant financial risks to the department.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 A successful implementation of this policy will boost foster carer recruitment so that more looked after children will be able to access family based placements in the Rotherham area and thus be more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Placing more looked after children with foster families will support their Human Rights and improve their life chances as research indicates that young people placed in family based settings are more likely to achieve good outcomes.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The Out of Authority Placements budget including IFA and Residential placements presents the most significant pressure on effective budget management on CYPS and therefore RMBC as a whole.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 These risks are being mitigated by an effective implementation of the revised scheme and a more robust and comprehensive foster carer recruitment strategy which is supporting effective recruitment.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker – Head of Service

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Mick Wildman	
Assistant Director of Legal Services	N/A	
Head of Procurement <i>(if appropriate)</i>	N/A	
Head of Human Resources <i>(if appropriate)</i>		

Report Author: *Ian Walker, Head of Service, Children in Care*

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