

Rotherham MBC Annual Complaints Report 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Summary and performance headlines

1. This report provides information about complaints made between **1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016** 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.

2. The figures in the report include details of the number of customers and the number of complaints they have made. For each Council Directorate (reflecting those structures in place for the majority of 2015/16) 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 over recent weeks, 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).

3. **In total over the 12 months of 2015/16 the number of complaints received by the Council increased very slightly by 3 (0.3%) from the 692 received in 2014/15, to 695.** These compare to 672 received in 2013-14. It should be noted that the number of complaint significantly reduced in Housing Services. (See Appendix 2 for further information)

4. **Overall 80% of all complaints were responded to within the required timescales, which represents a small decrease in performance compared to the 82% in 2014-15.** In 2013-14 performance was 98% (though this also reflected fewer numbers of complaints received). It should be noted that the 2016/17 Corporate Plan sets the Council a new target of responding to at least 85% of complaints within the required timescales, to move performance back towards higher historical levels.

5. The Corporate Complaints Team works 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.

6. A key priority is for the Complaints Team to work for the customer, to make sure that they are provided a good level of service and most appropriate response to their complaint. The team has maintained a focus in 2015/16 on improving the way complaints are dealt with and, whilst the overall response performance has decreased slightly, there have been a number of positive developments over the last 12 months, including: **fewer Ombudsman complaints, fewer "informal" complaints, reduced investigation costs** (for more complex issues in Children's and Young People Services), and **fewer complaints upheld** overall.

7. It is the continuing aim of the Council to maintain a high level of performance and improve the quality of service offered to customers; and that complaints are responded to on time and the responses are of the best quality possible with full consideration given to learning and 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.

8. When benchmarked externally in previous years, in terms of Adult Social Care and Housing complaint performance (where national and regional benchmarking networks and information is made available) Rotherham MBC performance, in terms of overall numbers of complaints received and those escalating to further stages has been in the top quartile. In terms of Children and Young People's Services, the Council has been an outlier in relation to the high number of complaints received in comparison to its population when compared with other Local Authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Further benchmarking information for 2015/16 is expected to become available from the autumn of 2016 and further analysis and comparisons can be made at that stage. It is, however, worth noting that the Local Government Ombudsman annual report, published on 28 July 2016, notes an increasing number of complaints being referred to it concerning children and young people's services, so Rotherham's recent experience may appear to be matching a national trend.

9. The decrease in overall response time performance, to 80%, is due to reduced performance in particular in the area of Children and Young People's services, whose Directorate performance figure has decreased to **50%** across 2014/15 as a whole, down from 55% in 2014-15. When excluding Children and Young People's services from the figures, the overall performance figure for Council complaints responded to in time is **92%**.

10. However, it is important to recognise that a number of steps have been put in place during 2015/16 to improve complaint response performance within Children and Young People's Services. This includes a new performance framework and weekly monitoring of management information on complaints within the Directorate. These steps have seen significant improvements in performance, with **90%** of complaints responded to in time in the last quarter of 2015-16 (January to March).

11. The corporate 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 2016-

12. Alongside this there will remain a critical focus on learning from complaints, so that service responses and understanding of issues can continue to be improved, supported by the regular reporting into management teams. There will also be an ongoing focus on ensuring that elected members at the Council are supported to have a thorough understanding of the complaints procedures and processes, expanding on the initial, induction support on provided for newly elected members (linked to their casework responsibilities at ward level).

13. This will build on the headline improvements achieved during 2015/16, which can be summarised as follows:

- Enhancing the focus on learning from complaints to identify service improvements (in particular through re-established regular performance reporting to Directorate and other senior management teams)
- Fewer Ombudsman complaints received
- Fewer complaints escalating through the complaint procedure

- Fewer “informal” complaints received
- Further expansion of monitoring and managing Councillor surgery enquiries via e-Casework system
- Significant reduction in the number of Housing Complaints received (See appendix 2 for further information)
- Reduced investigation costs in Children and Young Peoples Services
- Maintaining a response performance that benchmarks well with other authorities, despite an overall decrease in response time performance
- Providing guidance and training to investigating managers including 3 sessions for Children’s Social Care involving around 40 managers.
- Providing a focus on overall complaints performance in the finalised 2016/17 Corporate Plan

Summary of Rotherham MBC Complaints performance, 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

↑	Slightly more formal complaints (at all levels) received, at 695 (693 received in 2014-15)
↓	Fewer complaints were responded to within timescales, at 80% (82% in 2014-15)
↑	More complaints for Adult Services received, at 76 (73 received in 2014-15)
↓	Fewer complaints for Housing and Neighbourhood Services, at 268 (328 received in 2014-15)
↓	Fewer complaints for “Resources and Corporate” services (i.e. those covered by the previous “Resources & Transformation” Directorate, which now broadly form the Finance & Customer Services and Assistant Chief Executive Directorates), at 39 (43 in 2014-15)
↑	More complaints for Children and Young Peoples Services received, at 204 (159 received 2014-15)
↑	Slightly more complaints for Regeneration and Environment Services (previously known as Environment and Development Services, or “EDS”) at 108 (103 in 2014-15)
↑	More “Councillor Surgery” cases were processed by the e-casework system, administered by the Complaints Team during 2015/16, at 942 (859 were received in 2014-15; and 714 received in 2014-15)
↓	Fewer complaints (at all stages) were upheld, at 152 (21%) (220, or 31%, upheld 2014-15)
↓	Slightly fewer Stage 1 complaints required to be escalated to Stage 2, at 7% , or 45 . (7%, 47 escalated in 2014-15)
↑	More complaints about quality of service were received, at 385 (308 received 2014-15)
↓	Fewer complaints about actions of staff were received, at 135 (145 received 2014-15)
↓	The Ombudsman investigated very slightly fewer complaints, at 30 ; though upheld more, at 8 , or 26% (33 investigated and 5 (15%) upheld in 2014-15)
↑	More financial remediation to complainants was made; totalling £12,376.85 (£2,454.41 in 2014-15) with the majority relating to reimbursed over-payments/incorrect charges
↓	A decrease in external complaint investigation costs in CYPS, at £12,350 (£20,956 in 2014-15), reflecting fewer cases needing to be escalated
↑	Very slightly more compliments recorded by the Complaints Team, at 604 (603 recorded in 2014-15)
↓	Fewer “informal” complaints* received, at 594 (732 received 2014-15 and 811 received 2013-14)

** 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).*

Complaint trends

14. 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). The key focus of the corporate team has been to ensure compliance with the Council's procedures when dealing with complaints (rather than other, "non-complaint" enquiries), working in the interests of the complainant; and to prioritise all opportunities for learning from complaints, within services.

15. A key performance headline for 2015/16, as was the case in the previous year, has been the further increase in the number of complaints received with regard to Children and Young People's services – namely 45 more (at 204) than 2014/15. Looking back to 2013/14

16. Overall, however, numbers of complaints have remained relatively static at 695 (693 in 2014/15) due to a significant reduction in Housing Services complaints. Within Housing Services a number of performance improvements have been taken forward, including with regard to repairs and estate management, which have helped reduce the numbers of complaints received. The corporate Complaints Team has assisted these services areas to learning the lessons from complaints to help prevent common problems re-occurring.

17. 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 investigation by the Ombudsman services being reduced, albeit very slightly, to 32 (from 33).

18. A further positive trend over the last year is a significant increase in Councillor Surgery enquiries processed through the Council's e-casework system – an almost 10% increase (i.e. 942 - 83 more cases from those in 2014/15). This continues a year-on-year trend of increasing usage of the e-casework system, which helps ensure a track-able record of ward casework, whereby Councillors only close down cases on the basis they are satisfied with the response from the service.

19. Another positive trend in the year is the reduction in "informal complaints" (see also note on page 3 for a definition of what this term relates to). This is due to an effort by the corporate 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 – namely 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. Alternatively, it may also indicate that fewer issues are being drawn to the attention of the Complaints Team due to services dealing more effectively with "service request" enquiries, prior to them escalating to a complaint.

20. As noted previously (paragraph 9), the low levels of 'response time' performance in Children and Young People's Services in 2015-16 has had a negative impact on overall complaints turn-around performance, with this reducing from 82% to 80%. Performance excluding Children and Young Peoples services is 92%. However, it should also be noted that, while performance reduced overall during 2015/16 in Children's and Young People's Services, a number of steps have been taken to tackle performance issues and improve the flow of management information to highlight delays and potential problems. This has seen performance improve significantly during the year and into 2016-17. This new performance management framework, since taking effect, has seen performance of 90% of CYPs complaints being responded to in time in the last quarter 2015-16.

21. 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 maintained at 7%, with the number of complaints upheld after investigation reduced from 21% to 31%. This demonstrates positive performance, dealing with the vast majority of initial complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant.

22. Similarly, slightly fewer complaints were investigated this year by the Ombudsman – 30, compared to 33 last year (almost a 10% reduction). This also demonstrates a positive outcome, with fewer issues needing to be escalated by the complainant to this stage of investigation. However, on a more negative point, the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman that were upheld did increase, from 5 (15%) in 2014/15 to 8 (27%). 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%. Nevertheless, despite this increase, Rotherham MBC performance is still lower than this national average.

23. The amount of financial settlement/remediation has increased since 2014-15 in part due to a decision to record more accurately all monies paid as a result of the customer making a complaint for all Service areas and for this to be reported. The amount reported includes refunds of charges or fees incorrectly incurred, or overpayments made, which make up to the majority of the figure (£9,076.85); as well as some *ex-gratia* payments for distress and inconvenience caused (£3,300). This figure includes those awards agreed by the Council through the complaint procedure and those suggested by the Ombudsman. This information, by Directorate, is set out in more detail in each of the enclosed appendices.

24. In terms of the overall number of complaints received, apart from those relating to Housing and Children and Young People's Services (as noted above), other Directorates received numbers in broadly similar quantities and on the same subject areas as previous years. Complaints are received in those areas that deal with the largest number of customers and are the most publically visible. In Environment and Development Services (now "Regeneration and Environment Services") the largest number of complaints was received by "Network Management" (which deals with roads, drainage, street lighting etc.); and in Adult Services this was "Assessment and Care Management". For "Resources and Corporate" services most complaints received related to the "Revenues and Benefits Service".

25. **Appendices 1 to 5** provide further detail and analysis of the complaints received by Directorate area.

Improvements & learning from complaints

26. 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, with some examples of the service changes that have been made as a result of complaint investigations set out as follows (further details and additional learning points are also set out in the 'learning from complaints' sections in Appendices 1 to 5):

- A customer who was the main carer for their partner was unhappy with the response by the Council for extra support when she was going into hospital. She also felt that delays in her response made a crisis situation worse. In response the Council recognised the need for better action in these circumstances, and that any delays can have a severe impact on the care provided. This was discussed by all Social Work Teams in Adult Services and it was recognised that certain situations, such as this, required more urgent action. Protocols were updated as a result to allow Social Workers to respond more urgently when required.
- A customer's cheque payment was allocated to their rent account rather than split between Rent and Council Tax, despite an existing agreement. In response, the Council offered an apology and resolved the problem. It was found that the notes relating to the agreement had been lost due to IT system upgrades. Following remedial action, the notes were re-added; and, in addition, an IT update of the Finance systems will now include document management system that provide for customer notes and requests to be effectively transferred.
- A customer complained about the way in which a referral from their former spouse, making allegations about abuse towards their child, was dealt with; and, specifically, the Council's decision to carry out an assessment. In response to this complaint and in line with wider work to improve the way in which referrals are received and processed by the Council, steps were taken to ensure that all staff were aware of the correct route for making referrals concerning the welfare of a child; and that all referrals received by Children's Services are screened within 24 hours of receipt. The Council has also implemented robust performance management processes which ensure that assessments are completed within the required timescales and are continually monitored and subject to scrutiny to ensure compliance. Through the management of performance, the Council has ensured that members of staff are aware of the requirement to screen referrals and complete assessments within required timescales.
- A customer received incorrect tickets for a performance at the Civic Theatre. In response the complaint was discussed and considered by all the staff concerned. Ticketing procedures were updated as a result to prevent a similar event happening again.
- A number of complaints were received about the late payment of credits customers had on their District Heating accounts. In response the service created a list of all those meters where there have been difficulties obtaining an automatic electronic reading and a need to manually read the meters. It also ensured that the number of outstanding readings is performance managed through staff 1-2-1's.

Adult Services

27. The total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services in 2015/16 was 76 (compared to the total in 2014-15 of 73); and 91% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales (compared to 100% in 2014-15). The number of complaints upheld decreased to 24% (18) from 28% (21) in 2014-15.

28. The majority of complaints were directed to the "Independence & Support Planning" service, which received 36 out of the 76; and the majority being dealt with by Locality Teams (16). "Maximising Independence" services received the second highest number of complaints, with 9 of the 76, with the majority regarding Rothercare, and the Direct Payments Team. The "Community Occupation Therapy" service received the third highest number of complaints, with 8.

29. In terms of the types of complaints received the highest number of complaints were regarding the "quality of service" provided - 34 of the 76 received. Customers complained when their expectations of service were not met or where they had experienced continuing problems on separate or numerous occasions. 17 complaints were received relating to the "cost of service", which were regarding either the cost of care being delivered or financial procedures. Customers also complained if they felt they were not given enough information about the cost of care; or if there were delays in processing financial assessments; or about disagreements over contributions towards care costs.

See Appendix 1 for further details of Adult Services complaints

Housing and Neighbourhood Services

30. The number of formal complaints has decreased by 18% in the year, from 328 to **268**. The number of complaints fully upheld (66) and partially upheld (34) also reduced. At the same, time cases progressing to Stage 2 (5%) remains low. The figures suggest a continued improvement in case handling. This view is supported by the fact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) or Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) did not uphold any of the four complaints referred to it, meaning it has now not upheld any complaint about the service for four successive years.

31. There have been significant reductions in complaints in a number of service areas including, Contract & Service Development, the Repairs contractors and Housing & Communities. In all three services there is evidence of taking steps to apply the learning gained from complaints. The Contract and Service Development service has also seen significant reductions in the number of enquiries received from customers via MP's and Councillors, suggesting it has been particularly effective in applying customer insight to remodel its services.

32. The reduction in complaints has also been matched by an improvement the performance on answering complaints in time which has increased from 90% in the previous year to 94% 2015/6.

See Appendix 2 for further details of Housing and Neighbourhood Services complaints

Children & Young People's Services

33. In total 204 formal complaints were received, whereas 159 were received in 2014-15. The increase in the number of complaints has continued the upward trend in 2014/15, which followed the publication of the Jay report and the subsequent report from the Corporate Governance Inspection. The ongoing impact on public perception of services as well as proactive efforts to make it easier and more transparent to make complaints appear to have contributed to the further increase in the number of complaints and enquiries received in 2015-16.

34. The short-term impact of the restructuring and redesigning of services within CYPS was assessed to have had an impact in 2014/15 on complaints performance, in terms of meeting required timescales for responses. Whilst performance in responding to complaints at Stage 1 within statutory timescales has decreased further in 2015/6, from 55% to 50%, the introduction of new performance management arrangements has meant that performance during the year has improved; to the point where 90% of complaints were responded to in time between January and March 2016. This trend is continuing into 2016-17.

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

36. Concerns raised by young people include issues raised about decisions regarding changes to placements, other young people who they live with in care homes; support which they receive from their social worker; and actions of staff.

See Appendix 3 for further details of CYPS complaints

Environment and Development Services

37. The number of complaints received was **108**, a slight increase over the last year from **103**. **280** informal complaints have also been received, compared to **327** in 2014-15. Overall **86%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales compared with **90%** in 2014/2015, a slight decrease.

38. The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride Services (**62**) and Planning, Regeneration, Customer and Cultural Services (**31**); and were specifically around services delivered by Waste Management, Network Management, Customer and Cultural Services and the Planning Service. The nature of complaints focused on the quality of service received and attitudes of members of staff. Complaints were also received relating to delays in services being provided.

39. The highest number of complaints received in Streetpride Services were regarding services delivered by Waste Management and related to missed bin collections, delay in receiving replacement bins, and conduct of refuse collectors. Complaints were also received regarding Network Management services, specifically about the conduct and service provided by Parking Services; conduct of Civil Enforcement Officers, parking enforcement, and lack of consistency when issuing Penalty Charge Notices. Leisure and Community Services received complaints relating to tree cutting and the attitude of staff members in parks.

40. Complaints were received by Customer and Cultural Services relating to the quality of service and advice offered to customers, delays in receiving service or attitude of staff. Specific complaints were received regarding, advice provided by the contact centre, service provided by Registrars, condition of seating at the Civic Theatre, time taken to be seen at Riverside reception and incorrect advice relating to the process for renewing a travel pass.

41. Complaints were received by the Planning Service relating to information provided, a lack of response to enquiries and a concern that correct procedures had not been followed. Specific complaints included concerns regarding a lack of consultation relating to a planning applications, lack of consideration of objections to a planning application, delay in action being taken relating to a breach of planning permission, concerns relating to a Tree Preservation Order, a claim that planning permission has been incorrectly given and the Council's responses to reports of a neighbour running a business.

See Appendix 4 for further details of Environment and Development Services complaints

Resources and Corporate Services

42. "Resources and Corporate Services" relates to service areas of the Council that now fall within the "Finance and Customer Services" and "Assistant Chief Executive" Directorates, but for the majority of 2015/16 were part of a "Resources and Transformation" Directorate. The total number of complaints received for these services was 39, which represents a decrease over the last year from 43. In addition, 65 "informal" complaints from customers were received – an increase on the 49 last year. Overall 95% of formal complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, a very slight reduction from the 96% in 2014-15. Two Ombudsman complaints were upheld out of three decisions; there were none upheld out of three in 2014-15.

43. The majority of complaints were with regard to "Account Management and Benefits Assessment", with 21 of the 39. The complaints were regarding the maintenance of claims and the administration of payments. Complaints were also received regarding how people had been dealt with by staff and the advice that they had been provided with.

44. The second highest number of complaints received was in relation to "Local Taxation" with 14 complaints received. These were with regard to payment issues, relating to debt, overpayment or the amounts charged. Customers raised issues relating to information they had been provided, or information requests, or agreements being ignored. Complaints were also made regarding the accuracy of information held and the time taken to resolve issues of concern, along with the attitude of staff when dealing with accounts.

See Appendix 5 for further details of Resources and Corporate Services complaints

New Developments in 2015-16

45. 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.

46. 2015/16 has seen the Council continued to deliver on previous year-on-year improvements, including through the following:

- Further embedding a system of learning from complaints to identify service improvements, in particular through a re-instated process of Directorate and other senior management team performance reports, provided on a regular basis based on the needs of the Directorate
- All responses being quality assured – with an increasing focus on meeting the standards required and expected by Commissioners, Elected Members, the Chief Executive and Senior Officers
- Work with complainants and services to ensure that initial responses avoid the escalation of issues and provide a satisfactory conclusion of the issue at the first attempt – this has led to fewer complaints progressing through the Council’s complaint procedures (Stage 2 and Stage 3) and fewer referrals to the Ombudsman
- 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.
- Assisting with and facilitating more Councillor Surgery enquiries through the e-casework system, allowing for issues to be accurately recorded and tracked, as well as feeding in to the system provider’s process to upgrade the system for 2016/17.
- Maintaining good performance for dealing with complaints within timescales – with the exception of Children and Young People’s Services, but where the development of a new complaints performance management (and learning) framework is now seeing an improvement in performance, on a par with other Directorates.
- Reviewed and improved access to complaints for Children and Young People, in response to an action plan set out by the Young Inspectors and wider work on responding to the voice of the child, led by Children and Young People’s Services.
- Training and support provided to Elected Members regarding e-casework and complaints as part of the induction process for new councillors.
- Continued to work with managers to make sure complaints are acknowledged, responded to quickly and resolved as early as possible - always apologising whenever appropriate.
- Ensuring a headline focus on overall complaints performance as part of the new Corporate Plan for 2016/17, which will ensure complaints feature as part of the reporting framework to Cabinet, Commissioners and the Strategic Leadership Team.

2016-17 Outline improvement actions

47. Given the need to ensure a constant focus on improving the way that the Council manages complaints and learns from them, the following outline improvement actions are noted, on which the corporate Complaints Team and services will need to work with Elected Members and Commissioners to refine during 2016/17:

- Continuing 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 as a while through the new 2016/17 Corporate Plan reporting arrangements, and supporting Strategic Leadership Team focus on reviewing organisational performance data on a more robust and regular basis.

- Ensuring 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.
- To specifically seek to ensure that the behaviours and values of the organisation, as set out in the 2016/17 Corporate Plan, are demonstrated in services' responses to complaints – including by treating customers with respect and sensitivity.
- Providing specific training and feedback to staff (including investigating officers) and elected members to further improve the quality of investigations and responses.
- To also use this engagement with services and members to review the current Council complaint procedures and over-arching Policy during 2016/17 (within legislative requirements) to ensure that they are fit for purpose and up to date.
- Develop an online complaints handling e-learning package for all staff and managers.
- To facilitate an effective hand-over the management and future reporting of the e-casework system to Democratic Services - allow the whole process to be maintained by Member support services.
- Working to further improve complaint experience of customers raising complaints with private providers and contractors, reflecting an increased focus on commissioned services across the Council.
- Supporting an improved and more consistent framework for the way that “VIP” (MP, Chief Executive and Commissioner) enquires is responded to across the Council.
- Maintaining the new performance management process in CYPs, to maintain high performance; and determining how similar approaches might support other Directorates, where relevant.
- Engaging in relevant regional benchmarking, networking and learning activity, including specifically with regard to commercial opportunities (e.g. where the Complaints Team currently provides free-of-charge services to schools).
- Working to further ensure that, where issues referred to the Complaints Team can be effectively responded to as “service requests”, these are dealt with rapidly and to the customer’s satisfaction outside the formal complaints processes – while also ensuring that complainants are given the full opportunity to have their issues fully and transparently investigated.
- To further explore the opportunities of new, automated complaints systems linked to wider ICT/system investments (e.g. *Respond*).

Adult Social Services

Directorate Performance in 2015-16

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received for Adult Social Services was **76** (Total received in 2014-15 - **73**)

Overall 92% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales. (100% in 2014-15)

Headline Results 2015-16

↑	Number of complaints, 76 , increase from 73 received 2014-15.
↓	The number of complaints (at all stages) upheld, 18 (24%), decrease from 21 (28%) upheld in 2014-15.
↓	The number of complaints escalating, (10%), 7 Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2, from 68 Stage 1 complaints. Decrease from 12% in 2014-15. (8 Stage 2 complaints and 63 Stage 1 complaints)
↑	Complaints about quality of service, 34 , increase from 22 received in 2014-15.
↓	Complaints about actions of staff 9 decrease from 16 in 2014-15.
↓	2 Upheld Ombudsman complaints from 6 decisions. 3 Upheld from 7 decisions in 2014-15.
↑	Total financial remediation awarded was £2274.57 , £0 in 2014-15.
↔	External complaint investigation costs, £0
↓	Number of Councillor Surgery's received was 27 , decrease from 28 in 2014-15.
↓	Number of Compliments received was 59 , decrease from 104 in 2014-15.
↓	Number of informal complaints received, 35 decrease from 43 received in 2014-15.

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

- Reduced the number of upheld complaints.
- Maintained excellent performance.
- 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.
- Improved reporting process. Complaints reported to DMT bi-monthly.

Top complaint issues

Complaints in Adult Social Services continue reflect the wide range of services offered by the Directorate. Common themes were regarding communication, information, attitude of staff and cost of service.

As is usual in Adult Social Services there were 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. Complaints were also received regarding delays in the assessments, attitude of staff and refusal to pay charges due to concerns about the quality of the care provided.

In addition, 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.

Another continuing trend is that the majority of complaints were received by and dealt with by Adult Care management (Independence & Support Planning under the new current structure). They received **36** out of **76** complaints, with the majority being dealt with the Unplanned Review Team, **16** complaints (Locality Teams in the new structure). This is in part explained by the nature of the work the team provides. They are dealing with service users and their families in urgent and emergency situations, which can lead to disagreements over care outcomes and the cost of care. The remaining complaints were split evenly between the Hospital Social Work, Assessment and Planned Review Teams.

The Contact and Enabling Service (Maximising Independence in the new structure) received the second highest number of complaints, **9** complaints, with the majority of complaints regarding Rothercare, and Direct Payments Team. Rothercare complaints were regarding the attitude of staff, the quality of service provided on a call out and by a maintenance contractor. The Direct Payments Team received complaints regarding the delays relating to payments, the quality of service provided and the attitude of a member of staff.

The Community Occupation Therapy service received the third highest number of complaints, **8** complaints received. They were regarding the outcome of assessment, i.e. if an adaptation was not recommended and delays in the assessment process, either waiting for an assessment or waiting for an outcome.

The Learning Disabilities Team (LD services now provided by Independence & Support Planning under the new structure) received the fourth highest number of complaints, **6** complaints received. Complaints were regarding, time taken to arrange care, attitude of social workers and the payment of fees.

In terms of the types of complaints received the highest number of complaints were regarding the Quality of Service provided, **34** complaints received. Customers complained when their expectations of service were not met or they had experienced continuing problems on separate occasions.

17 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.

9 complaints were received relating to the Actions of Staff; these were regarding specific allegations about the conduct of a staff member. Examples include how they had addressed a customer, how they had failed to communicate correctly or how they had been made an incorrect decision.

The amount of financial remediation has increased due to better recording of all payments made to customers as a result of a complaint. The amount includes refund of care charges, £1774.57 and ex-gratia payments, £500.

For all complaints, including those that are not upheld, there is consideration applied for any learning and service improvement. 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 eCasework enquiries

27 Councillor Surgery enquiries were received regarding Adult Social Care Services (**28** in 2014-15).

Councillors in the main raised requests for Occupational Therapy assessments (**12** received), usually relating to access to properties and to bathing adaptations. Other requests were received asking for social care assessments to be completed. (**9** received)

Ombudsman decisions

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

- The Ombudsman decided that the Council was right to support a customer's decision to return home from a rehabilitation centre. There is no fault in the way the Council conducted its safeguarding investigation when his wife made allegations about their homecare agency. However, the Council delayed in formally assessing his wife's carer's needs and failed to provide her with respite for about four months.

The Council agreed to the Ombudsman's recommendations and apologised in writing and paid £400 in financial remediation.

- The Ombudsman decided that there is no fault in the way the Council decided the customer should contribute to her supported living placement. The Council decided not to make allowances for extra expenses her mother incurs when the customer stays with her. The Council is entitled to decide this and is not at fault. However, the Council failed to formally respond to the customer's complaint and this could have prevented or delayed its debt recovery procedures. As a result the customer experienced distress and increased frustration.

The Council agreed to apologise in writing to the customer and pay £100 to acknowledge the injustice.

Compliments

59 compliments were received regarding Adult Social Care Services; some examples are as follows;

- Compliment for **Davies Court**. "The stay at Davies Court was a first class experience".
- Compliment for the **Unplanned Review Team** "We cannot thank and praise Janet enough for her professionalism and sensitivity".

- Compliment for the **Hearing Impairment Officer**. "For her prompt and sensitive assessment".
- Compliment for the **Unplanned Review Team**. "Thanks for the tremendous job they have done. They have shown great compassion, a can do attitude and I have been continually appraised of the position and given common sense advice from day one, mother is safer and happier because of your work and devotion".
- Compliment for the **Enabling Service**. "Treated both of us with the utmost respect and kindness. Worked out a suitable programme which is working perfectly. Your ladies are all wonderful"
- Compliment for the Social Worker in the **Learning Disabilities Service**. "Thank you for all your help in the past".
- Compliment for the **Direct Payments Team**. "Thank you for your prompt replay and thanks to the member of staff whose efforts I have no doubt have gone a long way towards sorting out this audit".

DRAFT

Learning from complaints

1. Contractors working for Rothercare entered a family member's property without informing the family, despite previous request to do so.

In response to their concerns;

- We will ensure that in future when Rothercare Assistants are undertaking jobs of this nature e.g. replacing batteries and equipment, they are provided with all relevant information and notes relating to the customer. This will ensure that when requested family members are contacted.

2. Concerns, including concerns relating to the cost of care, were raised about a temporary admission to respite care following a short stay in hospital.

In response to their concerns;

- The complaint highlighted the importance of discussing the FAQ sheet and admission letter and making sure that patients, their families and carers will read what has been provided. This was shared across the Directorate to all relevant Social Work Teams to make sure that this key information was provided.

3. Customer as main carer was unhappy with the response for extra support when she was going into hospital. She felt that delays in response made a crisis situation worse.

In response to their concerns;

- We have considered the complaint and have shared the findings across all Social Work Teams in the Directorate. The complaint has highlighted the need to arrange care even when someone is self-funding, if they are in crisis and have no one else to support them.
- In addition, we recognise if a family is in crisis they may need information urgently, staff have been advised to consider the best way of getting information to a family member.

4. Delay in arranging a Key Safe; incorrect advice provided about the process of installation and information about family members was not passed onto our contractor.

In response to their concerns;

- Staff given guidance on Key Safe procedures and importance of making sure that critical information is passed on in a timely manner.

5. The customer felt that the Social Worker was not listening to them.

In response to their concerns;

- We have considered the complaint and shared the findings across the Directorate. In future we will ensure that information we provide is clear and relevant and available. Concerns raised are responded to more empathically and sensitively. We have ensured staff fully explain the process of discharge and ensure that Social Workers discuss general financial issues as soon as it becomes appropriate.

New Developments during 2015-16

- The number of complaints upheld has reduced and the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure has also reduced. These measures indicate good complaint handling and improvements in the way in which the Directorate responds to formal complaints.
- Improved complaint reporting to Directorate Management Team meetings. Complaints are reported on a regular basis in line with corporate reporting structure.
- 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. This included changes resulting from the implantation of the Care Act.

2016-17 Improvement Actions

- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform learning and service improvements.
- Continue to reduce the numbers of complaints received and to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- 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.

Public Health

Only 2 formal enquiries were received via the Corporate Complaint Team. It may be that the Service is receiving and responding to enquires directly or outside formal processes.

No complaints were received.

1 response to an MP was recorded. (**None** recorded in 2014-15)

- Sarah Champion MP raised a concern about changes in the provision and commissioning of sexual health services. In particular HIV testing, treatment and prevention of HIV.

Information about current commissioned services and the current provision of HIV services was provided.

1 response to a Councillor eCasework enquiry (**none** received in 2014-15)

- Customer raised concerns about frequency of drug litter finds in their local area and the Council's current needle exchange programme.

Customer was provided advice about the exchange programme and her local pharmacy was contacted on her behalf regarding her concerns.

Housing & Neighbourhood Services

Directorate Performance in 2015-16

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 268 (Total received in 2014/5- 328)

Overall 94% of all complaints were responded to within the corporate timescales

There was an **18%** decrease in the number of complaints, the number of upheld and partially upheld cases also reduced. The quality of complaint investigation remains high with only 5% of complaints progressing to stage 2. No complaints were upheld by either the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman Service.

Headline Results 2015-16

↓	Number of complaints (at all levels) was 268 representing a 18% decrease on the 328 received in 2014/5
↓	255 New (stage 1) complaints were received representing a 17% decrease on the 306 received in 2014/5.
↓	The total number of complaints fully upheld at all levels was 66 a reduction on the 91 fully upheld in 2014/5. The combined total of upheld and partially upheld complaints was 100 compared to 137 in 2014/5.
↓	13 complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 compared to 20 in 2014/5. One was withdrawn.
↔	Complaints about lack of service remain almost the same at 27 compared to 26 in 2014/15.
↓	Complaints about delays in service decreased by 39% to 44 from 72 in 2014/5.
↔	Complaints about the actions of staff remain almost the same at 53 compared to 54 in 2014/5.
↓	Complaints about the quality of service reduced by 8% from 126 in 2014/15 to 116 .
↓	There was just 1 complaint about the lack of information compared to 5 in 2014/5.
↓	There were 14 complaints about the cost of the service compared to 23 in 2014/5.
↑	£2,281.48 in financial remediation awards made, compared to £924.41 in 2014/15
↔	There were 167 Informal complaints, exactly the same number as last year.
↔	4 LGO/Housing Ombudsman judgements were received; No decisions were upheld against the Council.
↑	The number of Service Requests received was 171 compared to 137 in 2014/5.

↑	The number of Councillor Surgeries received through the e-casework system was 466 , an 8% increase from 433 received in 2014/15.
↑	The number of MP enquiries received was 180 , a 24% reduction from 238 received in 2014/15
↑	The number of Compliments received was 97 , a 43% decrease from 170 in 2014/15.

Stage 1 complaints

The number of stage 1 complaints reduced by 17% in 2015/6. The greatest reductions in the number of formal complaints has been Contract and Service Development (34%), Housing & Communities (19%) and the two repair & maintenance contractors (19%). 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	2015/6	2014/5	2013/4	% of total complaints
Asset Management	11	N/A	N/A	4.30%
Contract & Service Development (C&SD)	71	107	85	27.73%
Contractors	26	32	57	10.16%
Housing & Communities	64	79	70	25%
Housing Options	31	34	40	12.5%
Housing Income	23	23	16	8.98%
Safer Neighbourhoods	18	16	16	7.03%
Strategic Housing Investment (SHI)	6	8	23	2.34%
CSC/Connect	5	4	9	1.95%
Business Regulation	0	3	3	0
Total	255	306	319	100%

Table 2: Stage 1 Complaints dealt with in time

Service Area	Out of time	in time	% in time
Asset Management	1	10	91%
C&SD	0	71	100%
Contractors	1	25	96%
Housing & Communities	4	60	94%
Housing Options	1	30	97%
Housing Income	1	22	95%
Safer Neighbourhoods	5	13	72%
SHI	1	5	83%
CSC/Connect	0	5	100%
Total	14	241	94.5%

Summary of complaints by service Area

Contract and Service Development

Complaints about Contract and Development Service form the largest number of complaints, this reflects the number of inspections and repairs which is approximately 55,000 a year. 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 2014/5 to improve the co-ordination of investigation and response to more complex complaints.

The reduction in the number of complaints about the C&SD service has also been mirrored by the reduction in the number of Councillor and MP enquiries about the service, this is highlighted later in this report. The reduced number of complaints can in part be contributed to the fact that some of the programmed works managed by Asset Management would previously appear as Contract and Service Development complaints. Even if every Asset Management complaint were added to the C&SD complaints it would still result in an overall reduction of 23%.

The number of complaints and thousands of interactions that the service has with customers has allowed the service to identify trends over the years and the reduction in complaints. This would appear to be the consequence of remodelling the service in light of customer insight. The service has continued to introduce improvements in 2015/16 such as making all repairs appointable from November 2015, which will have had a positive impacted on the number of complaints in the third and fourth quarters.

The top three issues¹ recorded were damp (14) delayed repair (12) and repair quality (10). The damp issue reflects the increase of condensation related issues which are believed to be closely linked to fuel poverty. Delayed repair complaints are due to the time taken to complete repairs or are caused by poor communication when repairs have been placed on programmes. Repair quality is in part linked to patched repairs when the customer may be expecting the renewal of a path or greater extent of plastering than the Area Technical Officers believes is necessary to complete the repair. Actions are in place within C&SD to reduce complaints in all these areas and regular feedback and lessons learned are shared between the council and its contract partners.

Approximately half of all complaints about the service are upheld or partially upheld. The two main reasons for upheld or partially upheld complaints being associated with damp and delays. The figures for partially and fully upheld complaints for all service areas are shown in table 3 on the following page.

¹It should be noted that the prime issue is only 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 conduct of an officer could also be complaining about his or her diagnosis of damp meaning it would be reported as a complaint about the action of the staff member. This should be taken into account when considering the issue figures.

Table 3: Stage 1 Complaints by service Area and Outcome.

Service Area	Total received	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld	Inconclusive	Withdrawn	% Partially or fully upheld
Asset Management	11	3	2	6	0	0	73%
C&SD	71	31	16	22	1	1	54%
R&M Contractors	26	13	3	9	1	0	46%
CSC/Connect	5	1	0	4	0	0	80%
Housing & Communities	64	45	2	13	2	2	23%
Housing Income	23	12	4	7	0	0	48%
Housing Options	31	25	2	3	0	1	16%
Safer Neighbourhoods	18	14	3	0	0	1	17%
SHI	6	2	2	2	0	0	66%
Total	255	146	34	66	4	5	39%

Repair Contractor Performance

The number of complaints about the contractors has reduced for the last four years the current figure of 26 is less than half what were received two years ago. This reflects the time invested by CSD ensuring feedback is provided to the partners. The partner's willingness to learn from complaints and use of "tool box talks" to promote service improvements to the work force. It is difficult to develop significant trends when the number of complaints are so low, but the top three identified issues were the quality of the work undertaken (7), perceived delays in works being completed (6) and missed appointments (6). Slightly under half of the complaints about the contractors are partially or slightly upheld, the single biggest contributor being the six missed appointments.

Asset Management

The Asset Management team who were previously located within EDS received 11 complaints ranging from issues relating to corporate buildings and management of the RTB process. The one clear trend as the number of complaints about external insulation work undertaken on council tenancies (6), mostly from neighbouring owner occupiers complaining about the mess and disturbance created by contractors, all were partly or fully upheld. To address this issue the services has tightened their processes for project co-ordination and communicating with affected neighbours.

Housing and Communities

The second largest number of complaints by service areas were about the Housing and Communities service, although it should be noted the service also experienced a 19% reduction in complaints during the year, and less than a quarter were partially or fully upheld. The single largest cause of complaints is the perceived poor management of anti-social behaviour cases (20), a further 12 complaints were about the actions of staff. Most of these related to the alleged conduct of officers investigating ASB cases. The complaints were made by both the reporters and alleged perpetrators of the ASB, only a small percentage of this type of complaint were upheld. At the beginning of 2015/6 the service provided all its front line Area Housing Officers with de-escalation training to support officers dealing with conflict, this

may have contributed to the reduction of complaints about the Housing and communities Services.

The next biggest trend of complaints about the service relate to the termination of tenancies. These complaints contributed to almost half of all partially or fully upheld complaints about the Housing and Communities Service.

Housing Options

There has been a decrease in the number of Housing Options complaints for the second successive year with 31 complaints being received in 2015/16. The one clear trend is the number of complainants (11) who think their priority is not in line with the Allocation Policy, only a small percentage of such complaints were upheld. The second highest area of complaints was about adaptations (5) and the Furnished Homes Scheme (4). In total only 16% of all complaints about the Housing Option Service are upheld meaning it is difficult to identify a trend for partially or fully upheld complaints.

Housing Income

The number of complaints about the Housing Income team remains the same at 23, almost half of the complaints were partially or fully upheld. The highest number of complaints were about district heating (9), caused by problems experienced with defective valves and late repayments of credits. The figure was also affected by bringing the district heating tariff for the Fitzwilliam Estate in line with the rest of the district heating systems in the borough, which meant residence experienced a significant increase in their tariff at the start of the year. The next highest number of complaints related to tenants complaining about perceived incorrect rent arrears and (7) and the actions of those pursuing rent arrears (4).

Safer Neighbourhoods

The number of complaints about the Community Protection Unit rose slightly from 16 to 18 although only 17% of the complaints were partially or fully upheld. The level of complaints reduce the significance of any trends, the highest number of complaints being about the perceived poor management of noise complaints (4) and actions of staff pursuing enforcement (4).

Strategic Housing Services

The number of recorded complaints reduced from eight to six, the number is too small to identify a significant trend.

Customer services

Only five complaints were received about Rotherham Connect, although four were upheld for poor advice. The officers were advised accordingly and complaints used as case studies for the operatives.

Financial remediation

The payment of compensation doubled in 2015/6 to £2,281. Three cases accounted for the vast majority of the payment. Firstly a complaint about the Furnished Tenancy Scheme resulted in the customer being reimbursed £1,206.48, the case is highlighted later in the report. A payment of £500 was made for the distress and inconvenience caused by disruptive repairs that should reasonably have been completed before the property was let. A third complainant received a payment of £250 for poor advice about the "bedroom tax" which influence their decision to move home.

Stage 2s

13 stage 1 complaints progressed to stage 2 in 2015/6. One about the condition of an empty property including failure to identify a damp problem and woodworm was upheld. Three were ongoing at the end of the year and will be reported in 2016. Performance on answering complaints in time fell to 77% with 3 complaints being answered out of time.

Stage 3s

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. One stage three hearing about Revenue and Benefit services issues included an element about noise which was not upheld.

Ombudsman decisions

The Directorate received a total of 4 decisions from investigations completed by the Housing Ombudsman in 2015-16. No decisions were upheld against the Council.

Identifying complaint trends and introducing improvements

The service has treated every complaint as a learning opportunity and has sought to improve the service and customer experience by targeting emerging complaint trends. The following are examples of how the service has been improved.

Damp

Damp continues to be a significant cause of complaints in 2015/6 despite improvements introduced to combat damp in the previous years. The reason for the trend is attributed to condensation related damp and black mould caused by the rise in fuel poverty.

Area Technical Officers have been given an improved toolkit to identify and advise on condensation related damp. This includes Hydrometers to identify the level of humidity, they are also issued with mould spray to show and advise tenants how to combat condensation related mould. A mould treatment kit is also ready to be utilised by Technical Officers, empowering tenants to deal with and treat mould within their homes, which promotes tenant responsibility and independence.

A procedure has been put in place for 2016/17 which requires officer's to demonstrate the level of humidity, advice on condensation reduction and mould removal. This is recorded in a standard action plan sheet which is signed off by the tenant and is followed up three months later with a repeat visit to assess progress.

To augment this process the service is currently going out to tender to procure a mould/condensation specialist to assess excessive mould and condensation issues and advise on the solution. The specialists, in addition to the existing contract with Rentokil Ltd to address rising and penetrating damp, will inspect properties as advised by the Area Technical Officers.

In addition to the above, a full Rentokil Ltd survey is now triggered by the identification of suspected rising or penetrating damp, not just the areas demonstrating damp. All reasonable remedial works advised by the specialist contractor will be completed.

Full mould/condensation/damp training has taken place for all Technical Officers and a consistent approach in identifying issues established.

Complaints about the time taken to complete work

A significant number of these complaints were about work which had been placed on programmes following day to day repair inspections, with works being issued in batches on 12-16 week programmes. To address this issue the service has strengthened communication with the customer, including letters from the Council and contractor. Crucially issuing work on a monthly basis, meaning notification and completion are both quicker.

De-escalation training

A number of complaints about the quality of the repair service and the perceived actions of the technical officers can be attributed to officers advising customers that in their professional opinion either no repair is required, or more often, the extent of repair required is less than the tenant requests. To address this issue the Contract and Service Development Team have procured the de-escalation training provided to the Area Housing Officers. It is believed that this will allow officers to manage customers' expectations and express their reasoning in a way that minimises conflict and reduces complaints.

Termination of tenancies and succession

A trend in the year was the number of complaints made about the termination of tenancy process, issues involving relatives out of the borough terminating tenancies, terminations following death and succession following death. To address this issue the service has and is taking the following steps:

- The termination process has been rewritten to ensure that it is not only lawful but fair and reasonable.
- The death of a joint tenant letter has been rewritten to make it more sensitive and has been built into Civica.
- The pre termination letter has been amended meaning the Next of Kin or relatives do not need to hold the keys until the property has been inspected.
- Benchmarking has taken place and a new process is being developed with Legal Services which will be built into Civica. The process will take into account where there is a death and no successor, or next of kin, or probate and limited estate. The aim being to avoid notification to the Probate Office in Sheffield where it is reasonable to do so, thus allowing the tenancy to be terminated much sooner.

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

Termination of tenancies & Former Tenant Arrears

In the year the Housing Income team received several complaints about former tenant arrears, recovery action from customers who claimed to be unaware of arrears at the end of their tenancy. To address this issue the service has used the opportunity of the introduction of the new Civica system to rewrite the termination process so that the system automatically produces an end of tenancy account. The four week notice period has been trialled and the process is being adjusted to include notification on death which requires two weeks. It is expected that this process will be fully implemented in the second quarter of 2016/17.

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. A number of complaints were received about the late payment of credits customers had on their District Heating accounts

In response to the service has:

- Created a list of all those meters where there have been difficulties obtaining an automatic electronic reading and will manually read the meters.
- The number of outstanding readings is an issue performance managed through 1-2-1's.

2. A complaint was received about an incorrectly drawn RTB boundary resulting in the loss of an outhouse for a neighbouring council tenant. The plan was drawn without consultation with the Area Housing Team who had the local knowledge to advise the surveyor.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Made an apology and agreed to support the affected resident move accommodation more appropriate to their current health needs.
- Reviewed and amended the RTB plan process so that all plans are signed off by the Area Housing Team as correct before they are included in the conveyance documents.

3. A complaint was received about the length of time it took Willmott Dixon to repair a garage door because they did not possess the necessary skill set.

In response to their concerns the Contractor has:

- Made an apology and a specialist contractor added to their approved contractor list to ensure the works are completed promptly in the future.

4. A complaint was made about the disposal of possessions left in a communal area of a block of flats.

In response to the service has:

- Made an apology, reimbursement the complainant and the Management of Communal Areas Guide has been reviewed and re-written. The revised process includes notification to the individual or full block residents where the owner is not known. The level of risk is taken into account meaning where there is a very high level necessitating immediate removal the items are stored and notification given to the owner/residents on how they can be retrieved the items and the associated costs if any.
- A general letter was issued to all residents of flats reiterating health and safety standards and what is required of them.

5. A complaint regarding the length of time it took for officers to offer the financial options to a customer experiencing financial difficulties with their Furnished Homes Package. An apology was given along with a £1,206.48 refund. Following a review conducted by the Furnished Homes Team the following has taken place:

- A Furnished Tenancy Support Officer is now in place within the Housing Income Team the post highlights and flag up arrears cases for furnished tenancies, and offer advice and options regarding their furnished pack.
- The new Tenancy Agreement now includes revised information regarding responsibilities and options as part of being a furnished tenant.
- Revised information regarding the scheme, options, tenant responsibility and the services responsibilities are provided via the “it’s your move” interview and during the sign up.
- During the post sign-up “welcome visit” tenants receive a newly devised “welcome pack” which reaffirms the information given prior and during sign up. The tenant is also visited by a furnished officer to carry out an inventory; this occurs at 100% of new tenancy sign ups.
- Financial safeguarding measures have been reinforced to give assistance to those who find that they can no longer afford the charge. This includes the opportunity to return goods and down size.
- A review of the 1200 furnished tenancies has been completed where the options have been reaffirmed to customers.
- Refresher training has been provided to Housing Advice staff who sign up new tenants to the scheme and the Furnished Homes team were briefed to discuss the lessons learned.
- As part of the digital inclusion strategy, the Rotherham Furniture Solutions web page will be updated to ensure it is clear to tenants what they are paying for and information about the scheme.

6. A complaint was received about a number of programmed repair issues taking place in a tenants kitchen, it was partially upheld because of one issue that could have been resolved sooner if the service had responded to comments made on site to the supervisor.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Introduced an on-site Residents Log for programmed works, to capture comments and suggests from residents and ensure they are responded to promptly.

7. A complaint about a delay in the RTB process, which was not upheld, has resulted in the introduction of a new letter which is now sent once a property valuation has been accepted. It provides the customer with clearer information about the next stages of the procedure and timescales involved. The S125 Offer Notice has also been amended to make it clear that an Energy Performance Certificate will not be supplied immediately after it has been produced.

Councillor eCasework enquiries

Table 4 Councillor Surgeries by Service Area

Service Area	Surgeries *received	% of total enquiries
Housing & Communities	170 – (135)	36.48%
Contract & Service Development Team	121 – (136)	25.97%
Safer Neighbourhoods	68 – (42)	14.59%
Housing Options	65– (86)	13.94%
Strategic Housing Investment	16 -- (17)	3.43%
Asset Management	17	3.65%
Housing Income	5 – (10)	1.07%
Repairs Connect	3 -- (1)	0.65%
Business Regulation	1-- (5)	0.21%
Total	466 – (433)	100%

*2014/5 Councillor Enquiry numbers are shown in the brackets

466 Councillor Enquiries were received via the Council's e-case work surgery system in 2015-16 a rise of 8% on the previous year. Enquiries to Housing Communities (170) were up 26% and Safer Neighbourhoods enquiries (68) up 54%. Against this trend enquiries relating to the C&SD's day to day repair issues (121) went down by 11%, this is consistent with the reduction in the number of complaints and MP enquiries received for the service.

There are distinct trends within the enquiries received, the top three enquiries for those services receiving the bulk of enquiries are listed below:

Housing & Communities: ASB management (50), Trees& hedges (37) and Gates and Fencing (12)

Contract & Service Development: Requesting / reporting a repair (44), Damp (22) and Footpaths, hardstands and driveways (11).

Safer Neighbourhoods: ASB management/noise (15), Fly-tipping/Rubbish (15) and Dogs/dog fouling (8)

Housing Options: Rehousing request (16), queries about application of policy/priority (13), Waiting time (9) and Adaptations (9)

MP Enquiries

Table 5 MP enquiries by Service Area.

Service Area	MP enquiries *Complaints	% of total complaints
Housing & Communities	56 – (72)	31.11%
Housing Options	55 – (62)	30.56%
Contract & Service Development Team	32 – (56)	17.78%
Safer Neighbourhoods	15 – (27)	8.33%
Strategic Housing Investment	10 – (13)	5.55%
Housing Finance	9 – (4)	5%
Asset Management	3	1.67%
Total	180 – (238)	100%

*2014/5 MP enquiry numbers are shown in the brackets

180 MP enquiries were received in 2015-16 a reduction of 24% from the 238 reported in 2014-15. Two thirds of all enquiries were received by the services managing tenancy and estate management issues and the allocation policy and allocation of council tenancies. Half of all the enquiries received by Housing & Communities service were about anti-social behaviour (28), the next highest number of enquiries received by the team were in relation to trees, hedges gates and fencing (10). The enquiries made to the Housing Options team are almost all about rehousing constituents, waiting times and querying the allocated priority/homeless status. A significant number of enquiries were also about the Adaptations service (7). The third biggest reason for enquiries was in connection with the repair service, the main reason being the time taken to complete repairs (7).

Compliments

97 compliments were received regarding Housing and Neighbourhood Services compared to 170 in 2015/16, some examples are as follows;

Compliment for Housing Options *"The service my family have received has been life-changing and first rate - your staff are amazing"*

Compliment for, Housing Options *"Thanks to the Officer, she has given not only hope for the future, but a roof over mine and my daughters head. She has led me every step of the way and I can't thank you enough".*

Compliment for Housing Options *"I wanted to say how wonderful it was working with the Officer yesterday. She was very caring and kind towards my client.....She was very helpful and her manner was second to none....."*

Compliment for Adaptations Team *"I had my bathroom made into a wet room and it is absolutely beautiful the men worked so hard, I can't thank them enough, they cleaned all the rubbish and dust and wiped everything down."*

Compliment for Adaptations *"A big thank you to everyone involved. The workers were lovely and the standard of work is amazing"*

Compliment for Mears *"The workmen who came out to do the work did a great job and put plastic covers on their shoes so they wouldn't leave a mess. They were great"*

Compliment for Wilmott Dixon – *"The operatives were two of the nicest people and couldn't have been more helpful. I believe they went 'the extra mile' and I can't thank them enough"*

Compliment for Wilmott Dixon *"less than 24 hours later Willmott Dixon have repaired it already - your staff are amazing"*

Compliment for Housing & Communities *"I thank you for being a fantastic individual who cared enough to keep helping me even when it was difficult. Thank you again"*

Compliment for Housing & Communities *"Thank you to everyone concerned with the presentation for the winners of this year's garden competition. The effort put in for this occasion was terrific"*

Compliment for Housing & Communities *"Thank you for great service and understanding when you helped our family to move - very impressed and grateful".*

Compliment received for Housing Income *"Thank you and your staff for all you have done in this case - very impressed"- Kevin Barron MP.*

Compliment for Community Protection Unit *"I would like to thank you for the time, effort and only it would seem with your involvement made things happen, I know it's part of your job, but it's always nice to be thanked".*

Compliment for Community Protection Unit *"Can I express my gratitude for the prompt response to my complaint the speed of service has been second to none"*

Compliment for the ASB Officer, *"Thank you for all your help. The problem has now stopped and happy to close the report"*

Compliment for Leaseholder Service, SHI *"With regards to the information you put together it was most informative and very good. Please keep this up. It's nice to have concise information that is explanatory, clear and detailed"*

Compliment for Leaseholder Service, SHI *"The Officer is an excellent member of staff and his customer service is excellent"!*

Compliment for the Contract and Service Development Team *"what a very knowledgeable officer you are and how in-depth you are with your work"*

Compliment for Contract and Service Development Team *"Thank you for works carried out to my drive – I am delighted and want to thank the Officer involved."*

Compliment for Contract and Service Development Team - *"Thank you so much - you provided exemplary customer service, listening to the customer and acting upon it fairly"*

New Developments during 2015-16

- Monthly learning from complaints reporting to the SMT introduced.
- 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.
- 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.
- As part of wider economy drive the number of investigating officers in the complaints team was reduced from four to three.

Improvement Actions 2016/17

- The Transfer of the allocation and administration of Councillor enquiries will take place in the year to allow investigating officers to concentrate on that part of the service that adds value to the Council
- Similarly the management of MP enquiries will need to be reviewed to ensure the team can maximise its contribution service improvements by learning from complaints.
- 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 service will review its use of informal complaints, in the light of recent LGO and Housing Ombudsman findings
- The Complaints Team will investigate improving the efficiency of the service through the implementation of a new IT system this will include opportunities offered by the implementation of CIVICA.
- E-learning package for complaints handling and investigation will be developed for all staff and managers.
- The Complaints Team will continue to identify service sector best practice by attending the Housemark Complaints benchmarking group to aid service improvements.

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Children & Young People Services

Directorate Performance in 2015-16

This Annual Report provides details of complaints made to Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006; 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 146 to 192, which is a 32% increase.

In total 204 formal complaints were received, whereas 146 were received in 2014-15.

Overall 50% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to 55% (2014-15); and 50% of all complaints, including Stage 2 complaints were closed within timescales.

Whilst performance in responding to complaints within statutory timescales has decreased from 55% in the previous year to 50% in 2015-16; the introduction of new performance management arrangements has meant that performance over the year has improved to the point where 90% of complaints were responded to in time between January and March 2016. This trend has continued into 2016-17.

Headline Results 2014-15

↓	Number of school complaint enquiries, 76 . Decreased from 102 in 2014-15.
↑	Number of enquiries from MPs, 55 . Increased from 34 in 2014-15.
↓	Number of decisions from Local Government Ombudsman, 14, 4 Upheld . Decreased from 19, 1 Upheld in 2014-15.
↑	Number of complaints at all levels, 204 . Increased from 159 in 2014-15.
↑	Number of Stage 1 complaints, 192 . Increased from 146 in 2014-15.
↔	Number of Stage 2 complaints, 10 . Remained at 10 from 2014-15.
↓	Number of Stage 3 complaints, 2 . Decreased from 3 in 2014-15.
↔	Number of complaints escalating from Stage 1 to Stage 2, 10, 5% . Remained at 10, 7% in 2014-15.
↑	Number of complaints upheld (26) and partially upheld (73) at all levels, 99, 52% . Increased from 48% in 2014-15.
↓	Percentage of complaints at all levels responded to in timescales, 50% . Decreased from 52% in 2014-15.
↓	External complaint investigation costs, £12,350 . Decreased from £20,956 in 2013-14.
↓	Number of Councillor Surgery enquiries 5 . Decreased from 9 in 2014-15.
↓	Number of informal complaints received, 47 . Increased from 43 in 2014-15.

↓	Number of compliments received 72 . 160 received in 2014-15.
↑	Total financial remediation awarded was £8,274 in respect of 6 complaints. Decreased from £0 financial remediation awarded in 2014-15.
↑	Complaints about quality of service, 147 , increased from 77 received in 2014-15.
↓	Complaints about actions of staff, 37 , decreased from 38 received in 2014-15.

Complaints and other enquiries from Children and Young People

The number of Stage 1 complaints received from children and young people was **17** in 2015-16. This has remained the same as in 2014-15. Only 1 complaint from 2 young people was considered at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

12 complaints from children and young people were upheld or partially upheld at Stage 1. This has decreased from 17 in 2014-15.

The proportion of complaints at Stage 1 from children and young people which were responded to in timescales is **33%**. This has decreased from 41% in 2014-15 and is lower than the proportion of all complaints which were responded to in timescales. 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.

The Complaints Team is currently being undertaken to evaluate the handling of complaints from children and young people and to ensure that the complaints procedure is child-friendly and resolution focussed.

Proportionally, 59% of complaints from children and young people received in 2015-16 related to Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services; and 24% related to children's homes. This is broadly similar to previous years. 71% of complaints from children and young people were upheld or partially upheld; which has decreased from 100% of complaints in 2014-15. 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:

- Decisions regarding changes to placement where either young people are reluctant to move to a new placement or young people are requesting a move to a new placement; or frequent changes in placement.
- Young people unhappy with or wanting a change in their social worker.
- Impact of the behaviour of other individual young people in children's homes.
- Actions of staff in children's homes and supported living accommodation.

Stage 1 complaints

The number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2015-16 has increased by **32%**; from 146 in 2014-15 to **192** (Including 17 from children and young people). Whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints; 59% of those complaints were received between April and September 2015 where the numbers of complaints received peaked at 30 in April and 26 in June. Between October 2015 and March 2016 the numbers of complaints received were at more consistent levels; at an average of 13 per month. It is expected therefore that any change in the number of complaints in 2016-17 will be less substantial.

There has been a corresponding decline in timeliness of response in 2015-16 with only **50%** of complaints responded to in timescales; compared to 55% responded to in timescales in 2014-15. 'South – Children in Need' (20%) and 'Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services' (38%) were services which underperformed in responding to complaints within timescales.

However following the introduction of new performance management processes in October 2015 performance has 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 has continued between April 2016 and June 2016 where **94%** of complaints have been responded to in timescales.

There has also been a corresponding increase in the proportion of complaints which were upheld or partially upheld in 2015-16; which has increased from 31% in 2014-15 to **52%**.

74% (143) of complaints received in 2015-16 related to the quality of service. This is an increase from 53% of complaints in 2014-15. **20%** (36) of complaints received in 2015-16 related to the actions of staff. This is a decrease from 26% of complaints in 2014-15.

26% (49) complaints related to Borough Wide Duty and Referral Teams (Including Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). This has increased from 21% (30) in 2014-15. 37% (72) of complaints received related to Locality Social Work Teams (18% North Locality, 16% South Locality, 4% Central Locality). This has decreased from 40% in 2014-15. Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service also received 19% (37) of complaints in 2015-16. There is no comparison with previous years at this was no recorded as a separate service.

It can best be concluded that the above statistics reflect the short-term impact on services of the changes being made which are leading to improvements in services in the medium and long-term. This is particularly evident in analysis of complaints received about Borough Wide Duty and Referral where there has been much improvement and transformation work undertaken in the first half of the year. Whilst this service received 49 complaints over the course of the year it is important to note that 32 of these complaints were received between April and September 2015; and only 17 for the remaining 6 months of the year.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

In 2015-16, **10** complaints were escalated to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. This has remained at 10 as in 2014-15. However, proportionally fewer (5% in 2015-16 compared to 7% in 2014-15) complaints have escalated.

In 2015-16, **2** complaints were escalated to Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. This has decreased from 3 in 2014-15. Again this is proportionally fewer (1% in 2015-16 compared to 2% in 2014-15).

Only **29%** of complaints at Stage 2 were responded to in timescales. This has increased from 10% in 2014-15. Whilst this is partly a reflection of the complexity of the complaints which is 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 **57%** (4). This has increased from 20% in 2014-15. 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 proportion of complaints upheld or partially upheld at Stage 3 is 0%.

The cost of appointing independent persons to undertake the consideration of complaints at Stage 2 and 3 of the Statutory Complaints Procedure was **£12,350** in 2015/16. This has decreased significantly from £20,956 in 2014-15 due to improvement in the way that complaint investigations are managed.

Local Government Ombudsman cases

In 2015-16, **11** enquiries were received from the Local Government Ombudsman. This has decreased from 16 in 2014-15.

14 decisions were received from the Local Government Ombudsman in 2015-16. 3 decisions were received from enquiries made prior to 1 April 2015 as well as the 11 enquiries received in 2015-16.

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

- **4** complaints were upheld – maladministration and injustice.
- **1** complaint was not upheld – no maladministration.
- **3** enquiries were closed after initial enquiries with no further action.
- **3** enquiries were closed and not counted as a complaint decision.

Complaints that were upheld related to quality of life story work, child protection and legal processes, referrals to and assessments undertaken.

3 enquiries related to school admission appeals panels. This is a decrease from 10 in **2014-15**. None of the 3 complaints were upheld.

Learning from Complaints

Lessons learned were identified from 51 Stage 1 Complaints in 2015-16. Proportionally this is 27% of all Stage 1 complaints. This has increased from 45 in 2014-15 but proportionally has decreased from 31% of all Stage 1 complaints.

Examples

Complaint:

A complaint was received that the Council failed to protect her children and act on referrals regarding her children. The complainant stated that a number of referrals had been made to Children's Social Care by other agencies but these had not been addressed.

Learning:

Managers have reported that they are not currently able to provide written responses to most referrals made by other agencies as indicated by the guidance. The service should identify a timescale for meeting this objective or amend the guidance so that referring agencies are aware not to expect a written reply.

Action:

The Local Authority has introduced a process which means that a response letter is provided to all referrals which are received by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The response letter is completed by the social worker who deals with the referral and is sent once they have completed the initial consideration of the referral.

Complaint:

A complaint was received about the involvement of family in child protection by children's social care and lack of support from Children's Disability Service. The complainant stated that child protection visits had not been undertaken regularly.

Learning:

All staff should be reminded of the need to carry out statutory Child Protection visits according to Rotherham MBC procedures.

Action:

Robust performance management and audit processes have now been put in place to ensure that procedures are followed. This has led to evidenced improvement in statutory child protection visits being carried out. 100% of statutory child protection visits are now completed in accordance with the relevant procedures.

Complaint:

A complaint was received by the Local Government Ombudsman about the way in which a referral her former husband made about her abusing their son was dealt with; and the Council's decision to carry out an assessment.

Learning:

The Local Government Ombudsman found fault in the way the referral was initially dealt with as it had been received by a Senior Officer and not referred immediately to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Once the decision was made to carry out an assessment, the assessment took too long to complete.

Action:

The Council has made significant improvements to the way in which referrals are received and processed by the Council. Steps have been taken to ensure that all staff are aware of the correct route for making referrals concerning the welfare of a child. All referrals received by Children's Services are screened within 24 hours of receipt.

The Council has implemented robust performance management processes which ensure that assessments are completed within the required timescales and are continually monitored and subject to scrutiny to ensure compliance. Through the management of performance, the Council has ensured that members of staff are aware of the requirement to screen referrals and complete assessments within required timescales.

Further work is therefore being undertaken to maximise the opportunities for learning to be captured from all complaints and from July 2016 learning from complaints has been incorporated 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 2 complaints by the Local Government Ombudsman and the recommendations which they made.

MP Enquiries

In 2015-16, **55** enquiries were received from Members of Parliament which relate to Children and Young People's Services. This has increased from 34 in 2014-15.

During 2015-16 the Complaints Team have undertaken work to improve the quality and timeliness of responses to MP enquiries; support and guidance and has been provided to services and quality assurance of responses has been increased.

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 2015-16 has decreased from 102 in 2014-15 to **76**. 39 enquiries related to complaints about Secondary Schools, 33 enquiries related to complaints about Primary Schools; and 4 enquiries related to complaints about Special Schools.

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.

Compliments

72 compliments were received about services in 2015-16. This has decreased from **160** in 2014-15.

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 will be 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.

The following are examples of compliments received in 2015-16:

- Compliment for worker in **Integrated Youth Support Service**. "Thank you for what you did for me..... You stuck by me... you brought our family back together....you are the best person I ever met."
- Compliment for Social Worker in **Adoption Service**. "Thank you for all the hard work and what you have done for us so far.....we both want you know that we truly do appreciate everything you do, and are doing, and are thankful of your continuing support."
- Compliment for **Independent Reviewing Officer**. "Many thanksI sincerely hope he has your tenacity and empathy you have shown all for which has now benefited *Child* and us his loving parents."
- Compliment for **Social Worker in Locality Team**. "Social Worker has done a fantastic job supporting the families and school, and she is one of the most efficient and effective social workers I have worked with and it has been a pleasure to work with her."
- Compliment for **Foster Carer**. "Foster Carer has been a real pleasure to work alongside....I have been so impressed by her commitment to and understanding of *Child's* and his needs.....nothing has been too much trouble for her."

Financial Remediation

A total of **£8,274** was paid to 6 complainants as a result of complaints made in 2015-16. This has increased from £0 in 2014-15.

However, only £1,750 was paid to complainants in recognition of distress suffered as a result of their experience and for time and trouble in pursuing complaints.

£6,524 was paid to 2 complainants to reimburse money which they were entitled to but not received either as a result of incorrect policy or delay in processing payments..

Top complaint issues 2015-16

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.

Actions, Conduct and Professionalism of Staff

Previously complaints about actions of staff have been made supplementary to the main issues which the customer has complained about. But these types of complaints have continued to be a main focus of complaints in 2015-16.

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.

Content and timeliness of assessments and reports

The most common types of assessments and reports which form the subject of complaints are Child Multi-Agency Assessments and Case Conference Reports:

- Customers unhappy with what is written about them in reports and assessments.
- Complaints about delay in delivering the social worker's Case Conference Report which should be provided 48 hours before Case Conference.

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.

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.

Child Protection Practice and Processes

- Customers unhappy with delays in social care assessment resulting from protracted criminal investigations.
- Customers disagreeing with the decision to initiate child protection investigations.

Developments in 2015-16

- A new performance management regime has been introduced 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.
- The Complaints Team have reintroduced a monthly Complaints and Customer Feedback Report to Directorate Leadership Team highlighting exceptions in performance and learning.
- The Complaints Team have worked with the Performance and Planning Team in Children and Young People's Services to implement an improved process for capturing and reporting learning from complaints which has seen an increase in the number of complaints where learning has been identified.

- 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 partial 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 has been commissioned by the Complaints Team in 2015-16 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.

12. Planned Improvement Actions in 2016-17

In 2016/17 we have up to June 2016:

- Introduced performance management for capturing lessons learned from complaints and included this in existing weekly and monthly performance reporting processes.
- Incorporated lessons learned from complaints into the auditing framework for Children's Social Care so that learning from complaints contributes to wider improvements in services.
- Introduced a quarterly Learning from Complaints report to Directorate Leadership Team in Children and Young People's Services to highlight progress.

In 2016/17 we will:

- Further develop our processes for learning lessons from complaints to ensure that actions identified translate into 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.
- 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. This includes continuing to explore the options for a mobile application to enable young people to make complaints and communicate with the Council.

- 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.

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Environment and Development Services

Directorate Performance in 2015-16

Environment and Development 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 **108**. This represents a slight increase over the last year from **103** to **108**. However **280** informal complaints have also been received.

Overall **86%** of all complaints were responded to within timescales compared with **99%** in 2013/2014.

Headline Results 2014/15

↑	Number of complaints (at all levels) increased from 103 in 2014/2015 to 108
↑	Complaints regarding Streetpride 72, 67% (2014/2015, 53, 51%)
↓	Complaints regarding Planning, Regeneration, Customer & Cultural Services 35, 32% (2014/2015, 44, 43%)
↑	Total number of complaints upheld was 47, 44% (2014/2015, 34, 33%)
↑	An increase in the number of complaints escalating has been seen:-From 6 in 2014/15 to 11 for Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2 in 2015/16
↓	Percentage of complaints at all levels responded to in timescales, 86% . Decreased from 99% in 2014-15.
↑	Complaints about quality of service increased to 63, 58% (2014/2015, 56, 54%)
↓	Complaints about actions of staff decreased to 27, 25% (2014/2015, 28, 27%)
↑	£0 financial remediation awards were made, in total £0 (2014/2015, £1030.00)
↓	Ombudsman upheld 0 out of 3 complaints investigated.
↑	Number of Councillor Surgery's received was 436 (2014/2015, 379)
↑	Number of Compliments received was 371 (2014/2015, 269). <i>The majority of compliments (277) received related to Streetpride Services</i>
↓	Number of informal complaints decreased to 280 , (2014/2015, 327)
↑	The number of MP enquiries received was 72 , a 55% decrease from 160 received in 2014/15

Top complaint issues

Streetpride

The highest number of complaints received related to Streetpride Services and were specifically around services delivered by Waste Management and related to missed bin collections, delay in receiving replacement bins and conduct of refuse collectors.

In relation to Network Management complaints were received about the conduct and service provided by Parking Services; conduct of Civil Enforcement Officers, parking enforcement and lack of consistency when issuing Penalty Charge Notices.

Leisure and Community Services received complaints relating to tree cutting and the attitude of staff members in parks.

Planning, Regeneration Cultural & Customer Services

Complaints were received by Customer and Cultural Services relating to the quality of service and advice offered to customers, delays in receiving service or attitude of staff. Specific complaints were received regarding, advice provided by the contact centre, service provided by Registrars, condition of seating at the Civic Theatre, time taken to be seen at Riverside reception and incorrect advice relating to the process for renewing a travel pass.

Complaints were received by the Planning Service relating to information provided, a lack of response to enquiries and a concern that correct procedures had not been followed. Specific complaints included concerns regarding a lack of consultation relating to a planning applications, lack of consideration of objections to a planning application, delay in action being taken relating to a breach of planning permission, concerns relating to a Tree Preservation Order, a claim that planning permission has been incorrectly given and the Council's responses to reports of a neighbour running a business.

Learning from complaints case studies

1. Customer received incorrect tickets for a performance at the Civic Theatre.

In response to their concerns we have:

- Apologised to the customer. The complaint was considered and discussed at full team meeting. The best way of dealing with similar situations was agreed to prevent this from happening again.

2. A complaint was received about the removal of items from a memorial bench in Clifton Park and the conduct of an officer.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Made an apology and the standard memorial bench agreement is to be reviewed. The review is to be linked with a review of the Road side memorial agreement with a target completion date of the third quarter of 2016/7.

3. A complaint was received about the time taken to answer a phone call when reporting an issue to the contact centre about Streetpride services and what was perceived as misleading messages about the position in the queue.

In response to the complaint the service has:

- Made an apology, extended the staff lunch break periods from 11:00 until 15:00, meaning staff lunch breaks are more spaced out during these hours and employed more staff on part time contracts to work over this period.
- The in-queue messages that are played whilst customers are waiting to have been reviewed and amended.

Informal Complaints

280 contacts were received which were logged as Informal Complaints compared to **327** in 2014/2015. The majority of these contacts related to services delivered by Streetpride Services (**221**). Issues relating to Waste Management (**56**), Transportation and Highways Design (**21**), Corporate Transport (**1**), Leisure and Community Services (**56**) and Network Management (**77**).

In addition Planning, Regeneration, Customer and Cultural Services received (**58**), Planning (**13**) and Customer and Cultural Services (incl. Contact Centre) (**38**), and Regeneration (**4**).

Informal contacts related to missed bin collections, disposal of waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres, recycling points, green waste collection, grounds maintenance, street cleansing, replacement litter bins, potholes, road resurfacing, parking, winter maintenance, dangerous driving by taxi driver, safe walking route, IT problems in Riverside House Library, payment facilities at Customer Service Centres, delay in receiving blue badge service, shouting and swearing Riverside House Café, Smell from public toilets in Riverside House, boundary dispute and disposal of land issues.

Councillor eCasework enquiries

436 enquiries were received in the last year, compared with **379** received in 2014-15, **13%** increase. The vast majority being related to services delivered by Streetpride primarily Network Management (**215**) and Leisure and Community Services (**130**). Issues relating to Network Management Service were concerned with potholes, condition of the highway, repair to grass verges, improvement works, damaged street signs, request for anti-motorcycle frames and ongoing parking issues.

Issues related to Leisure and Community Services were concerning fly tipping reports, overgrown trees, request for litter bins, concerns about litter and concerns about the frequency of cutting to a local park.

Enquiries were also received relating to the Highway Design and Transportation Service (**31**) regarding road markings, request for traffic calming measures, noise and other concerns relating to Heavy Goods Vehicles, excessive noise from roads, double yellow lines, request for new signage.

Waste Management Service (**28**) received enquiries relating to concerns about changes in times of collection, stolen wheeled bins, charges relating to replacement bins, missed collections, excess waste left by householders and additional green bins.

Ombudsman decisions

In 2015-16, 3 decisions were received, compared to 3 decisions in 2014-15. No decisions were upheld.

Compliments

371 compliments were received, **269** received in 2014-15, some examples are as follows:-

Leisure and Community Services

- For removal of fly tipping and litter picking along Grange Lane.
- How clean, tidy and well maintained their local area is looking.
- Have done a wonderful job on Moorgate of clearing leaves.
- Thanks for Street Cleansing Works on High Street.
- For the wonderful display of wild flowers in the central reservation along Bawtry Road.
- Thank you to two members of Streetpride Staff who stopped and helped the customer pick up laminate which had dropped out of his boot on the way to the tip - they were cheerful and helpful with a good attitude.
- Thanks to Street Cleansing for clearing away the dog fouling.
- Thanks to Streetpride for the emergency clear up.
- Thank you to driver of the channel sweeper - him and his team did an exceptional job
- Thanks for providing 2 weeks activities for children, took two grandchildren one with autism, this was an invaluable opportunity to mix and join in organised activities with mainstream children.
- Grass cutting suspending to aid growth of Bee, Marsh and Spotted Orchids. Your patience is appreciated.
- Thanks for your assistance; the walkway hedges have now been trimmed.
- Thank you for recent work on trees in St James Church Yard - it has made a huge difference to the light we are receiving.

Network Management

- Huge thank you to all involved in the resurfacing of Barnsley Road/Hesley Lane
- Good job done with the wooden post on the grass verge
- Thank you very much for help with Parking Charge Notice
- Thank you for repairs done to the
- Thanks for the excellent job done on the resurfacing of Ladyfield Road in Thorpe Salvin and Thorpe Road in Harthill.
- Just to say thank you to you and the Green Spaces team and volunteers for the kissing gate.
- Thank you for a resurfacing a public footpath in Rawmarsh.
- The crew have done an excellent job and the customer wanted to pass on his thanks.
- Thank you for the resurfacing of Greystones Road
- The crew have done an excellent job
- Thank you for your timely response and the cancellation of my parking ticket. Much appreciated.
- Huge thank you to you from me and other riders in our area. We will now be able to use the bridleway and enjoy safer off road riding.
- Thank you for resurfacing work on Cowrakes Lane - little disruption and very pleased with the completed works
- Thank you - you did a really good job cutting back the trees near Recreation Road
- I just wanted to say thank you for your help and co-operation with the Cancer Research UK Race for Life event.
- Thanks for the work currently in progress removing the overhanging trees and shrubs.
- Thank you, you do a brilliant job - jetting gulley team.
- Thank you for speedy response & action taken to address overhanging trees reported.

Waste Management

- Thanks for prompt action on getting his bin emptied also wanted to say thank you to the crew as well for their quick and prompt response.
- They always go out of their way to move the lorry so that I can get past, or run to collect the bins if there is nowhere for them to move to. They are really accommodating and kind which I think should be mentioned as this doesn't happen enough these days. Please pass my sincere thanks on to the men who do this round as they make a real effort to be conscientious and this should be recognised. Many thanks
- Thanks to you and their patience and kindness I got them back and cannot thank you all enough I am so very very grateful. It restores faith in human kindness and shows there are some good people out there!!!!. Please let the lads know how much I appreciate what they have done and thank you for allowing them time from their schedule to do what they did. Many many thanks again much appreciated.
- I just want to compliment the bulky item collection team. They were punctual, professional and very courteous, excellent value for money; I would certainly use the service again.
- Staff at Ravenfield Disposal site on Lidget Lane. He said that their effectiveness and helpfulness is second to none
- Thank you for the assisted collection she is receiving she said all of the crews are kind and Courteous she wouldn't be able to recycle if it wasn't for the help of the crews.
- They were helpful & so polite says we should be proud of these working for council.
- Compliment for Waste Management customer wanting to thank us for sorting out emptying green bin after being missed.

- Compliments for service received at the North Anston Recycling Centre.

Customer and Cultural Services

- Thank you to Customer Service Operative for arranging the collection of a settee and beds. Very helpful even though very busy and the technology was going down.
- Thank you so much for service and to the people who brightened up my day. Excellent and very helpful, very pleased and grateful for all the help
- Excellent service by staff, visit has opened up numerous avenues to further my research into my family history.
- I would like the person responsible for customer services in Dinnington to tell his staff how happy I was with the service I received when renewing my blue badge. I know there job us not issue but they do a wonderful job and they made me very welcome with my canine partner.
- Just to give feedback. I phoned today to order copy birth Certs for our grandchildren and was dealt with by a delightful Scottish lady. I have to say what a credit to our Council she is. She was friendly, patient, efficient and a delight to deal with. It is so good to be able to give really positive feedback to our much maligned but wonderful Council. Thank you (and give her a pay rise immediately!)
- Wanted to pass on her thanks to all the staff in the CC that she has spoken to regarding issues with getting her green bin emptied.
- Yourself and the Staff were exceptional considering the extreme weather and it was a full house, you did not have to wait long to be served at any of the points of sale, and everyone was lovely and polite.
- Compliment for a member of staff at Aston Library who he spoke to on the telephone - naturally pleasant, helpful and polite young lady

Planning Service

- A big thank you to RMBC for their efforts in transforming the site from a waste tip to what can be a real heritage asset for Rotherham
- Thanks so much for getting back to me with a very comprehensive reply that has answered all my questions. I wish I'd been put through to you back in January! Thanks for the excellent customer service.
- Thank You for your help, as a newby to the business world you made me feel at easeif you were a business yourself I would recommend you.
- He was always approachable and returned calls in a timely manner.....I have been very impressed with the professionalism of your team and thank you accordingly.
- We felt her presentation to be clear, concise and candid....I have been very impressed with the professionalism of your team and thank you accordingly.
- Quality of Service - 1 Compliment for Planning Service - "I read in last Friday's Advertiser that your Department was one of the top ten in the country and I am not surprised. Your Planning Department stands out in all it offers us as Agents - reliable, prompt and approachable, a "breath of fresh air"

Regeneration Service

- Thank you very much for your e-mail. The information is very valuable and much appreciated....I have been very impressed by the quality of the guidance I have received up to now.
- I would like to say that the RIDO project is invaluable to small businesses. They are well run and always meet the client's needs. I have also found RIDO to be available

and accommodating when approached.....The whole operation and delivery of this service should be celebrated.

- "Had a very useful meeting today with RIDO Business Intelligence - always come away with good ideas"
- I'll tell you what mate – you're brilliant!
- Transformation of Rotherham - quality buildings restored and land cleared to open up spaces - impressive and aesthetically pleasing from all angles

New Developments 2015-16

- Improved complaint reporting to Directorate Management Team meetings, and to Service Management Teams. Complaints are reported on a regular basis in line with corporate reporting structure.
- 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.

2016-17 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.
- 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.

Resources & Corporate Services

Directorate Performance in 2015-16

Resources and Transformation Service's complaints are dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaint's Procedure.

Over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received was **39**. This represents a decrease over the last year from **43**. In addition **65** customer informal complaints have also been received. (**49** received in 2014-15)

Overall **95%** of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales compared to **96%** in 2014-15.

Headline Results 2015-16

↓	Number of complaints (at all levels) was 39 , 16% decrease from total in 2014-15 – 43 .
↓	Total number of complaints upheld was 11 , 28% compared to 17 , 35% in 2014-15.
↑	Increase in the number of complaints escalating:- 4 (10%) Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2 in 2015-16. (3, 7% in 2014-15) 1 Stage 3 complaint was received in 2015-16. (1 in 2014-15.)
↑	25, 64% of complaints about Quality of Service were received (27, 63% in 2014-15.)
↑	9, 23% of complaints about Actions of Staff were received (9, 21% in 2014-15.)
↓	£1506.80 in financial remedies awarded from 5 complaints. (1 award totalling £500 in 2014- 15.)
↑	2 Ombudsman complaints were upheld out of three decisions. None out of 3 in 2014-15.
↓	8 Councillor Surgery's received (10 in 2014-15.)
↑	5 Compliments received (3 in 2014-15.)
↑	65 informal complaints were received increase from 49 in 2014-15.
↑	22 MP enquiries received. (15 received in 2014-15.)
↑	15 Commissioner enquiries received. (New enquiry type for 2015-16.)

Resources and Transformation Services maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Maintained excellent performance against complaint timescales.
- Number 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 management team.

Learning from complaints case studies

1. Staff member in Local Taxation could not resolve the customers query to the level the customer expected and there should have not been a need to refer the query to a manager.

In response;

- It was found that the member of staff had failed to realise and explain clearly that the account was set to be paid by direct debit. (and the adjusted amount would be taken by direct debit).

Staff member was spoken to, they were advised that the call would have been resolved much quicker if the customer had been advised that the final balance was going to be taken by direct debit. All staff were briefed following the complaint.

2. Customer's cheque payment was allocated to their rent account rather than split between Rent and Council Tax, despite existing agreement.

In response;

- Apology offered and payment re-allocated. It was found that the notes relating to the agreement had been lost due to system upgrades. The notes were re-added.

In addition there has been an IT update of the Income systems which will now include document management systems that will allow customer notes and requests to be better transferred.

3. (Local Taxation) We did not update the direct debit details when they were provided and chased the customer for payment. In addition, the instalments were more due to the delay setting up the direct debit.

In response;

- Apology offered and instalment plan amended to reflect the original instalment amounts. The member of staff was spoken to about the error and reminded of the importance of ensuring all accounts are updated correctly. All staff were briefed following the complaint.

Top complaint issues

Revenue and Benefits

The majority of complaints for the Directorate were received in Revenue and Benefits, 14 complaints received. The complaints were regarding the maintenance of claims and the administration of payments.

Complaints were also received regarding how people had been dealt with by staff and the advice that they had been provided with.

Complaints were received around overpayment of claims, alleged breaches of confidentiality and Discretionary Housing Applications.

Local Taxation

Complaints were received relating to the payment issues, relating to debt, overpayment or the amount charged. Customers raised issues relating to information they had been provided or requests or agreements being ignored. Complaints were also made regarding the accuracy of information held and time taken to resolve issues of concern along with the attitude of staff when dealing with accounts.

Councillor eCasework enquiries

8 Councillor Surgery enquiries were received in the year compared to **10** in 2014-15, the majority being related to services delivered by Revenues and Benefits. Issues relating to Revenues and Benefits - Benefits Assessment (**3**), Account Management (**2**).

The types of enquiries received related to the outcome of discretionary housing payments claims, query relating to a Benefit claim and issues relating to arrears payments.

Ombudsman enquiries

3 decisions were received from the Local Government Ombudsman. They were regarding;

- *Revenues and Benefits – Account Management.* The Ombudsman advised that there was fault by the Council in its record keeping. This led to injustice for the customer as they received communication about debt recovery should not have received, including a bailiff's letter.

The Council agreed to the Ombudsman's recommendations. They apologised to the customer, to steps to ensure staff members were reminded of the importance of accordance record keeping and paid £100 in financial remediation.

- *Revenues and Benefits – Local Taxation.* The Ombudsman advised that there was fault by the Council in awarding a council tax discount in error to the customer. The Council agreed to write off a remaining charge of £414 due to the fault.

As advised the Council agreed to write off the remaining charge. The Council has revised its application form to include guidance regarding the criteria. The Council has also carried out training for staff and introduced procedural changes so that a different officer will consider the review of the original decision.

- *Human Resources.* The Ombudsman advised the Council that they had received an enquiry from a member of Council staff in respect of personnel issues. They did not divulge the name of the member of staff and informed the Council it was out of their jurisdiction to investigate.

Informal Complaints

65 contacts were received which were logged as Informal Complaints compared to **48** in 2014-15. The majority of these contacts related to services delivered by Local Taxation and Account Management. Issues relating to Council Tax (**20**), Account Management (**20**) and Benefit Assessment (**12**).

Informal contacts related to charges relating to, council tax payments including arrears, recovery action and the calculation of charges, discretionary housing payments and arrears caused by problems relating to a Benefit claim.

Compliments

5 compliments were received, as follows;

- “Rotherham Show was fantastic, a really enjoyable day out for the family. Well done to the Council and organisation that worked together. Thank you to everyone that must have worked very hard to get the show ready and give us a fantastic time.”
- “The running of this year’s Rotherham Show, I thought it was superb. Thank you for the long hours that people put in and the help they give so willingly.”
- Compliment regarding Rotherham Vintage Vehicles Rally. “The two words THANK YOU just don't seem enough somehow. With all the work, effort, etc., that you and the other ladies/men put into both days both before, during and I have no doubt about it, after, those two words just do not seem adequate.”
- Compliment for the Communication Team. “Thanks to joined up teams and customer care from the people at RMBC press our daughter managed to get hold of an important lost letter.”
- Compliment for Benefits Assessment. “Big thank you for your efforts in resolving our overpayment issue. The fantastic communication and courtesy we received from yourself and your team was excellent.”

New Developments 2015-16

- Improved quality assurance process for all responses. 100% of complaint response letters continue to be checked.
- Improved learning and service improvements from complaints, 100% of complaints considered for potential learning. All reported through to the Directorate Management Team.
- All complaints and customer enquiries are reported on a regular basis to the Directorate Management Team.
- Review of contract monitor arrangements in respect of debt recovery contractors following an Ombudsman report. (Relating to the actions of other Council’s nationally)

2016-17 Improvement Actions

- Revised training programme for investigating manager’s to be introduced, bespoke training to be developed incorporating discussions around learning from complaints.
- Analysis of complaints by service and type will continue to inform learning and service improvements.
- Continue to reduce the numbers of complaints received and to reduce the number of complaints escalating through the complaint procedure.
- Reduce the number of Informal Complaints received.