

Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2017-18

Cardiff Council
Annual Complaints Report
2017-18



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Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2017-18

Foreword

Welcome to Cardiff Council's Annual Complaints Report for 2017/18. I am extremely pleased to reflect on the successes of last year and share with you some of the key headlines.

Following five successive years of reducing the number of complaints received, complaints have increased by 7% this last year. This is largely due to the two significant snow events in Quarter 4 which greatly affected Waste operations and impacted on the number of complaints we received. I am however pleased that the number of complaints remains below the 5-year average.

While it is disappointing to learn of instances where customers have been unhappy with the service provided to them, as a council, we recognise the value of lessons that can be learned from complaints. The Council is committed to getting things right first time and the feedback we receive from service users provides us with a much-valued understanding as to what we have been doing well and what we can improve on.

I am pleased to note that for the 7th consecutive year the Public Ombudsman for Wales has not issued any Section 16 reports against the Council. Of the 123 complaints that the Ombudsman closed during 2017/18, only 2 were taken forward to investigation.

Our report also contains information on the compliments and positive feedback that customers have provided us with in terms of their satisfaction with aspects of Cardiff Council this year, and I am grateful to all those who have taken the time to write in and acknowledge the efforts made by our staff.

Finally, I would like to thank those same hard working and dedicated staff who work in front-line services and those whom manage complaints. There is much to look forward to over the coming year, and I look forward to sharing news of our continued progress with you all next year.

Councillor Christopher Weaver - Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance



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Reason for this report

To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. The statistics for corporate complaints are set out by service area.

A complaint is defined within the Council as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the Council, or its staff, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.”

Complaints recorded under the corporate complaints procedure do not include ‘first time’ representations which are effectively requests for a service and dealt with as such. A new report of a pothole or a missed bin for example, would not be registered as a complaint, but as a request for service. Of course, in the event that we failed to respond to the ‘request’ appropriately, then that may generate a complaint.

Our complaints procedure

The Council’s complaints procedure reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints. This was further supported by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Complaint received. A complaint can be registered via any Council venue and once received, should be forwarded to the Service Area Complaints Manager. Every Council service area has a lead officer for complaints. The

Complaints Manager will ensure complaints are acknowledged and recorded and facilitate the investigation of the complaint in accordance with the corporate complaints procedure.

Acknowledgment. The Complaints Managers will aim to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days. At this stage, we can let the customer know who is dealing with their complaint and our understanding of what the customer’s complaint entails. We can also let the customer know that a full response will follow within 20 working days of our receipt of the complaint.

Full response. At the end of an investigation, a response should be produced depending on how a customer has indicated they prefer to be contacted. The response should include the outcome of the investigation as well as any necessary action taken for service improvement. The Ombudsman states that the aim of every formal investigation should be to “investigate once, investigate well”. Advice is also included on what the complainant should do if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome – to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Complaints that progress to the Ombudsman will have been thoroughly investigated by the service area. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, it is for the Ombudsman to assess whether there is any evidence of service failure or maladministration not identified by the Council.



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Complaints for Cardiff Council in 2017-18

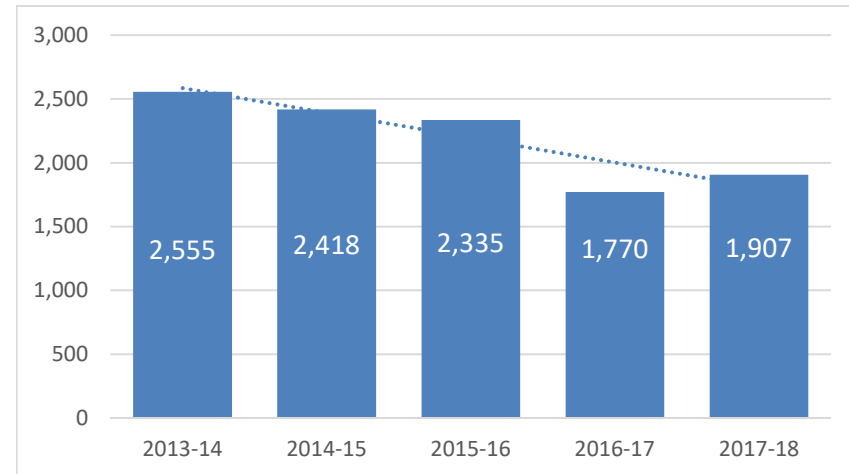
A total of **1,907** complaints were recorded during 2017/18. This is a **7.7%** increase from the previous year, when 1,770 complaints were recorded.

Year	Number of complaints
2017-18	1,907
2016-17	1,770
2015-16	2,335
2014-15	2,418
2013-14	2,555

COMPLAINTS HAVE INCREASED BY

7.7%

WHEN COMPARED TO 2016/17



Complaints received per 1,000 of population

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Cardiff population (estimate)	357,496	361,168	362,756
Total number complaints received	2,335	1,770	1,907
Number of complaints received per 1,000	6.5	4.9	5.3

The population of Cardiff is estimated at 362,756 (Source: <https://statswales.gov.wales>). In 2017/18, Cardiff Council handled 1,907 complaints from customers, meaning that an average of 5.3 complaints were received per 1000 residents.



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Complaints breakdown for Cardiff Council

Service Area	Number of complaints 2016/17	Number of complaints 2017/18
Waste	405	570
Housing	404	440
Arts and Theatres	286	226
Traffic & Transportation	111	152
Resources (Council Tax & HR)	121	115
Parks, Sport & Harbour Authority	52	79
Neighbourhood Services	87	69
Customer Services	113	61
Economic Development	46	56
Bereavement & Registration	40	38
Highways Maintenance	40	36
Education	34	29
Planning	18	21
CTS / FM / BA	7	12
Governance & Legal Services	5	3
Communications & Media	1	0
Total	1,770	1,907

NB Complaints for Children's Services and Health & Social Care are recorded under their statutory complaints procedure. Information on this can be found at the end of this report.



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Compliments for Cardiff Council

As an organisation, we receive many positive comments about our staff and the services we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important to capture as knowing where things are perhaps not working. We therefore keep a record of the compliments we receive as well as the complaints. Good practice and learning can then be circulated across the Council.

Across the year 2017-18, Cardiff Council received a total of **1,988** recorded compliments, which is a 6.3% decrease from the previous year when 2,122 compliments were recorded. Work will take place to ensure that the good service provided every day by some Council departments is captured and we are hopeful of seeing an increase during 2018/19.

Service Area	Number of compliments	
	2016/17	2017/18
Housing & Communities	362	549
Customer Services	570	363
Economic Development	210	279
Bereavement & Registration Services	251	191
Arts & Theatres	194	146
Waste Collections	137	138
Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation	159	99
Neighbourhood Services	91	97
Parks & Sports	110	79
Harbour Authority	17	36
Finance	10	9
Leisure & Play	11	2
Total	2,122	1,988



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A few examples are provided below of the types of compliments we have received:

Area	Service improvement
Arts & Theatres	A great team and a great theatre. Always a pleasure to visit the New Theatre and converse with the staff and volunteers. I can only describe (their) service to be fabulous and attentive to the needs of a diverse audience
Arts & Theatres	Great review and I also find St. David's Hall a great venue to visit in my wheelchair. All the staff are very helpful and friendly and the spaces set aside for wheelchair users suit me very well and are in an excellent position for viewing the stage. Great shows are put on at the hall and I always feel relaxed and enjoy my visits there.
Central Transport Services	Please can you pass on my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Fleet and Transport team. Their support over the snow period and into the recovery period was really appreciated and has help to minimize the disruption to residents. Their support and efforts during this period was immense and certainly avoided significant disruption to our operations, this was despite major issues with contractor availability during this period.
Citizen Hub	I just wanted to say thank you for my free concessionary bus pass. I had experienced a truly horrible 24 hours where my license had been revoked due to some loss of vision, but your staff in the Hub were courteous and efficient and had me walking away with access to free transport throughout Wales in under 10 minutes. It has made all the difference knowing that I have some measure of independence and don't have to worry about the cost.
Connect to Cardiff	Customer explained that she always calls C2C and the service is amazing! She said she always gets answers and is very rarely on hold and has called a variety of lines (Council Tax, waste etc.), and the service is always fantastic and the people of Cardiff are very lucky to have C2C. Well done team C2C!
Economic Development	We visited for the afternoon last weekend and really enjoyed the Castle, we booked onto the Clock Tower tour which was really interesting, the rooms were stunning and our guide brought the stories and history to life. Would definitely recommend it. (The tour guide) told us more about the hallway we were in which was really enjoyable, thank you! There was also a lovely gentleman who told us all about the staircase and the marriage proposals that had taken place there, the staff are so enthusiastic and knowledgeable and so forthcoming! Great place, highly recommend a visit
Events	What a wonderful job you all did, we could not have done it without you. The Reindeer Run Team and Cancer Research Wales would like to say a BIG THANK YOU, to you all, for supporting us and helping us deliver what we think was the best Reindeer Run ever. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves, helping us bring some good old fashioned Christmas Spirit to the Village. Have a wonderful well-earned Christmas and we looking forward to seeing you all next year.



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Finance	I am writing to ask if you could pass on my thanks to a member of staff in the Council Tax collections team. I have today made a payment that clears my council tax bill for the year. I struggled with payments and there had been issues with my bank and direct debits but the collections team were extremely helpful. The account could have gone to court and I could have been charged more. (The member of staff) helped by agreeing to repayment proposals and not progressing the account. This has been very much appreciated being treated with respect, honesty, fairness and patience.
Harbour Authority	Thanks for making this happen. As a first timer I was humbled to see paraplegics and other disabled people showing amazing performances and proving to me that there is no disability as long as you want it and you go for it. (Indoor Rowing Championships @ Channel View)
Highways	Customer called us and advised that the drains were in a horrendous condition in Grangetown when she had reported them last Friday. They have now been done and would like a big thankyou to us here in Highways for getting it done so swiftly!
Housing	I would like to thank your Housing Options team in their recent help in rehoming myself, all staff members that I came into contact with were very polite and professional in every manor. The landlord was reassured by members of staff who only presented factual information...to commence the tenancy which has kept me off the streets. I know some councils have been hammered in recent weeks due to not helping Ex-forces, I would just like to say, not in Cardiff!
Libraries	(Today) was my first visit to the (Cathays Heritage) library and I was greeted by a staff member who promptly and helpfully arranged new membership. The staff member presented very professionally and efficiently whilst maintaining a friendly and approachable nature which I find to be quite rare these days. I had a very enjoyable experience and ... all of the requirements of my visit were achieved. Excellent customer service which should be noted and commended."
Parks	I would like to say a huge thank you to the Victoria Park Rangers for setting up the band stand for this evening's carol service. And also for staffing the event to make sure people stayed safe. It was a magical evening and will live in the memory. I attended with my daughters and parents and we all thoroughly enjoyed. It would be great if you could pass on my thanks to the team
Planning	Hi, I just wanted to let you know how helpful and professional...the planning admin department are. (They) always answers queries promptly and are a pleasure to deal with.
Responsive Repairs	Service user called to advise she had two emergencies raised today....for her door not securing and (for) her blocked toilet. Service User advised Repairs attended to the leak and were absolutely wonderful, very polite and arrived well before the 2 hour timescale given. The carpenter arrived with an apprentice. They arrived the same time and were wonderful. She advised she is extremely happy with the level of service she received and wanted to pass this on.
Waste Collections	The customer wished to express her "complete satisfaction with the (Waste Service). I think you're amazing". She also added "I think the way they collect the waste is perfect"



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Ombudsman Complaints 2017-18

The Ombudsman closed **123** cases involving Cardiff Council compared to 133 cases in 2016-17. 2 of these cases were accepted for further investigation of which just 1 led to an Ombudsman report where the complaint was upheld. The Ombudsman received 21 premature complaints (defined as when the Council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). A further 36 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council. The Ombudsman closed the cases for the following reasons:

Reason for closing the case

	2016-17	2017-18
Complainants had not exhausted the Council's complaints process - they were referred back to the Council	43	21
Cases closed by the Ombudsman after initial consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none">e.g. no evidence of maladministration or service failureno evidence of hardship or injustice suffered by the complainantlittle further would be achieved by the Ombudsman pursuing the matter	38	41
Cases declined because Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by Council (Quick-Fix / Voluntary Settlement)	16	36
Cases out of Ombudsman's jurisdiction	31	22
Cases withdrawn by complainant	1	1
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint upheld	3	1
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint not upheld	1	1
Total	133	123



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Ombudsman Complaints - a yearly comparison

The table below shows the total number of complaints made to the Ombudsman regarding Cardiff Council over the last five years.

Year	
2017-18	123
2016-17	133
2015-16	143
2014-15	98
2013-14	100

Investigations leading to reports

The Ombudsman issues a report if he finds that a complainant has suffered hardship or injustice through the Council's maladministration or service failure.

Under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, the Ombudsman can issue one of two types of report following an investigation into a complaint by a member of the public: Section 16 and Section 21.

Section 16 Report

The first type of report is known as a Section 16 report. This is issued when the Ombudsman believes that the investigation report contains matters of public interest. The Council is then obliged to publicise the report at its own expense. **For the sixth consecutive year, the Ombudsman issued 0 Section 16 reports against Cardiff Council.**

Section 21 Report

The Ombudsman can issue a Section 21 report if the Council agrees to implement any recommendations he has made and if he is satisfied that the case does not raise matters of public interest. **The Ombudsman issued 1 Section 21 report during 2017-18.**



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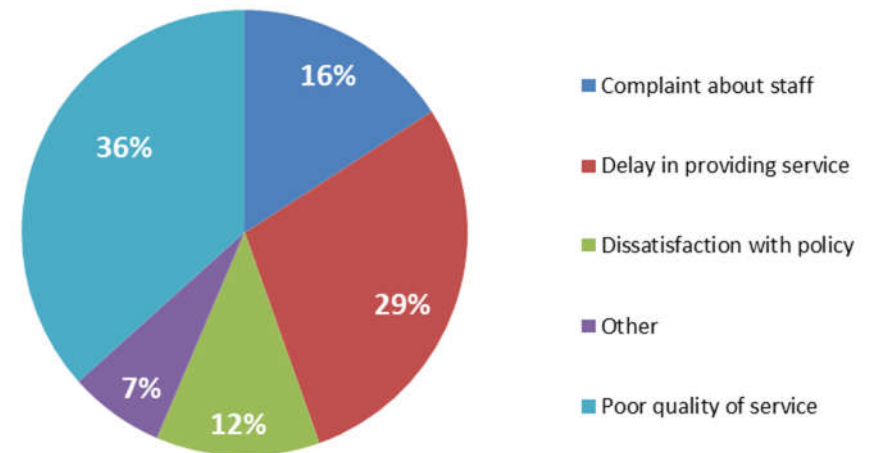
Housing & Communities

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Assessment & Support	78	92
Face to Face Services	31	17
Landlord Services	114	117
Preventative Services	2	13
Regeneration, Development & Enabling	15	23
Responsive Repairs Unit	164	161
Libraries	12*	16
Adult Community Learning	4*	1
Total	404	440
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	392 (97.0%)	430 (97.7%)
Complaints about staff	52 (12.8%)	68 (15.5%)
Delay in providing service	87 (21.5%)	129 (29.3%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	31 (7.7%)	51 (11.6%)
Other	47 (11.6%)	31 (7.0%)
Poor quality of service	187 (46.3%)	161 (36.6%)
Total	404	440

*Figures not included in 2016/17 result as part of Customer Services.

Housing & Communities have elected to employ specialist officers that deal with complaints. These officers are part of a team that sits within the Service Development and Improvement Section. Having these officers, allows Housing & Communities to have a constructive, efficient and

consistent approach to complaints. All complaints are looked into thoroughly and with an independent mind-set, to establish all the relevant facts in each case. Whereas the prime objective is to resolve the matter for the complainant, we also take a wider view and look at changes that could be made to improve services going forward, which would also minimise potential future complaints.



The increase in the number of complaints about Assessment & Support is primarily a result of an increase in complaints about the homelessness services (20 in 2016/17 to 34 in 2017/18). It should be noted that the Council received 3,987 applications for help with homelessness in 2017/18 which represents an increase of 68% from just two years ago. As



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the demand for housing increases it is not always possible to offer social housing to those who find themselves homeless, resulting in an increase in the use of private rented sector accommodation for this purpose. This together with the pressure on services caused by the increase in applications has contributed to the increase in complaints. Additional funding has been made available for Homelessness services and a review is currently underway which should improve the service for the future.

All complaints are recorded on a custom-built database and the reasons for justified complaints are monitored and reported on regularly, with recommendations also being made to Senior Managers on individual cases as they are dealt with. Any themes in complaints are also identified and addressed.

The specialist officers cover many of the areas within Housing and Communities including Independent Living Services, Housing repairs and Planned Maintenance, Caretaking, Social Lettings, Anti-Social Behaviour, Tenancy Management and Benefits.

Overall, the number of complaints has gone up slightly, but this appears to be purely the natural fluctuation that is to be expected. Having looked at the figures and the reports, there is no specific reason that can be identified.

Learning from complaints – Responsive Repairs

One of the Council's main success stories with regards to complaints is the repeated annual decrease in complaints received by the Responsive Repairs Unit (RRU). Housing repairs is one of the most visible services the Council provides to its residents and accordingly, is the main service through which many residents judge the Council overall. It is therefore of great importance that the Council attempts to get repairs 'right first time' and the department has conducted regular reviews on the number and type of complaints received. The improvements implemented speak for themselves as the department have received a consecutive decrease in the number of complaints received for five years in a row (440 in 2013/14, 333 in 2014/15, 227 in 2015/16, 164 in 2016/17 to 161 in 2017/18).

A common theme amongst complaints received has been about delays to the work taking place. The RRU are now able to keep our customers informed about potential delays as customers will now receive a text message notifying them of their appointment and a reminder text 24 hours before the appointment and a further reminder when the Operative is on his way. All RRU operatives have also been issued with smart phones to enable mobile working and scheduling. This change has allowed the RRU to start offering morning or afternoon appointments to customers, or a slot to avoid the school run.



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The RRU have also arranged for more repairs to be undertaken by in-house operatives as opposed to external contractors. This means the department are able to retain sufficient oversight of the jobs reported and take ownership of reported issues. These changes have reduced costs and improved the service to our tenants, which is clearly demonstrated by a significantly reduced number of complaints.

Learning from complaints - Neighbourhood Regeneration

A complaint was made to the Council about Council staff being unable to cut the grass on a communal area due to cars being parked illegally on grass in the communal area. This had unfortunately happened previously and after a review, the Council proposed to install bollards around the communal area mentioned in the complaint. This would prevent any further issues and damage to the grass due to the illegally parked cars.



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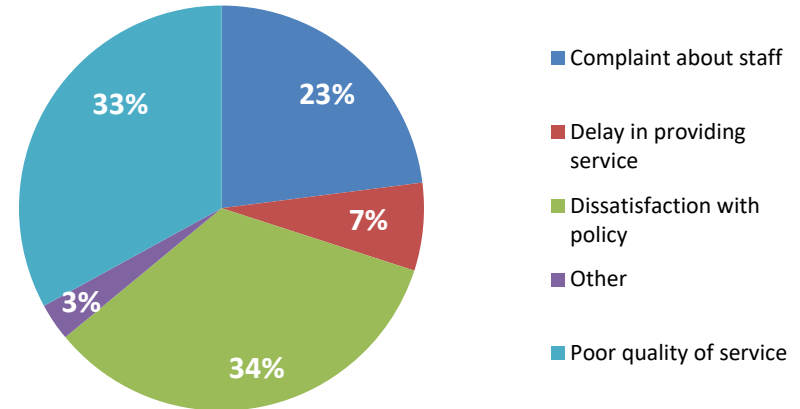
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Customer Services

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Adult Community Learning	4	N/A*
Connect to Cardiff	33	25
Libraries	12	N/A*
Rent Smart Wales	56	32
24/7 Services	8	4
Total	113	61
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	107 (94.7%)	58 (95.1%)
Complaints about staff	29 (25.7%)	14 (22.9%)
Delay in providing service	8 (7.0%)	4 (6.6%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	19 (16.8%)	21 (34.4%)
Other	13 (11.5%)	2 (3.3%)
Poor quality of service	44 (38.9%)	20 (32.8%)
Total	113	61

* Figures not included in 2017/18 result as now part of Housing.

Connect to Cardiff (C2C) has received **25** complaints which is a decrease when compared to 33 in 2016/17. Of the 25, 8 were not upheld following investigation which is the equivalent of 32% of the complaints received. Furthermore, 2 were only partially upheld which forms 8% of the total.



C2C benefit from a dedicated Stats and Support team who can utilise specialist software to accurately advise to- the-second metrics, such as the time a customer waits before having their call answered and the duration of the call itself. Furthermore, all calls that are received at the contact centre are recorded and retained for a 12-month period. Both of these factors enable C2C to investigate complaints fully and form decisions on whether to uphold complaints based on evidence and without the need to rely on recollection of accounts which could be subject to inaccuracies. This facility also allows C2C to support our Service Area partners in their own complaint investigations, particular as we now have the facility to record conversations with our colleagues and hold a record of the advice they have offered and their understanding of the customer's circumstances.



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Any upheld complaints regarding members of staff can be managed more effectively with the benefit of these recordings being available for staff to hear and work through a plan of rectification with either one of our full time coaches or a Team Leader.

For the 2017/18 period, C2C handled 561,161 calls, 98,306 emails and 3,492 webchats. When you combine these figures, C2C dealt with a total of 662,959 customer enquiries. Based on that volume, the 25 complaints are the equivalent to 0.003% of customers registering a dissatisfaction with the service they received. C2C utilize a Commination Strategy and a Learning and Development Strategy on a daily basis to ensure there is a continuous cycle of staff engagement so that staff have the right skills and attributes to resolve situations before they become complaints. This is reflected in the Customer Satisfaction rate of **96.7%** for the year and the number of compliments received throughout the same period.

Rent Smart Wales was introduced in November 2015 with the enforcement provisions being implemented from November 2016. During the 2017/2018 period, call and email volumes have stabilised to approximately 8,000 interactions per month; however, following the significant impact of the introduction of enforcement provisions there has been a delay in processing licence application due to the volumes received.

During 2017/18, there was a 42.8% decrease in the total number of complaints received in comparison to 2016/2017 with **32** formal complaints recorded. The vast majority (65.6%) of the formal complaints were categorised as 'dissatisfaction with policy'. The primary policy

decision that has attracted formal complaints is that landlords who live outside of mainland Britain must appoint a mainland-Britain based agent to conduct letting and management activities. This policy decision is designed to improve the private rented sector in Wales and does not reflect a failure of the service.

15.6% (5 incidents) of the formal complaints were categorised as either 'poor quality of service' or 'delay in providing service'. These complaints both relate to the licence submission process. The complaints categorised as 'poor quality of service' are where customers believed that they had submitted their licence application online, but had not done so. The complaints categorised as 'delay in providing service' are where customers had been dissatisfied about the length of time a submitted licence has taken to be processed while there has been an increased number of licence applications following enforcement provisions being introduced. Measures, such as making the submission process clearer for customers, and an escalation process for licence review, have been implemented and are having positive impact.

Learning from Complaints – Rent Smart Wales

A number of complaints were received in 2016/17 due to a delay in processing licenses. Management considered the complaints received, and the process that had led to delays. This allowed Rent Smart Wales to anticipate and plan for potential delays the following year, and as such only 2 (6.25%) of the 2017/2018 complaints dealt with were of this nature.



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24/7 Services received just **4** complaints within 2017/18. These have reduced by 50% compared to the 8 recorded in the previous year. This has been the third successive year that complaints have decreased, reinforcing our core value that customers are at the heart of our service.

Telecare Cardiff continues to deliver a service to 4,500 customers and responded to over 225,000 calls in 2017/18. The Meals on Wheels service is also continuing to expand and this year has seen a 100% increase of our number of customers.

Of the complaints that were received within the unit, 3 were in relation to the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) and 1 for Telecare.

24/7 services continues to develop Customer Satisfaction Surveys to obtain as much feedback from all services that are delivered within the unit. Again, Telecare continues to receive positive feedback and 99% of our customers would recommend the service. This year has also seen the introduction of the Meals on Wheels Survey. Again, feedback was positive with 100% of customers happy with the service and quality of the meal they receive.

The unit has continued to sustain its accreditation in relation to TSA Standards. These standards ensure that the industry benchmark for safety

and quality is met within our unit. ISO 9001/2015 accreditation was also maintained recognising that the Quality Management Systems are embedded within our processes.

Learning from Complaints – 24/7 Services

Some previous complaints have been in relation to staff and quality of service. 24/7 Services is committed to continually improving our existing services, and to providing the relevant skills and knowledge to further develop our staff and services. This is to ensure customers receive the best service and products possible.

Since looking at the nature of the complaints, recruitment has taken place with additional Team Leaders in post to help support, enabling staff and our services to perform more effectively.



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Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Highway Maintenance	40	36
Planning (including Building Control)	18	21
Traffic & Transportation	111	152
Total	169	209
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	132 (78.1%)	203 (97.1%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	119 (70.4%)	181 (86.7%)

Highway Maintenance

Highway Maintenance received **36** complaints for 2016/17. This is a decrease of 4 on the previous year where 40 complaints were recorded.

The highest number of complaints received was again related to potholes and paving (17 complaints). This is consistent when compared to the previous year when 15 complaints were received. It should be noted that a huge volume of potholes are reported every year, so to only receive a small number of formal complaints on the matter is a significant achievement.

Carriageway reconstruction complaints remained the same as the previous year with 5 complaints received. A common factor among the complaints

were that people were upset that the area where they reside had not been included on the treatment programme. All roads are considered against set criteria, and although roads may not qualify for resurfacing at the time, any defects identified are passed onto the maintenance team for consideration.

Maintenance Operations received 13 complaints in 2017/18 compared with 5 in the previous year. This can be contributed to the severe weather events that were experienced in Quarter 4 and the huge strain that this placed on the highway network.

Traffic & Transportation received **152** complaints for 2016/17, which is an increase of 41 from the total (111) for 2016/17.

The highest number of complaints related to Civil Enforcement which has received 52 complaints. This number can be attributed to the increased enforcement of moving traffic offences such as yellow box junctions and also bus lanes to improve traffic flow on the highway network. 11 complaints have also been received against Civil Parking Enforcement Officers. All complaints against officers are investigated rigorously and if any inappropriate behaviour is proven, necessary action is taken from refresher training to disciplinary proceedings. It should be noted that as these situations can be quite emotive, it is often the case that information provided by the complainant is totally different to the Civil Enforcement Officer.



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Road Safety Schemes have also seen an increase in complaints during 2017/18, with 15 complaints received compared to 7 for the year before. Although these comments are logged as complaints, essentially the information is classed as feedback to the scheme and included as part of the post-scheme monitoring process.

Planning (including Building Control)

The Planning Service received **21** complaints in total for 2017/18. This is an increase of 3 on the previous year where 18 complaints were recorded. These complaints covered a range of issues relating to planning applications, the planning consultation process, planning decisions and compliance with Building Regulations. This figure is small considering that Development Management determines approximately 3,000 planning applications per year. Many of these applications will require negotiating with multiple parties to discuss contentious issues and securing decisions using either Delegated Powers or by reporting through the Planning Committee. Planners also investigated approximately 501 Enforcement Cases where planning permission had not been granted, developments had not complied with permissions granted, and unauthorised and alleged unauthorised developments had been undertaken.

Neighbourhood Services

69 complaints were received for Neighbourhood Services which comprises of; street cleansing, education and enforcement. This is a 20% decrease from the previous year when 87 complaints were recorded.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Neighbourhood Services	87	69
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	87 (100%)	69 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	75 (86.2%)	44 (63.8%)

Through improved engagement with our citizens, Neighbourhood Services ensures 'the citizen is central to how we work' and recognises that everyone has a role to play in tackling environmental issues such as litter and fly tipping, whilst ensuring our streets are a safe, clean and inspiring place to live. There is great potential for every local authority to enhance this endeavour by working alongside residents and allowing them to take ownership of their own neighbourhoods. We have already seen improvements on our streets and this is reflected in the lower number of complaints received during 2017/18 for comparable services.



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Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority

Complaints for **Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority** have increased from 52 in 2016/17 to **79** in 2017/18.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority	52	79
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	52 (100%)	78 (98.7%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	48 (92.3%)	69 (87.3%)

On analysis of the Parks-specific complaints, some could arguably have been classed as a request for service and this could attribute to the increase in numbers. Work will take place during 2018/19 with the Council's Corporate Complaints Team to help distinguish formal complaints from requests for service.

Complaints numbers for the Harbour Authority have remained static over the last 3 years with just three complaints received during 2017/18, two of which were concerning debris in the Bay. This is a small decrease from the 4 complaints recorded during 2016/17.

Monthly complaint statistics for Parks, Sports and Harbour Authority continues to be monitored at Performance Meetings. This allows managers to identify trends and, if necessary, take corrective action.

Compliments are also reported at Performance Meetings, with an impressive 95 compliments received during the year.

Learning from Complaints – Parks

Bilingual notice - The Parks service received a complaint from a service user to advise that there were incorrect translations regarding Cardiff Council Park Pitches email notices. Parks have liaised with Bilingual Cardiff and this has led to the standard email template being re-translated and corrected for future use.

Allotments - A customer made a complaint regarding a fire at an allotment site behind their property, which damaged their fence. This led to the Allotments Office liaising with the allotment holders to take action to prevent any further incidents and for letters to be sent to all plot holders advising that gas canisters are not permitted in storage sheds. These preventative measures should help to stop any future fires and damage to adjacent properties.



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Bereavement & Registration Services

There were **38** recorded complaints for **Bereavement & Registration Services** in 2017/18 compared to 40 in 2016/7.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Bereavement & Registration	40	38
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	40 (100%)	38 (100%)

Bereavement and Registration Services actively encourages the bereaved and all Registration Service users to contact them should they experience any issues with any burial, cremation, marriage or registration service as these are such significant events where there can be no errors.

Complaints are received by email, via C2C, in writing and also via Bereavement Services' reception area where service monitor forms are completed. All complaints are recorded on a database and considered as soon as possible. Service Provision Questionnaires are also sent to all those who use Bereavement and Registration Services which provides an additional avenue for people to advise us of any issues with the services they have received.

It is important to note that due to the high number of visitors to the service – with over 4,000 funeral services per annum, approximately 500,000 visitors to our sites, 9,000 registrations for births and deaths, and 1,500 marriages – the complaints are very minimal.

Bereavement and Registration Services is a 'right first time' service in which our customers, the bereaved, or those carrying out life changing events are our ultimate priority. Customer requests and comments via service monitor forms and questionnaires are scrutinised and service standards have been developed to inform the public. From these standards, monthly performance data is monitored to ensure that we are meeting our commitments to Cardiff's citizens. Annually, our level of customer satisfaction averages 99%.

The complaints reported would equate to under 0.01% of all visitors to our sites. Visitors come to us, in the main, in quite a vulnerable state and at differing points in their grieving process. This can mean that small issues may become of increased importance to them and we actively encourage families to communicate with Bereavement Services their needs via service monitor forms. In 2017-18, 12 instances of this nature were recorded. These are then monitored via our monthly statistics and at operational meetings. Trends in service requirements are then considered at this point as well. Where an error has occurred we will also proactively apologise in writing to the family concerned to try and stop an issue escalating. Registration Services too is an area in which our citizens are undertaking life changing events and as such we have to respond to their needs with sensitivity and understanding. We also register deaths at University Hospital of Wales and work with the team there to ensure that any issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

Due to the sensitive nature of the service, 100% of complaints received a full response within 5 working days.



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Learning from Complaints – Bereavement & Registration Services

One of the identified issues for the Register Office is the increasing number of telephone calls for birth and death registrations. Due to the complex and statutory nature of the information given to the public, each call can last in the region of ten minutes. Following a lean management exercise it was deemed that this caused frustration to both the public and staff. Call volumes increased further and in order to overcome this issue calls are now directed via C2C which means that calls are answered promptly. This has been a huge success and has led to a decrease in the number of complaints regarding call failure or the wait time for calls to be answered.

In addition the development of a Ceremony Manager post has provided a more tailored and consistent service for those clients booking ceremonies with the Register Office and a single point of contact concerning these ceremonies. This will lead to a decrease in customer frustration with contacting staff regarding their ceremony and provide a more accessible service for those requiring information. The Ceremony Manager is currently streamlining the booking processes to make it easier and more robust, and will also work closely with the venues to discuss options around holding ceremonies outside and offering new initiatives in keeping with the individual needs of those booking the ceremony.



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Waste Collections

The number of complaints received by Waste Collections has increased by 25% from 405 in 2016/2017 to **570** in 2017/2018.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Waste Collections	405	570
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	397 (98.0%)	529 (92.8%)

In comparison with the previous year, the majority of complaints received against the various complaint types has remained stable. The key complaint types that have seen a noticeable increase from the previous year are:

- Non Collections – Domestic (+55)
- Non Collections - Assisted Lift (+55)
- Delivery of Bin/bags/caddies & availability in outlets/Recycling bag limit (+32)

The highest number of complaints was received in Quarter 4, with 239 complaints being received. During the exceptional weather experienced during this period, Cardiff experienced two significant falls of snow, freezing wind, and blizzards. The snowfall that hit Cardiff was the heaviest in almost 35 years and was so extreme that, for the first time, a Red weather warning was issued for Cardiff. This caused significant disruption to waste operations and collections were suspended for health and safety

reasons. To allow the service area to recover, collection of some waste streams were cancelled until the next scheduled collection day (recycling & compost). The snow events also impacted on the service area's ability to deliver bins/bags/caddies and re-stock outlets.

A number of other events took place during this period that contributed to the increases seen.

They are as follows:

- Customer call-backs for non-collections were temporarily recorded as complaints rather than escalated within C2C in January 2018. This was a temporary process agreed between Waste Collections and C2C, lasting for a period of 3 weeks and which accounted for 50 complaints.
- Our contracted supplier for food waste caddy liners experienced production issues during Quarter 4. This affected stock levels and our ability to deliver to residents.
- The service area implemented new back office and in-cab technology during Quarter 4. Back office staff and frontline operatives have had to undergo training and adjust to new ways of working.

The number of complaints is considered to be extremely low when the volume of waste service delivery is taken into account. With approximately 157,000 address points currently serviced citywide, over 470,000 waste



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collections are carried out weekly - which is equivalent to over 24 million a year. Additionally Waste Management also provides education to residents, bulky waste collection services and delivery/repair services across the City, as well as access to three Household Waste Recycling Centres during the 2017/18 period.

93% of all complaints made were responded to within 20 working days or less.

The service area received 138 compliments during the 2017/18 period, which is an increase from the previous year and is pleasing to report.

Complaints and trends are robustly monitored by officers through close liaison with Connect to Cardiff and regular updates from the Service Complaints Manager. Complaints and compliments are also discussed with managers and union representatives at monthly meetings and are displayed on display screen monitors at Lamby Way.

A traffic light system is operated by the Business Support team at Lamby Way to ensure that complaints are responded to within the appropriate response timescales.



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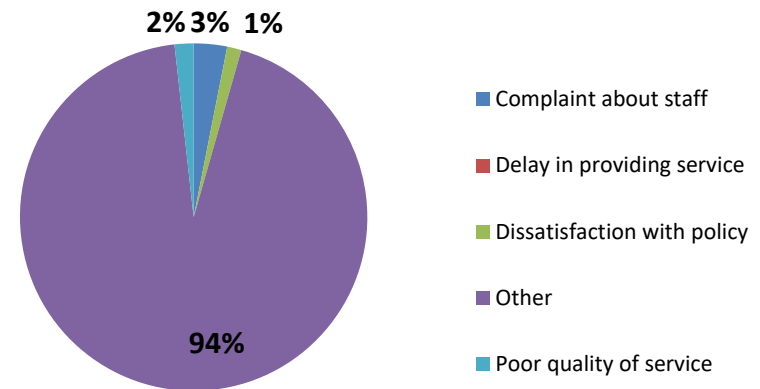
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Arts and Theatres

Arts and Theatres contains two of the city’s biggest arts venues, St Davids Hall and the New Theatre. Complaints for Arts and Theatres have decreased from 286 in 2016/17 to **226** in 2017/18.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Arts and Theatres	286	226
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	286 (100%)	226 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	286 (100%)	226 (100%)
Complaints about staff	15 (5.2%)	7 (3.1%)
Delay in service	6 (2.1%)	0 (0%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	25 (8.7%)	3 (1.3%)
Other	219 (76.6%)	212 (93.8%)
Poor quality of service	21 (7.3%)	4 (1.7%)

It is pleasing that there has been a decrease in the number of complaints received. A large variety of shows take place within Arts and Theatres and it is important to note that the majority of complaints for this service area can be classified as ‘customer preference’ rather than service failure. For example, the department receives complaints about shows not being to the customer’s personal taste, the quality of plays and the audience etc. There were 425,000 tickets sold within 2017/18 and so the 226 complaints equates to just 0.0005% of customers being dissatisfied.



Learning from Complaints

Though the majority of complaints do not relate to service failure, there are some complaints that enable us to implement changes as a result of feedback from our customers.

Customer Care - Considering the number of events that take place at our arts venues, the number of complaints specific to staff is extremely minimal with even fewer of the complaints being upheld. A complaint was received during 2017/18 alleging incorrect information was given regarding a performance. The customer was subsequently contacted with an apology and assured that customer care would be addressed in the next staff training day.



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Economic Development

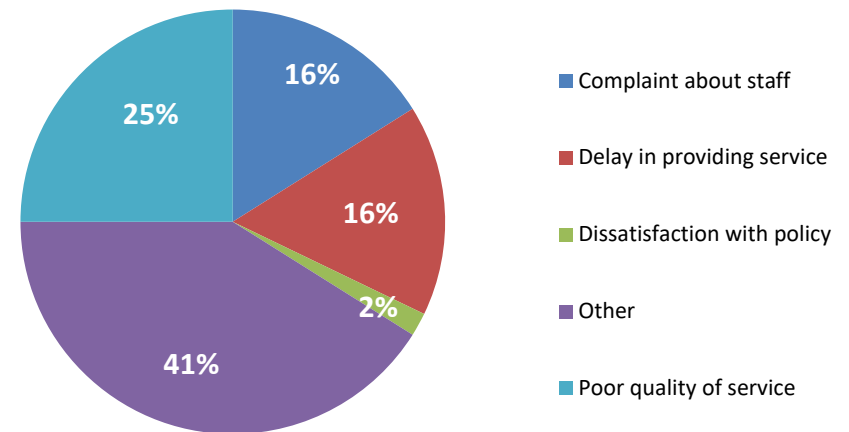
Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Economic Development	46	56
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	46 (100%)	56 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	46 (100%)	56 (100%)
Complaints about staff	6 (13.0%)	9 (16.1%)
Delay in service	3 (6.5%)	9 (16.1%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	5 (10.9%)	1 (1.8%)
Other	17 (37.0%)	23 (41.1%)
Poor quality of service	15 (32.6%)	14 (25.0%)

During 2017/18, Economic Development received **56** complaints which is a slight increase on the 46 recorded during 2016/17. The complaints comprised of 3 for City Centre Management, 3 for Strategic Estates, 27 for Venues and Tourism (this includes Cardiff Castle, the Events team, Cardiff Caravan Park and the Norwegian Church) and 23 for Major Events.

Complaints have remained relatively static, however, there was a slight increase in complaints received for Major Events. The majority of these complaints were as a consequence of major events being held in Cardiff. For example, a perceived lack of information regarding park and ride, the cost of parking at Sophia Gardens when there is an event at the Millennium

Stadium or citizens being unable to navigate across town due to road closures during major events such as rugby matches / triathlons or the velothon.

The legacy and benefit to Cardiff of hosting major events is significant and feedback from many has been overwhelmingly positive. When considering the number of high profile projects and the amount of regeneration activity across the city, the number of complaints received for 2017/18 is still a very encouraging result.



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Learning from Complaints – Economic Development

A complaint was received from a service user who expressed their disappointment with a tour guide at Cardiff Castle. The complainant alleged that the amount of detail provided during the tour was insufficient and further alleged that some members of staff were rude.

As a result of the complaint, the service has arranged for all tour guides to be given extra training and the complainant was advised that the management team would address the complainants concerns about staff behaviour.



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Education & Lifelong Learning

The Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate received **29** formal complaints in 2017/18, a decrease from the 34 recorded in 2016/17.

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Education	34	29
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	19 (55.9%)	17 (58.6%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	18 (52.9%)	10 (34.5%)

From the 29 complaints received, 17 of the complaints were acknowledged within five working days. The Directorate responded to 34% of the complaints received within 20 days of receipt.

The percentage of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days has increased from the previous year. However, the percentage of complaints responded to within 20 working days has decreased compared to 2016/17. Some complaints have involved the Directorate having to commission an Independent Investigator to undertake and oversee the complaint process. This process has an impact on the Council meeting its complaint timescales.

Where this occurs, the Directorate will send an interim reply explaining the reasons for delay and when the complainant can expect a response.

The most common causes of complaint were relating to concerns for the statutory functions of School Admissions and Statements of Special Educational Needs.

It is important to note that under Section 29(1) of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies of all maintained schools are required to establish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school or to the provision of facilities or services. The Local Authority does not have a role in investigating or resolving complaints about schools. The Welsh Government has issued guidance to support schools in dealing with complaints entitled Complaints Procedures for School Governing Bodies in Wales (Welsh Government circular no 011/2012). Within the guidance, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to satisfy itself that all schools it maintains have adequate complaints procedures in place and that these are published. A governing body complaints procedure may, with the agreement of the local authority, include a stage for the local authority to consider the complaint. However, the statutory responsibility for dealing with a complaint remains with the governing body.



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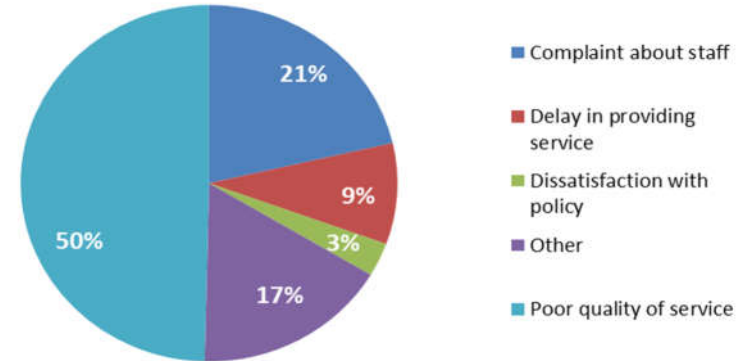
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Resources

Service Area	2016/17	2017/18
Resources (Revenue Services & HR)	121	115
Revenue Services	121	114
HR	0	1
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	120 (99.2%)	92 (80.0%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	58 (47.9%)	91 (79.1%)
Complaints about staff	22 (18.2%)	28 (21.3%) *
Delay in providing service	3 (2.5%)	12 (9.2%) *
Dissatisfaction with policy	11 (9.1%)	4 (3.1%) *
Other	10 (8.3%)	22 (16.8%) *
Poor quality of service	75 (61.9%)	65 (49.6%) *

*Figures exceed 115 total complaints as complaints are recorded against multiple complaint categories

During 2017/18, Resources (comprising of Revenue Services & HR) received **115** complaints which is a slight decrease on the 121 recorded during 2016/17. We will be working to continue this improvement in 2018/19. As a key front line service handling sensitive customer transactions, the majority of complaints relate to Revenue Services in Finance. There has been a focus on streamlining processes in order to improve turnaround times in responding to complaints.



Learning from Complaints

A third party was sent a standard probate letter as the account holder had passed away. The customer/account holder had not expressed a preference for Welsh so the letter was provided in English only. However, it was not realised that this was the first time that the third party had been contacted so the letter would have needed to be bilingual. This led to a review of the service's outgoing letters, the establishment of bilingual letters to fit this particular situation and a work instruction for staff to consider third party's language needs.

There were several cases within the year where the allocation of payments between separate debts had led to problems. To overcome this issue, a training session was organised on the subject for nominated staff, and the process for making staff notes was modernised.



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Statutory Complaints – Social Services

It is a statutory requirement under the following items of legislation for Local Authorities to have in place a Representations and Complaints Procedure for Social Services.

- Representation Procedure (Children) (Wales) Regulations 2014
- Social Services Complaint's Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014

This is in line with the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guidance and the NHS Complaints procedure *Putting Things Right*.

The following provides information about the operation of the Social Services Representation and Complaints Procedure between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by the Complaints Unit during that period.

Although the Directorate commissioned an independent review of the current arrangements for managing complaints in 2016/17 and some changes to current arrangements were initiated during the year in partnership with corporate information governance officers, there is more work to do in 2018/19 to fully implement the new recommendations. Complaints are a key source of intelligence for the Director of Social Services in terms of overall quality assurance, particularly in relation to citizen entitlements, safeguarding and practice learning. A key benefit of the new structural arrangements coming on stream in 2018/19, is that

appropriate capacity will be will be focused on implementing a range of overdue improvements to the complaint process.

Despite areas where systems and processes can be improved, the Directorate has nevertheless managed to respond effectively to a wide range of complaints, many of which reflect the highly complex nature of individual cases.

Children's Services

Children's Services received 124 complaints during 2017/18, little change from the 128 complaints received during 2016/17. 8 complaints were received direct from children and young people (or an advocate) during the year compared with 9 in 2016/17. The 124 complaints equates to 4% of the children receiving services from us at any given time during the year.

There were 8 Stage 2 investigations initiated in 2017/18 compared with 6 in 2016/17. There were 7 referrals to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, compared with 6 in 2016/17. In relation to these referrals, the Ombudsman made the following decisions:

- 5 cases required no action to be taken.
- 2 cases were recommended to progress to Stage 2 before any further involvement with the Ombudsman.



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Stage 1 complaints are resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints – 6% (8 / 124) proceed to Stage 2 or require action from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Adults Services

Adults Services received 68 complaints during 2017/18, 1 more than the 67 complaints received during 2016/17. The 68 complaints equate to 1% of the adults receiving service from us at any given time during the year.

There were 7 Stage 2 investigations in 2017/18 compared with 5 in 2016/17. There were no investigations by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Stage 2 complaints are resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints – 10% (7/68) proceed to Stage 2 or required action from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Stage 1 complaints are resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints – 10% (7/68) proceed to Stage 2 or required action from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Compliments

Children's Services

Citizen to social worker: "Thank you for all your help and support at such a hard time for myself and my children. You were very professional but still had the empathy and compassion that helped me be strong and get through this."

A District Judge was incredibly complimentary of the content, structure and insight that a social worker put into drafting her report regarding a family. He advised that it has assisted the court immensely and suggested that it should be used as a precedent in future cases.

Adults Services

Citizen to social worker: "Thank you for your kind sympathies expressed following the passing of our Mum. Alzheimer's was a long journey for our Mum over far too many years, and brought a raft of difficulties for the family. We thank you for your support and professionalism since you became involved in our lives. Thank you for recognising that it was not just Mum that needed support, but my brother too as her sole carer."

Citizen to carers: "Thank you so much for the wonderful caring service you have shown me. My carers have been so kind and it was a joy having their company."



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