

Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2018-19

Cardiff Council

Annual Complaints Report

2018-19



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Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2018-19

Foreword

Welcome to Cardiff Council's Annual Complaints Report for 2018/19. In this report you will find details of how we have performed in dealing with complaints as well as some of the key highlights and successes.

While complaints have increased for the second year in a row, (an increase of 34.1%) this is due to a number of reasons that are detailed in the report. There has also been an increased awareness of the complaints process amongst the residents of Cardiff in recent years, which helps us keep the user at the heart of the process, and enables us to better understand how to improve our services.

Cardiff Council provides the highest possible quality of service to our customers and service users, and we recognise that there are times when things go wrong, or where expectations aren't met. Although it is disappointing to convey that Cardiff Council's services occasionally fall below the expected standard, it is inspiring to recognise that issues are captured, reviewed and improvements implemented, so that services are continually being refined as a direct result of the information provided by the residents of Cardiff Council. As an organisation, we provide people with a procedure to feed back to us both positive and negative experiences and encourage a culture of learning, where the focus is on resolution and continual improvement. Examples of this can be found throughout this report, as well as information on positive feedback and compliments that have been received from customers this year.

I am pleased to report that for the 7th consecutive year, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has not issued any Section 16 reports against the Council. Of the 110 complaints that the Ombudsman closed during 2018/19, 0 were taken forward to investigation. This is the first time this has happened since the establishment of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005.

Finally, I would like to thank the conscientious and committed staff from front-line services and whom manage complaints on a daily basis. Their success is reflected in the amount of compliments we do receive about our staff and services.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Chris Weaver

Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and 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 2018 and 31st March 2019. 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 2018-19

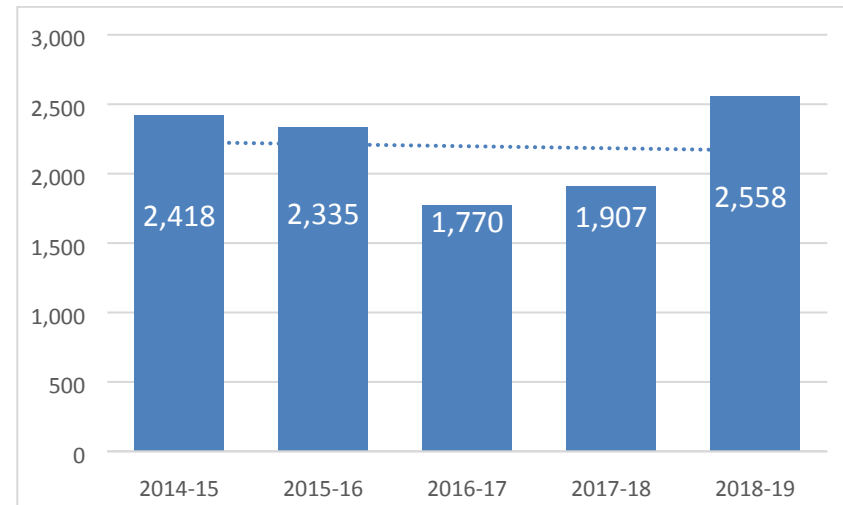
A total of **2,558** complaints were recorded during 2018/19. This is a **34.1%** increase from the previous year, when 1,907 complaints were recorded.

Year	Number of complaints
2018-19	2,558
2017-18	1,907
2016-17	1,770
2015-16	2,335
2014-15	2,418

COMPLAINTS HAVE INCREASED BY

34.1%

WHEN COMPARED TO 2017/18



Complaints received per 1,000 of population

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Cardiff population (estimate)	357,496	361,168	362,756
Total number complaints received	1,770	1,907	2,558
Number of complaints received per 1,000	5.0	5.3	7.0

The population of Cardiff is estimated at 362,756 (Source: <https://statswales.gov.wales>). In 2018/19, Cardiff Council handled 2,558 complaints from customers, meaning that an average of 7.0 complaints were received per 1000 residents.



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Complaints breakdown for Cardiff Council

Service Area	Number of complaints 2017/18	Number of complaints 2018/19
Waste	570	890
Housing	440	479
Arts and Theatres	226	291
Neighbourhood Services	69	253
Resources (Council Tax, HR and Customer & Digital Services)	176	225
Economic Development (including Parks & Harbour Authority)	135	146
Traffic & Transportation	152	141
Education	29	44
Highways Maintenance	36	42
Bereavement & Registration	38	24
Planning	21	13
Facilities Management	12	6
Governance & Legal Services	3	2
Total	1,907	2,558

NB Complaints for Social Services 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 in 2018-19

A total of **2,611** compliments were recorded during 2018/19. This is a **31.1%** increase from the previous year, when 1,991 compliments were recorded.

Year	Number of compliments
2018-19	2,611
2017-18	1,991
2016-17	2,122
2015-16	1,483
2014-15	1,560

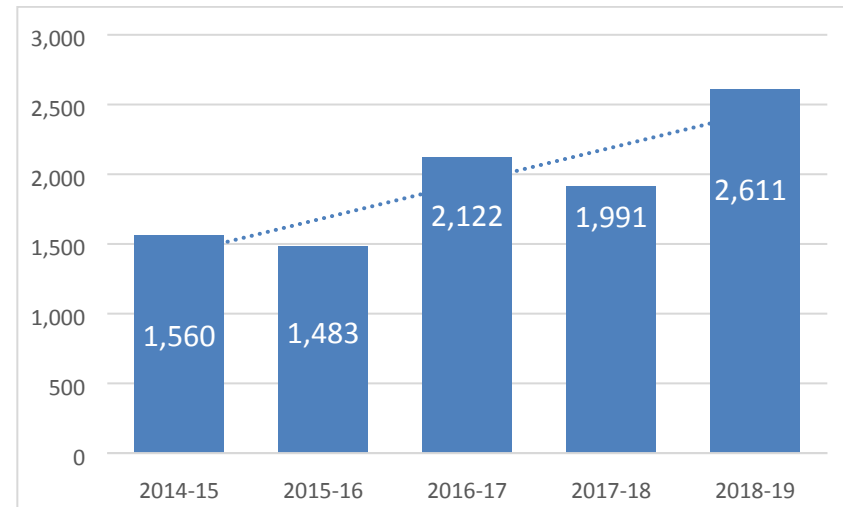
Compliments received per 1,000 of population

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Cardiff population (estimate)	357,496	361,168	362,756
Total number compliments received	2,122	1,991	2,611
Number of compliments received per 1,000	5.9	5.5	7.2

COMPLIMENTS HAVE INCREASED BY

31.1%

WHEN COMPARED TO 2017/18



The population of Cardiff is estimated at 362,756 (Source: <https://statswales.gov.wales>). In 2018/19, Cardiff Council handled 2,611 compliments from customers, meaning that an average of 7.2 compliments were received per 1000 residents.



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Compliments breakdown 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.

The 31.1% increase in complaints recorded is encouraging. 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 a further increase during 2019/20.

We have provided examples of the types of compliments received over the following pages.

Service Area	Number of compliments	Number of compliments
	2017/18	2018/19
Housing & Communities	549	703
Arts & Theatres	146	477
Customer & Digital Services	363	472
Economic Development (including Parks & Harbour Authority)	394	292
Waste Collections	138	217
Bereavement & Registration Services	191	180
Neighbourhood Services	97	140
Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation	99	98
Finance	9	25
Education & Lifelong Learning	2	4
Legal & Democratic Services	3	3
Total	1,991	2,611



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Service Area	Compliment
Arts & Theatres	Just a quick email to say a massive thank you to you and all the staff at St David's Hall. The night went brilliantly and everyone was so happy and willing to help. Thank you once again and look forward to working with you all next year!
Arts & Theatres	I would like to say how amazing your (New Theatre) staff were. At the sweet counter upstairs, the lady went out of her way to go to the bar for my friend's drink. As I have a bad leg, I was worried about exiting the show as I had seen the crowds on the stairs for other performances. I spoke to a lady member of staff and she said don't worry I'm fine to get you personally after the show and get you safely to the lift, which she did. I cannot fault the service your staff gave.
Central Transport Services	Without any regrets I will come back. Great staff friendly and also the mechanics was friendly and explained to me what was wrong with my car. Thank you everyone, keep going!
Citizen Hub	We are so grateful. Some of these quite hard to reach students have been transformed and now have a real sense of purpose and ambition, beyond what their families offer, in some cases. It's made me re-evaluate our provision for these students. Work experience is key and I will put it on earlier in the year next time, so that it has a greater impact, motivating them with their studies and apprenticeship applications.
Connect to Cardiff	Just to say thank-you, I get social anxiety so this online form helps me so much and everyone I have talked with using it have been wonderful, the customer service is always so polite and helpful. You have a great team working there...your workers always put me at ease and are respectful and polite and should be told they are doing a fantastic job. I know how hard the job is and little feedback comes back which is positive,
Economic Development	I thought you'd be interested in hearing about a very positive experience I had at County Hall this morning. One of your car parking personnel was extremely helpful in finding a spot for me to park and also, due to this morning's particularly inclement weather, in asking whether I'd like to borrow an umbrella to use between the car and the building. I was also impressed with the fact that he spoke to me in Welsh and English; asking if he could be of further assistance. I thought you'd want to be informed of such excellent customer care.
Events	I just wanted to say a massive thank you, Cardiff is absolutely our favourite place to work, so much so, we don't even mind the 5 hour drive! Having performed at lots of Christmas events in recent weeks I can honestly say the staff at Cardiff (stage managers, crew etc.) are the friendliest and most helpful bunch of people we have worked with all year, so keep up the good work.
Finance	The customer was very thankful for the staff member's empathy and understanding as the customer had been very upset the evening before regarding a Council Tax issue
Harbour Authority	Flat Holm - Thank you, the trip was amazing! The young people got so much out of it. They loved the whole experience. As an end of year trip we are looking to book the same group onto the hour and a half boat ride. Once again many thanks.



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Service Area	Compliment
Highways	A tweet was received to “applaud the 20mph notices that have been spray painted on the road surfaces in Grangetown. I am pleased to see these measures being implemented throughout the City Centre”.
Housing	Many thanks for your email... also thanks so much to you all for offering me the house. It really means a lot to me & will make my life so much easier....I've never had something so nice given to me in my life. I will always look after it.
Libraries	This library is just what the community needs. Comprehensive range of books, good groups and events and lovely people. Happy days!
Meals on Wheels	Thank you so much for sending such helpful, wonderful people to deliver such delicious meals. Today's lamb casserole and the golden syrup sponge could not be bettered even by the most famous chefs!
Parks	I hoping to send this email to the team that looks after the plants in front of County Hall. I thought I would just take a little bit of time to say thank you for all your hard work and I send my appreciation! The red tulips are stunning, and mix of colours with the other flowering bulbs are just beautiful!!! I am sure that many of my other colleagues here in County Hall think so too!! Please continue with the fantastic work throughout the year as each time I see the flowers they make my day just a little bit better!
Planning	I just wanted to say thank you for dealing with my requests so efficiently. It is RARE to have someone send information i.e. the hard copies before I sent the email - knowing that they would be more useful. I do appreciate all your help. Also, everyone I have spoken to in your department has also been unusually helpful - after living in another local authority for over 40 years - not something I am used to and so I want to thank you.
Preventative Services	Thank you for all your help, all my requests were followed through promptly, advice was given when necessary and you maintained excellent communication throughout the whole process. I was over the moon with the service provided.
Telecare	Thank you to all the staff at Telecare for all their help and assistance over the last few days. I have had several falls and am extremely grateful
Traffic	Just to say whoever thought of the idea to have the inside lane of Newport road (coming down Rumney hill) as a filter lane, so there is no stopping at the traffic lights is an absolute genius. It has done wonders for the traffic in the morning coming from Rumney, St Mellons and Llanrumney. Literally a world of difference. Whoever it was needs a promotion and Christmas bonus.
Waste Collections	May I say that you and your team have transformed the city of Cardiff with your programme against illegal advertising. When I travel around Wales and some parts of England I feel proud of our City as elsewhere illegal advertising seems rampant.



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Ombudsman Complaints 2018-19

The Ombudsman closed **110** cases involving Cardiff Council compared to 123 cases in 2017-18. The Ombudsman received 27 premature complaints (defined as when the Council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). A further 45 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council. The Ombudsman wrote to the Chief Executive during 2018/19 and commended the Council's approach to closing cases via 'Voluntary settlements'. 19 cases were closed by voluntary settlements during 2018/19. These are redress proposals (an apology / change of process / time and trouble payment) which enable cases to be closed without the need for full investigation. On that note, we are pleased to report that **0** Ombudsman investigations took place during 2018-19. This is the first time this has happened since the establishment of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005.

The Ombudsman closed the cases for the following reasons:

	2017-18	2018-19
Complainants had not exhausted the Council's complaints process - they were referred back to the Council	21	27
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	41	45
Cases declined because Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by Council (Quick-Fix / Voluntary Settlement)	36	19
Cases out of Ombudsman's jurisdiction	22	19
Cases withdrawn by complainant	1	0
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint upheld	1	0
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint not upheld	1	0
Total	123	110



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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	
2014-15	98
2015-16	143
2016-17	133
2017-18	123
2018-19	110

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 seventh 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 0 Section 21 reports during 2018-19.**



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Learning from complaints

Complaints provide valuable feedback and are viewed by our staff as a positive opportunity to learn from experiences in order to drive continual organisational improvement and prevent similar things happening again.

Our complaints handling procedure helps us to address a customer's dissatisfaction and may also prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from arising again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the customer's views and experience, and resolving complaints early saves resources and creates better customer relations.

Every Council Service Area has a lead officer for complaints and Corporate Complaints Workshops have been set up to look at common issues relating to complaints handling, including standardising responses to customers, collecting customer views and developing templates.

Some of the actions we take in response to complaints might appear to be small but they can make a big difference. The following are examples - big and small - of what we have done as a result of learning from complaints

Complaint area	Complaints analysis	Service improvement
Arts & Theatres – New Theatre	A complaint was received regarding 'rowdy' customers at a show. The customer was unhappy at what they thought was a disproportionate attitude towards front of house staff telling off customers for using their phones but not when it came to talking during the performance.	An apology was offered for the behaviour of customers during the show. It was explained to the customer that there are challenges that come with judging the appropriate level of audience participation. However, these issues will be brought up at the next staff training session.
Arts & Theatres – St David's Hall	A customer was unable to attend a ukulele concert at St David's Hall. The (unticketed) events experienced an unprecedented increase in numbers that meant that some people were denied access.	St David's Hall have started planning next year's events and (although they are unable to create more space) they have agreed that the event will be ticketed in future which will hopefully ease the access issues that were experienced this year.
Customer & Digital Services – Connect to Cardiff	Complaints received about incorrect information provided by staff at the contact centre, Connect to Cardiff.	Any complaints regarding members of staff are managed effectively with the benefit of call recordings being available for staff to hear and work through a plan of rectification with either one of the centre's full time coaches or a Team Leader.



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Complaint area	Complaints analysis	Service improvement
Economic Development - Events	Complainant has attended Sophia Gardens car park on an event day. They had checked the Council website beforehand where it said that parking would be £3.60 for 3 hours. On arrival the complainant was charged £15.	To resolve the matter, the Council apologised for the distress caused and assured the complainant that the Council website would be updated with the correct pricing structure for future event days.
Facilities Management	Complainant was disappointed with the condition of the male and female toilets at the caravan park.	The site warden, apologised to the complainant and informed them that Facilities Management would work to upgrade the shower and toilet facilities as a result.
Harbour Authority	A complaint was received about litter (timber and rubbish that is washed up on the wetlands) within the Harbour Authority's jurisdiction.	A temporary boom (navigational barrier) has been installed by the Authority to try and establish where rubbish is coming from. Two members of staff continue to litter pick –covering 30kms of riverbank under our jurisdiction and also with the kind assistance of Cardiff Rivers Group in scheduled clean ups.
Harbour Authority	A complaint about litter at Mermaid Quay during a popular weekend event. There were higher levels of litter than normal due to the fine weather.	We have reviewed resources allocated to cleanse the harbour at weekends and on bank holidays to ensure that the resource meets demand in future to prevent this situation from happening again.
Housing – Anti-Social Behaviour	Complaints received relating to anti-social behaviour of local residents.	A range of short and longer term measures have been put in place This includes letters being sent to residents reminding them of their responsibilities, or offering to make contact if they have any reports of ASB or any descriptions individuals hanging about. Increased patrols in the relevant area also take place.
Housing - General	Complaint received stating that correspondence was sent to the incorrect name.	There is already a procedure whereby all responses are proof read and checked prior to being sent out. However, in this instance, there was a genuine error. Apologised to the customer and reiterated to staff the importance of proof reading.
Complaint area	Complaints analysis	Service improvement



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Housing – Social Lettings Unit	A complaint was received disputing the qualifications of a member of staff who had considered the medical circumstances of a complainant on the Housing waiting list.	Letters will now contain qualifications of the person who has made the decision.
Neighbourhood Services	Complaints received regarding excess littering in local communities.	Regular ward analysis of complaints is carried out to identify any particular littering hotspots.
Parks	A complaint was received due to anti-social behaviour by people using the basketball court in a park.	Investigations were made, and an officer spoke to the complainant to discuss solutions to help alleviate the problem. Following a productive discussion, a solution was found which included increased signage and coordination with the Police in order to reduce issues going forward.
Parks	Various issues relating to Bute Park - litter, overgrowth, lack of bins, poor lighting, homeless people, etc.	Letter sent to customer advising there are no current proposals to change the lighting at Sophia Gardens, however, in the longer term a scheme is being developed for the Sophia Gardens road in connection with the cycle superhighway proposals and the need to consider a lighting upgrade will be considered as part of the design process.
Rent Smart Wales	Analysis has shown that, as enforcement activity increases, so too do the number of formal complaints regardless of the validity of the enforcement action.	We invest in marketing and communication activities to ensure that the Rent Smart Wales obligations are well understood and will continue to do so in conjunction with our local authority partners, in order to limit the need for enforcement action.
Waste	Complaints relating to waste inform our decisions. We have a lot of information available to us.	The Council launched its consultation on the draft Recycling & Waste Management Strategy in 2018/19. Complaints data will be used to ensure we capture the views of key stakeholders and the general public who use our services.

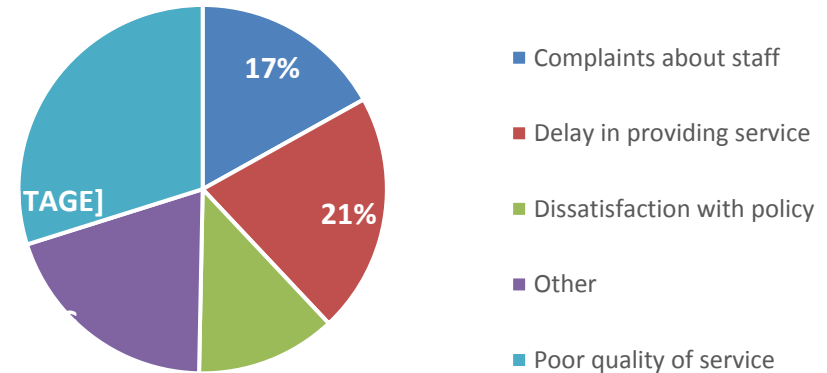


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Housing & Communities

Housing & Communities continue to adopt a constructive and positive approach to complaints. Each case is investigated to establish exactly what (if anything) has gone wrong, with the primary aim being to resolve the matter for the individual if possible. In addition to doing everything possible to resolve individual complaints, officers will always look at any changes that can be made following a complaint, for example to our literature or procedures. Any lessons that can be learned from a complaint are used to deliver service improvements.

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Assessment & Support	92	103
Hubs & Community Services	17	44
Landlord Services	117	119
Preventative Services	13	6
Regeneration, Development & Enabling	23	5
Responsive Repairs Unit	161	184
Libraries	16	17
Adult Community Learning	1	1
Total	440	479
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	430 (97.7%)	464 (96.9%)
Complaints about staff	68 (15.5%)	81 (16.9%)
Delay in providing service	129 (29.3%)	101 (21.1%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	51 (11.6%)	59 (12.3%)
Other	31 (7.0%)	95 (19.8%)
Poor quality of service	161 (36.6%)	143 (29.9%)
Total	440	479



The detailed reasons for complaints are monitored at monthly meetings by the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities and other relevant staff. Any patterns, such as the types of errors being made, can then be addressed and the appropriate action taken to ensure best practice; for example, changes made to procedure or standard letters being amended.

The role of the specialised Housing Complaint Officers has expanded as hoped and they now deal with complaints relating to a number of housing teams including Landlord Services (including Social Lettings, Anti-Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management), Hubs and the Responsive Repairs Unit. This allows for a consistent and thorough approach to all complaint investigations and their roles continue to evolve.



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The slight increase in the number of complaints about Assessment & Support can be attributed to the continued Welfare Reform measures the Benefits section have had to implement. These measures have also had an impact on customers' rent accounts and this is a further possible explanation for the increase in complaints received by the Finance Team within Landlord Services.

Although the number of complaints about Hubs & Community Services has increased slightly, these remain very low at 44. It should be noted that in 2018/19, the volume of customers visiting the Hubs has increased by over 14.6% to 1,184,091.

The largest proportion of complaints was about Responsive Repairs who are responsible for responsive repairs for 13,546 Council properties. 184 complaints were received and, while any level of complaints remains of concern, it should be noted that prior to this increase, complaints had decreased for Responsive Repairs for five consecutive 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). Furthermore, the amount of complaints is less than 0.20% of the approximately 102,000 repairs carried out in 2018/19 in total. With at least 93% of repairs being carried out by the in-house workforce and 90% of appointments made, customer satisfaction with the Responsive Repairs service remains high as is demonstrated by good feedback in the annual tenant survey.

It is pleasing however to see the fall in complaints about Regeneration, Development & Enabling. This area includes the Housing Development team and the Neighbourhood Regeneration team, both of whom work to improve the quality of life in communities across the city through either the provision of new homes or local regeneration schemes. The scale of these projects means that there will be an inevitable impact on local residents and it is a testament to the work of the teams that so few complaints have been received.



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Planning, Transport & Environment

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Highway Maintenance	36	42
Planning (including Building Control)	21	13
Traffic & Transportation	152	141
Total	209	196
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	203 (97.1%)	183 (93.3%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	181 (86.7%)	151 (77.1%)

Highway Maintenance received **42** complaints for 2018/19. This is an increase of 6 on the previous year when 36 complaints were recorded.

The highest number of complaints received was again related to Potholes and Paving (16 complaints). This is an increase of 1 on the previous year when 15 complaints were received. A number of complaints were concerning the quality of the pothole repair, although this is often attributable to the repair only being temporary to make the area safe and serviceable until a permanent repair can be provided.

Carriageway reconstruction complaints decreased from the previous year with 3 complaints received compared to 5 for 2017/2018. The theme of the complaints was the disruption caused to residents by the road closures

necessary to undertake the works. Therefore, every effort is made to minimise disruption by undertaking works at off-peak times and displaying advance warning notices within the areas of the roads affected.

Maintenance Operations received 8 complaints in 2018/19 compared with 13 in the previous year. The largest number of complaints were concerning blocked drains (4). It should be noted that once a blocked drain has been reported, a drainage crew will endeavour to attend the location within 48hrs to cleanse/flush the drain accordingly.

Traffic & Transportation received **141** complaints for 2018/19, which is a decrease of 11 from the total (152) for 2017/18.

The highest number of complaints related to Penalty Charge Notices (30 complaints received by the service area). The main reason for the complaints were that their appeals against the charge had been rejected. The issuing of a penalty charge notice is a legal process and all appeals received against the issue of a notice are dealt with using the correct legislative process. Another common theme of the complaints was correspondence being sent to the wrong address. It should be noted that the Council receive the appropriate information from the DVLA and it is the motorist's responsibility to ensure that the information held is correct and up-to-date.



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Civil Parking Enforcement received 28 complaints. This is a considerable decrease from the 52 complaints that were received in 2017/18. The fall in complaints of this nature is likely to be because motorists are now more aware to the increased enforcement of moving traffic offences such as yellow box junctions and also bus lanes, and have started to alter their driving habits accordingly.

Road Safety Schemes have seen a slight increase in complaints during 2018/19, with 17 complaints received compared to 15 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. These comments are a valuable aid when assessing if any adjustments are required to a scheme.

The **Planning Service** received **13** complaints in total for 2018/19. This is a decrease of 8 on the previous year where 21 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.



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Resources

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Resources (Finance, Customer & Digital Services and HR)	176	225
Finance	114	120
Customer & Digital Services	61	104
HR	1	1
Total	176	225
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	149 (84.7%)	209 (92.9%)
Complaints about staff	42 (21.9%)	49 (16.9%)
Delay in providing service	16 (8.3%)	27 (9.3%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	25 (13.0%)	108 (37.3%)
Other	24 (12.5%)	25 (8.7%)
Poor quality of service	85 (44.2%)	80 (27.7%)
Total	192*	289*

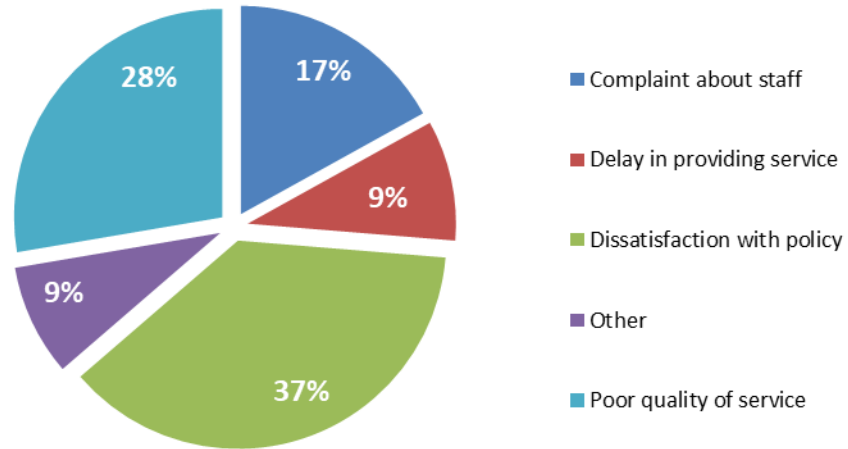
*Total does not equal 100% as some complaints are recorded amongst multiple categories

Although the overall number of complaints for **Resources** has increased to **225** complaints in 2018/19 compared to the previous year (176), at least part of this rise is attributable to the addition of Customer & Digital Services to the directorate as of April 2018. However, the majority of the complaints received in 2018/19 continue to be addressed to Revenue Services in Finance. Despite a challenging year for the citizens of Cardiff faced with

increases in Council Tax, the level of complaints has remained largely stable, and thanks to streamlining processes and increased monitoring of ongoing complaints, the majority (92.9%) were responded to within 20 working days, representing a significant improvement on the last two years.



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The collection of as much Council Tax income as possible is particularly important in the current economic climate and the Directorate is continuing to take a robust stance in pursuing Council Tax debtors. It is pleasing to see that, despite these efforts, complaints have remained relatively static over the last four years (109 in 2015/16, 115 in 2016/17, 114 in 2017/18 to 120 in 2018/19).



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Customer & Digital Services includes a number of key frontline services including C2C, 24/7 Services and Rent Smart Wales. Connect to Cardiff (C2C) has received 23 complaints which is a decrease when compared to 25 in 2017/18. This is the second successive year the complaints figure has reduced.

Of the 23 complaints received, 11 were not upheld and 2 only partially upheld, leaving 10 that are considered as having genuine grounds for complaint. Of the upheld complaints, any regarding members of staff are managed effectively with the benefit of call 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.

To reduce further reduce complaints, our Stats and Support Team work closely alongside C2C on a daily basis and can produce accurate and timely data to the second, such as the time a customer waits to be answered or when a customer was actually passed to colleagues in the back office of our service area partners to be assisted further. This affords the ability to drill down right to the heart of the customers concerns and understand any points of failure without the need to rely on customer/staff accounts in order to form a decision.

For the 2018/19 period, C2C handled 572, 680 calls, 78, 058 emails and 9,889 webchats. When combined, the volume of customer interactions dealt with by C2C on these channels alone total 660, 627. When factoring in how many of these interactions with customers resulted in complaint, this is the equivalent of 0.002% of customers registering a dissatisfaction and is balanced out further by the number of compliments that were received in the same period.

Rent Smart Wales was introduced in November 2015, with the enforcement provisions being implemented from November 2016. During the 2018/2019 period, call and email volumes stabilised to an average of 4,464 interactions per month. From a complaints perspective, an increase in compliance and enforcement activity has led to an increase in the number of complaints.

There has unfortunately been a 118.75% increase in the total number of complaints received with 70 formal complaints recorded, compared to 32 2017/2018. 32.9% (23 incidents) of the formal complaints were categorised as 'Enforcement'. Enforcement complaints are usually contesting a Fixed Penalty Notice that has been served by the enforcement team as part of investigation into non-compliance. As enforcement activity increases, the expectation is that the complaints generated as a result of enforcement activity will also increase.

9% (6 incidents) of the formal complaints were categorised as 'Compliance and Regulation' and relate to breaches of licence conditions. This work generates a high number of complaints as it is similar to enforcement activity, and ensures that licence conditions are being met. It also deal with concerns regarding fitness and proprietary of individuals.

24/7 Services provides support, security and reassurance 24 hours a day , 365 days a year, to over 4,500 citizens across Cardiff.

'Helping citizens to live independently and feel safe in their locality' is at the heart of everything we set out to achieve.

These services include Telecare, Meals on Wheels, Alarm Response Centre (ARC), Concierge and Locality Wardens.



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Within 2018/19, 24/7 Services received **11** complaints. This is an increase compared to the 4 we received last year.

The team within the ARC have established effective working relationships between housing and the community. Locality wardens have increased visible presence addressing anti-social behaviour. CCTV operators are fully trained and experienced, having the confidence to question any security breaches. This has increased contact channels which has resulted of the 5 complaints relating all to ARC and staff.

No previous complaints had been received for Meals on Wheels, however this year 2 were received. This was coupled with the significant expansion of the service to a 7 day function, increasing customer base to over 360 customers.

Of the 254,654 Telecare calls that were received for the year only 2 complaints were upheld. These complaints reflect less than 0.001% compared to the volume of calls. Telecare continues to receive positive feedback and 98% of our customers would recommend the service.

24/7 services continues to develop Customer Satisfaction Surveys to obtain as much feedback from all services to ensure we are continually improving.

24/7 Services has retained its accreditation of TSA and ISO, and more recently gained SSAIB accreditation for its CCTV monitoring. The quality management systems are set to continually improve delivery of services and focuses on customer satisfaction and how to reach the best outcomes. This is embedded within our processes and staff communication.



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Education & Lifelong Learning

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Education	29	44
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	17 (58.6%)	41 (93.1%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	10 (34.5%)	31 (70%)

The **Education & Lifelong Learning** Directorate received **44** formal complaints in 2018/2019, an increase from the 29 recorded in 2017/18.

Of the 44 complaints received, 41 of the complaints were acknowledged within five working days. The Directorate responded to 70% of the complaints received within 20 days of receipt. Further work will take place over the coming year to try and improve this result. However, the percentage of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days and responded to within 20 days has increased compared to 2017/18. Of the complaints which were responded to outside of the 20 working day timescale, some have involved the Directorate having to commission an Independent Investigator to undertake and oversee the complaint process. Others were sent directly to the Director of Education which can result in delays due to time constraints. The result of these processes has an impact

on the Council meeting its complaint timescales. When 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 reasons for complaining were in relation 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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Bereavement & Registration Services

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Bereavement & Registration	38	24
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	38 (100%)	24 (100%)

There were **24** recorded complaints via emails and letters for **Bereavement & Registration Services** in 2018/19 compared to 38 in 2017/8. 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 dealt with as soon as possible and always within the timescale. Service Provision Questionnaires are 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 often come to us 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 their needs with Bereavement Services via service monitor forms. In 2017-18, 18 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 is also 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.



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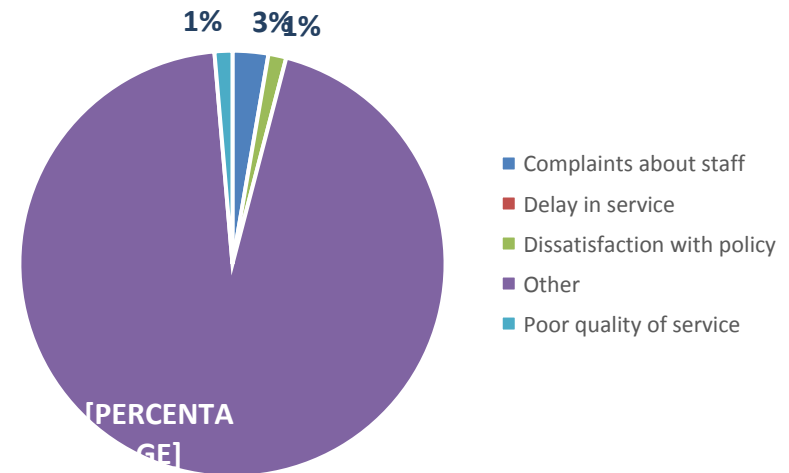
Arts and Theatres

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Arts and Theatres	226	291
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	226 (100%)	291 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	226 (100%)	291 (100%)
Complaints about staff	7 (3.1%)	8 (2.7%)
Delay in service	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	3 (1.3%)	4 (1.3%)
Other	212 (93.8%)	279 (95%)
Poor quality of service	4 (1.7%)	4 (1.3%)

Arts and Theatres contains two of the city's biggest arts venues, St David's Hall and the New Theatre. Complaints for Arts and Theatres have increased from 226 in 2017/18 to **291** in 2018/19.

100% of complaints received an acknowledgement within 5 working days with the same number receiving a full response within 20 working days.

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. It is also noted that the numbers of complaints regarding the behaviour of other audience members is increasing and is likely indicative of wider issues within society, and not



due to poor service provision. In context, there were approximately 425,000 tickets sold within 2018/19 and so the complaints equate to under 0.1% of customers being dissatisfied.



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Waste Collections

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Waste Collections	570	890
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	529 (92.8%)	774 (87.1%)

The number of complaints received by **Waste Collections** has increased by 56% from 570 in 2017/18 to **890** in 2018/19.

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 of all waste streams.

During Quarter 4 of 2017/18, the service area implemented new back office and in-cab technology. Back office staff and frontline operatives had to undertake training and new ways of working. The drivers have taken some time to adjust to this new way of working and there has been a number of missed collections while they have been adjusting to these changes.

The highest number of complaints was received in Quarter 4 with 215 complaints regarding non collections being received. The snowfall at the end of January 2019 and the beginning of February 2019 caused significant problems with collections. The snow events also impacted on the service area's ability to deliver bins/bags/caddies and re-stock outlets.

There has also been a significant number of new properties built in Cardiff over the last year, and Waste Management has experienced access issues to some of these sites, resulting in further non-collection complaints.

The number of complaints is considered to be extremely low when the volume of waste service delivery is taken into account. With approximately 161,000 address points currently serviced citywide, over 485,000 waste collections are carried out weekly – which is equivalent to over 25 million collections 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 two household waste recycling centres during the 2018/19 period.

87% of all complaints made were responded to within 20 working days or less. In order to ensure a high number of complaints are responded to within this timescale, a traffic light system is operated by the Business Support team at Lamby Way.

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

It is encouraging to see that in addition to the complaints received during the previous year, the service area received 217 compliments during the 2018/19 period which is a 57% increase from 2017/18



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Neighbourhood Services

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Neighbourhood Services	69	253
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	44 (63.8%)	231 (91.3%)

253 complaints were received for **Neighbourhood Services** which comprises of; street cleansing, education and enforcement & flytipping. This is a 267% increase from the previous year when 69 complaints were recorded. Neighbourhood Services was in its infancy during 2017/18 and work has since taken place on improving the service's reporting processes. We feel the number of complaints recorded during 2018/19 is more reflective of the service and provides an accurate baseline for the future.

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.

116 complaints were received in relation to Education & Enforcement, particularly with regards to literature & signage. Since its creation in 2016, Neighbourhood Services has looked to increase education and engagement initiatives through its enforcement function. We have, for example, worked with Communications to publicise the 'Love Where You

Live' campaign. This involved newspaper articles, using social media and publicising volunteer events. We have worked with local schools to raise litter awareness (for example, through the 'Love Where You Live' poster competition), promoting the work through the websites of the Council and its associated partners, and we have developed links with media outlets like Wales Online. We are confident that the increase in complaints is as a result of this increased profile and increased citizen focus on enforcement activities.

55 complaints were received in relation to flytipping. The issue of waste being dumped illegally is a costly and time-consuming process for the Council and it is now easier to report flytipping due to the introduction of Cardiff's 'log it report it' app. To counter this, the Council was able to adopt new legislative powers during 2018/19 that will enable us to issue Fixed Penalties of £400 to first-time offenders for small-scale fly-tipping offences. To reflect our zero tolerance approach to fly-tipping, there will be no reduction for early payment. In addition to adopting the new legislative powers, we will be introducing new technologies to help prevent and detect offences. Bringing in these additional measures will hopefully result in a decrease in complaints over the coming year.

Finally, 32 complaints were received in relation to Street Cleansing. The Council's successful 'Love Where You Live' campaign continues to work well across the city. The campaign has been designed to work with community groups and volunteers, so we can all work together to create a sense of pride in the communities that we live in. This includes neighbourhood cleaning blitzes, community litter picks and raising recycling awareness with residents.

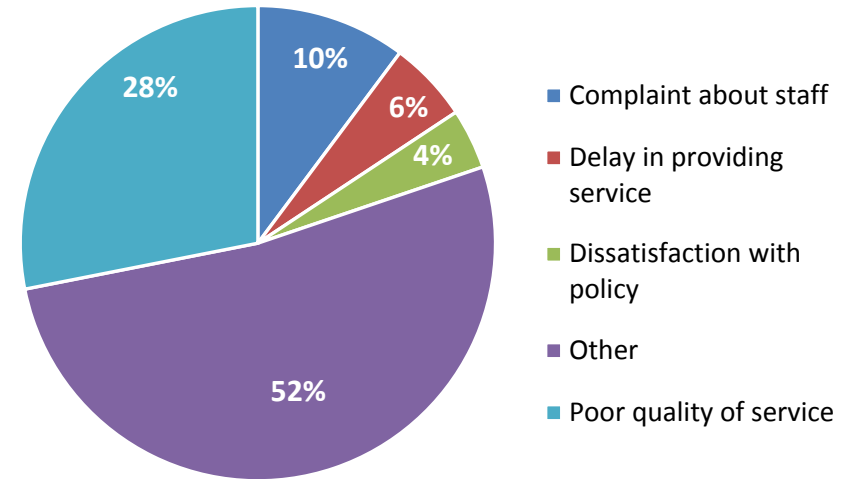


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Economic Development

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19
Economic Development	56	65
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	56 (100%)	64 (98.5%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	56 (100%)	65 (100%)
Parks & Harbour Authority	79	81
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	78 (98.7%)	76 (93.8%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	69 (87.3%)	77 (95.1%)
Complaints about staff	9 (16.1%)	15 (10.2%)
Delay in service	9 (16.1%)	8 (5.5%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	1 (1.8%)	6 (4.1%)
Other	23 (41.1%)	76 (52.1%)
Poor quality of service	14 (25.0%)	41 (28.1%)

During 2018/19, **Economic Development** received **146** complaints which is a slight increase on the 135 recorded during 2017/18. The complaints comprised of 5 for City Centre Management, 5 for Strategic Estates, 17 for Venues and Tourism (this includes Cardiff Castle, the Events team, Cardiff Caravan Park and the Norwegian Church), 3 for Economic Development, 26 for Major Events, 9 for Facilities Management and 44 for Parks & Harbour Authority.



Complaints have remained relatively static and the slight increase can largely be attributed to Facilities Management joining Economic Development from Quarter 2. 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

Statutory Complaints – Social Services



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Children's Services

Children's Services received **185** complaints during 2018/19, an increase from 124 in 2017/18. 21 complaints were received direct from children and young people (or an advocate) during the year compared with 8 in 2017/18. The 185 complaints equates to 6.1% of the children receiving services from us at any given time during the year.

Stage 2 investigations initiated in 2018/19 decreased to 6 compared to the 8 carried out in 2017/18. There was a further reduction in referrals from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to Children's Services, with 2 received in 2018/19 compared with 6 in the previous year. In relation to these referrals, the Ombudsman made the following decisions:

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

Stage 1 complaints are resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints – 3% (6 / 185) proceeded to Stage 2.

Adults Services

Adults Services received **70** complaints during 2018/19, 2 more than the 68 complaints received during 2017/18. The 70 complaints equate to 1.1% of the adults receiving service from us at any given time during the year.

There were 4 Stage 2 investigations in 2018/19 compared with 7 in 2017/18, and 2 referrals from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Of these 2 referrals,

- 1 case required no action to be taken.
- 1 case was recommended to progress to Stage 2 before any further involvement with the Ombudsman.

Stage 1 complaints are resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints – 6% (4/70) proceeded to Stage 2.

Relatively few of Adults and Children's Services complaints have proceeded to Stage 2 and this demonstrates that the majority of customers are happy for the Council to deal with their complaints at a local level and that managers are effectively dealing with the issues raised.

Priorities for the coming year

We will continue to review the complaints service through 2019/20 and make any necessary changes to ensure that our complaints process



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remains customer-focused and that the Council is providing the best service possible. Below are some of our priorities this coming year so that we can achieve these goals.

Improved complaints training

We will continue to offer training to staff throughout 2019/20. In the coming year, we will provide specific training on complaint responses. The Corporate Complaints team will be working with service areas to improve the overall quality of our complaint responses. Training has been arranged for service areas during Quarter 1 with the aims of enhancing written communication and encouraging consistency cross the Council.

Improved complaints reporting

The complaints team has implemented a quarterly report which will help to identify any trends promptly but also place increased emphasis on what the Council is learning from complaints. Quarterly meetings will also be arranged with Service Area Complaints Managers so that issues can be raised, discussed and resolved. The Council will also be required to report on complaints data to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. This will enable comparisons with the other Local Authorities in Wales.

Improved complaints resolution

There are occasions where a problem can be resolved without the need to enter the complaints process. The complaints team will look at ways of

empowering public-facing staff to try and resolve these problems at the first point of contact before they escalate into complaints. This may involve training with service areas to help them apply the complaints policy and procedure.

Improved complaints efficiency

We will continue to monitor the percentage of complaints responses provided in the agreed timescales. Our policy states that we aim to respond in 20 working days and (when this is not possible), we should keep the complainant informed.

Improved customer satisfaction

Though compliments have increased this year, there is a concern that the good service provided every day by some Council departments is not being represented. The complaints team will look at ways of updating our recording procedure to ensure our compliments are captured and that we are continuing to take on board what our customers want.

We hope to see continued progress in complainant satisfaction as a result of new processes that have been put in place alongside our training package for written responses. We will continue to monitor and develop this throughout 2019/20.

