



## APPENDIX 2

# 2024-25 SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMPLAINT REPORT

**AUTHOR:** C Bygraves-Paul, Interim Head  
of Customer Services

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## **1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT**

This is Sheffield City Council's Annual Corporate Complaints Performance Report for the period of 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

It focuses on the nature of complaints received by the Council, handling performance and the learning elicited to shape future service improvements. Sheffield City Council's main strategic partners Veolia (Waste Management) and Amey (Streetscene) performance are also included in this report.

Complaints regarding Adult and Children's Social Care are processed and monitored under specific statutory frameworks. Consequently, these annual reports are produced separately and not included in this report.

In 2024-25, Sheffield City Council had 6 main Portfolio service areas:

- Adults Wellbeing & Care Services
- Childrens Services
- City Futures
- Neighbourhoods
- Public Health & Integrated Commissioning
- Strategic Support Services

Sheffield City Council's Customer Services Feedback & Complaints Team is responsible for the development and implementation of policy and procedures regarding feedback and complaints. This team acts as the Council's liaison point with the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), Housing Ombudsman (HO), and Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

## **2. COMPLAINT POLICY**

- 2.1 Sheffield City Council welcomes complaints as an opportunity to maintain high quality performance and a gateway to consistently review and improve the quality of the services offered to customers.
- 2.2 When a customer makes a complaint, their complaint will be handled through the approach set out in Sheffield City Council's Corporate Complaint Handling

policy and procedures. We will do this irrespective of where and how customers make their complaint.

- 2.3 Sheffield City Council has a two staged approach when dealing with complaints.  
See: [Complain about a council service | Sheffield City Council](#)

### 3. CORPORATE COMPLAINT ANALYSIS 2024-25

#### 3.1 NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The Complaint Handling Code states:

*“High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.”*

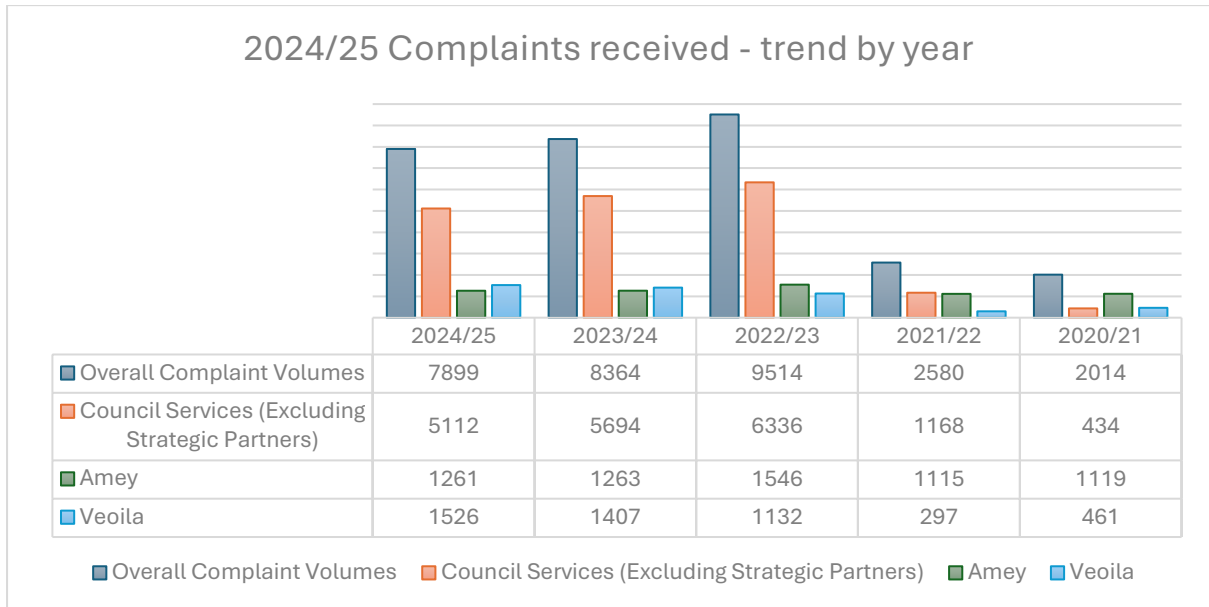
3.1.1 In 2024-25 the number of new complaints received was as follows:

Portfolio/Directorate 2024/25	New Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD	% of overall
<b>Adults Wellbeing &amp; Care Services</b>	Corporate	32	29	23	33	117	1.5%
	Statutory	31	56	38	52	177	2.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>Childrens Services</b>	Corporate	48	41	40	62	191	2.4%
	Statutory	26	26	21	19	92	1.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Public Health &amp; Integrated Commissioning</b>		5	5	10	0	<b>20</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>City Futures</b>		15	11	15	22	<b>63</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Strategic Support Services</b>		101	127	119	93	<b>440</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>		1062	980	891	1079	<b>4012</b>	<b>50.8%</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPLAINTS EXCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS</b>		<b>1320</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>1157</b>	<b>1360</b>	<b>5112</b>	<b>64.7%</b>
<b>AMEY (Streetscene)</b>		337	353	263	308	<b>1261</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>VEOLIA (Waste Management)</b>		441	409	384	385	<b>1526</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL COMPLAINTS INCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS</b>						<b>7899</b>	<b>100%</b>

Portfolio Breakdown 2024/2025 Excluding Partners	Overall council Excl. partners	Adults	Childrens	City Futures	Neighbourhood Services	Public Health & Integrated Services	Strategic Support Services
<b>Highest number of complaints received</b>	Neighbourhood Services (4012)	Living & Aging Well Short-Term Support (116)	Children & Families (187)	Investment Climate Change & Planning (54)	Hsg & Repairs (3294) Breakdown: Repairs & Maintenance (2241) Housing Serv. (1053)	Policy, Perf & Comms (18)	Revenue & Benefits (396)

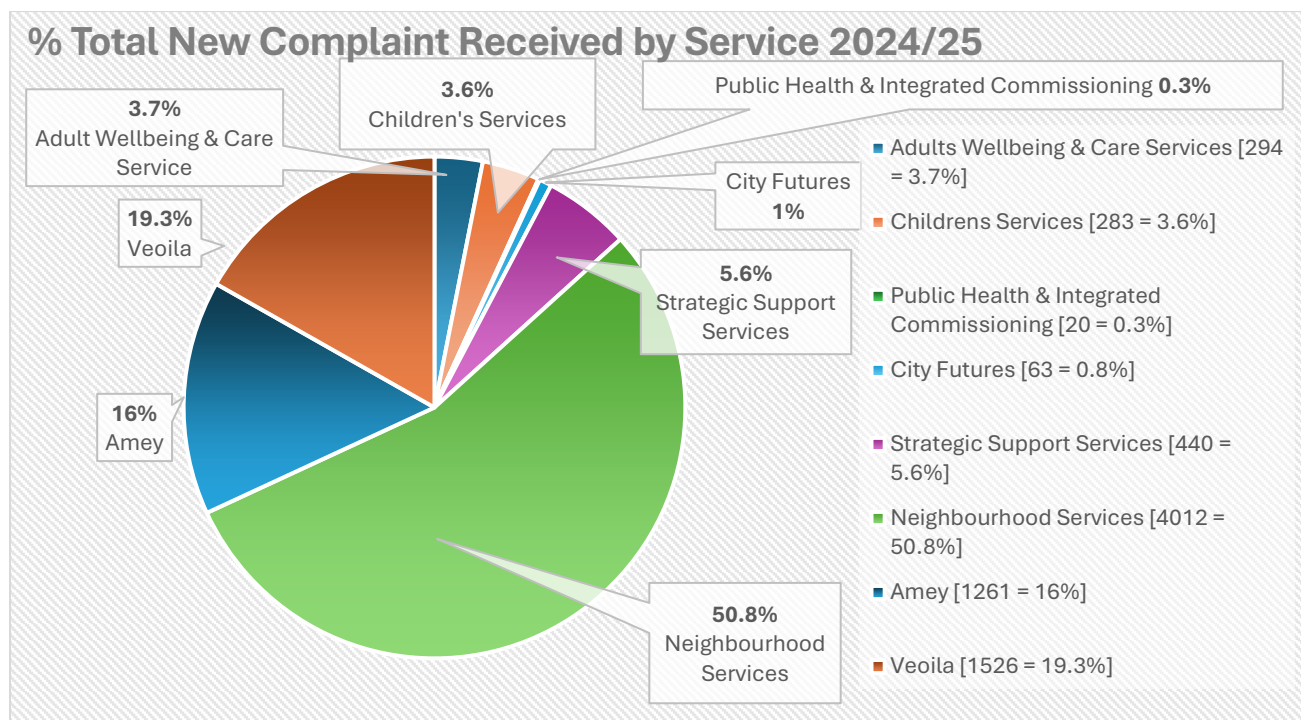
- Total number of complaints received: **7899**
- Total number of complaints received at Stage 1: **94.3%**
- Total number of complaints escalated to Stage 2: **4.5%**

### 3.1.2 Number of complaints received trend:



- In 2024-25, the Council received a total of 7899 complaints (including its strategic partners).
- This compares with 8634 in 2023-24, which represents an 8.5% (735) decrease in overall complaint volumes.

### 3.1.3 Number of complaints received by Service

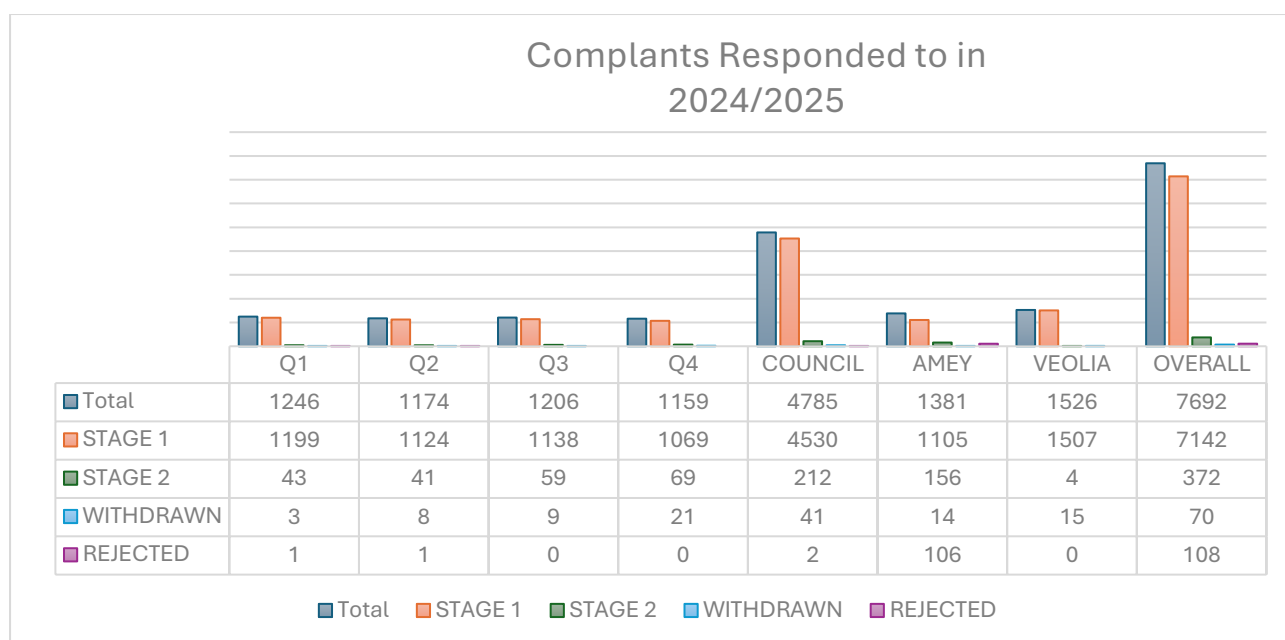


- **Strategic Partners:** Amey (Streetscene) represents 16% (1261) and Veolia (Waste Management) 19.3% (1526) - a total of 35.3% (2787/7899) of all new complaints received. This is a slight increase to the 2023-24 result of 30.9%.
- **All other Council Services:** The Council's complaints volume (excluding strategic partners) was 64.7% (5112/7899) of the overall number of complaints received. Comparing the number of complaints received for the Council (excluding strategic partners) with the previous year, there was a 14.3% (852) decrease.
- **Neighbourhood Services Portfolio:** The highest number of complaints was received by Neighbourhood Services – 78% (4012/5112) - a 3% decrease on the previous year. Neighbourhood Services represents 51% of the overall number of complaints received (including strategic partners).
- **Council Housing & Repairs Maintenance Services** received the highest volume of complaints – 64% (3294/5112) excluding partner and 42% (3294/7899) of overall complaints received (including strategic partners).

### 3.1.4 Number of complaints responded to:

**\*Note:** For the figures shown below statutory complaints volumes have been excluded as response timescales under the statutory framework differ to the corporate response timescales.

- Total number of complaints responded to: **7692** \*
- Total number of complaints responded to at Stage 1: **92.8%**
- Total number of complaints responded to at Stage 2: **4.8%**



- The total number of corporate complaints responded to in 2024-25 was 7692 (including strategic partners).
- 92.8% (7142/7692) were responded to at Stage 1 (investigation), compared with 96.6% in the previous year.
- 4.8% (372/7692) were responded to at Stage 2 (investigation review), compared with 2% in the previous year.
- 1.4% (108/7692) were rejected/not accepted as a complaint; and 0.9% (70/7692) were withdrawn before an investigation could commence. This compares with 0.6% rejected and 0.8% withdrawn in the previous year. (See Complaint policy - exclusions in Section 2.8).

## **3.2 TIMELINESS**

Timescales for responding to complaints set out in the Ombudsman Code are intended to encourage prompt and efficient complaint handling.

Each complaint should be dealt with proportionately. This means some may take up little officer time and receive a short response, whilst others may require a thorough investigation and a detailed response.

The Council's Complaint Policy states that all complainants will receive an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days of the complaint being received. This applies to complaints received at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Council's complaint process.

### **3.2.1 Complaint acknowledgements within 5 working days of receipt**

- 44.7% of complaints were acknowledged with 5 working days of receipt. This is an area for improvement to ensure customers are provided with a comprehensive acknowledgement response.
- The Council's Complaint Policy has thus been revised to include these requirements (at all stages of the process) in line with the Ombudsman's recommendations. See Corporate Complaint Policy – Sections 6.1.2 and 6.2.3.
- The complaints case management system (CRM) review, planned for July 2025 will support improved recording and more accurate monitoring of complaints including the recording of complaint acknowledgements.

### **3.2.2 Stage 1 (investigation stage) response performance within 10 working days:**

All complaints received are logged at Stage 1 of the Council's complaint process, and complainants should receive a formal written response within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

- Overall, (including strategic partners), **80%** of complaints responded to at Stage 1, were within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
- Council Housing & Repairs Services recorded 74% of complaints responded to within 10 working days, compared with 63% in the previous year, representing an 11% improvement at Stage 1.

### **3.2.3 Stage 1 (Investigation Stage) response performance within 20 working days:**

Where a response is not able to be provided within 10 working days of acknowledgement, an extension should be agreed with the complainant and the reason for the delay provided. This should be no more than an additional 10 working days.



- Overall, (including strategic partners), 89% of complaints responded to at Stage 1, were responded to within 20 working days of days of the complaint being acknowledged. This represented a 11% improvement on the previous year.
- Housing & Repairs Services also saw improvements recording 86% responses within 20 working days of acknowledgement compared with 80% in the previous year.

#### **3.2.4 Stage 1 - Average time to respond:**

- The average response time for a Stage 1 complaint was: for the Council (excluding strategic partners), 15 working days; Amey, 9 working days and Veolia, 12 working days.
- Council Housing & Repairs Services recorded an average of 14 working days at Stage 1.

#### **3.2.5 Stage 2 (investigation review stage) response performance, 20 working days:**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request for a review of their complaint through an investigation review.

All such escalated complaints are logged at Stage 2 of the Council's complaint process and complainants should receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days of receipt and a formal written response within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

- Overall, (including strategic partners), 46.2% of complaints were responded to at Stage 2, within 20 working days of acknowledgment of the complaint, representing a 6.2% improvement on the previous year.
- Council Housing & Repairs Services recorded 53% of complaints being responded to within 20 working days of acknowledgement, compared with 46% in the previous year, representing an 7% improvement at Stage 2 investigation review.

#### **3.2.6 Stage 2 (investigation review stage) response performance, 40 working days:**

Where we failed to provide a response within 20 working days of acknowledgement, an extension should be agreed with the complainant and the reason for the delay provided. This should be no more than an additional 20 working days.

- Overall, (including strategic partners), 62.9% of complaints were responded to at Stage 2 within 40 working days of acknowledgement.
- Council Housing & Repairs Services recorded 80% of complaints were responded to within 40 working days of acknowledgement.



### 3.2.7 Stage 2 - Average time to respond:

- The average response time for a Stage 2 complaint was, for the Council (excluding strategic partners), was 55 working days, (compared with 53 working days in the previous year); Amey, 32.5 working days and Veolia, 19 working days.
- Council Housing & Repairs Services recorded an average of 32 working days.

## 3.3 OUTCOMES

### 3.3.1 Upheld Rates

Measuring upheld complaints allows the Council to be more focused and targeted in directing improvement actions where service faults have been identified, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of actions identified to provide a better quality customer experience.

**Fully Upheld:** These refer to complaints where a service failure was identified - where the complaint has been found to be complete and the service has accepted errors were made or inappropriate action(s) were taken.

**Partially upheld:** This is where some elements of the complaint are justified, yet others are not. It is also where, although no inappropriate actions or decisions have been made, the complainant's viewpoint is accepted and there are ways in which improved ways of working could be adopted either for the individual concerned or for all users of the service.

- The upheld rate (partially upheld and fully upheld) including strategic partners was 16.6%.

### 3.3.2 Remedies

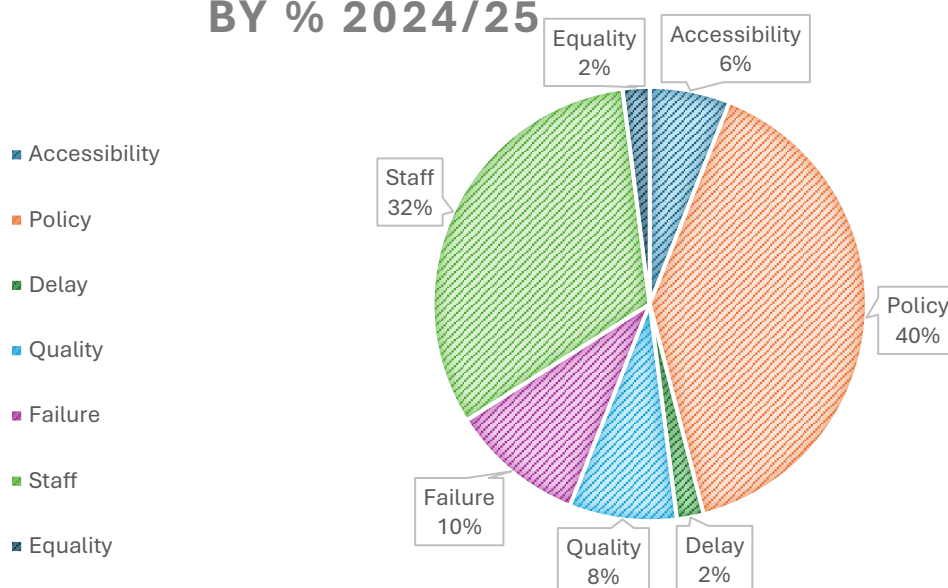
For each partial/fully upheld complaint, more than one remedy may be recorded.

- In 2024-25 including strategic partners, 1519 remedies were recorded.
- There were 77 Council financial remedies (excluding strategic partners and statutory complaints) totalling £28,577. £27,504 in compensation payments and £1073 in refunds.

### 3.3.3 Complaint Categories (excluding statutory complaints)

- When recording a complaint *all* reasons for the complaint should be recorded. For example, a complaint made regarding delay in taking an action, may also include a reason category regarding staff attitude and conduct and elements of policy. In this example there is one complaint and 3 reason categories.
- In 2024-25 Sheffield City Council Officers recorded the following reason category information for new complaints received: (*excluding statutory complaints*):

## REASON CATEGORY FOR COMPLAINT BY % 2024/25



- Of the corporate categories that were recorded, the highest reason category was 'Policy' (490) 40%, followed by 'Staff' (383) 32% and 'Failure' (121) 10%. This compares with 2023-24 outcomes: Delay' 38%, 'Staff' 23% and 'Quality' 14%.
- Neighbourhood services (Streetscene & Regulation) recorded 23% (114/490) of the 'Policy' reasons, and the Council's strategic partner Amey recorded 39% (190/490) of 'Policy' reasons. This predominantly relates to complaints made regarding the terms and conditions of the highway's maintenance contract.
- 6% of recorded categories related to accessibility issues, representing 1% improvement on the previous year.
- 2% of recorded categories related to delay issues, representing 36% improvement on the previous year.

**3.3.4 Equalities:** In 2024-25 of complaints recorded (including strategic partners) that involved an equality issue/protected characteristic; **5% (73)** related to Race (2%) or Disability (3%). None of the race/disability cases related to the Council's strategic partner issues.

Of the Race/Disability concerns recorded, 30% (22/73) were upheld, which in context, represents 1.5% of all equality cases recorded. Breakdown is as follows:

Equality Issue:	Partly/Fully Upheld	% Partly/Fully upheld
Race	8	0.5%
Disability	14	1%
Total	22	1.5%

### **3.3.5 Quality Assurance**

A Quality Assurance Framework is embedded within Sheffield City Council's Feedback and Complaint procedures to review the standards of complaint responses.

It places emphasis on customer focus (personal contact, empathy, positive tone, user friendly) and the complaint outcome (clear explanation of investigation findings, remedies, and signposting).

Each quarter, the Customer Services Feedback and Complaints team takes a sample of responses which are evaluated against the framework as follows:

- Identify areas of improvement and good practice
  - Use the outcome of the evaluation to provide a platform for guidance and development on complaint handling.
- 
- The corporate target for Quality Assurance is 85%. Overall performance for 2024-25 was 84%, compared with 83% in the previous year.

### **3.3.6 Complaint satisfaction surveys**

For 2024-25, 38% of customers completing the survey recorded a score of 5 or more, (where 1 is poor and 10 is good). This is an improvement of 32% on the previous year's results.

### **3.3.7 Compliments & Suggestions**

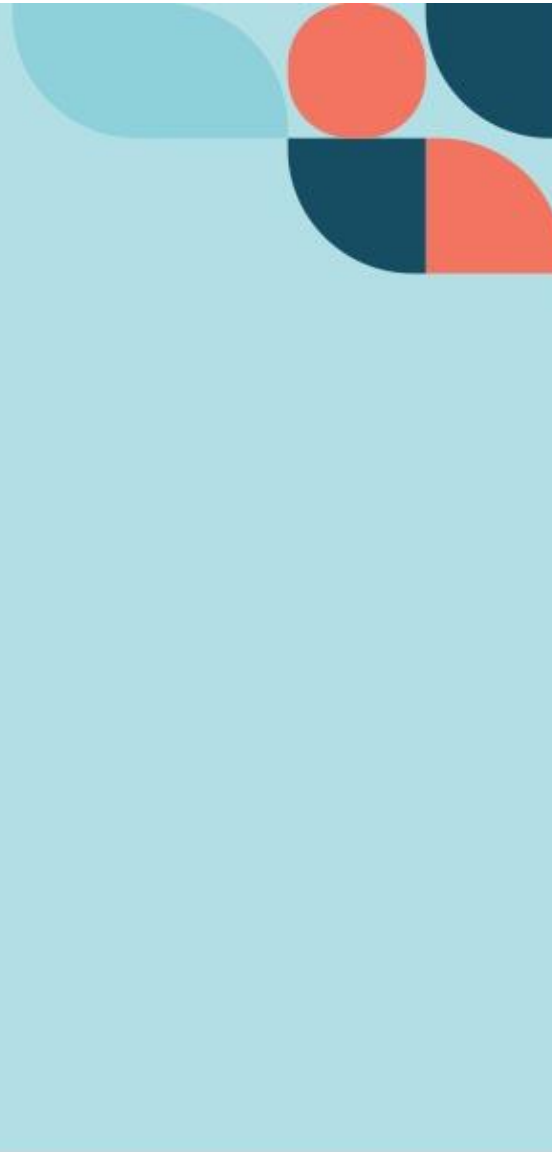
- Overall, 387 compliments and 19 suggestions were recorded, compared with 214 compliments and 33 suggestions in the previous year.

## **3.4 ANNUAL OMBUSMAN'S FINDINGS**

For details of the 2024-25 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service Annual report, please see Appendix 3.

## **3.5 LEARNINGS & SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

- A sample of learnings are detailed below
- See Appendix 4 for the Council's 2025-26 Service Improvement Plan



## 2024-25 A SAMPLE OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Summary of complaint	Category / Improvement Required	Improvement Action description	Outcome to complaint / Action Taken	Service
Complaint regarding works completed by Equipment and Adaptations.  An initial outcome letter was not sent to the tenant.	Complaint Handling  Staff training on dealing with complaints effectively	Cascade Complaint Procedure to all staff.  Written acknowledgement to be embedded.	Apology to Customer  Reiteration of Complaint Procedure.  Effective Complaints Handling LMS	Adults & Wellbeing Services
Complaint about staff conduct	Health and Safety training for all staff	All staff to be reminded of the prohibited use of mobile phones policies at team meetings.	Apology to customer  Officer Conduct Policy Revisited	Adults & Wellbeing Services
Complaint about a health and housing worker, and how their case has been dealt with.  Lack of timely communication and a thorough explanation of our process.	Staff conduct and poor communication	Staff Development: Complaint Handling.  Closer tracking & monitoring of complaint.	Failure to communicate appropriately was formally discussed with the Social Worker and documented.  Reiteration of Complaint Procedure.  Effective Complaints Handling LMS	Adults & Wellbeing Services
Complaint received regarding a new street sign being installed against their home	Communication	Improve customer contact & communication	Unlit Signs team, have now created an 'Advance warning of works' letter which is issued to customers when a sign is going to be attached to their property	Amey (Streetscene & Regulation)

Drug use in the communal area of a block of flats. Tenants scared to leave their flats as they had to walk past the drug users in the communal stairwell.	ASB procedure to be instigated to resolve the issue	To ensure all staff are aware of ASB procedures.	Neighbourhood Team worked closely with the tenants and the police to try and resolve the ASB.  Consultation took place with the tenants on a weekly basis and agreement to install target hardening as a deterrent.  The ASB stopped, the individuals stopped using the stairwell to take drugs, making it a better place to live.	Housing and Neighbourhoods
The Decant Procedure is not working as well as hoped and does not contain all of the issues which it needs to. This includes some tenants complaints about being offered unsuitable properties by rehousing to decant into.	Decant Procedure to be updated to provide more clarity and better outcomes for customers	A review of the procedure to be undertaken, including consultation with customers	Tenants being offered more suitable housing when they need to be decanted	Housing and Neighbourhoods
Complainant unhappy with how he was dealt with by the Council and its legal team in a matter in which he was a litigant in person.	The main complaint was not upheld (relating to his claim to have been inappropriately charged under the advance payment code (for highways works) – however, it was noted that the tone of the letter was unhelpfully abrupt, and that it is important that when dealing with litigants in person we consider how to best explain matters to them,	To develop and implement a protocol on how to best ensure an appropriate manner when a counterpart in litigation is a litigant in person.	Work to develop the protocol is ongoing	Legal services

	and to maintain an awareness of the importance of constructive tone and explanations.			
Complaints relating to damp and mould can be complex to resolve and have highlighted training needs.	A better understanding of the causes and treatment of damp and mould.	We have been carrying out training with regard to the identification of damp and mould via an external provider and have invited MP representatives to be briefed on the content.	Improvement to procedures for receiving concerns relating to damp and mould completed.  Improvement in process to diagnosis and treatment of damp and mould cases.	Housing Repairs and Maintenance.
Complaint relating to discrimination against relating to neurodivergence; Delay in parenting assessment taking place which is prohibiting contact between complainant and son	Train more social workers to be able to assess using Parent Assess, which is a framework developed in 2016 for assessing parents who have learning disabilities	Improved customer care	Apologised for delay and provided explanation. Accepted lack of trained workers meant a significant delay in parenting assessment and impact it had with lack of contact. Confirmed worker now appointed and reiterated apology for delay. Did not uphold complaint about discrimination as the delay was due to ensuring worker with correct experience and knowledge of Parent Assess was appointed to ensure neurodivergence was properly acknowledged and addressed	Childrens Services



Provision in EHCP not secured. Lack of promised communication	Be clearer with external providers what information LA require in order to make decisions, in particular if not on LA's provider list	Improved customer care	<p>Acknowledged that that the delay in funding decisions relating to the personal budget have caused frustration and apology provided in response letter.</p> <p>Process review to streamline work; (especially in high demand periods). Customer contact reviewed.</p> <p>Acknowledged, in one instance, one officer should have returned call when agreed to but other than that, that part of complaint not upheld</p>	SENDSARs
Complaint about delay in corresponding, delay in decision making and placement not being agreed. Poor communication due to lack of updates	<p>Improvements required are:</p> <p>Comprehensive training across team, regular senior Management meetings, and a detailed review of the LA's decision-making procedures.</p>	Improved customer care / Procedures review	<p>Apology provided in response letter and assurances given that LA remain dedicated to</p> <p>Minimising the impact of any such occurrences and to providing the best possible support for learners and their families</p>	SENDSARs

