



**DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

# Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am

Thursday, 1 September 2022

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington. DL1 5QT

**Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.**

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 - Quarter 1 – Report of the Group Director of Operations and the Group Director of Services (Pages 7 - 24)
5. Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports 2021/22 – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 25 - 154)
6. Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 155 - 164)
7. Investment Fund - Update – Report of the Assistant Director Resources (Pages 165 - 172)
8. Work Programme – Report of the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Pages 173 - 180)

9. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
10. Questions



**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Wednesday, 24 August 2022**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

Councillors Boddy, Crudass, Harker, L Hughes, Mrs D Jones, Lee, McEwan, Mills, Paley, Wright and Mrs H Scott

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Shirley Wright, Democratic Manager, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays E-mail: [shirley.wright@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:shirley.wright@darlington.gov.uk) or telephone 01325 405998

## ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30 June 2022

**PRESENT** – Councillors Boddy, Crudass, L Hughes, Mrs D Jones, Lee, McEwan, Wright and Mrs H Scott

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Harker, Mills and Paley

**ABSENT** –

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor Durham

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects), Dave Coates (Head of Planning, Development and Environmental Health), David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment), Andrew Perkin (Business Growth and Investment Manager), Brian Robson (Head of Capital Projects), Shirley Wright (Democratic Manager) and Michael Conway

### ER1 CHAIR

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Mrs H Scott be appointed Chair of this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23

### ER2 VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Crudass be appointed Vice-Chair of this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23

### ER3 TIME OF MEETINGS

**RESOLVED** - That, for the Municipal Year 2022/23, meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 10.00 a.m on the dates agreed in the Calendar of Meetings by Cabinet at Minute C100/Feb/22

### ER4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### ER5 MINUTES

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 28 April 2022, be taken as read and approved as a correct record.

### ER6 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QTR 4 2021/22

The relevant Assistant Directors submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with performance data against those performance indicators for 2021/22 at

Quarter 4 for those indicators within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

Particular references were made to indicators ECI 329 Average Annual Income – Darlington residents which was showing that the average income had risen for the fourth year in succession and was above the North East average and closing the gap between the England average and ECI 330 – Average Annual Income Darlington employees which was showing that the average income had fallen for the second year in succession, which was in line with the North East average but below the England average.

It was also reported that the amount of Council Tax arrears collected had exceeded the target for 2021/22, with £1.55 million compared to £1.23 million in 2020/21 and that the amount of outstanding arrears had also increased during 2021/22 from £5.6 million to £6.8 million which Scrutiny was advised was mainly due to restrictions imposed on recovery action due to the pandemic.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted and further work be undertaken in relation to those indicators which were showing performance which was not as good as the same quarter in the previous year to understand the reasons for that.

**ER7 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING OUTTURN 2021/22**

The Assistant Director Transport and Capital Projects and the Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the current position in relation to the delivery of the Council's capital programme, the financial outturn position as at 31 March 2022 and the proposed financing of the 2021/22 capital expenditure, together with an update on the current status of all the construction projects which were currently being managed by the Council.

It was reported that the Council currently had 48 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £188.383 million, with the majority of those projects running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues. Further information was provided for those projects which did have variances due to delays, together with the action being taken.

Discussion ensued on the impact of inflation and supply chain issues on cost and project milestones and highlighted the importance of ensuring that social value was included in contract documentation and that Framework partners were continuing to provide best practice.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

**ER8 REVENUE OUTTURN 2021/22**

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated), which was being considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 5 July 2022, requesting Members to consider the 2021/22 revenue outturn.

It was reported that the Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2021/22 were

£30.161 million, a £5.235 million improvement on the initial 2021-25 MTFP position, which included a brought forward amount of £2.317 million from 2020/21, £0.741 million of projected departmental underspends, the rebasing exercise of £0.993 million, a £0.722 million increase in corporate resources and net £0.462 million required from the Covid 19 reserve (a total drawn down from the reserve of £0.932 million to fund the departmental covid costs and £0.470 million to refund the shortfall in government grant for Sales, Fees and Charges in corporate resources).

It was also reported that, of the £30.161 million projected reserves, there was a risk reserve balance of £5.350 million leaving £24,811 for use in the 2022/23 – 2025-26 MTFP, an improvement of £0.216 million on the initial estimated position.

In relation to the carry forward request for pressures in the 2022/23 budget, the pressure of additional temporary staffing being required to undertake the implementation of the Government's Adult Social Care finance reforms, including the Fair Cost of Care work were highlighted by Members and it was advised that this was a major and complex piece of work which was being jointly led by the Council's Finance and Commissioning Team. To date, £80,000 of Government funding had been received to cover some of the additional costs of this exercise.

Discussion also ensued on the processes surrounding budget management within the authority and Members were re- assured that regular and robust budget monitoring was undertaken with budget holders and that there was regular reporting through the democratic process.

**RESOLVED** -That the report be noted.

#### **ER9 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 - QUARTER 1**

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated), together with a report (also previously circulated) scheduled to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 July 2022 in relation to the quarter 1 revenue budget monitoring 2022/23.

It was reported that the Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2022-23 were £24.219 million, a £0.206 million improvement on the initial 2022-26 MTFP position and included a brought forward amount of £0.216 million from 2021-22, £0.513 million of projected departmental overspend and a £0.503 million increase in corporate resources.

It was also reported that, of the £24.219 million projected reserves, there was a commitment to use £22.490 million to support years two to four of the current MTFP, leaving a surplus of £1.729 million of unallocated reserves.

Members were advised that the 2022/23 MTFP assumed a three per cent pay award for staff, however, any agreement which might be reached above the three per cent would place additional pressure on the MTFP.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

#### **ER10 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme for this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

**RESOVLED** – That the draft work programme be approved.

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
1 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – QUARTER 1  
2022/23**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 1 report.

**Summary**

2. Attached at **Annex 1** is the Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 1 report. which is due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 September 2022.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members consider the Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitorin – Quarter 1

**Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	There are no specific implications for diversity
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	The proposals do not affect any particular groups within the community
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	The report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme referred to in the report supports delivery of the Sustainable Community strategy through appropriate deployment of the Council's resources
Efficiency	The recommendations support the effective and efficient use of resources.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers



**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT & CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**  
**QUARTER 1 2022/23**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -**  
**Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -**  
**Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**  
**Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides:
  - (a) A summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme.
  - (b) An update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council.
2. It also seeks approval for a number of changes to the programme.

**Summary**

3. The projected outturn of the current Capital Programme is £297.497m against an approved programme of £298.262m. The investment is delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically, to Council services. Refurbishment of council homes, improved learning environments in schools, better traffic flows and opportunities for sustainable travel have been achieved and are detailed within the report. The programme, including commitments, remains affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 – 2025/26.
4. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work. The current project position statement (PPS) shows there are 48 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall projected outturn value of £186.911m. The majority of projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations but are being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally.
5. The projects are managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

## **Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - (a) Note the attached status position on construction projects.
  - (b) Note projected capital expenditure and resources.
  - (c) Approve the adjustments to resources as detailed in paragraph 21.

## **Reasons**

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.
  - (b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.
  - (c) To maintain effective management of resources.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Dave Winstanley**  
**Group Director of Services**

## **Background Papers**

- (i) Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26
- (ii) Project Position Statement June 2022

Brian Robson : Extension 6608  
Claire Hayes : Extension 5404

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	There are no specific implications for diversity
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	The proposals do not affect any particular groups within the community
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	The report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme referred to in the report supports delivery of the Council plan.
Efficiency	The recommendations support the effective and efficient use of resources.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### 2022/23 Capital Spend and Resources

### Information and Analysis

8. **Appendix 1** is for information and lists all live construction projects and provides details on numbers, type and of the key individuals responsible for the delivery of the projects. It also provides a statement on the current status position on each project, details of actions being taken, where required and any current issues.
9. **Appendix 2** summarises the Council's capital commitments which are yet to be financed and also shows how it is intended for them to be financed. The total value of commitments, including available resources brought forward from previous years and 2022-23 schemes previously released by Cabinet, is £159.678m.
10. **Appendix 3** shows the Council's projected capital receipts and how they are going to be utilised to help finance the capital programme over the life of the MTFP.

### Project Position Statement

11. Project management procedures require the production by project managers of a Project Position Statement (PPS) for all projects over £75,000. This report brings together the pertinent data from the current PPS with financial information from the Financial Management System (FMS) and approvals by Cabinet.

12. The Project Position Statement (Appendix 1) details the current live construction projects, up to the end of June 2022, by delivery area, and provides details on numbers, type and of the key individuals responsible for the delivery of the projects. It also provides a statement on the current status position on each project, details of actions being taken, where required and any current issues. The statement excludes any completed projects or those on hold.

13. The overview of live construction projects is as follows:

	Projects	Current Approved Budget £ / p	Projected Outturn £ / p	Variance %	Variance (Value) £ / p
<b>Chief Executive &amp; Economic Growth</b>	15	55,648,101	55,506,218	(0.3)	(141,883)
<b>Operations</b>	19	56,104,838	56,984,688	1.6	879,850
<b>People</b>	2	4,154,566	3,968,246	(4.5)	(186,320)
<b>Services</b>	12	70,463,310	70,452,155	(0.0)	(11,155)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>186,370,815</b>	<b>186,911,307</b>	<b>(3.2)</b>	<b>540,492</b>

14. The table shown above includes a column for current approved budget. In certain cases this budget figure may be different from the original approved budget. This could be as a result of variances identified during construction or other variables not known at the initiation stage. The original budget and all subsequent changes have been reported to and approved by Cabinet.

15. The live projects are at the following stages:




Department	Brief	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	Total
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	0	3	1	7	7	3	15
Operations	0	6	0	10	3	0	19
People	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Services	0	4	1	3	2	2	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>

**Control Point 1 (CP1) – Start Up:** is used to define the position of a project at its conception stage.

- (a) **Control Point 2 (CP2) – Initiate:** defines a project at feasibility stage and will likely include a desktop assessment of a project and the use of informed estimates.
- (b) **Control Point 3 (CP3) – Define:** the point that the project is progressed to RIBA Stage F, i.e. detailed design.

- (c) **Control Point 4 (CP4) – Construction Phase:** is the stage at which work begins on the project, i.e. for a construction project on site through to build completion.
- (d) **Control Point 5 (CP5) – Evaluate:** is the stage post completion of the project at which time the project is reviewed and lessons learned are discussed in order that they can be taken to the next or similar projects.

16. The status on live projects is as follows:

<b>Department</b>			
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	3	12	0
Operations	2	17	0
People	0	2	0
Services	6	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>

- (a) Star and triangle symbols are used to identify projects that have variances which are:
  - (i) More than £5,000, if the variance is also more than 5% of the approved budget for the project, or
  - (ii) More than £50,000 regardless of the percentage variance
- (b) Projects that are within these margins are symbolised with circles.
- (c) In addition to cost, the same symbols are used to indicate similar levels of variances in time and quality/outputs/outcomes.

17. Current projects with the triangle symbol are as follows:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Reason for Variance</b>	<b>Action</b>
Skinnergate Re-development Housing	A delay was encountered following the need to produce a revised design to satisfy concerns raised by English Heritage at the planning application stage.	The design team are working on the Stage 4 design and reviewing the programme to see if there is an opportunity to recover time.
Ingenium Parc Masterplan + Infrastructure	Delays encountered due to difficult ground conditions. Works split across two phases.	The contractor has completed the first phase of the drainage works and commences the second phase in early August.
Dolphin Centre Bowling Alley & Soft Play	Work is complete but the outturn report has not yet been produced.	The over £1m Outturn report to be produced.

Darlington Station Enabling Works	Additional site complexities identified around utilities, neighbouring properties and highways impacts of works.	WDC (main contractor) is now managing all current enabling works to the East side and has begun to prepare the site for the demolition process. Demolitions in the West side are being split into multiple phases and are to commence from September.
Crown Library Refurbishment	Delays and additional costs have been encountered from the withdrawal of the originally appointed roofing contractor	Building Services have appointed a replacement roofing contractor and are investigating ways to recover time.
A68 Woodland Road Outram Street Duke Street	A delay has been encountered due to the need for a public Inquiry for the Duke Street proposals	Public Inquiry found that the scheme should proceed. Detailed design being finalised.
LAD 1b funding	The contractor has been delayed and will be delivering until the end of April with reporting to be carried out by May 22	Works being carried forward to 22/23
S & D Trackbed	Delays were encountered with some remedial works required.	Remedial works to be completed.
Skinnergate & Indoor Market	Revised completion date 31/07/23	Design to be progressed.
Walking Cycling Route MSG Yarm Road-Mill Lane	Scheme required additional drainage and structural design work which extended the programme.	Consultants to be appointed to complete design work.
Neasham Rd	The budget in the project position statement is the initial budget based upon the feasibility stage of the project. Between the CP2 stage and CP3 stage designs are developed and work is undertaken on cost certainty based on more developed designs and the market conditions. The figure reported reflects the outcome of tendering and is above	Inflation is a factor being considered in all capital schemes. Action has been taken to manage inflation in terms of modifying the scheme and seeking additional funding from Home England. The scheme remains viable and affordable within the Housing Revenue Account. Funding for the increase has previously been approved

	initial feasibility stages, which is why it is being reported as out of tolerance. However, the scheme remains viable and the revised costs are funded from the HRA new build capital programme which was released in February 2022.	and will be vired between the HRA new build programme budget and the scheme.
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### Reconciliation of Project Position Statement to Capital Programme

18. The table shown below reconciles the differences between the Capital Programme (CP) and the Project Position Statement (PPS). Differences occur because the Project Position Statement includes all construction projects over £75,000 in value funded from Capital and Revenue sources. Spending within the Capital Programme is not always of a construction nature and can be of any value and excludes Revenue funded schemes.

	Value £m
<b>Live Projects from Project Position Statement</b>	<b>186.911</b>
Schemes closed or on hold within CP but awaiting PPS post project review.	6.058
Annualised Schemes excluded from PPS - Housing Repairs & Maintenance	0.267
Annualised Schemes excluded from PPS - Highways Maintenance	5.583
Non construction excluded from PPS	15.122
Capital Investment fund excluded from PPS	29.216
Projects under 75k excluded from PPS	4.415
Capital Schemes not yet integrated into PPS reporting	18.760
Included in PPS & CMR	0.403
Funding not yet allocated	30.762
<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>297.497</b>

19. The table below shows the split of the approved capital programme of £298.262m, between the different service areas and also the various categories of spend. When compared to the table above it shows that there is a projected £0.765m underspend on the approved capital programme.

	Construction				Non construction	Capital investment fund	Housing New Build not yet allocated	Total
	Live Schemes 75k & Over	Annualised Schemes	Completed Schemes awaiting review	Live Schemes under 75k				
Area	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing	36.049	0.667	0.000	0.160	1.205	0.000	59.161	97.242
Economic Growth	46.464	0.000	0.474	0.578	9.804	29.216	3.216	89.752
Highways/Transport	65.488	5.583	5.511	3.178	1.334	0.000	0.028	81.122
Leisure & Culture	22.351	0.000	0.073	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.000	22.599
Education	4.155	0.000	0.000	0.324	0.053	0.000	0.289	4.821
Adult Social Care	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071
Other	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.655	0.000	0.000	2.655
<b>Total</b>	<b>174.507</b>	<b>6.250</b>	<b>6.058</b>	<b>4.415</b>	<b>15.122</b>	<b>29.216</b>	<b>62.694</b>	<b>298.262</b>

## Capital Programme

20. Paragraph 21 shows the movement in the Capital Programme since the approval of the 2022/23 Capital MTFP.

21. Adjustment to resources requested by departments:

### Virements

Department	Scheme	Value £	Reason for adjustment	Impact on budget
Operations	Housing Investment Fund	(£893,520)	Housing Investment Fund moved to the Neasham Road scheme	Nil Effect
Operations	Neasham Road	£893,520	Housing Investment Fund moved to the Neasham Road scheme	Nil Effect
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£0</b>		

### Adjustments needing approval release

Department	Scheme	Value £	Reason for adjustment	Resource type adjusted
Operations	Green Homes Grant - LA Delivery Phase 2	£199,265	Match funded grant for energy efficiency as per MTFP	Release
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£199,265</b>		

### Outcome of Consultation

22. There has been no consultation in the preparation of this report.



Project	CP1 Start Up	CP2 Initiate	CP3 Design	CP4 Delivery	CP5 Review	Status Symbol	Status	Client Department	Delivery Department	Internal Project Sponsor	Internal Project Manager	Cost Centre	Feasibility Project Budget (CP1)	Initial Approved Budget	Increase To Initial Approved Budget	Current Approved Budget	Project Expected Out Turn Cost	Variance (%)	Variance (Value)	Original Planned Project Completion Date	Revised Approved Project Completion Date	Anticipate d Project Completion Date	Schedule Variatio n (Days)	Project Residual Risk Level	CDM Notifiable Project	Principal Designer	Previous Plan Progress	Plan Progress	Budget Progress Report	Issue Status Report	Lead Consultant	Contracts In place	Contract Type/Form	Contract With	Contract Value
Yards Phase 2							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Mark Ladyman	Mike Bowron	R0180	£1,120,000	£0	£1,120,000	£1,120,000	%	£0	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-23	0	46		DBC	The initial properties identified within the project for works are now being re listed for final approval as some initial agreements with the owners are needing to be reviewed. Detailed inspections continue to be carried out on the viability and suitability of the properties for work within the project. A Programme is being formulated to procure and initiate the works when final designs are agreed. Once the Designs are agreed by all sites, the project can progress.	Works have continued at pace. Further properties have now been identified and detailed designs and technical drawings are being created. Momentum of the project is being maintained whilst property works are being agreed and permissions sought.		Works continue to be progressed with positive results. Key locations in Post House Wynd and some properties in Skinnergate have already benefited from the works. Close liaison is taking place with property owners to agree designs and programme.		Main Contract	JCT	DBC Contract Services		
Yards Phase 1							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Mark Ladyman	Michael Bowron	R0176	£350,000	£488,000	£12,000	£500,000	£488,000	-2%	-£12,000	30-Nov-21	31-Mar-22	31-Mar-22	0	0	Y	DBC	Some works originally identified within Phase 2 as they will be completed post 31st March. This was as a result of both supply chain issues and availability of the various business.	Some works originally identified within Phase 1 have been moved into Phase 2 as they will be completed post 31st March. This was as a result of both supply chain issues and availability of the various business. Remaining works have been completed and a post project review is being arranged.		Yards Phase One has overall been very successful. Due to the Pandemic, both access and supplier delays have meant that some of the works have needed to be re profiled into Phase 2. The required spend on the project will be achieved for the financial year 2021/2 through the re programming of other works that were able to be brought forward. Works not able to be achieved in 2021/2 have been committed and carried forward.		Main Contract	JCT	DBC Contract Services	£357,853
West Cemetery Development							Live	Services	Services	Ian Thompson	Brian Robson	R0154	£4,900,000	£1,500,000	£6,400,000	£6,400,000	%	£0	13-Jun-22	19-Jul-22	19-Jul-22	0	1	Y	Todd Milburn	Crematorium 06/04/21 to 31/12/22	The tender process for the drainage works has completed and the Project Team have awarded the contract. The works will commence upon receipt of the planning decision notice and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.	The tender process for the drainage works has completed and the Project Team have awarded the contract. The works will commence upon receipt of the planning decision notice and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.			Architect	Standard DBC T&C	Align	£500,539	
Skinnergate Re-development Housing							Live	Services	Services	Anthony Sandys	Brian Robson	H6748	£4,950,000	£0	£4,950,000	£4,950,000	%	£0	31-Mar-22	31-Oct-23	31-Oct-23	0	1	Y	Andrew Burnley	Discussions ongoing with Historic England to enable demolition work to commence. RIBA Stage Design ongoing	RIBA Stage 4 design will complete for end of July. asbestos removal work to former cash converters unit is to commence 6th July and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.		1. Initial surveys undertaken, which reveal major loss of structure to heritage building and adjacent property. 2. Historic England opposition to designs are now addressed but significant delays have ensued.		Design Work	Bloom Framework	Design Services	£368,795	
Shorborne Close Phase 2							Live	Operations	Operations	Anthony Sandys	Ben Walde	H6749	£2,375,962	£374,057	£2,750,019	£2,750,019	%	£0	08-Mar-23	22-Sep-23	08-Mar-23	0	32	Y	Lee Darvil	22 units Planning approved November 2021. Start on site commenced Jan 22- works to commence properly April 22	22 units Planning approved November 2021. Start on site commenced Jan 22. Works on hold until roof protection and surface water management plan planning conditions are discharged. Applications for discharge now with planning LLA (10). Expected recommencement on site by end July 2022.		Re-start on site still delayed due to groundwater management statement required to discharge planning condition. July 2022 start date target.		Main Works	Spirit of JCT	Internal	£2,750,019	
East London							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Guy Metcalfe	Richard Storey	D0192	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	%	£0				0	1	Y	Mike Johnson	Feasibility Study to commence 18th Mar	Design works up to stage 3 ongoing		Initial plan for site extension agreed in principle with Homes England. Surveys completed. Design work ongoing						
Railway Heritage Quarter							Live	Services	Services	Ian Thompson	Brian Robson	R0155	£210,000	£20,000,000	£15,140,000	£36,140,000	£35,140,000	%	£0	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-24	0	1	Y	Space Architects	Site set up to commence on 3rd May 2022. A temporary fence to segregate the build area from Network Rail infrastructure is now in place	Works commenced on site with new engineering shed on Bonomi Way. An access issue has delayed the start of works on the 1861 shed.		Issues with land acquisition with Network Rail is nearly resolved		Main Works	Scope	Willmott Dixon	£30,334,766
Neasham Rd							Live	Operations	Operations	Anthony Sandys	Richard Storey	H6745	£31,069,000	£0	£31,069,000	£31,962,520	3%	£893,520	02-May-25	02-May-25	30-May-25	0	17	Y	Lee Darvil	ESH handover delays until July 2022. Outline tender policy received for DBC works.	ESH handover July 2022. DBC and consultants currently assessing infrastructure works close to date for acceptance of DBC housing construction by July 15th 2022. DBC housing programme to begin 26th July 2022.		Acceptance of critical issue - DBC can not start until approved and JV payment agreed 13m paid.		DBC		Internal		
Innovation Central							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Anthony Hewitt	Joanne Wood	R0157	£50,000	£500,000	£7,837,854	£8,337,854	%	£0	31-Dec-21	31-Aug-22	31-Aug-22	0	131	Y	Napper Architects	Construction work is ongoing which includes M & E installation, installation of roof plant and some internal fit out WCs. Presently on programme	Construction work is ongoing which includes M & E installation, joinery, decoration, commencement of the floor finishes and also the hard and soft landscaping. Presently on programme.			SCAPE	NEC Engineering & Construction Contract Option A	Willmott Dixon	£7,223,510		
Ingenium Parc Masterplan Infrastructure							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Anthony Hewitt	Joanne Wood	R0144	£811,500	£811,500	£4,265,593	£4,877,093	%	£0	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-22	02-Nov-22	0	190		Net Walecki	Works are to be undertaken in 2 phases. Phase 1 which is the installation of the drainage within the non trapped out areas from Jan 22 - 28th Feb 22 and Phase 2 which is the staging out of the basin and connections within the trapped out areas from May 22 - Aug 22. Phase 1 is now complete. Work is due to re-commence May 22. Work is presently on programme. The site is presently suffering from ASB. The semi-permanent new barrier and Heras fencing is getting vandalised on a daily basis. Due to the existing new licence this barrier requires repairing/replacing immediately and therefore costs may increase.	Following a further meeting with Seymours they have confirmed that recommencement of the drainage works will start from 27th July 2022. Prior to restarting on site Seymours are required to submit a revised Construction Phase Management Plan. A new programme has been submitted which now states that all the works, including landscaping will be completed by 2nd November 2022. Once these works have finished there is a requirement as part of the Natural England licence to provide a further 3 ponds within the site. Pond construction details have been submitted to Seymours to provide a quote.		The recent storms have caused problematic ground conditions although work has continued additional costs have been realised. Due to the weather conditions it is possible that phase 2 works will go beyond the programme.		Spine Road, Phase 2 Ecological mitigation planning & seeding	Short Term NEC	DBC Highways / Brambles	£1,109,897	
Eastbourne Sports Pitches & Drainage							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Ian Thompson	Rebecca Robson	L0154	£2,350,000	£0	£2,350,000	£2,350,000	%	£0	31-Jul-23	31-Jul-23	24-Mar-23	0	1	Y	SPACE	Pre App - February 2022 Planning Application - September 2022 Start on Site Pts 1 Athletics Track - November 2022 Start on Site Pts 2 Changing & Parkino - April 2023 Start on Site Pts 3 3G & pitches - Mid-April 2023 Handover - July 2023	Pre App - February 2022 Planning Application - September 2022 Start on Site Pts 1 Athletics Track - November 2022 Start on Site Pts 2 Changing & Parkino - April 2023 Handover - July 2023		Currently working through the pre app comments.		Space	RIBA Stage 1-3 Design Work	Standard DBC T&C	Space Architects	£21,865
Dolphin Centre M & E Refurb							Live	Services	Services	Lisa Soderman	Ben Walde	D0191	£0	£0	£0	£0	%	£0				0	1	Y	AN Consultants - Andrea Nicholls	TBC	Initial project launch meeting held with cost consultant, lead designer & client team. team to develop programme over Q3 2022			DTA					
Dolphin Centre Bowling & Soft Play							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Ian Thompson	Richard Storey	D0174	£1,600,000	£194,687	£1,784,687	£1,784,687	%	£0	27-Nov-20	19-Mar-21	19-Mar-21	0	1	Y	Mike Brown	Completed	Completed. Closure report outstanding.				In spirit of JCT Intermediate	In House no contract		£1,731,721	







2022/23 Capital Resources Summary					
Row Ref.		Approved Commitments £M	Virement of Resources £M	Variance £M	Total £M
1	<b>Capital Commitments</b>				
2	Brought forward from 2021/22	159.678			
3	2022/23 Capital Programme (released by Cabinet)	38.435			<b>198.113</b>
4	Projected (Under)/Over Spend				
5	<b>Total Commitments</b>	<b>198.113</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>198.113</b>
	<b>To Be Funded By:</b>				
	<b>External and Departmental Resources</b>				
6	External Funding and Departmental Supported Borrowing	2.676	-	-	<b>2.676</b>
7	Departmental Unsupported Borrowing	0.000	-	-	<b>(0.000)</b>
8	Capital Grants	74.431	-	-	<b>74.431</b>
9	Capital Contributions	1.815	-	-	<b>1.815</b>
10	Revenue Contributions	30.152	-	-	<b>30.152</b>
11	Capital Receipts - HRA	0.303	-	-	<b>0.303</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>109.377</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>109.377</b>
	<b>Corporate Resources</b>				
12	Capital Receipts (General Fund)/ Prudential Borrowing	88.736	-	-	<b>88.736</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88.736</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>88.736</b>
13	<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>198.113</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>198.113</b>

Corporate Resources Analysis		
		£M
14	Required Resources to fund 2022/23 expenditure (see above)	88.736
15	<b>Total Planned Use of Corporate Resources</b>	<b>88.736</b>
16	Less: Total Projected net Capital Receipts 22/23 (as per Appendix 3)	(4.918)
17	Add: projects already released and included in the capital commitments above	4.110
18	<b>Corporate Resources required to fund capital programme</b>	<b>87.928</b>

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**Capital Receipts Utilisation - latest projection**

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Projected Opening Balance as at 1 April	0.579	0.808	9.437
Projected net Capital Receipts	4.339	9.029	3.095
<b>Total projected Capital Receipts</b>	<b>4.918</b>	<b>9.837</b>	<b>12.532</b>
<b><u>Less (as per approved capital programme)</u></b>			
Capitalisation utilisation as per MTFP	(1.085)	0.000	0.000
Council funded schemes	(1.485)	(0.400)	(0.400)
Economic Growth Investment Fund	(0.897)	0.000	0.000
Slippage from previous years	(0.643)	0.000	0.000
<b>Projected available Capital Receipts as at 31 March</b>	<b>0.808</b>	<b>9.437</b>	<b>12.132</b>

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**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
1 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS ANNUAL REPORTS 2021/22**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee with the 2021/22 Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports for:
  - (a) Adult Social Care (**Appendix 2**);
  - (b) Children's Social Care (**Appendix 3**);
  - (c) Corporate (**Appendix 4**);
  - (d) Housing (**Appendix 5**); and
  - (e) Public Health (**Appendix 6**).

**Summary**

2. It is important that the Council's complaints, compliments and comments procedures are accessible so people can tell us what they think about the services we provide. The Council constantly strives to ensure an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as quickly as possible and one in which learning from complaints is used to improve services.
3. The Council received a total of 739 complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 628 in 2020/21, although complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the Council receiving 838 complaints in 2019/20 and 825 in 2018/19.
4. The Council received a total of 217 compliments during 2021/22, a decrease from 309 compliments in 2020/21, 292 in 2019/20 and 280 in 2018/19.
5. The Council received a total of 127 comments during 2021/22, a decrease from 178 in 2020/21, 168 in 2019/20 and 240 in 2018/19.
6. A summary table is provided at **Appendix 1**.
7. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.
8. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

9. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

### **Recommendation**

10. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) That Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee notes the content of the attached reports.
  - (b) That Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee endorses the further recommendations made in the Corporate, Children's and Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports to be put to Cabinet on 6 September 2022.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

### **Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Lee Downey : Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific impact on Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The purpose of the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report is to improve the service we provide to service users and their carers.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific recommendations contained within the attached reports concerning Carbon Reduction.
Diversity	Complaint investigations have led to service improvements for people with protected characteristics.
Wards Affected	All.
Groups Affected	All.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not have a direct impact on the Budget and Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This report does not require an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	Learning from complaints contributes towards the delivery of the priorities in the Plan.
Efficiency	The revised procedures aim to improve the efficiency with which complaints are handled. The recommendations contained within the appended reports aim to reduce risk and improve efficiency in the way we interact with our customers.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The purpose of the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report is, in part, to improve the service we provide to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

11. Our aim is to put people first and provide them with the best possible service. To make this aim a reality it is important people have the opportunity to tell us what they think about the services we provide. The Council's Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedures are one way they can do this. They can tell us when we get things wrong so we can put them right. They can also tell us when we get things right, make comments about the things we do and suggest new ways of doing things.
12. We understand that sometimes it is difficult to complain and work hard to ensure an organisational culture in which complaints are seen as a positive means of engagement and an opportunity for the Council to learn and improve services. If people do need to complain we always take their concerns seriously, treat them fairly and with respect and assure them they will not receive a poorer service as a result.
13. There was a slight decrease in the overall number of representations made under the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. While there was a slight increase in the number of complaints received, complaint numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was a decrease in the number of compliments received and a small increase in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 2.
14. There was an increase in the overall number of representations made under the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a significant increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 1 of the procedure, although Stage 1 complaints remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was an increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 2 and a small decrease in the number of complaints received at Stage 3. There was a decrease in the number of compliments received, while there was a small increase in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 3.
15. There was a decrease in the overall number of representations made under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. While there was a significant increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints received, Stage 1 complaint numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was also a significant increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 2 of the procedure. There was a significant decrease in the number of compliments and comments received, both of which remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. Full details are attached at Appendix 4.
16. There was a slight increase in the number of representations made under the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a significant increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints received. The number of Stage 1 complaints received was significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. There was also an increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints received, with the number of Stage 2 complaints received also higher than before the pandemic. There was a significant decrease in the number of compliments received, which remained below pre-pandemic

levels. There was also a decrease in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 5.

17. There was an decrease in the number of representations made under the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a small decrease in the number of complaints received, a small increase in the number of compliments received and a slight decrease in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 6.
18. Some examples of organisational learning resulting from complaints have been extracted from the appended reports and are provided below.
19. *Adult Social Care Complaints:*
  - (a) Following a complaint regarding a care home, it was recommended the home's visiting policy was regularly reviewed during the pandemic to ensure it was consistent with Government guidance.
  - (b) Following a Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decision, the Council agreed to carry out a review of how it supports, monitors and audits recipients of direct payments. This is to ensure all current and future recipients of direct payments are adequately monitored and audited in line with statutory guidance.
  - (c) Following a complaint for Life Stages 26+, it was recommended that a Direct Payment Procedure be developed to inform Adult Social Care staff of the use and processes involved in service users having a Direct Payment, including what Direct Payments can and cannot be used for.
  - (d) Following a LGSCO decision, staff were reminded to ensure they adhere to the Council's safeguarding policy, in particular to retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made regarding safeguarding enquiries. Furthermore the Council decided to update existing/provide new training for staff in order to ensure social workers retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made, not only in relation to safeguarding enquiries but in other areas of social work practice.
  - (e) Following a complaint for Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT), social workers were reminded of the importance of holding Best Interests meetings to inform planning in adult social care and that this should always include an invitation to family members were identified as appropriate and with consent where possible of the cared for person.
20. *Children's Social Care Complaints:*
  - (a) Following a complaint for Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the front door, the importance of verifying information contained within assessments and verifying this with parents prior to finalisation was reinforced with social workers. The importance of including birth fathers within assessments and ensuring that all information

recorded is current and accurate as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was also reinforced with social workers.

- (b) Following a complaint for Independent Reviewing Officers, it was recommended that consideration is given to either establishing a clear signposting in procedures so that all Foster to Adopt placements are managed in line with embedded adoption processes.
- (c) Following a complaint for Looked After Through (LATC) Team, it was agreed Children's Services should ensure that attendance records for Looked After Reviews (LAR) clearly evidence attendees of the LAR meeting. It was also agreed that LAR minutes should contain information shared by a young person's advocate to ensure there is a transparent record of a young person's views, wishes and feelings captured at that point in time.
- (d) Following a complaint for Team C, it was agreed that as per the Placement and Review Regulations 2015, social workers would ensure parents/carers are consulted prior to any significant social worker actions or changes to agreed care plan actions.
- (e) Following a further complaint for Team C, it was agreed that an existing function within Liquid Logic (the Council's social care system) should be used to modify the content of CLA documentation that relates to Foster to Adopt (and Adoption Placements) to prevent the automatic insertion of information into documentation that is distributed to birth family members.

#### 21. *Corporate Complaints:*

- (a) Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council improved its knowledge of its enforcement powers set out in Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- (b) Following a further complaint for Income Management, it was agreed consideration would be given to developing a Customer Standards Charter which clearly gives timescales for responses to urgent and non-urgent communication from customers.
- (c) Following a complaint for People and Families Information Service, it was agreed the Council would review entitlement for children and young people who reside in Darlington but attend a school setting out of area.
- (d) Following a complaint for Strengthening Families, it was agreed the assessment for Direct Payments as part of an Early Help Assessment for children under the age of five would be reviewed to ensure the service is appropriate for those who need it.
- (e) Following a complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed refresher training would be provided to Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in relation to their jurisdiction.

22. *Housing Complaints:*

- (a) Following a complaint for Housing Management, further staff training was provided in relation to the process of void inspections and void standards and all major work voids are now jointly inspected by both Asset Management and the Housing Management Officer prior to a person taking on that tenancy, with any failed post-inspections immediately addressed with Building Services.
- (b) As a result of another complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to look at the processes around voids and glazing to ensure we reduce the chances of delays happening in future.
- (c) Following a further complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed that Housing Management would provide tenants with a copy of repair notices and information on how the right to repair scheme works.
- (d) Following another complaint for Housing Management, Building Services were reminded of the need to confirm the time and date of appointments before arriving to undertake works and it was agreed a detailed operational manual would be provided to prospective tenants.
- (e) Following a complaint for Tenancy Enforcement it was recommended that the clauses in the Tenancy Agreement regarding succession of properties be reviewed and that all relevant staff receive refresher training in relation to this.

23. The further recommendations set out in the Corporate, Children's and Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports are.

- (a) The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Corporate Stage 2 complaint response target.
- (b) The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Housing Stage 2 response target.
- (c) Children's Services should work to improve performance against the Stage 2 timescale for Children's Social Care complaints.

**Consultation**

24. No consultation was required in preparing this report.

## Total Representations by Year

Type of representation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Complaints</b>				
<b>Corporate</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	532	457	632	623
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	17	24	15	1
Direct to Ombudsman	0	1	0	0
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>549</i>	<i>483</i>	<i>647</i>	<i>624</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	53	26	44	70
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>71</i>
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	48	46	67	64
<b>Children's Social Care</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	49	37	57	67
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	4	0	0	0
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>67</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	8	7	10	16
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>16</i>
Stage 3 complaints	1	2	3	4
<b>Housing</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	88	60	65	69
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	0	1	1	1
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>70</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	16	12	6	9
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>
Stage 3 complaints	0	0	0	0
<b>Public Health</b>	1	2	1	0
<b>Compliments</b>				
Corporate	154	209	170	199
Adult Social Care	33	38	62	33
Children's Social Care	8	15	7	19
Housing	21	47	49	28
Public Health	1	0	4	1
<i>Total compliments</i>	<i>217</i>	<i>309</i>	<i>292</i>	<i>280</i>
<b>Comments</b>				
Corporate	123	171	166	236
Adult Social Care	2	1	0	2
Children's Social Care	1	0	0	0
Housing	1	4	2	2
Public Health	0	2	0	0
<i>Total comments</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>240</i>





# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### Adult Social Care

### Complaints, Compliments and Comment

### Annual Report

### 2021/22

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## Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to inform service users, carers, the public, Council Members and staff of the effectiveness of the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the procedure).
2. On the 1 April 2009 the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (the regulations) came into force following the consultation 'Making Experiences Count' by the Department of Health. The consultation found that the complaints processes for people receiving both health and social care services were overly complex and inflexible.
3. As a result the legislation introduced altered the way in which complaints are handled introducing a single joint complaints process for both social care and health services, with one stage as opposed to the previous three stage process used in relation to adult social care services. The regulations also introduced a duty for health and social care services to cooperate.
4. The Council implemented a new procedure on the 1 April 2010 providing a local framework to ensure complaints are handled effectively and in line with the regulations.
5. The procedure aims to:
  - (a) Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users and their carers to raise complaints;
  - (b) Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
  - (c) Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
  - (d) Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
  - (e) Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to adult social care complaints and improve services as a result.
6. The Assistant Director Adult Services is the responsible person for ensuring that the Council complies with the arrangements made under the regulations. They act as the 'Adjudicating Officer', which means they make decisions on complaints and decide what action should be taken in light of the outcome of a complaint.
7. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager (Complaints Manager) is the responsible person for managing the procedure for handling and considering complaints in accordance with the agreements made under the regulations.

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (Health Services Ombudsman)**

8. Although complainants can refer their complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) from the outset, the LGSCO will not normally investigate until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they may refer the matter to the LGSCO (or Health Services Ombudsman for some joint complaints).

### **Information and Accessibility**

9. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
10. Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
11. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

### **Advocacy**

12. During 2021/22 the Council commissioned an advocacy service which provides RPRs (Relevant Persons Representatives), IMCAs (Independent Mental Capacity Advocates), IMHAs (Independent Mental Health Act Advocates), Court of Protection Advocacy, and Care Act Advocates. This is provided by Darlington association on Disability (DAD).
13. The Council also commissioned Specialist Advocacy / Welfare Rights services for adults with a sensory impairment, and NHS Complaints Advocacy on behalf of the NHS.

## Summary

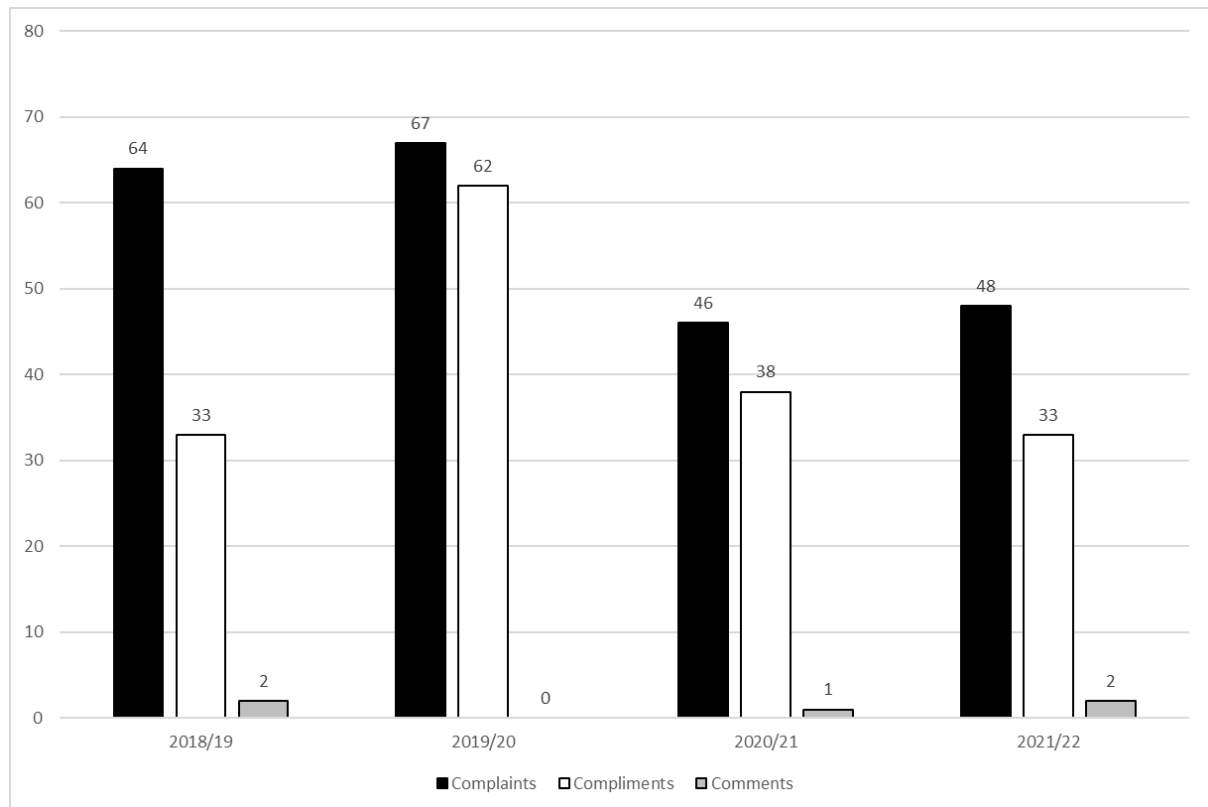
14. There has been a slight decrease in overall feedback, 83 representations in 2021/22 compared to 85 in 2020/21, 134 representations in 2019/20 and 99 in 2018/19.
15. The trend of relatively low numbers of complaints compared to pre-pandemic levels continued during 2021/22, with the Council investigating 48 complaints. Although this was an increase from 46 in 2020/21, it was still significantly lower than 67 in 2019/20 and 64 in 2018/19.
16. The Council received 33 compliments under the procedure during 2021/22, a decrease from 38 in 2020/21 and 62 in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
17. The Council received two comments under the procedure during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
18. The Council did not receive any complaints which did not qualify for investigation under the procedure during 2021/22, a decrease from 6 in 2020/21 and five in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
19. Three adult social care complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, a decrease from six in 2020/21.
20. The LGSCO reached a decision on four complaints during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21.

## Review of the Year

### Breakdown of all Representations

21. A total of 83 representations were handled under the procedure during 2021/22. This does not include those representations responded to directly by social care providers i.e. care homes and home (domiciliary) care providers.

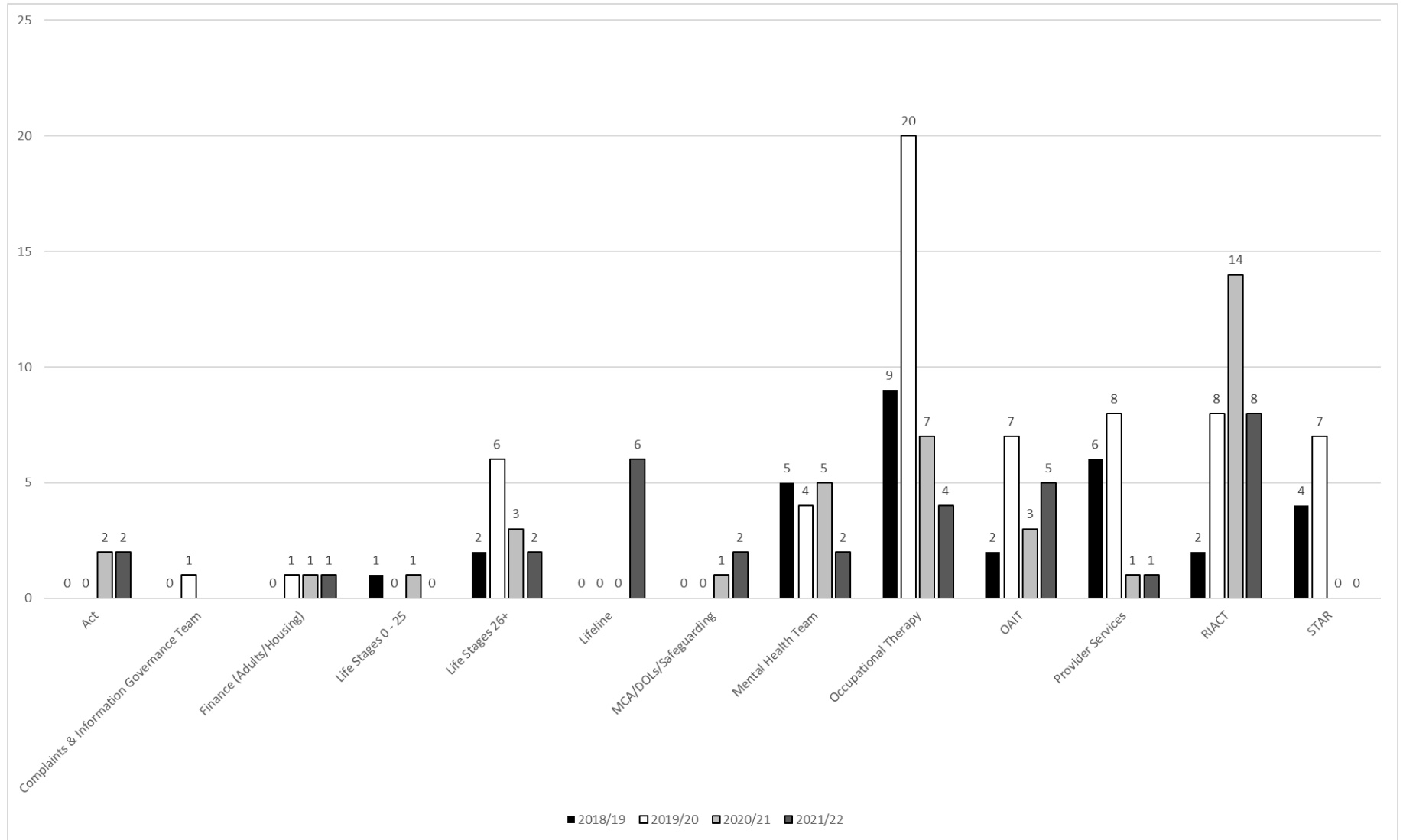
**Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received 2021/22**



22. There was an increase in the number of complaints we investigated, 48 compared to 46 in 2020/21, however, complaints remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.
23. There was a decrease in the number of compliments we received, 33 compared to 38 in 2020/21. Again compliments remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.
24. There was an increase in the number of comments we received, two compared to one in 2020/21. The number of comments received has always been low and was seemingly not affected by the pandemic in the same way as compliments and complaints.

### Breakdown of Compliments Received by Team

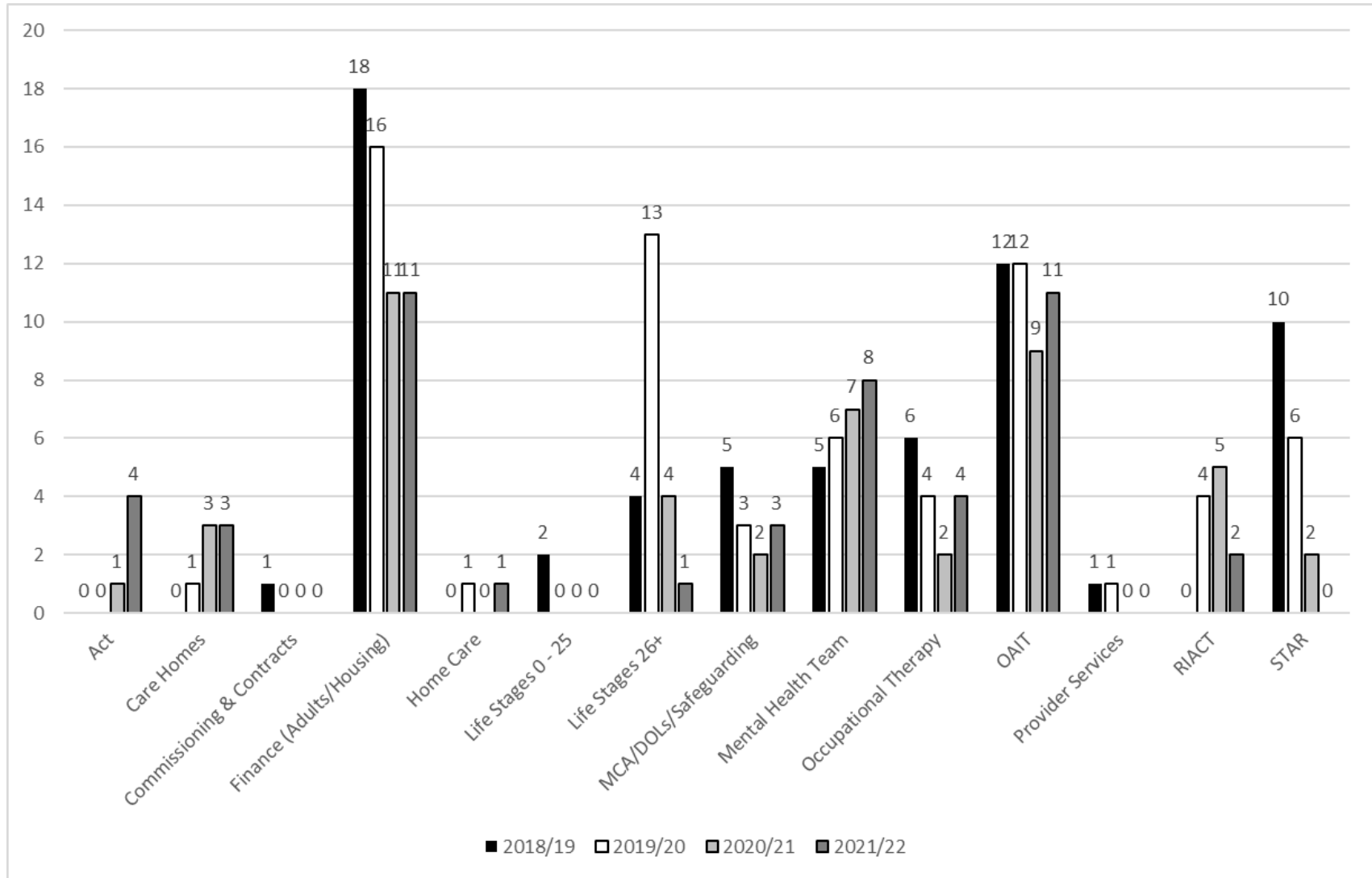
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\*ACT = Adult Contact Team, MCA/DOLS = Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, OAIT = Ongoing Assessment and Intervention Team, RIACT = Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team, STAR = Short Term Assessment and Review

*N.B. Those teams that do not appear in the graph did not receive any compliments*

### Breakdown of Complaints Received by Service Area/Team





\*ACT = Adult Contact Team, MCA/DOLS = Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, OAIT = Ongoing Assessment and Intervention Team, RIACT = Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team, STAR = Short Term Assessment and Review

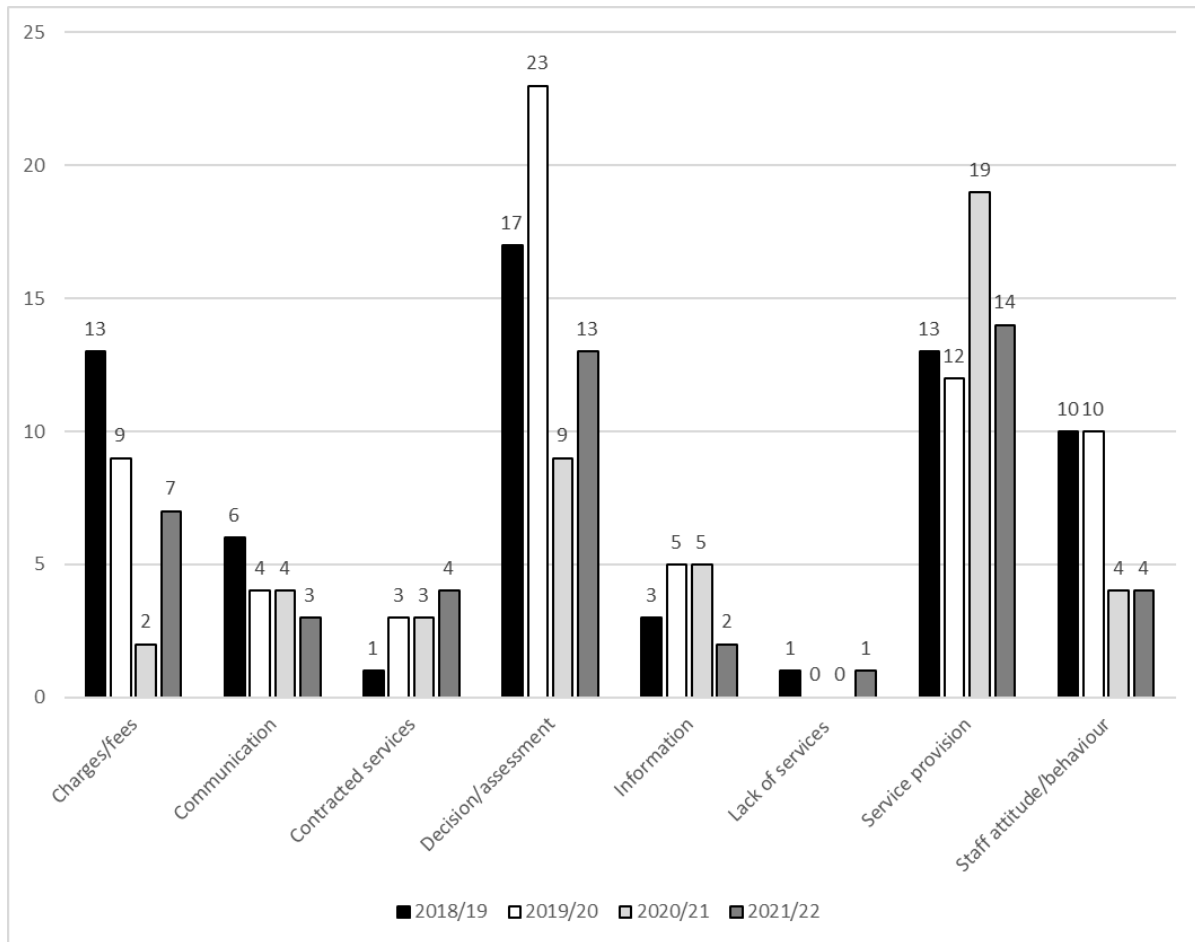
*N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints.*

25. The Council investigated four complaints about Act, an increase from one in 2020/21.
26. The Council investigated three complaints about care homes (contracted service), the same number as in 2020/21.
27. The Council investigated 11 complaints about Finance (Adults/Housing), the same number as in 2020/21. Complaints concerned delays, poor communication, inaccurate information and dissatisfaction with decisions.
28. The Council investigated one complaint about a home (domiciliary) care provider (contracted service), an increase from zero in 2020/21.
29. The Council investigated one complaint about Life Stages 26+, compared to four in 2020/21.
30. The Council investigated three complaints for MCA/DOLS (Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards), compared to two in 2020/21.
31. The Mental Health Team received eight complaints, compared to seven 2020/21. Dissatisfaction with the service provided by the social worker was the most common cause of complaint.
32. Occupational Therapy received four complaints, compared to two 2020/21.
33. Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT) received 11 complaints, compared to nine in 2020/21. Dissatisfaction with the service provided by the social worker was the most common cause of complaint.
34. Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) received two complaints, compared to five in 2020/21.
35. Short Term Assessment & Review Team (STAR) received zero complaints, compared to two in 2020/21.

#### **Breakdown of Comments Received by Service Area/Team**

36. The Council received two comments, compared to one in 2020/21. One related to Occupational Therapy as did the one the previous year and one related to Life Stages 26+.

### Breakdown of Complaints Received by Issue



37. The most common cause of complaint remained service provision. The Council received 14 complaints about service provision, a decrease from 19 in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained higher than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 12 complaints in 2019/20 and 13 complaints in 2018/19.
38. The second most common cause of complaint remained dissatisfaction with a decision/assessment. The Council received 13 complaints about this issue, an increase from nine in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 23 complaints in 2019/20 and 17 complaints in 2018/19.
39. The third most common cause of complaint was charges/fees. The Council received seven complaints about this issue, an increase from two in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received nine complaints in 2019/20 and 13 complaints in 2018/19.
40. Contracted services and staff attitude/behaviour were the fourth most complained about issues during 2021/22. The Council received four complaints about contracted services, an increase from three in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19. The Council received four complaints about staff attitude/behaviour, the same number as in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 10 complaints in both 2019/20 and 2018/19.

41. Communication was the fifth most complained about issues. The Council received three complaints about this issue in 2021/22, a decrease from four in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and six in 2018/19.
42. Information was the sixth most complained about issue. The Council received two complaints about this issue during 2021/22, a decrease from five in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
43. Lack of services was the least complained about issue. The Council received one complaint about this issue in 2021/22, an increase from zero in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number as was received in 2018/19.

### Complaint Outcomes

44. 44 complaint investigations were concluded during 2021/22. The outcomes of these complaints are detailed in the chart below.

Service Area/Team	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Inconclusive	Withdrawn	Total
Adult Contact Team (ACT)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Care Homes (contracted service)	1	2	0	0	1	4
Finance	3	3	5	0	0	11
Life Stage 26+	2	2	2	0	0	6
MCA/DOLS/Safeguarding	0	0	3	0	0	3
Mental Health	0	0	3	0	2	5
Occupational Therapy	2	0	0	0	3	5
Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT)	1	1	1	0	3	6
Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT)	1	1	1	0	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>

#### Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints Received 2021/22

45. Three adult social care complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 13 in 2018/19.

#### Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaint Outcomes 2021/22

46. Four adult social care complaints were determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to four in 202/21, five in 2019/20 and 14 in 2018/19.
47. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Organisational Learning**

48. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, a number of service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22, some of which are detailed below.

### **Care Homes**

49. Following a complaint regarding a care home, it was recommended the home's visiting policy was regularly reviewed during the pandemic to ensure it was consistent with Government guidance.

### **Finance**

50. Following a LGSCO decision, the Council agreed to carry out a review of how it supports, monitors and audits recipients of direct payments. This is to ensure all current and future recipients of direct payments are adequately monitored and audited in line with statutory guidance.

### **Life Stage 26+**

51. Following a complaint, it was recommended that a Direct Payment Procedure be developed to inform Adult Social Care staff of the use and processes involved in service users having a Direct Payment, including what Direct Payments can and cannot be used for.

### **MCA/DOLS/Safeguarding**

52. Following a LGSCO decision, staff were reminded to ensure they adhere to the Council's safeguarding policy, in particular to retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made regarding safeguarding enquiries. Furthermore the Council decided to update existing/provide new training for staff in order to ensure social workers retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made, not only in relation to safeguarding enquiries but in other areas of social work practice.

### **Occupational Therapy**

53. Following a complaint, it was agreed OT's would ensure that when they determine that a piece of equipment is not safe for use an alternative is provided. OT's also improved their knowledge of the financial assessment process.

### **Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT)**

54. Following a complaint, social workers were reminded of the importance of holding Best Interests meetings to inform planning in adult social care and that this should always include an invitation to family members were identified as appropriate and with consent where possible of the cared for person. Social workers were also reminded of the

importance of recording all communication with family members with regards to the care of an individual.

### **Performance against the Procedure**

55. The target for acknowledging receipt of complaints under the procedure is 3 working days.
56. 91.67% of complaints received during 2021/22 were acknowledged within the 3 working day timescale, an increase from 86.96% in 2020/21.
57. There are no longer any statutory timescales for complaint responses, except that complainants should receive a response within six months. The procedure sets out a timescale for dealing with complaints solely about the Council's services i.e. 30 working days, although there are circumstances in which the investigator may agree an extension with the complainant. It also states that for joint health and social care complaints the complaints managers from the different organisations will work together to decide a reasonable timescale and agree this with the complainant. This is to ensure investigations are completed in a timely manner and within the maximum time allowed.
58. 15.56% of complaints were responded to within 30 working days, a decrease from 27.8% in 2020/21.
59. 45.5% of complaints exceeded the maximum six month time limit, an increase from 22.2% in 2020/21.

### **Performance Indicator for 2021/22**

60. In relation to Adult Social Care complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received four maladministration decisions during 2021/22, compared to one 2020/21, five in 2019/20 and nine in 2018/19.
61. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Further recommendations**

62. As a result of COVID-19 the Assistant Director Law and Governance made a [Delegated Decision](#) on 23 March 2020 that gave approval for timescales not to be adhered as a result of services diverting resources to the areas of greatest need. This resulted in a backlog of complaints and in the 2020/21 annual report it was recommended that Adult Services work to clear the backlog, which they successfully did during 2021/22.
63. While performance against the procedure was significantly lower than in 2020/21, this was as a result of the significant backlog that arose during the pandemic. There are no further recommendations arising from the 2021/22 annual report.

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# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

## **Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. Darlington Children's Social Care welcomes complaints, compliments and comments as a way of improving service delivery to children, young people and their families. The purpose of this report is to inform the service users, carers, the public, Council Members and Children's Social Care staff of the effectiveness of the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the Procedure). The report identifies topics and trends in relation to complaints information, makes suggestions for service improvements, where appropriate and identifies areas of organisational learning that have taken place in relation to people, policy and process.

## **The Law**

2. The Council is required by law to have management arrangements in place for considering children's social care representations, including complaints, under the Children Act 1989. National legislative procedures for social care were amended in September 2006 with the introduction of the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (the Regulations). It is a requirement of the Regulations that the Council publishes an annual report. In addition to the Regulations the Department for Education and Skills produced some comprehensive guidance for local authorities on managing complaints, called 'Getting the Best from Complaints'.
3. Key features of the Regulations include:
  - (a) A requirement for local authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager;
  - (b) A requirement for review panels to be retained by local authorities but with more robust arrangements for constituting and running them; and
  - (c) A 12 month time limit to make complaints.

## **Complaints and Information Governance Team**

4. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager is appointed as the 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations. The Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team is independent of Children's Social Care operational line management. This ensures a high level of independence in the way children's social care complaints are managed within the Council.

## **Public Information**

5. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the Procedure. To help make the Procedure easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

6. Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish.
7. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
8. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## **Children's Services Social Care Complaints Process**

### **Stage 1 – Local Resolution**

9. This initial stage allows children's social care managers the opportunity to try and resolve complaints locally, usually within the team being complained about.

### **Stage 2 – Investigation**

10. Stage 2 involves a full and formal investigation. An 'Independent Person' must also be appointed to oversee the investigation and report independently to Children's Social Care Services. Both the Investigating Officer and Independent Person produce reports, which are submitted to a senior manager who writes the final response to the complainant.

### **Stage 3 – Review Panel**

11. A review panel is convened when the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response. The panel consists of an independent chairperson and two individuals who are independent of the Council.

### **The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

12. Although complainants can refer complaints at any stage to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) they will not normally investigate until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response.

### **External Support to the Complaints Process**

#### **Advocacy**

13. The Council commissions an advocacy service for children and young people who make a complaint. This is an independent service provided by NYAS.

#### **Investigating Officers**

14. While the Regulations do not require Investigating Officer's to be independent of the Council, we have signed up to a contract for the provision of Independent Investigating Officers.

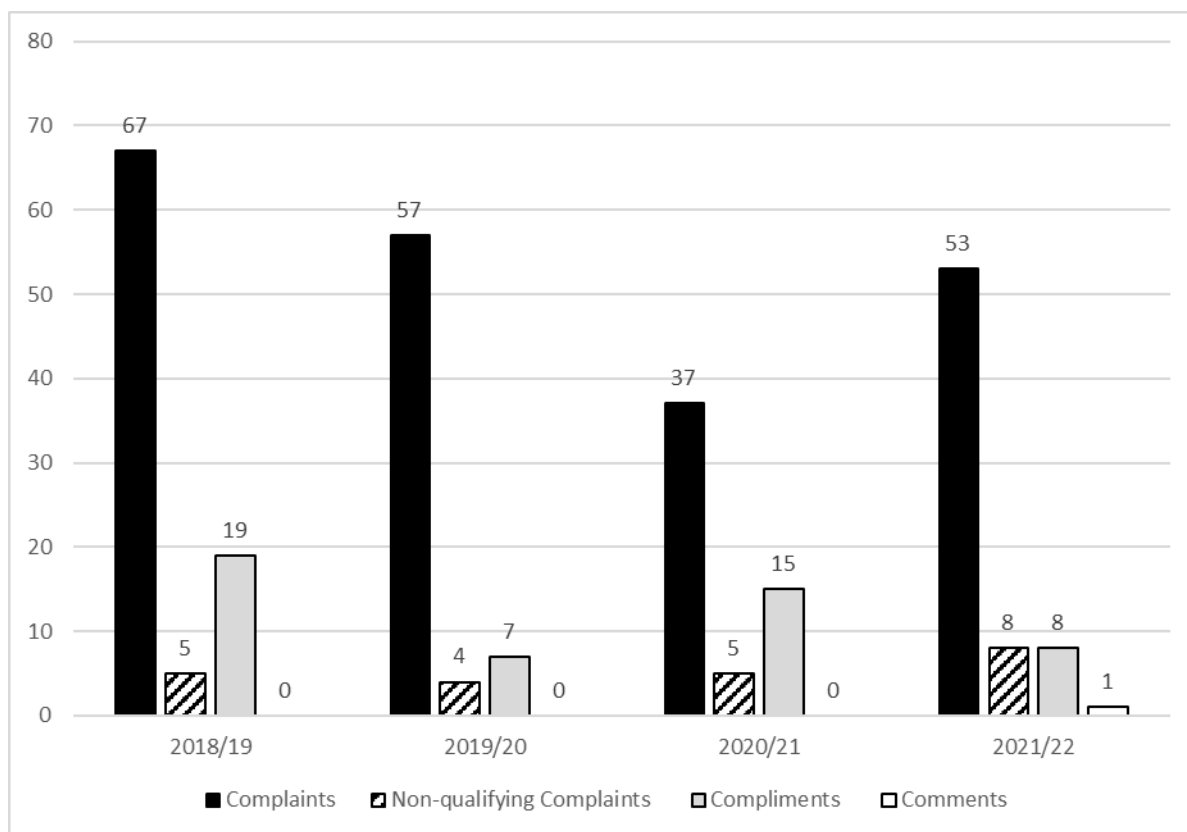
#### **Independent Persons**

15. The Council has signed up to a contract for the provision of Independent Persons.

#### **Review Panels**

16. The Council has also signed up to a contract for the provision of an Independent Chair and Independent Panellist service.

### Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments received



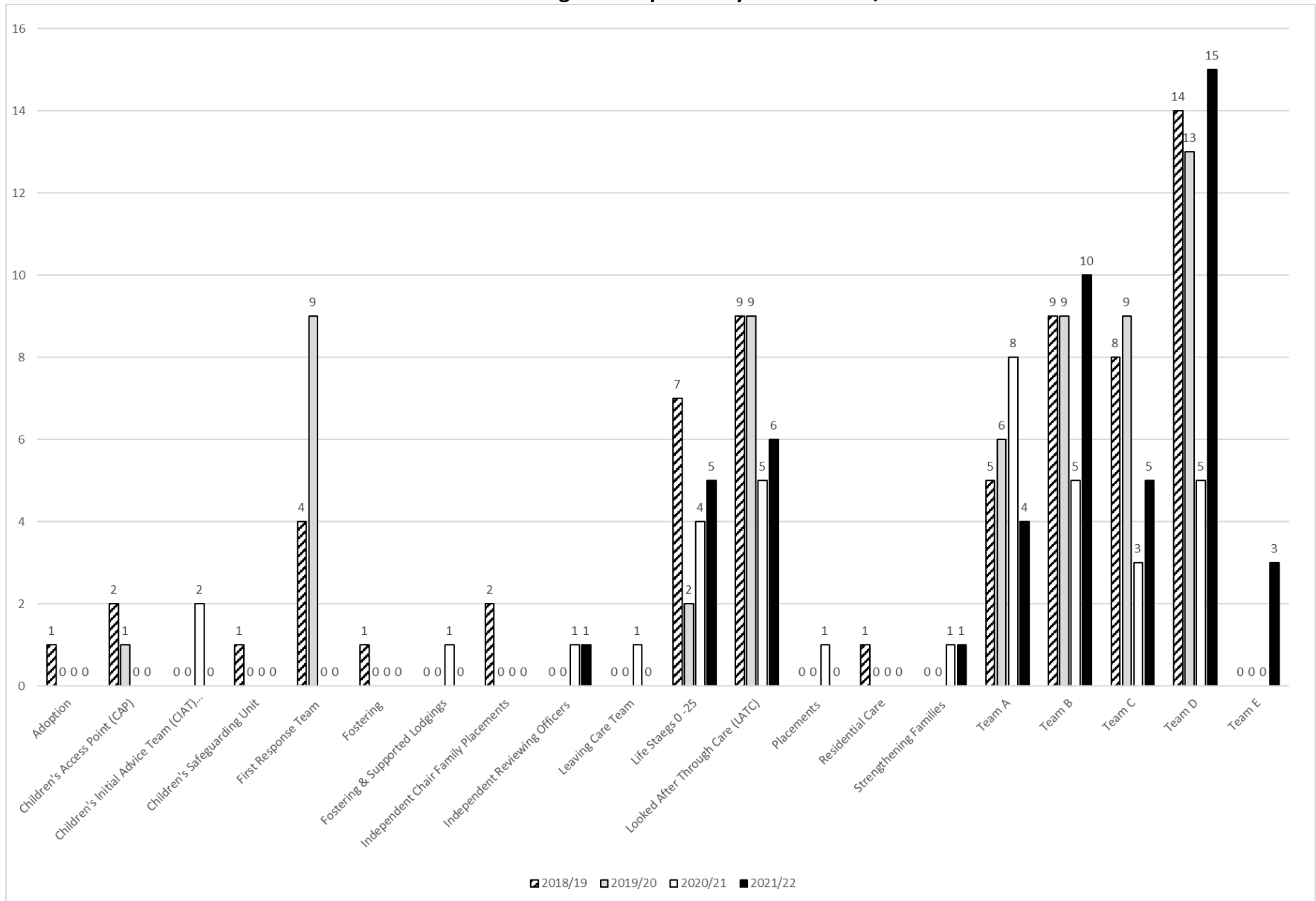
17. The Council investigated 53 complaints, an increase from 37 in 2020/21, however, overall the number of complaints investigated remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. 49 complaints were investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure, while four were escalated directly to Stage 2.

18. The Council also received eight non-qualifying complaints, an increase from five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19. While fewer complaints were investigated, the overall number of complaints considered by the Council under the procedure was 61, the same number as in 2019/20.

19. The Council received 8 compliments, a reduction from 15 in 2020/21, an increase from seven in 2019/20 and a decrease from 19 in 2018/19.

20. The Council received one comment, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Breakdown of Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area/Team



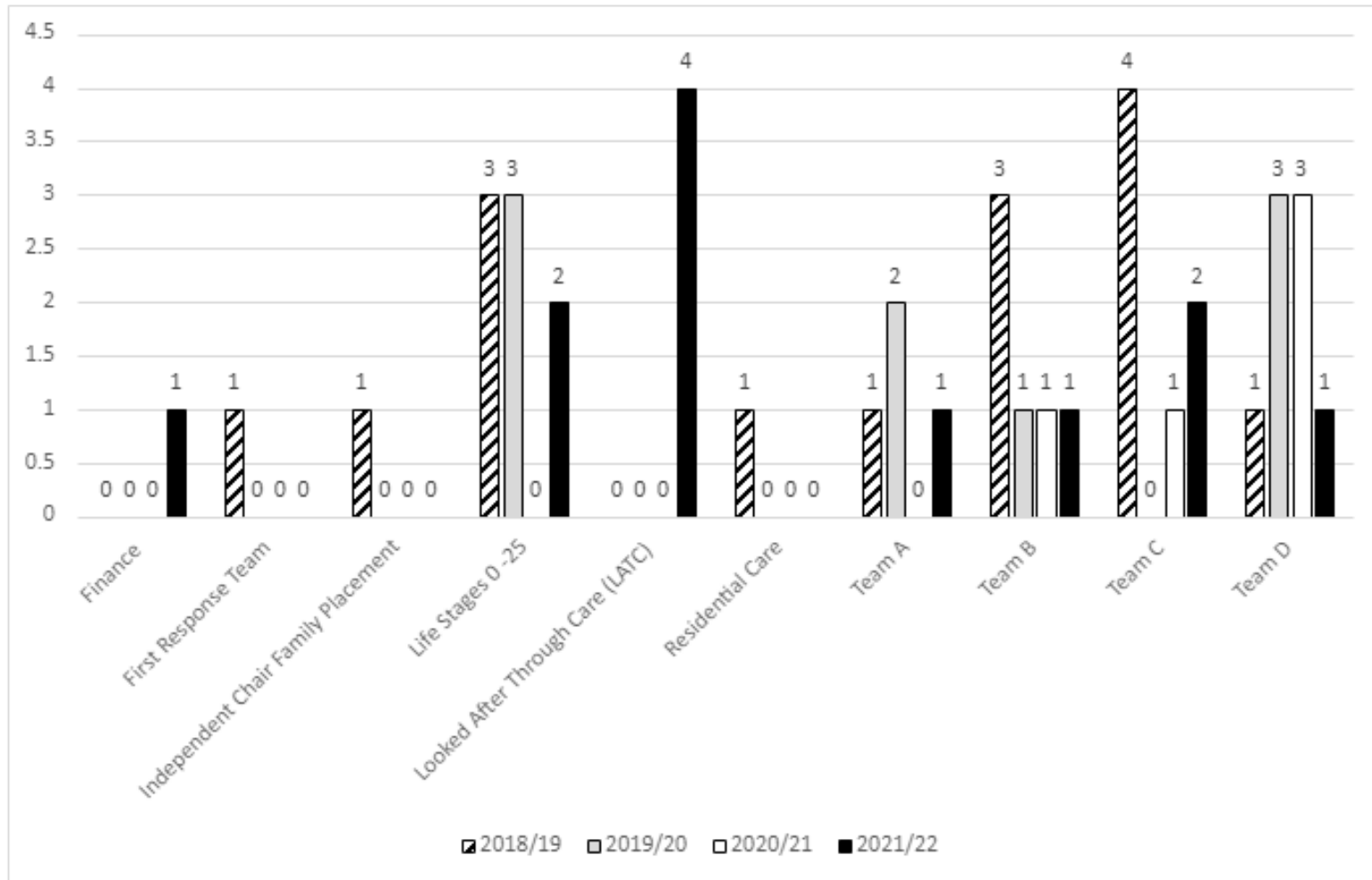
*N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints during 2021/22. Comparison data is not available for all teams due to changes in the Council's organisational structure.*

21. Independent Reviewing Officers received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
22. Life Stages 0 – 25 received five complaints during 2021/22, an increase from four in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and a decrease from seven in 2018/19. Two complaints, in part, concerned communication and two concerned direct payments.
23. Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team received six complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 5 in 2020/21, although a decrease from nine in 2019/20 and 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes.
24. Strengthening Families received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
25. Team A received four complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from eight in 2020/21, six in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes.
26. Team B received 10 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, and higher than the nine received in 2019/20 and 2018/19. Team B received more complaints than in the years preceding the pandemic. The most common cause of complaint was people's dissatisfaction with the behaviour of, treatment by and their relationship with the social worker.
27. Team C received five complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21, although less than the nine received in 2019/20 and the eight received in 2018/19. The attitude and behaviour of the social worker was the most common theme running thorough the complaints received by Team C.
28. Team D received 15 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, and higher than the thirteen received in 2019/20 and fourteen received in 2018/19. Team D also received more complaints than it did in the years preceding the pandemic. Again the most commonly identifiable theme was people's dissatisfaction with the attitude and behaviour of and their treatment by the social worker.
29. Team E received three complaints during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. Again Team E received more complaints than it did in the years preceding the pandemic, although there were no identifiable themes.



### Breakdown of Stage 2 Complaints by Service Area/Team

30. Twelve complaints were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from seven in 2020/21, 10 in 2019/20, although a decrease from 16 in 2018/19.



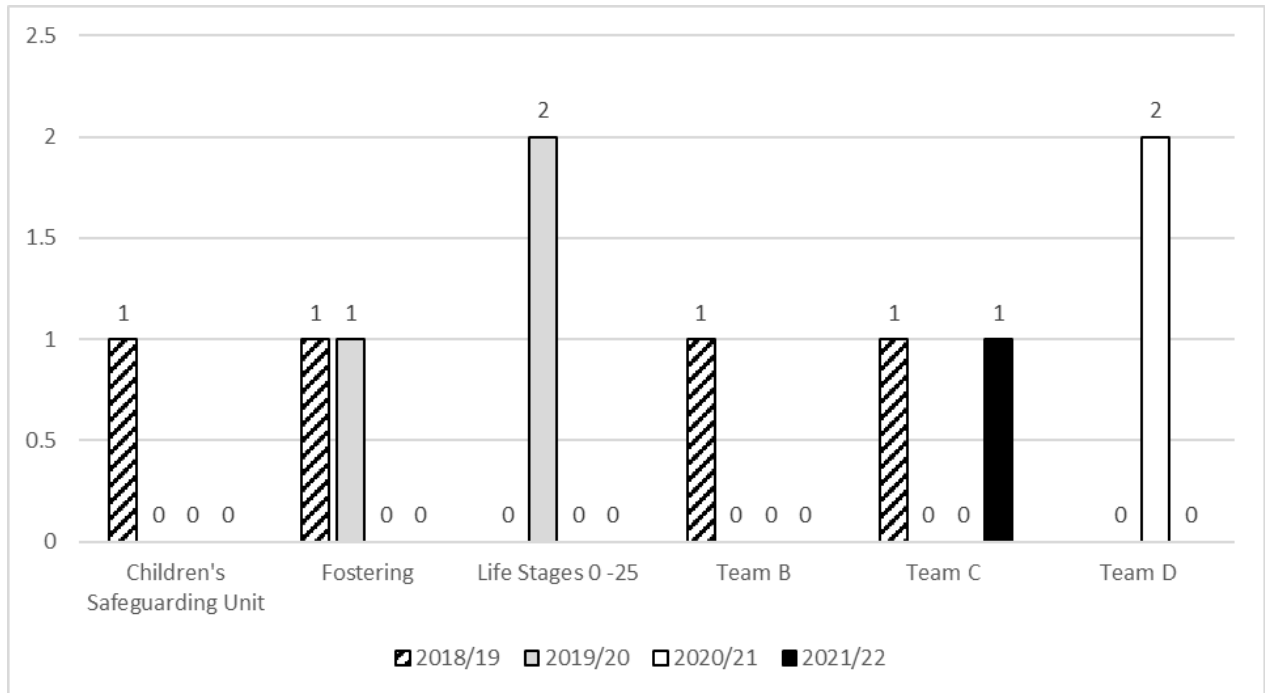
*N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints during 2021/22.*

*Comparison data is not available for all teams due to changes in the Council's organisational structure.*

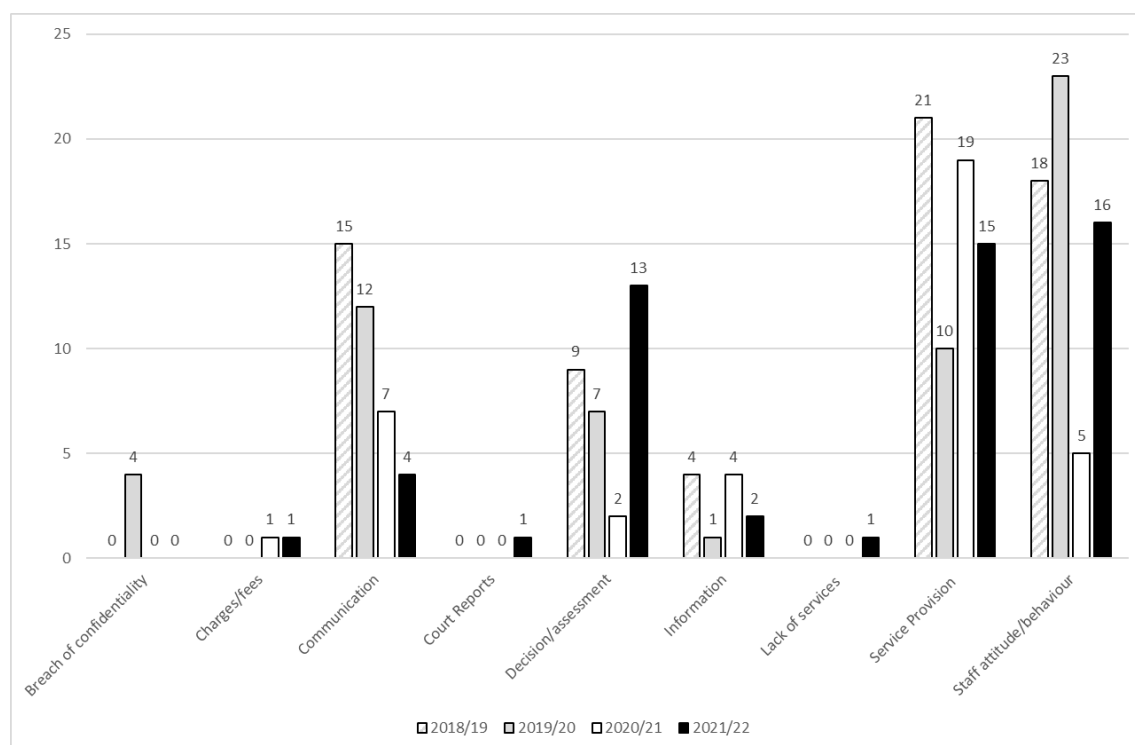
31. Finance received one complaint during 2021/22, compared zero in previous years.
32. Life Stages 0 – 25 Team received two complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, although less than the three received in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
33. Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team receive 4 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
34. Team A received one complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
35. Team B received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and a decrease from three received in 2018/19.
36. Team C received two complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and a decrease from four in 2018/19.
37. Team D received one complaint during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.

**Breakdown of Stage 3 complaints by Service Area/Team**

38. One complaint was escalated to Stage 3 during 2021/22, a decrease from two during 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.



### Breakdown of complaints by Issue



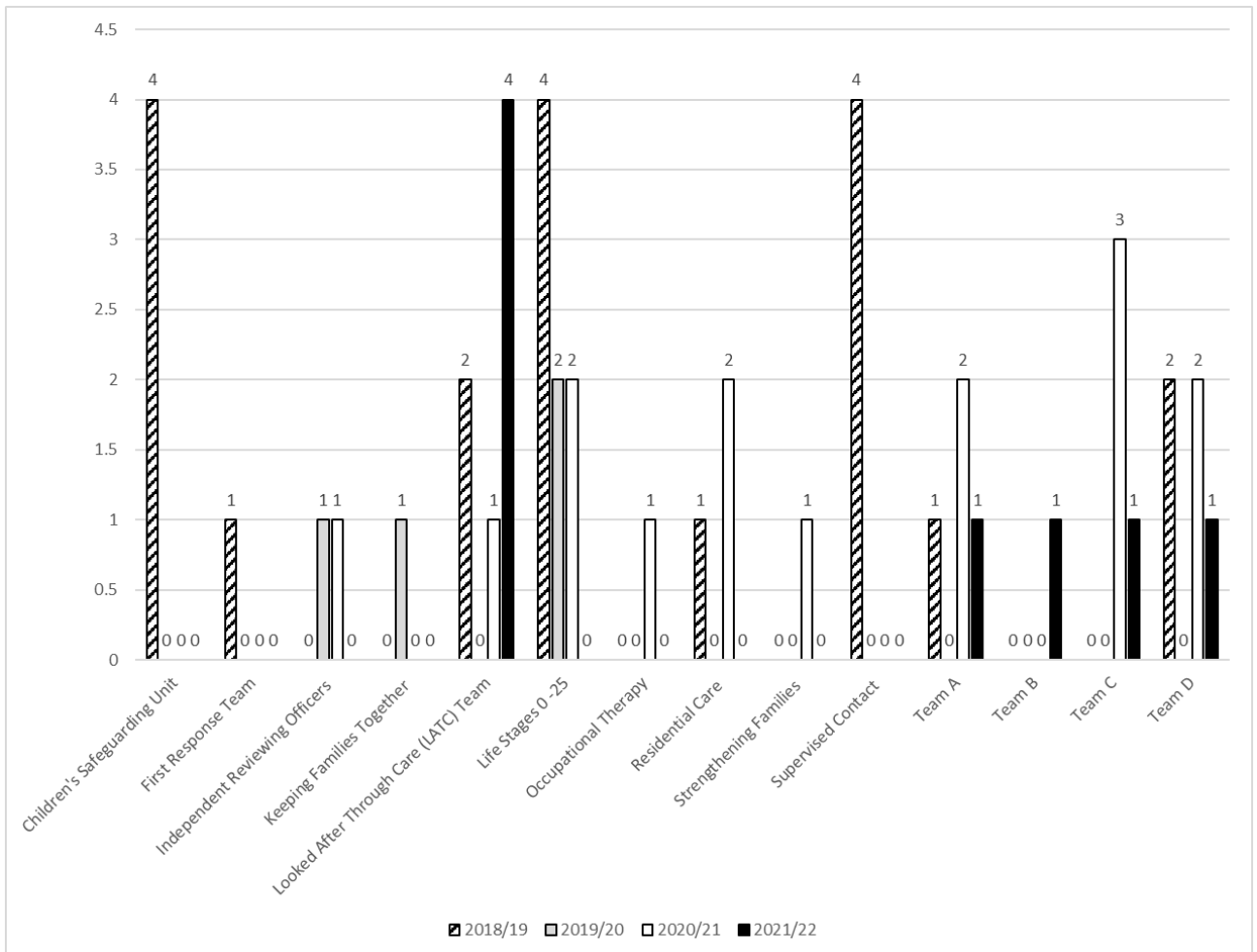
39. Staff attitude/behaviour was the most commonly complained about issue during 2021/22. The Council received 16 complaints about this issue, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 23 complaints in 2019/20 and 18 complaints in 2018/19.
40. Service/provision was the second most commonly complained about issue in 2021/22. The Council received 15 complaints about this issue, a decrease from 19 in 2020/21, an increase from 10 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 21 in 2018/19.
41. Decision/assessment was the third most complained about issues in 2021/22. The Council saw a significant increase in complaints about decision/assessment, compared to two in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue were higher than they were before the pandemic, when the Council received seven complaints about this issue in 2019/20 and nine complaints in 2018/19.
42. Communication was the fourth most complaint about issue in 2021/22. The Council received four complaints about this issue, a decrease from seven in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 12 complaints in 2019/20 and 15 complaints in 2018/19.
43. The fifth most complaint about issue was information. The Council received two complaints about this issue during 2021/22, a decrease from four in 2020/21, an increase from one in 2019/20 and a decrease from four in 2018/19.
44. Charges/fees, court reports and lack of services were the least complained about issues during 2021/22. The Council received one complaint in relation to each. The Council

received one complaint about charges/fees in 2020/21, but did not receive any other complaints about any of these issues back to 2018/19.

**Breakdown of Comments by Service Area/Team**

45. The Council received one comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero during 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. The comment was for Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team.

**Breakdown of Compliments by Service Area/Team**



46. The Council saw a decrease in compliments, eight compared to 15 in 2020/21. This remained higher than the seven received in 2019/20, although it was a decrease from the 19 received in 2018/19.

### Complaint Outcomes

**Stage 1** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 1 complaints during 2021/22.

Service Area/Team	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Independent Reviewing Officers	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Life Stages 0 - 25	0	0	1	2	1	0	4
Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team	1	0	2	2	0	0	5
Strengthening Families	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Team A	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Team B	0	0	6	2	1	0	9
Team C	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Team D	0	0	4	0	1	5	10
Team E	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>

**Stage 2** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 2 complaints during 2021/22.

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door	0	0	0	1	0	1
Finance (Childrens/Resources)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Looked After Through Care (LATC ) Team	0	0	2	1	0	3
Team A	0	1	0	0	0	1
Team B	0	0	0	0	1	1
Team C	0	0	2	0	0	2
Team D	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

**Stage 3** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 3 complaints during 2021/22.

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Team C	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints**

47. One complaint was referred to the LGSCO during 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2020/21 and the same number as in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

48. One complaint was determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to two in 2020/221 and one in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### **Organisational Learning**

49. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22. Some examples of these are detailed below.

### **Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the front door**

50. Following a complaint for CIAT, the importance of verifying information contained within assessments and verifying this with parents prior to finalisation was reinforced with social workers. The importance of including birth fathers within assessments and ensuring that all information recorded is current and accurate as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was also reinforced with social workers.

### **Independent Reviewing Officers**

51. Following a complaint for Independent Reviewing Officers, it was agreed that when a Fostering Social Worker is not available the carer should be provided with a named contact in the Fostering Team and be provided with support visits from the duty worker. It was also recommended that consideration is given to either establishing a clear signposting in procedures so that all Foster to Adopt placements are managed in line with embedded adoption processes.

### **Life Stages 0 -25**

52. Following a complaint for Life Stages 0 -25, it was agreed an information leaflet would be produced outlining the financial/review process, various options, timescales and outcomes.

### **Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team**

53. Following a complaint for LATC, it was agreed Children's Services should ensure that attendance records for Looked After Reviews (LAR) clearly evidence attendees of the LAR meeting. It was also agreed that Children's Services would ensure that details of the records of advocates work with a child are referenced within case records and relevant LAR records to ensure a transparent record of involvement from external agencies. It was also agreed that LAR minutes should contain information shared by a young person's advocate to ensure there is a transparent record of a young person's views, wishes and feelings captured at that point in time.



54. Following a further complaint for LATC, it was agreed Children's Services would ensure written contact plans are in place for looked after children and make this a matter of priority for those who have recently moved placement and are in a more unsettled state.

### **Team C**

55. Following a complaint for Team C, it was agreed that as per the Placement and Review Regulations 2015, social workers would ensure parents/carers are consulted prior to any significant social worker actions or changes to agreed care plan actions.
56. Following a further complaint for Team C, social workers were reminded of the use of, and need, to involve independent advocates and/or other representatives for young children involved in similar situations to that subject of the complaint. Social workers were also reminded that case recording and other record keeping must provide accurate information of processes followed. It was also agreed and that lessons learned in relation to capturing and incorporating the financial impact of being a carer in the assessment and care plan process would be shared with the workforce to inform future practice. It was also agreed that for Foster to Adopt placements, when a review meeting is being scheduled a process should be established that includes communication between the child's social worker, fostering social worker, independent reviewing officer and admin officer so that a clear decision can be made regarding who should attend and who will/will not receive documentation. Furthermore, it was agreed that an existing function within Liquid Logic should be used to modify the content of CLA documentation that relates to Foster to Adopt (and Adoption Placements) to prevent the automatic insertion of information into documentation that is distributed to birth family members, and that instruction on how to do this would be provided to the Children's Safeguarding Unit Admin Team. It was also agreed mandatory training would be established for social workers, social work team managers, advanced practitioners and independent reviewing officers on Foster to Adopt Placements.

## **Performance against the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

57. The below performance measures are in relation to those complaints responded to during 2021/22.

### **Timescales**

#### **Stage 1**

58. The target for responding to a complaint at Stage 1 is 10 working days, with a possible extension of up to 20 working days if the complaint is complex.

- (a) 36.84% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within 10 working days. This was an decrease in performance from 53.66% in 2020/21.
- (b) A further 44.74% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within 20 working days.
- (c) In total 81.58% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within the maximum 20 working day timescale, an increase in performance from 70.73% in 2020/21.

#### **Stage 2**

59. The target for responding to a complaint at Stage 2 is 25 working days, extendable up to a maximum of 65 working days.

- (a) 0% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent within 25 working days during 2021/22, as was the case in 2020/21.
- (b) 11.11% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent within the maximum timescale allowed (65 working days), an decrease in performance from 37.5% in 2020/21.
- (c) 88.89% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent after 65 working days, an decrease in performance from 62.5% in 2020/21.

#### **Stage 3**

60. At Stage 3 the Review Panel should be held within 30 working days of the request. 100% of Review Panels were held within 30 working days.

61. The Review Panel should write to the Director within 5 working days of the panel. They did so in 100% of cases.

62. The Director should write to the complainant within 15 working days of receiving the Panel's response. The Director wrote to the complainants within 15 working days in 100% of cases, an increase in performance from 66.66% of cases in 2019/20.

### **Performance against key performance indicators**

63. In relation to children's social care complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Children's Services did not received any maladministration decisions during 2021/22, a decrease from one in 2020/21, the same number as in 2019/20 and a decrease from one in 2018/19.

Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Further recommendations**

64. Children's Services should work to improve performance against the Stage 2 timescale for Children's Social Care complaints.

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# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

## **Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2021/22 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the corporate procedure). The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints; identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received and make further recommendations based on trend data to improve services. The report also highlights those areas of good practice within the Council and seeks to identify topics and trends in relation to comments made by members of the public so the Council can also take action where appropriate to improve services.
2. In addition to the statistical information presented in this report it is important to recognise the work of the Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team that underpins this in terms of promoting an organisational culture in which complaints are recognised, accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently and as close to the point of service delivery as possible.

## **Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

3. The corporate procedure sets out how the Council will deal with all complaints, compliments and comments received with the exception of those received in relation to adult and children's social care services, social housing, public health and Members which will be dealt with under separate procedures.
4. The corporate procedure has two stages. Stage 1 is a local resolution stage where we try to resolve those complaints that cannot be resolved immediately as part of our day to day business. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with locally, that is within the service being complained about. We aim to resolve the majority of complaints at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure.
5. Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Council's Complaints Investigator, the Complaints and Information Governance Manager or another officer independent of the service being complained about.
6. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following a Stage 2 investigation they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## **Public Information and Accessibility**

7. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

8. Information is available on the Council's website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
9. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

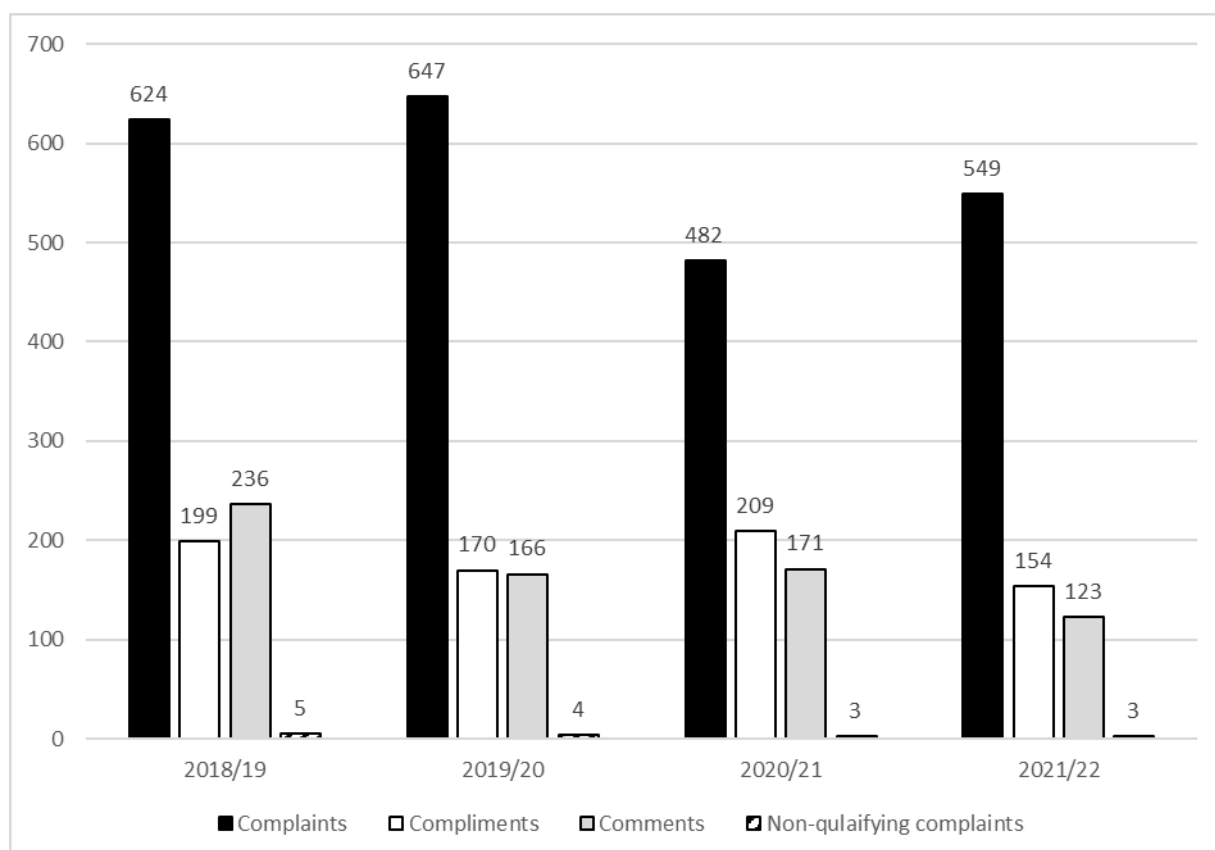


## Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

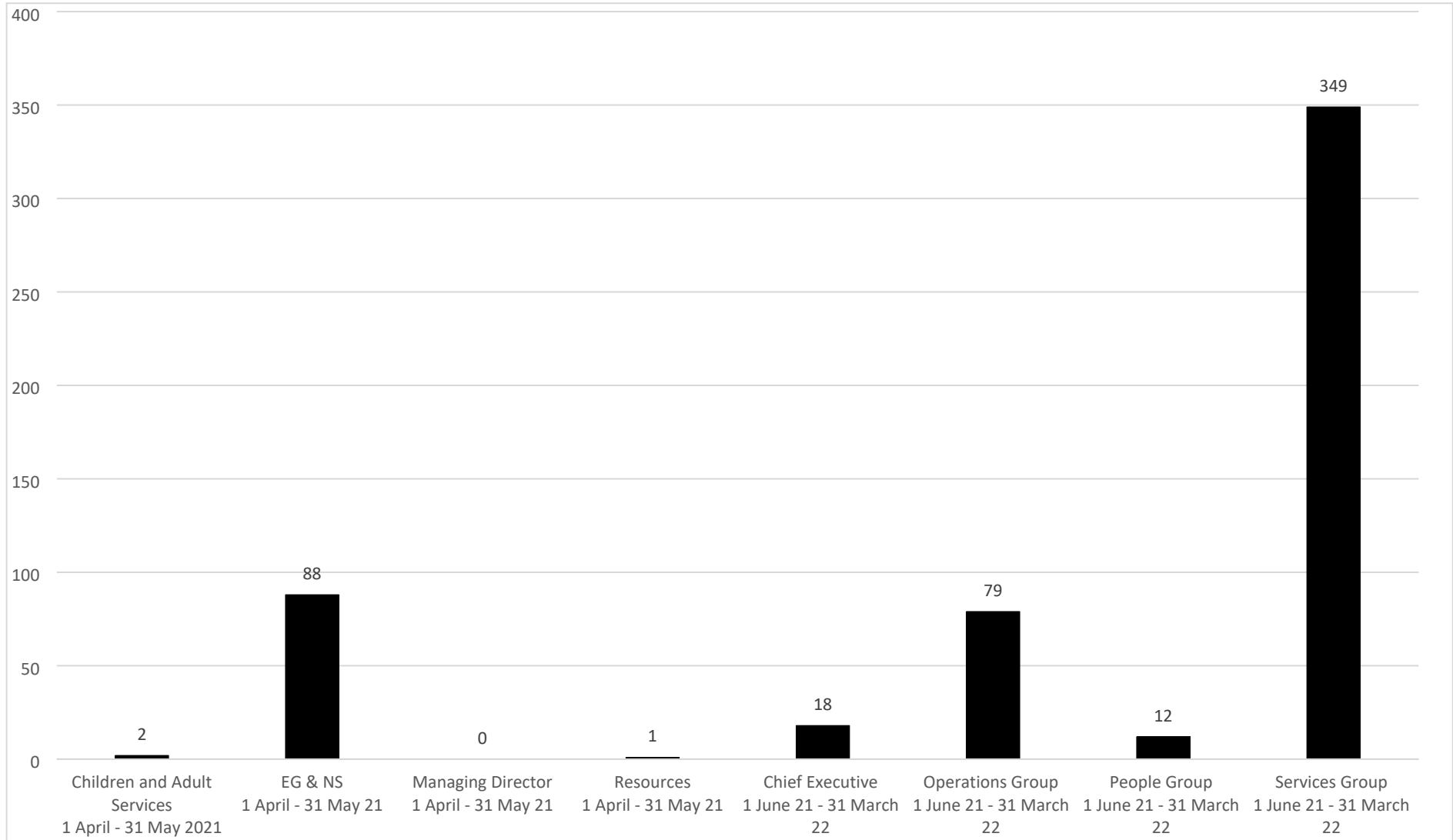
### Overview of Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

10. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Council received a total of 830 representations under the corporate procedure, a decrease from 865 in 2020/21, 987 in 2019/20 and 1064 in 2018/19.
11. The Council received 549 corporate complaints, which was an increase from 482 in 2020/21. Although complaint numbers remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the Council receiving 647 corporate complaints in 2019/20 and 624 in 2018/19. 532 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, whilst 17 were escalated directly to Stage 2. 53 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 70 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, a significant increase from 50 in 2020/21 and 59 in 2019/20, although one less than the 71 that were investigated in 2018/19.
12. The Council received 154 corporate compliments, a decrease from 209 in 2020/21, 170 in 2019/20 and 199 in 2018/19.
13. The Council received 123 corporate comments, a decrease from 171 in 2020/21, 166 in 2019/20 and 236 in 2018/19.
14. The Council also received three non-qualifying corporate complaints, the same as in 2020/21, a decrease from four in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19.

### Total Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

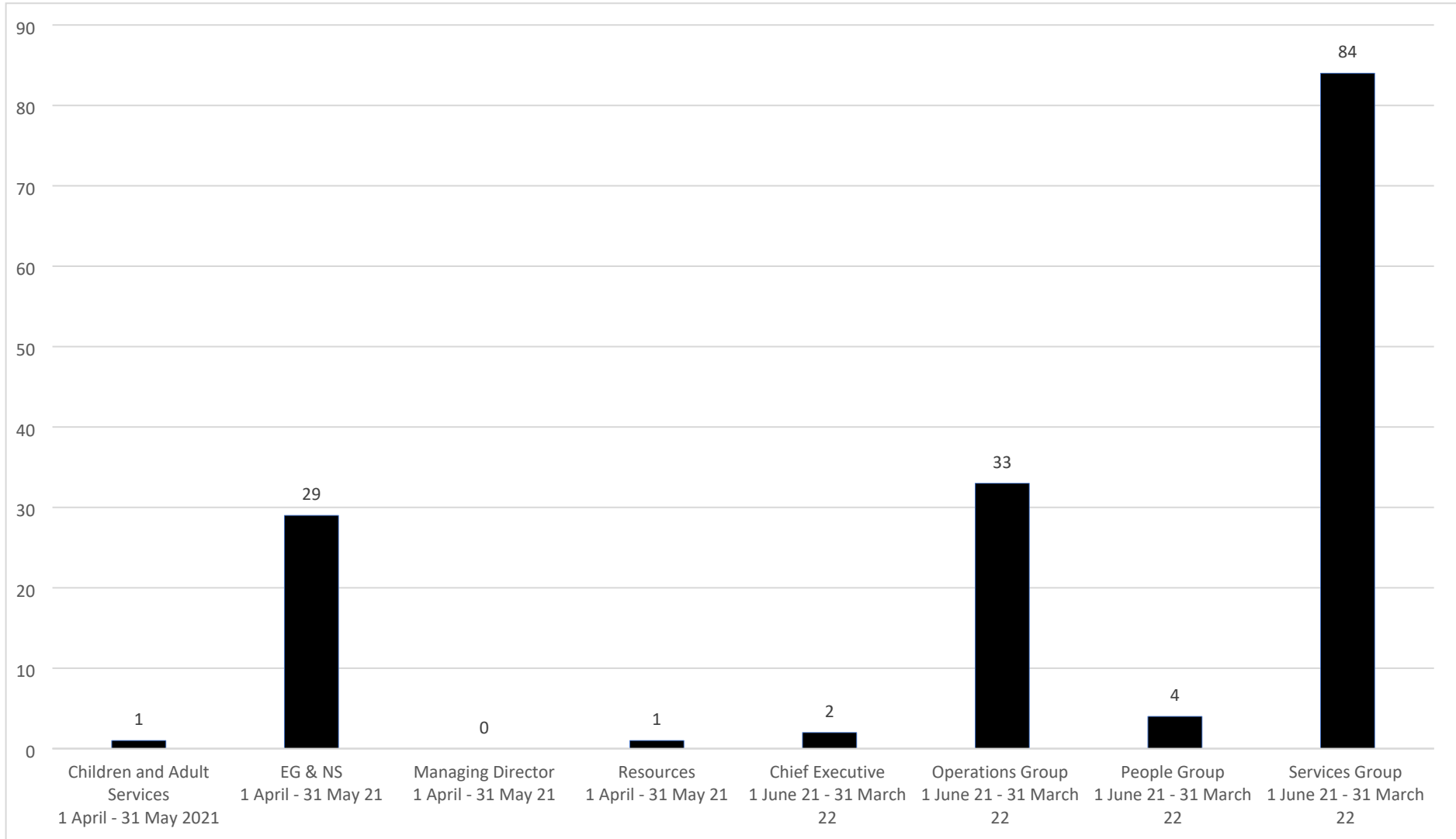


### Corporate Complaints by Department



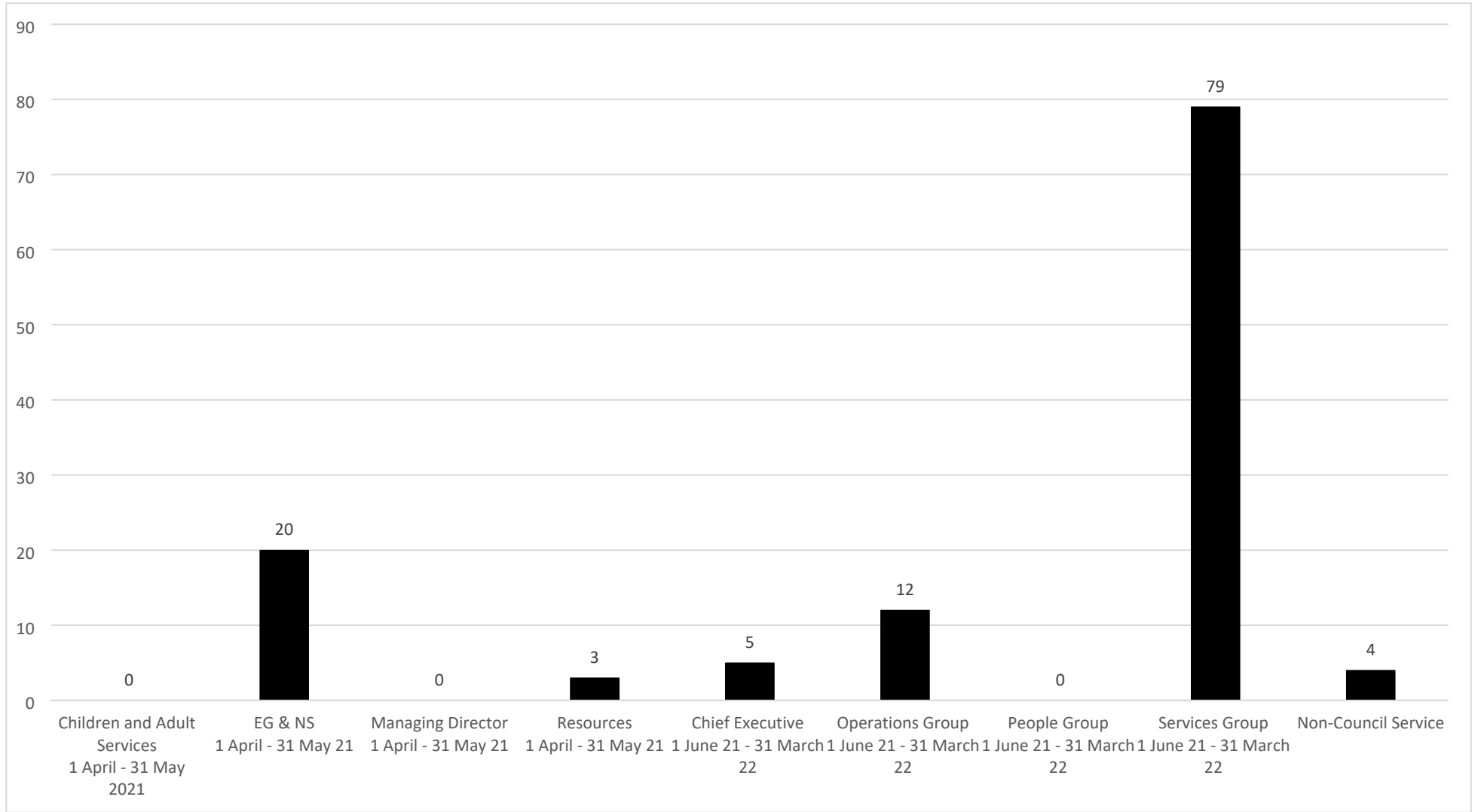
*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

### Corporate Compliments by Department



*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

### Corporate Comments by Department



Page 76

*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

## Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

### Children and Adult Services

#### Complaints by Service Area/Team

15. Children and Adults Services received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, one for Children’s Services, Team E and one for Children’s Services, Youth Offending Service (YOS).

#### Complaints by Stage

16. Both complaints were investigated a Stage1 of the corporate procedure.

#### Compliments by Service Area/Team

17. Children and Adult Services received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, for Education, SEND.

#### Comments by Service Area/Team

18. Children and Adults Services did not receive any corporate comments during 2021/22.

#### Complaints by Outcome

19. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Team E	0	1	0	0	0	1
YOS	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

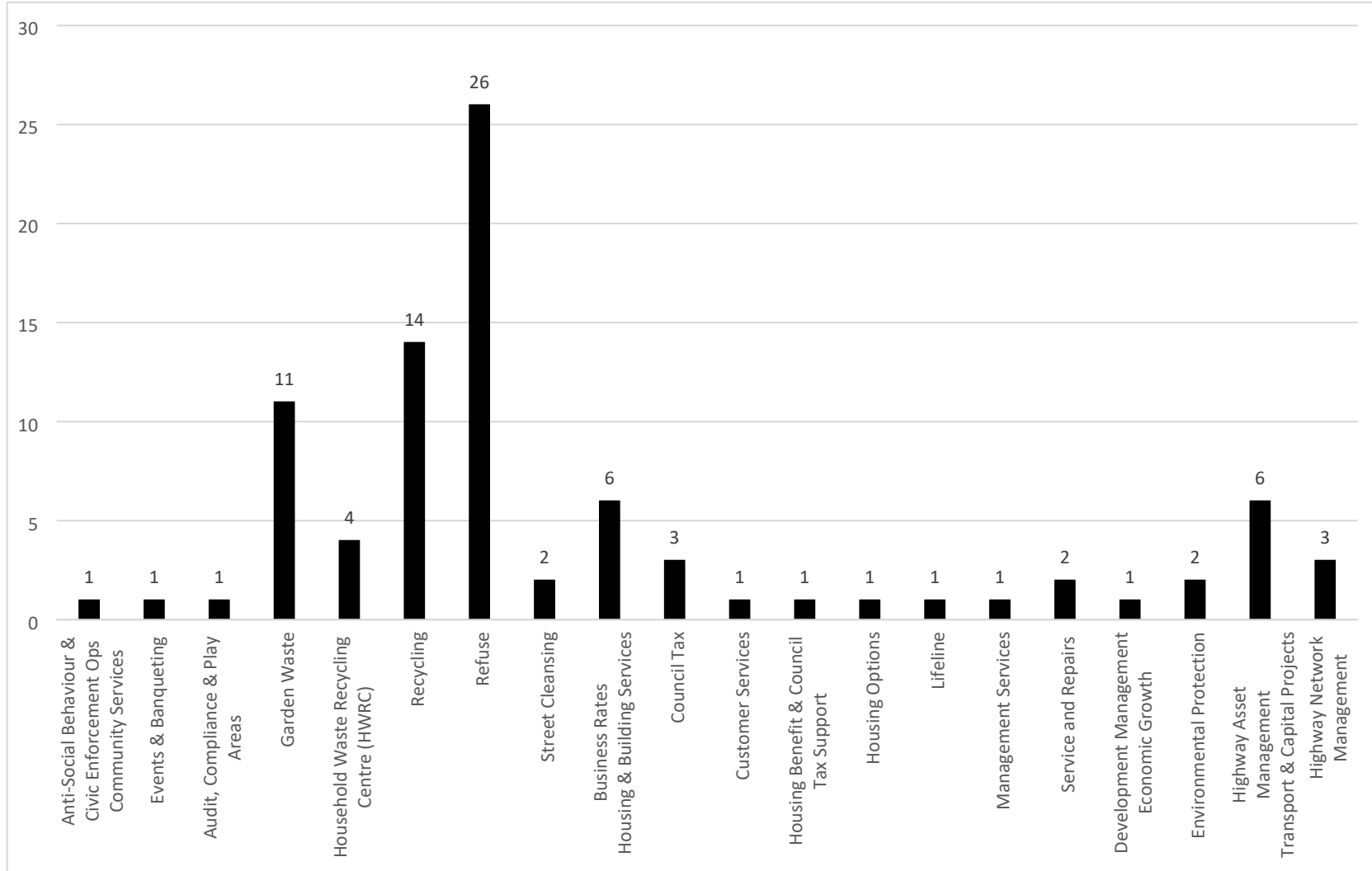
#### Organisational Learning

20. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of corporate complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.

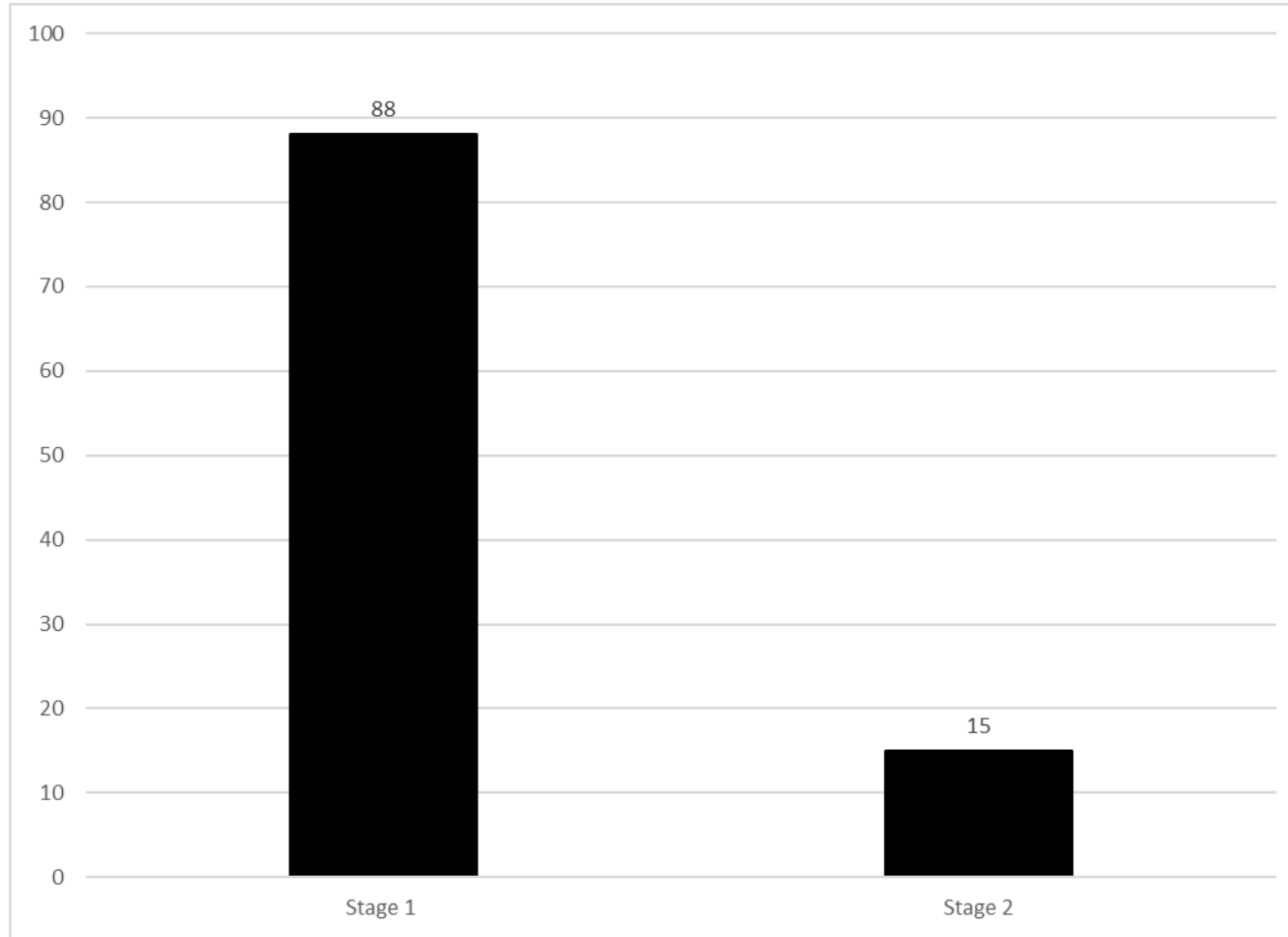
*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

### Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

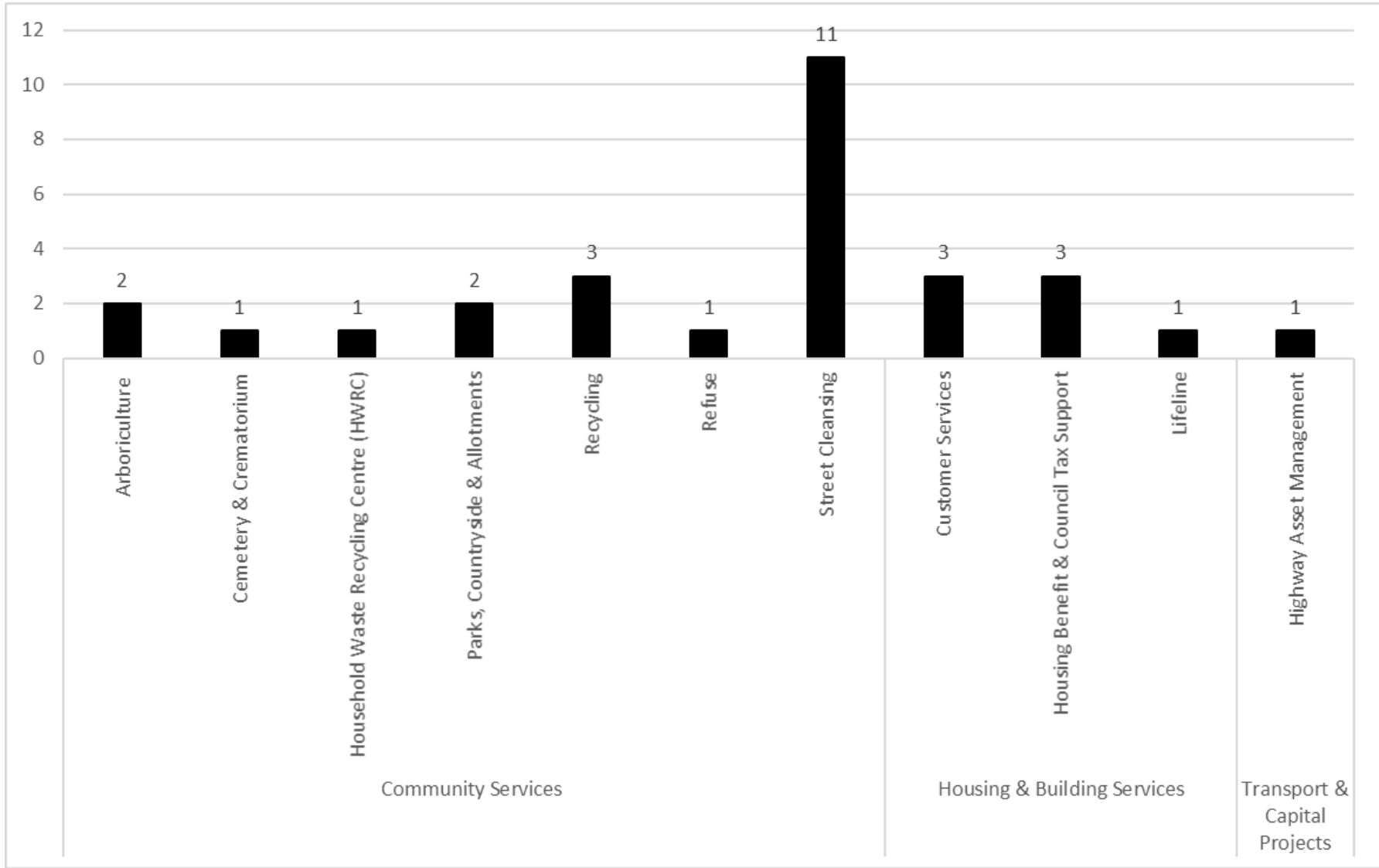
#### Complaints by Service Area/Team



### Complaints by Stage

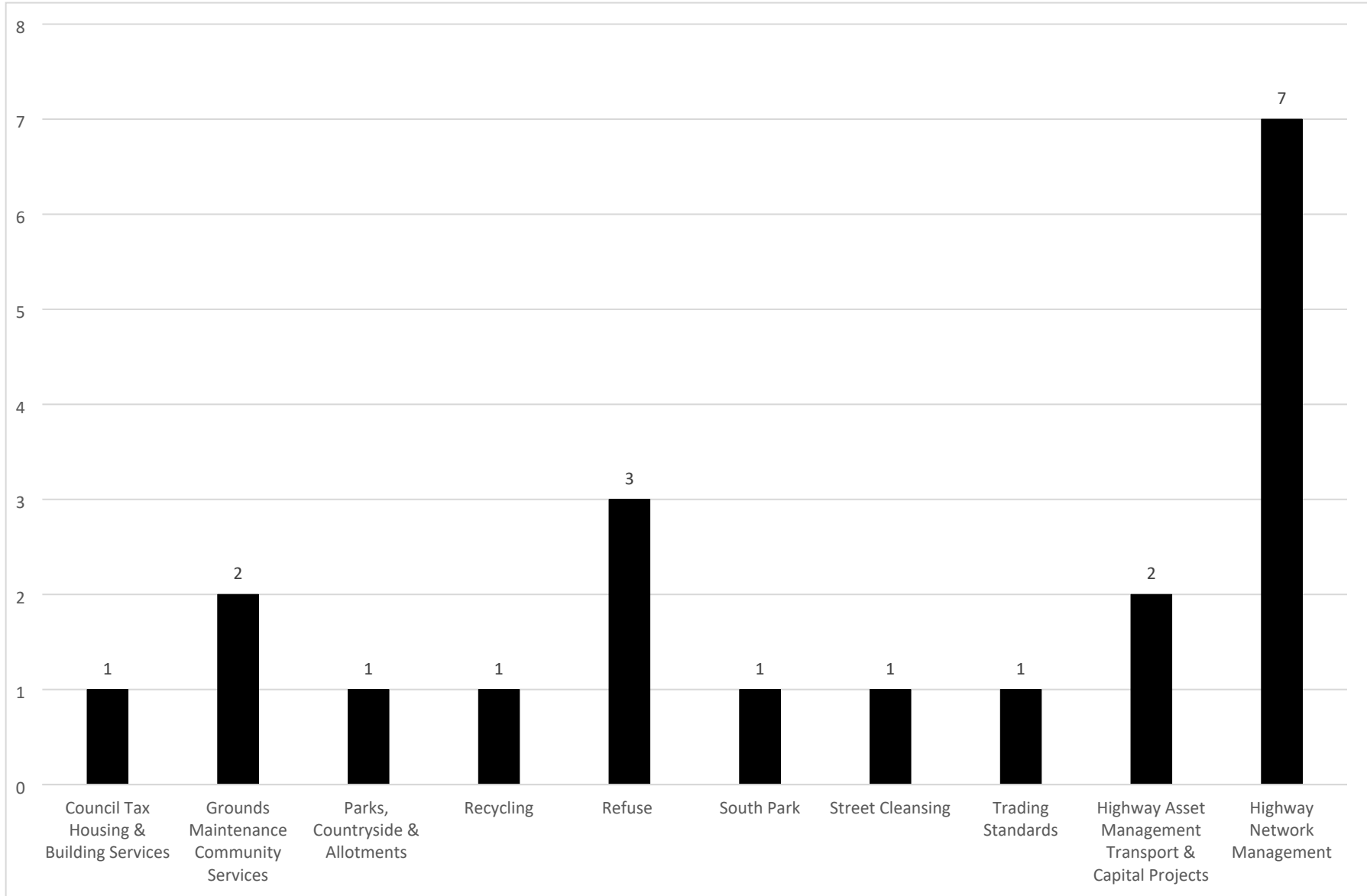


### Compliments by Service Area/Team





### Comments by Service Area/Team



### Complaints by Outcome

21. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highway Asset Management	0	0	0	15	1	9	1	<b>26</b>
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	5	3	2	0	<b>10</b>
Community Safety	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
CCTV	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	<b>3</b>
Processing & Appeals	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
COVID Community Testing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Arboriculture	0	0	0	6	2	1	0	<b>9</b>
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	<b>8</b>
Parks, Countryside & Allotments	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
South Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	<b>4</b>
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	12	1	13	1	<b>27</b>
Garden Waste	0	0	0	5	0	8	0	<b>13</b>
Recycling	0	0	5	28	6	45	1	<b>85</b>
Refuse	1	0	17	50	6	69	5	<b>148</b>
HWRC	0	0	1	5	0	7	0	<b>13</b>
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	<b>3</b>
Service & Repairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Customer Services	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	<b>9</b>
Income Management	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Management Services	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	<b>4</b>

Housing Options	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Lifeline	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Business Rates	0	0	0	8	0	0	2	10
Council Tax	0	0	1	7	0	3	3	14
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Development Management	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	6
Environmental Health	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Commercial	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	6
Environmental Protection	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	6
Monitoring & Compliance	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Building Control	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Estates	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Growth & Investment	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Planning Policy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>433</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highway Asset Management	0	6	0	0	0	6
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	1	0	1
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	0	0	1	0	1
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	0	1	0	1
COVID Community Testing	1	0	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	1	0	0	0	1
Parks, Countryside & Allotments	0	1	0	0	0	1
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Recycling	0	2	1	0	0	3
Refuse	0	1	0	0	0	1
HWRC	0	2	0	0	1	3
Service & Repairs	0	0	1	0	0	1
Customer Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Rates	0	1	1	0	0	2
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	1	0	0	0	1

Development Management	0	1	2	0	0	3
Environmental Protection	0	1	0	0	0	1
Building Control	0	0	1	0	0	1
Business Growth & Investment	0	1	0	0	0	1
Planning Policy	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>

### Organisational Learning

22. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
23. As a result of a complaint for Development Management, it was agreed the Council would ensure any future planning reports relating to heritage assets take into account the High Court decision in the case of (R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council (2020)).
24. Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council improved its knowledge of its enforcement powers set out in Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
25. Following another complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council's permit scheme, which regulates works on the highway was updated.

*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

## Resources

### Complaints by Service Area/Team

26. Resources received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, for Elections.

### Complaints by Stage

27. The complaint was initially investigated at Stage 1, following which it was investigated at Stage 2 of the corporate procedure.

### Compliments by Service Area/Team

28. Resources received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, for the Superintendent Registrar.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

29. Resources received three corporate comments during 2021/22. Two for Communications and one for Xentrall Services.

### Complaints by Outcome

30. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Elections	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

#### Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Elections	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

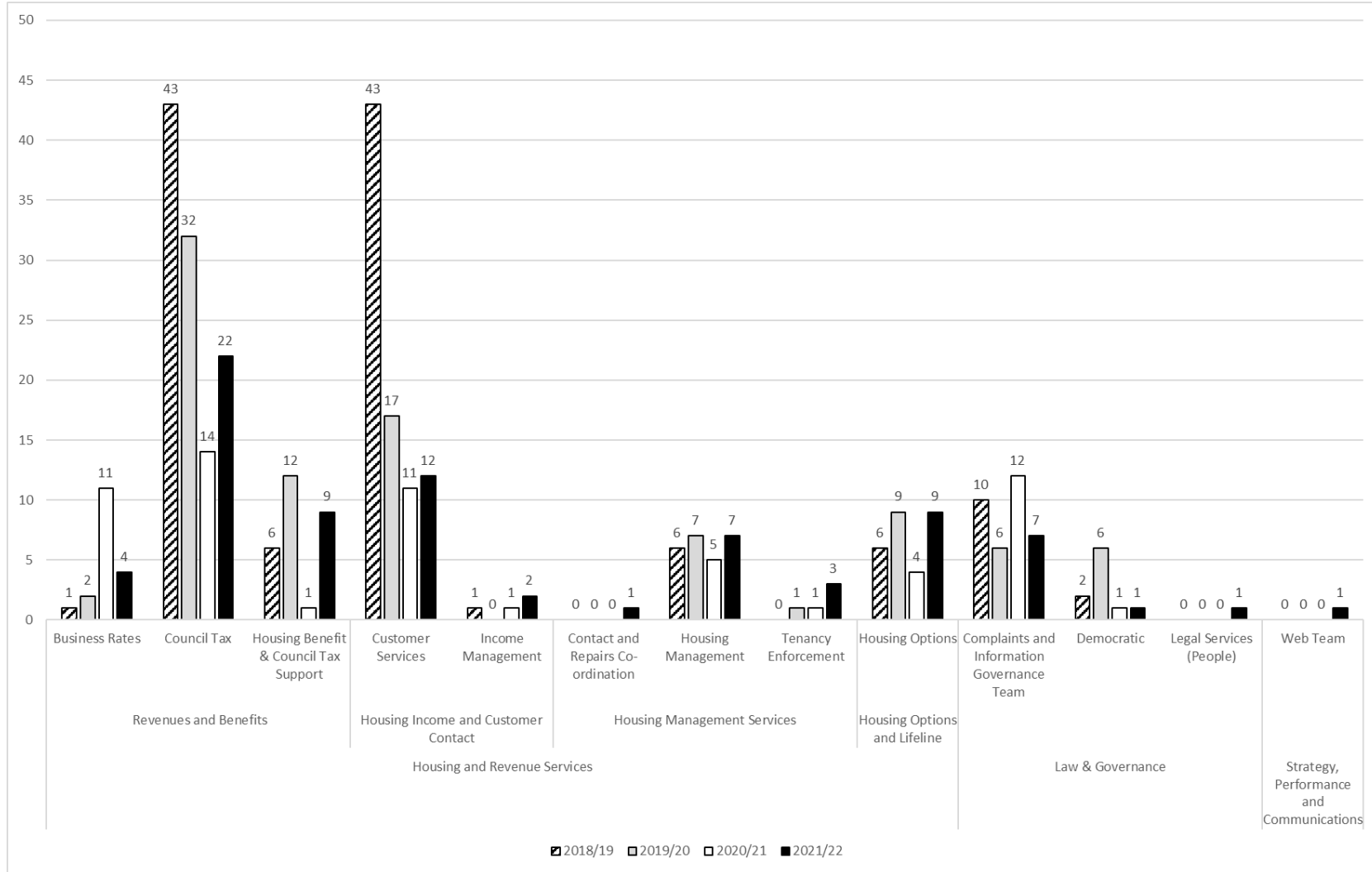
#### Organisational learning

31. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.

*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

### Operations Group

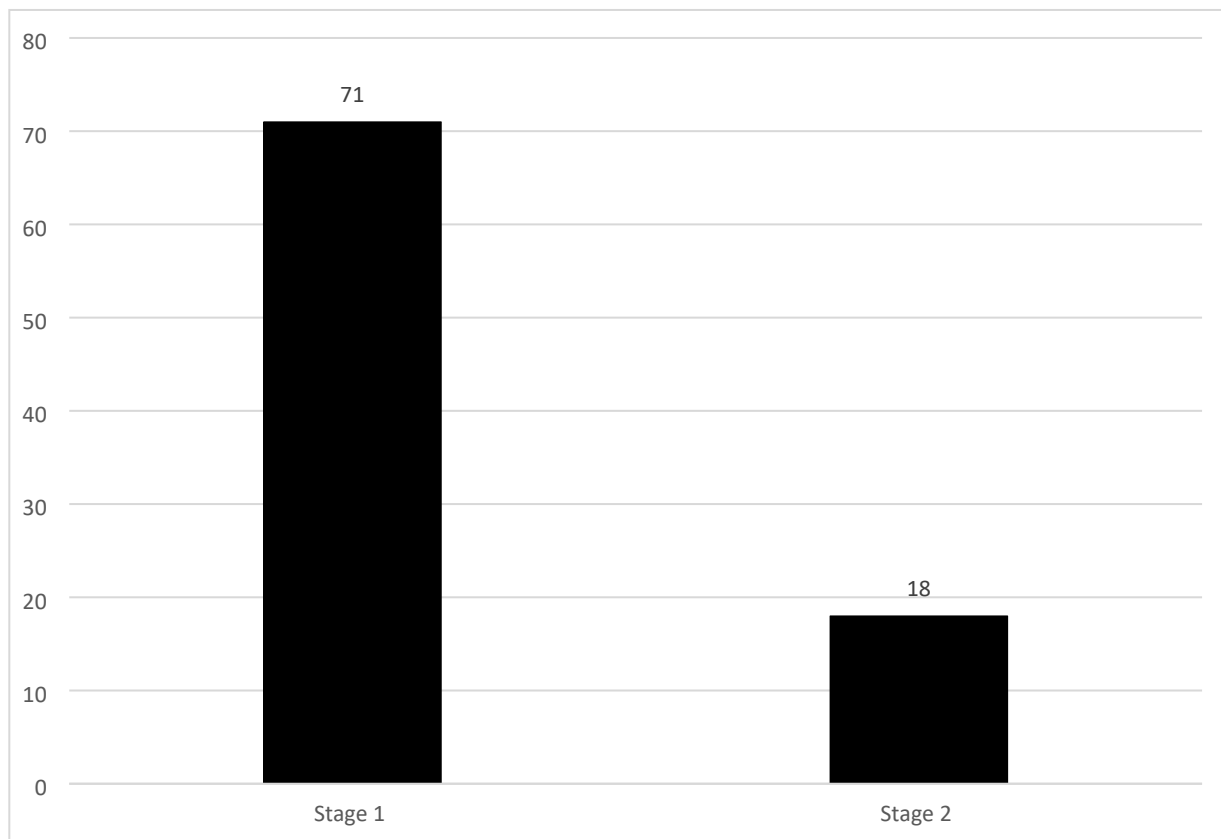
#### Complaints by Service Area/Team



32. Business Rates received a total of 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. six pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 11 in 2020/21. Although this as an increase from pre-pandemic levels when the team received two corporate complaints in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was dissatisfaction with decisions in relation to COVID-19 grants.
33. Council Tax received 25 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 14 in 2020/21. Although complaints about Council Tax remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 32 complaints in 2019/20 and 43 in 2018/19. The most common themes were dissatisfaction with the support provided in resolving Council Tax issues and the attitude of advisors.
34. Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support received 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from one in 2020/21. Although this remains lower than the 12 received in 2019/20, it is an increase on the six received in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was people's dissatisfaction with not being awarded the Covid-19 test and trace payment.
35. Customer Services received 13 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 11 in 2020/21. Although complaints about Customer Services remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 17 complaints in 2019/20 and 43 in 2018/19.
36. Income Management receive two corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
37. Contact and Repairs Co-ordination received one corporate complaint in 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
38. Housing Management received eight corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from five in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19. There were no common themes.
39. Tenancy Enforcement received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
40. Housing Options received 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from four in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was level of support provided in progressing housing applications/finding suitable accommodation.
41. The Complaints & Information Governance Team received seven corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from 12 in 2020/21, an increase from six in 2019/20 and a decrease from 10 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was the delay in responding to Subject Access Requests (SARs).
42. Democratic received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, the same number as the team received in 2020/21. Although complaints about Democratic remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received six complaints in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.

- 43. Legal Services (People) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
- 44. The Web Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

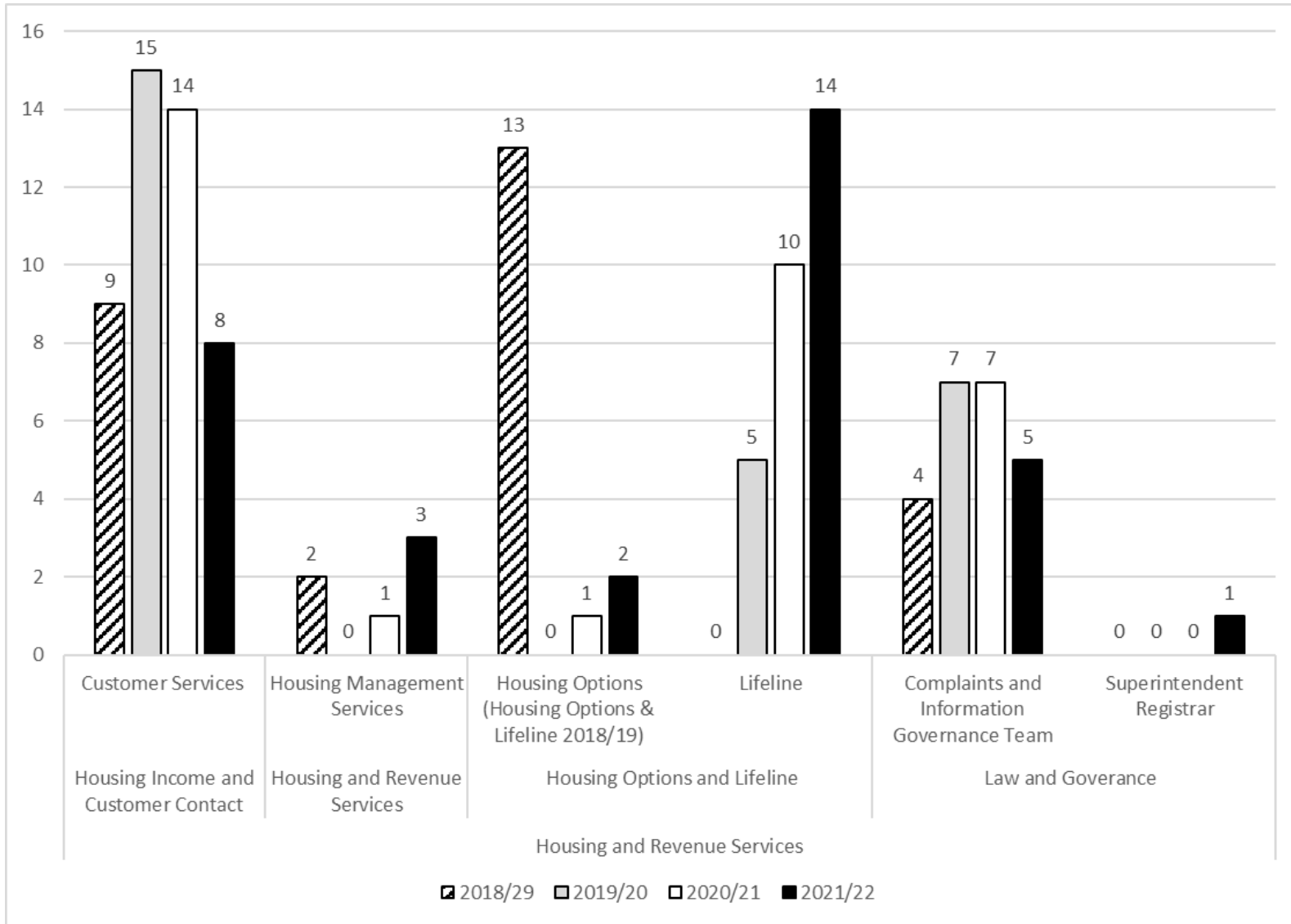
### Complaints by Stage



*N.B. Eight complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2.*

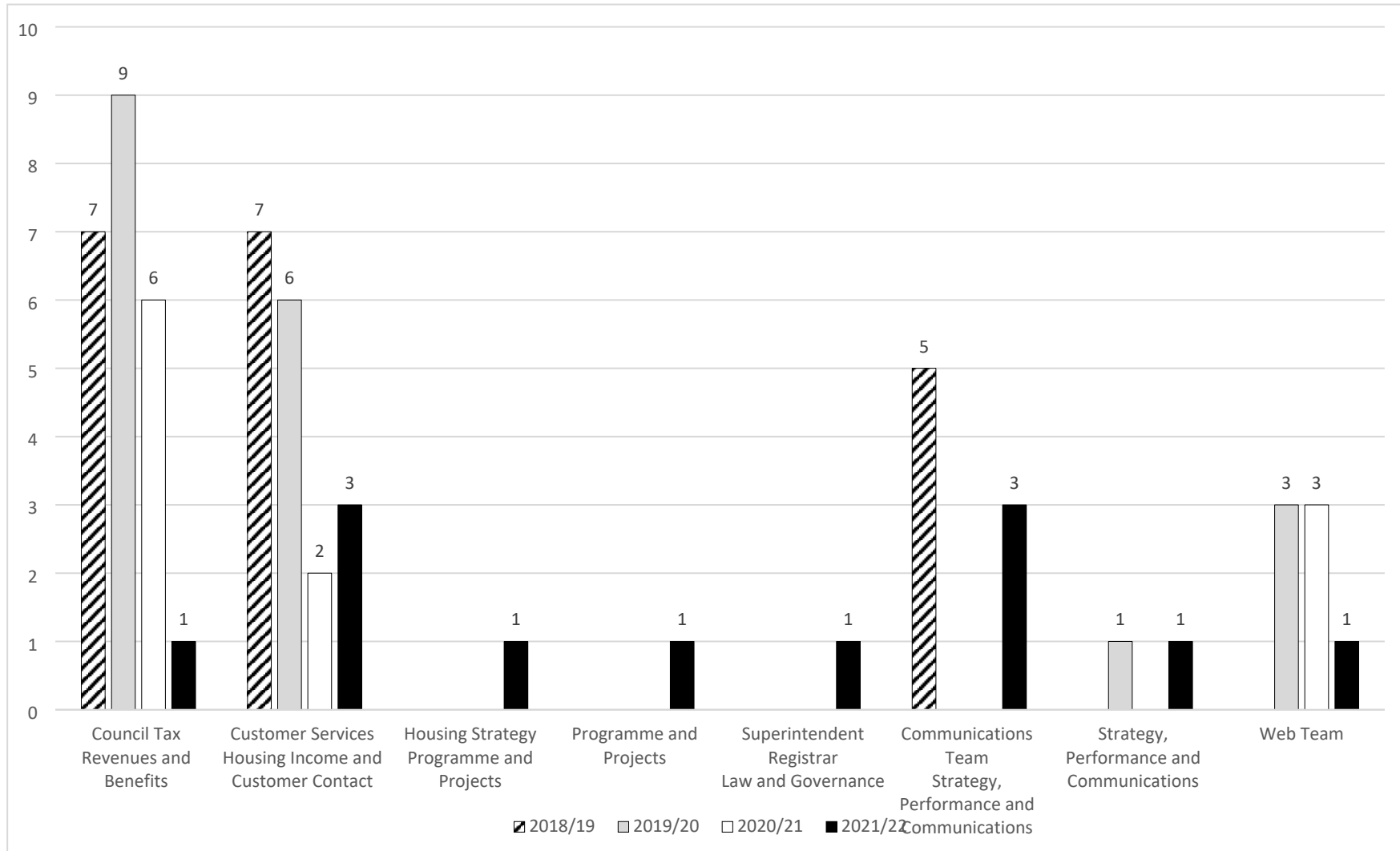


### Compliments by Service Area/Team



45. Customer Services received 11 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 14 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and an increase from nine in 2018/19.
46. Housing Management Services received three corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.
47. Housing Options received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and zero in 2018/19. The figure for 2018/19 included compliments for Lifeline.
48. Lifeline received 15 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 10 in 2020/21 and five in 2019/20. The compliments received for Lifeline in 2018/19 are included in the 13 received for Housing Options and Lifeline.
49. Complaints and Information Governance Team received five corporate compliments during 2021/22, a decrease from seven in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from four in 2018/19.
50. Superintendent Registrar received two corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Comments by Service Area/Team



51. Council Tax received two corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from six in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
52. Customer Services received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although a decrease from six in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
53. Housing Strategy received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
54. Programme and Projects received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
55. Superintendent Registrar received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
56. Communications Team received five corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
57. Strategy, Performance and Communications received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, the same number as the team received in 2019/20 and an increase from zero 2018/19.
58. Web Team received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Outcome

59. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Web Team	0	0	0	1	0	1
Customer Services	0	6	2	3	1	12
Income Management	0	0	2	0	0	2
Housing Management	0	2	1	0	1	4
Tenancy Enforcement	0	3	0	0	0	3
Contact and Repairs Co-ordination	0	0	1	0	0	1
Housing Options	0	3	0	2	4	9
Business Rates	0	2	0	1	0	3
Council Tax	0	16	0	0	4	20
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	7	1	0	0	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>

#### Stage 2 Outcomes

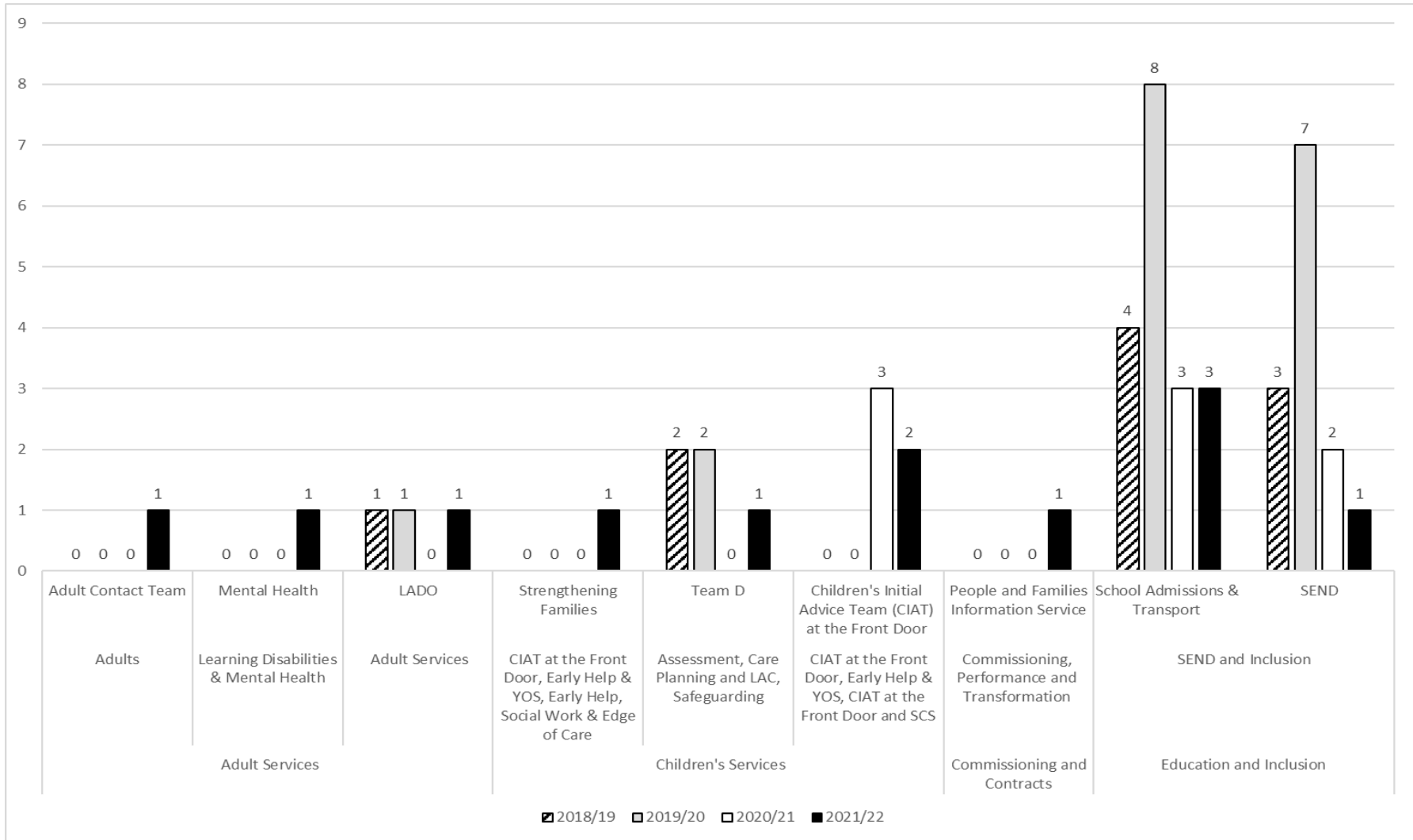
Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Complaints and Information Governance Team	0	0	2	0	1	3
Customer Services	0	0	0	2	0	2
Housing Management	0	0	0	1	0	1
Business Rates	0	1	0	0	0	1
Council Tax	0	4	0	0	0	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Organisational learning**

60. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
61. Following a complaint for Customer Services, training was provided to ensure consideration is taken when dealing with older or vulnerable customers.
62. As a result of a further complaint for Customer Services, the Council amended its telephony options to include bus pass enquiries.
63. Following a complaint for Income Management, the team agreed to ensure tenancy end reasons are considered and systems updated before producing correspondence.
64. Following a further complaint for Income Management, it was agreed consideration would be given to developing a Customer Standards Charter which clearly gives timescales for responses to urgent and non-urgent communication from customers.
65. Following a complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed the Council would ensure its revised lettings policy is consistent with current data protection legislation. It was also agreed the Council would ensure officers are clear about the scope of its Tenancy Fraud Policy.
66. Following a complaint for the Complaints and Information Governance Team, officers were reminded of an individual's right of access to their personal data under UK GDPR/The Data Protection Act 2018. They were also asked that in future they undertake robust searches to identify all personal data held, so the Council can make an informed decision on disclosure, including whether or not an exemption may apply.

### People Group

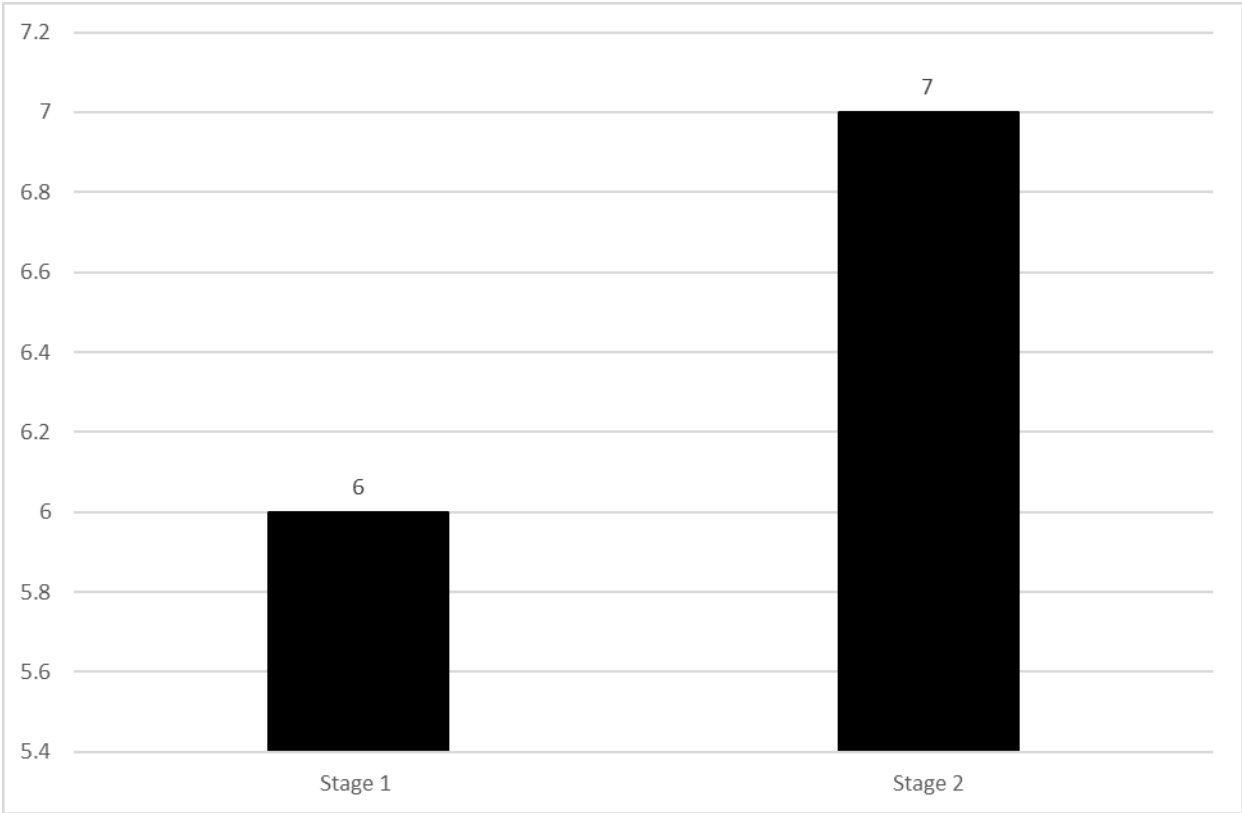
### Complaints by Service Area/Team



67. Adult Contact Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
68. Mental Health received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
69. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and the same number the team received in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
70. Strengthening Families received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
71. Team D received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and a decrease from two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
72. Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
73. People and Families Information Service received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
74. School Admissions and Transport received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21. Complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels when the team received eight complaints in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes in the complaints received.
75. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, a decrease from two 2020/21. Complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels when the team received seven complaints in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

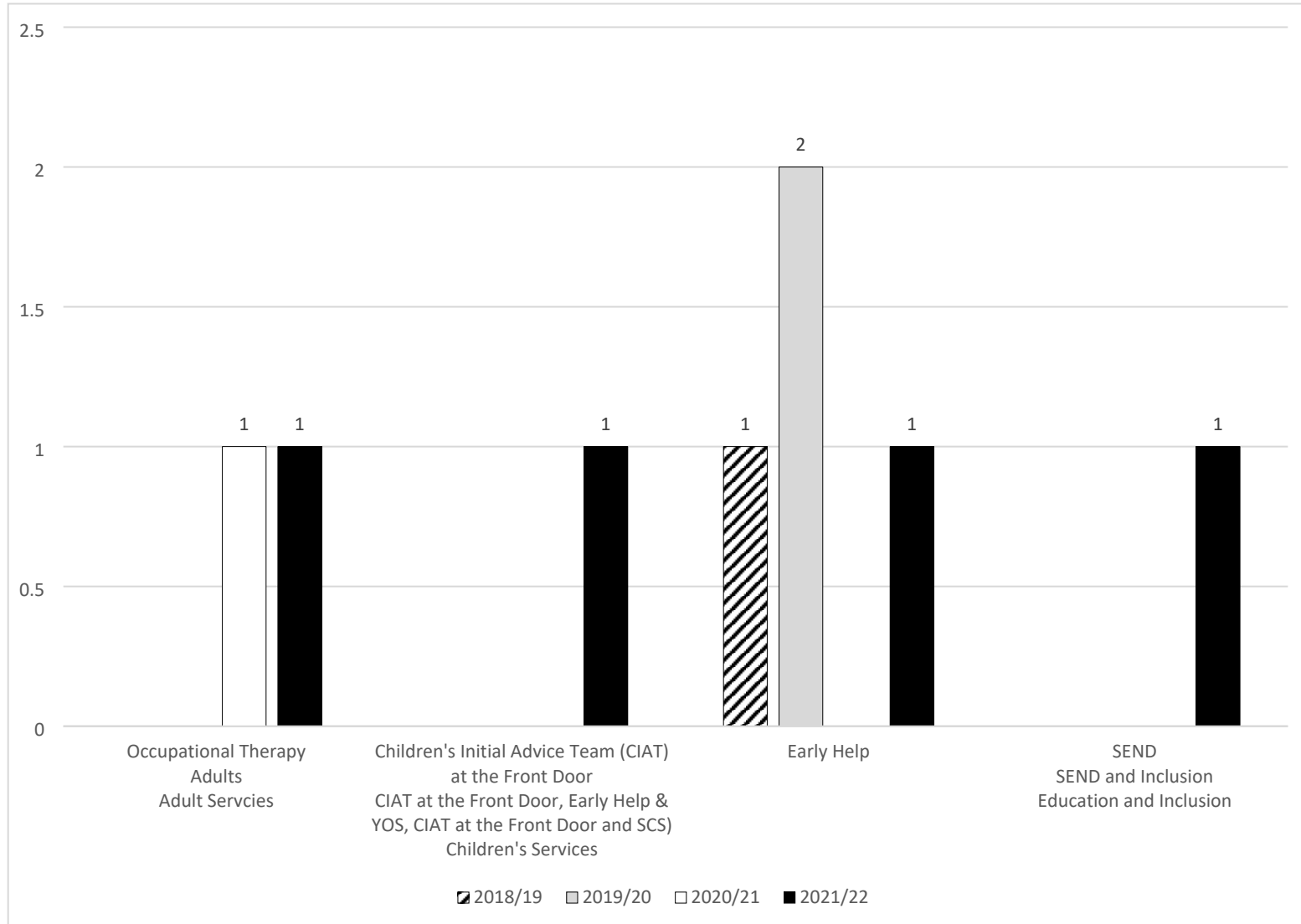


### Complaints by Stage



*N.B. Six complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2*

### Compliments by Service Area/Team



76. Occupational Therapy received once corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21 and an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/29.

77. Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

78. Early Help received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.

79. SEND received two corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/29.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

80. People did not receive any corporate comments during 2021/22.

### Complaints by Outcome

81. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Strengthening Families	0	0	0	1	0	1
People and Families Information Service	0	0	0	1	0	1
SEND	0	0	1	0	0	1
School Admissions & Transport	0	1	1	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

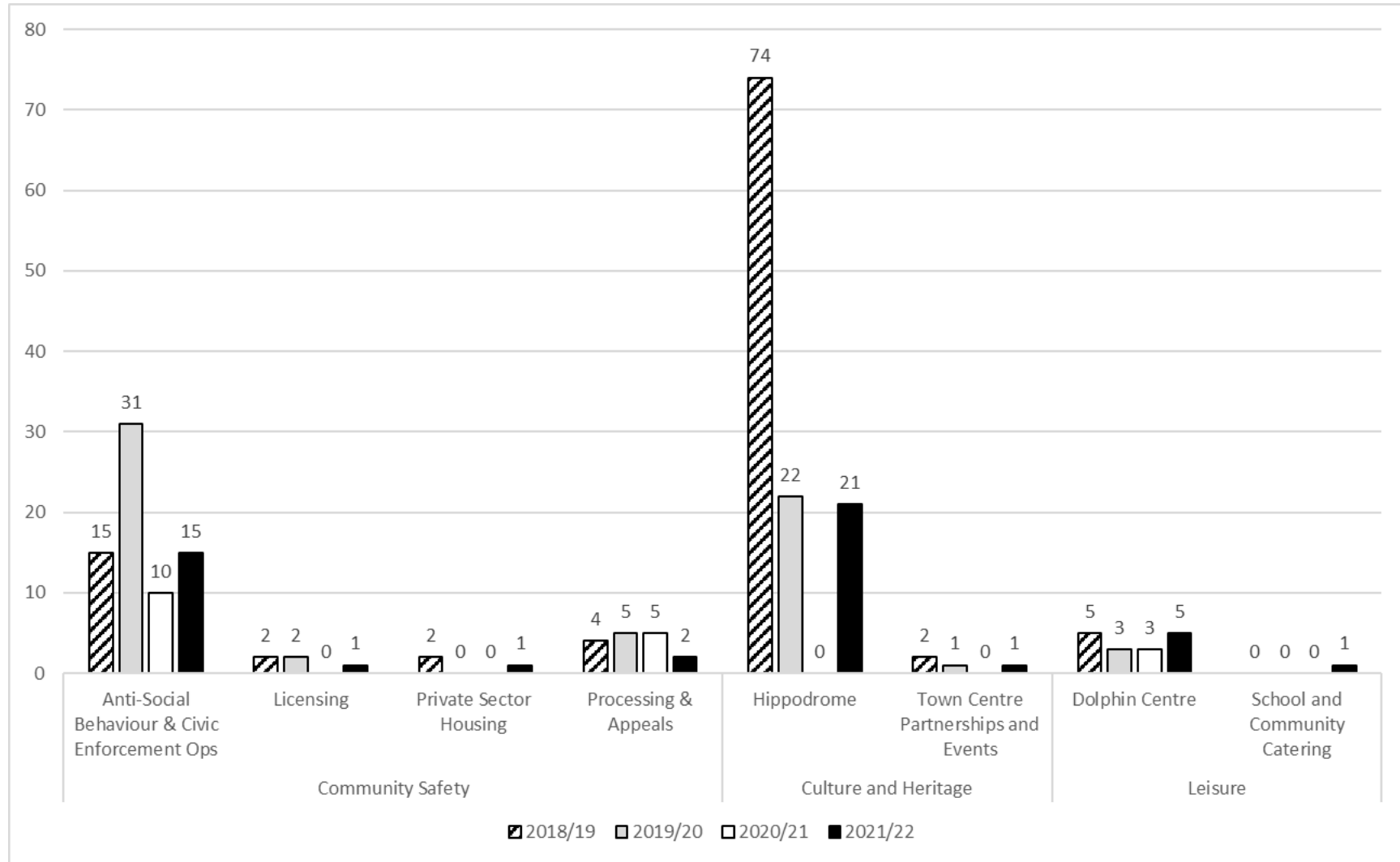
<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mental Health Team	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Adult Contact Team (ACT)	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
LADO	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Team D	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
School Admissions & Transport	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

## Organisational learning

82. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
83. Following a complaint for People and Families Information Service, it was agreed the Council would review entitlement for children and young people who reside in Darlington but attend a school setting out of area.
84. Following a complaint for Strengthening Families, it was agreed the assessment for Direct Payments as part of an Early Help Assessment for children under the age of five would be reviewed to ensure the service is appropriate for those who need it.

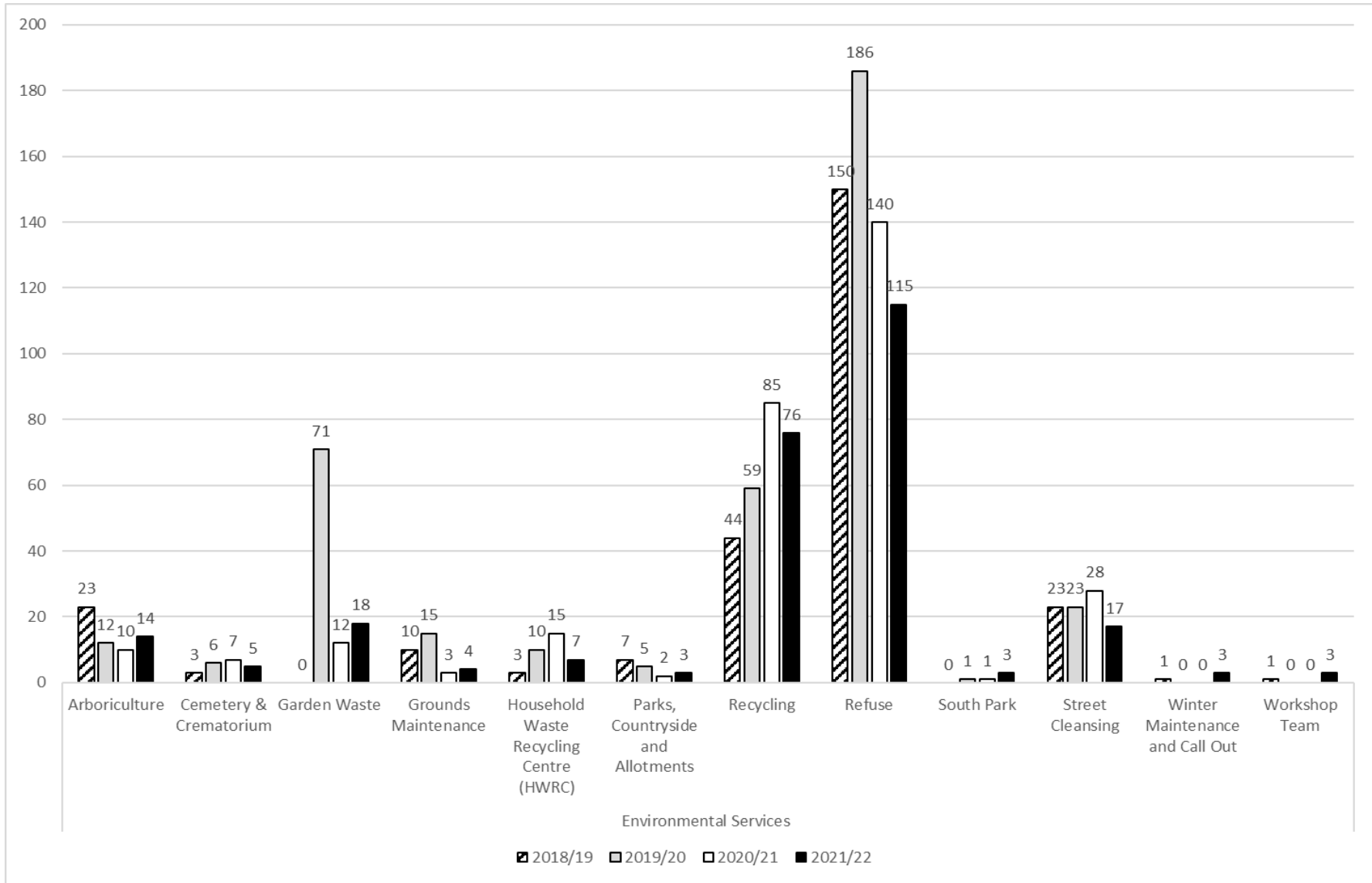
Services Group

Complaints by Service Area/Team - Community Services



85. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received 16 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 10 in 2020/21, significantly less than the 31 received in 2019/20 and an increase from 15 in 2018/19. The most common theme was dissatisfaction with perceived lack of action in relation to requests for enforcement.
86. Licensing received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and a decrease from two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
87. Private Sector Housing received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.
88. Processing & Appeals received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.
89. Hippodrome received 21 corporate complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from zero during 2020/21, although this was largely due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place during 2020/21. Complaints about the Hippodrome remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 22 complaints in 2019/20 and 74 complaints in 2018/19. The main causes of complaints was people's dissatisfaction with the service provided by Hippodrome staff and the enforcing of the Hippodrome's COVID policy following the theatre re-opening.
90. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, the same number the team received in 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.
91. Dolphin Centre received five corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
92. School and Community Catering received one corporate complaint during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Community Services continued...

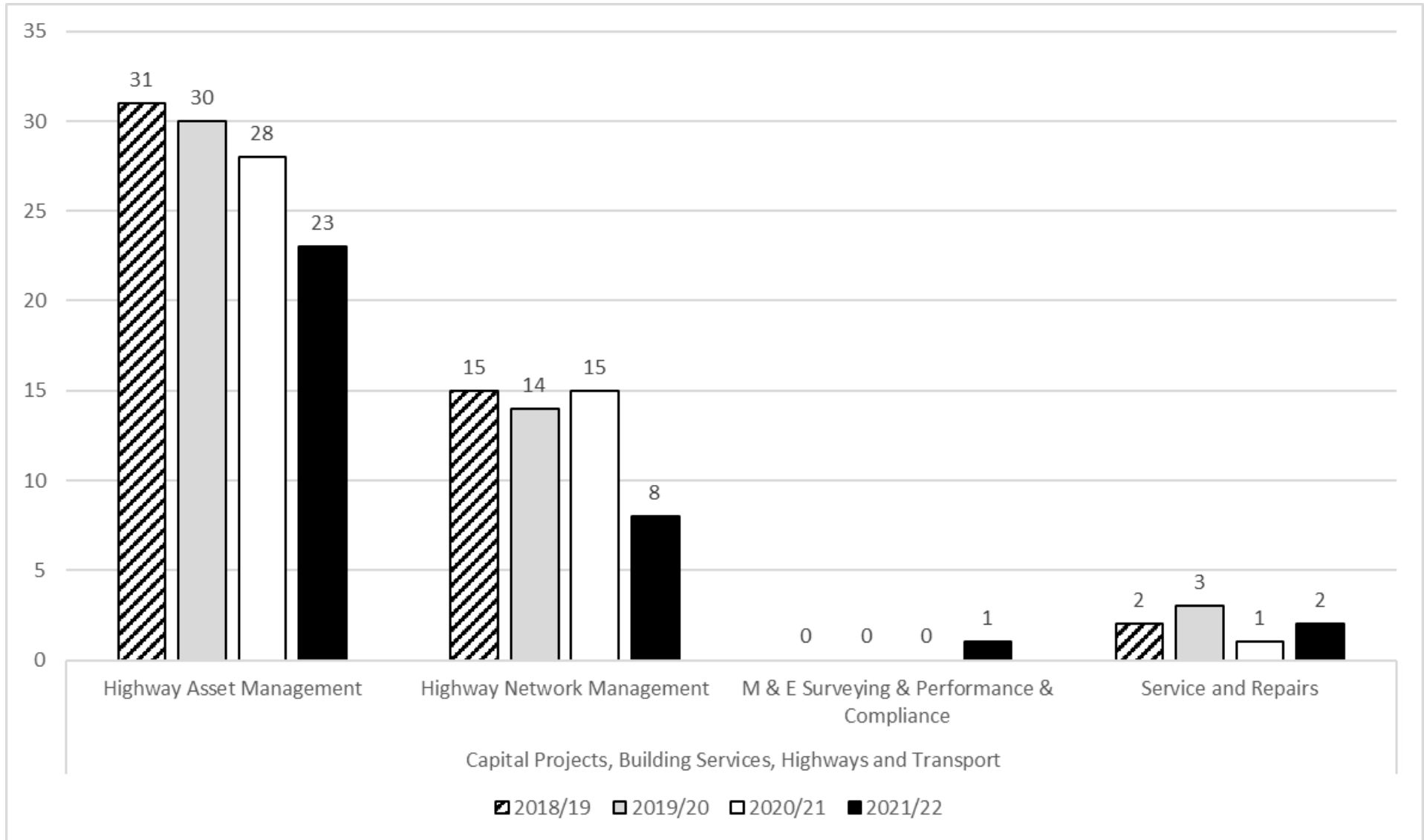


93. Arboriculture received 14 corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 10 in 2020/21 and 12 in 2019/20, although a significant decrease from 23 in 2018/19. These complaints generally resulted from a lack of response to initial enquiries and/or dissatisfaction with a decision not to undertake works to a tree for the reasons requested.
94. Cemetery & Crematorium received five corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from seven in 2020/21, six in 2019/20 and an increase from three in 2018/19. Lack of maintenance in the cemetery was the only identifiable theme.
95. Garden Waste received 29 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 11 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 12 in 2020/21, although a significant decrease from 71 in 2019/20 following the service being launched. Themes included dissatisfaction with missed collections and delays in delivering garden waste bins following people signing up for the service.
96. Grounds Maintenance received four corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 15 complaints in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.
97. HWRC received 11 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. four pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, an increase from 10 in 2019/20 and an increase from three in 2018/19.
98. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving five complaints in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
99. Recycling received 90 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 14 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 85 in 2020/21. Complaints have increased since the pandemic with the team receiving 59 complaints in 2019/20 and 54 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was recycling not being collected and bins and boxes either being broken or not returned during collection.
100. Refuse received 141 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 26 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 140 in 2020/21, although complaints remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 186 complaints in 2019/20 and 150 in 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions.
101. South Park received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
102. Street Cleansing received 19 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 28 in 2020/21 and 23 in 2019/20 and 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to the lack and quality of the service provided
103. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
104. Workshop Team received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.



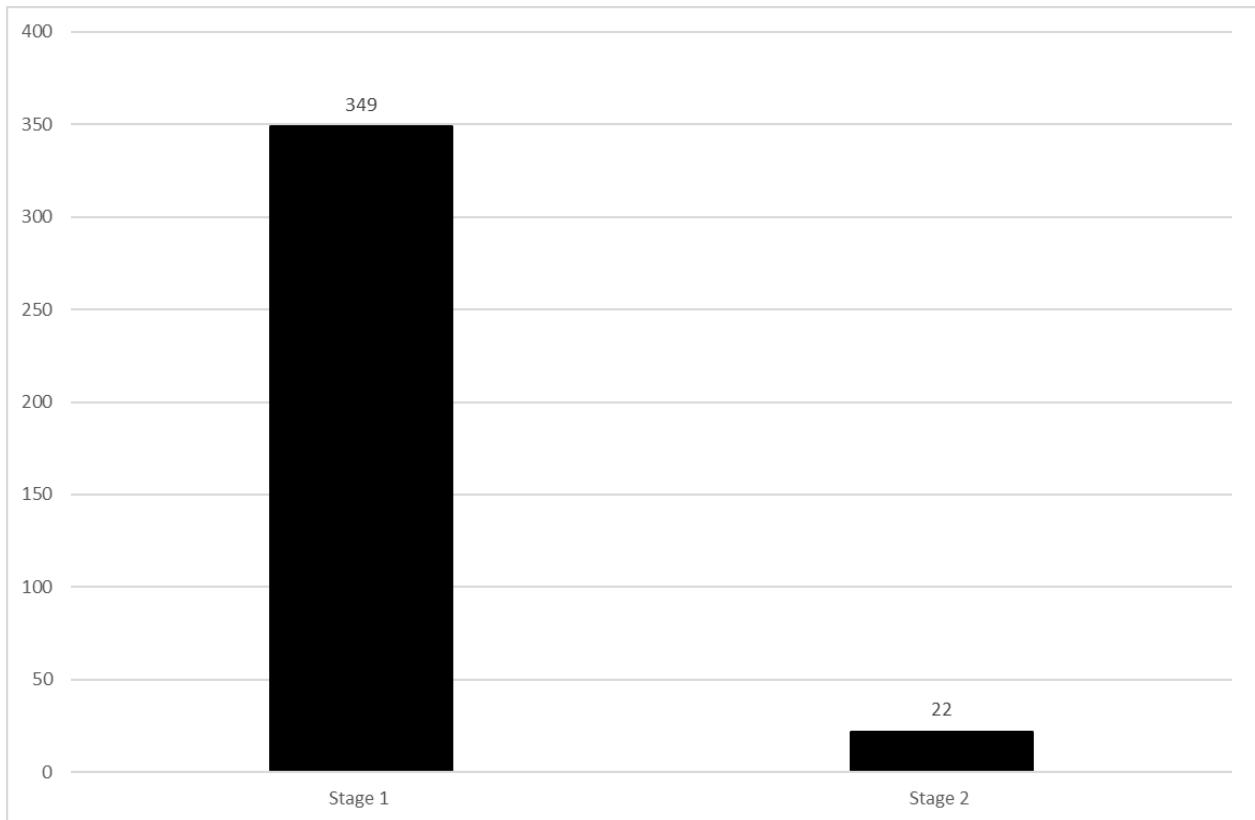
### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport

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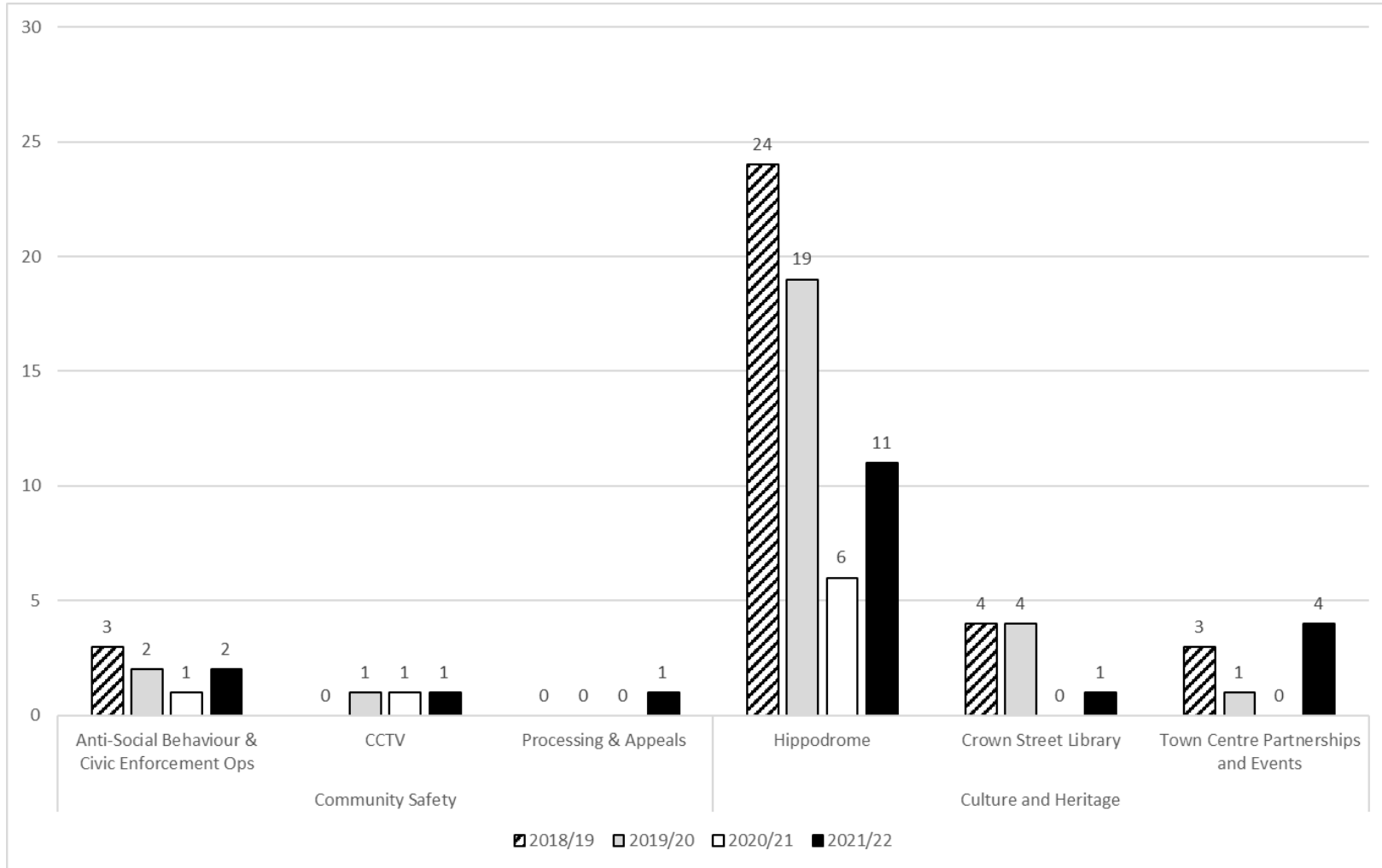
105. Highway Asset Management received 29 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. six pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 28 in 2020/21 and a decrease from 30 in 2019/20 and 31 in 2018/19. Themes included delays in responding to requests for service and dissatisfaction with the impact of highways decisions on individuals and their property.
106. Highway Network Management received 11 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, 14 in 2019/20 and 15 in 2018/19. There were no common themes identified.
107. M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
108. Service and Repairs received four corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from one in 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Stage



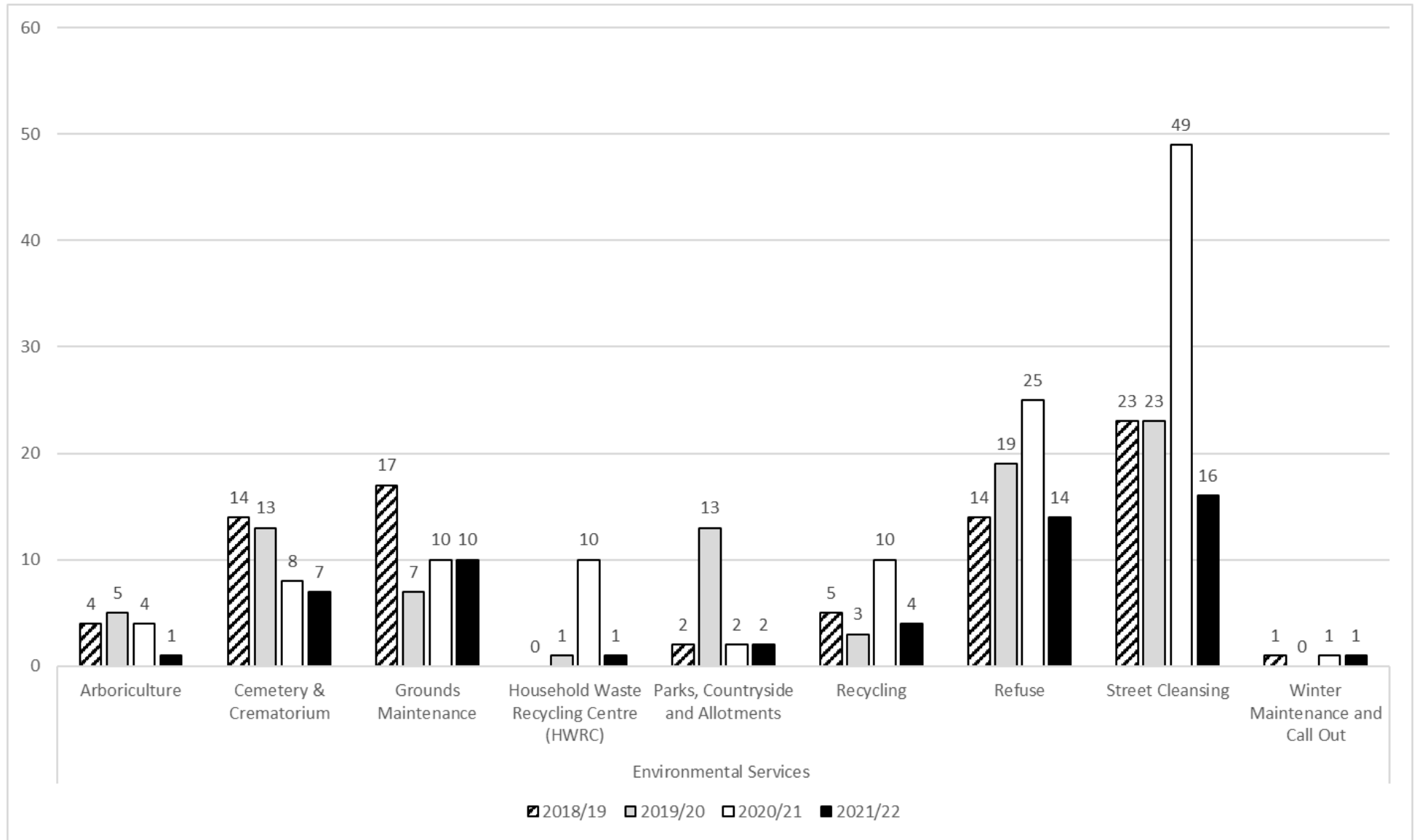
### Compliments by Service Area/Team

#### Community Services



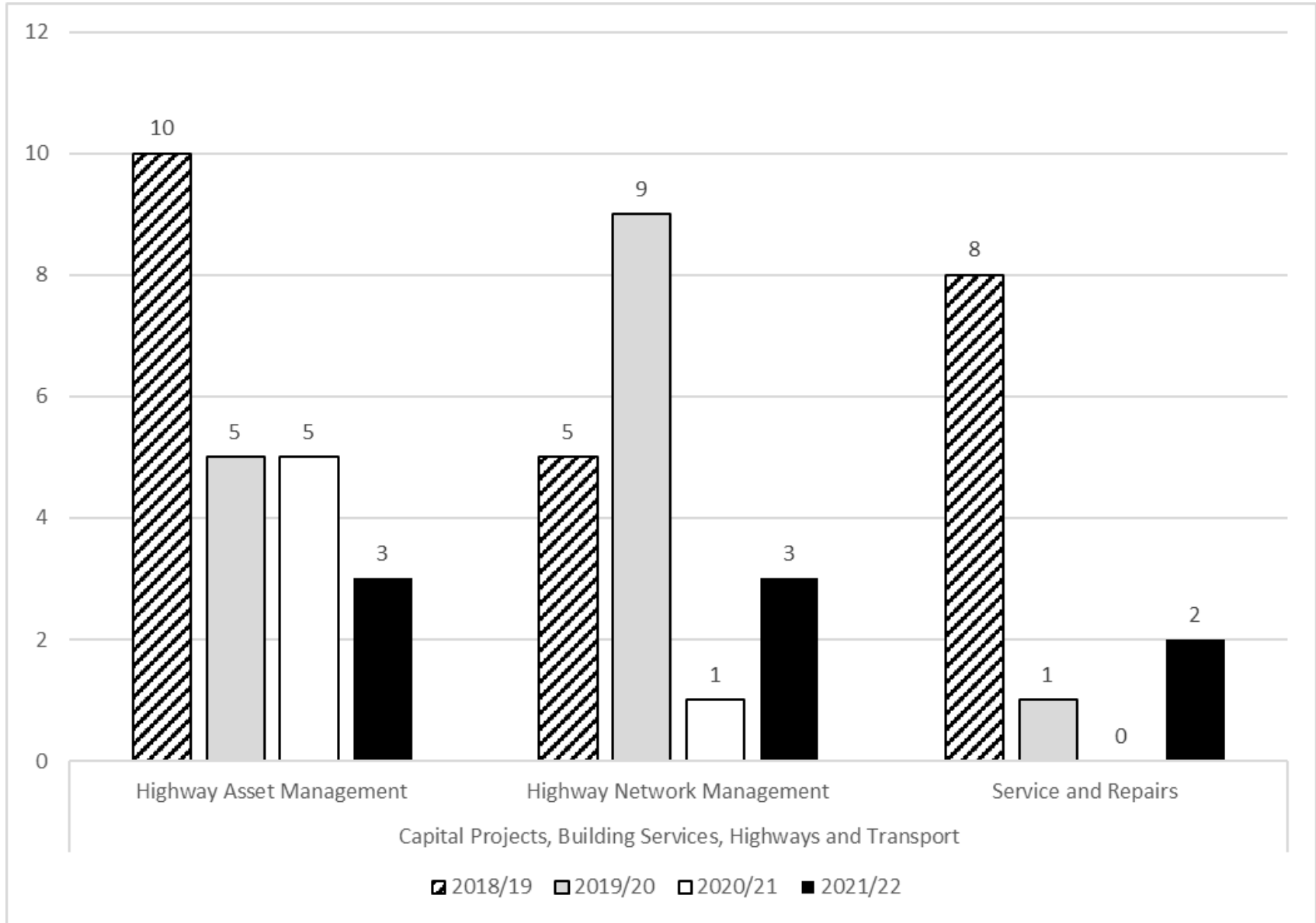
109. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, the same number as the team received in 2019/20 and a decrease from three in 2018/19.
110. CCTV received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number as the team received in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
111. Processing & Appeals received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
112. Hippodrome received 11 corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from six in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 19 compliments in 2019/20 and 24 in 2018/19.
113. Crown Street Library received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, and a decrease from the four received in 2019/20 and 2018/19 before the pandemic.
114. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received four corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

Community Services continued...



115. Arboriculture received three corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from four in 2020/21, five in 2019/20 and the same number the team received 2018/19.
116. Cemetery & Crematorium received eight corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), the same number as 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 13 compliments in 2019/20 and 14 in 2018/19.
117. Grounds Maintenance received 10 corporate compliments during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from seven in 2019/20, although a decrease from 17 in 2018/19.
118. HWRC received two corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, and an increase from one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
119. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received four corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from two in 2020/21, a decrease from 13 in 2019/20 and an increase from two in 2018/19.
120. Recycling received seven corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, an increase from three in 2019/20 and an increase from five in 2018/19.
121. Refuse received 15 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 25 in 2020/21 and 19 in 2019/20 and an increase from 14 in 2018/19.
122. Street Cleansing received 27 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. 11 pre 31 May 2021), a significant decrease from 49 in 2020/21, although an increase from 23 in 2019/20 and 2018/19, before the pandemic.
123. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number the team received in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.

### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport

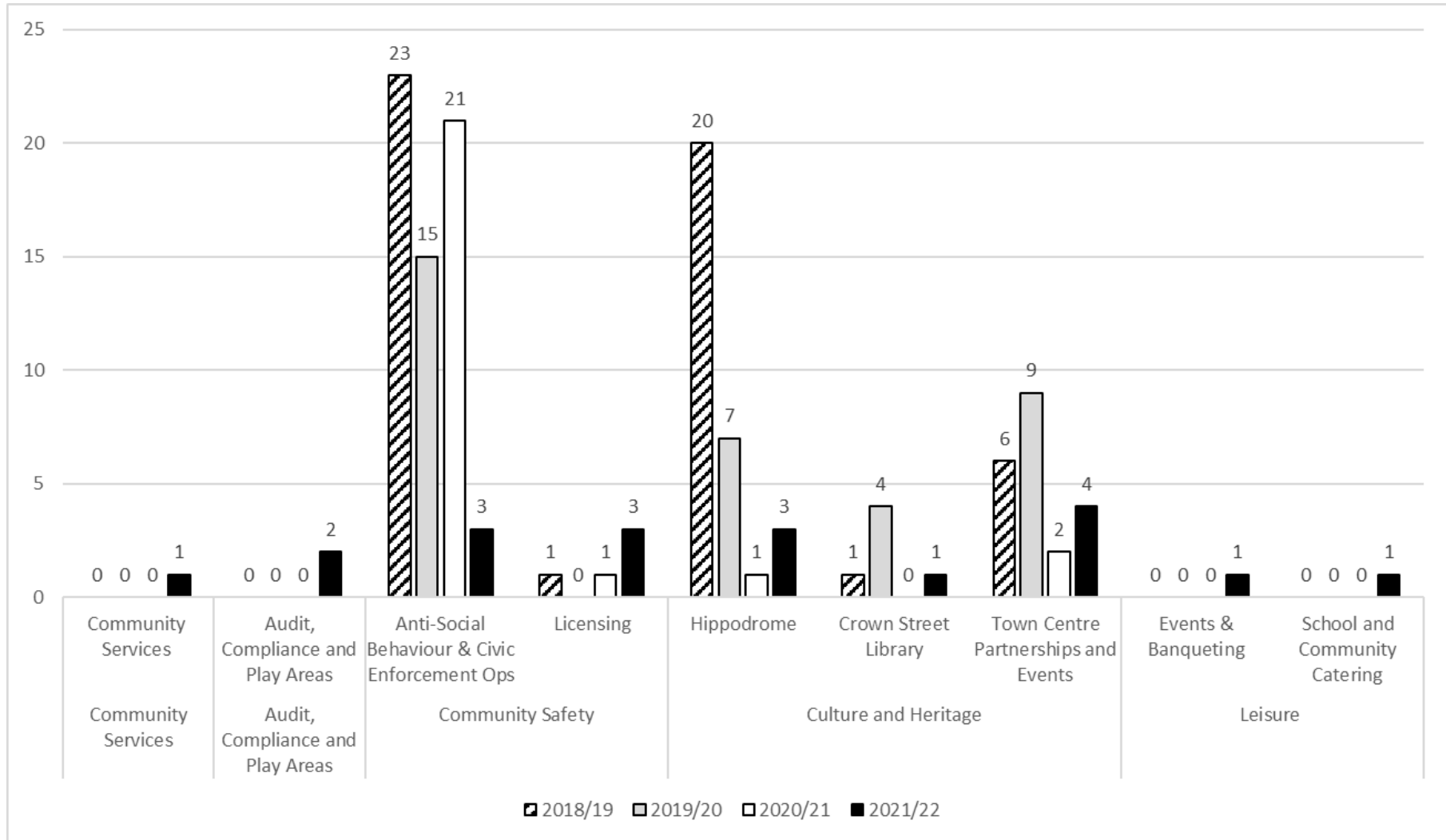




124. Highway Asset Management received four corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.
125. Highway Network Management received three corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, although a decrease from nine received in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19, prior to the pandemic.
126. Service and Repairs received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and a decrease from eight in 2018/19.

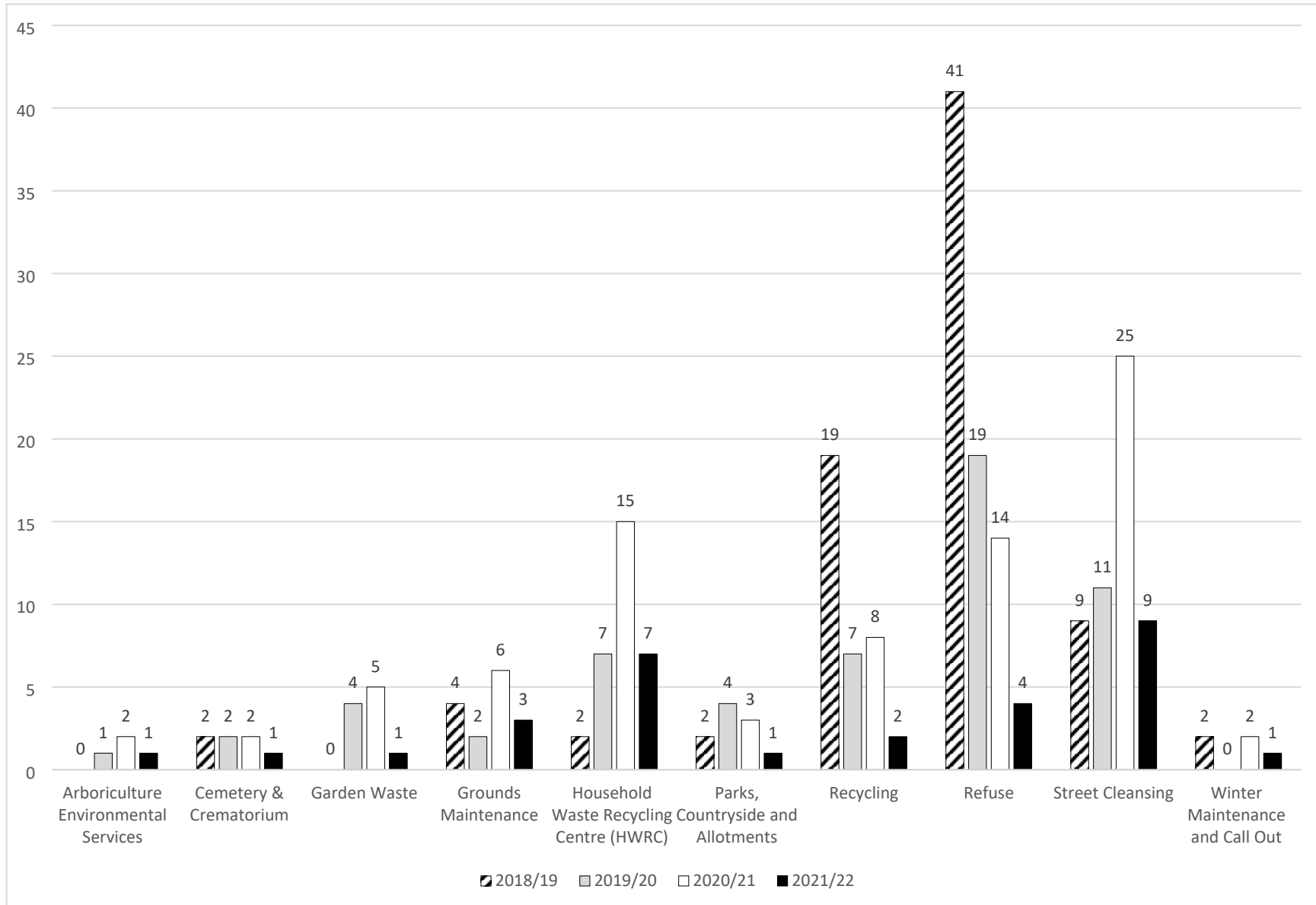
### Comments by Service Area/Team

#### Community Services



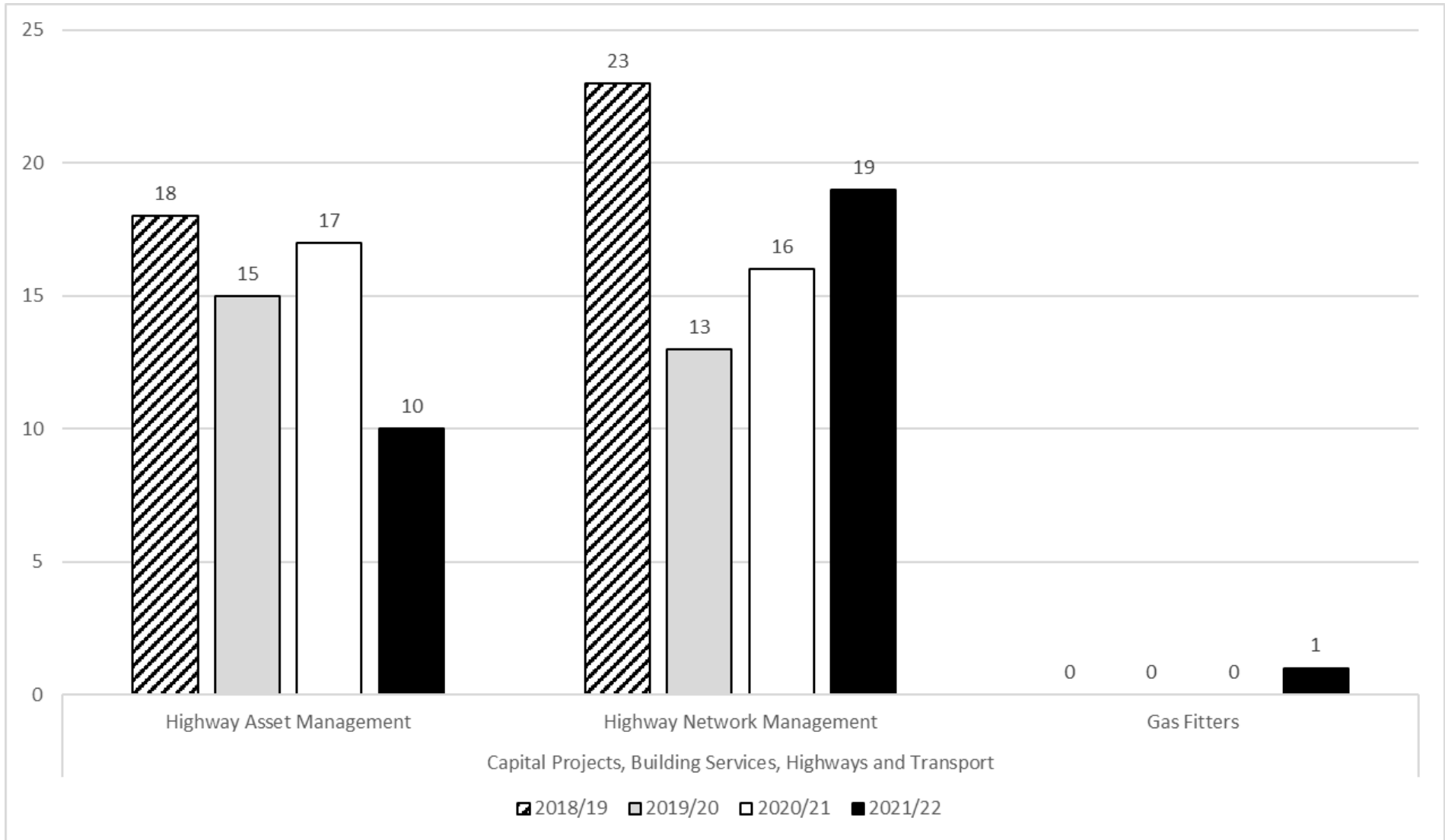
127. Community Services received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. It comment concerned the lack of public toilets.
128. Audit, Compliance and Play Areas received two corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
129. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received three corporate comments during 2021/22, a significant decrease from 21 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 23 in 2018/19.
130. Licensing received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and one 2018/19.
131. Hippodrome received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving seven comments in 2019/20 and 20 in 2018/19.
132. Crown Street Library received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the Crown Street Library receiving four comments in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
133. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received four corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving nine comments in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19.
134. Events and Banqueting received one corporate comment during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
135. School and Community Catering received one corporate comment during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Community Services continued...



136. Arboriculture received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, the same number the team received as in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
137. Cemetery & Crematorium received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
138. Garden Waste received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20.
139. Grounds Maintenance received five corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from six in 2020/21, an increase from two in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.
140. HWRC received seven corporate comments during 2021/22, a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, the same number the team received in 2019/20 and an increase from two in 2018/19.
141. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received two corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from three in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
142. Recycling received three corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from eight in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 19 in 2018/19.
143. Refuse received seven corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 14 in 2020/21, 19 in 2019/20 and 41 in 2018/19.
144. Street Cleansing received 10 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a significant decrease from 25 in 2020/21, a decrease from 11 in 2019/20 and an increase from nine in 2018/19.
145. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.

### Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



146. Highway Asset Management received 12 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 17 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 18 in 2018/19. There were no common themes identified.
147. Highway Network Management received 26 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. seven pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 16 in 2020/21, 13 in 2019/20 and 23 in 2018/19. The only identifiable theme was dissatisfaction with road closures for events.
148. Gas fitters received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Complaints by Outcome

149. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	4	1	0	5
Processing & Appeals	0	1	1	0	0	2
Licensing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Private Sector Housing	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hippodrome	0	9	4	4	1	18
Town Centre Partnerships and Events	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	5	2	2	0	9
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	2	0	2
Parks, Countryside and Allotments	0	0	1	1	0	2
South Park	0	0	0	2	0	2
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	0	4	0	4
Street Cleansing	2	3	2	6	0	13
Garden Waste	1	2	0	14	1	18
Recycling	6	31	4	31	1	73
Refuse	11	35	7	53	4	110
Winter Maintenance and Call Out	1	0	0	1	0	2
Workshop Team	0	3	0	0	0	3
HWRC	0	5	0	0	0	5
School and Community Catering	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dolphin Centre	0	2	0	2	0	4
Highway Asset Management	0	11	2	6	1	20
Highway Network Management	0	0	2	2	1	5



M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance	0	0	1	0	0	1
Service and Repairs	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>304</b>

### Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	1	1	1	0	3
Processing & Appeals	0	0	1	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	2	0	0	0	2
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1	1
Recycling	1	0	0	0	0	1
Refuse	1	0	1	1	0	3
Dolphin Centre	0	0	1	0	0	1
Highway Asset Management	0	5	1	0	0	6
M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

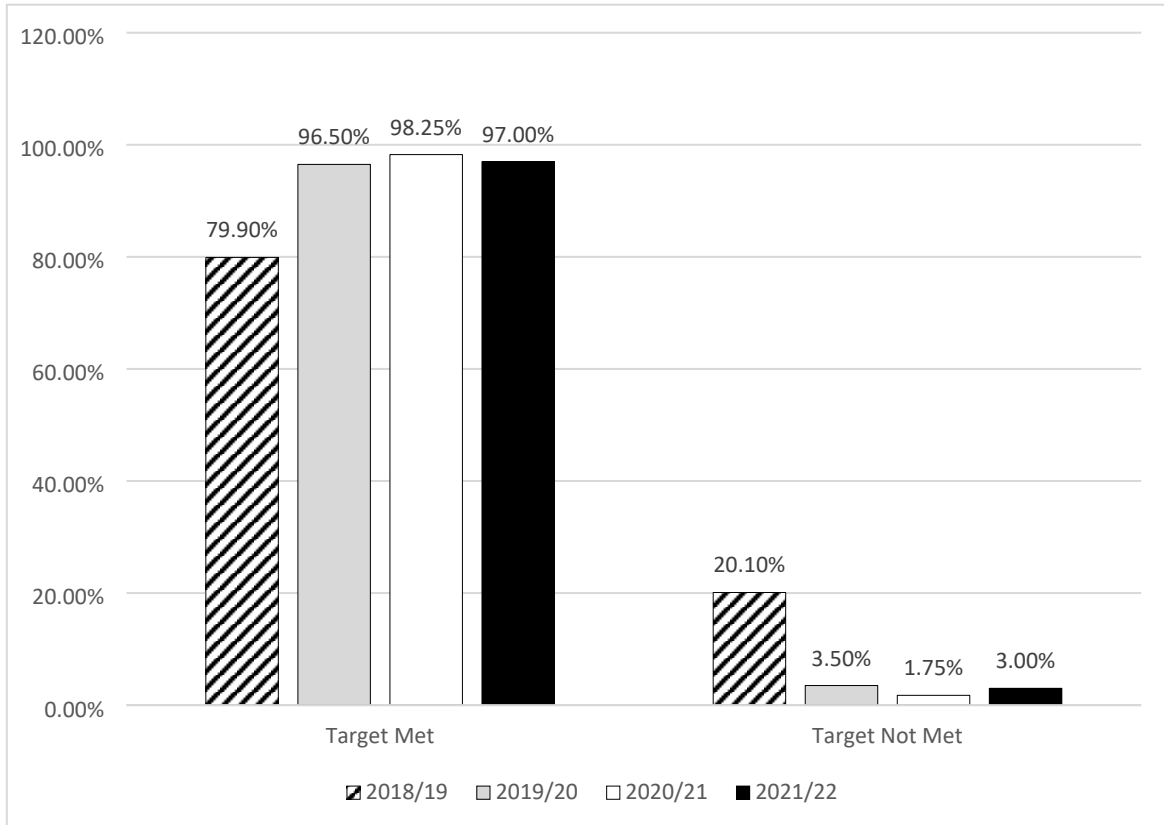
## Organisational Learning

150. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
151. Following a complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed refresher training would be provided to Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in relation to their jurisdiction.
152. Following a further complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed policies and procedures would be reviewed, including service standards, whereby all emails/complaints will be initially responded to within 24 hours.
153. Following a complaint for Garden Waste, from a resident who is visually impaired, the crews were spoken to about the importance of returning bins to the correct location.
154. Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, officers were reminded of how to speak to members of the public about road closures.
155. Following a complaint for the Hippodrome, immediate action was taken to address the issues identified with a ticket agent's practice.
156. Following a complaint for Recycling, the team were spoken to about leaving broken glass on the floor following collections.
157. Following a further complaint for Recycling, the crew was spoken to about the importance of returning bins to the correct location.
158. Following a complaint for South Park, the reason for the toilets being closed on a Saturday was established to prevent a re-occurrence, the reason for refusing to allow the customer to use the Café toilets was also established and the staff who work in the café were spoken to about customers who may have medical conditions that are not always visible and asked to exercise discretion in future.

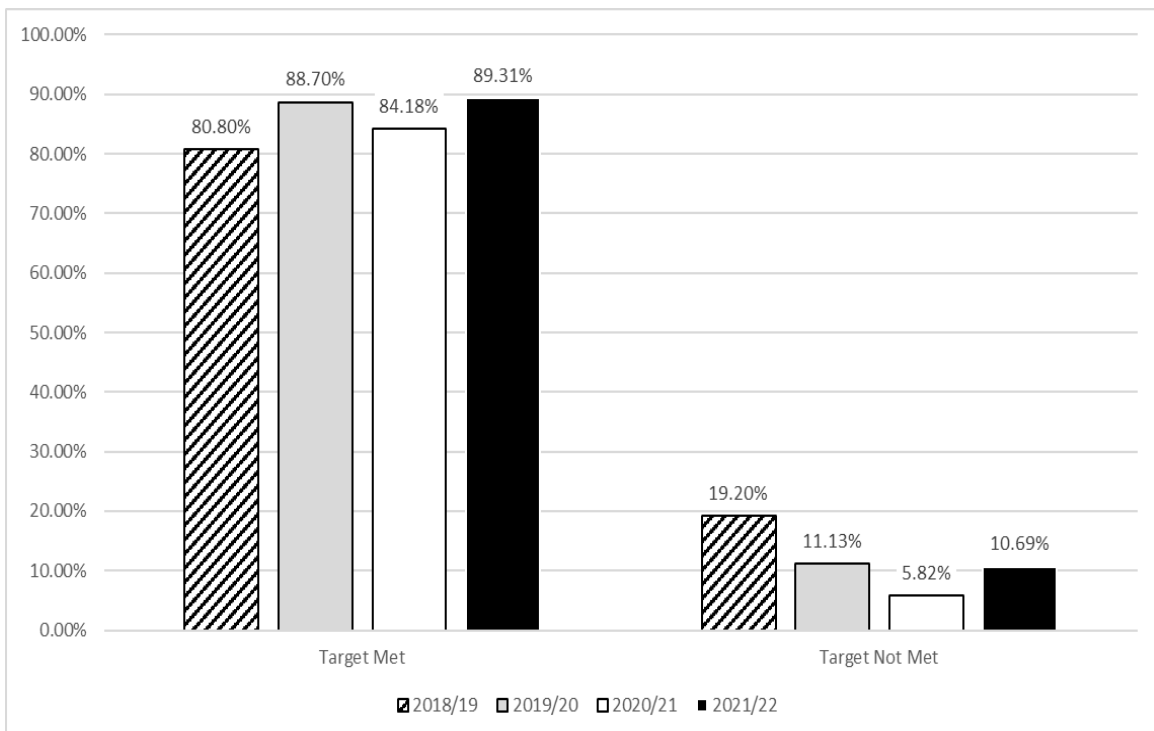
## Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

### Stage 1

#### Performance against Stage 1 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)

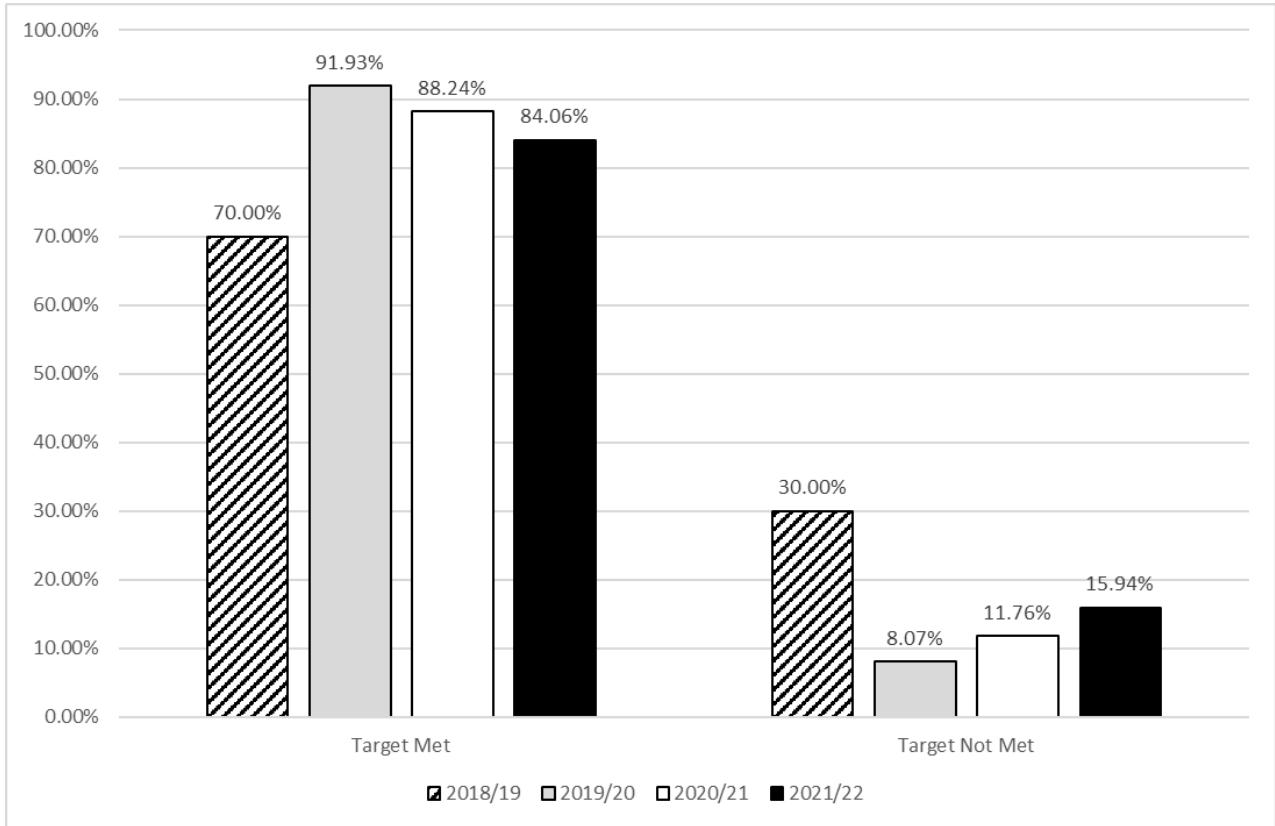


#### Performance against Stage 1 complaint response target (25 working days)

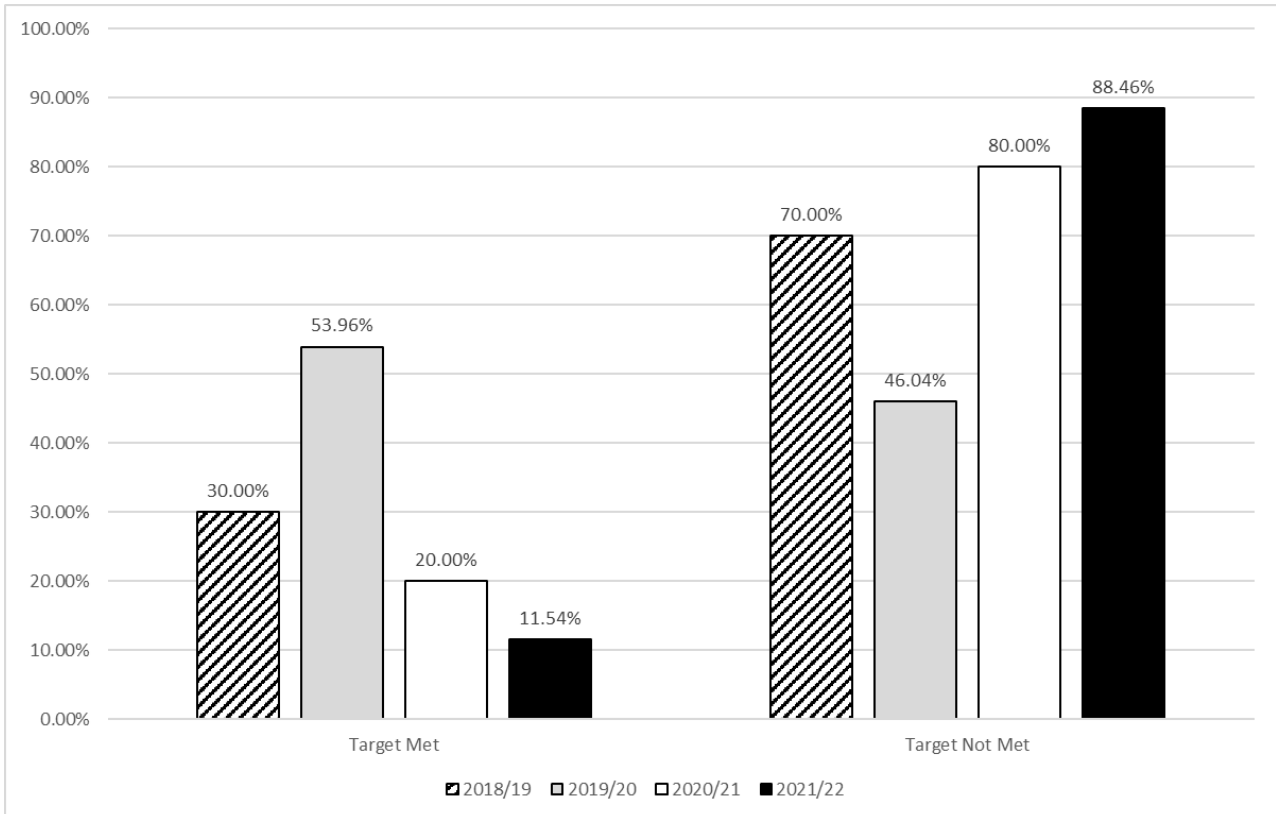


**Stage 2**

**Performance against Stage 2 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)**



**Performance against Stage 2 complaint response target (30 working days)**



### **Further Recommendations**

159. The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Corporate Stage 2 complaint response target.

### **Performance against Local Performance Indicators**

160. In relation to corporate complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received one maladministration decision during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, the same as received in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
161. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

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# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

## **Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2021/22 under the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the procedure). The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints; identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received and make further recommendations based on trend data to improve services. The report also highlights any areas of good practice and seeks to identify topics and trends in relation to comments made by members of the public so that the Council can take action where appropriate to improve services.
2. In addition to the statistical information presented in this report it is important to recognise the work of the Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team that underpins this in terms of promoting an organisational culture in which complaints are recognised, accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This also enables the Council to collect accurate information on complaints in order to identify topics and trends and improve services accordingly.
3. It is also important to recognise the work of Housing Services who have ensured that all senior management have taken part in the Housing Ombudsman online complaint training in 2021 with a plan for Housing Officers to also complete this training thereby enhancing the offer to customers and increasing Officer knowledge.

## **Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

4. The procedure sets out how the Council will deal with complaints, compliments and comments received about the Council as a social landlord (as well as in respect of its ownership and management of leasehold housing).
5. The procedure has three stages. Stage 1 is a local resolution stage where we try to resolve those complaints that cannot be resolved immediately as part of our day to day business. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with locally, that is within the service being complained about. We aim to resolve the majority of complaints at Stage 1 of the procedure.
6. Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Complaints Investigator or Complaints Manager.
7. Stage 3 is a mandatory stage between the Council and the Housing Ombudsman. This is referred to as the 'designated person' or 'democratic filter'. The designated person or democratic filter can be an MP, a local Councillor or a recognised Tenant Panel (from here onwards referred to as the Tenants' Complaints Panel, to differentiate it from our Tenant Panel). In Darlington we do not currently have a recognised Tenants' Complaints Panel. Should a tenant remain dissatisfied with the Council's response to their complaint, they will be required to refer the matter to the 'designated person' or

'democratic filter'. The 'designated person' or 'democratic filter' may help resolve the complaint directly, refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman or decide to do neither. If the 'designated person' or 'democratic filter' decides not to take any action the complainant will be entitled to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman directly. The complainant will also be able to approach the Housing Ombudsman directly in cases where eight weeks have elapsed since the Council's response to their complaint at Stage 2 of the procedure.

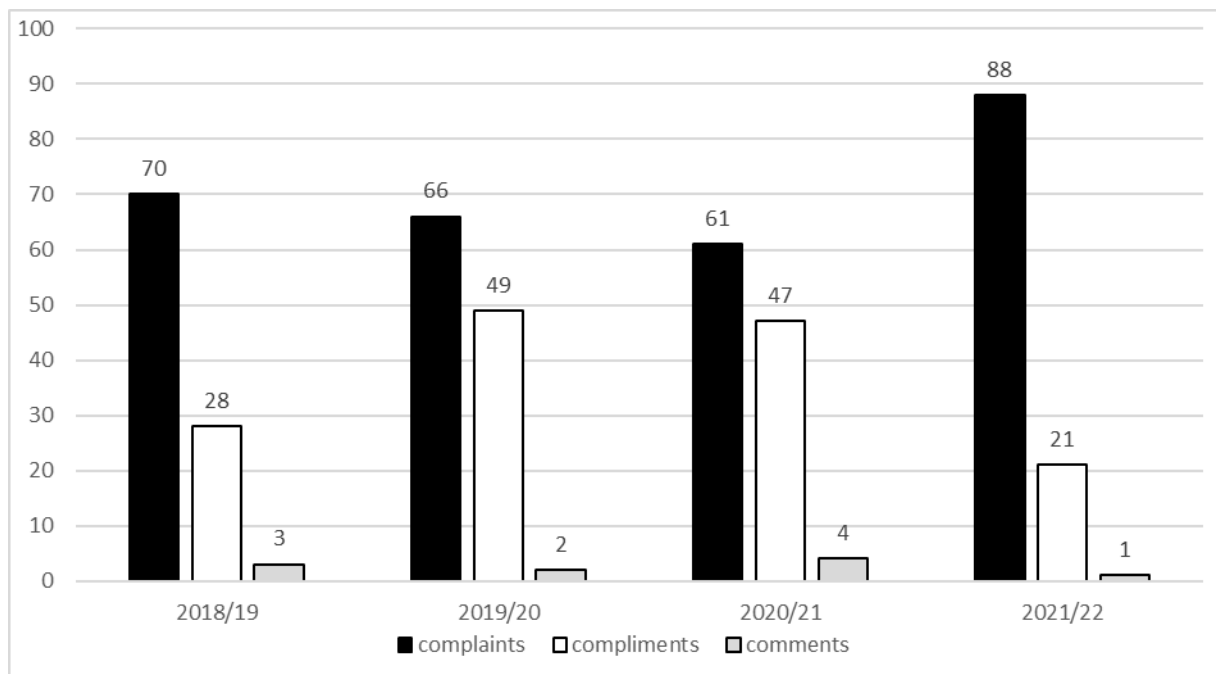
### **Public Information and Accessibility**

8. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
9. Information is available on the Council's website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
10. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

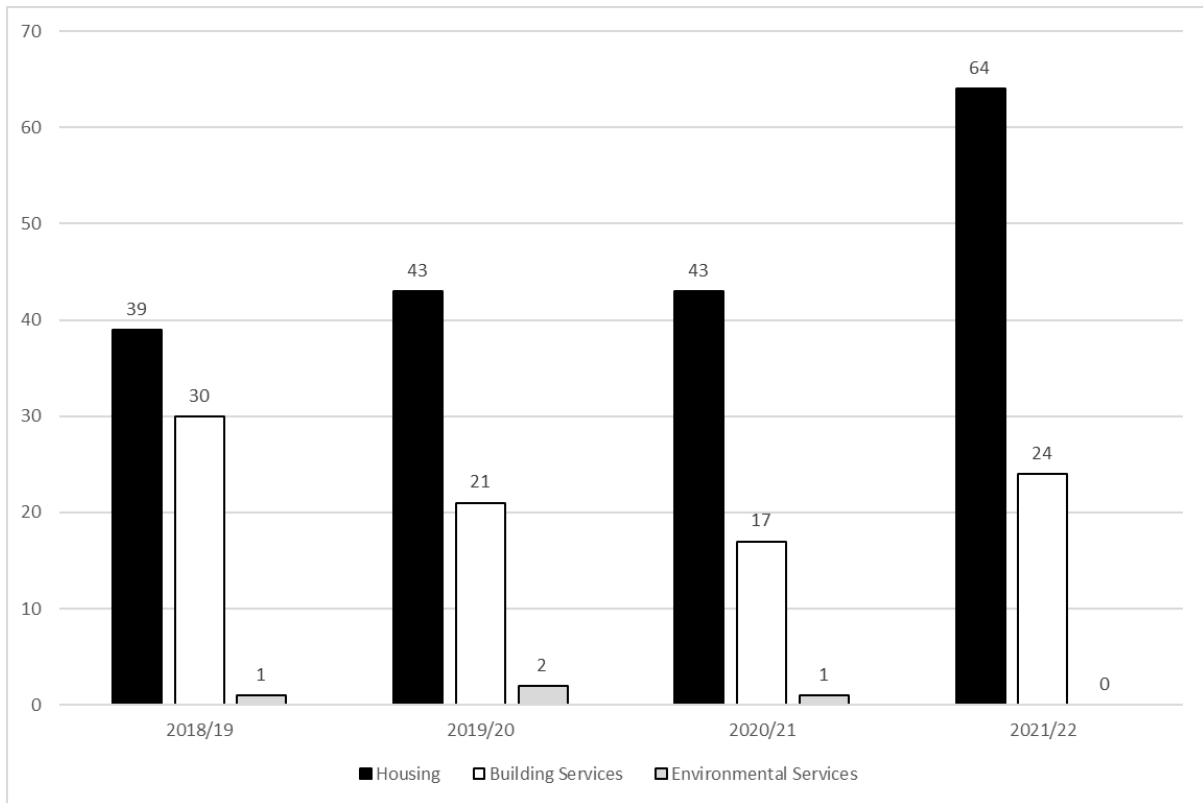
### Overview of Complaints, Compliments and Comments

#### Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments



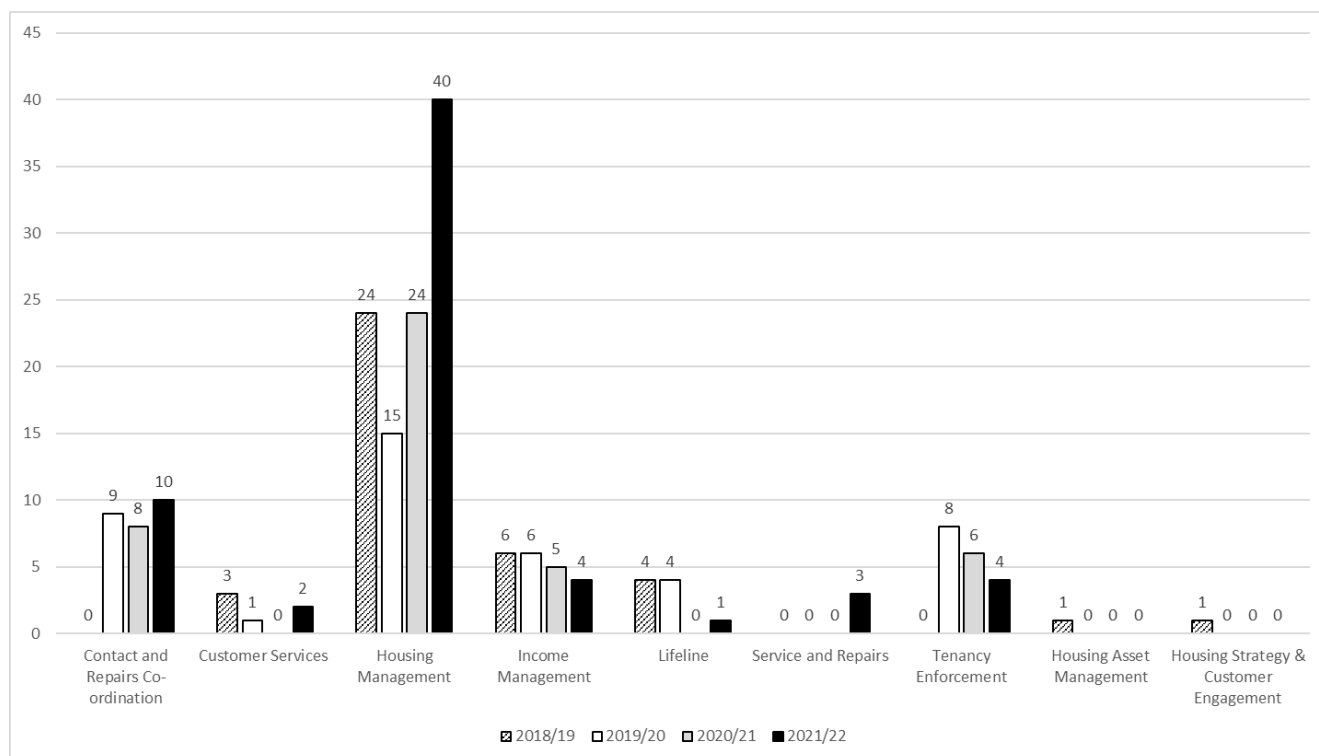
11. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Council received a total of 88 complaints under the procedure, a significant increase from 61 in 2020/21, 66 in 2019/20 and 70 in 2018/19. Housing Services have recently encouraged residents to make contact through the Housing Facebook page, which has continued to increase its number of followers and set up an additional complaints page within their section of the Council's website, which may in part account for the increase. We believe the increase is also, in part, attributable to the legacy of the pandemic, with people reporting fewer issues in the earlier part of the pandemic and spending more time at home resulting in the need for increased contact and repairs during 2020/21. As a result of the restrictions in place officers also had less of a presence in neighbourhoods meaning they were unable to resolve issues as part of their day to day work.
12. A total of 16 complaints were considered at Stage 2, an increase from 13 in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19. All of the Stage 2 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1. No complaints were considered at Stage 3, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
13. The Council received 21 compliments under the procedure, a significant decrease from 47 in 2020/21, 49 in 2019/20 and 28 in 2018/19.
14. The Council also receive one comment under the procedure, a decrease from four in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Service



15. Housing received 64 complaints, an significant increase from 43 in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 39 in 2018/19.
16. Building Services received 24 complaints, an increase from 17 in 2020/21, 21 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 30 in 2018/19.
17. Environmental Services did not receive any complaints, a decrease from one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and 1 in 2018/19.

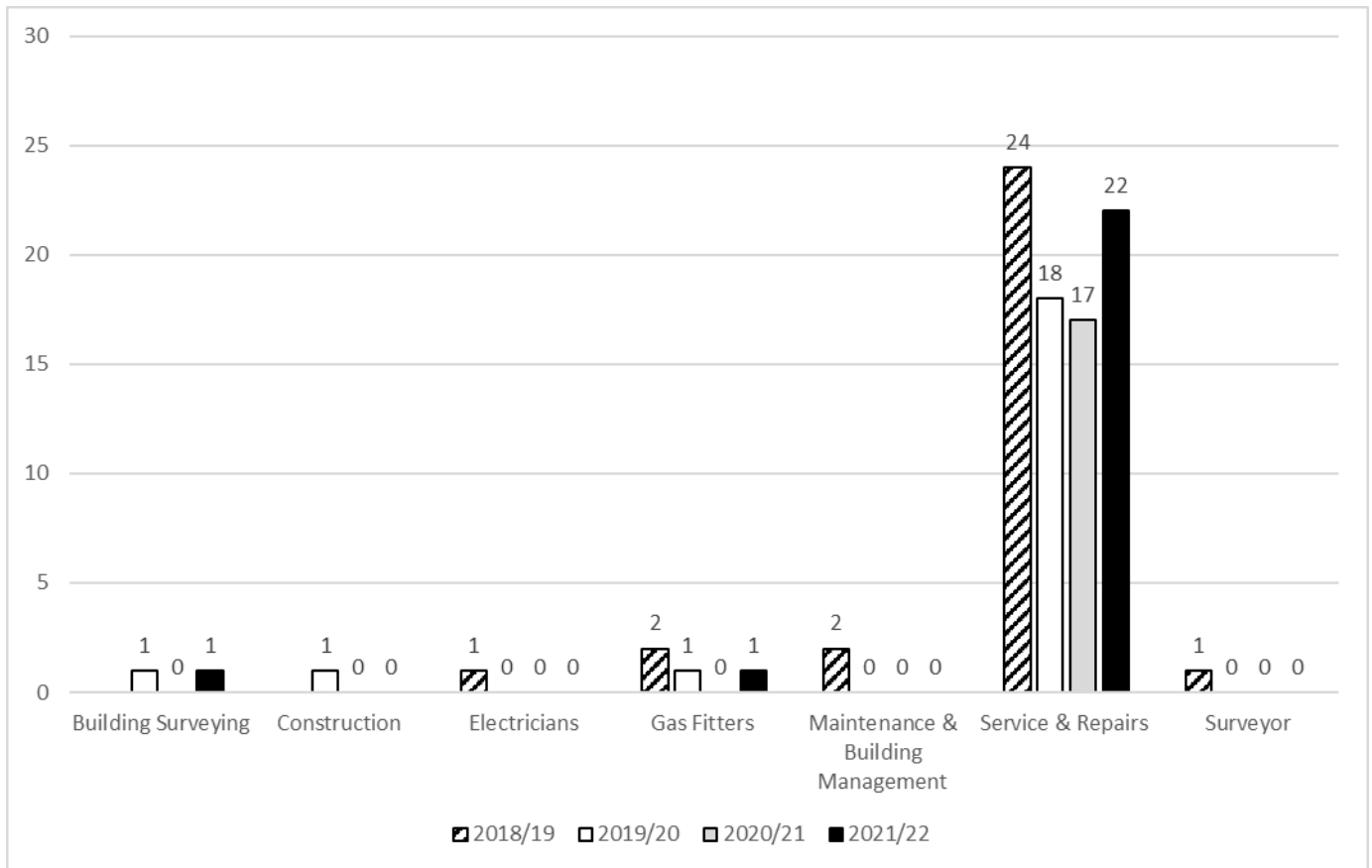
### Complaints by Team – Housing Service



18. Housing Management received 40 complaints, a significant increase from 24 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 24 in 2018/19. There is no particular theme that would account for the increase. Complaints concerned communication, the service provided in relation to various housing management issues, dissatisfaction with proposed repairs, changes to the tenancy agreement and the wording of the gas check letter.
19. Contact & Repairs Co-ordination received 10 complaints, an increase from eight complaints in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19. Complaints concerned communication, appointments not being kept and delays in undertaking repairs.
20. Customer Services received two complaints, compared to zero complaints in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
21. Housing Income Management received four complaints, a decrease from five complaints in 2020/21 and six in 2019/20 and 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes in the complaints received.
22. Lifeline received one complaint, and increase from zero complaints 2020/21, but a decrease from four in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
23. Service and Repairs received three complaints, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
24. Tenancy Enforcement received four complaints, a decrease from six complaints in 2020/21, eight in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.

- 25. Housing Asset management did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.
- 26. Housing Strategy & Customer Engagement did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.

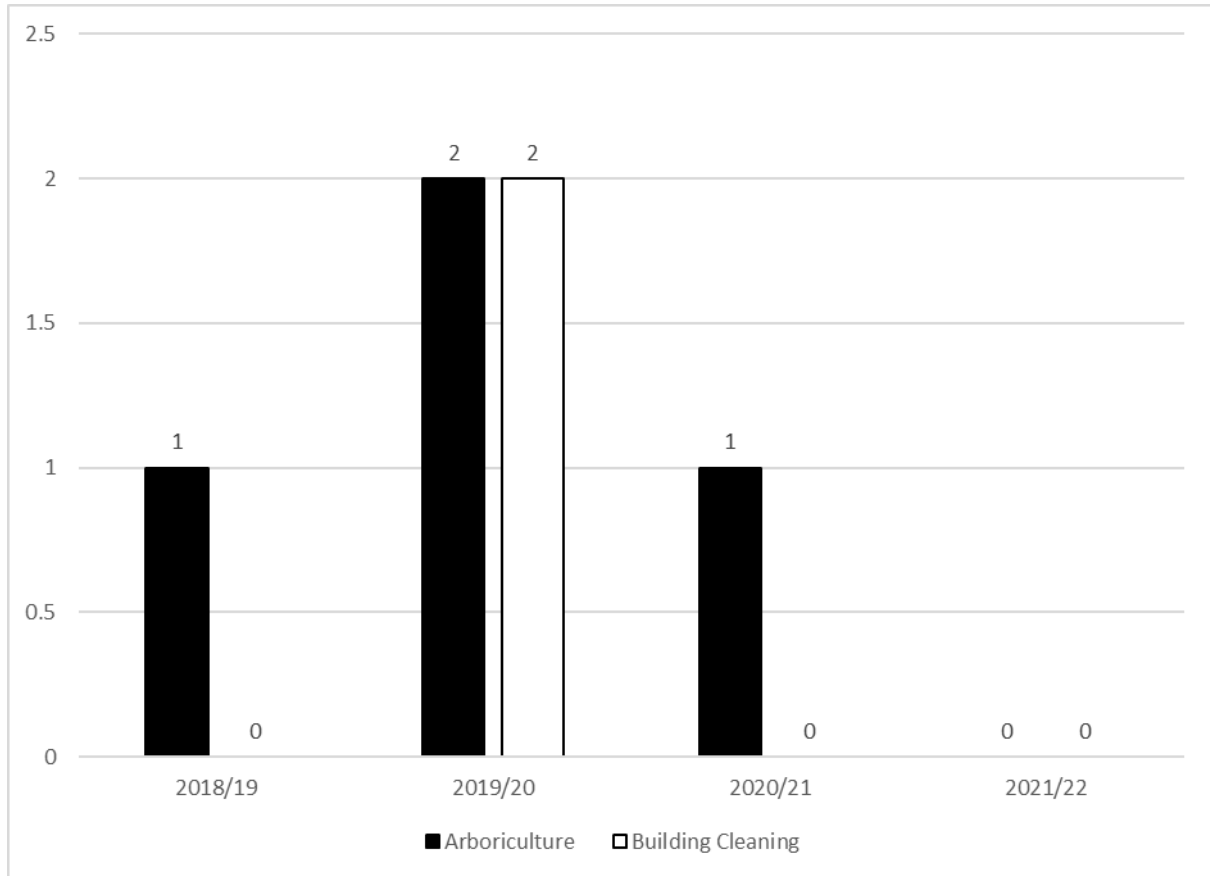
**Complaints by Team – Building Services**



- 27. Building Surveying received one complaint, compared to zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
- 28. Construction received zero complaints, the same as in 2020/21, compared to one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
- 29. Electricians received zero complaints again, as in 2020/21 and 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.
- 30. Gas Fitters received one complaint, compared to zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.
- 31. Maintenance & Building Management received zero complaints again, as in 2020/21 and 2019/20. They received two complaints in 2018/19.

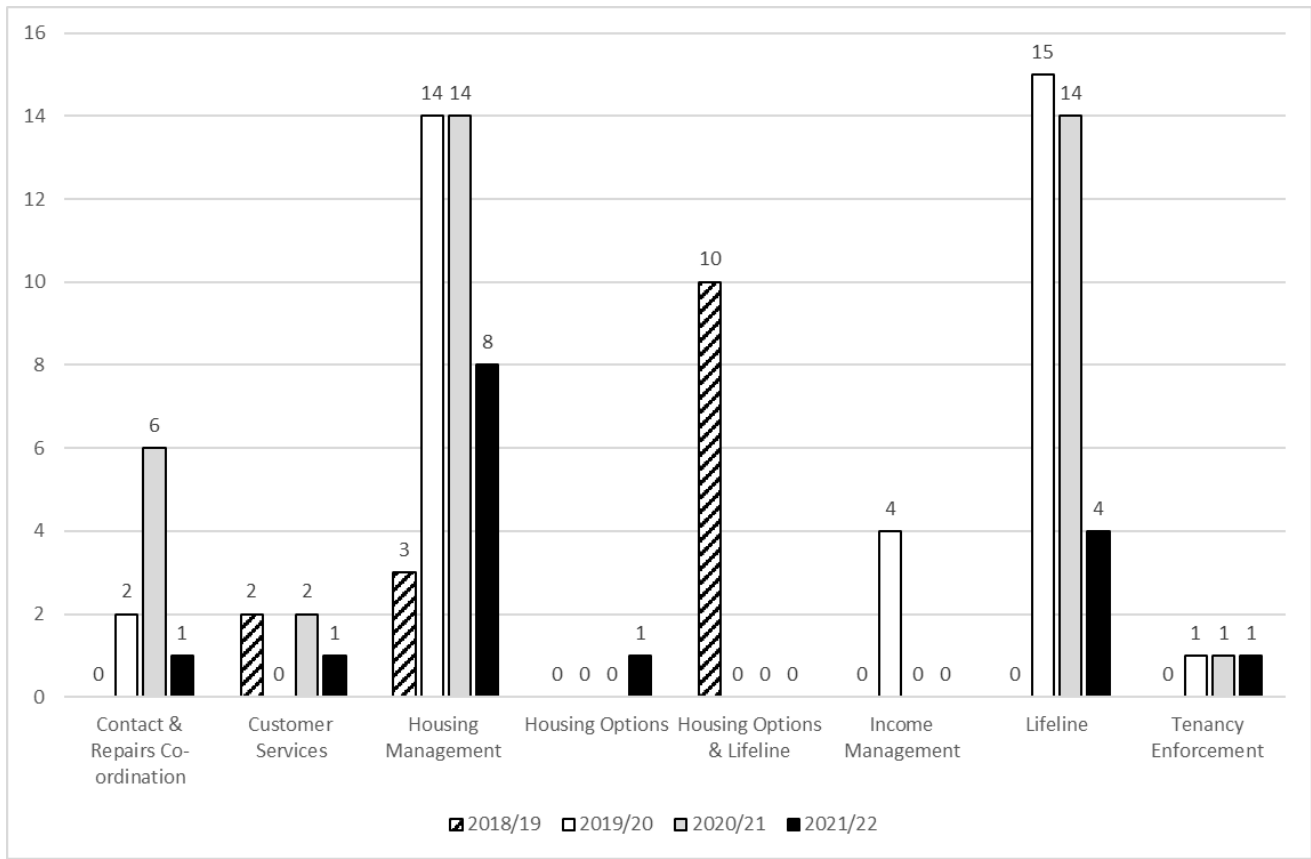
- 32. Service & Repairs received 22 complaints, an increase from 17 in 2020/21, 18 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 24 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaints were dissatisfaction with quality of repairs, the time take to complete repairs and staff attitude.
- 33. Surveyor did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.

**Complaints by Team - Environmental Services**



- 34. Arboriculture did not receive any complaints, compared to one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
- 35. Building Cleaning did not receive any complaints, the same number as in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.

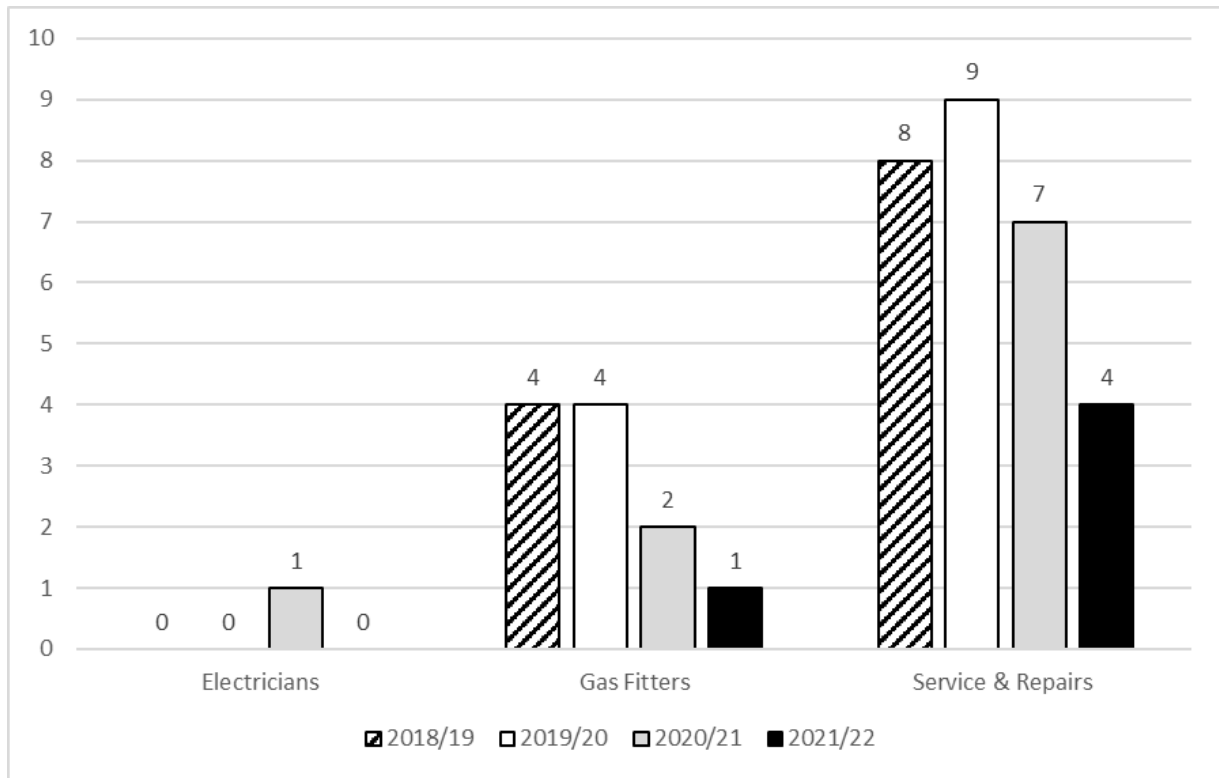
### Compliments by Team – Housing Services



36. Housing received 16 compliments, a significant decrease from 37 in 2020/21, 36 in 2019/20, although slightly higher than the 15 received in 2018/19.

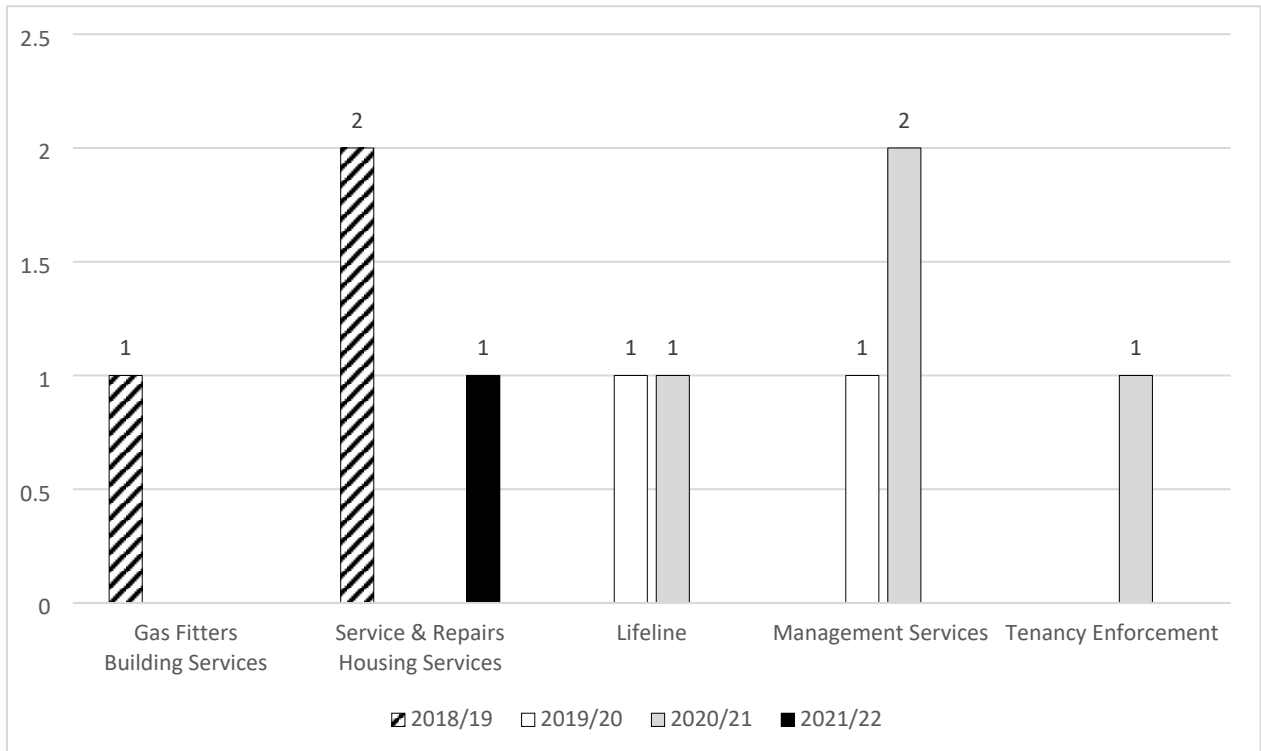


### Compliments by Team – Building Services



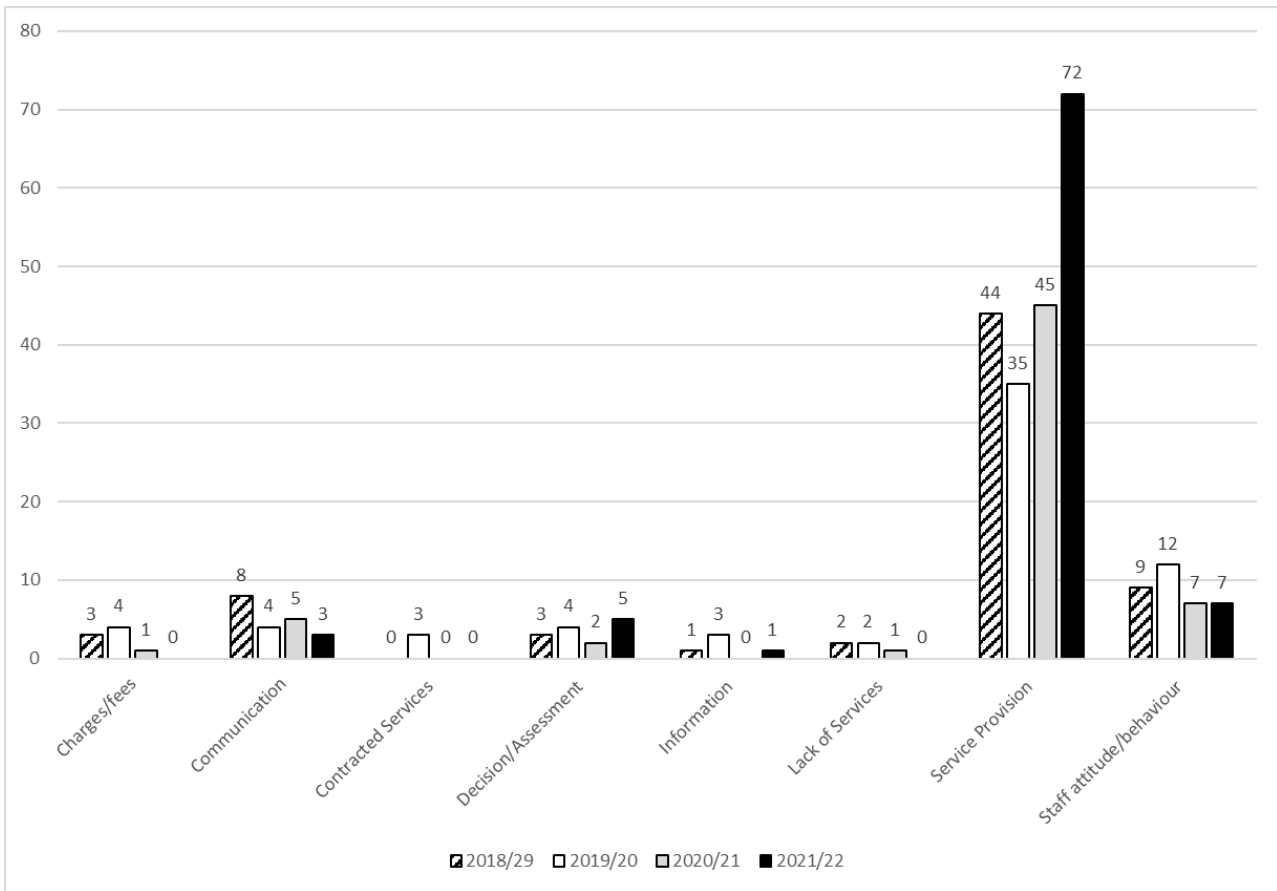
37. Building Services received five compliments, a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, 13 in 2019/20 and 12 in 2018/19.

### Comments by Team - Housing



38. The Council received one comment, a decrease from four 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Issue

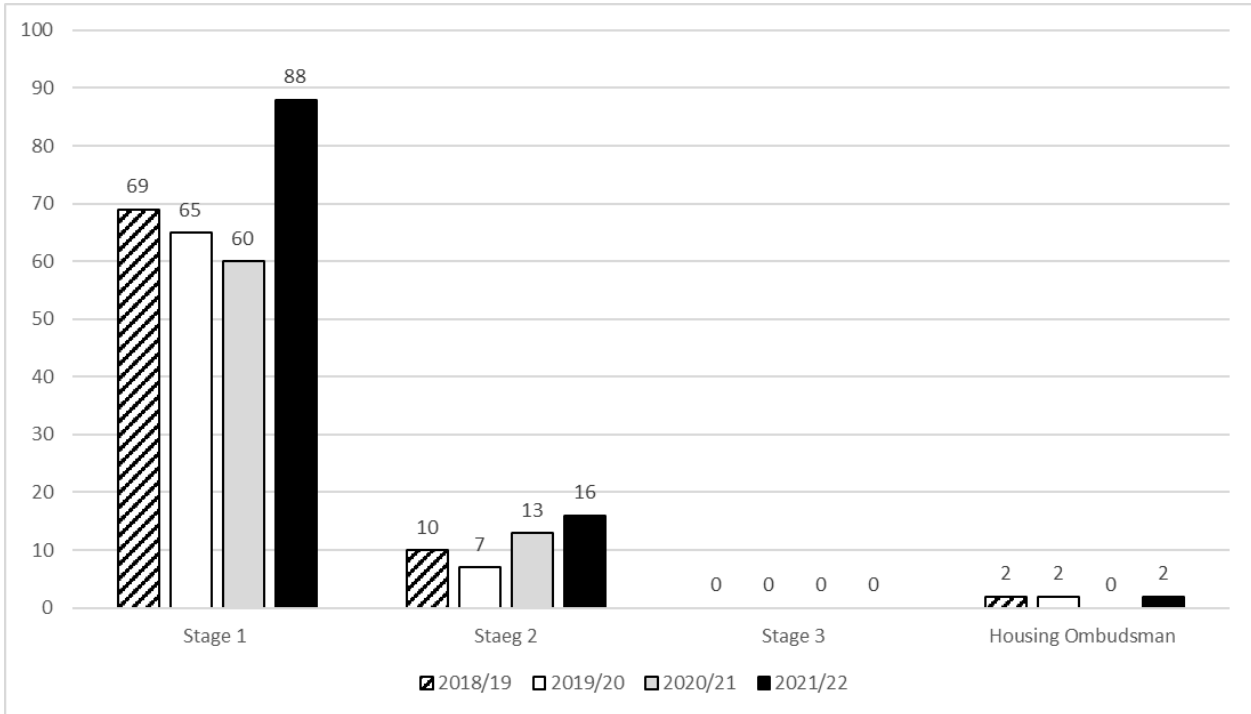


39. No complaints related to charges/fees, compared to one in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
40. Three complaints related to communication, compared to five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and 8 in 2018/19.
41. No complaints concerned contracted services, as was the case in 2020/21, a decrease from three in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
42. Five complaints related to decision/assessments, an increase from two in 2020/21, four 2019/20 and 3 in 2018/19.
43. One complaint related to informaiton, compared to zero in 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
44. There were no complaints about lack of services, compared to one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
45. There were 72 complaints about service provision, a significant increase from 45 in 2020/21, 35 in 2019/20 and 44 in 2018/19.

46. Seven complaints related to staff attitude/behaviour, the same number as in 2020/21, a decrease from 12 in 2019/20 and nine in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Stage

47. The below graph shows the number of complaints received at each stage of the procedure during 2021/22.



48. The Council received 88 Stage 1 complaints, an increase from 60 in 2020/21, 65 in 2019/20 and 69 in 2018/19.

49. 16 were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from 13 in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.

50. Two complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and the same number as in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Complaints Outcomes

51. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2020/21.

#### Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
<b><i>Housing</i></b>						
Income Management	0	0	3	1	0	4
Contact & Repairs Co-ordination	0	2	1	4	2	9
Customer Services	0	1	0	1	0	2
Housing Management	2	10	11	11	3	37
Tenancy Enforcement	0	1	0	3	0	4
Lifeline	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b><i>Building Services</i></b>						
Building Surveying	0	1	0	0	0	1
Service & Repairs	0	1	2	12	3	18
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>76</b>

**Stage 2**

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><i>Housing</i></b>						
Contact & Repairs Co-ordination	0	0	0	1	1	2
Customer Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Management	0	0	6	2	2	10
Tenancy Enforcement	0	0	1	1	0	2
<b><i>Building Services</i></b>						
Service & Repairs	0	0	1	1	2	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>

**Stage 3**

52. The 'designated person' or 'democratic filter' did not determine any complaints during 2021/22.

**Housing Ombudsman**

53. The Housing Ombudsman determined two complaints, compared to one during 2020/21 and 2019/20. The Housing Ombudsman also determined two complaints during 2018/19.

54. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

## **Organisational Learning**

55. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22 and are detailed below:

## **Complaints**

56. Following a complaint considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Council has now amended its investigative practice in relation to housing complaints, where the officer and complainant provide conflicting accounts of events.

## **Contact and Repairs Co-ordination**

57. Following a complaint for Contact and Repairs Co-ordination, it was agreed communication between teams and the process for inspecting and ordering work to external contractors needed to be improved.
58. Following another complaint for Contact and Repairs Co-ordination, the Planning Team the importance of getting it right was reiterated with the Planning Team.

## **Housing Management**

59. Following a complaint for Housing Management, further staff training was provided in relation to the process of void inspections and void standards and all major work voids are now jointly inspected by both Asset Management and the Housing Management Officer prior to a person taking on that tenancy, with any failed post-inspections immediately addressed with Building Services.
60. Following another complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to look at the processes around voids and glazing to ensure we reduce the chances of delays happening in future.
61. Following a further complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed that Housing Management would provide tenants with a copy of repair notices and information on how the right to repair scheme works.
62. As a result of another complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to review its 'Belongings left in a Council Property' form.
63. Following a complaint for Housing Management, regarding the handing of a noise nuisance complaint, the Housing Management officer was spoken to regarding the correct process to follow to ensure they respond to future noise nuisance complaints in a timely manner.



64. As a result of a further complaint for Housing Management, Surveyors were reminded letters need to be sent to all tenants before a survey is carried out.
65. Following another complaint for Housing Management, Building Services were reminded of the need to confirm the time and date of appointments before arriving to undertake works and it was agreed a detailed operational manual would be provided to prospective tenants.
66. Following a further complaint for Housing Management, the Council advised it indeed to introduce MOT style servicing in relation to Gas checks i.e. where the check would be undertaken within a certain date range each year.
67. As a result of a further complaint for Housing Management, Housing Officers and Customer Services staff were made aware of who can apply for the County Durham & Darlington Community Safety Fund to avoid inaccurate advice being given the future.
68. Following a complaint for Management Services considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Council was ordered to ensure it has procedures in place so that it is able to conduct risk assessments when residents report that they have been subject to verbal abuse or threats related to Anti-Social Behaviour.

#### **Tenancy Enforcement**

69. Following a complaint for Tenancy Enforcement it was recommended that the clauses in the Tenancy Agreement regarding succession of properties be reviewed and that all relevant staff receive refresher training in relation to this.

#### **Service & Repairs**

70. Following a complaint for Service & Repairs it was agreed the Head of Building Services would hold a meeting with the relevant members of staff to address the practice issues and training needs identified in relation to boiler repairs.

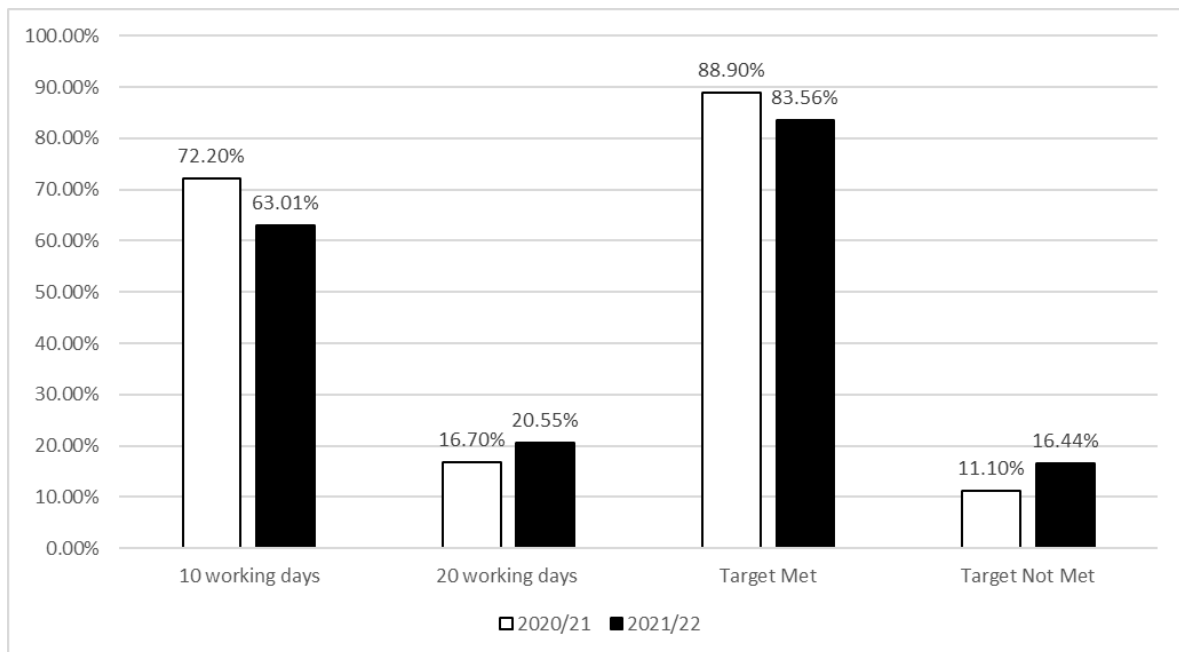
### Performance against the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

71. On the 1 January 2021 the Council updated its Housing Complaints procedure to ensure it was compliant with the [Housing Ombudsman Code](#). This included amending the Stage 1 and Stage 2 timescales.

#### Stage 1

72. The below graph shows Stage 1 performance in relation to those complaints received after 1 January 2021.

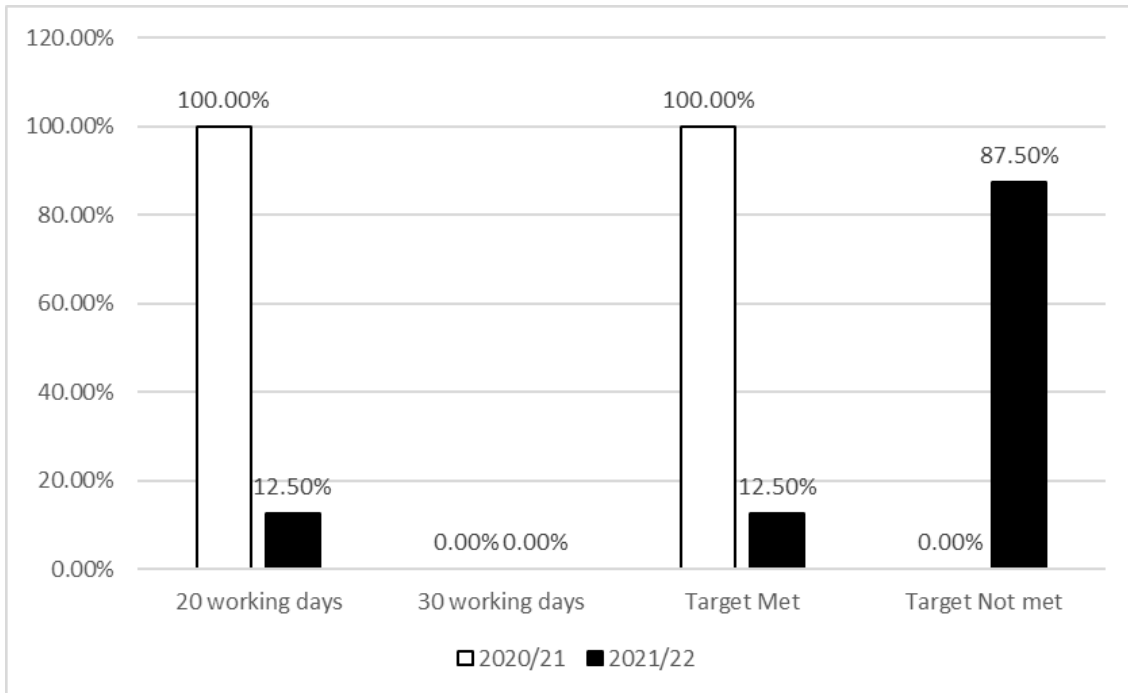
**Performance against Stage 1 response target  
(10 working days, with an extension up to 20 working days)**



#### Stage 2

73. The below graph shows Stage 2 performance in relation to those complaints received after 1 January 2021.

**Performance against Stage 2 response target  
(20 working days, with an extension up to 30 working days)**



**Further recommendations**

74. The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Housing Stage 2 response target.

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# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

## **Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to inform service users, carers, the public, Council Members and staff of the effectiveness of the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the Procedure).
2. On the 1 April 2013 the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) came into force. Part five of the Regulations deals with Complaints about Public Health Functions of Local Authorities.
3. The Council implemented a new procedure providing a local framework to ensure complaints are handled effectively and in line with the regulations.
4. The procedure aims to:
  - (a) Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users and their carers to raise complaints;
  - (b) Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
  - (c) Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
  - (d) Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
  - (e) Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to Public Health complaints and improve services as a result.
5. The Chief Executive is the designated as the 'Responsible Person' for ensuring compliance with the arrangements made under the Regulations, and in particular ensuring that action is taken if necessary in the light of the outcome of a complaint. The functions of the responsible person will usually be performed by the Director of Public Health.
6. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager is designated the 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the regulations and is responsible for managing the procedures for handling and considering complaints in accordance with the arrangements made under the Regulations.

## **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

7. Although complainants can refer their complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) from the outset, the LGSCO will not normally investigate until the Council or service provider has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they may refer the matter to the LGSCO.

## **Information and Accessibility**

8. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
9. Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
10. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.



### Summary

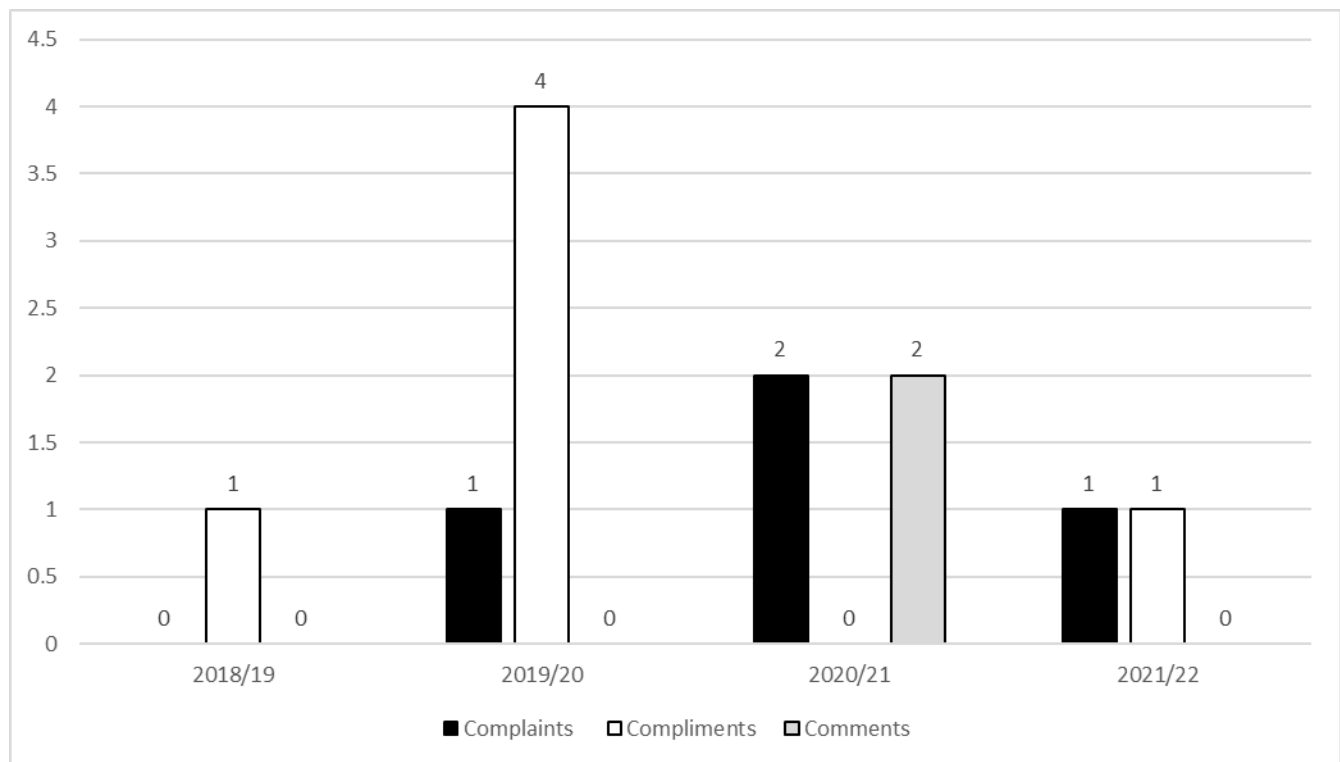
- 11. The Council received one complaint about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to two in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
- 12. The Council received one compliment about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to zero in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
- 13. The Council received zero comments about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to two in 2020/21 and zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Review of the Year

#### Breakdown of all Representations

- 14. A total of two representations were handled under the procedure during 2021/22.

**Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received**



- 15. The complaint related to the COVID-19 NHS Track and Trace programme.
- 16. The compliment related to the 0-19 Growing Healthy Service.

### **Complaint Outcomes**

17. One complaint was determined during 2021/22. It concerned the consultation process when changing provider from NECA to We Are With You and was **NOT UPHELD**.

### **Local Government Ombudsman Complaints (LGSCO) Received 2021/22**

18. No Public Health complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, the same as in 2020/21.

### **Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Outcomes (LGSCO) 2020/21**

19. No Public Health complaints were determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, the same as in 2020/21.

### **Organisational Learning**

20. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint that was concluded during 2021/22.

### **Further recommendations**

21. There are no further recommendations.

### **Performance against the Procedure**

22. While the regulations allow a maximum of six months to respond to a complaint we aim to respond to complaints within 30 working days.
23. The above complaint was responded to in 34 working days.

### **Performance Indicator for 2021/22**

24. In relation to Public Health complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received zero maladministration decisions during 2021/22.
25. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
1 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**COMPLAINTS MADE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update of the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) since the preparation of the previous report to Cabinet on 7 December 2021.
2. To provide Members with the Annual Review Letter of the LGSCO (Appendix 1).

**Summary**

3. This report sets out in abbreviated form the decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and outlines actions taken as a result.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

**Elizabeth Davison  
Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

Correspondence with the LGSCO and HOS is treated as confidential to preserve anonymity of complainants.

Lee Downey : Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Carbon Impact and Climate Change
Diversity	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Diversity.

Wards Affected	This report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there is no impact on any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	This report contributes to all the priorities in the Council Plan.
Efficiency	Efficiency issues are highlighted through complaints.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

5. Cabinet has previously resolved that they would consider reports on the outcome of cases referred to the LGSCO and HOS during the Municipal Year on a bi-annual basis.
6. The opportunity is normally taken to analyse the areas of the Council's functions where complaints have arisen. It is appropriate to do that in order to establish whether there is any pattern to complaints received or whether there is a particular Directorate affected or a type of complaint which is prevalent. If there were a significant number of cases in any one particular area, that might indicate a problem which the Council would seek to address.

### Decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS during 2021/22

7. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 16 cases were the subject of decision by the LGSCO.
8. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 2 cases were the subject of decision by the HOS.
9. The outcome of cases on which the LGSCO reached a view is as follows:

LGSCO Findings	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21	No. of cases 2019/20	No. of cases 2018/19
Closed after initial enquiries: no further action	9	4	7	10
Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction	1	1	2	2
Not upheld: no maladministration	1	2	1	3
Premature	0	0	0	4
Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice	4	2	6	10
Upheld: Maladministration, No Injustice	0	1	0	0

Upheld: maladministration and injustice - no further action, satisfactory remedy provided by the org	1	0	0	0
Upheld: not investigated - injustice remedied during Body in Jurisdiction's complaint process	0	1	0	0

10. The outcome of cases on which the HOS reached a view is as follows:

HOS Findings	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21	No. of cases 2019/20	No. of cases 2018/19
No Maladministration	0	0	1	2
Service Failure	2	1	0	2

### Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

#### ***Closed after initial enquiries: no further action***

11. The LGSCO decided not to investigate this complaint about the actions of the Council's building control officers because it was unlikely an investigation could add to the Council's response. The complainant was also not caused any personal injustice by the matter.
12. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the Council's refusal to award the complainant a COVID-19 hardship payment for the 2021/22 financial year because there was no evidence of fault in the Council's decision. The LGSCO added they would not investigate the Council's publication of misleading information on its website as the issue did not cause the complainant a significant injustice.
13. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about contact restrictions placed on the complainant by the Council because there was no evidence of fault in how the Council dealt with the matter.
14. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about how the Council dealt with planning applications for a development near the complainant's property because the last planning decision was made by the Council in 2019, the complaint was late and there were no good reasons to investigate it now. The LGSCO added they would not investigate a complaint about a recent ecology survey because the Council was not involved in this being carried out.
15. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about problems the complainant faced in registering to vote because the Council provided an explanation and the complainant did not wish to pursue the complaint further.
16. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about renewing a bus pass for an older person because there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council and insufficient evidence of injustice.

17. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the location of a street light which impacts on the complainant's property because there was not enough evidence that any fault by the Council caused the injustice the complainant claimed.
18. The LGSCO decided they would not investigate a complaint about the Council's actions regarding the placement of three children with the complainant because they would be unable to add anything significant to the Council's investigation.
19. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the Council's actions relating to how much an individual should pay for their social care, because the complaint was late and there was not good reason to accept it.

***Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction***

20. The LGSCO concluded they cannot investigate a complaint about maintenance work to Council properties next to the complainant's home because they do not have the power to investigate complaints about the management of social housing by councils.

***Not upheld: no maladministration***

21. The LGSCO did not find any fault with the Council's actions in approving planning applications for development near the complainant's property. The LGSCO found the Council properly considered the impact on surface water drainage and potential flooding of nearby properties including the complainants.

***Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice***

22. The LGSCO upheld an Adult Social Care complaint about the Council's handling of a Direct Payment between 2015 and 2018, resulting in the Council issuing the complainant an invoice for approximately £7000 for unaccounted and unauthorised spending of the Direct Payments. The LGSCO determined the Council was at fault for failing to monitor, audit and provide support on the spending of the direct payment. It was also at fault for failing to keep adequate records. The Council agreed to apologise for the distress and uncertainty this caused and reduce the outstanding debt owed.
23. The LGSCO upheld another Adult Social Care complaint regarding the Council failing to carry out its safeguarding duties towards the complainant. The complainant said the Council's actions had a negative impact on their mental health. The LGSCO found the Council at fault for not recording the rationale for its decision in accordance with its Safeguarding Policy. The Council has agreed to apologise; make a payment to recognise the uncertainty caused by the fault identified and remind staff to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy, in particular retaining complete and accurate records demonstrating how decisions are made in relation to safeguarding enquires.
24. The LGSCO upheld a further Adult Social Care complaint about the Council reducing the complainants support package without proper consideration of their needs and fettering their discretion in deciding to refuse some elements of support, unlawfully applying a blanket policy in the allocation of domestic support hours. The Council agreed to

apologise for its failure to properly reassess the complainant's care needs; review the complainant's care needs and produce a care and support plan which details, how these needs will be met, in consultation with the complainant; consider what, if any support the complainant had missed, and decide on a suitable remedy; pay the complainant £250 for their time and trouble pursuing the complaint with the Council and the Ombudsman and ensure staff undertake assessments/reviews in accordance with the law and guidance.

25. The LGSCO upheld a complaint about the Council's failure to carry out cleansing of the lane next to the complainant's home and the fact it confiscated the complainant's bin without notice, delayed in returning the bin and delayed in responding to their complaint. The LGSCO concluded this caused the complainant distress, led to them having to dispose of their own refuse and led to them going to time and trouble to pursue their complaint. The Council agreed to apologise; make a payment to the complainant and introduce a monitoring schedule to ensure the lane is cleansed fortnightly.

***Upheld: maladministration and injustice - no further action, satisfactory remedy provided by the org***

26. The LGSCO upheld a complaint about the Council's Financial Assessment Team's handling of a direct payment in relation to adult social care services. The LGSCO concluded there was evidence of delay by the Council in sending an invoice. The Council had already offered a satisfactory remedy for this complaint before the complaint came to the LGSCO offering a payment plan, an apology and £100 compensation. The LGSCO also concluded there was no fault on the Council's part in relation to the calculation of invoices or in asking for direct payments to be repaid in accordance with its policy.

## **Housing Ombudsman Services (HOS)**

### ***Service Failure***

27. The HOS found service failure in respect of the Council's handling of the resident's allegations of unacceptable staff conduct towards them. The HOS concluded that following the residents decision not to disclose their CCTV footage of the incident to the Council in order to determine the complaint it would have been reasonable for the Council to have approached the witnesses to the incident and asked for their version of events. The HOS ordered the Council to award the resident £100 and write to the resident to apologise for the limitations in its investigation.
28. The HOS found Housing Services failed to take any meaningful actions to investigate new ASB reports from a resident after mediation attempts ended, even after the resident advised how the situation had impacted their health. It also contributed to a lack of clarity on why it had decided a particular course of action, did not address their concerns about the impact of this decision and failed to offer any compensation for the errors identified through its complaints process. The HOS ordered the Council to write to the resident to apologise for the service failures identified; pay the resident compensation of £250 in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused and ensure it has procedures in place so that it is able to conduct risk assessments when residents report that they have been subject to verbal abuse or threats related to ASB.

29. The organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints should ensure there is not a re-occurrence.

#### **LGSCO's Annual Review letter 2022.**

30. In their annual review letter (Appendix 1) the LGSCO focus on three key statistics and compare the Council's performance against that of other Unitary Council's (further information is available from the LGSCO's interactive map).
31. 83% of complaints the LGSCO investigated were upheld, compared to 64% in similar authorities (The LGSCO uphold complaints when they find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before they investigated).
32. The LGSCO found that in 20% of upheld cases the Council had already provided a satisfactory remedy, compared to an average of 12% in similar authorities.
33. The LGSCO were satisfied the Council successfully implemented their recommendations in 100% of cases compared to an average of 99% in similar authorities. However, they did note there was again a delay in implementing their recommendations in two cases and asked the Council to consider how it might make improvements to reduce delays in the remedy process.

#### **Analysis**

34. The organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints should ensure there is no re-occurrence.
35. The delay in implementing the LGSCO's remedies was, in part, as a result of the pandemic. The Complaints Manager has highlighted this issue with officers responsible for implementing remedies to complaints agreed with the LGSCO in order to reduce delays in the remedy process.

#### **Outcome of Consultation**

36. The issues contained within this report do not require formal consultation.



20 July 2022

*By email*

Mr Williams  
Chief Executive  
Darlington Borough Council

Dear Mr Williams

### **Annual Review letter 2022**

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2022. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

### **Complaint statistics**

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 27 July 2022. This useful tool places all our data and information

about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

### **Your organisation's performance**

I welcome that your Council agreed to, and implemented, the recommendations we made in three cases during the year, however, it is disappointing that in two of these cases remedies were not completed within the agreed timescales. I acknowledge the pressures councils are under, but such delays add to the injustice already suffered by complainants.

This is the third consecutive year where I have raised concerns about delays in the remedy process and yet these delays persist. I once again invite the Council to consider how it might make improvements to act on our recommendations within the agreed timescales. If the Council consider the proposed timescales are not achievable, it can request further time to complete the recommendations when it responds to our draft decisions.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

I know your organisation, like ours, will have been through a period of adaptation as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic lifted. While some pre-pandemic practices returned, many new ways of working are here to stay. It is my continued view that complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic. Through the lens of this recent upheaval and adjustment, I urge you to consider how your organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility. Properly resourced complaint functions that are well-connected and valued by service areas, management teams and elected members are capable of providing valuable insight about an organisation's performance, detecting early warning signs of problems and offering opportunities to improve service delivery.

I want to support your organisation to harness the value of complaints and we continue to develop our programme of support. Significantly, we are working in partnership with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code. We are aiming to consolidate our approaches and therefore simplify guidance to enable organisations to provide an effective, quality response to each and every complaint. We will keep you informed as this work develops, and expect that, once launched, we will assess your compliance with the code during our investigations and report your performance via this letter.

An already established tool we have for supporting improvements in local complaint handling is our successful training programme. We adapted our courses during the Covid-19 pandemic to an online format and successfully delivered 122 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,600 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

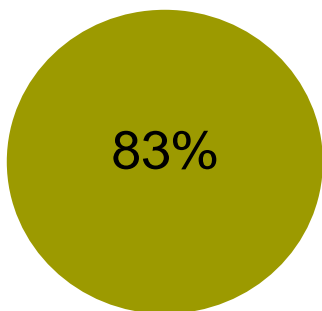
We were pleased to deliver an online complaint handling course to your staff during the year. I welcome your Council's investment in good complaint handling training and trust the course was useful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

### Complaints upheld



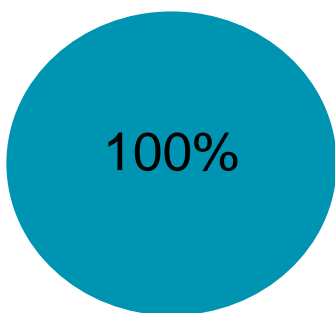
**83%** of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **64%** in similar organisations.

**5**  
upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **6** investigations for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



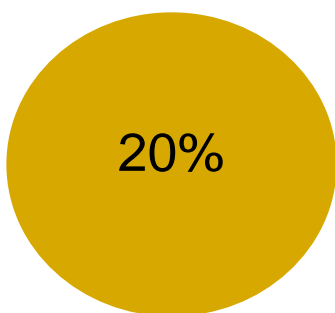
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **3** compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

### Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **20%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **12%** in similar organisations.

**1**  
satisfactory remedy decision

Statistics are based on a total of **5** upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
1 SEPTEMBER, 2022**

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**INVESTMENT FUND - UPDATE**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.

**Summary**

2. Attached at **Annex 1** is a report of the Group Director of Operations which is being considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 September, 2022 in relation to progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members consider the attached report and forward any views to Cabinet for consideration.

**Elizabeth Davison  
Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	No impact as a result of this report
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	No impact as a result of this report
Diversity	No impact as a result of this report
Wards Affected	No impact as a result of this report
Groups Affected	No impact as a result of this report
Budget and Policy Framework	There is not impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The Investment fund is being utilised to assist with the financial stability of the council by maximising investment returns. The fund is also enabling economic growth by facilitating development.
Efficiency	The utilisation of the Investment Fund is likely to increase Council income.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Scott Durham,  
Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Elizabeth Davison,  
Group Director of Operations**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Cabinet on progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.

**Summary**

2. In November 2016 the Council established an Investment Fund to be used for innovative investment opportunities beyond the traditional Treasury Management Strategy in order to achieve greater returns given the low returns on investment.
3. The fund provision of £50m is being utilised as envisaged in the original reports to Council to include Joint Venture (JV) vehicles and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on JV's are anticipated to be over £6m and three of the schemes have completed with the investment fully repaid and recycled back into the fund.
4. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the joint venture schemes construction timescales, they are now back on track and sales are buoyant.
5. The Investment Fund is currently funding nine schemes as detailed in the report.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet note the use of the Investment Fund and the returns achieved through the joint venture vehicles.

**Reasons**

7. The recommendation is supported:-
  - (a) To keep Cabinet informed of progress made on opportunities undertaken and investment returns.

- (b) To increase development opportunities and ultimately income for the Council.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

- (i) Council report – 24 November 2016 – Investment opportunities
- (ii) Council report – 29 November 2018 – Investment opportunities update and request to increase the fund.

Brett Nielsen : Extension 5403

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no anticipated impacts as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	There are no specific implications as a result of this report
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	As this report is providing an update on the financing of schemes there is no impact as a result of this report.
Diversity	There is no anticipated impact as a result of this report
Wards Affected	No anticipated impact on an individual area as a result of this report
Groups Affected	No anticipated impact on specific groups as a result of this report
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The Investment Fund is being utilised to assist with the financial stability of the council by maximising investment returns. The fund is also enabling economic growth by facilitating development
Efficiency	The utilisation of the Investment Fund is likely to increase Council income
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers



## MAIN REPORT

### Background

8. In November 2016 Council agreed to the establishment of a Capital Investment Fund and following the successful implementation agreed to increase the fund to £50m on 29 November 2018.
9. It has been agreed the fund is recyclable, so as the life of an investment comes to an end and repayment is made, it will be recycled back into the Investment Fund for further utilisation. Any future scheme would of course still require a full detailed business case report to Cabinet. The Economic Growth and Finance Teams continue to look for new opportunities to provide development and financial returns to the Council through the use of the Investment Fund.
10. Since the establishment of the fund, Cabinet have agreed to 14 uses, five of which have completed with the investment recycled back into the fund. One of the five completed investments has completed during the last year, Middleton St George JV, with all houses sold and the investment fully repaid. The remaining nine are summarised below:-

Investment	Cabinet Agreement Date	Agreed Amount £m's	Repaid	Balance £m's
Markets (MAMD Ltd)	20/09/17	1.80	0	1.80
Neasham Road – Relocation of Cattle Mart	06/03/18	3.14	0	3.14
JV - West Park	03/04/18	12.00	5.90	6.10
JV - ESH/BC North East	03/12/19	9.50	0	9.50
Land Acquisition – Faverdale	31/03/20	1.30	0	1.30
JV - Neasham Road	15/09/20	8.50	0	8.50
Burtree Lane Garden Village	05/10/21	0.73	0	0.73
Feethams House	11/01/22	1.71	0	1.71
Land at Blackwell	22/07/22	0.70	0	0.70
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39.38</b>	<b>5.90</b>	<b>33.48</b>

11. The JV schemes are projected to provide a pre-tax return on investment of over £6 million once all houses have been sold. The three schemes that have already completed are estimated to provide a pre-tax return of over £1.9m once the accounts are finalised with £1.6m received to date (£1.345m after corporation tax).

### Investment update

12. The following paragraphs provide an update on the individual schemes committed against the Investment Fund since the last report to Cabinet in September 2021.

### **Market Asset Management**

13. In 2017 the Council entered into a lease with Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM) for the management and refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market and the management and improvement of Darlington's outdoor market.
14. As at the end of June 2022, MAM have drawn down £1.376m of the £1.8m loan which has been used to make physical improvements to the market building, including six new street food stalls, a new bar facility, new toilets, enhanced entrance areas, full mechanical and electrical improvements, the installation of a bio-mass boiler and repairs to the market roof. Further improvements planned to commence in August 2022 include ground floor enhancements, further improvements to entrances, café unit, basement bar and accessible, public and trader toilet improvements. Works are due to be completed by December 2022.

### **Neasham Road: Linked to Relocation of Cattle Mart**

15. In March 2018 Cabinet agreed to purchase the land at Neasham Road from the Darlington Farmers Auction Mart and others to help facilitate the move out of the town centre. The acquisition of the land at Neasham Road not only assisted with this priority but enables the Council to bring forward a significant additional development of affordable and social housing to meet an identified need within the borough
16. £3.14m was allocated from the investment fund being the balance of funding required for the move. The funding will be repaid from Section 106 receipts from affordable housing along with any capital receipts received from the site. This scheme is now progressing with the construction underway for 155 privately owned homes delivered by a JV company (see below) and construction of 150 Council owned affordable houses is due to commence in early August.

### **West Park Joint Venture**

17. The Council entered a JV company with our framework partners to build and sell houses at West Park and agreed funding of £12m to facilitate this. This scheme is part of the larger West Park Village and will be completed over a seven-year period. The Council is anticipated to receive a pre-tax profit on the venture of £2.1m, but it is anticipated returns will be higher than originally anticipated when the scheme is complete.
18. The site continues to see high levels of interest and has sold all but one of the properties available for sale in 2022 and reservations have been made against the 2023 releases.

### **Esh DBC JV Limited**

19. Cabinet approved the establishment of a JV company in December 2019 to provide the infrastructure, build and sell homes under an investment programme within the North East under the company name Esh DBC JV Limited.
20. This company takes a longer-term view and is not site specific which enables funds to be reinvested over a longer term. All sites are subject to qualifying investment criteria for

residential development and it is envisaged the sites would be outside the boundaries of Darlington but within the North East region.

21. The company is based on a 50:50 split between the Council and Esh Homes Ltd with the company delivering profits equally the two parties. The estimated average pre-tax profit share for the Council per annum is £1m, however cashflows will be recycled into new land and WIP until the fourth year of operation when the first dividend of £1m is anticipated.
22. The company is still in its infancy however one site has been purchased for the development of 75 houses in the Gateshead area. Good progress at this site, has all houses available for sale in 2022 sold, with further reservations made against the 2023 release.

#### **Land Purchase – Land at Faverdale**

23. The Council acquired 74 acres of land for employment use to the east of Faverdale East Business Park following approval in March 2020. Cabinet agreed in October 2021 to seek expressions of interest for a preferred developer of the site which has been marketed through informal tender requesting unconditional offers for the site. The closing date for the tender is 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, at which point submissions will be analysed before returning to Cabinet to consider options.

#### **Neasham Road Joint Venture**

24. Cabinet agreed to establishing a JV company with our framework partners to build and sell houses on the Neasham Road site. The company has been set up and infrastructure works are progressing well, with all the properties that will be available for sale in 2022 already sold and reservations made against the 2023 release. Pre-tax profits from the site are anticipated at £1.1m.

#### **Burtree Lane Garden Village**

25. The Council have engaged the services of ESH Homes Limited to help facilitate an early planning application for Council owned land at Faverdale. This forms part of the Burtree Lane Garden Village site, which subject to planning will provide approximately 188 new homes and provide a capital receipt to the Council as the site is developed. This receipt will be used to repay the investment from the Investment Fund.

#### **Feethams House**

26. Cabinet agreed to the repayment of £1.7m of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to the Government received for the construction of Feethams House, to facilitate the temporary use of the building by the Treasury and Other Government Departments. This repayment was required as the change in use no longer met the ERDF funding criteria to provide high quality office accommodation to small and medium enterprises. The grant is to be repaid over a three year term and will be reimbursed through rental income received from the Darlington Economic Campus occupants.

## **Land at Blackwell**

27. Cabinet agreed to the disposal of 5.2 hectares of land on the former Blackwell Grange golf course for housing development. It was also agreed to undertake feasibility works to develop a plan for parkland restoration surrounding the Blackwell Grange Hotel, funded from the Investment Fund and to be repaid from the capital receipt on sale of the land. The sale of the land will fund the wider restoration of the parkland and retain historic pleasure walks and landscaping features.

## **Summary**

28. The Investment Fund has been used for 14 schemes to date five of which have been recycled back into the fund.
29. The agreed Investment Fund of £50m has a commitment against it of £33.48m, leaving a balance of £16.52m uncommitted.
30. The JV schemes are anticipated to generate over £6m in pre-tax profit dividend to assist the Medium Term Financial Plan, along with a further surplus on loan repayments.
31. The Investment Fund is being utilised as envisaged facilitating wide economic benefits as well as a direct positive impact on the Councils financial position.

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**1 September 2022**

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**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –**  
**WORK PROGRAMME**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the next Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included.

**Summary**

2. Members are requested to consider the attached draft work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the next Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee.
3. Once the work programme has been approved by this Scrutiny Committee, any additional areas of work which Members wish to add to the agreed work programme will require the completion of a quad of aims in accordance with the previously approved procedure.

**Recommendation**

4. Members are requested to consider and approve the attached draft work programme as the agreed work programme and consider any additional items which they might wish to include.

**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Background Papers**

There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

Shirley Wright: Extension 5998

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
6. The Council Plan sets the vision and strategic direction for the Council through to May 2023, with its overarching focus being 'Delivering Success for Darlington'.
7. In approving the Council Plan, Members have agreed to the vision for Darlington which is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.
8. The vision for the Economy Portfolio is :-

**'a borough where economic growth is high and the benefits are enjoyed by all residents'**

by delivering

- More sustainable and well paid jobs
- More businesses
- More homes

9. The vision for the Resources Portfolio is :-

**'a Council that is financially stable and delivering much needed services and support for the Borough'**

### Forward Plan and Additional Items

10. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims. A revised process for adding an item to a previously approved work programme, has been agreed by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group.
11. Details of the items included on the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 2** for information.

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## ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

	Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	Scrutiny's Role
<b>RESOURCES</b>				
	Performance Management Framework	Work to be undertaken to look at relevant Pl's. Informal meeting to be arranged	Relevant Assistant Directors	To understand/monitor and challenge the indicators
	Medium-Term Financial Plan - Monitoring	Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee	Brett Nielsen	To contribute and challenge the Medium-Term Financial Plan and assist with the implementation and development of the required savings
	Medium-Term Financial Plan	December – February 2022/23	Brett Nielsen	To provide a response to Cabinet on the proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan
	Capital Programme and project Position Statement	Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee	Anthony Hewitt	To look at the position
	Complaints, Compliments and Comments - Annual Report 2019/20	1 September 2022	Lee Downey	To look at the position

	Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman	1 September 2022	Lee Downey	To consider the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and forward any view to Cabinet
	Investment Fund	1 September 2022	Brett Nielsen	To consider progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.
	Council Tax Support Scheme	3 November 2022	Anthony Sandys	To provide comment to Cabinet on the proposed scheme
	Customer Services and Digital Strategy	3 November 2022	Anthony Sandys	To brief Members on the work being undertaken
<b>ECONOMY</b>				
106	Economic Strategy	3 November 2022	David Hand	Development of Strategy
114	Housing Strategy	TBC	David Hand	Development of the Strategy and Actions
209	Climate Change	On-going	Cabinet Member	To update on the work of the Review Group
	Levelling Up	3 November 2022	Mark Ladyman	
	Business Week 2022	Presentation to be arranged October 2022	Mark Ladyman	To update Scrutiny

	Markets Update	Presentation to be arranged November 2022	Mark Ladyman	To update Scrutiny on compliance with the contract
	Towns Fund	Presentation to be arranged November 2022	Mark Ladyman	To update Scrutiny

**ARCHIVED ITEMS**

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>				
	Sickness Absence Year-end turn out	Briefing note circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee	Brett Nielsen	N/A
	Health and Safety Year-end turn out	Briefing note circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee	Brett Nielsen	N/A