



# **DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

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

## Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Public Information and Accessibility.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Complaints Information and Organisational Learning .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview of Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Children &amp; Adult Services up to 31 May 2021.....</i>	<i>.9</i>
<i>Economic Growth &amp; Neighbourhood Services up to 31 May 2021.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Resources up to 31 May 2021.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>Operations Group.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>People Group.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Services Group.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Further Recommendations.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Performance against Local Performance Indicators .....</b>	<b>57</b>

## **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.

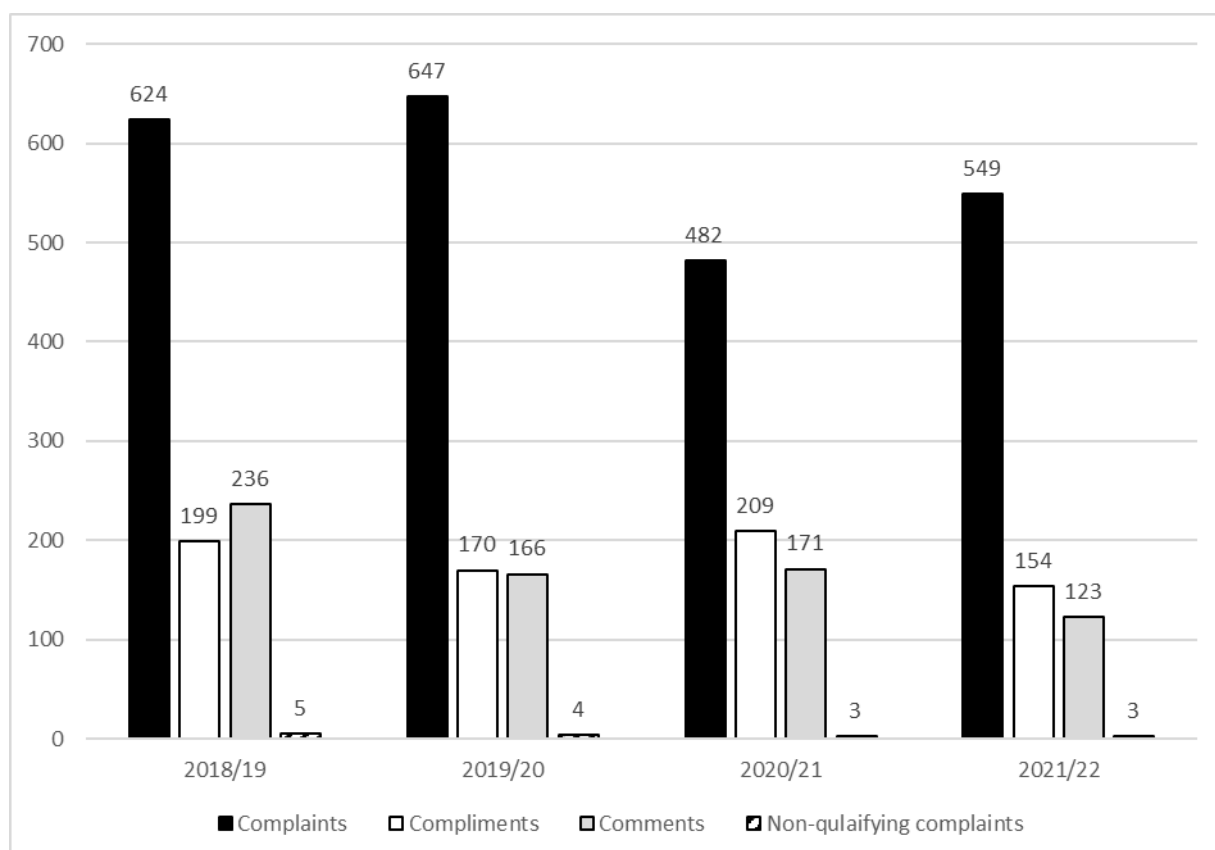
8. Information is available on the Council's website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in 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

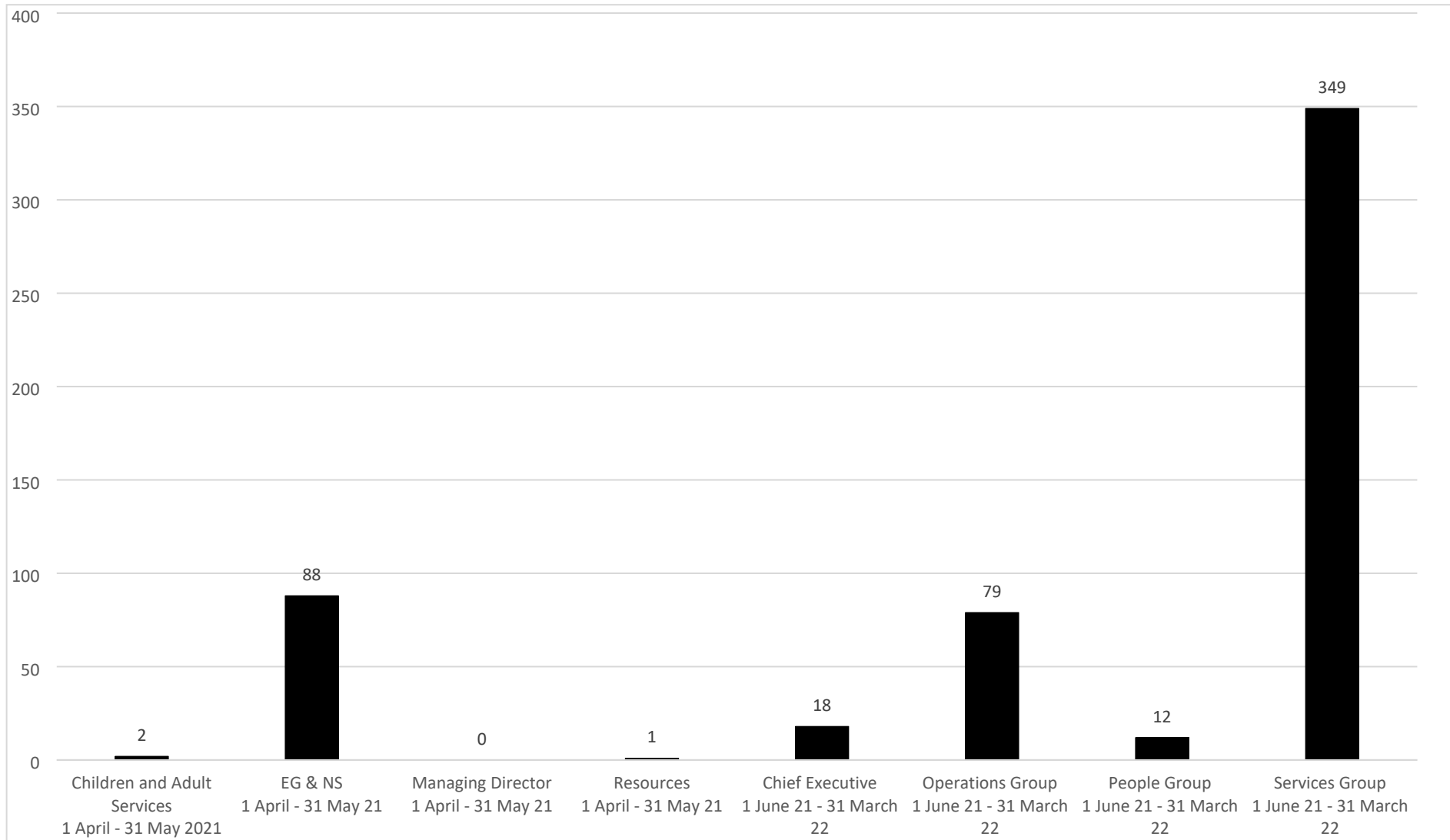
### Overview of Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

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

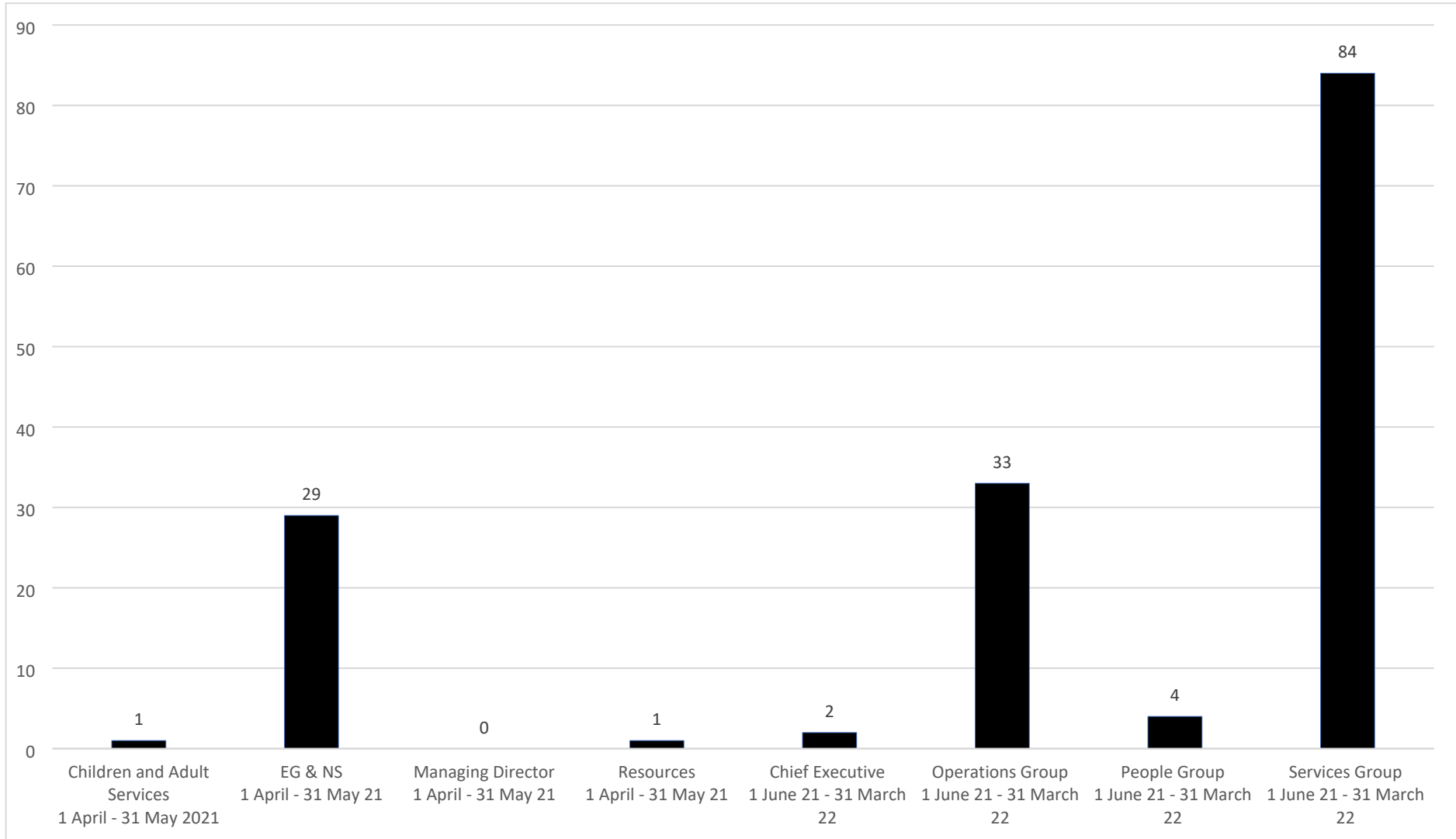


### Corporate Complaints by Department



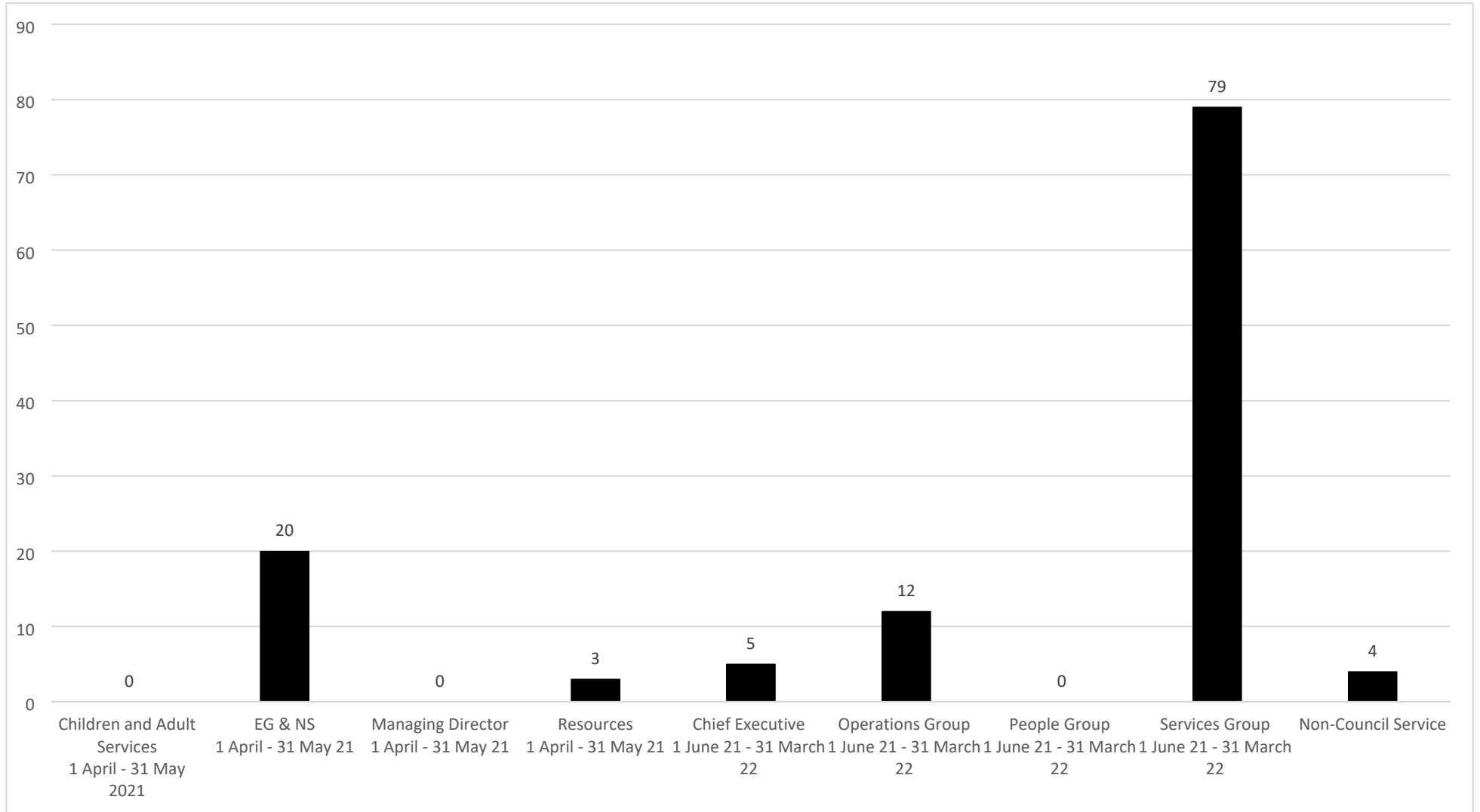
*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.*

### 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



*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>

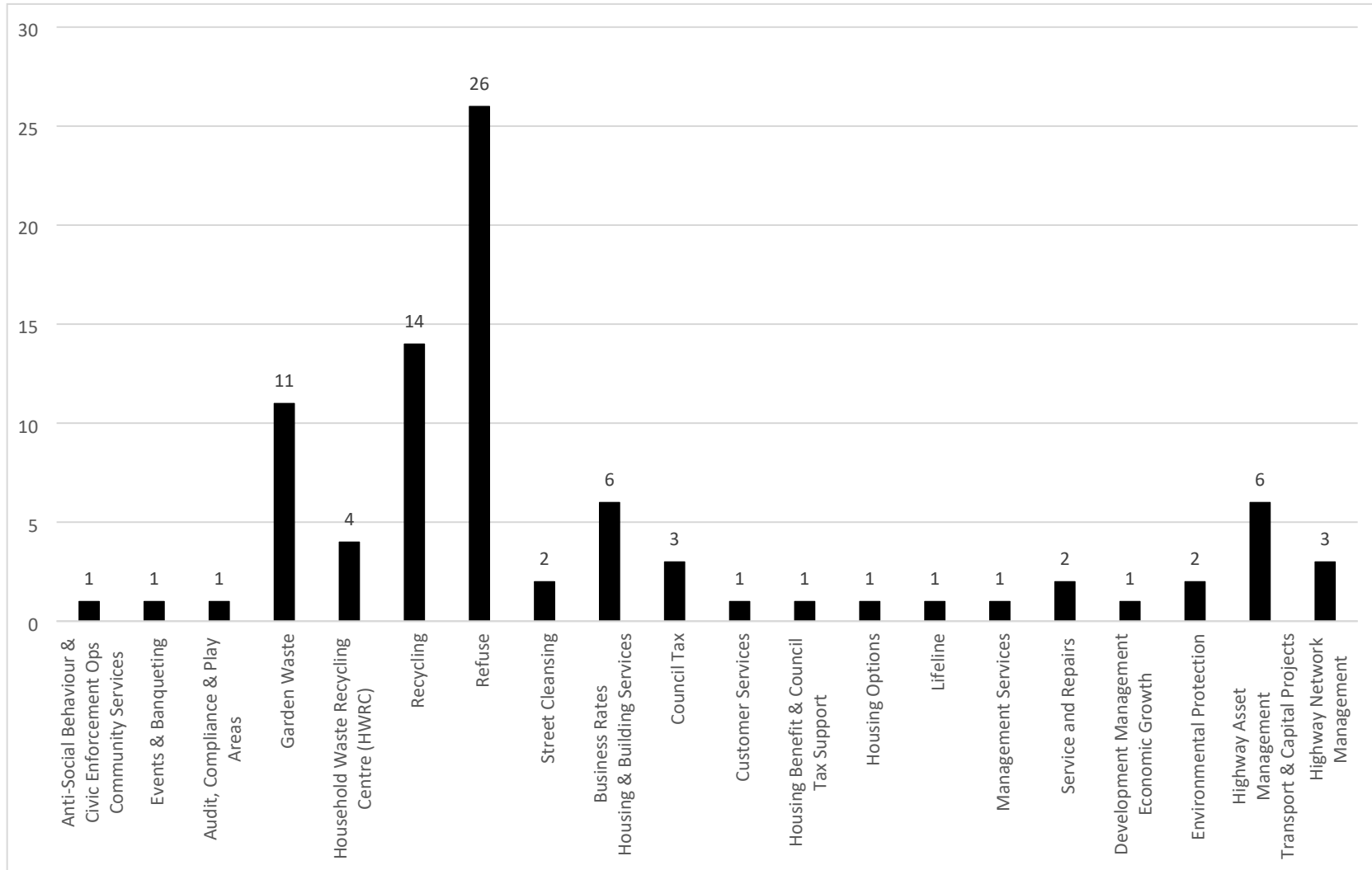
#### Organisational Learning

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.

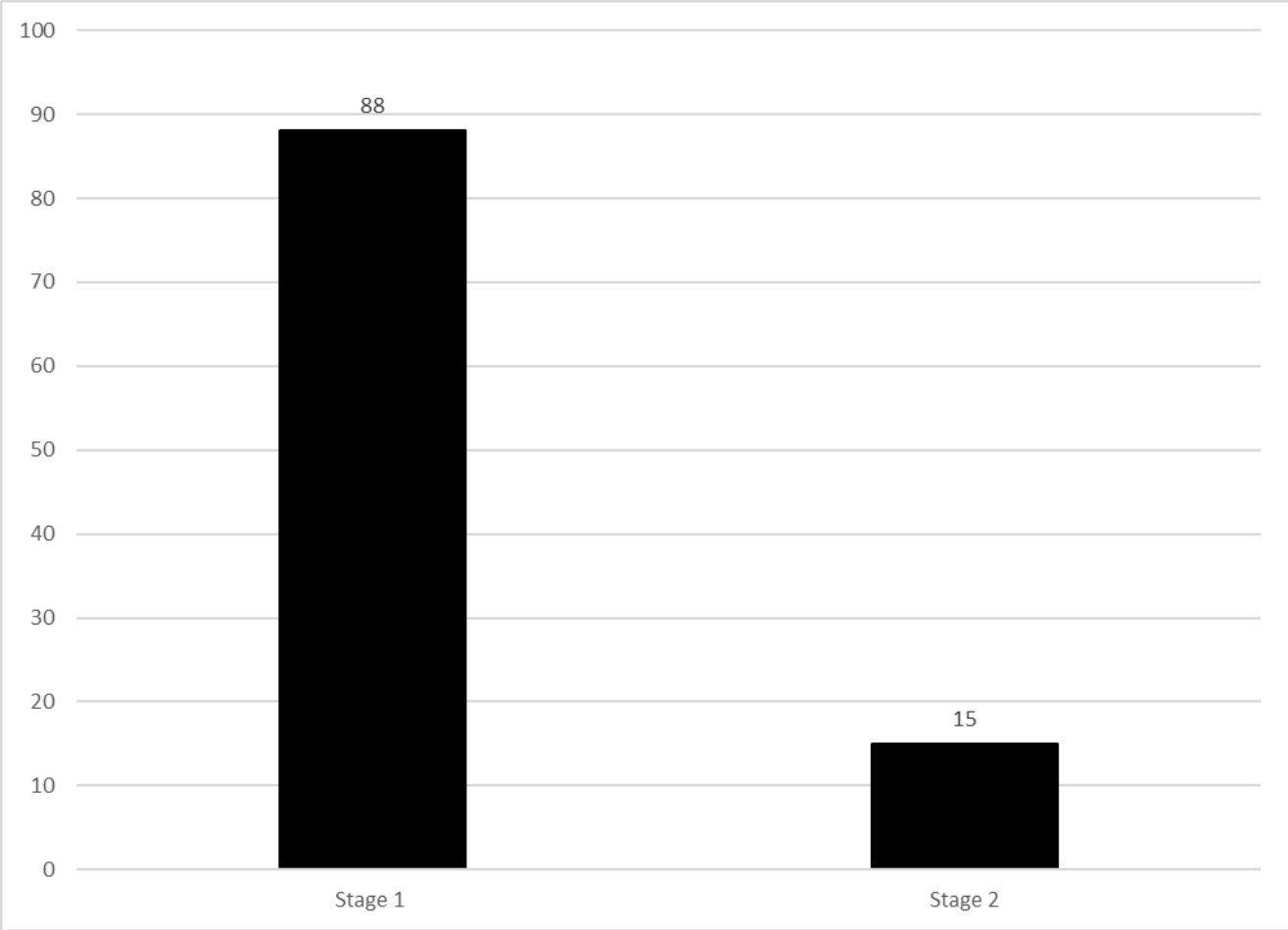
*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

### Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

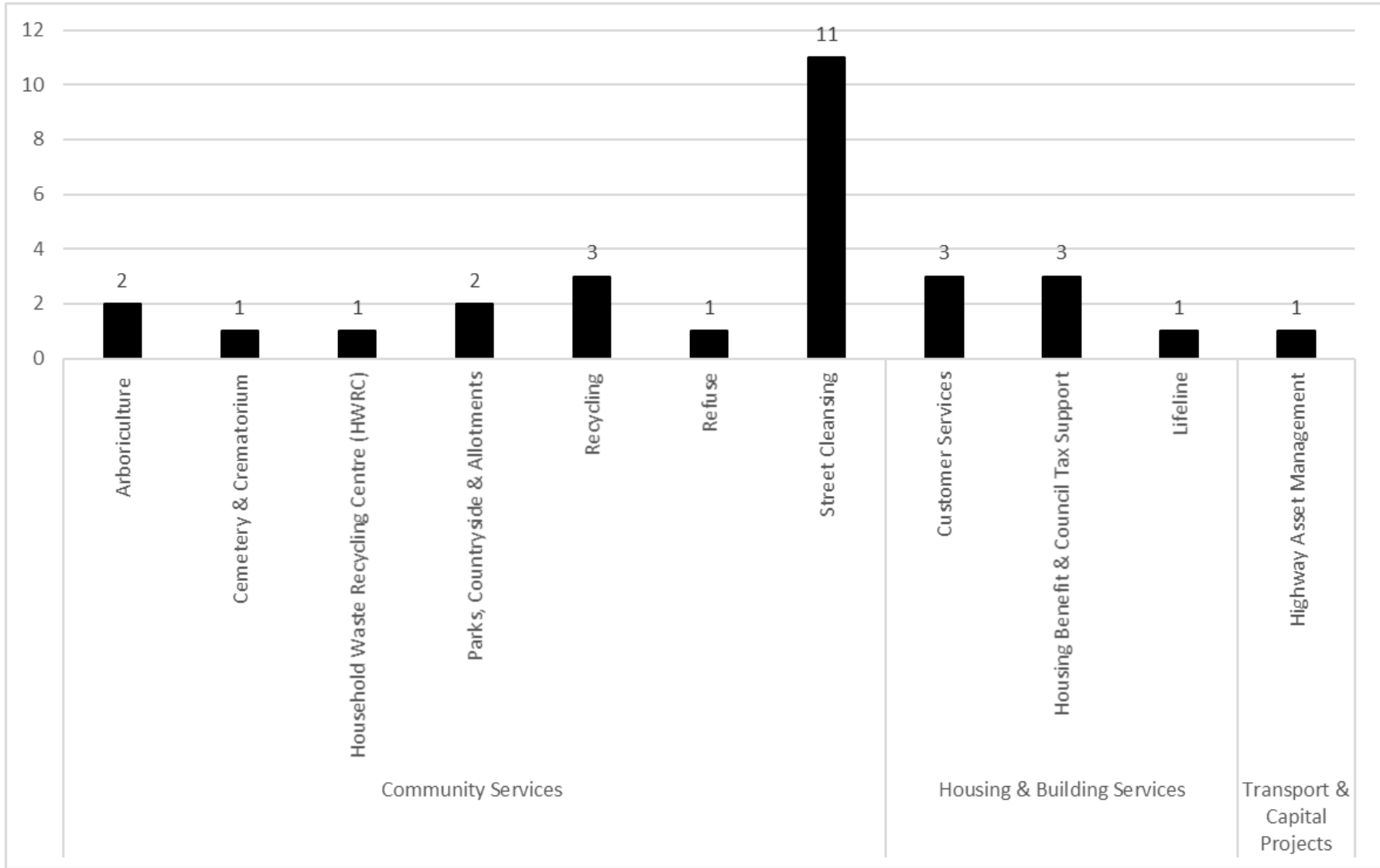
#### Complaints by Service Area/Team



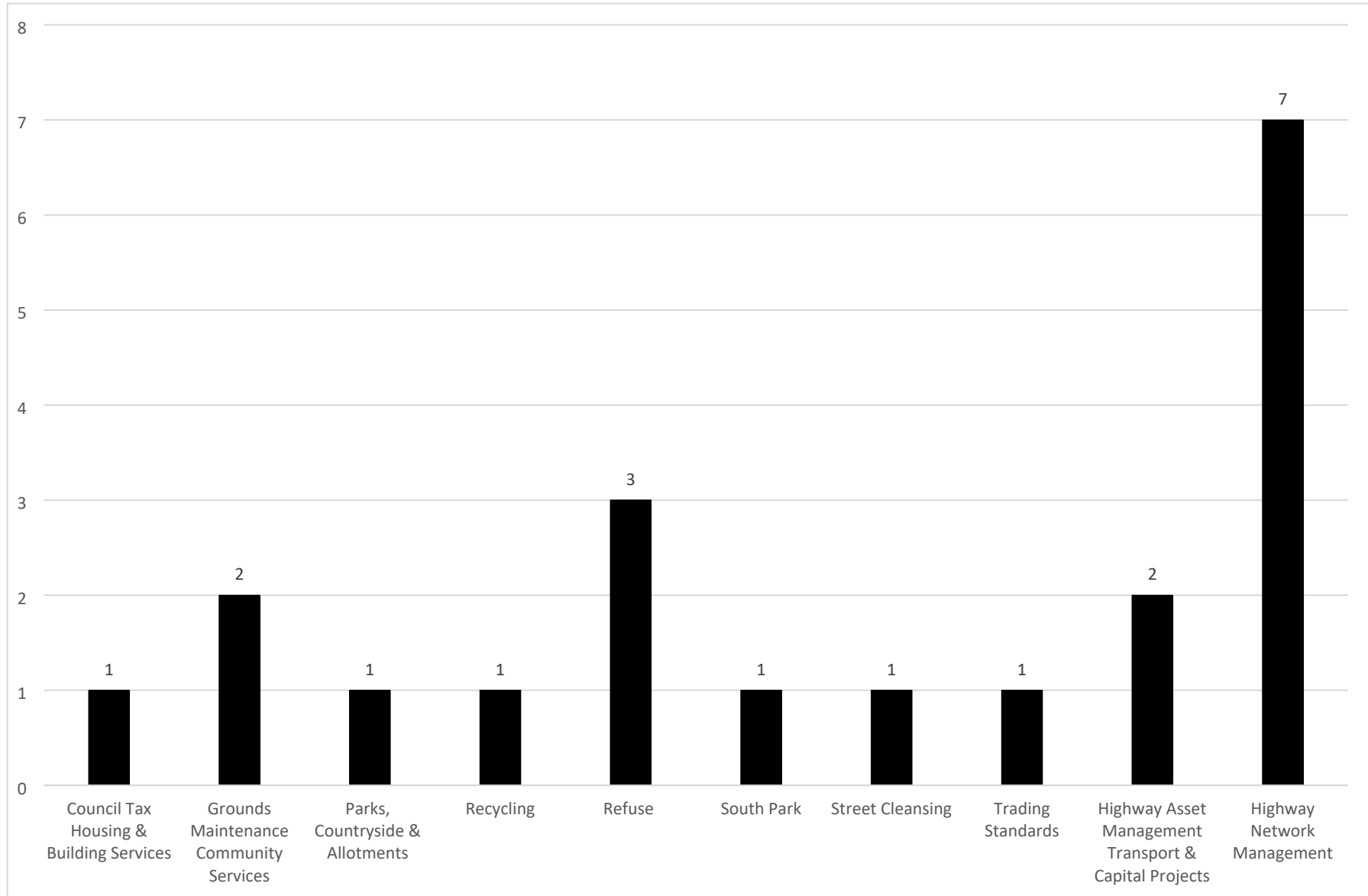
Complaints by Stage



### 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>

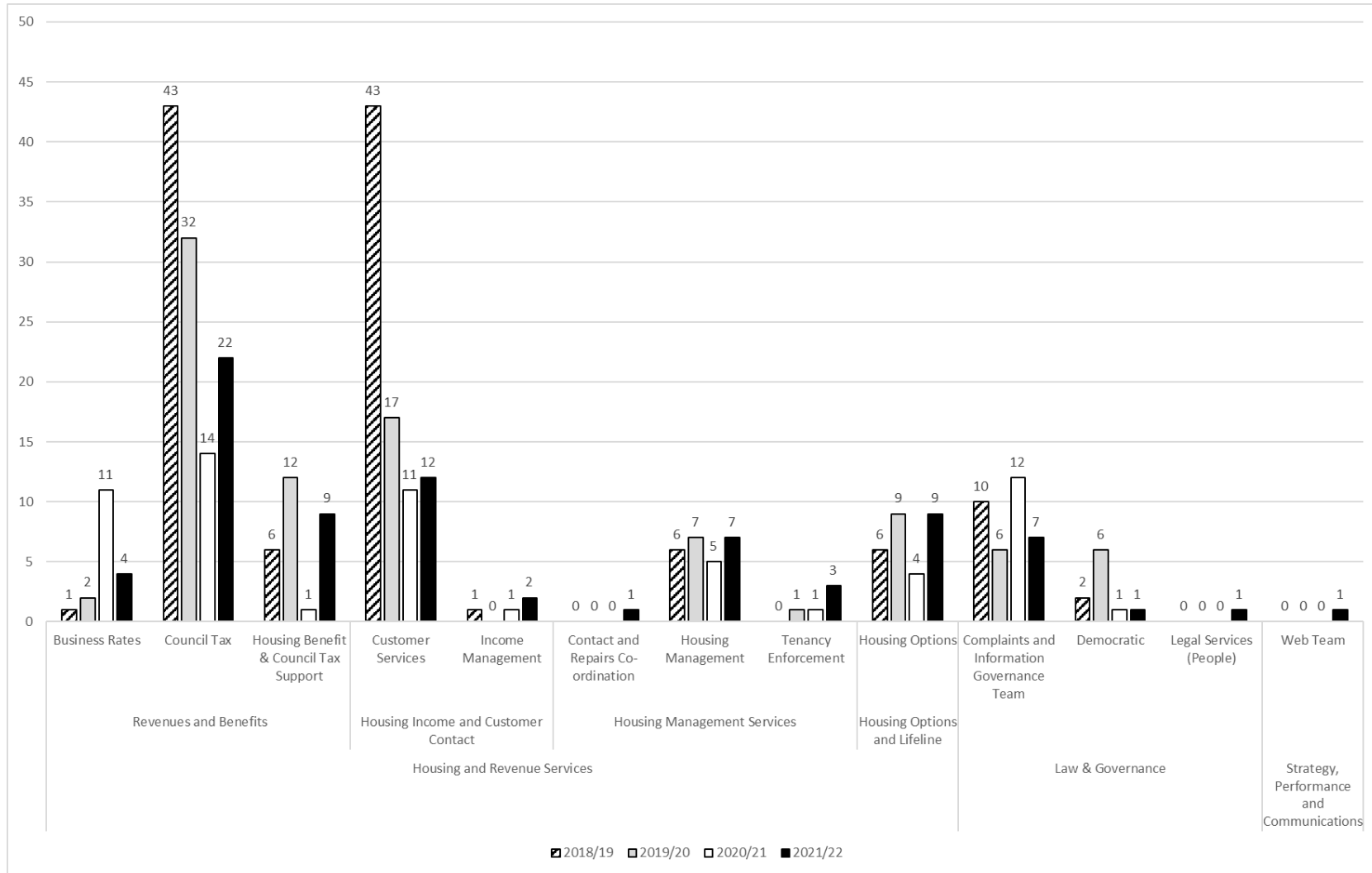
#### Organisational learning

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

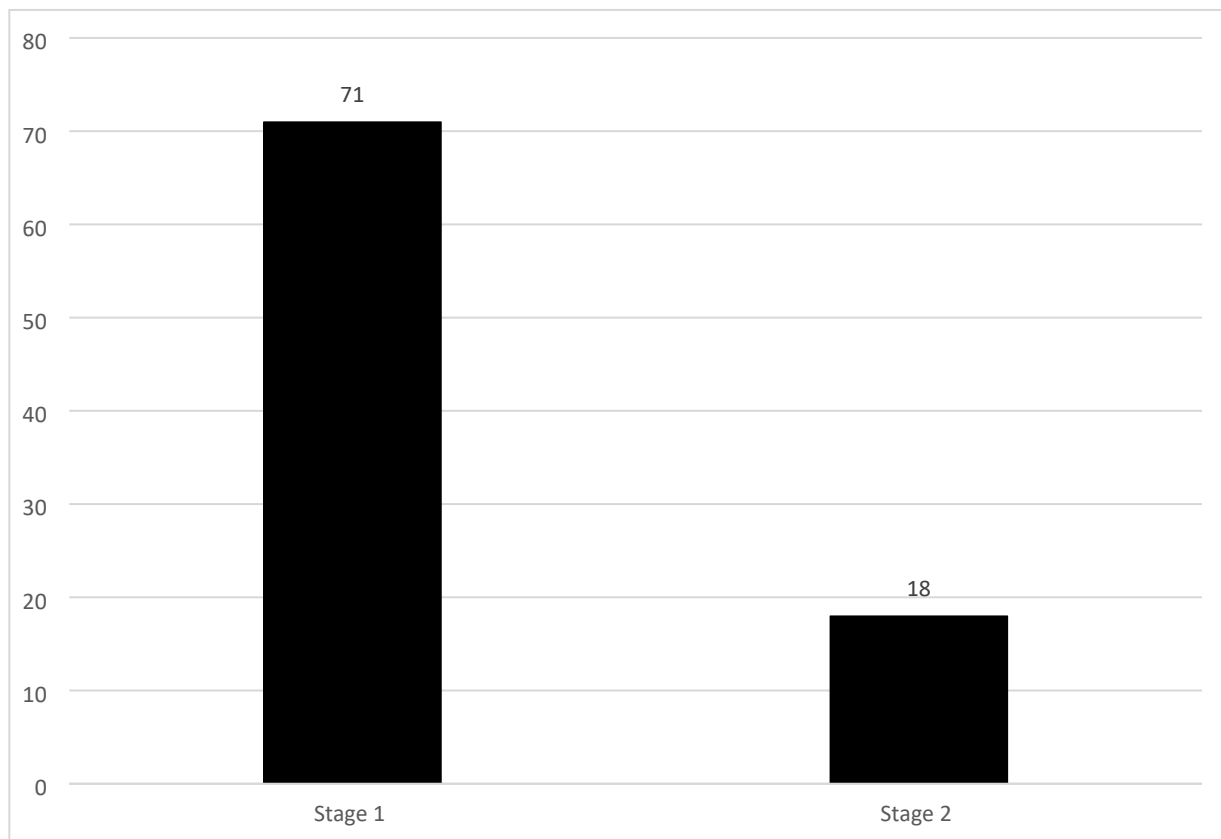
#### Complaints by Service Area/Team



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.

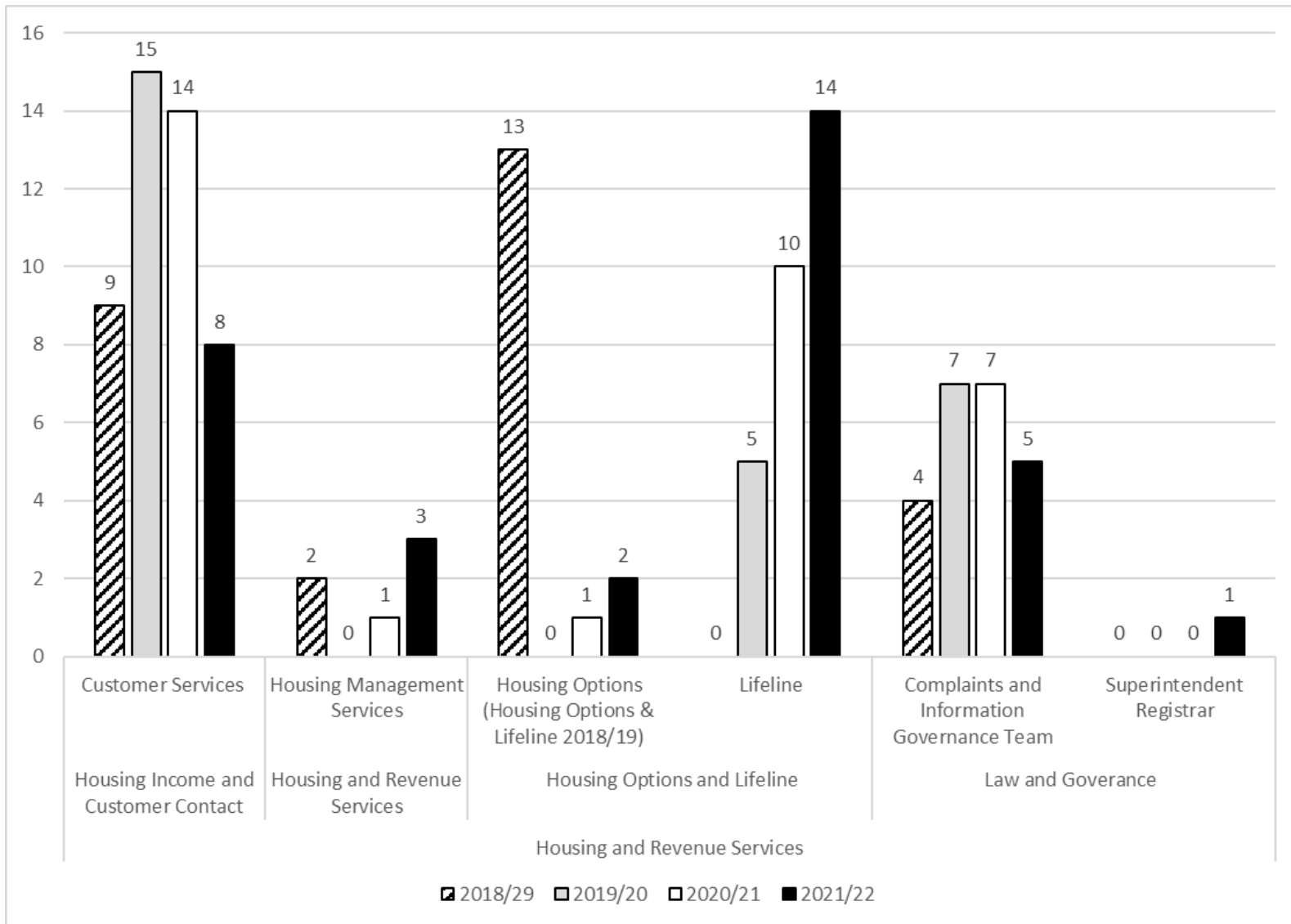
- 43. Legal Services (People) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
- 44. The Web Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Complaints by Stage



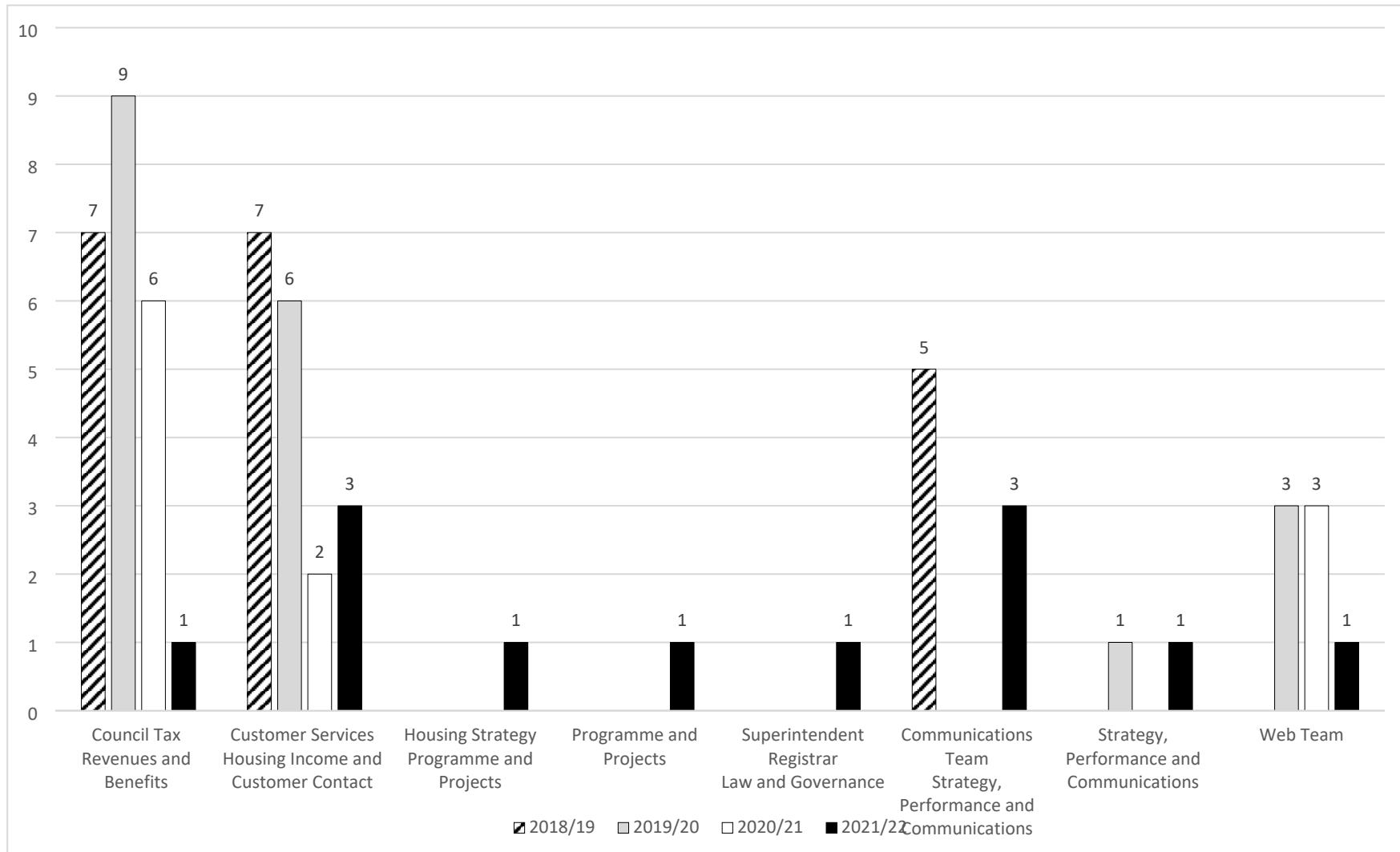
*N.B. Eight complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2.*

**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>

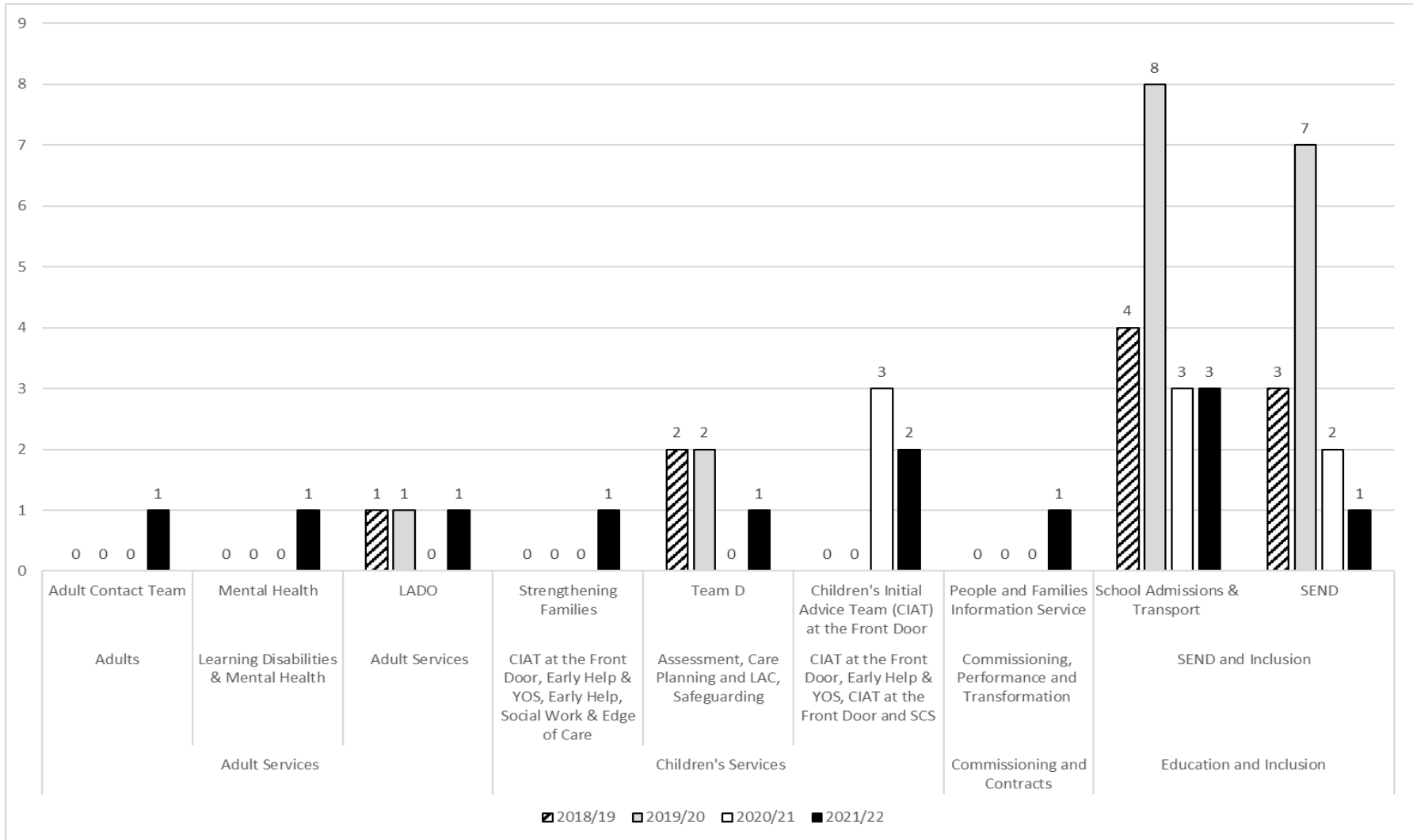
#### Stage 2 Outcomes

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**

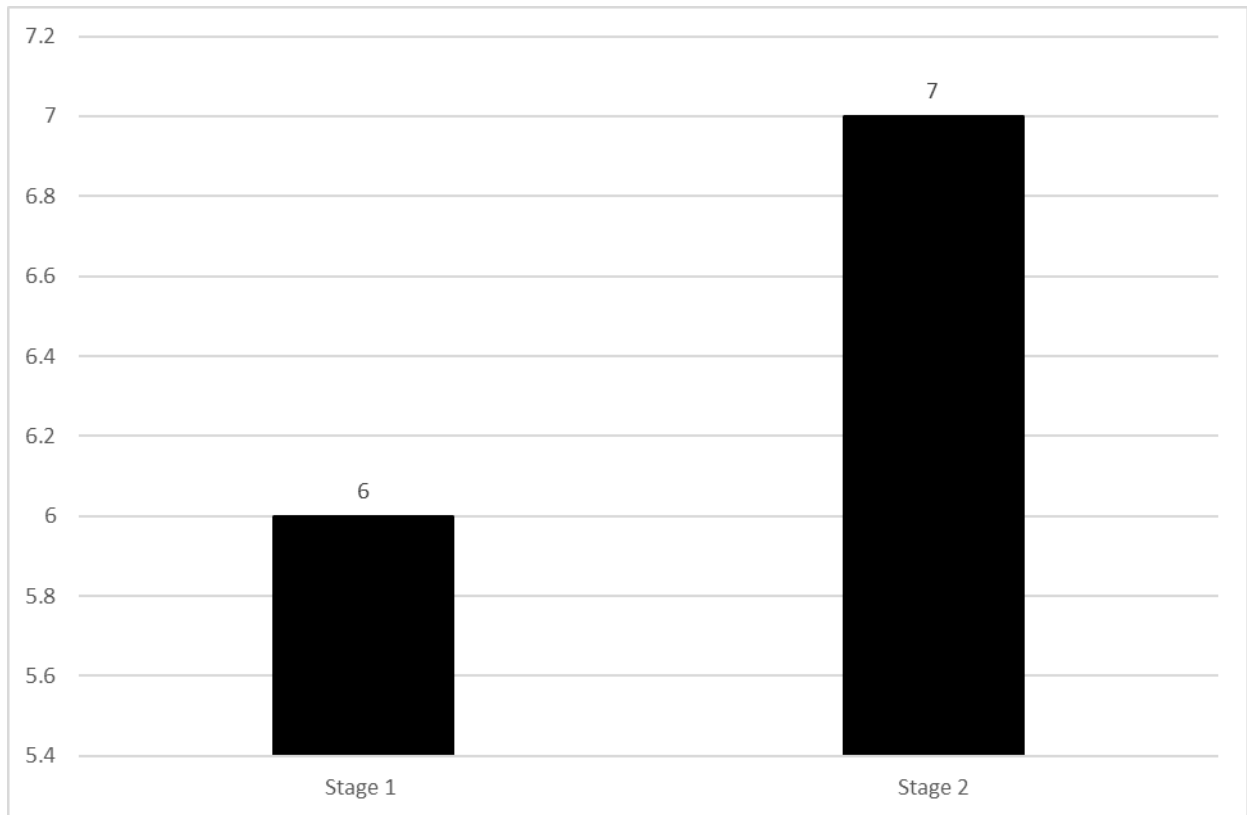
60. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational 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**



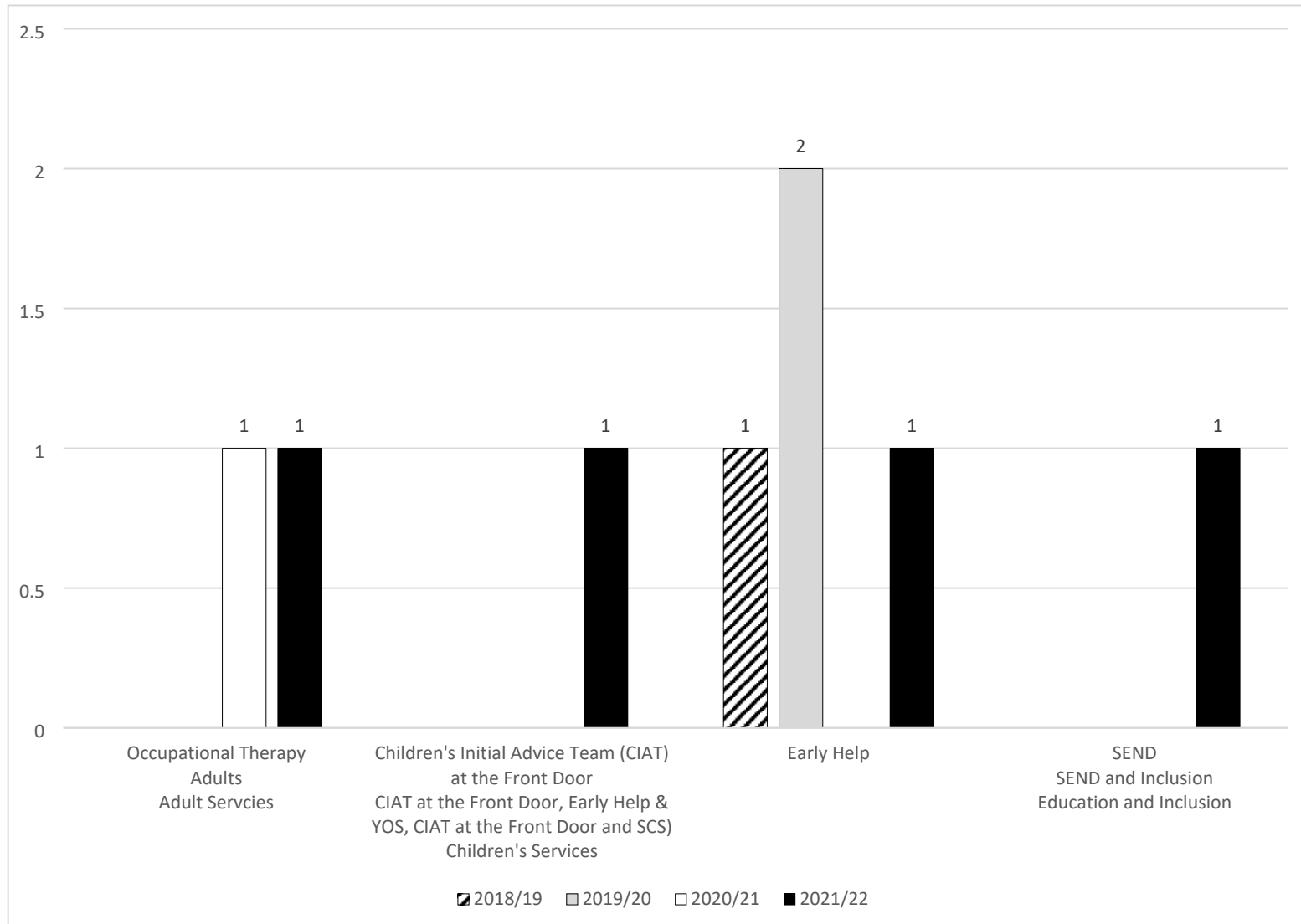
67. Adult Contact Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
68. Mental Health received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
69. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) received 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>

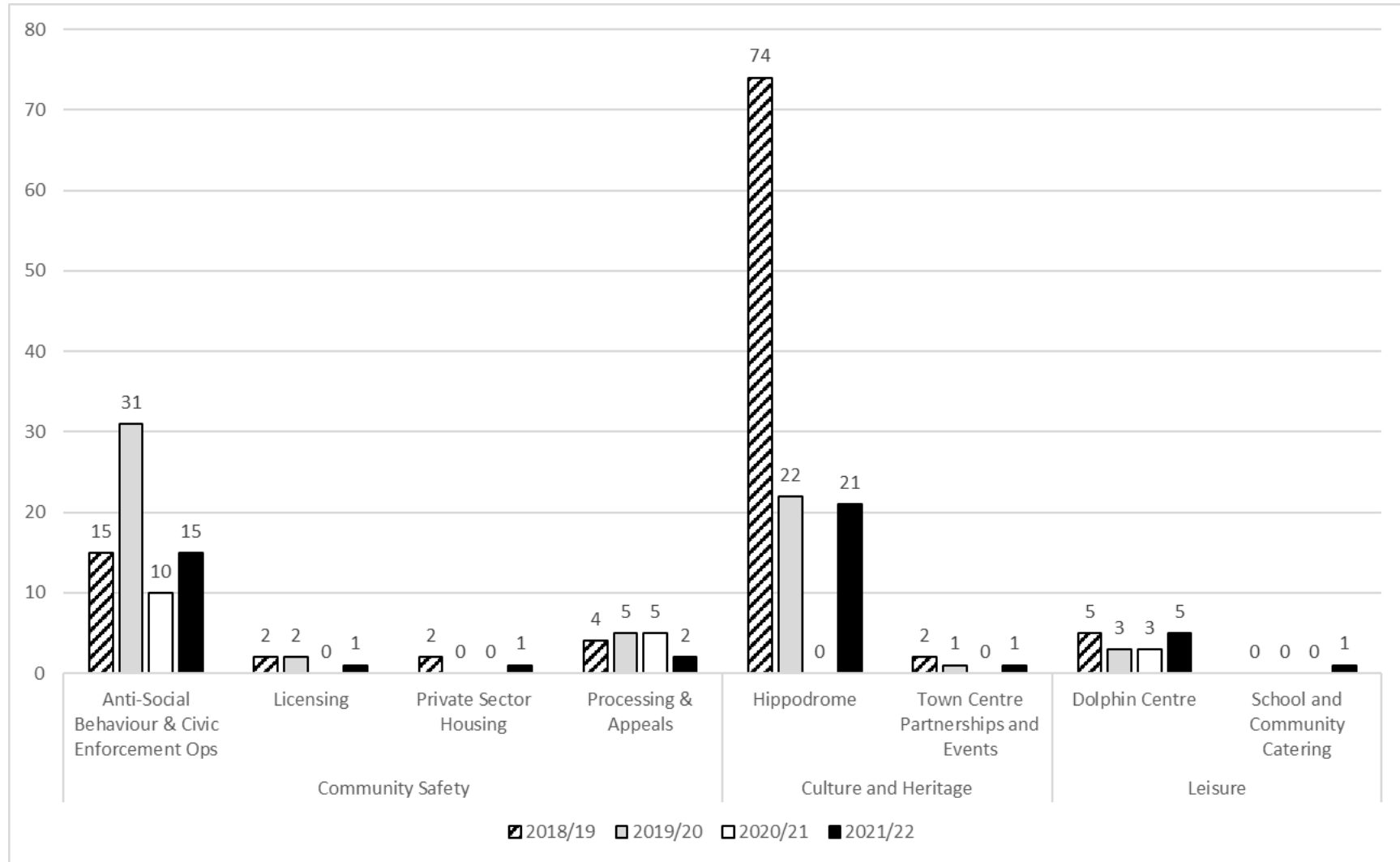
## Organisational learning

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.



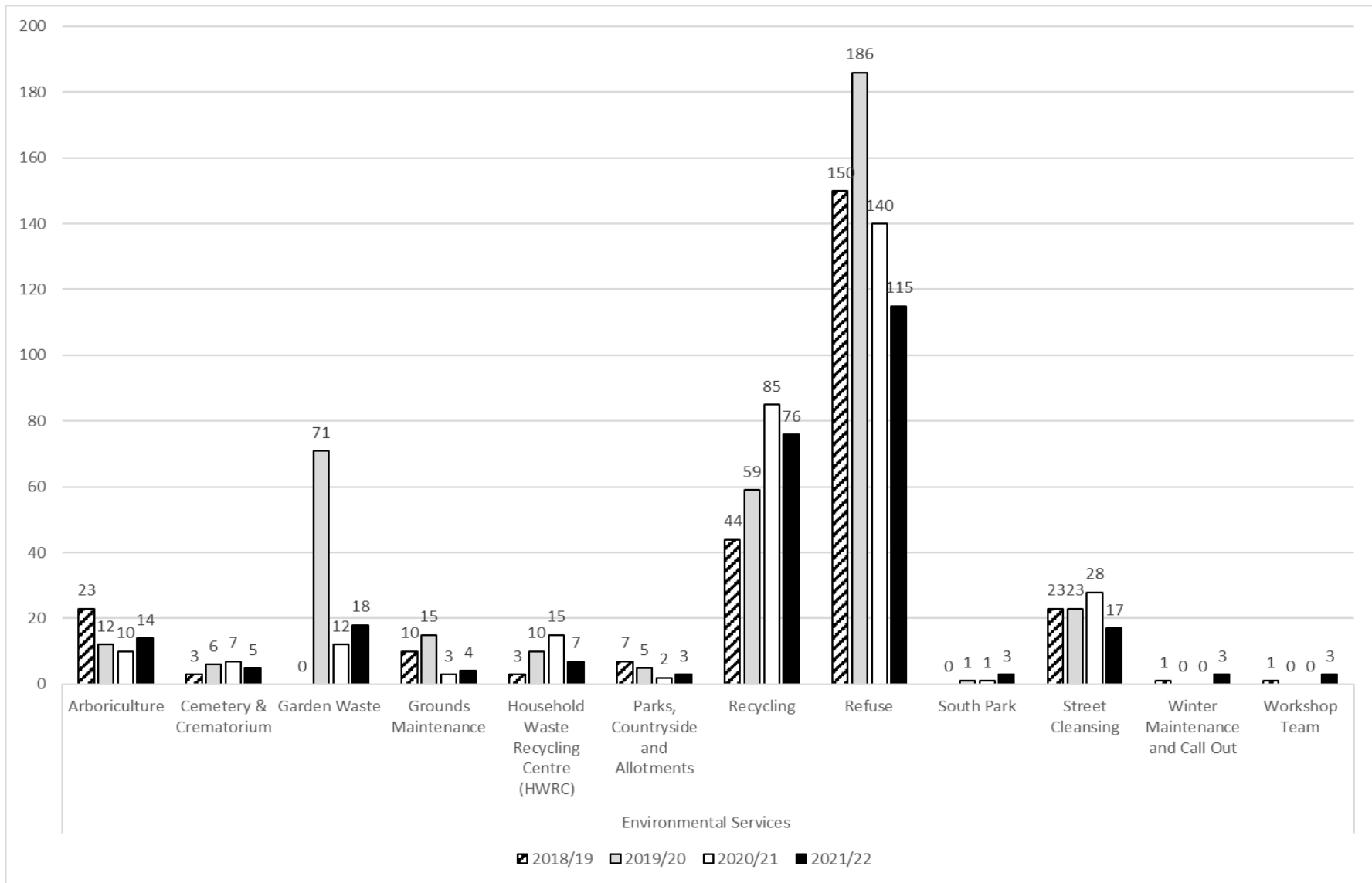
Services Group

Complaints by Service Area/Team - Community Services



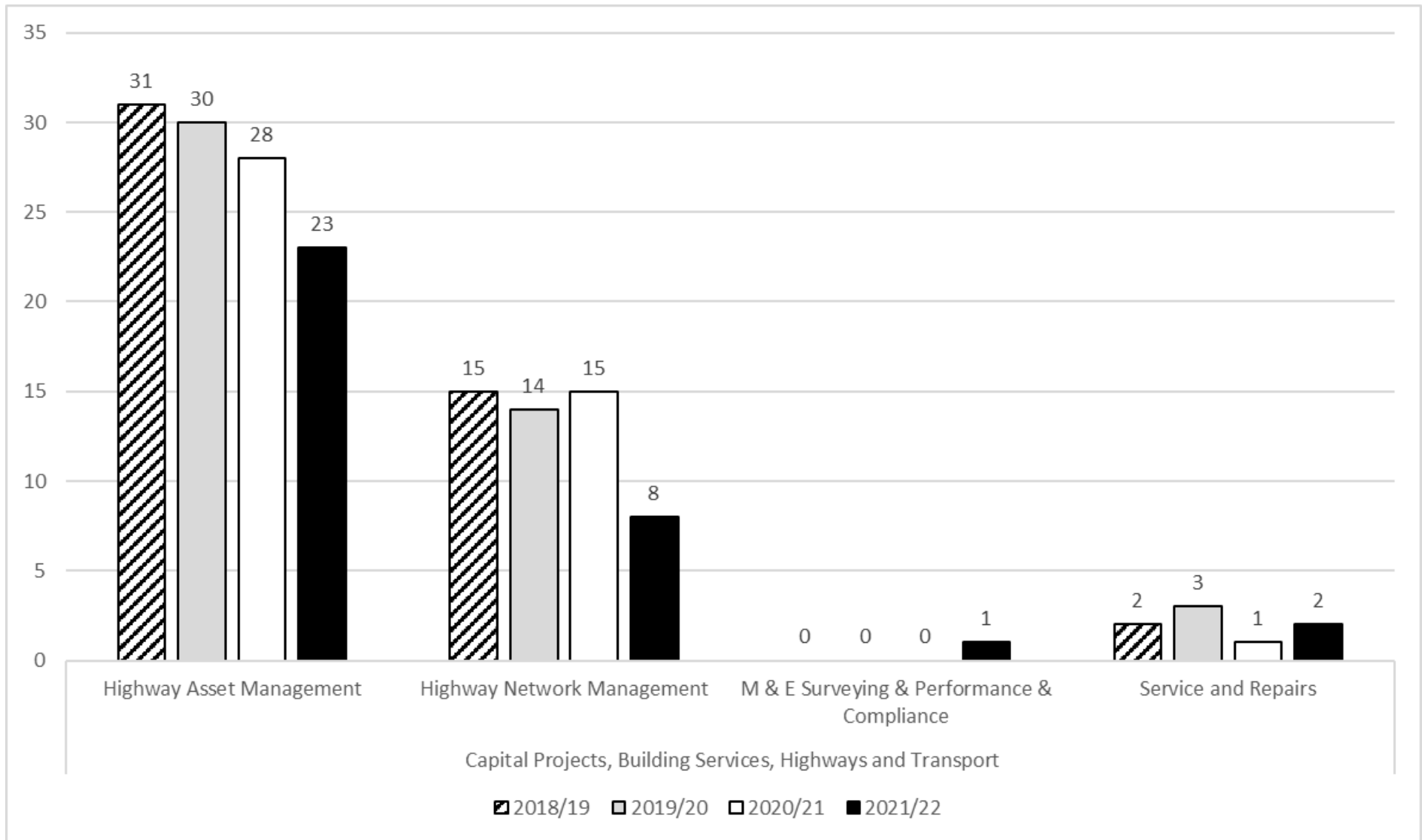
85. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received 16 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 10 in 2020/21, significantly less than the 31 received in 2019/20 and an increase from 15 in 2018/19. The most common theme was dissatisfaction with perceived 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...



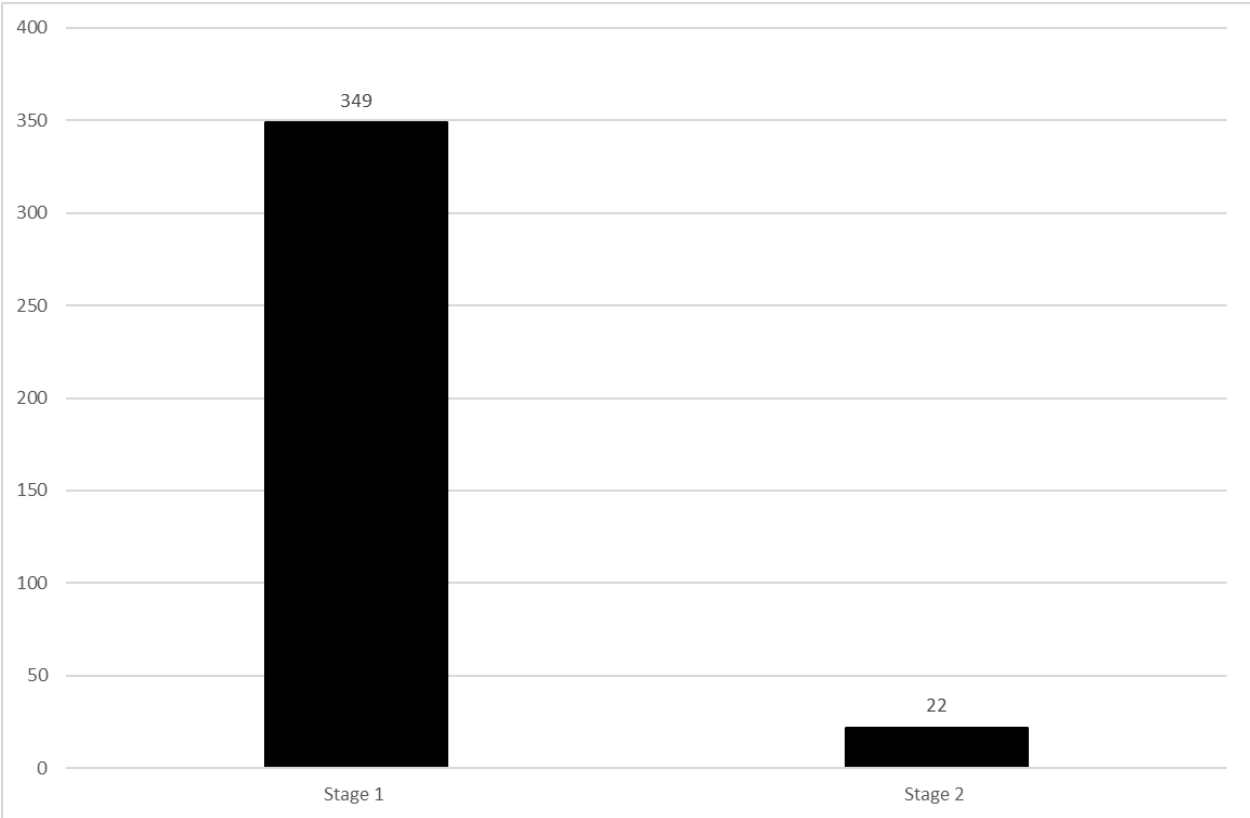
93. Arboriculture received 14 corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 10 in 2020/21 and 12 in 2019/20, although a significant decrease from 23 in 2018/19. These complaints generally resulted from a lack of response to initial enquiries and/or dissatisfaction with a decision not to undertake 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



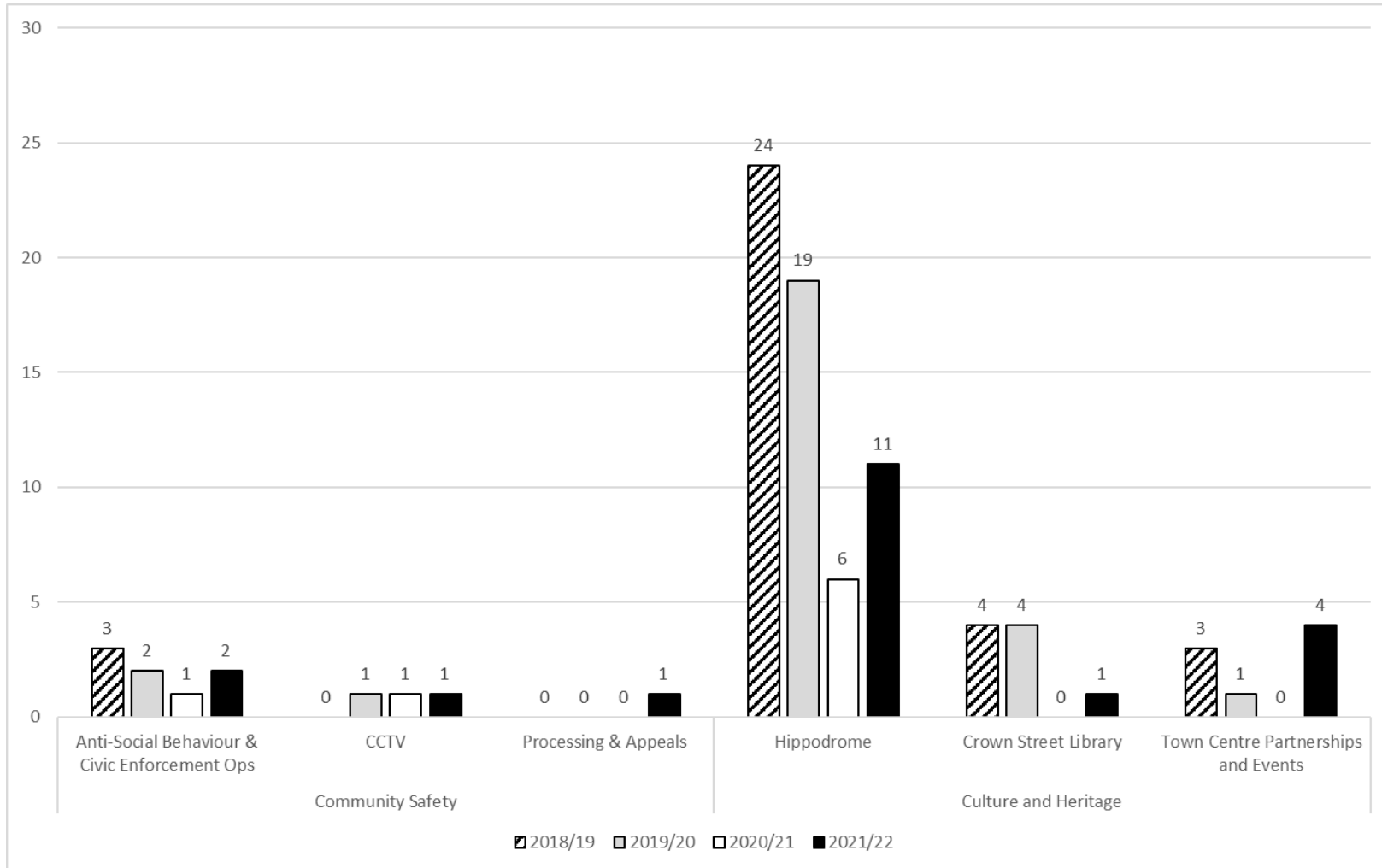
105. Highway Asset Management received 29 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. six pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 28 in 2020/21 and a decrease from 30 in 2019/20 and 31 in 2018/19. Themes included delays in responding to requests for service and dissatisfaction with the impact of highways decisions 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

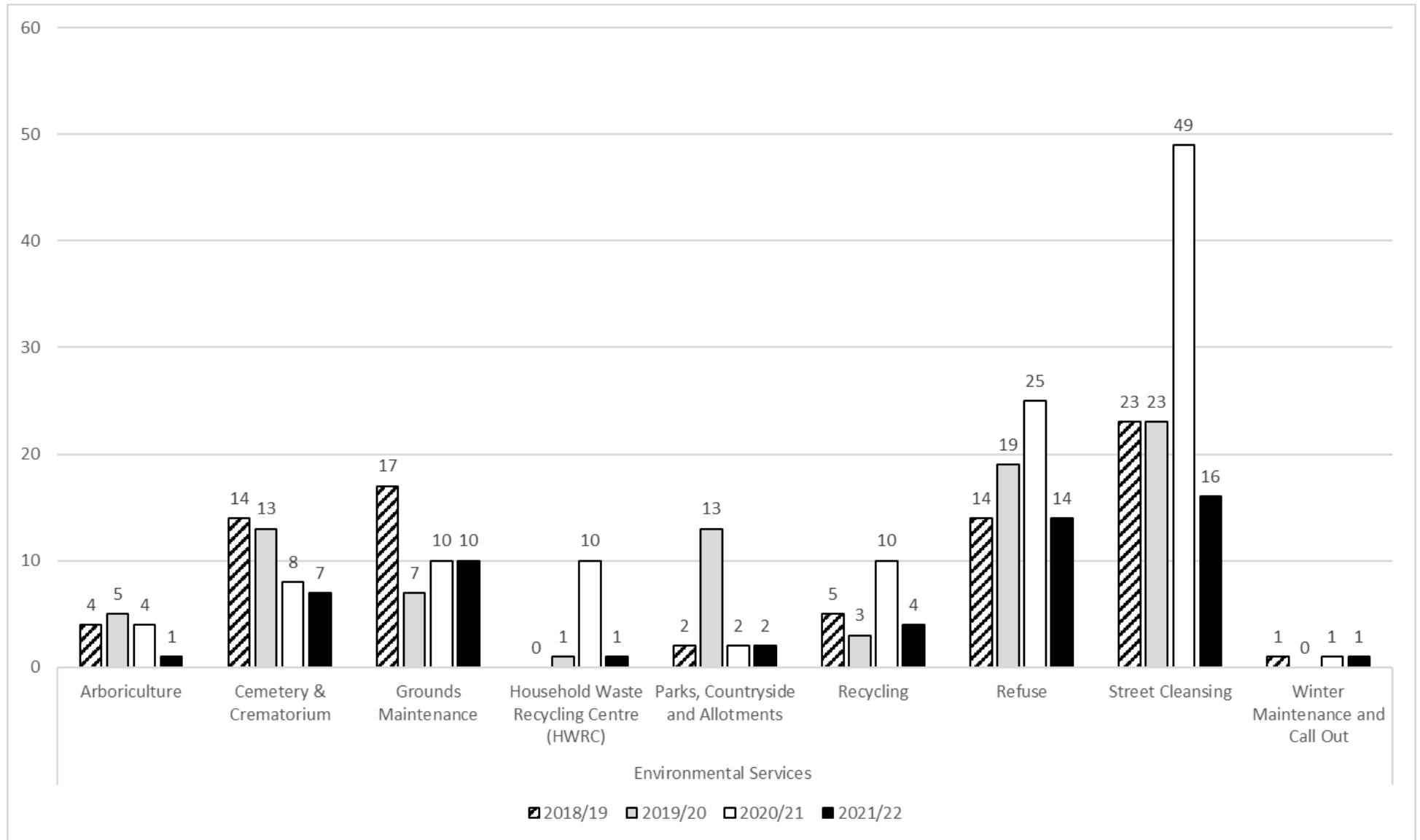
#### Community Services





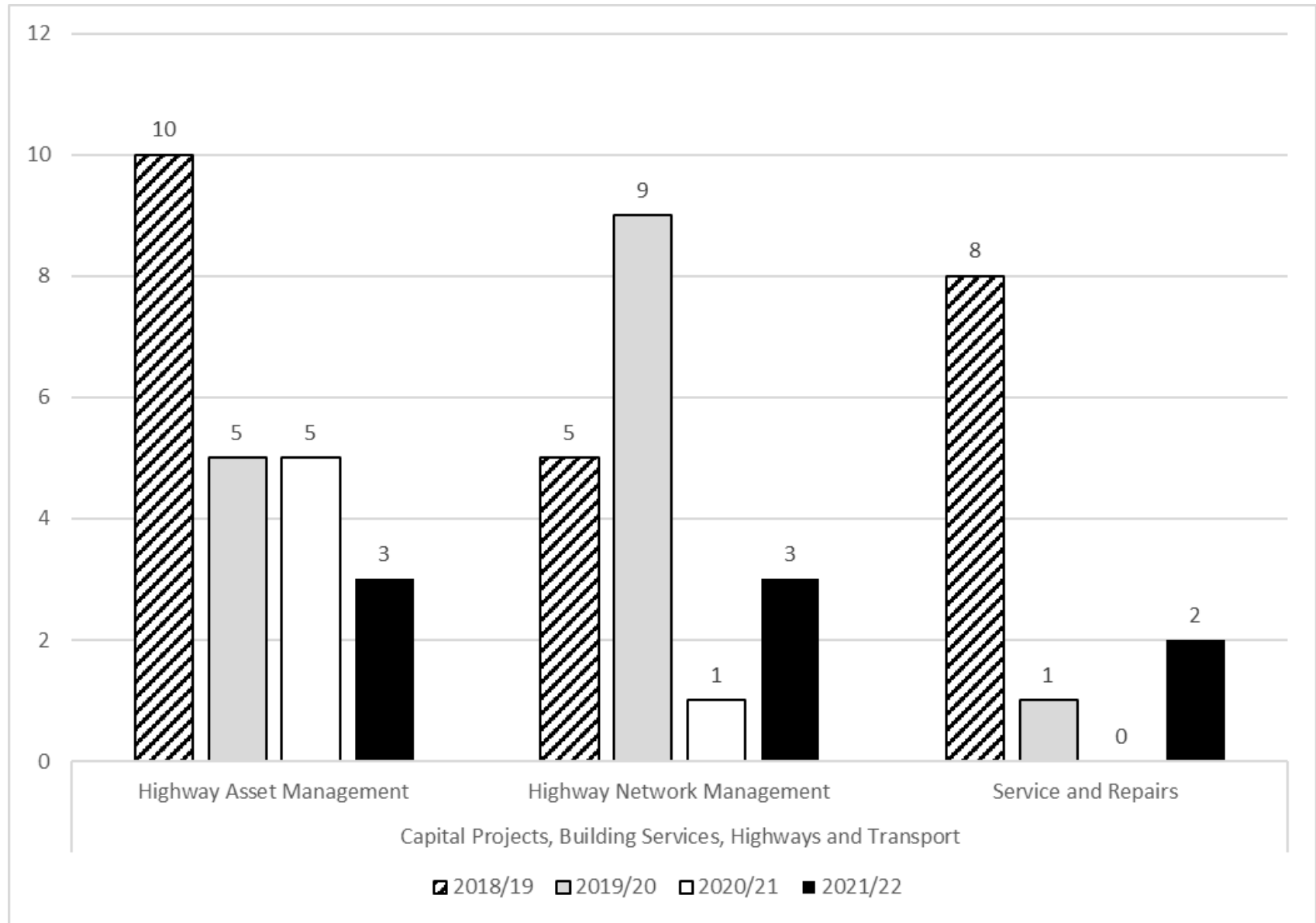
109. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, the same number as the team received in 2019/20 and a decrease from three in 2018/19.
110. CCTV received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number as the 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

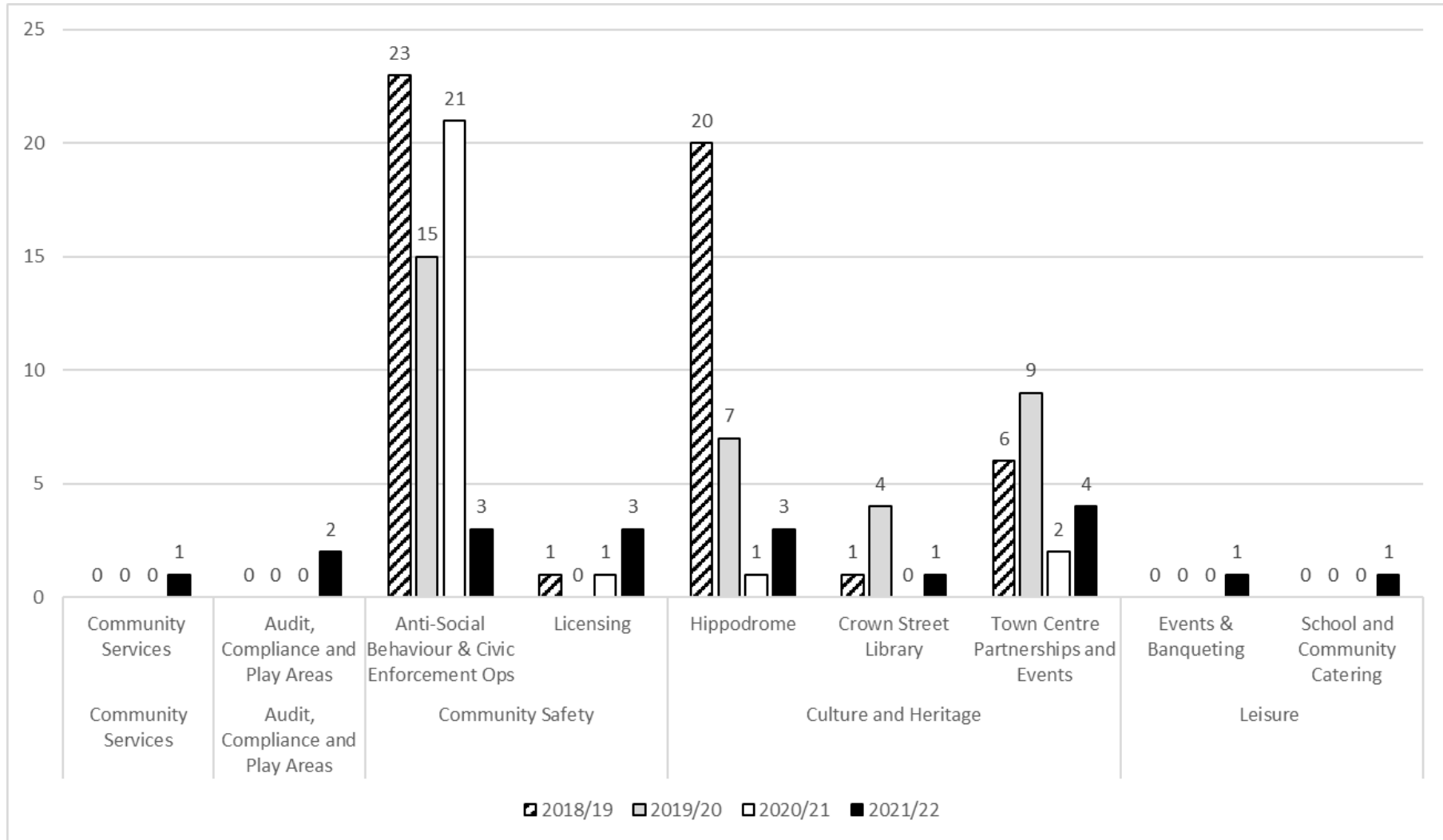


## Appendix 4

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

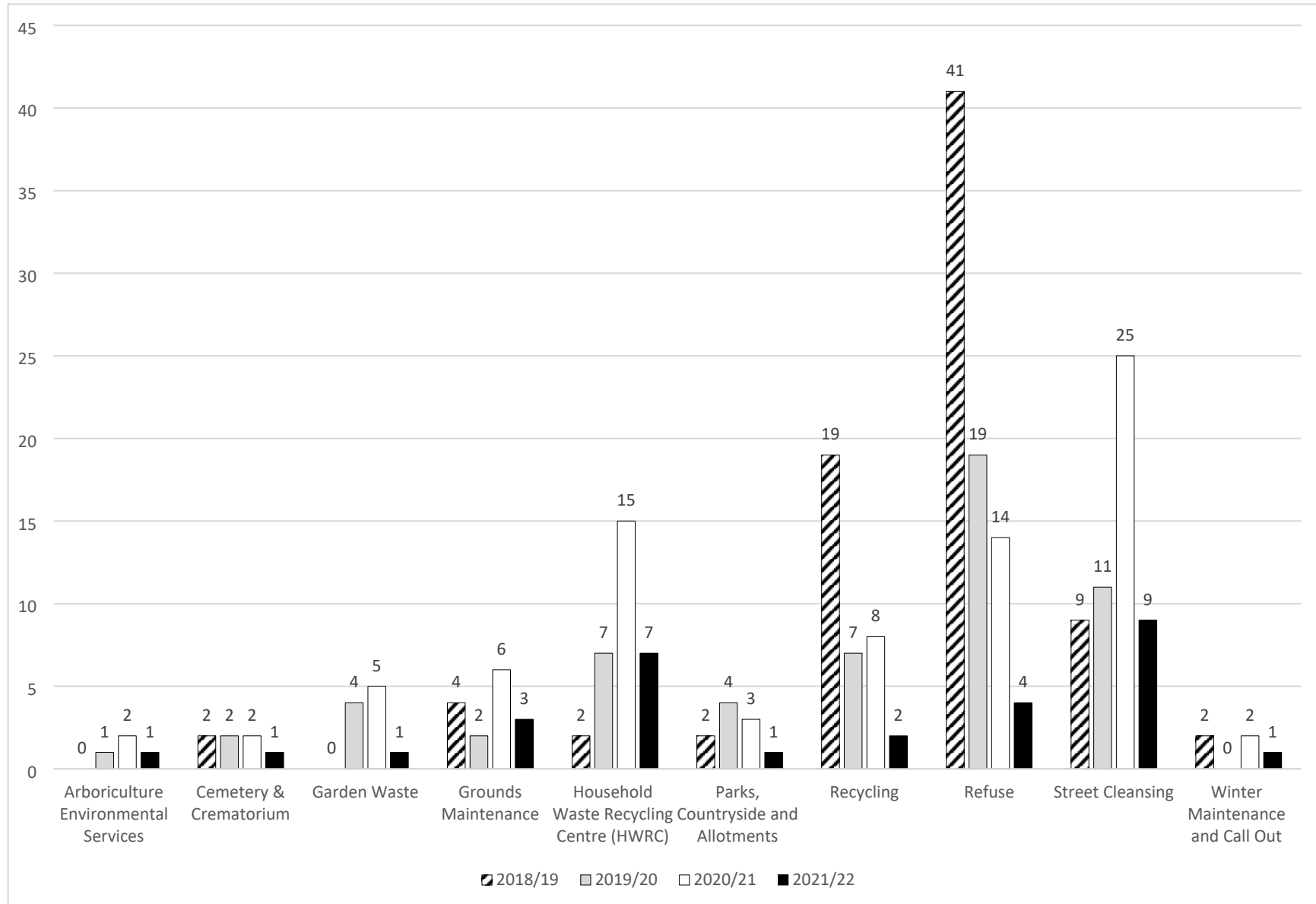
Community Services



## Appendix 4

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.

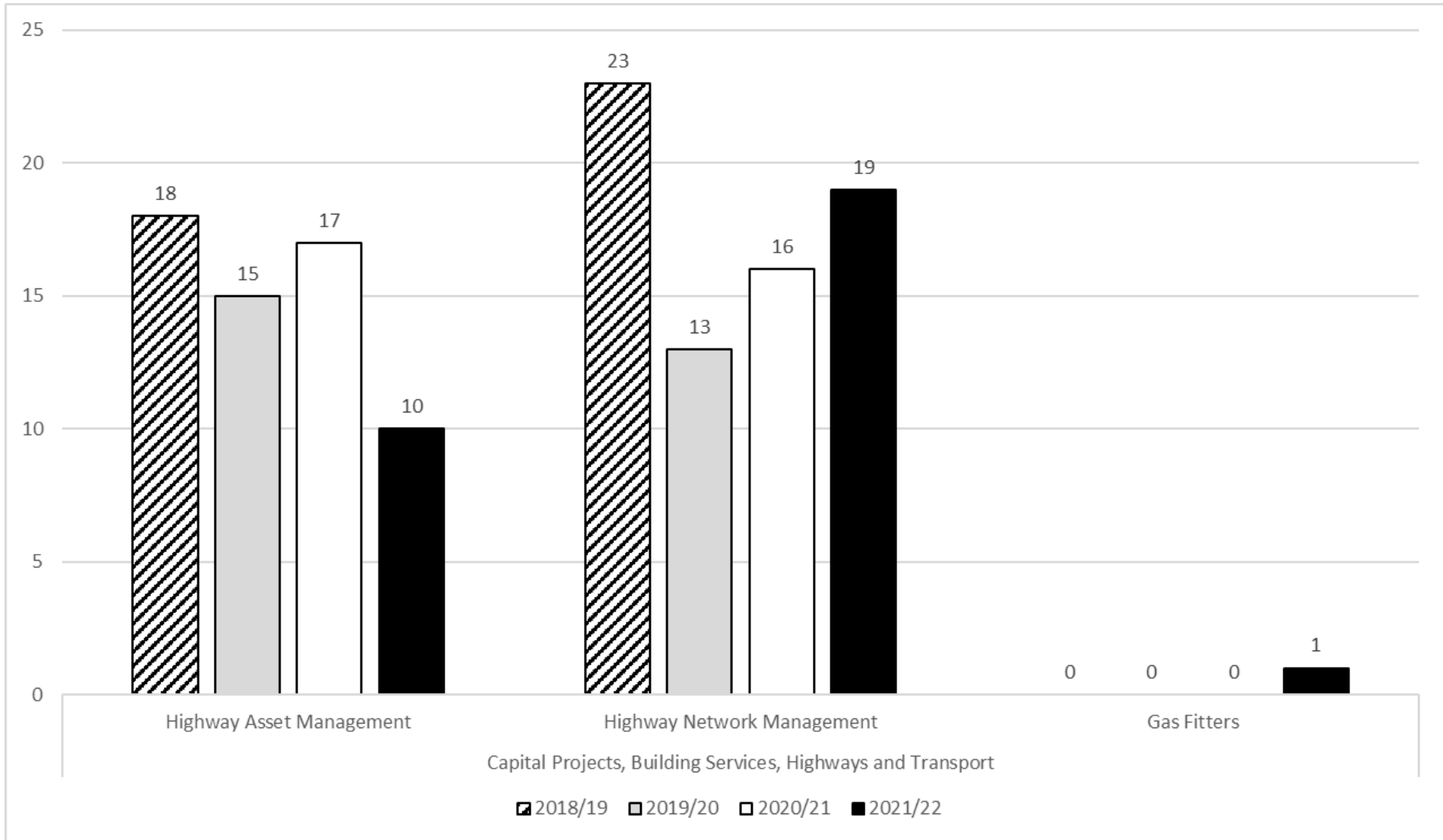
Community Services continued...





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	<b>1</b>
Service and Repairs	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<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	<b>3</b>
Processing & Appeals	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Arboriculture	0	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Recycling	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Refuse	1	0	1	1	0	<b>3</b>
Dolphin Centre	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Highway Asset Management	0	5	1	0	0	<b>6</b>
M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

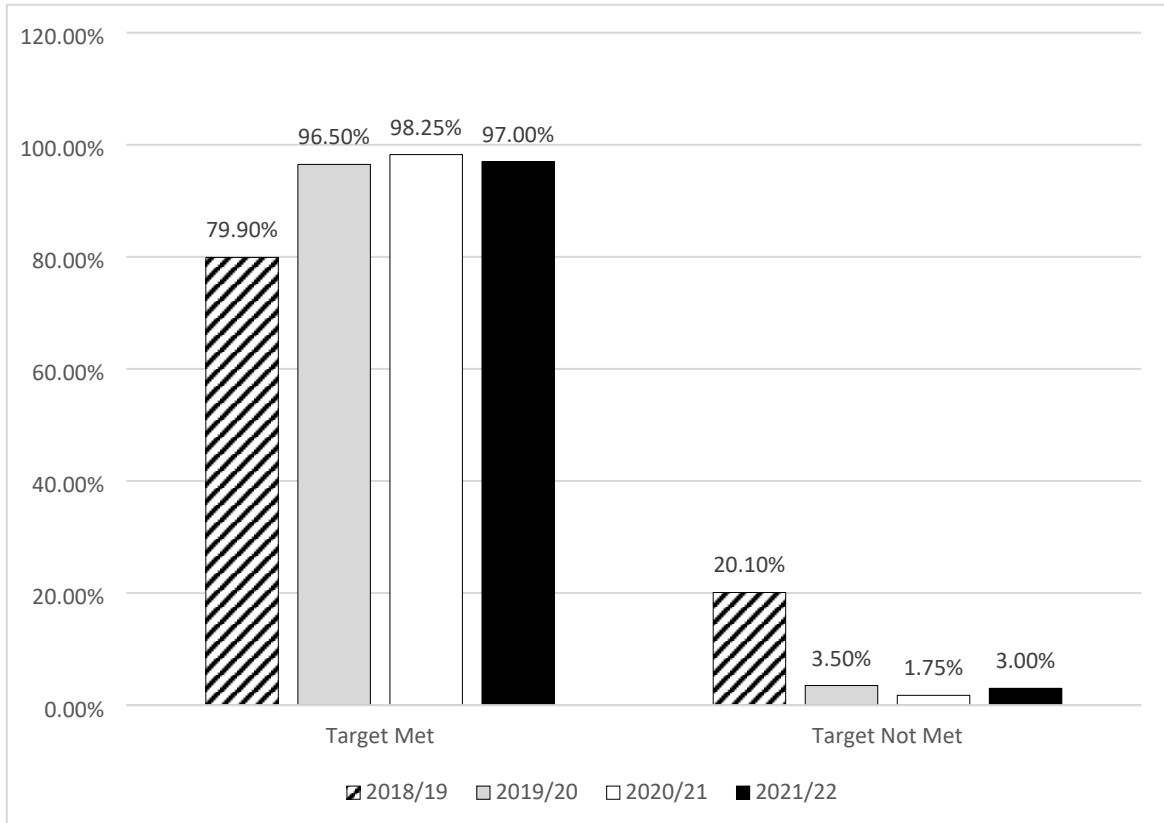
## Organisational Learning

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.

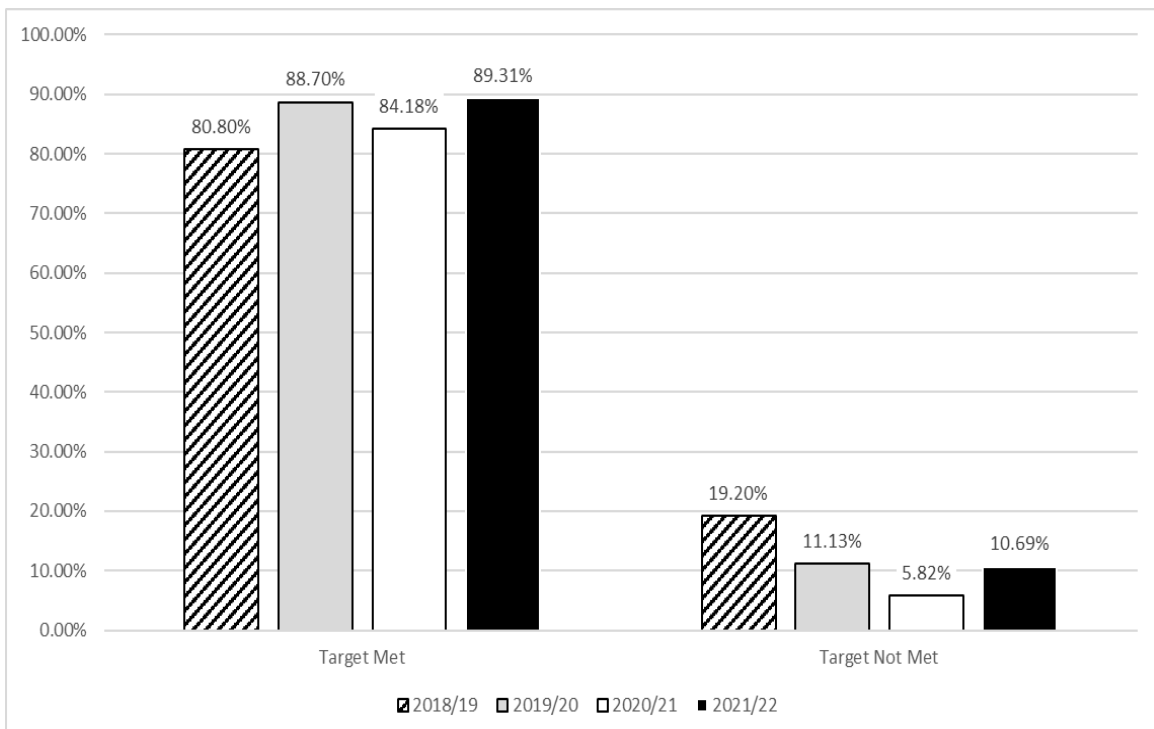
## Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

### Stage 1

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

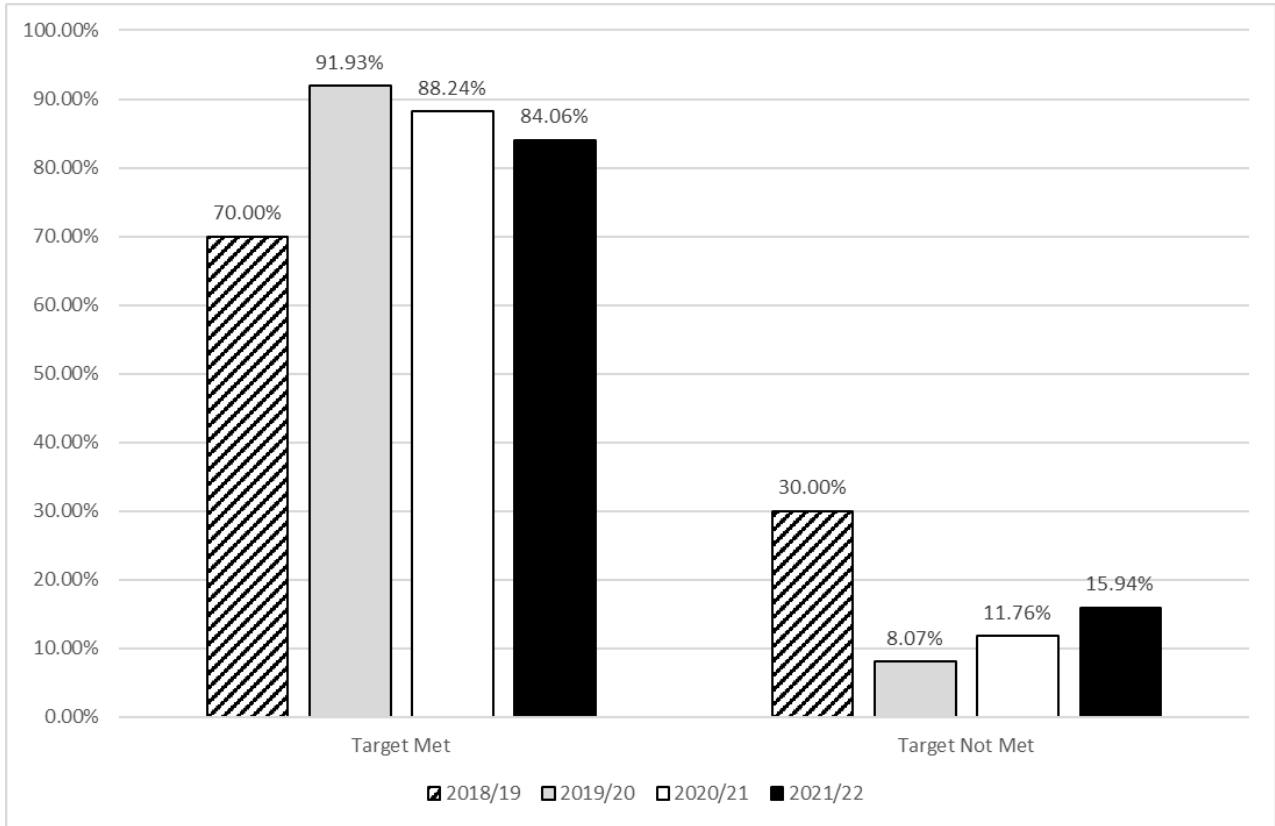


#### Performance against Stage 1 complaint response target (25 working days)

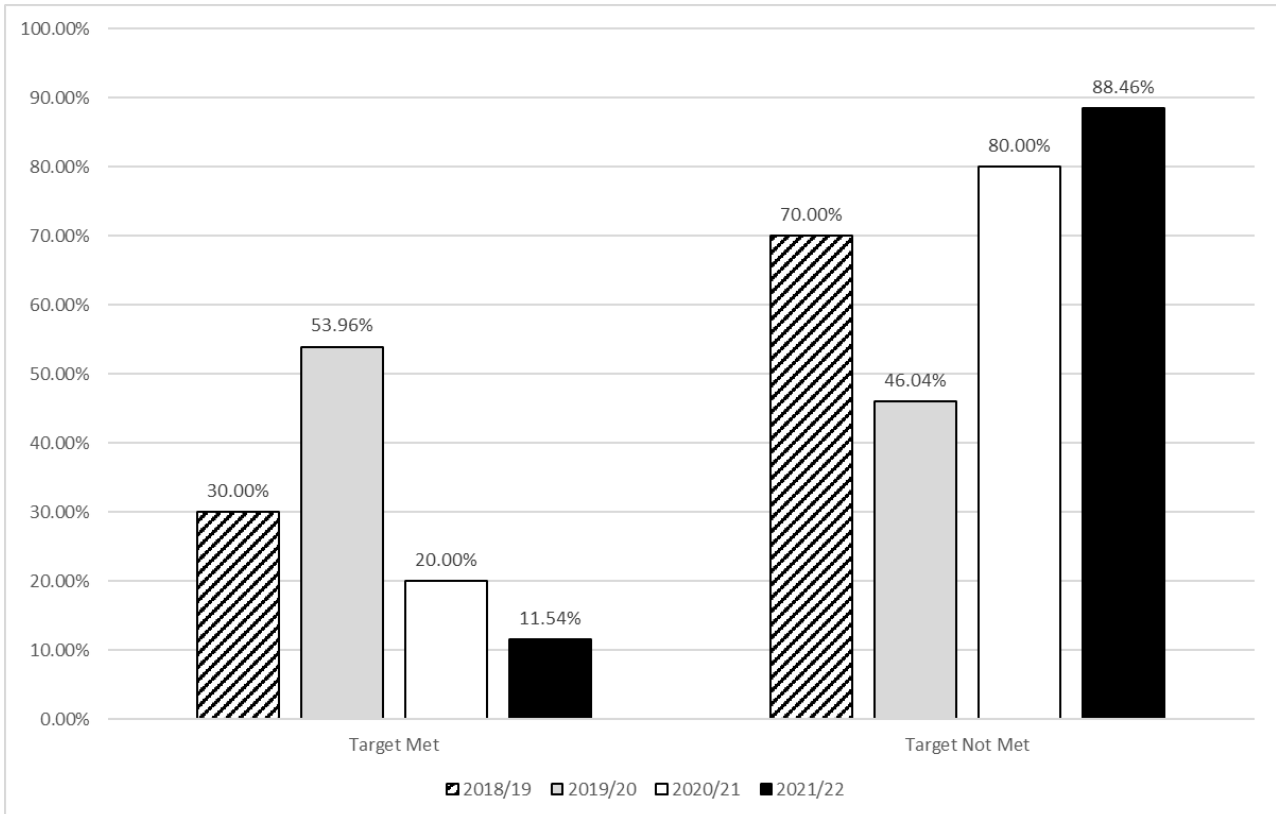


**Stage 2**

**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](#).