



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

**Public Health
Complaints, Compliments
and Comments
Annual Report
2020/21**

Contents

Introduction	3
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman	4
Information and Accessibility	4
Summary	5
Review of the Year	5
Organisational Learning	7
Further Recommendations	7
Performance against the Procedure	7
Performance Indicator	7

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

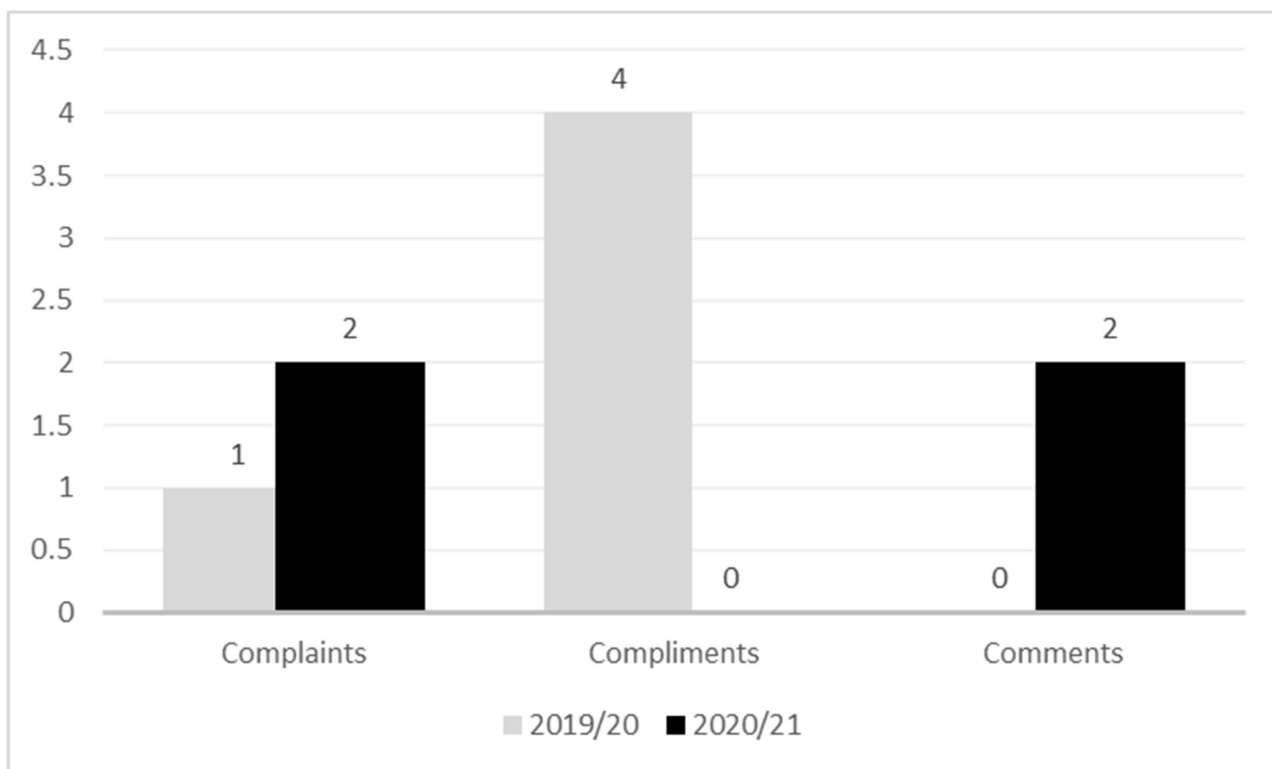
- 11. The Council received two complaints about Public Health services during 2020/21, an increase from one in 2019/20.
- 12. The Council received zero compliments, a decrease from four in 2019/20.
- 13. The Council received two comments, an increase from zero in 2019/20.

Review of the Year

Breakdown of all Representations

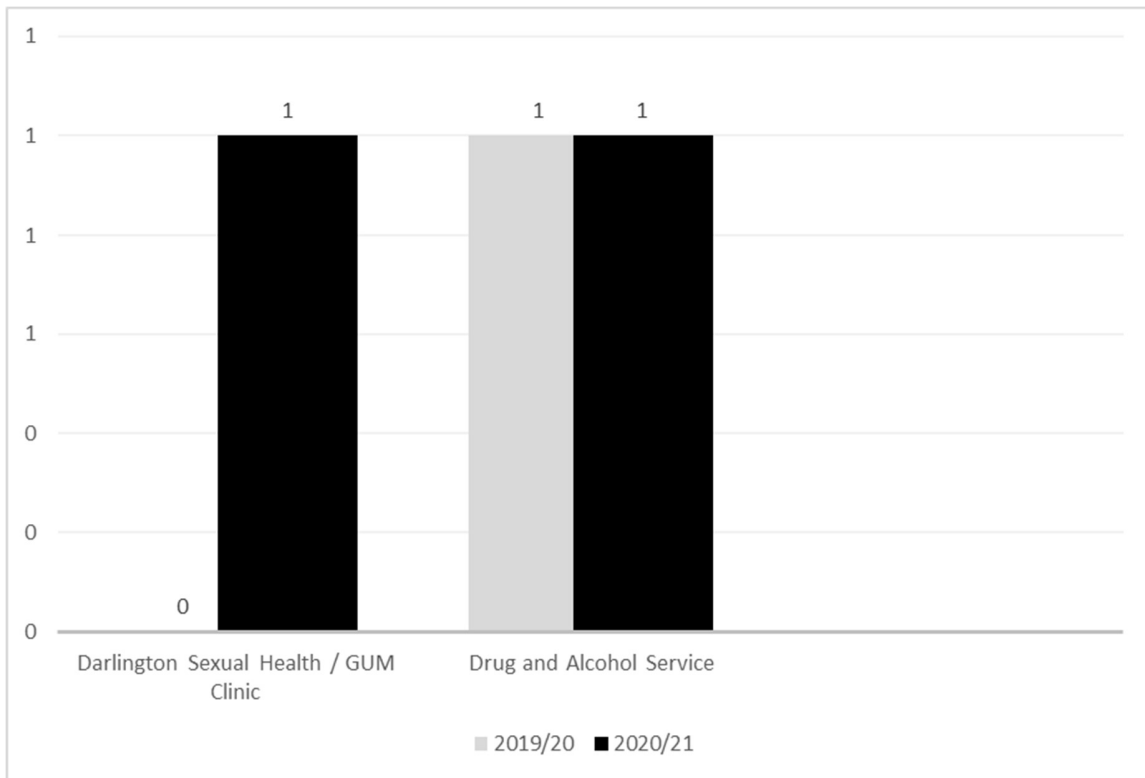
- 14. A total of four representations were handled under the procedure during 2020/21.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received

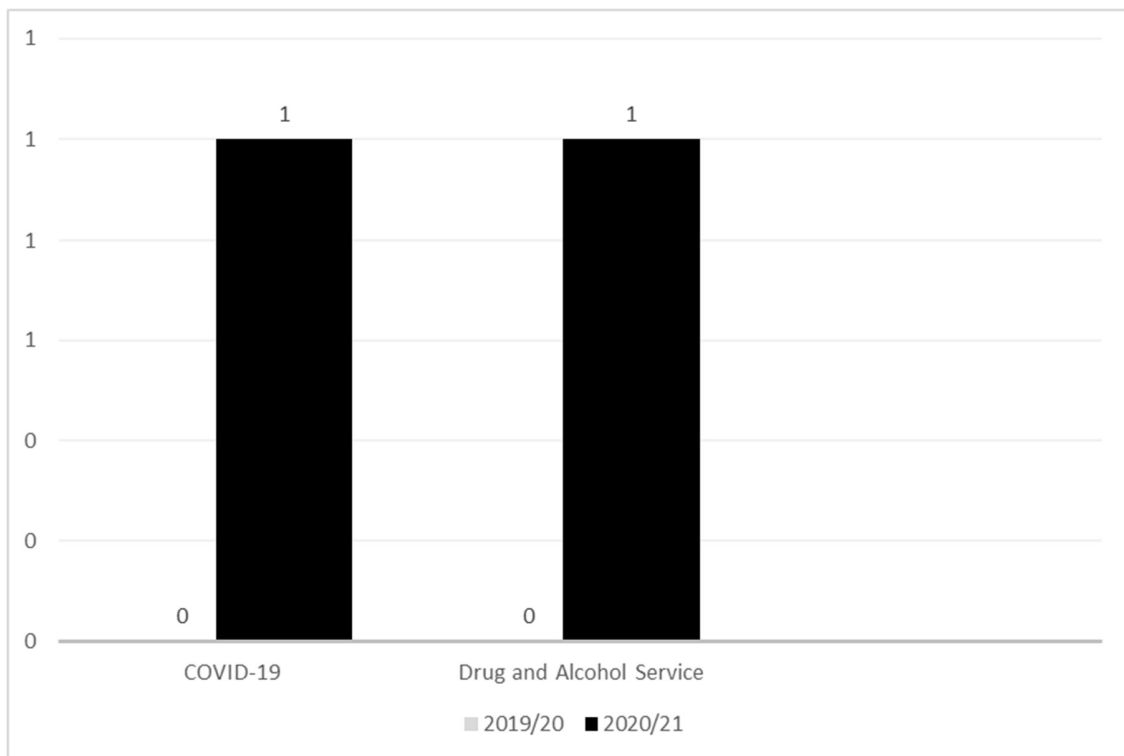


- 15. The complaints related to Public Health Providers, Darlington Sexual Health / GUM clinic and the changes to the Drug and Alcohol Service.
- 16. The comments related to the changes to the Drug and Alcohol Service and the COVID-19 rates in Darlington.

Complaints by Service



Comments by Service



Complaint Outcomes

17. The complaint relating to the changes to the Drug and Alcohol Service was responded to during 2020/21. The outcome of the complaint was not upheld.

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints (LGSCO) Received 2020/21

18. No Public Health complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2020/21, the same as in 2019/20.

Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Outcomes (LGSCO) 2020/21

19. No Public Health complaints were determined by the LGSCO during 2020/21, the same as in 2019/20.

Organisational Learning

20. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint that was concluded during 2020/21.

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 2020/21

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 2020/21.
25. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 8 December 2020 and 7 September 2021 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).