



Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report

1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2011/12 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the procedure). The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints information; make suggestions for service improvements where appropriate and identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received.

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. The development of an organisational culture in which complaints are viewed as a positive means of engagement has enabled the Council to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling. It will also enable the Council to continue to collect accurate information on complaints in order to identify topics and trends and improve services accordingly.

Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

The 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 and Members which will be dealt with under separate procedures.

The 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 procedure.

Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Complaints and Information Governance Manager or another officer independent of the service being complained about.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following a Stage 2 investigation they may refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Public Information and Accessibility

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.

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.

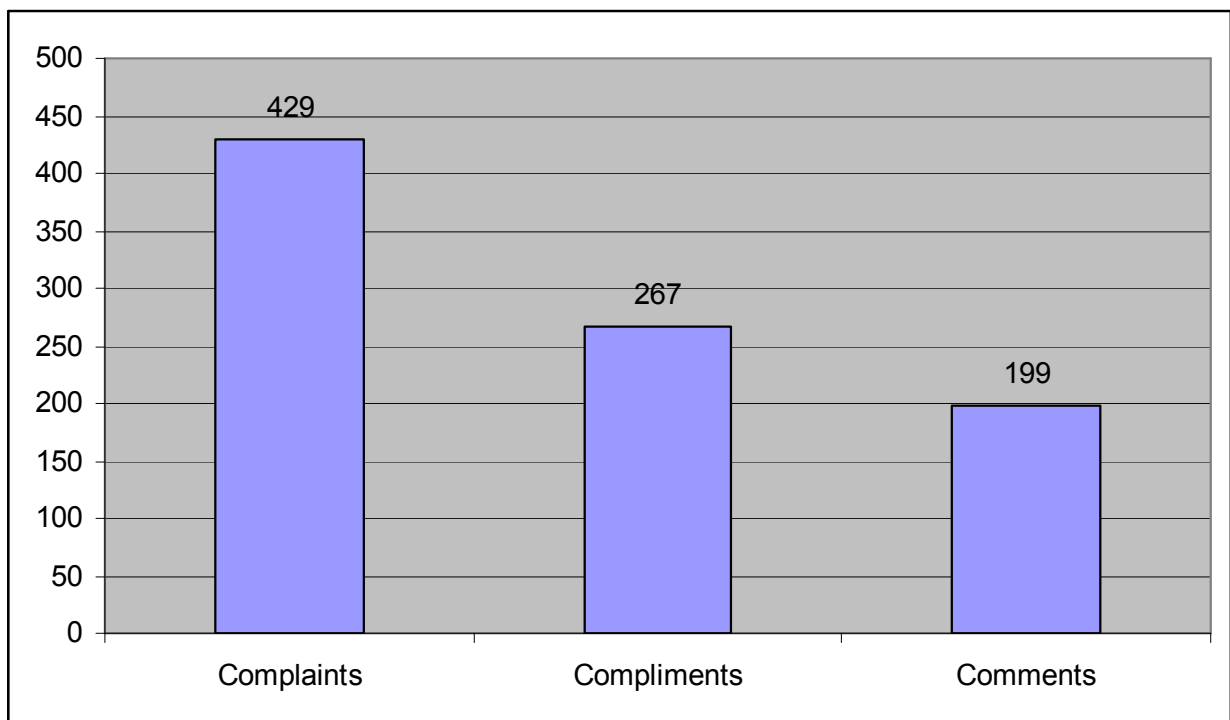
The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

Overview of Complaints, Compliments and Comments

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 the Council received a total of 895 representations under the procedure, an increase from 838 in 2010/11. The Council received 429 complaints, an increase from 330 complaints in 2010/11. 421 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the procedure while eight were initially dealt with at Stage 2. 52 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 60 complaints were investigated at Stage 2 an increase from 43 in 2010/11. The Council also received 267 compliments, a reduction from 306 in 2010/11 and 199 comments, a similar amount to the number received in 2010/11 (202).

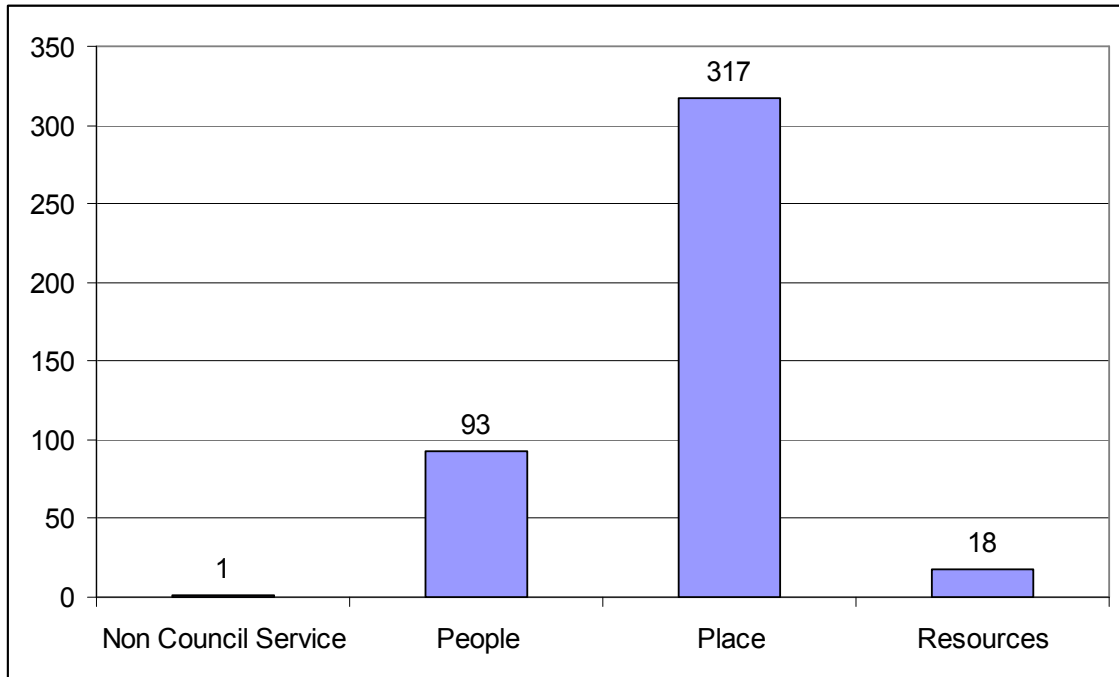
Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments



The increase in the overall number of representations received was solely as a result of the increase in the number of complaints received during this period. This was anticipated in light of the increased pressure on Council services in the current financial climate.

A breakdown of the total number of complaints, compliments and comments received by each department is provided below.

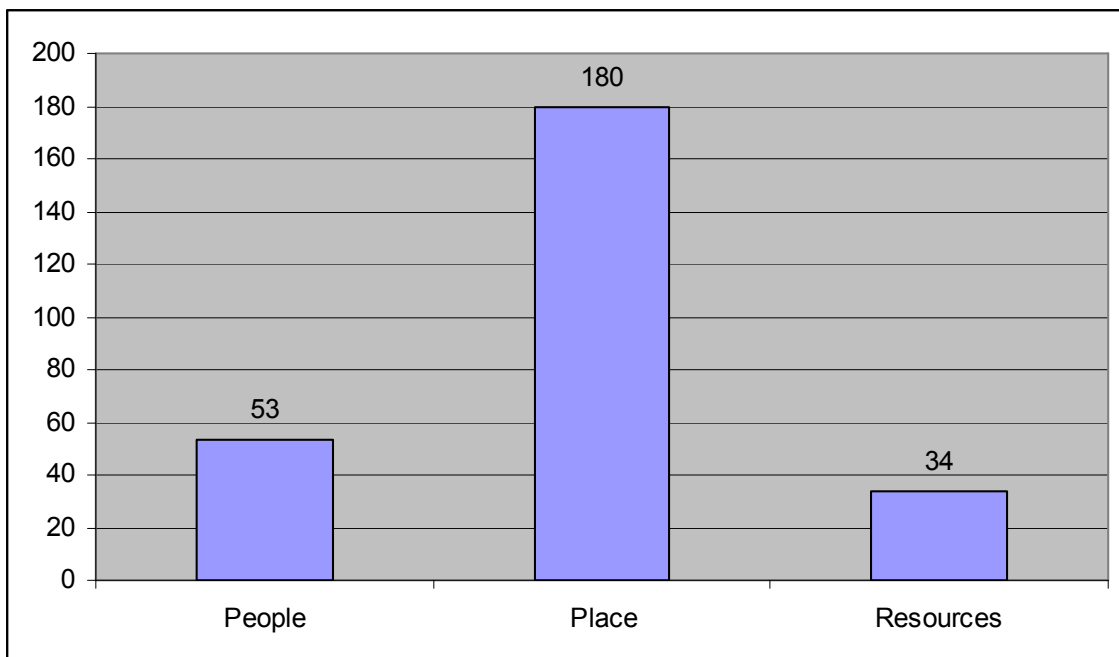
Complaints by Department



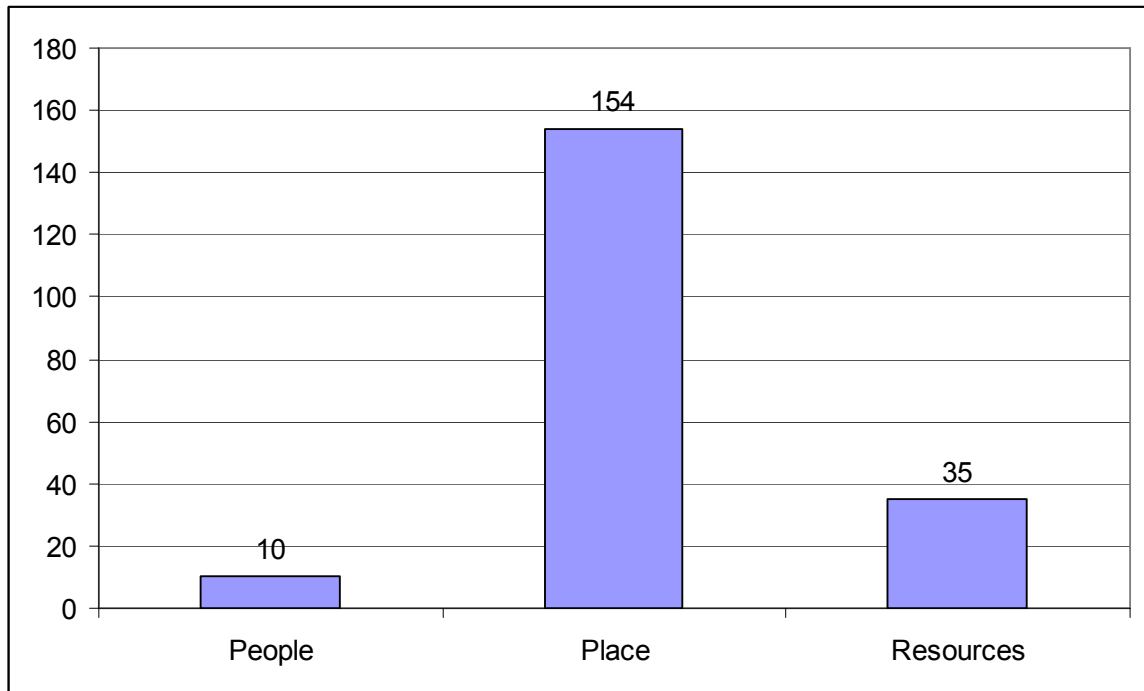
- *People = Services for People*
- *Place = Services for Place*
- *Resources = Resources Group*

Following the Council restructure at the beginning of 2011/12, which saw the number of departments reduced from four to three, it is not possible to draw any meaningful comparisons regarding the number of complaints received at a departmental level. The one complaint recorded against the heading of Non Council Service was for the Chief Executive's Office.

Compliments by Department



Comments by Department



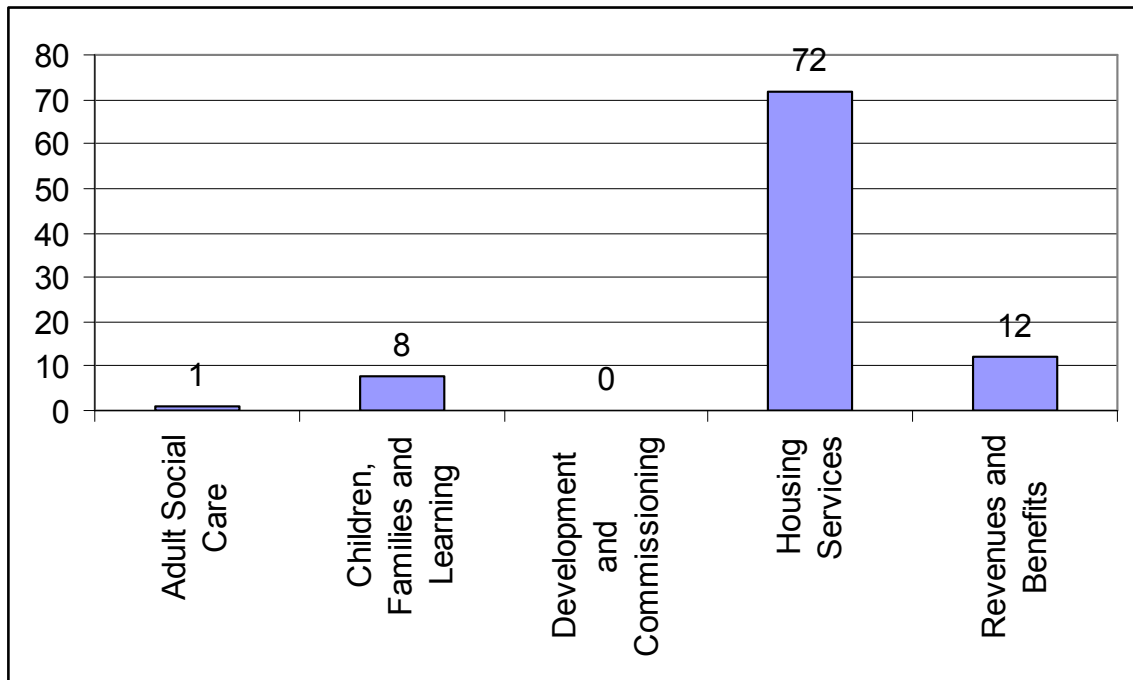
Again, following the Council restructure, it is not possible to draw any meaningful comparisons regarding the number of compliments and comments received at a departmental level.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

Services for People

Complaints by Service Area/Team

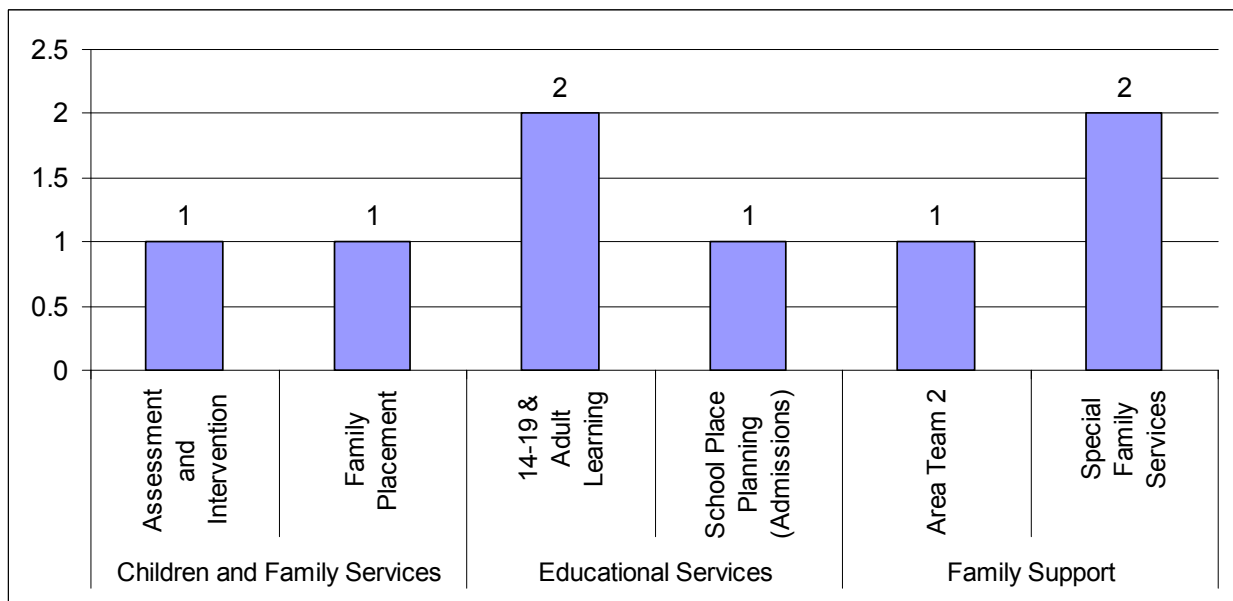
Overview



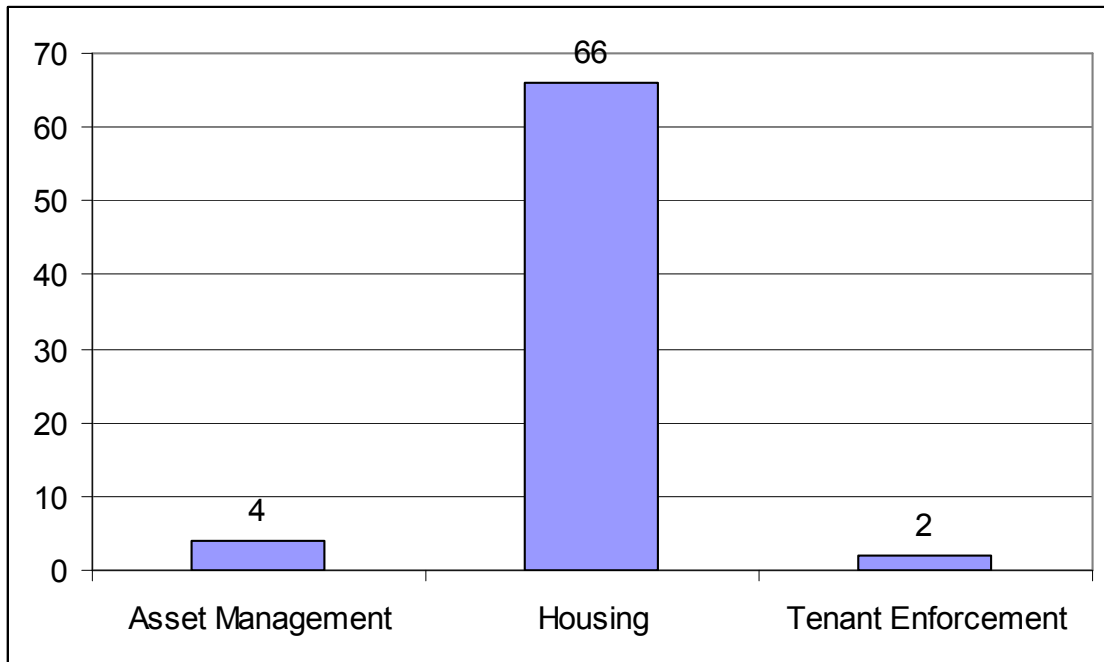
Adult Social Care

The one complaint received for Adult Social Care was regarding Community Reablement, Lifeline Service.

Children, Families and Learning

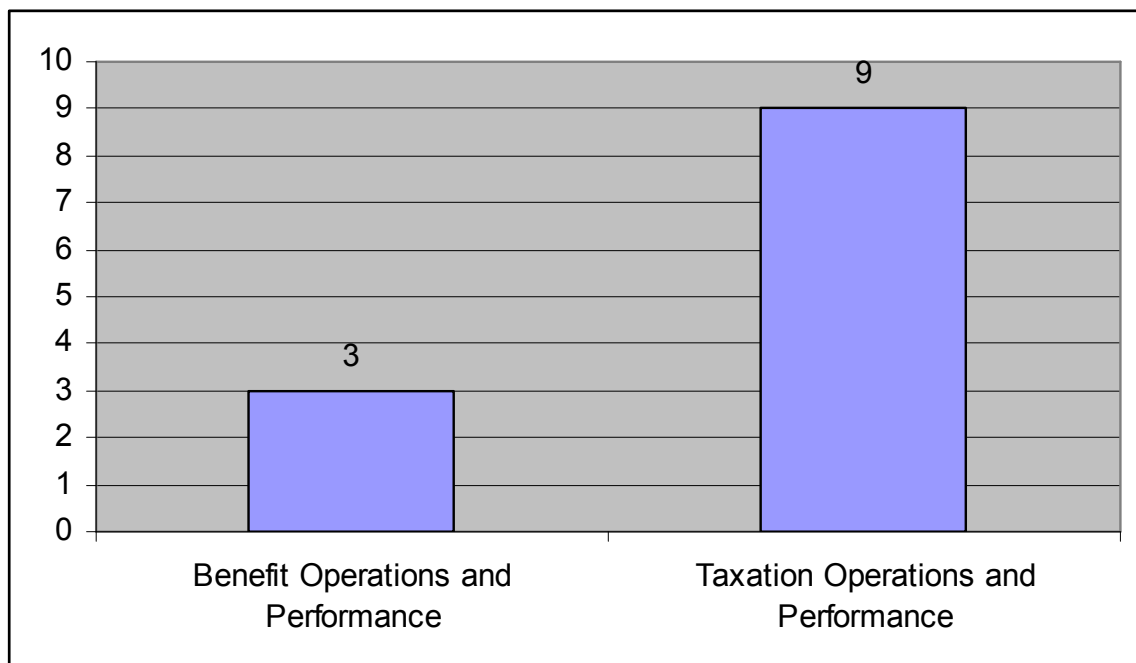


Housing Services



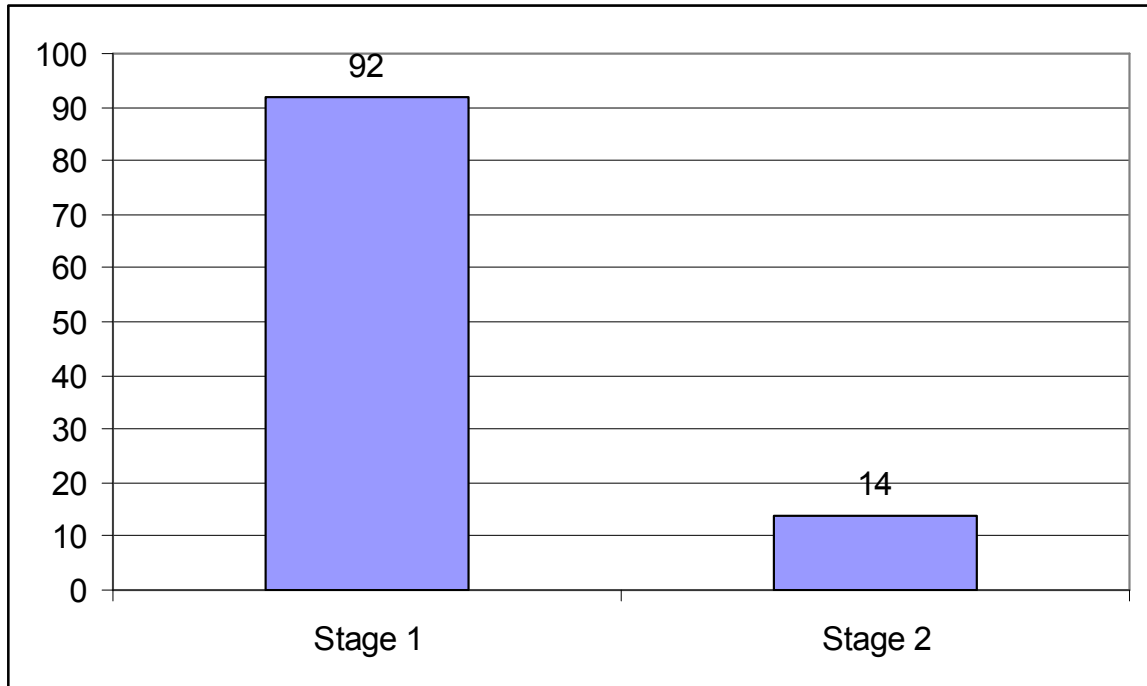
As in 2010/11, the most common complaints about Housing Services during 2011/12 concerned delays in undertaking and the quality of repair work. This accounted for around 50% of all the complaints received by Housing Services in this period. Other complaints ranged from dissatisfaction with the allocations policy, complaints about staff attitude, dissatisfaction with the level of support provided in relation to neighbour nuisances, disputes over rent arrears and dissatisfaction with grounds maintenance.

Revenues and Benefits



The most common complaints in relation to Taxation Operations and Performance concerned the Council's debt collection process

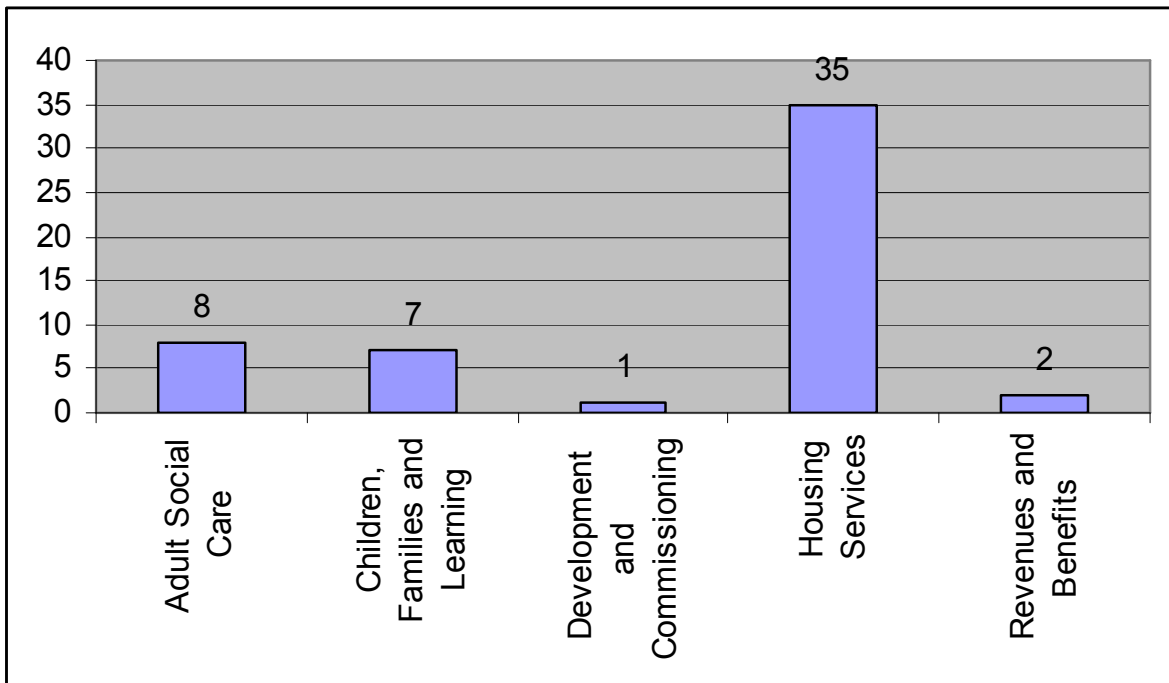
Complaints by Stage



The above graph shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by the Council during 2011/12.

Compliments by Service Area/Team

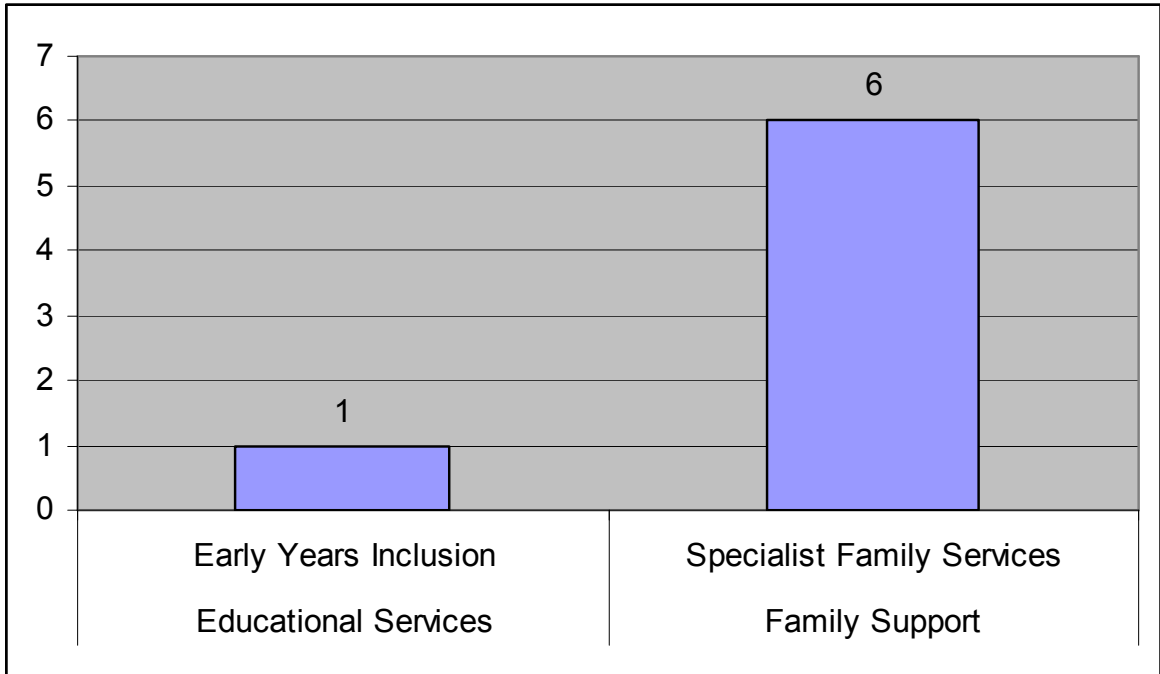
Overview



Adult Social Care

The compliments recorded under the corporate procedure for Adult Social Care relate to Community Reablement, Lifeline Services.

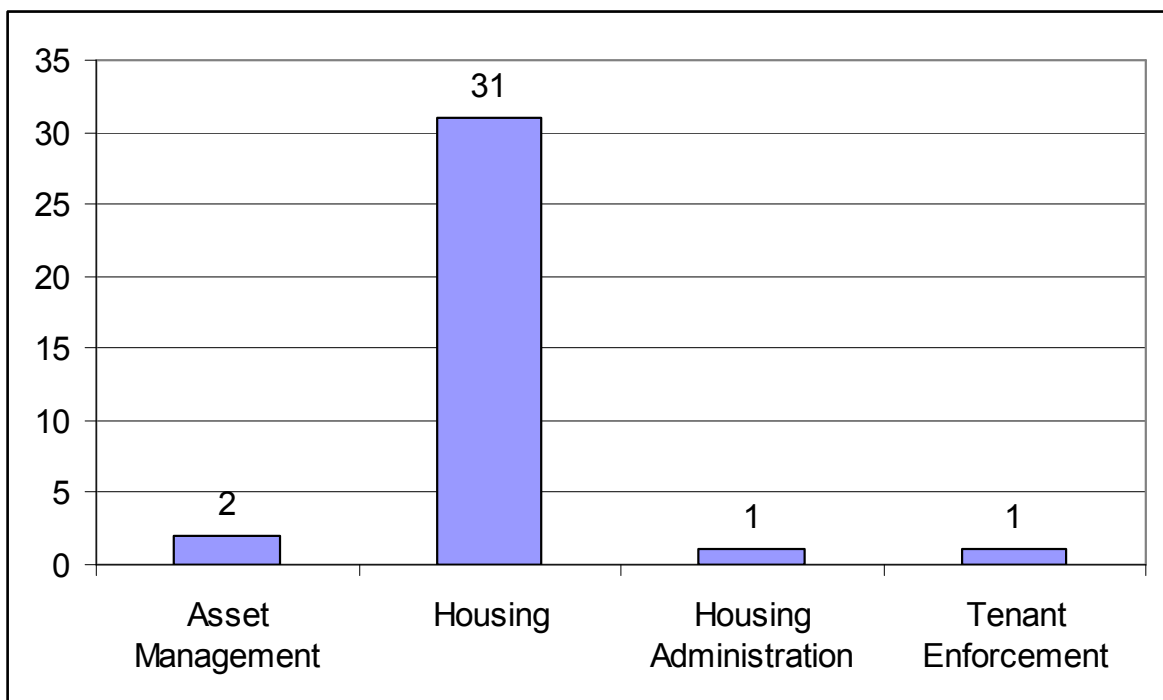
Children, Families and Learning



Development and Commissioning

The one compliment received for Development and Commissioning was for People, Strategy and Improvement.

Housing Services



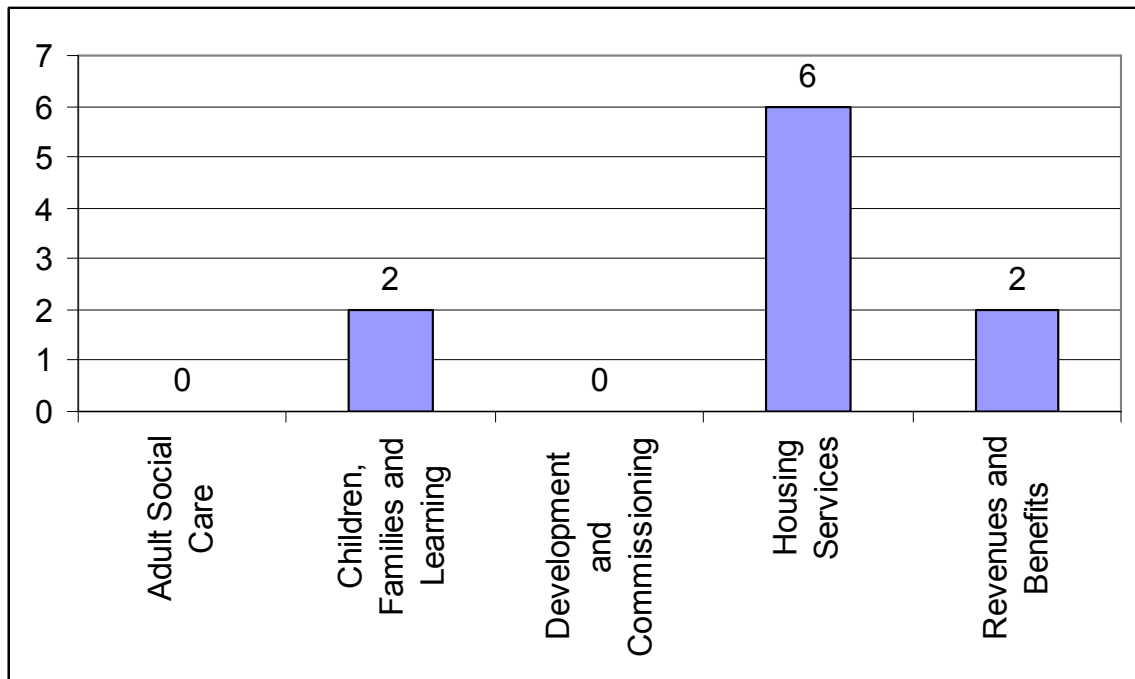
The compliments for Housing related to the excellent support provided by staff in resolving issues, helping tenants get settled into their new property and dealing with neighbour nuisance issues.

Revenues and Benefits

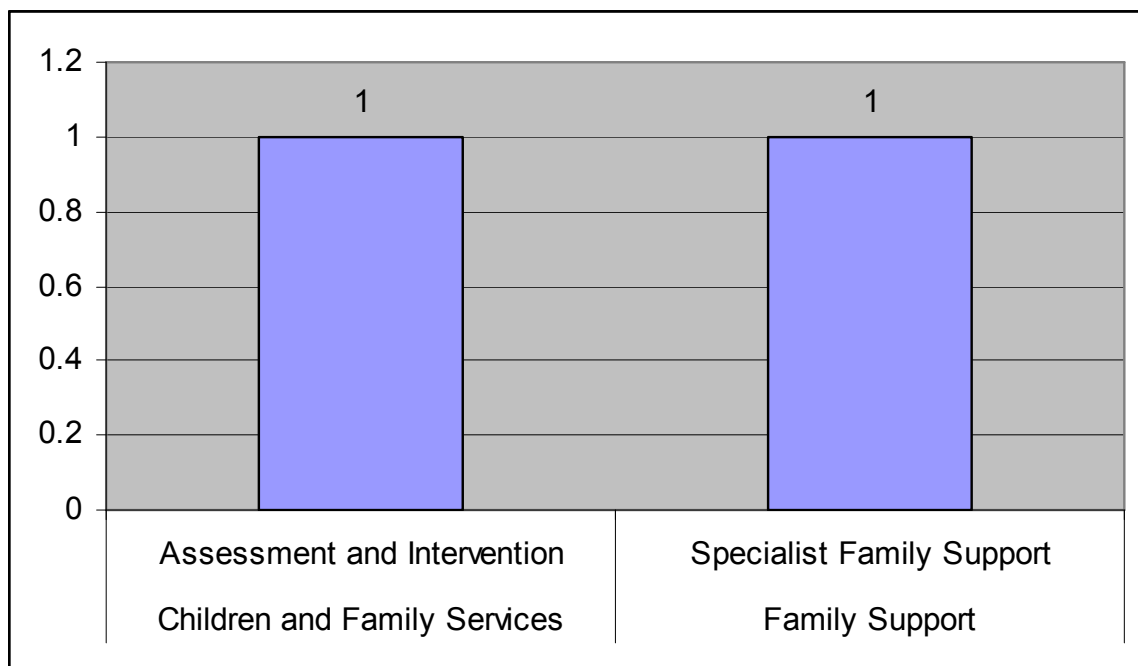
Both compliments received for Revenues and Benefits were for Housing Benefits.

Comments by Service Area/Team

Overview



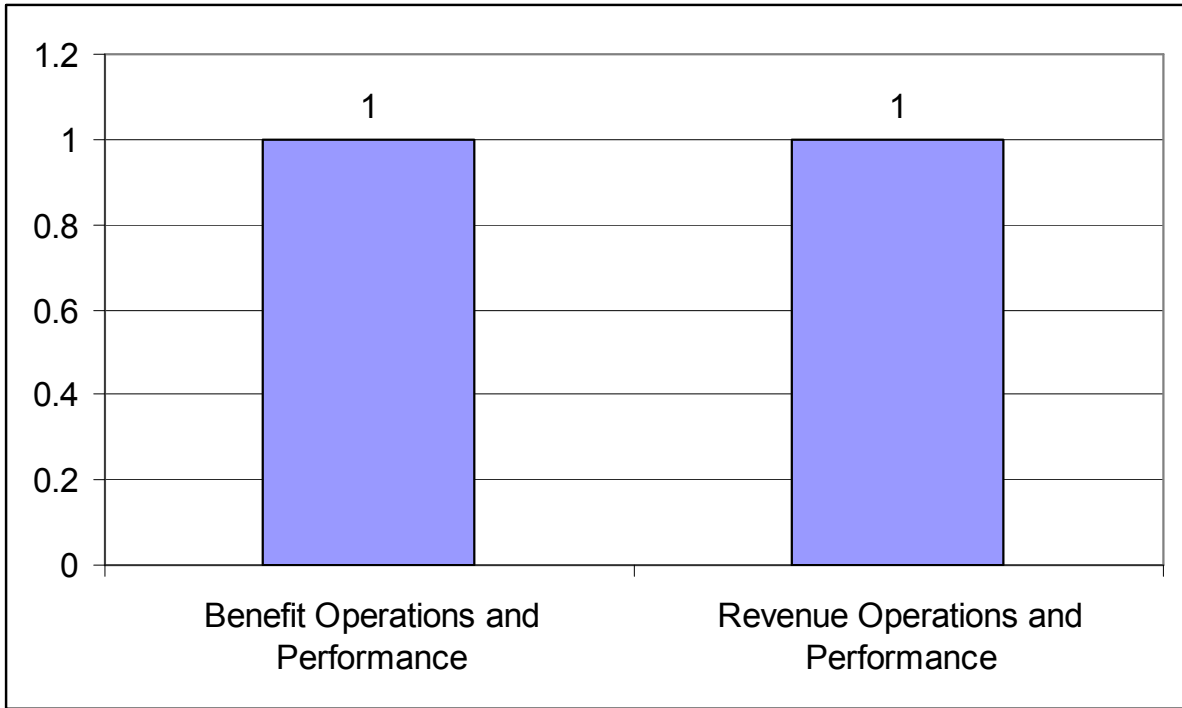
Children, Families and Learning



Housing Services

All six comments received for Housing Services were for Housing.

Revenues and Benefits



Complaints by Outcome

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
People	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Reablement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lifeline Services	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Lifeline Services	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Community Reablement	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Adult Social Care	0	0	1	0	0	1
Children Families & Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children & Family Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assessment and Intervention Teams	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Assessment and Intervention Teams	0	0	0	1	0	1
Children Looked After	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Placement	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Children Looked After	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Children & Family Services	0	1	0	1	0	2
Educational Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
14-19 & Adult Learning	0	0	0	1	0	1
14-19 Team	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for 14-19 & Adult Learning	0	0	0	1	1	2
School Place Planning, Assets & Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admissions	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for School Place Planning, Assets & Transport	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Educational Services	0	1	0	1	1	3
Family Support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area Team 2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Area Team 2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Specialist Family Services (FIT)	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Specialist Family Services (FIT)	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Family Support	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total for Children Families & Learning	0	5	0	2	1	8
Housing Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asset Management	0	2	0	1	0	3
Total for Asset Management	0	2	0	1	0	3
Housing	0	19	9	28	7	63
Total for Housing	0	19	9	28	7	63
Tenant Enforcement	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total for Tenant Enforcement	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total for Housing Services	0	22	9	30	7	68
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Operations & Performance	0	1	0	2	0	3
Total for Benefits Operations & Performance	0	1	0	2	0	3
Taxation Operations & Performance	0	6	0	1	1	8
Total for Taxation Operations & Performance	0	6	0	1	1	8
Total for Revenues & Benefits	0	7	0	3	1	11
Total for People	0	34	10	35	9	88
Total	0	34	10	35	9	88

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	On hold	Partially Upheld	Suspended (ongoing proceedings)	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
People	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children Families & Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Specialist Family Services (FIT)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total for Specialist Family Services (FIT)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total for Family Support	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total for Children Families & Learning	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Housing Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing	0	1	2	0	4	0	2	0	9
Total for Housing	0	1	2	0	4	0	2	0	9
Tenant Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Tenant Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total for Housing Services	0	1	2	0	4	0	2	1	10
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taxation Operations & Performance	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Taxation Operations & Performance	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for People	0	1	3	0	6	0	2	1	13
Total	0	1	3	0	6	0	2	1	13

The above table shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints determined by the Council during 2011/12.

Organisational Learning

As a result of a complaint about Housing Services the Council formalised in its Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure the practice of producing interim action plans specifically when Police involvement prohibits a full action plan. It was agreed that an interim action plan should be completed as soon as possible following a report of anti-social behaviour which would then be reviewed upon the conclusion of Police involvement or receipt of relevant information.

Following another complaint received it was recommended that Housing and Building Services review the standards for repair and/or their systems to ensure that the service tenants receive matches the standards set out in the information the Council provide to tenants.

Following another complaint about Housing Services staff were reminded to follow the correct procedure on receipt of correspondence relating to disputes over rent arrears.

The Council also worked with the bailiff to ensure that their letters were updated to advise debtors to contact Housing Services direct, if they wish to dispute a debt.

Following a complaint referred to the Council by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to Housing Services staff were reminded of the importance of ensuring they provide tenants with details of how to make a complaint to the Council in the first instance.

There were a number of complaints about delays in completing works. The repairs rapid improvement event identified that there were issues with job appointments being changed and the fact that operatives did not have materials or time to do the work necessary. As a result one of the planners was relocated to Customer Services and the number of jobs not completed at first visit is now monitored to improve the service provided.

Following a complaint received by Housing Services it was agreed that a termination form and key receipt form would be signed and dated by both parties and that this would be recorded. It was also agreed that the Council's Secure Tenancy Agreement would be revised to accurately reflect our practice on termination of a tenancy.

Following a complaint about the Council prematurely suspending someone's benefits it was agreed that officers would always leave a card when they visit someone unannounced and give them 24 hours to contact us. It was also agreed that we would not suspend the benefit until we have established that there is no contact, and therefore a real probability that the person is no longer living in the property.

Further recommendations

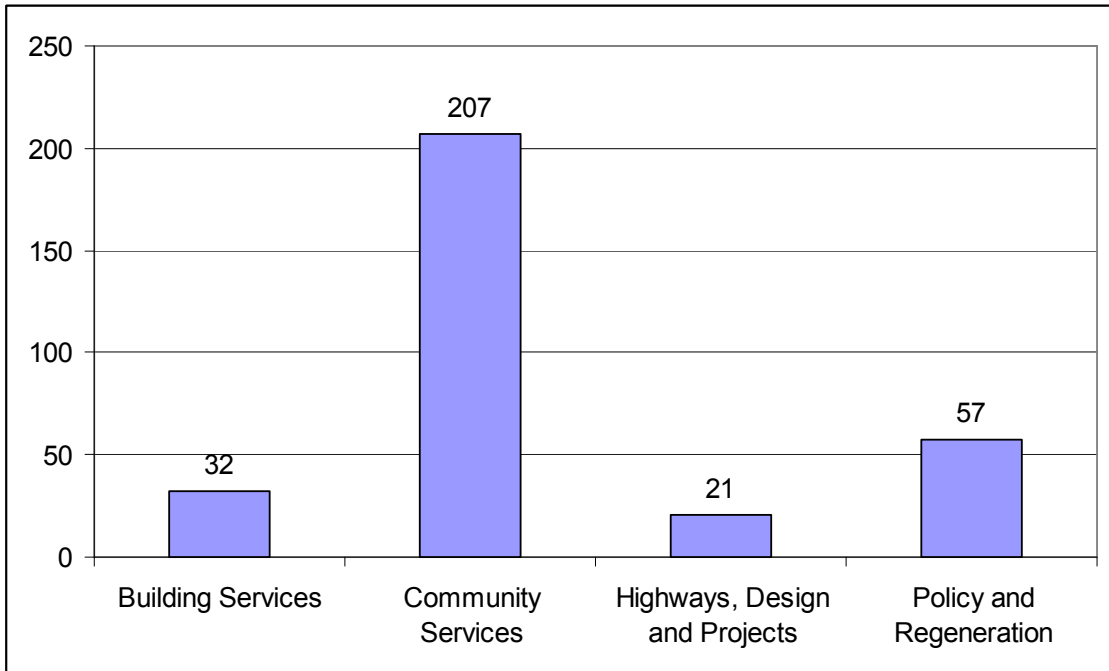
Officers investigating complaints should ensure they contact complainants within 5 working days, as per the procedure, to ensure the Council can resolve as many complaints as possible at Stage 1 of the procedure.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

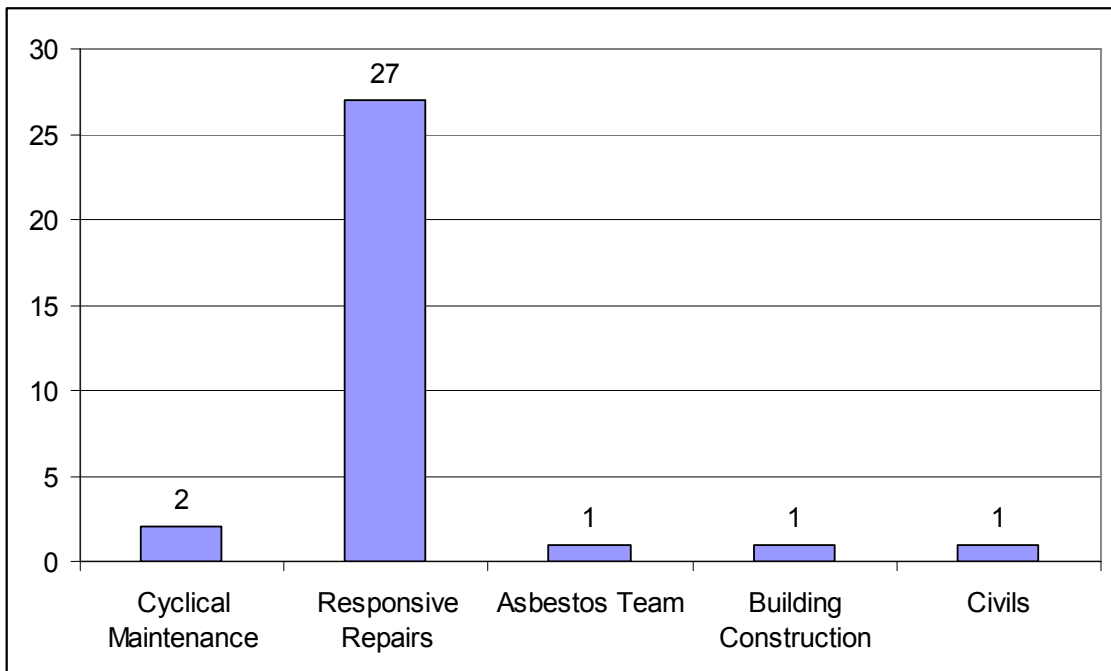
Services for Place

Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



Building Services



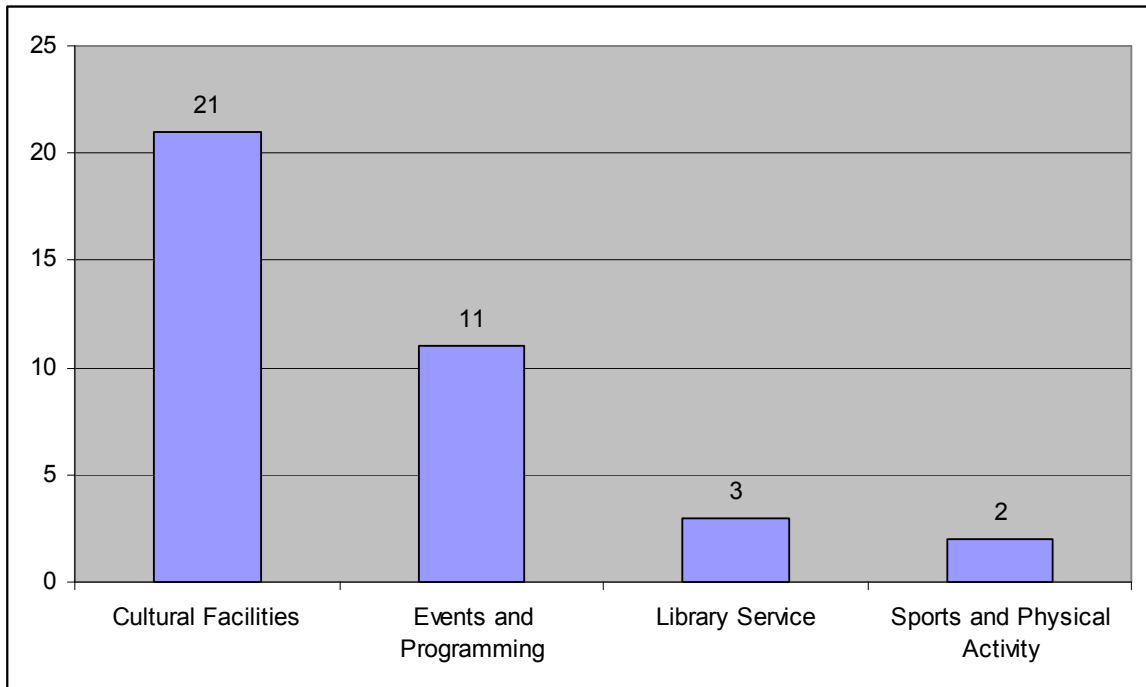
The complaints for Responsive Repairs related to delays in undertaking, the quality of and communication around repair works.

Community Services

Community Services - Commercial Services

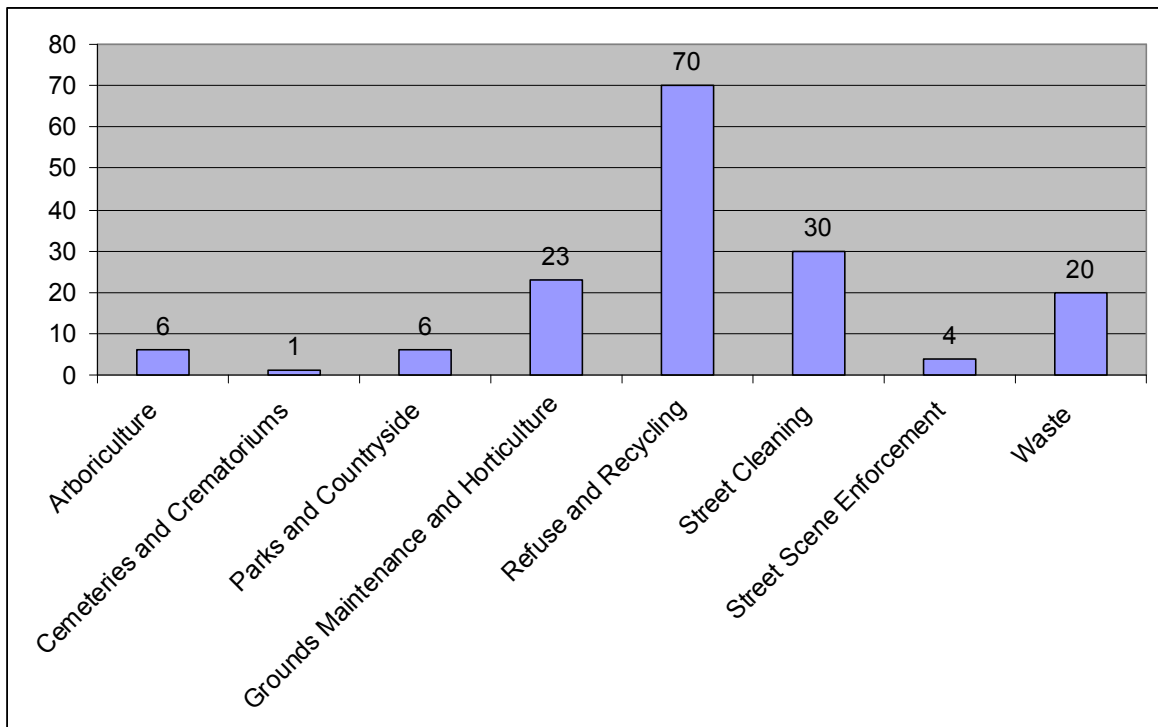
Commercial Services received three complaints all of which related to the Markets.

Community Services - Culture



15 of the complaints received for Cultural Facilities related to the Civic Theatre, four to the Dolphin Centre and two to the Arts Centre.

Community Services – Environmental Services

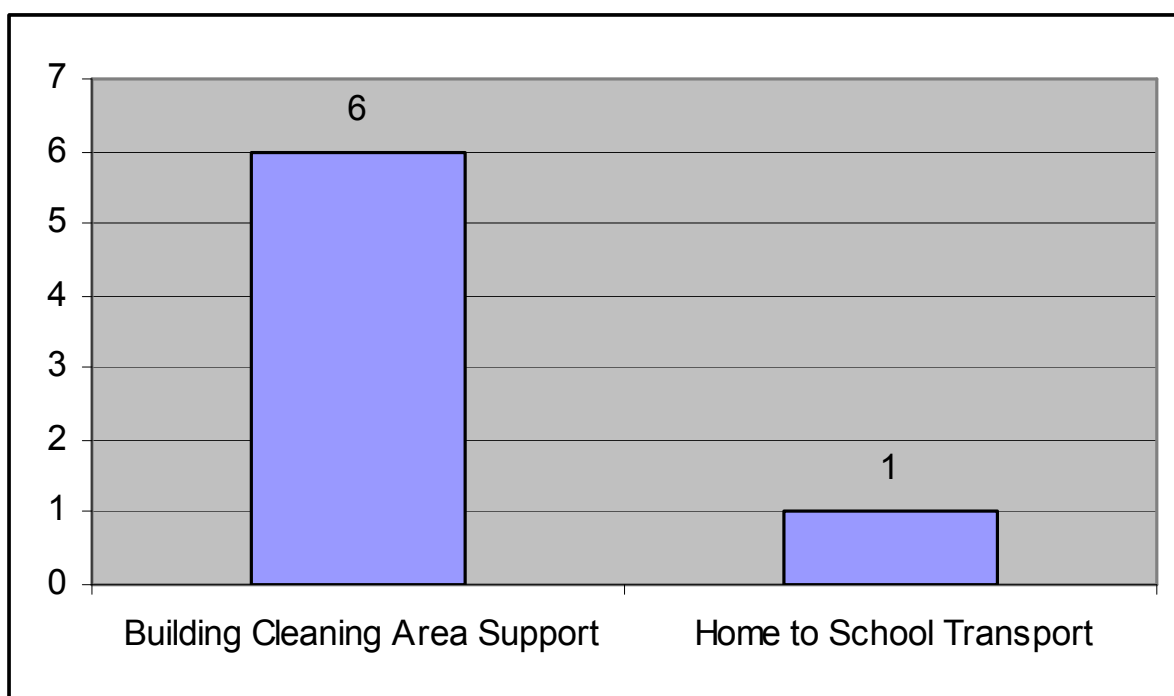


The Council saw a significant increase in the overall number of complaints for Refuse and Recycling during 2011/12. 70 complaints compared to 43 in 2010/11. The most common complaint remains missed refuse and recycling collections, including assisted collections. The Council saw an increase in these complaints, from 20 in 2010/11 to 51 in 2011/12. Of the 51 complaints received 22 people also expressed their dissatisfaction that the Council no longer provides a recall service in relation to refuse and recycling. In addition, of the 20 complaints logged to Waste, 16 relate to missed refuse and recycling collections and of those a further six people expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's decision to no longer provide a recall service. In total that meant the Council received 67 complaints about missed refuse and recycling collections, including assisted collections, an increase of 47 compared to 2010/11. Of those 28 people also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's policy to no longer provide a recall service.

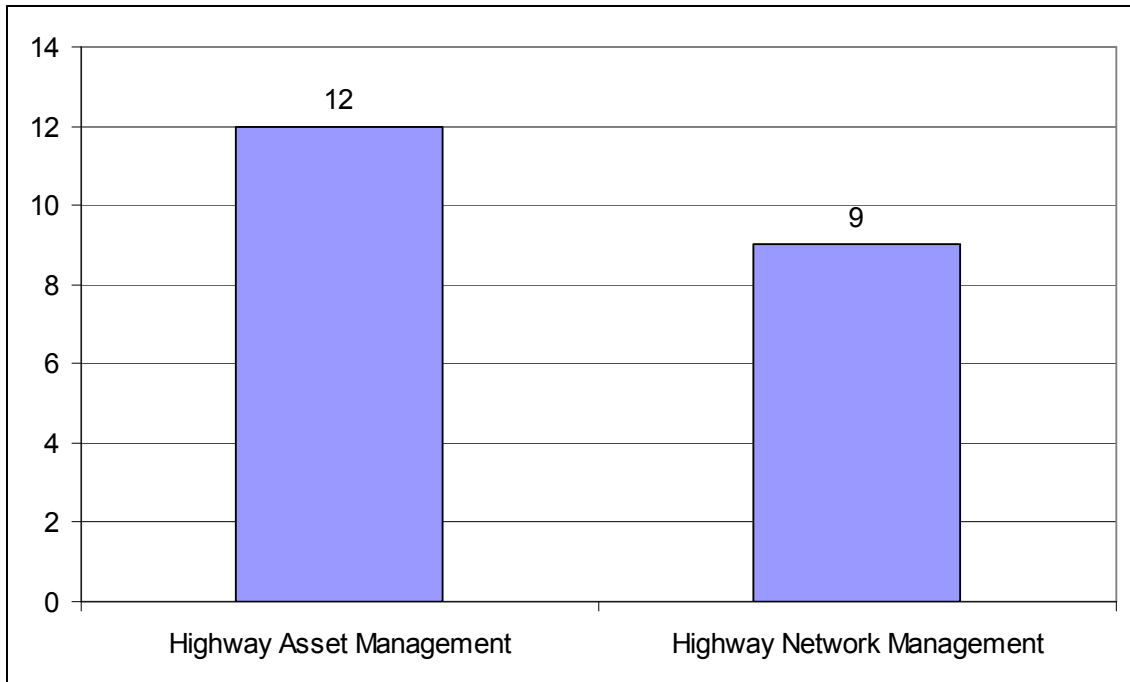
The most common complaint in relation to Street Cleaning was that the Council had not carried out work requested/or carried it out to a satisfactory standard following an issue being reported by a member of the public.

There were no identifiable trends in relation to Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture.

Community Services - Transport and Building Cleaning

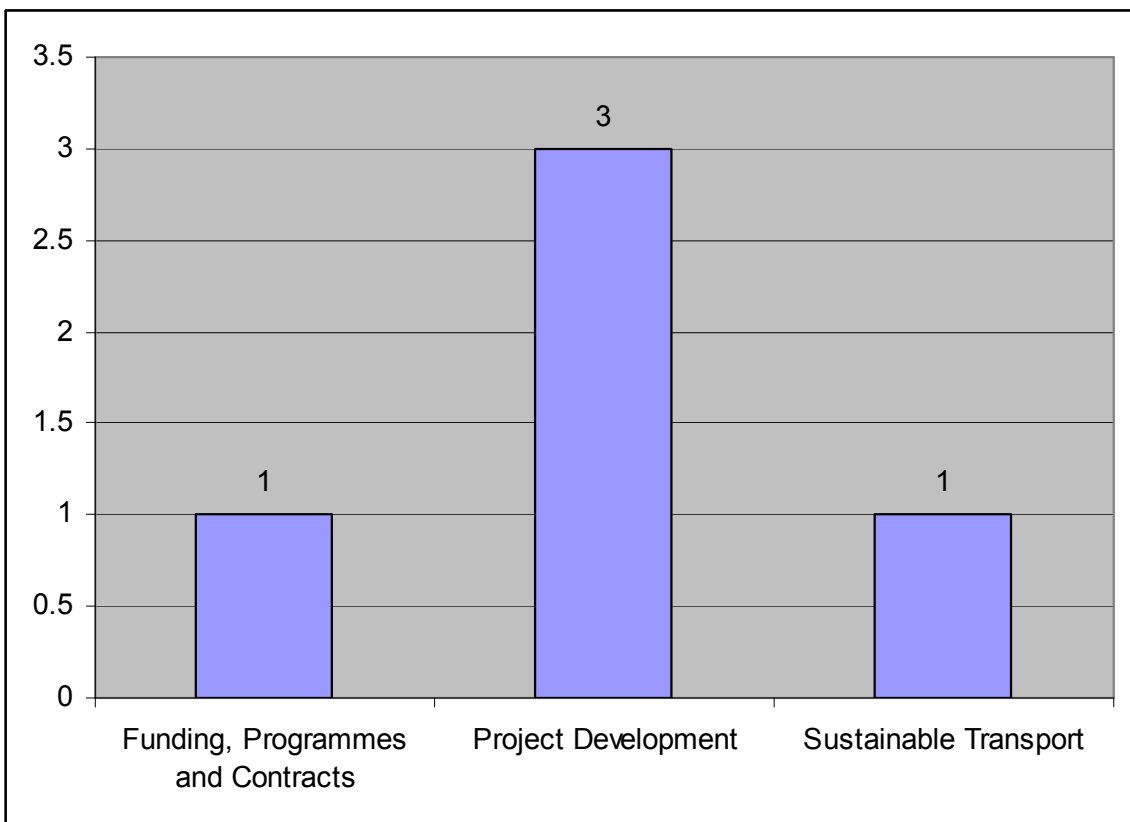


Highways, Design and Projects

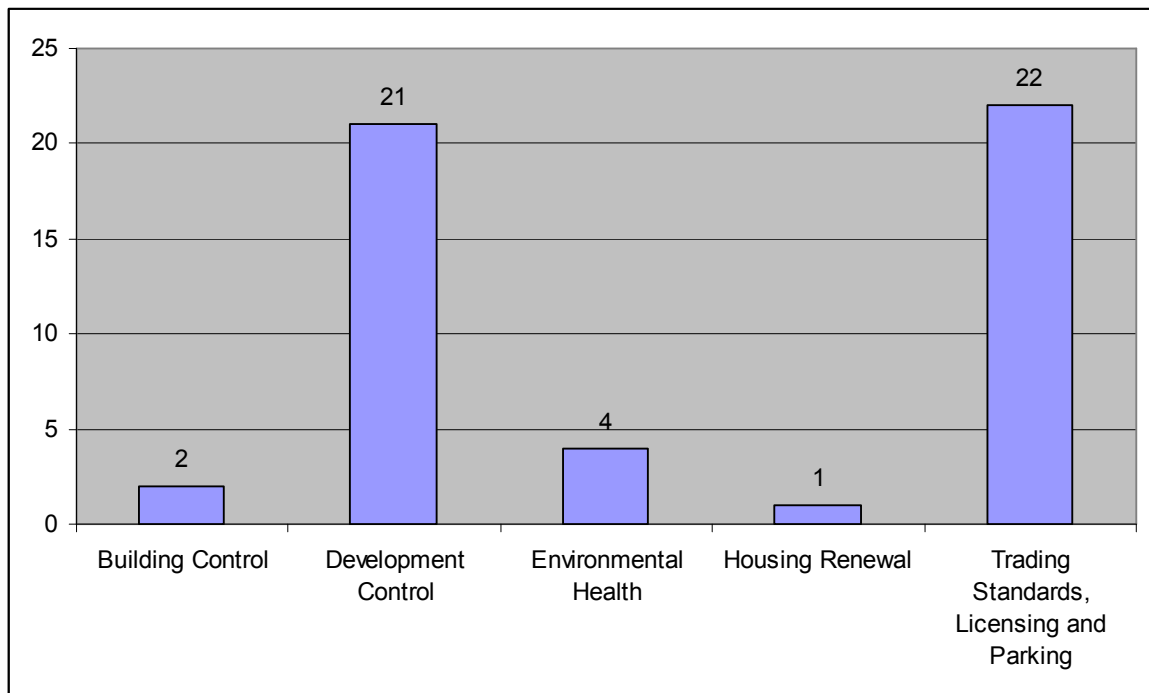


Policy and Regeneration

Policy and Regeneration - Programme and Projects



Policy and Regeneration - Regulatory Services



Development Control saw a reduction in the overall number of complaints received from 30 in 2010/11 to 21 in 2011/12. The Council saw a reduction in the number of complaints about lack of enforcement action in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11 and fewer complaints about communication problems. The most common complaints in 2011/12 concerned dissatisfaction with the way in which planning applications were processed.

There were no identifiable topics or trends in relation to the complaints received for Trading Standards, Licensing and Parking.

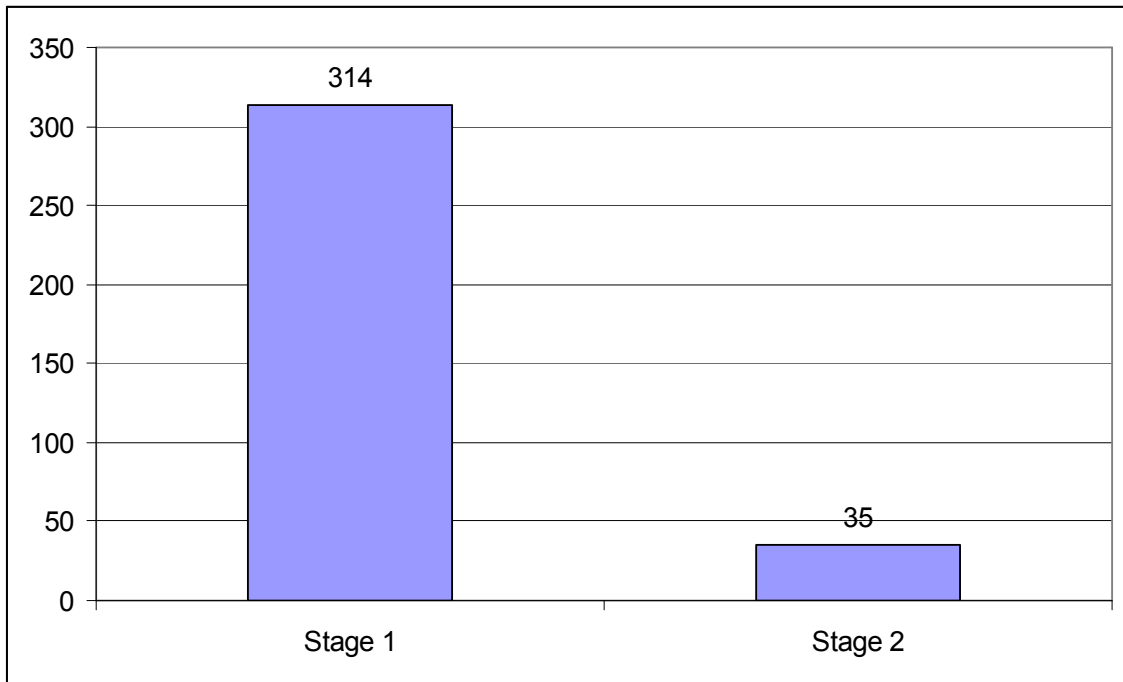
Policy and Regeneration - Strategy and Commissioning

Strategy and Commissioning received one complaint for Planning Policy.

Policy and Regeneration - Town Centre

Town centre received one complaint.

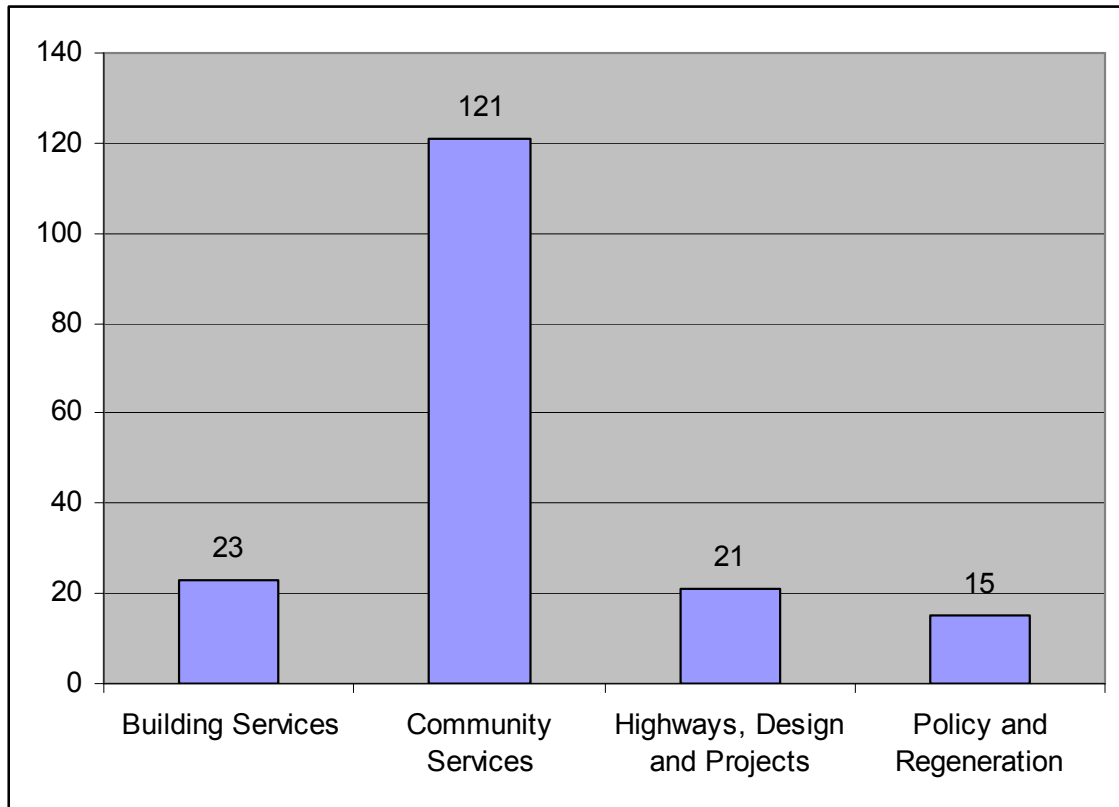
Complaints by Stage



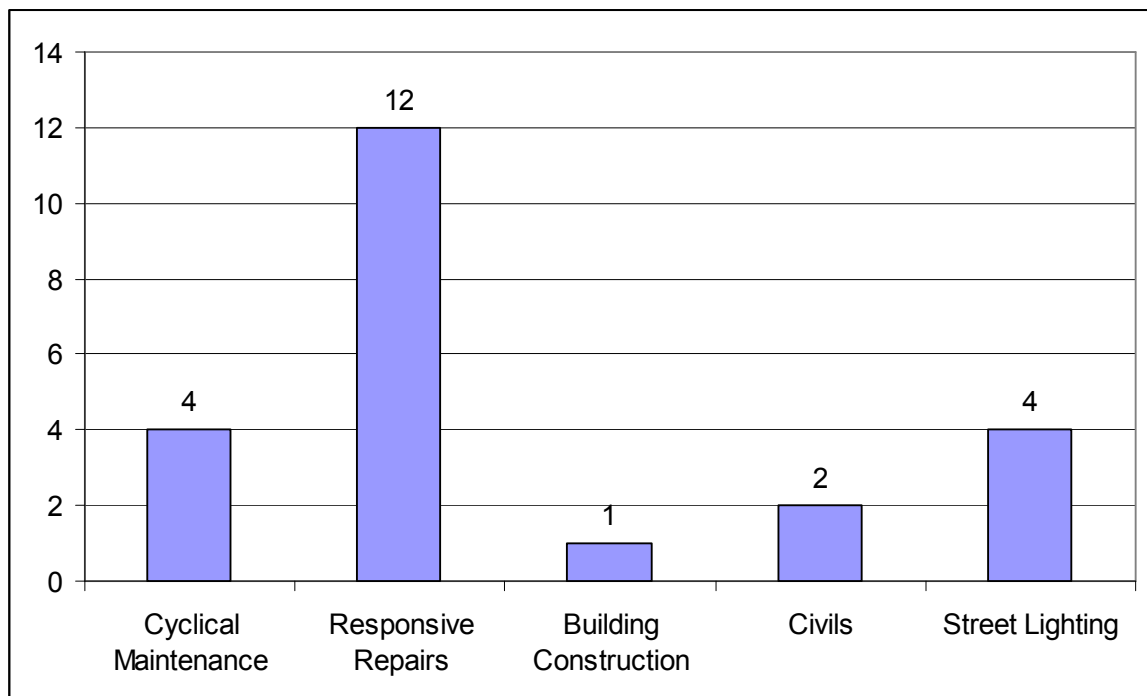
The above graph shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by the Council during 2011/12.

Compliments by Service Area/Team

Overview

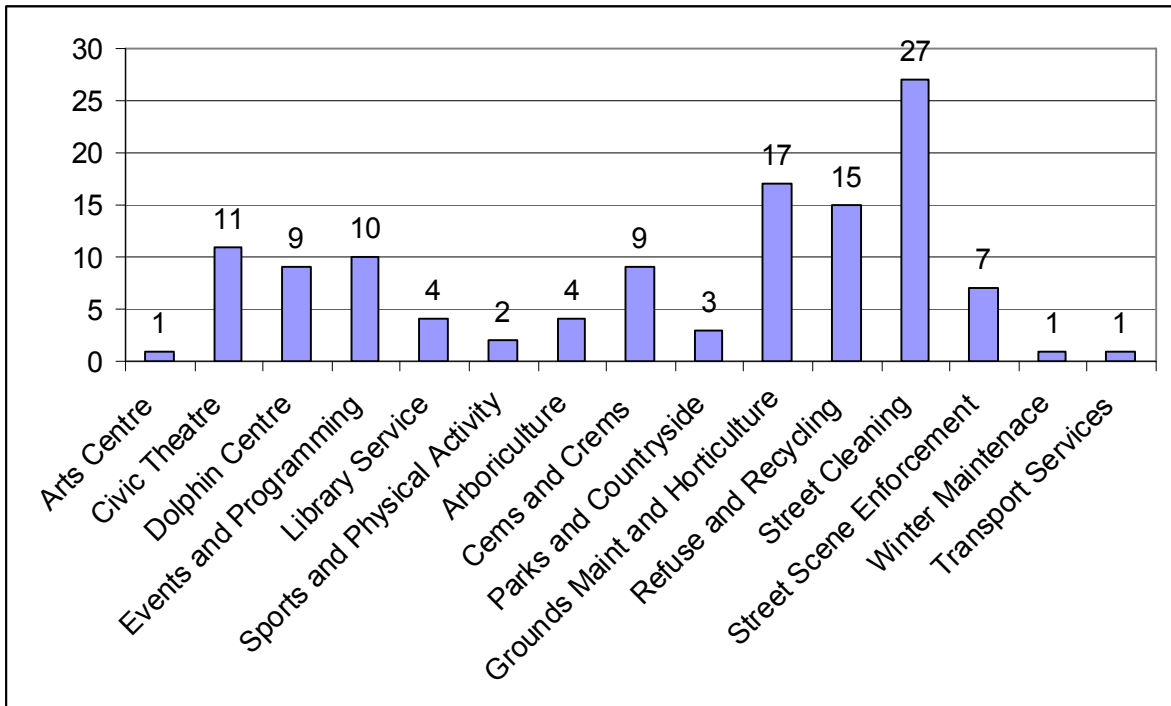


Building Services



All of the compliments for Building Services were in relation to the excellent service provided.

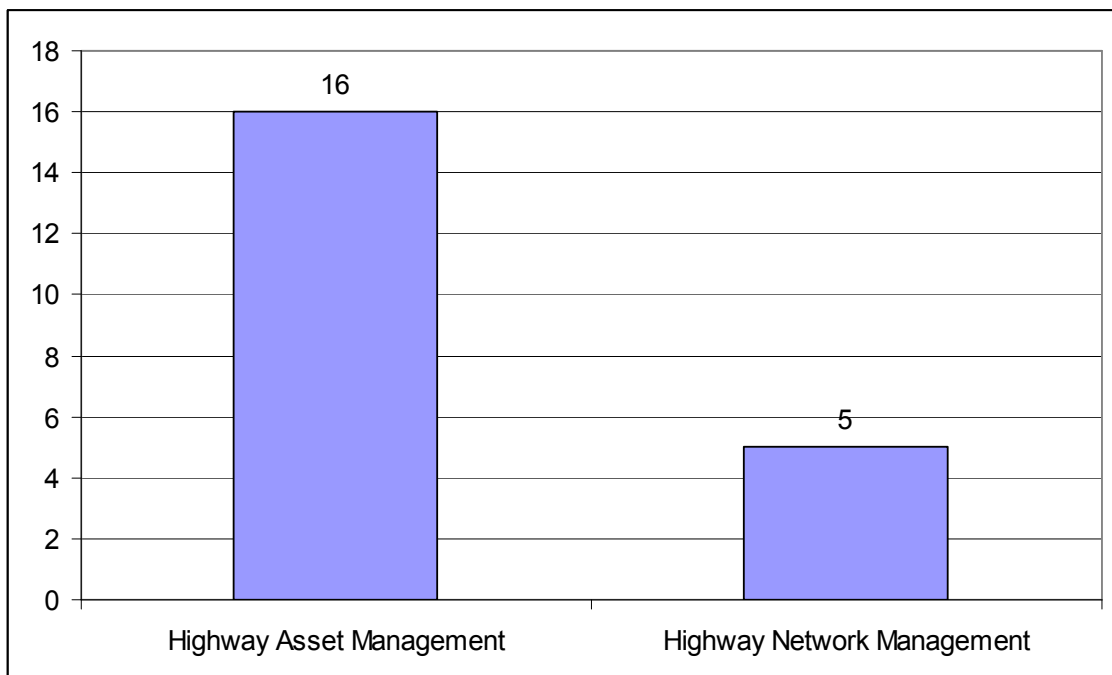
Community Services



Some of the compliments for the Civic Theatre and Events and Programming related to shows and events and others were for the support provided by staff.

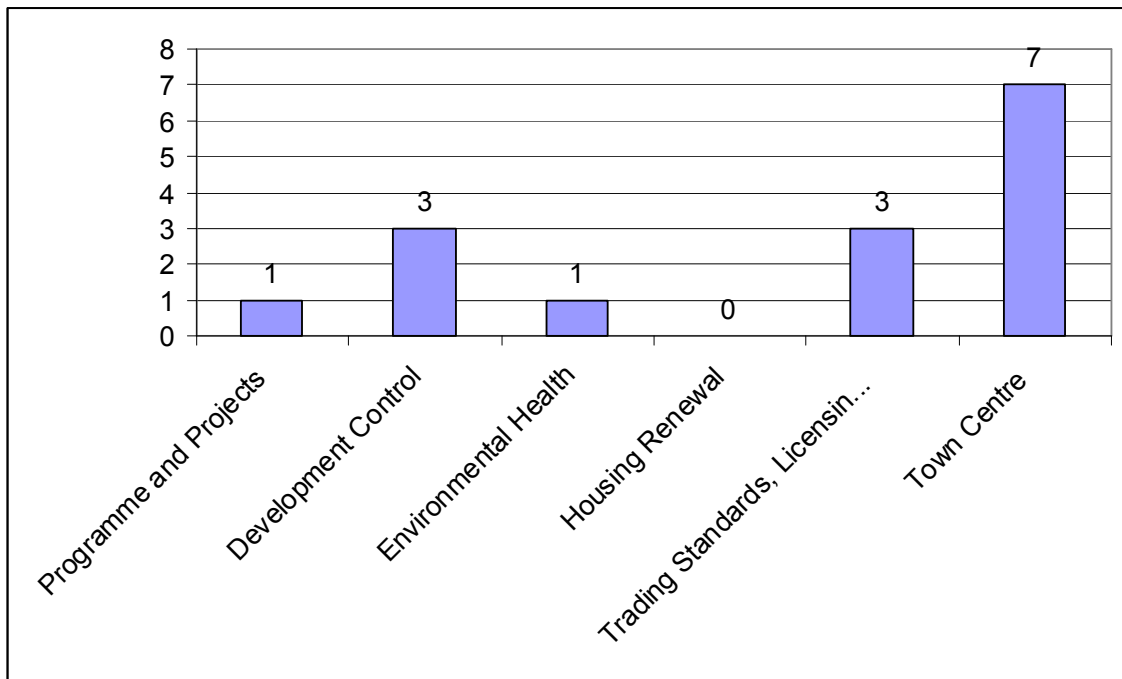
All of the compliments for Street Cleaning were in relation to the excellent service provided. The compliments for Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture related to floral displays, grass/hedge cutting and clearing leaves. The majority of the compliments received for Refuse and Recycling related to the quality of the service provided.

Highway, Design and Projects



The majority of the compliments received for Highways Asset Management related to the quality of the work undertaken.

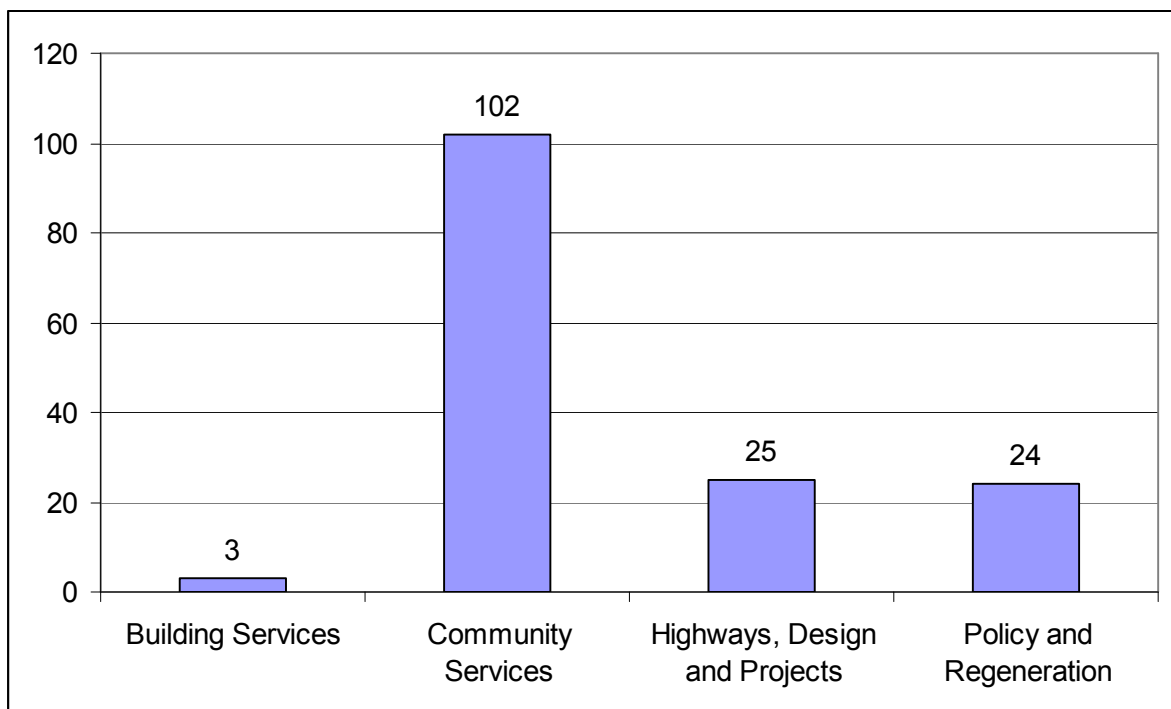
Policy and Regeneration



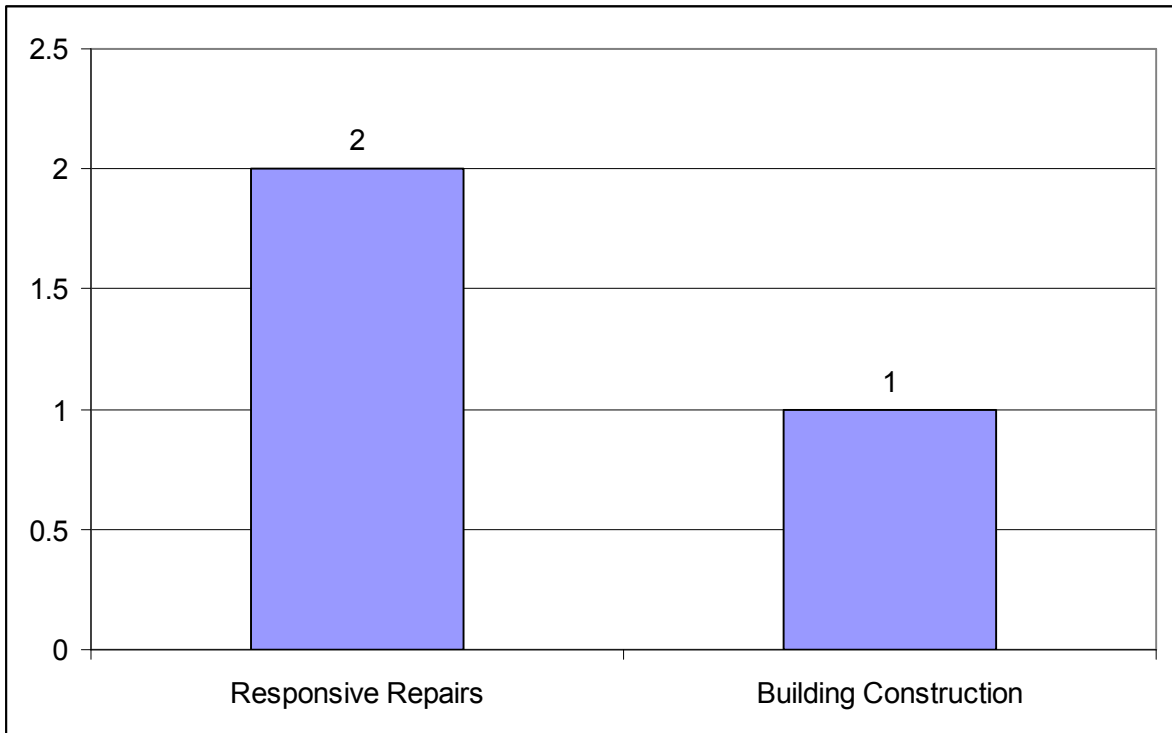
* Trading Standards, Licensing and Parking

Comments by Service Area/Team

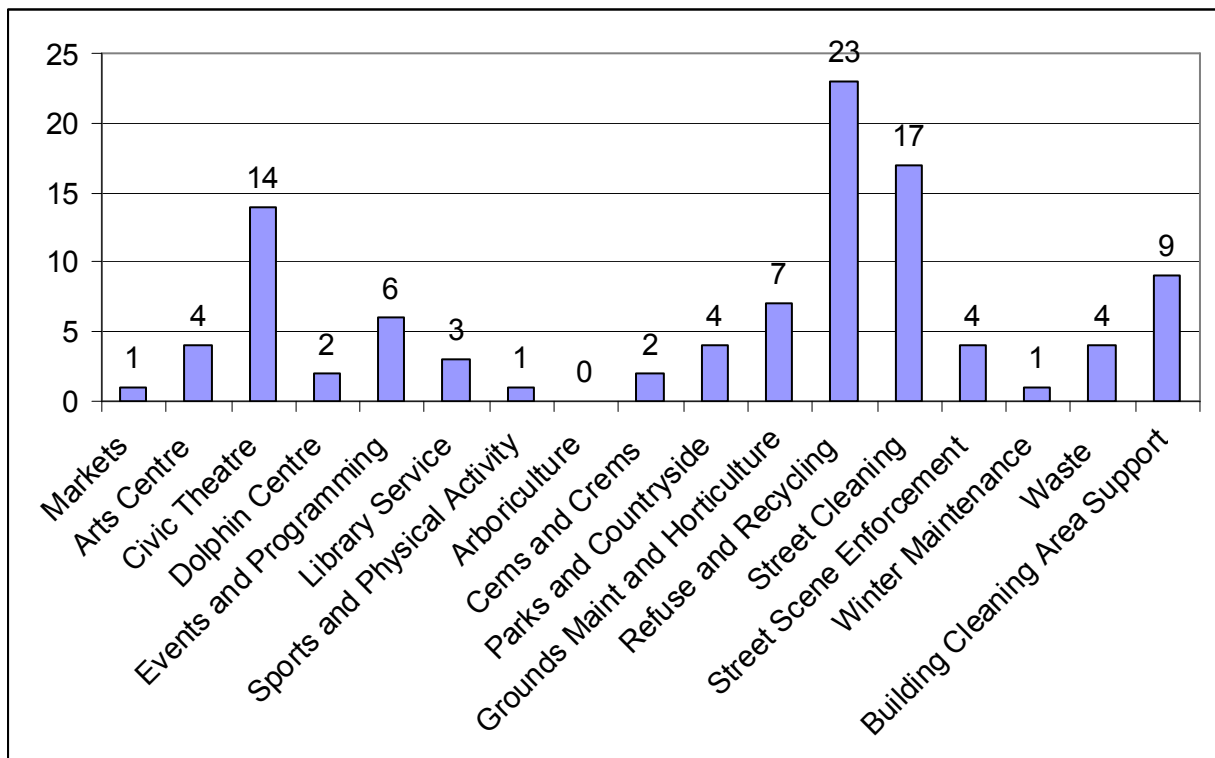
Overview



Building Services



Community Services

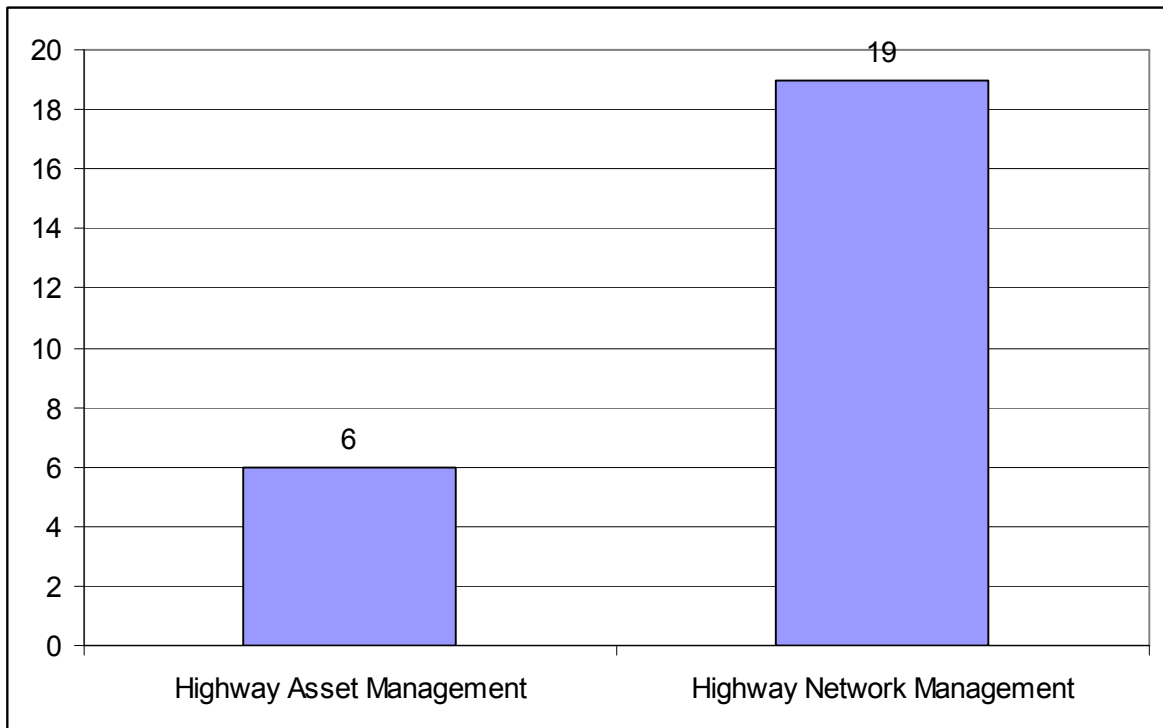


The majority of the comments for the Civic Theatre related to the quality of shows.

There were no identifiable topics in relation to the comments received for Refuse and Recycling, they ranged from individual issues to the proposal to introduce wheelie bins and the changes made to the Household Waste Recycling Centre.

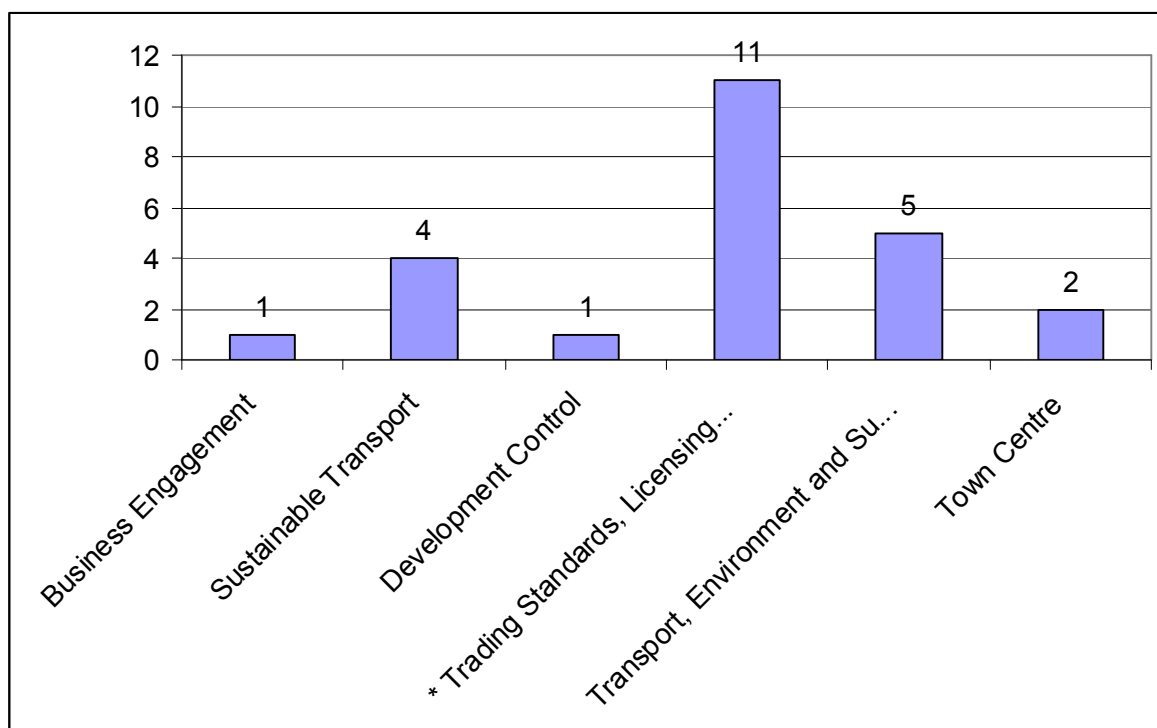
The comments about Street Cleaning covered issues such as litter and dog fouling problems in particular areas of the town.

Highway Design and Projects



There were no identifiable topics in relation to the comments received for Highway Network Management.

Policy and Regeneration



* Trading Standards, Licensing and Parking

The majority of comments received for Trading Standards, Licensing and Parking were in relation to the changes introduced to parking enforcement and car parks.

Complaints by Outcome

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Place	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cyclical Maintenance	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total for Cyclical Maintenance	0	1	1	0	0	2
Responsive Repairs	2	6	8	9	1	26
Total for Responsive Repairs	2	6	8	9	1	26
Total for Building Maintenance	2	7	9	9	1	28
Buildings Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asbestos Team	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Asbestos Team	0	1	0	0	0	1
Building Construction	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Building	0	0	0	1	0	1
Construction						
Total for Buildings Construction	0	1	0	1	0	2
Highways Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civils	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Civils	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Highways Construction	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Building Services	2	8	10	10	1	31
Community Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Markets	1	0	0	2	0	3

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Total for Markets	1	0	0	2	0	3
Total for Commercial Services	1	0	0	2	0	3
Culture	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arts Centre	0	1	0	1	0	2
Civic Theatre	2	6	1	6	0	15
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total for Cultural Facilities	2	7	1	9	0	19
Events and Programming	0	8	0	1	0	9
Total for Events and Programming	0	8	0	1	0	9
Library Service	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Library Service	0	2	0	0	0	2
Sports and Physical Activity	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Sports and Physical Activity	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Culture	2	19	1	10	0	32
Environmental Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arboriculture	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total for Arboriculture	0	2	0	0	0	2
Parks and Countryside	0	1	1	2	1	5
Arboriculture	0	2	0	2	0	4
Parks	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Parks and Countryside	0	3	2	4	1	10
Street Scene	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture	0	13	2	8	0	23
Refuse and Recycling	4	14	0	48	1	67
Street Cleansing (including gullies)	0	7	2	14	3	26
Street Scene Enforcement	0	1	0	3	0	4
Total for Street Scene	4	35	4	73	4	120
Waste	2	4	1	13	0	20
Total for Waste	2	4	1	13	0	20
Total for Environmental Services	6	44	7	90	5	152
Transport and Building Cleaning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Cleaning Area Support	0	1	3	1	0	5
Total for Building Cleaning	0	1	3	1	0	5
Home to school Transport	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Home to school Transport	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Transport and Building Cleaning	0	1	4	1	0	6
Total for Community Services	9	64	12	103	5	193
Highways, Design and Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highway Asset Management	0	7	2	2	1	12
Total for Highway Asset Management	0	7	2	2	1	12
Highway Network Management	0	5	2	2	0	9
Total for Highway Network Management	0	5	2	2	0	9
Total for Highways, Design and Projects	0	12	4	4	1	21
Policy and Regeneration Programme & Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funding, Programmes & Contracts	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Funding, Programmes & Contracts	0	1	0	0	0	1
Project Development	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total for Project Development	0	3	0	0	0	3
Sustainable Transport	0	1	0	0	0	1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Total for Sustainable	0	1	0	0	0	1
Transport						
Total for Programme & Projects	0	5	0	0	0	5
Regulatory Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Control	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total for Building Control	0	1	0	1	0	2
Development Control	0	11	4	2	1	18
Total for Development Control	0	11	4	2	1	18
Environmental Health	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Environmental	0	1	0	0	0	1
Health						
Housing Renewal	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total for Housing Renewal	0	0	1	0	0	1
Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking	2	18	0	1	0	21
Total for Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking	2	18	0	1	0	21
Licensing & Car Parking						
Total for Regulatory Services	2	31	5	4	1	43
Strategy & Commissioning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Policy	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Planning Policy	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Strategy & Commissioning	0	1	0	0	0	1
Commissioning						
Town Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town Centre	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Town Centre	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Town Centre	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Policy and Regeneration	2	38	5	4	1	50
Total for Place	13	122	31	121	8	295
Total	13	122	31	121	8	295

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	On hold	Partially Upheld	Suspended (ongoing proceedings)	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Place	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction									
Civils	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Civils	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Highways Construction	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Building Services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Community Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civic Theatre	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Cultural Facilities	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Culture	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Environmental Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arboriculture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Arboriculture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	On hold	Partially Upheld	Suspended (ongoing proceedings)	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Parks and Countryside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arboriculture	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total for Parks and Countryside	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Street Scene									
Street Scene	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Refuse and Recycling	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Street Scene	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	5
Environmental Services									
Total for Environmental Services	0	1	1	0	5	0	0	0	7
Community Services									
Total for Community Services	0	1	2	0	5	0	0	0	8
Policy and Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regulatory Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Control	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total for Building Control	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Development Control									
Total for Development Control	0	0	4	0	2	0	2	0	8
Environmental Health									
Total for Environmental Health	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking									
Total for Trading Standards, Licensing & Car Parking	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	1	7
Regulatory Services									
Total for Regulatory Services	0	1	10	0	4	0	3	1	19
Policy and Regeneration									
Total for Policy and Regeneration	0	1	10	0	4	0	3	1	19
Total for Place	0	2	13	0	9	0	3	1	28
Total	0	2	13	0	9	0	3	1	28

The above table shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints determined by the Council during 2011/12.

Organisational Learning

Following a complaint received for Development Control the validation procedure for planning applications was revisited to ensure that applicants are asked to re-draw the red line boundary more tightly around the application site, where appropriate, to ensure appropriate classification. Following a further complaint about the same development it was agreed that the Council would include the heights of floodlights in descriptions for future similar applications. The Council also ensured that the noise attenuation barrier, required by condition, was erected.

Following a complaint received for Development Control queries regarding the extent of Tree Preservation Orders are now handled by Legal Services.

Following another complaint received for Development Control, regarding lack of response to a report of an unauthorised sign, it was agreed that to help overcome this problem a single inbox for general queries and enforcement complaints would be set up with a responsible officer assigned to distribute all incoming mail.

Following a complaint received for Licensing and Car Parking the importance of keeping accurate records in relation to all Penalty Charge Notice Appeals, in particular those concerning Council vehicles, was reiterated with staff.

Following a further complaint for Licensing and Car Parking the Council's Civil Parking Enforcement Procedures were revised to reflect the current practice of its officers.

Following a complaint received for Street Scene Enforcement the Council reviewed its out of hour procedures relating to the release of dogs.

Following a complaint received by Markets it was agreed that the Council would review its practice to ensure that traders are provided with all the relevant paper work, that all the paper work is returned by traders and the trader's insurance is checked prior to them being allowed to commence trading. It was also agreed that in future, as set out in the Darlington Markets Regulations and Bye Laws, where a penalty is issued to a trader the trader will be notified in writing and informed of their right of appeal. The Darlington Markets Regulations and Bye Laws section on complaints was also updated to reflect the Procedure.

Further recommendations

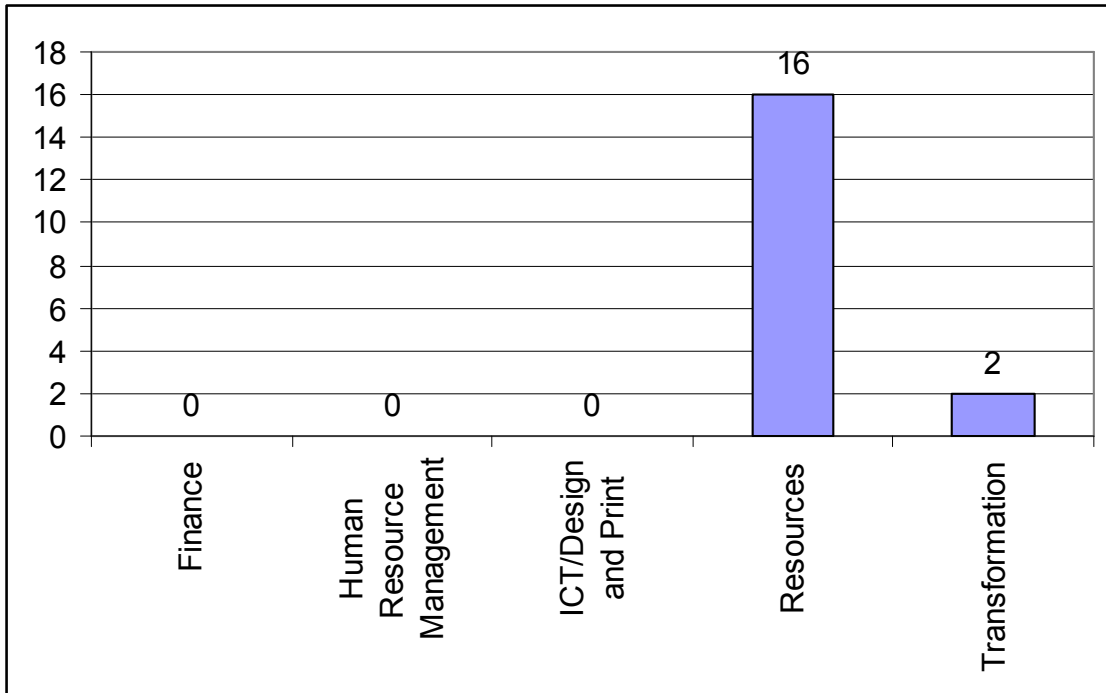
Officers investigating complaints should ensure they contact complainants within 5 working days, as per the procedure, to ensure the Council can resolve as many complaints as possible at Stage 1 of the procedure.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department

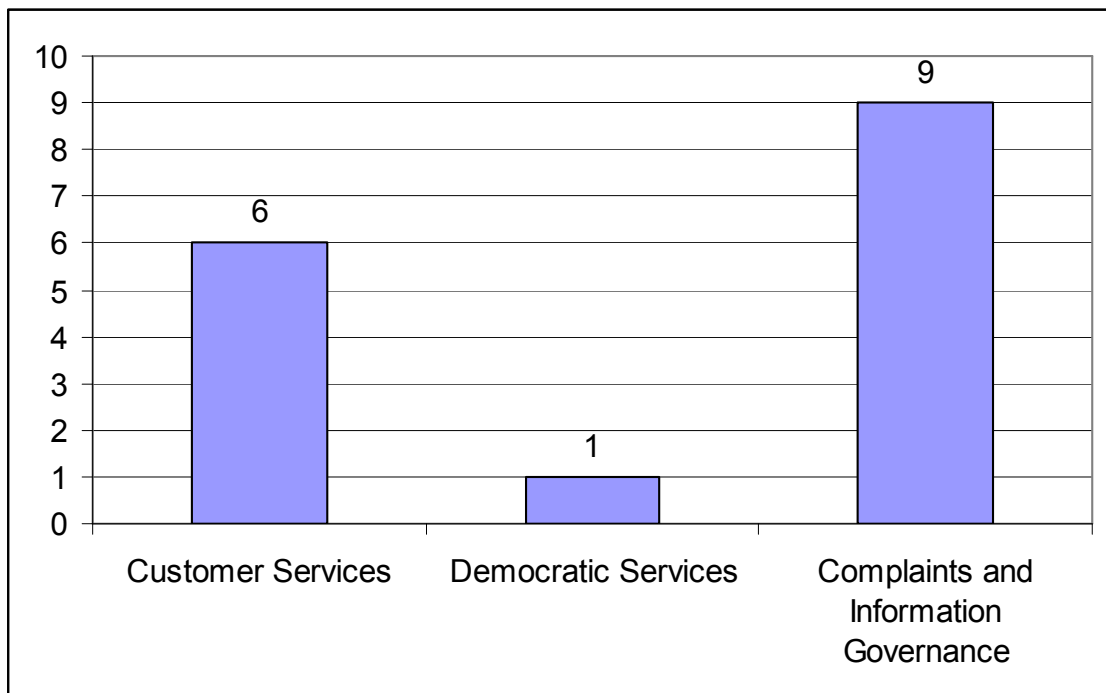
Resources Group

Complaints by Service Area/Team

Overview



Resources



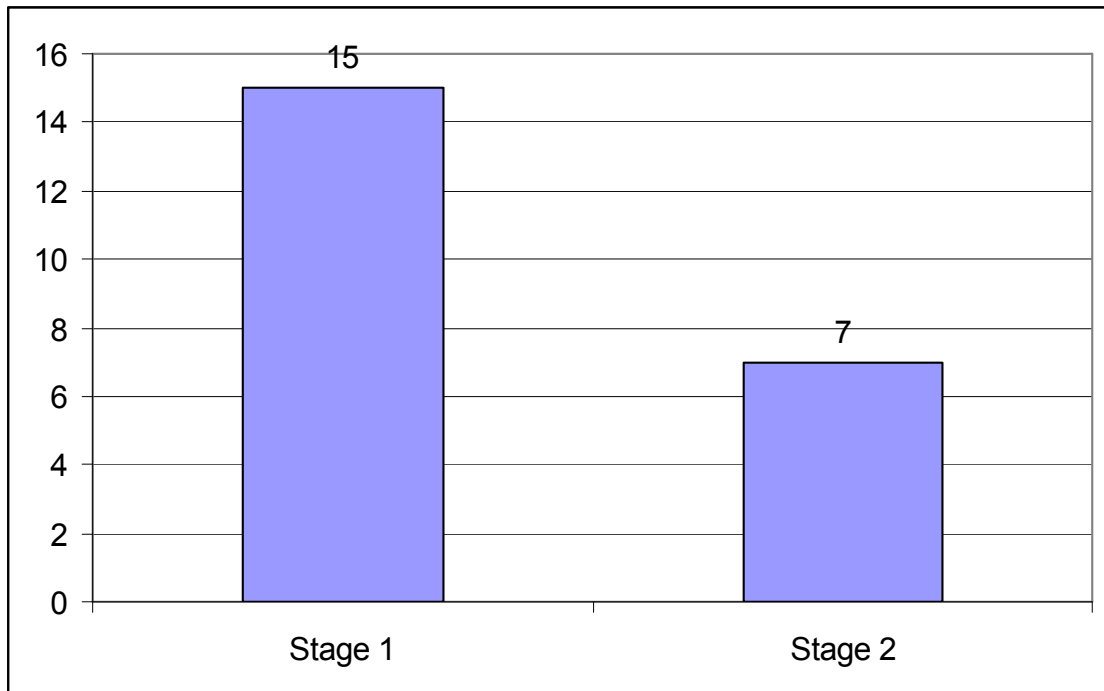
The complaints received for customer services related to the menu system introduced, waiting times and miscommunication.

The majority of complaints received for Complaints and Information Governance were as a result of officers failing to adhere to the Council's complaints procedure(s). In particular not contacting complainants within five working days to discuss the matter and failing to agree an extension where they were unable to meet the timescale.

Transformation

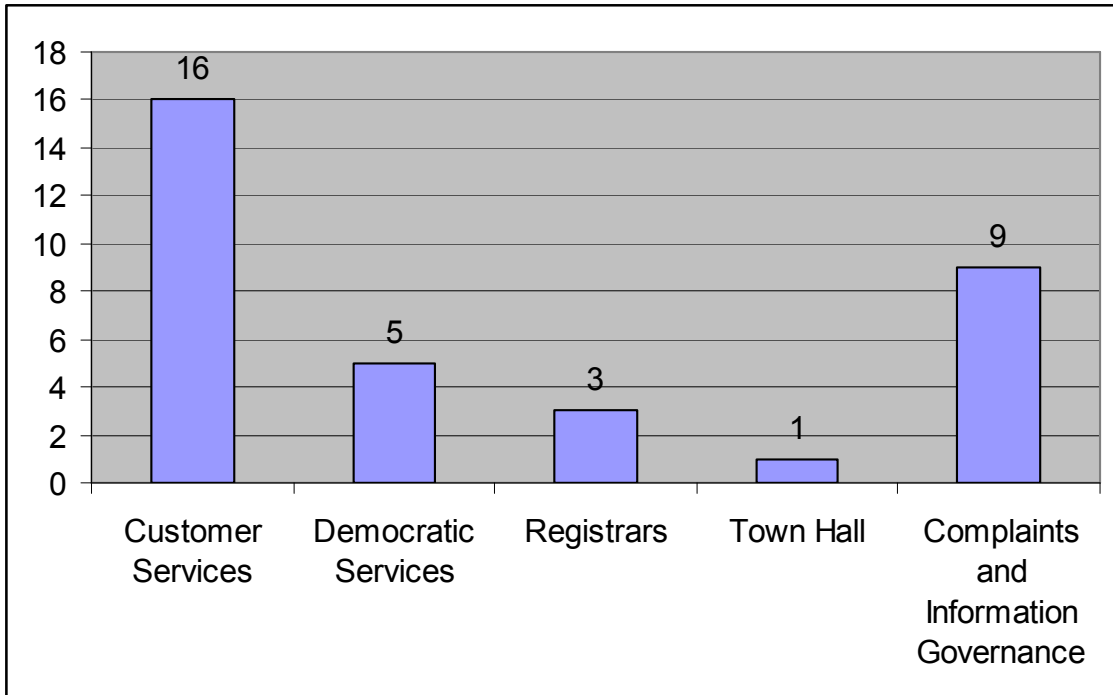
Both complaints received for Transformation were regarding the Transformation Team.

Complaints by Stage



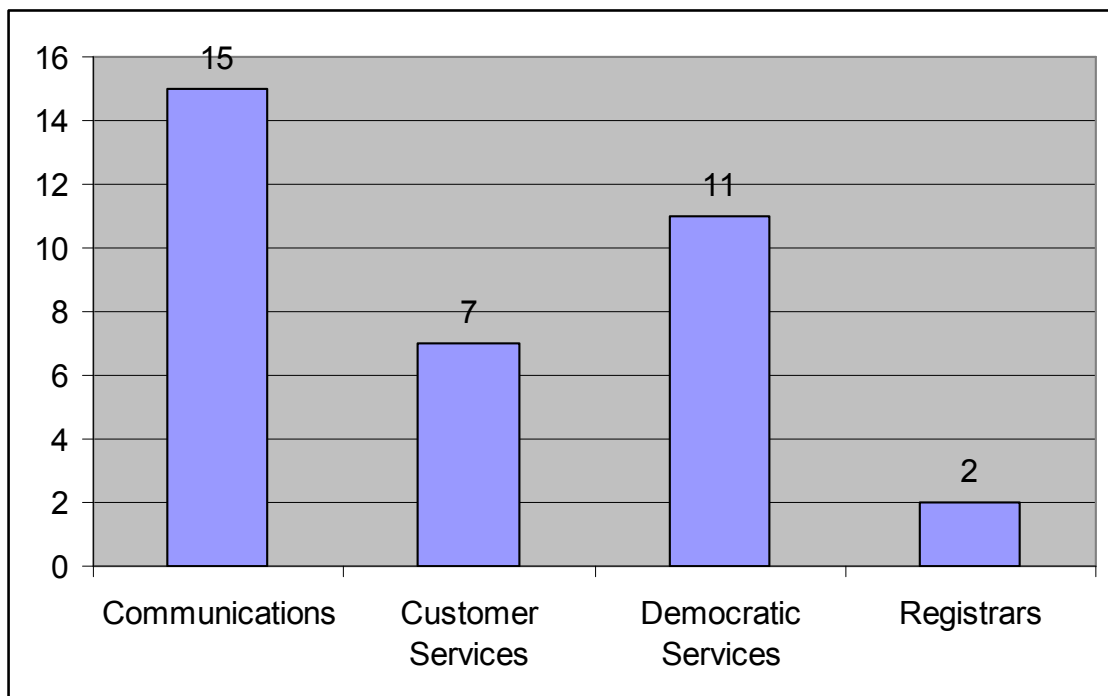
The above graph shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by the Council during 2011/12.

Compliments by Service Area/Team



The majority of compliments for Customer Services and Complaints and Information Governance related to the manner and efficiency in which officers helped resolve matters.

Comments by Service Area/Team



The majority of comments for Communications related to peoples dissatisfaction with the decisions to stop advertising in and production of the Town Crier.

Seven of the comments received for Democratic Services were positive comments relating to the on-line registration for the Electoral Roll.

Complaints by Outcome

Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic & Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	0	1	1	2	0	4
Total for Customer Services	0	1	1	2	0	4
Democratic Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Democratic Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Democratic & Customer Services	0	1	1	3	0	5
Information & Insight	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints and Information Governance	0	1	2	5	0	8
Total for Complaints and Information Governance	0	1	2	5	0	8
Total for Information & Insight	0	1	2	5	0	8
Total for Resources	0	2	3	8	0	13
Total for Resources	0	2	3	8	0	13
Total	0	2	3	8	0	13

Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Early referral to LGO	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	On hold	Partially Upheld	Suspended (ongoing proceedings)	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic & Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total for Democratic & Customer Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Information & Insight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Complaints and Information Governance	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Total for Complaints and Information Governance	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Total for Information & Insight	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4

<i>Total for Resources</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	5
<i>Total for Resources</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	5
<i>Total</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	5

The above table shows the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints determined by the Council during 2011/12.

Organisational Learning

Following a complaint from a gentleman who found out that his neighbour had confirmed his address for the purpose of the Electoral Roll the Council revised the training for Canvassers to ensure that there is no repetition of personal information asked for or accepted by the Council from a third party.

Following a complaint for Customer Services a review was undertaken into the accessibility of the Customer Contact Centre for disabled customers and customers with disabled children, specifically in relation to waiting times and waiting arrangements.

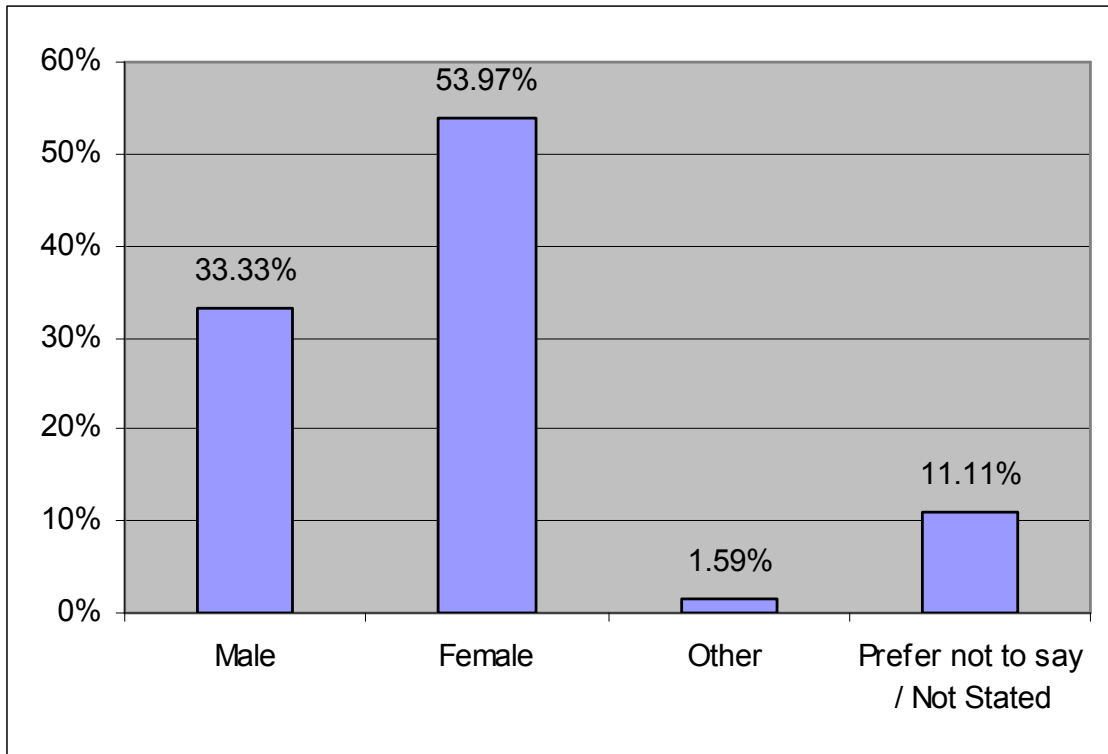
Following several complaints for Complaints and Information Governance the importance of adhering to the Council's complaints procedure(s) has been reiterated with officers.

Further recommendations

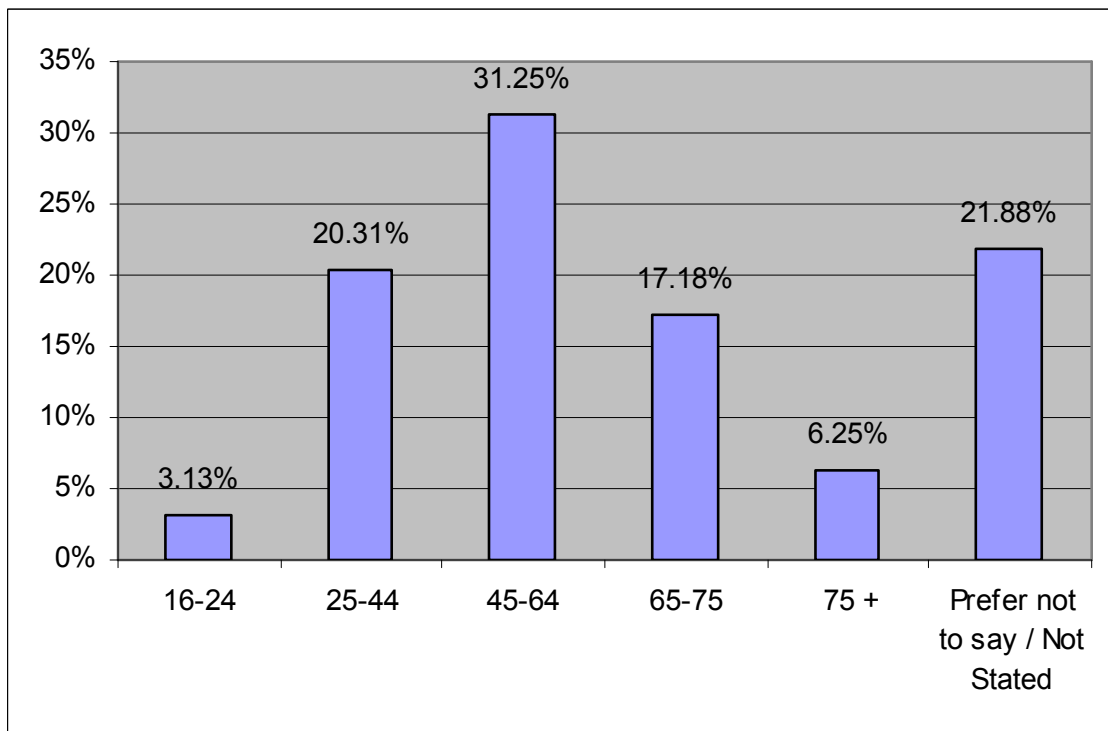
Officers investigating complaints should ensure they contact complainants within 5 working days, as per the procedure, to ensure the Council can resolve as many complaints as possible at Stage 1 of the procedure.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Complainants by Gender



Complainants by Age

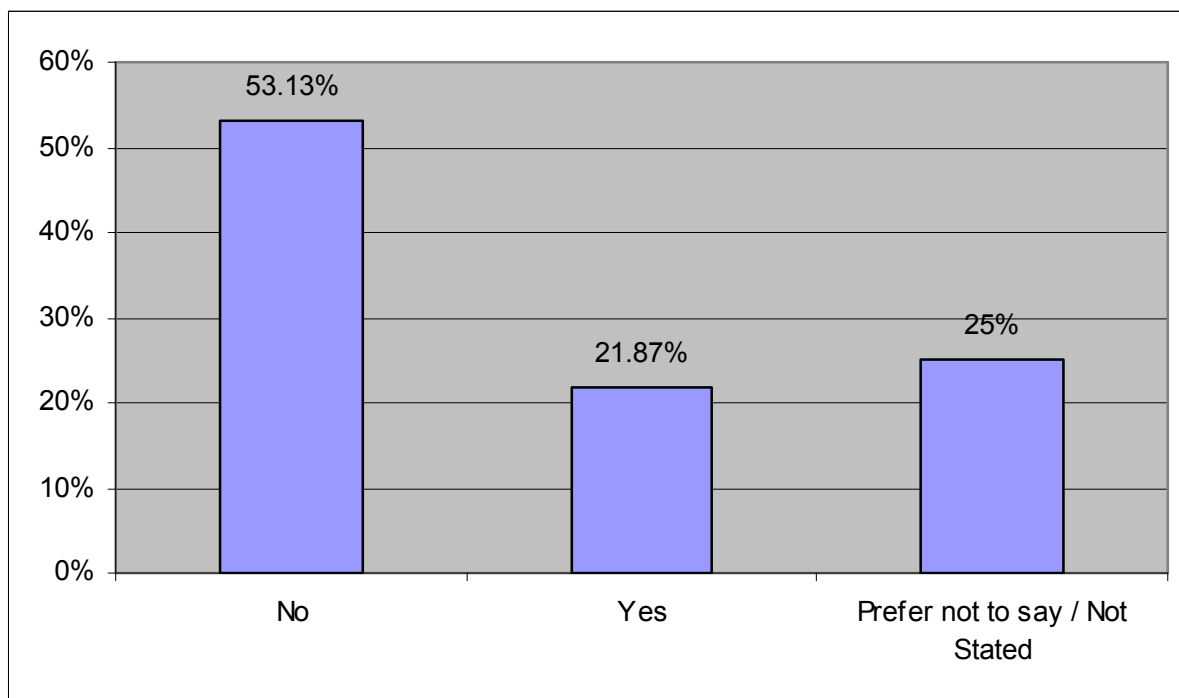


The number of complaints received from young people remains particularly low. The CIG Team have now developed a leaflet to try and engage more young people in the process. The leaflet was distributed during 2011/12. In addition to this the Complaints

and Information Governance Manager has visited services provided for young people to raise awareness of the Council's complaints, compliments and comments procedures.

Furthermore the Council is now using social networking sites to provide alternative forums via which young people can engage with the Council. The use of social networking sites has been successful in engaging with young people between the age of 13 - 17 with around 300 accessing the Council's Facebook page and a further 100 accessing the Council's Click (Youth Service) page.

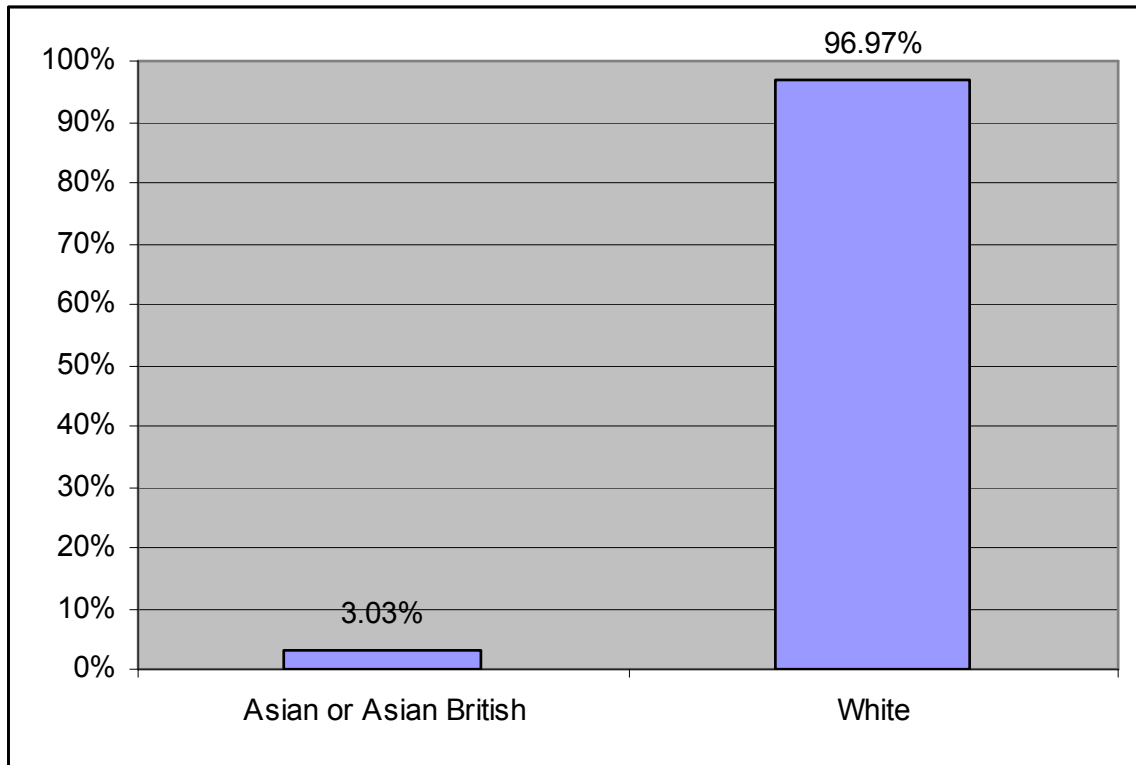
Complainants by Disability



According to census data, there is, in Darlington, a slightly higher than average percentage of people who stated they had a long term illness, health problem or disability (this includes mental, physical and sensory impairment) which limited their daily activities or work (20.4%, compared to a national average of 18.2%).

On the basis of the information gathered in 2011/12 it would appear that disabled people are slightly over represented within the procedure.

Complainants by Ethnicity



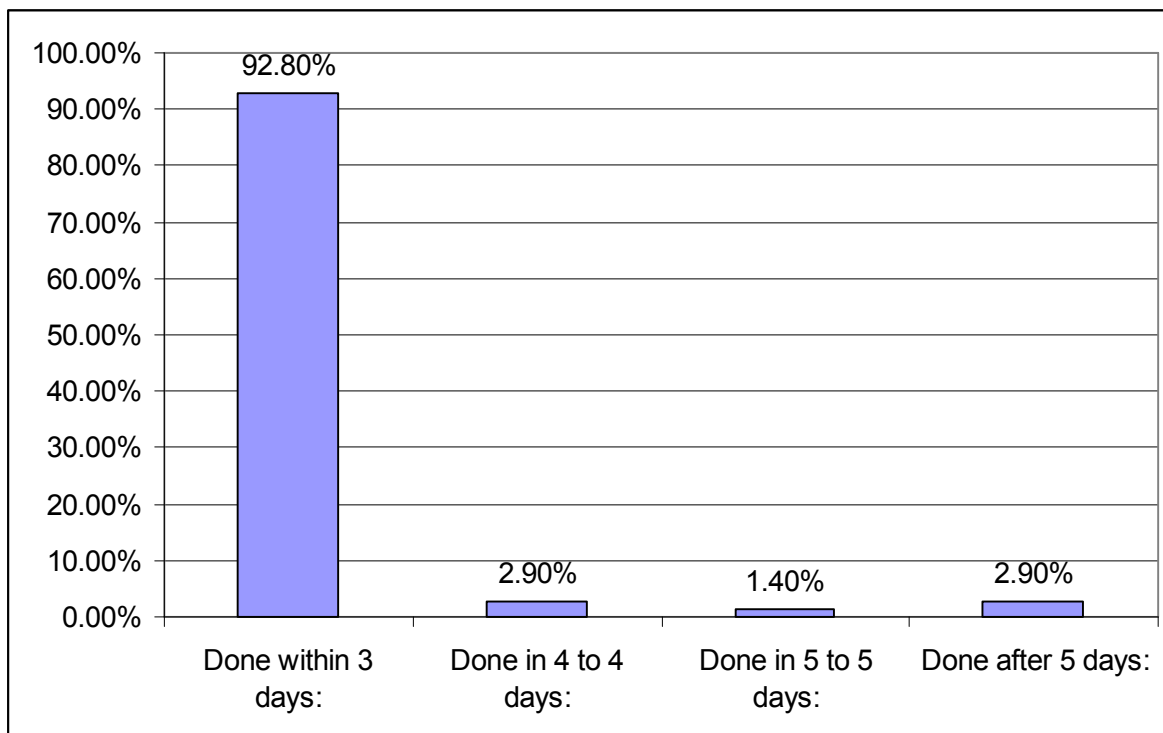
Darlington's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population was 2.1% at the time of the 2001 census. In 2011 the Office for National Statistics published some experimental population estimates by ethnic group for local authority districts and higher administrative areas in England and Wales for 2009. This information indicated that the BME population in Darlington had increased to 6.4%. Based on the information gathered only 3.03% of complaints were from members of the BME community, a reduction from 8.5% in 2010/11.

Work to try and improve the accessibility of the complaints procedure has included the printing of the title of the complaints leaflet in the most commonly used community languages.

Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

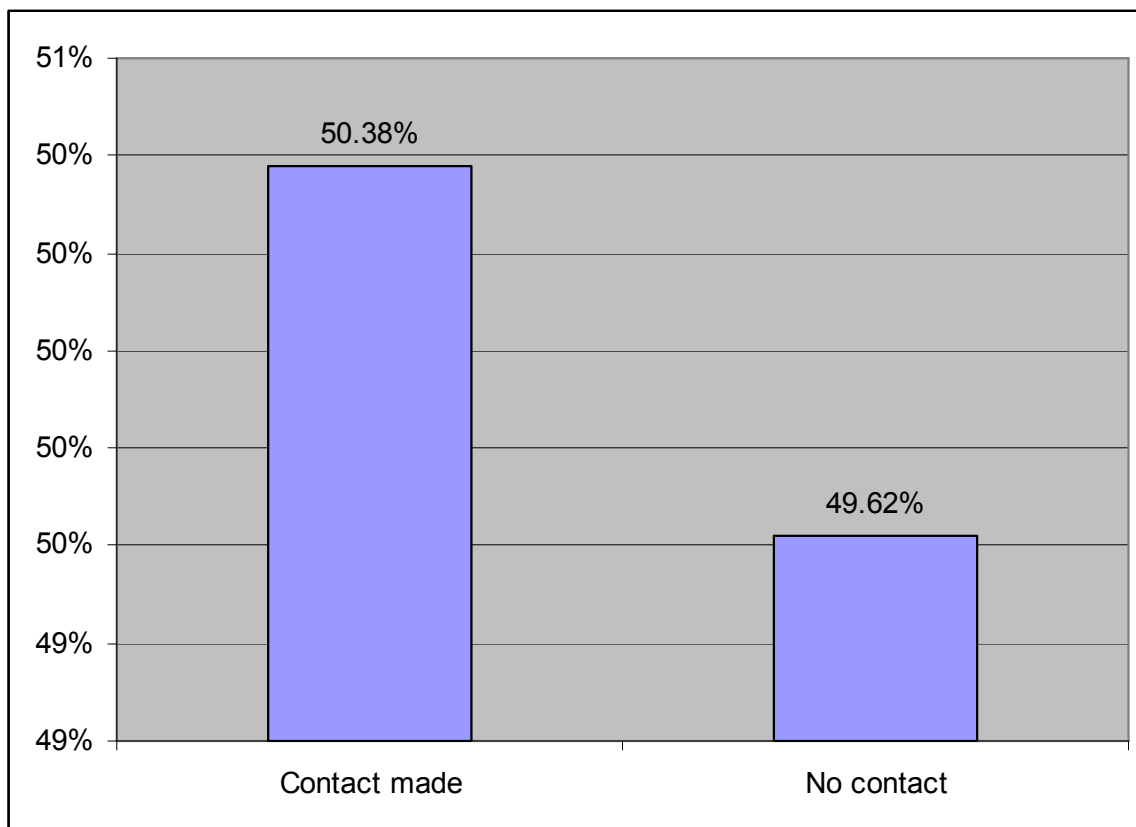
Stage 1

Performance against Stage 1 acknowledgement target (3 working days)



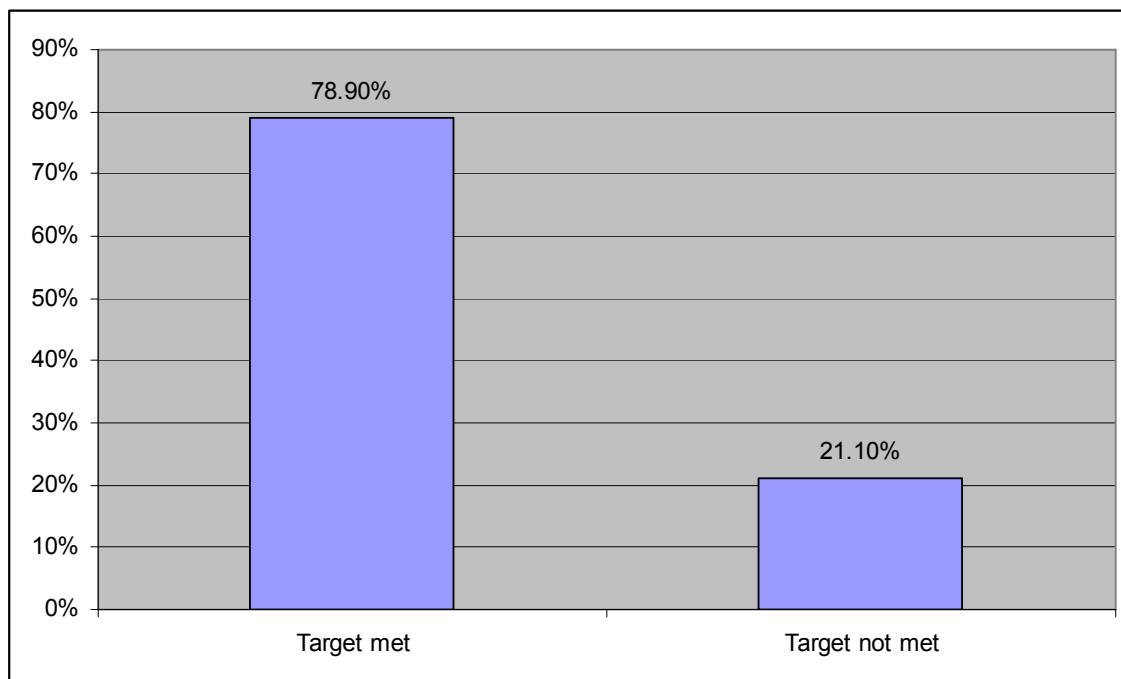
The most common reason that the Stage 1 acknowledgement target was not met was because the complaint was not forwarded to the CIG Team on the day of receipt. Information is provided in the procedure practice guidance on how officers can ensure complaints reach the CIG Team in time to be acknowledged within the timescale.

Performance against Stage 1 contact complainant target (5 working days)



For the third consecutive year there has been an increase in the number of complainants contacted within five working days. While that is the case the Council did receive a number of complaints about officers not doing so in accordance with the procedure. While it may not be necessary to contact all complainants and in some cases they may not wish to be contacted we will continue to emphasise the importance of this dialogue to ensure that officers are able to resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage. This dialogue will also help ensure a high level of customer satisfaction with complaints handling.

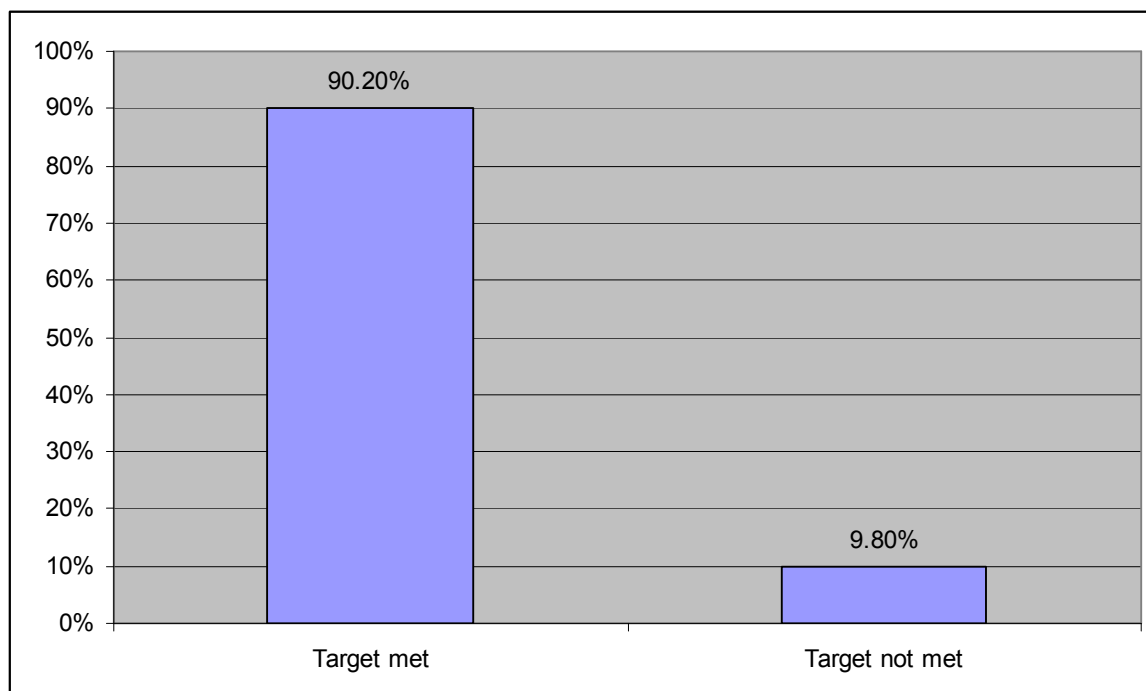
Performance against Stage 1 response target (20 working days)



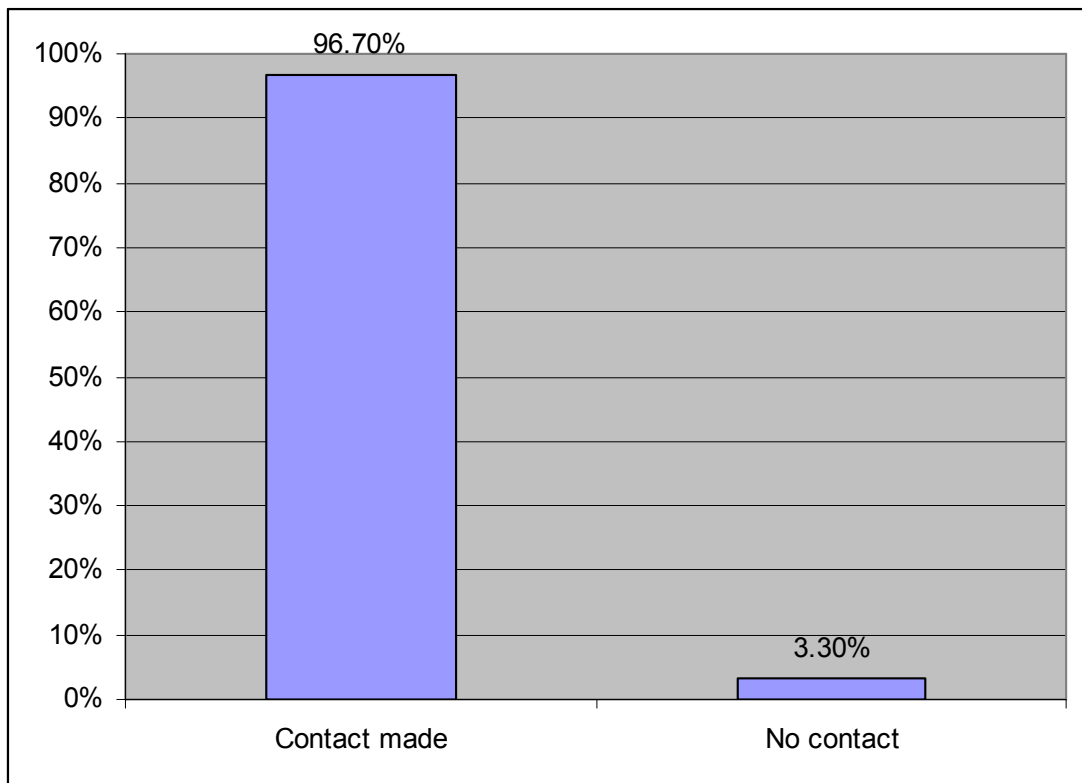
Performance against this target remained the same as 2010/11. While it is important that officers work to the timescales it is recognised that this is not possible in all cases and that process should not necessarily come before successfully resolving the matter to the complainant's satisfaction. Where it is not going to be possible to meet the timescale the responding officer should agree an extension with the complainant and maintain a dialogue throughout the course of the investigation.

Stage 2

Performance against Stage 2 acknowledgement target (2 working days)

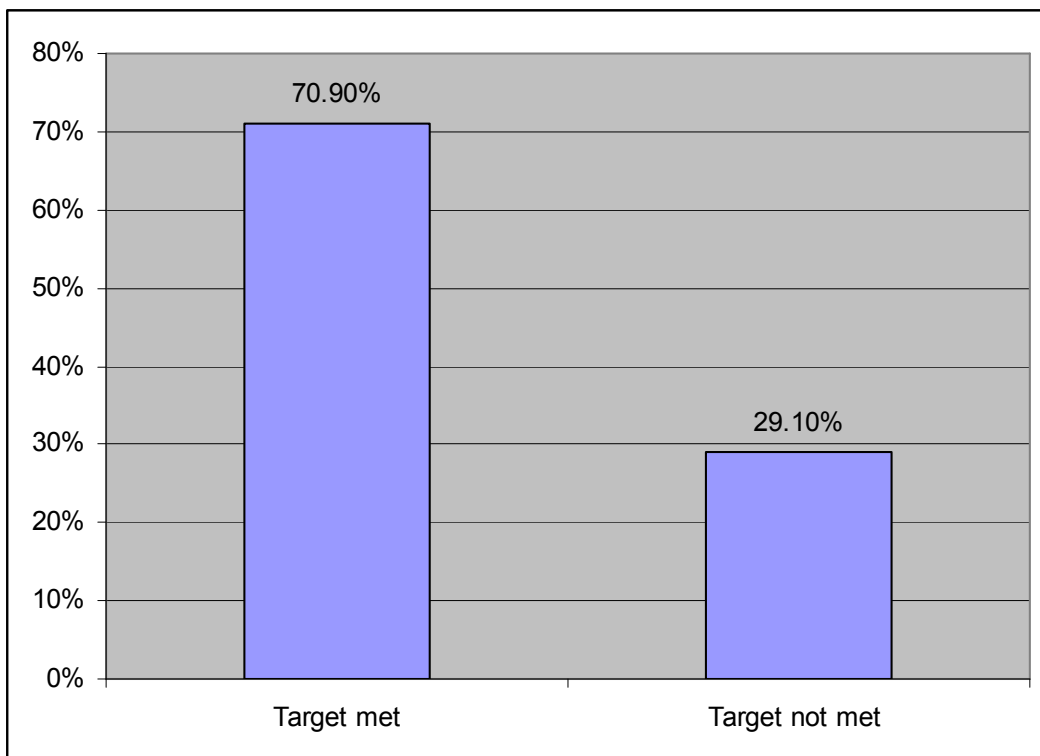


Performance against Stage 2 contact complainant target (5 working days)



There were only two cases in which no contact was made with the complainant. In both cases this was because the matter was straight forward and both complaints were successfully resolved at Stage 2.

Performance against Stage 2 response target (25 working days)



Those investigations not completed within the 25 working day target were not done so due to the complexity of the case or officers/complainants being on annual leave/holiday. In all cases an extension was agreed with the complainant in advance. 81.80% of Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 30 working days and 89.10% within 35 working days. The remaining investigations took over 35 working days to complete, one of which remains open at the time of writing with the agreement of the complainant.

Performance against Local Performance Indicators

Percentage of those making a complaint satisfied with the handling of these complaints.

Target for 2011/12 - **67.5%**

Actual figure for 2011/12 - **68.80%**

Target met ✓

Number of Stage 1 Corporate complaints escalated to Stage 2.

Target for 2011/12 - **Less than 40**

Actual figure for 2011/12 - **52**

Target not met ✗

The main reasons that complainants remained dissatisfied and requested their complaint be escalated to Stage 2 was due to the quality of the initial investigation. In particular, problems occurred where officers failed to address all the issues raised within the complaint. It is recommended that this issue be addressed by officers ensuring they contact complainants within 5 working days to discuss their complaint and desired outcomes and ensure they address all of the points raised in an objective manner.

Number of maladministration decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to Corporate Complaints.

The Local Government Ombudsman determined 21 complaints previously considered under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure during 2011/12.

Target for 2011/12 - **0**

Actual figure for 2011/12 – **0**

Target met ✓