



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**20 October 2021**

**Report of the Governance, Ethics and Standards Committee**

**Complaints and Compliments 2020/21**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide an end of year update on complaints and compliments reported to the Council during 2020/21 and trend analysis for the last five years.

## **2. Information and Analysis**

### **2.1 Background**

The Council is committed to delivering high quality public services and engages in a very substantial number of transactions with the public each year. A robust compliments and complaints policy, with effective supporting procedures, is a vital way to monitor how well the Council:

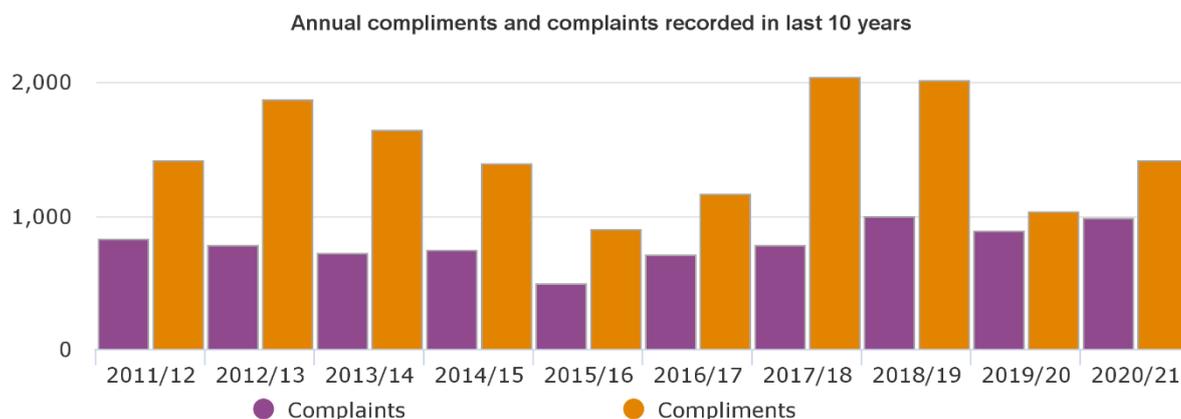
- Delivers an equitable service and remedies any injustices.
- Works constructively and sympathetically with its clients to put things right as quickly as possible; and
- Learns how it can do things better

Complaints and compliments data is currently collected through individual system managed by each departments and reported through to the APEX performance management system. Summary and detailed information from this data is presented below and enables the Council

to explore how well the compliments and complaints policy is being implemented and to use the information to improve service delivery.

## 2.2 Council Compliments and Complaints

A summary of compliments and complaints recorded over the last ten years is highlighted below:



### Compliments

Compliments provide important feedback to individual officers and service areas regarding quality of work, the appreciation of clients and the impact of services on people's lives.

Compliments data has been collected using the following guidelines:

*“Any contact outside of the usual courtesies where a member of the public, service user or partner agency has been in touch with a specific compliment or expressed the difference our work has made to them.”*

In 2020/21 the Council recorded 1,426 compliments. This is an increase from 2019/20 where 1,028 compliments were recorded. Since 2016/17, the Council has seen an overall decrease in recorded compliments received in Adult Social Care and Health, Place and Commissioning Communities and Policy. Over the same period, there has been a significant increase in the recording of compliments received by Children's Services as set out below.

Table 1 - Number of compliments received

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult Social Care and Health	390	1,345	1,427	402	292
Children's Services	109	81	140	302	738
Place	294	323	218	155	187
Commissioning Communities and Policy	371	335	229	169	206
Derbyshire County Council	1,164	2,036	2,014	1,028	1,423



## Complaints

The Council's complaints data is collected using the definition of a complaint as outlined in the Corporate Complaints Procedure as follows:

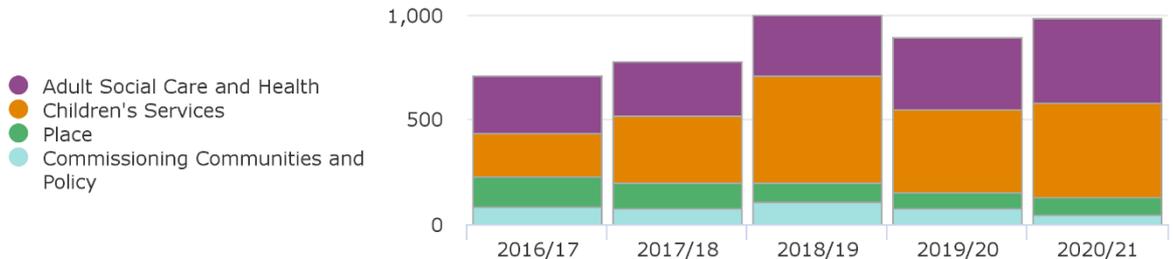
*“An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet by a service user or their representative which requires a response in writing.”*

In most cases, the Council deals with and resolves any issues directly with service users and interested third parties without their need to make a complaint. The Council's complaints procedures offer a more formal process where a service user or third party wants to follow this route immediately or are dissatisfied with the initial response.

In 2020/21, the Council received 984 complaints. This is an increase from 889 complaints received in 2019/2020. Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, there has been an increase in the number of complaints received by Adult Social Care and Health and Children's Services, with a decrease in complaints in Place and Commissioning Communities and Policy between the same period as set out below.

Table 2 - Number of complaints received

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult Social Care and Health	272	260	290	344	403
Children's Services	207	321	511	391	452
Place	143	122	95	79	83
Commissioning Communities and Policy	83	75	105	75	47
Derbyshire County Council	705	778	1,001	889	984

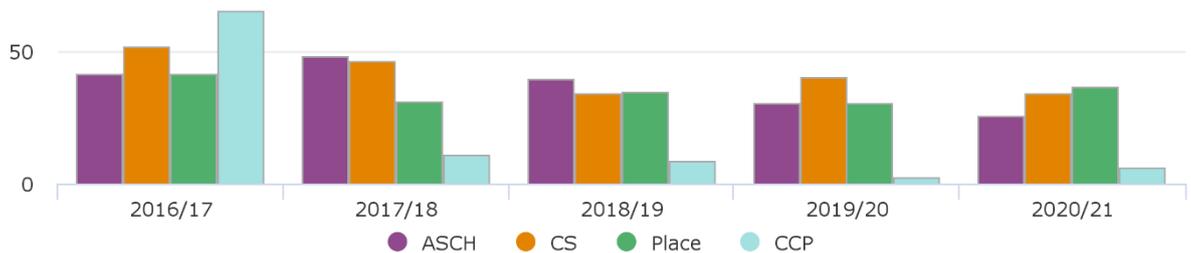


### Complaints received and decisions upheld

In 2020/21, 29.9% of complaints were upheld by the Council. This was a lower percentage of complaints upheld compared to the previous five years. In 2020/21, Place upheld the largest percentage of complaints received by the Council. In a comparison between 2016/17 and 2020/21 data below, there has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints upheld by Adult Social Care and Health, Children Services and Place.

Table 3 - Percentage of complaints upheld by department

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult Social Care and Health	41.6%	48.4%	39.8%	30.7%	25.6%
Children's Services	52.3%	46.7%	34.2%	40.2%	34.6%
Place	41.5%	31.2%	34.9%	30.8%	36.6%
Commissioning Communities and Policy	65.4%	10.8%	8.6%	2.7%	6.4%
Derbyshire County Council	47.9%	40.5%	33.2%	32.0%	29.9%



### Response times

The Council's policy is to respond to complaints within 28 working days. This target was met for 60.4% of complaints during 2020/21 as set out below. This is an improvement from the previous year when 51.9% of complaints were responded to within target. However, over the five year

period from 2016/17 there has been an overall reduction in the percentage of complaints where the response was within target.

Complaints received by Commissioning, Communities and Policy in 2020/21 had the highest percentage of complaints responded to within the Council's target, with Adult Social Care and Health having the lowest percentage of complaints responded to within target. In 2020/21, 16 Council complaints were given a response time extension, so fall outside of the Council's response policy.

Table 4 - Percentage of complaints responded to within target by department

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult Social Care and Health	74.5%	65.6%	77.2%	51.6%	55.1%
Children's Services	63.2%	60.3%	46.7%	46.8%	61.2%
Place	82.3%	92.4%	89.4%	74.4%	68.3%
Commissioning Communities and Policy	81.9%	63.8%	79.2%	57.1%	78.8%
Derbyshire County Council	73.2%	67.7%	64.1%	51.9%	60.4%



The average number of days that is taken to respond to complaints is recorded in Table 5 below. In 2020/21, the average number of days to respond to complaint across the Council, within target timescales, was 16. Where the response was outside the target, the average number of days to respond to a complaint across the Council was 61 days.

Table 5 - Average days to respond to complaints

Within Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
No	54.2	63.6	69.3	61.3	54.0	<b>61.5</b>
Yes	17.1	19.0	14.4	14.8	15.9	<b>16.2</b>

### Complaints by type

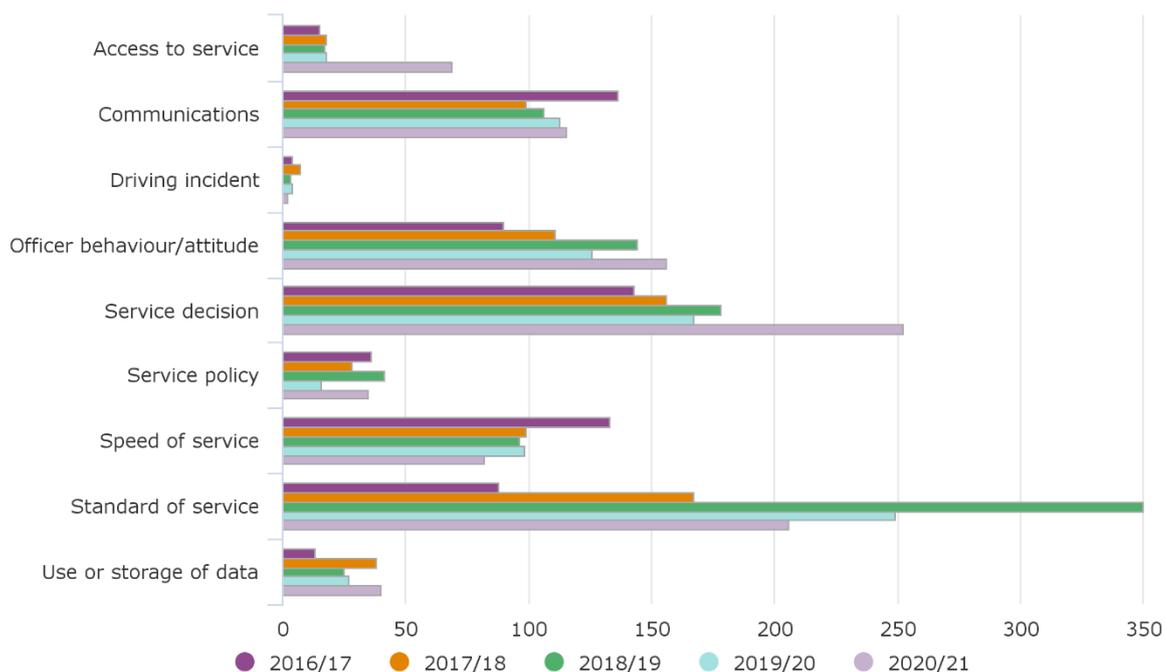
To assist with understanding the reasons why complaints are made, each complaint is allocated to a single category of complaint, based on the most significant issue raised by the complainant. This helps to identify and understand the nature of complaints and potential

weaknesses in service delivery. The list of categories, with examples of issues that fall within each category, is provided in Appendix 2.

In 2020/21, the Council received 252 complaints in relation to service decision, which represents the highest number of complaints received. This is an increase from 2019/20 where 167 complaints relating to service decisions were received. Areas which have seen an increase in complaints between 2016/17 and 2020/21 include officer behaviour/attitude, standard of service, use or storage of data and access to service. Over the same period, there has been a reduction in complaints related to speed of service.

Table 6 - Breakdown of complaints received by type

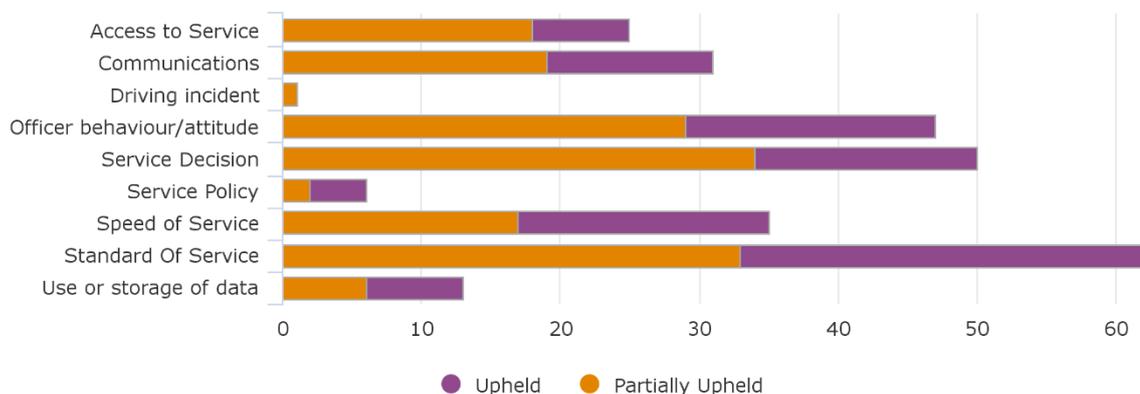
	Access to service	Communication	Driving incident	Officer behaviour/attitu	Service decision	Service policy	Speed of service	Standard of service	Use or storage of data
2016/17	15	136	4	90	143	36	133	88	13
2017/18	18	99	7	111	156	28	99	167	38
2018/19	17	106	3	144	178	41	96	350	25
2019/20	18	113	4	126	167	16	98	249	27
2020/21	69	115	2	156	252	35	82	206	40



Looking in more detail at the complaints received during 2020/21 by the outcome the highest number of upheld or partially upheld complaints changes to standard of service with a total of 62 complaints, service decision is the second highest with 50 and officer behaviour/attitude third with 47.

Table 7 - 2020/21 Complaint type by upheld outcomes

	Access to Service	Communications	Driving incident	Officer behaviour/attitude	Service Decision	Service Policy	Speed of Service	Standard Of Service	Use or storage of data
Upheld	7	12	0	18	16	4	18	29	7
Partially Upheld	18	19	1	29	34	2	17	33	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>13</b>



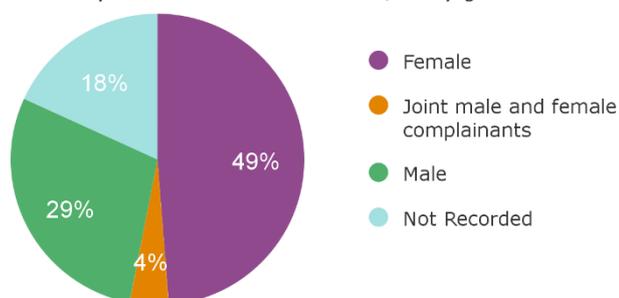
## Demographics

The Council also collects data on the gender of complainants and this information is set out in Table 8 for information. As can be seen in the table and graph overleaf, in 2020/21, the highest percentage of complaints were made by female complainants which mirrors trends seen over the previous four years.

Table 8 - Complaints received by Gender

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Female	287	344	501	469	525	<b>2,126</b>
Joint male and female complainants	1	32	94	39	20	<b>186</b>
Male	211	200	278	266	300	<b>1,255</b>
Not Recorded	206	202	129	115	139	<b>791</b>

Percentage breakdown of complaints received since 2016/17 by gender



## **Learning from complaints**

Learning about the root causes of complaints is vital for the continuous improvement of Council services and helps to develop the Enterprising Council and One Council approaches. Specific actions are undertaken as a result of individual complaints. Where the complaint investigation has identified underlying issues then broader actions have been undertaken to prevent further incidents. In general terms these have included:

- Staff training
- Service and process reviews
- Improved team working
- Reallocation of resources
- Better and more accessible information about services
- Management of client expectations

## **2.3 Complaints procedures and systems**

In March 2020, Cabinet agreed that moving forward Customer Feedback (complaints, comments and compliments) would be managed through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which is currently being implemented through the Channel Shift programme.

Work is currently underway with the supplier, Granicus, to embed the CRM which will enable its use by the Council as outlined below. CRM use will enable more comprehensive reporting on customer feedback, and, most importantly, support the change of processes and policies to improve customer service from December 2021. Manual data collection from departments and the reporting of complaints for the period from 1 April 2021 to the point of availability of data from the CRM (expected December 2021) will be carried out by the Channel Shift and Customer Service teams as agreed.

## **2.4 Next Steps**

Children's Services feedback will be the first to use the CRM system from October 2021. CRM use for Place feedback is also expected to be in place prior to June 2022.

Adult Social Care & Health's use of the CRM system is dependent on technical integration with the existing Mosaic system, which requires ICT and supplier activity. This will enter the 'Discovery' project phase from January 2022.

CCP's customer feedback process is complex as it is spread across teams and as such the workflow mapping and training of staff within CCP to use the CRM is more complex than in other areas. This will be implemented from January 2022.

Reporting on customer feedback from the CRM will be available at the point at which the system goes live in 2021, although readers should be aware that this will be on a phased basis as new services enter the system. Manual reporting from other areas will support these reports.

The Organisation Development and Policy Division will be working closely together to integrate customer feedback reporting and resulting improvements with performance monitoring to ensure a seamless response to customer service and service improvement is developed.

### **3. Alternative Options Considered**

- 3.1 Not to provide an update on complaints and compliments received to the Committee; however this is not recommended as the role of the Committee includes the receipt of regular reports on the performance of the Corporate Complaints process.

### **4. Implications**

- 4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Not Applicable, for information only

### **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Data held on the APEX Corporate Performance Management System

### **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Type of Complaints

### **8. Recommendation(s)**

That the Governance, Ethics and Standards Committee:

- a. Notes the content of the report and the Council's Complaints and Compliments for 2020-21
- b. Notes the steps that are being taken to improve the Council's approach and the roll out of the Customer Relationship Management System as set out in the report

**9. Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

- 9.1 To support the Committee in understanding the latest position in respect of Complaints and Compliments for 2020-21
- 9.2 To provide an update on changes to the Council's approach in respect of Complaints and Compliments which are currently taking place.

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**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<p><b>On behalf of:</b></p> <p>Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer          Director of Finance and ICT          Managing Executive Director          Executive Director</p>	<p><b>Peter Handford          Helen Barrington          Sarah Eaton          Julie Odams</b></p>
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## **Implications**

### **Financial**

1.1 None

### **Legal**

2.1 The role and function of the Governance, Ethics and Standards Committee set out in Article 11 of the Constitution includes the following:

“To receive regular reports on the performance of the Corporate Complaints process, Local Government Ombudsman referrals and to recommend revisions to related policies and procedures as appropriate.”

### **Human Resources**

3.1 None

### **Information Technology**

4.1 The report references the next steps in respect of complaints for the implementation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

### **Equalities Impact**

5.1 None

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

6.1 The information feeds into the development and progress monitoring of the Council Plan areas of complaints feedback, resident-first approach and resident experience.

### **Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

7.1 None

### TYPE OF COMPLAINT DESCRIPTORS

**Access to service** - Difficulties in finding services, problems with access to buildings, website not working, complex or difficult forms.

**Communications** - Information difficult to find or understand, delays in communication

**Driving incident** - Discourteous or dangerous driving.

**Officer behaviour/attitude** – Inappropriate, impolite, discourteous, unhelpful or rude behaviour.

**Service decision** - Disagreement with a decision to provide, withdraw or limit a service. Disagreement with the process leading to decisions being made.

**Service policy** - Service delivered in accordance with any policy but where there is disagreement with the policy or it is felt it disadvantages or discriminates against an individual.

**Speed of service** - Service outside of published target dates, missed deadlines or outside reasonable client expectation.

**Standard of service** - Not following service standards or policies, products or workmanship not up to reasonable expectations.

**Use or storage of data** - Incorrect client information, information not readily available or lost, not complying with established policies, procedures and Regulations in relation to managing information