



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**26 OCTOBER 2023**

**Report of the Director of Organisation Resilience, People and Communications**

**Customer Feedback: Compliments and Complaints 2022/23**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report provides an end of year update on complaints and compliments reported to the Council. From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
- 1.2 Trend analysis for the last seven years is also included, in order to give some historical context to the data presented.

## **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 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 a range of systems within departments. Place currently use Apex and Adult Social Care and Corporate Services & Transformation use Mosaic and local systems. All departmental complaints processes are still planned to be migrated into Granicus in the future. Summary and detailed information from this data has been collected from all departments and is presented below.

This work will be part of the development of a Customer Experience Strategy, which is planned to include a refreshed Customer Charter with mechanisms for gathering feedback and implementing that feedback into an improvement process.

## 2.2 Council compliments and complaints

Derbyshire County Council has hundreds of thousands of direct contacts with residents every year. As examples, Call Derbyshire receives around 30,000 calls each month and the Highways team receives over 90,000 enquiries annually. The number of compliments and complaints should be viewed in the context of the bigger picture of resident interaction with consideration that they make up a very small proportion of the contacts received. It should be noted that this data is currently produced through localised reporting undertaken by departments.

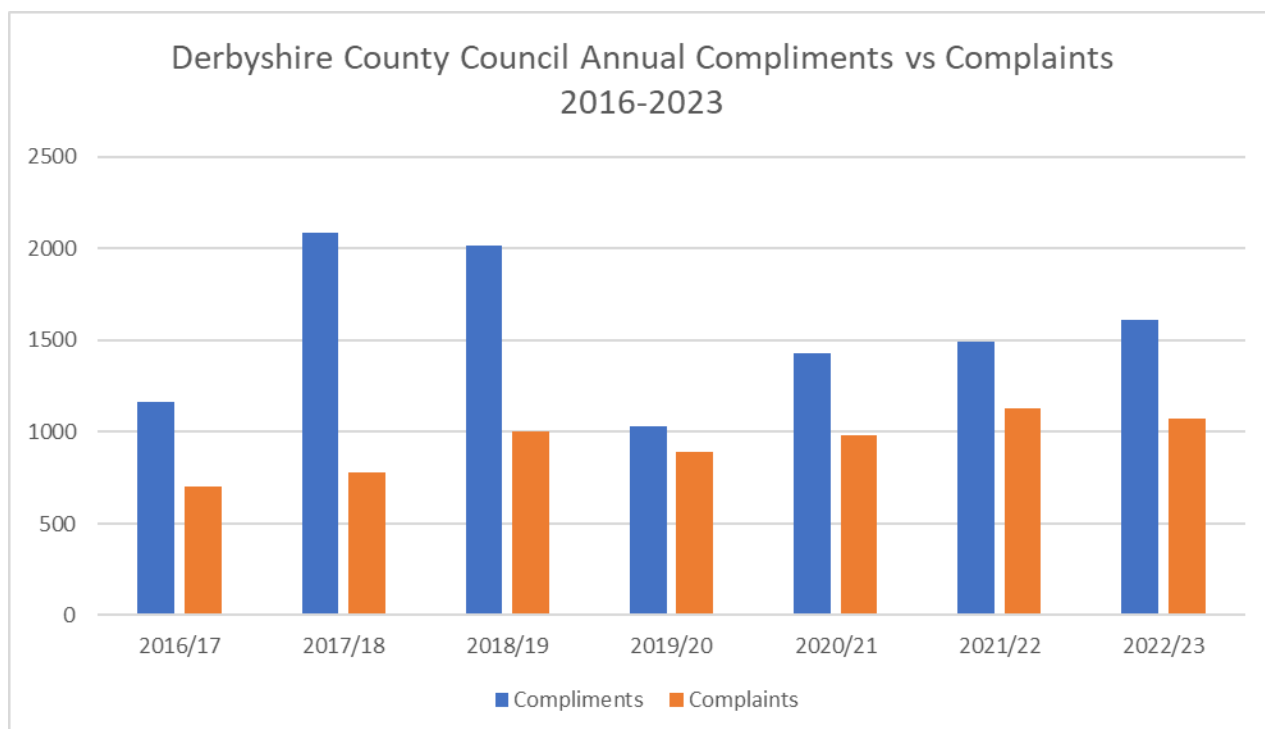
It is the Council's future aspiration that, as part of a wider Customer Experience Strategy and refreshed Customer Charter, the Complaints and Compliments to the Council will be centralised into the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which will allow for the reporting on this subject to develop further and become more efficient to produce.

A standardised CRM approach will allow the council to better understand with a richer depth and quality the issues being raised by residents and to allow this data to be feedback into an improvement process.

There is a gap at present in the Council's ability to analyse the data in an optimal way, and the data from departments below must currently be viewed through that lens with a lack of ability to look at trends and the picture emerging from them.

A standardised CRM approach would also be one of the ways in which the views of the residents can be fed into the improvement loop that will be a focus of the Customer Experience Strategy.

A summary of compliments and complaints recorded over the last seven 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:

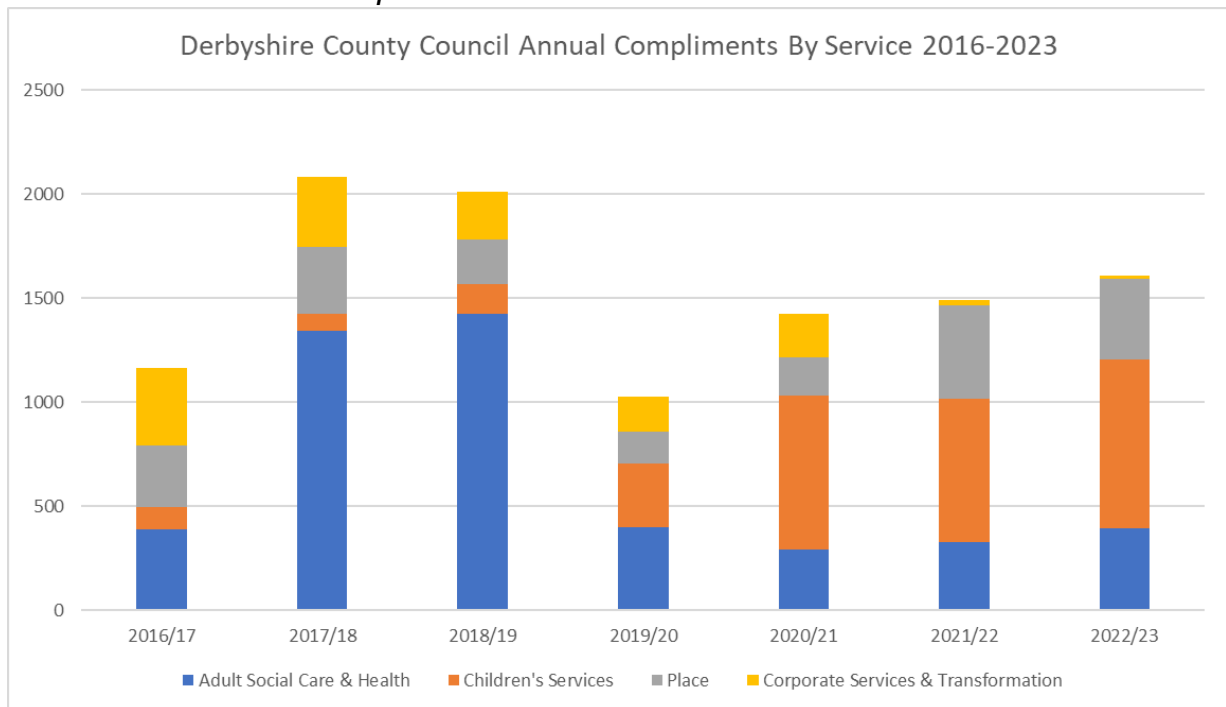
*“Any contact outside of the usual courtesies where a member of the public, person who uses our services or partner agency has been in touch with a specific compliment or expressed the difference our work has made to them.”*

In 2022/23 the Council recorded 1,558 compliments. This is an increase from 2021/22 where 1,494 compliments were recorded. Since 2016/17, the Council has seen an overall increase in recorded compliments received in Children’s Services. Over the same period, there has been a general decrease in the recording of compliments received by Adult Social Care and Corporate Services & Transformation. Place have seen a slight decrease in compliments this year.

Children’s Services also collect compliments data from partner agencies and other professionals, both internal and external.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Adult Social Care and Health	390	1,345	1,427	402	292	330	393
Children's Services	109	81	140	302	738	687	812
Place	294	323	218	155	187	447	390
Corporate Services & Transformation	371	335	229	169	209	30	13
Derbyshire County Council	1,164	2,036	2,014	1,028	1,426	1,494	1,608

**Table 1: Number of compliments received**



## Complaints

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

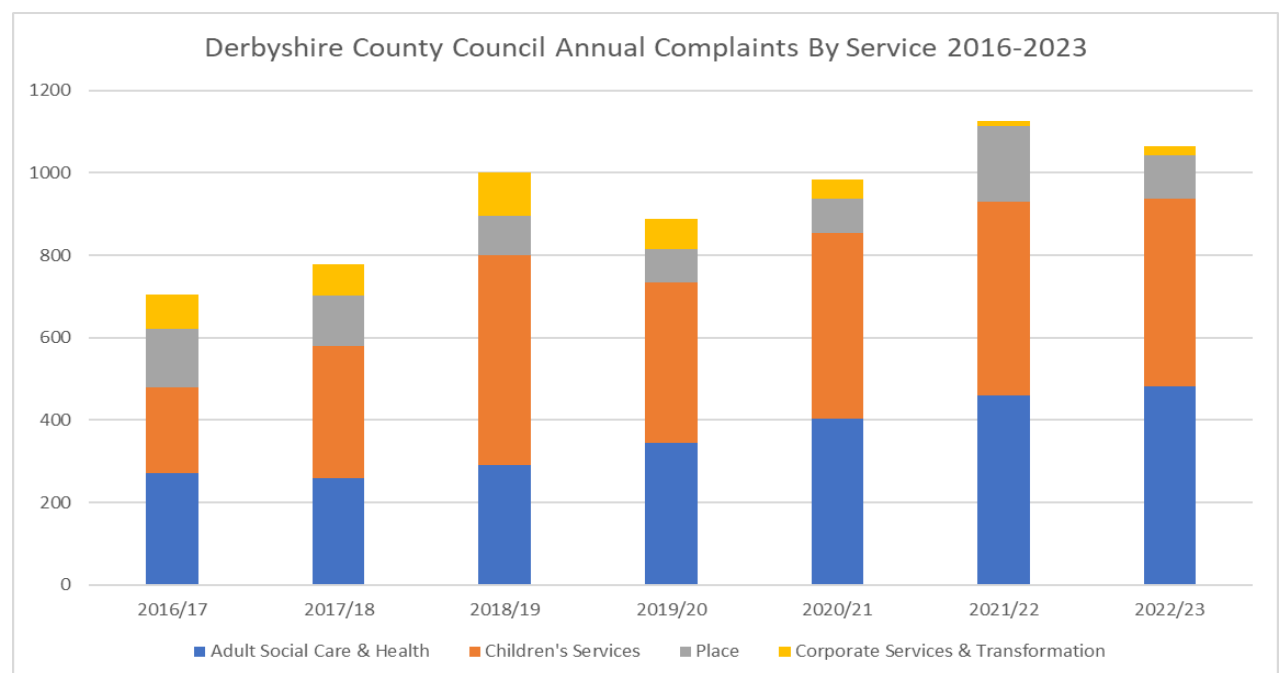
“An expression of dissatisfaction from a service user about a specific Council service that has been already provided, that isn't resolved at the first point of contact”

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

In 2022/23, the Council received 1,064 complaints. This is a decrease from 1,126 complaints received in 2021/2022. Between 2016/17 and 2022/23, there has been an increase in the number of complaints received by Adult Social Care and Health, Corporate Services & Transformation and Children’s Services, with a decrease in complaints in Place between the same period.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Adult Social Care & Health	272	260	290	344	403	460	489
Children's Services	207	321	511	391	452	471	456
Place	143	122	95	79	83	184	107
Corporate Services & Transformation	83	75	105	75	47	11	20
Derbyshire County Council	705	778	1001	889	985	1126	1072

*Table 2: Number of complaints received*

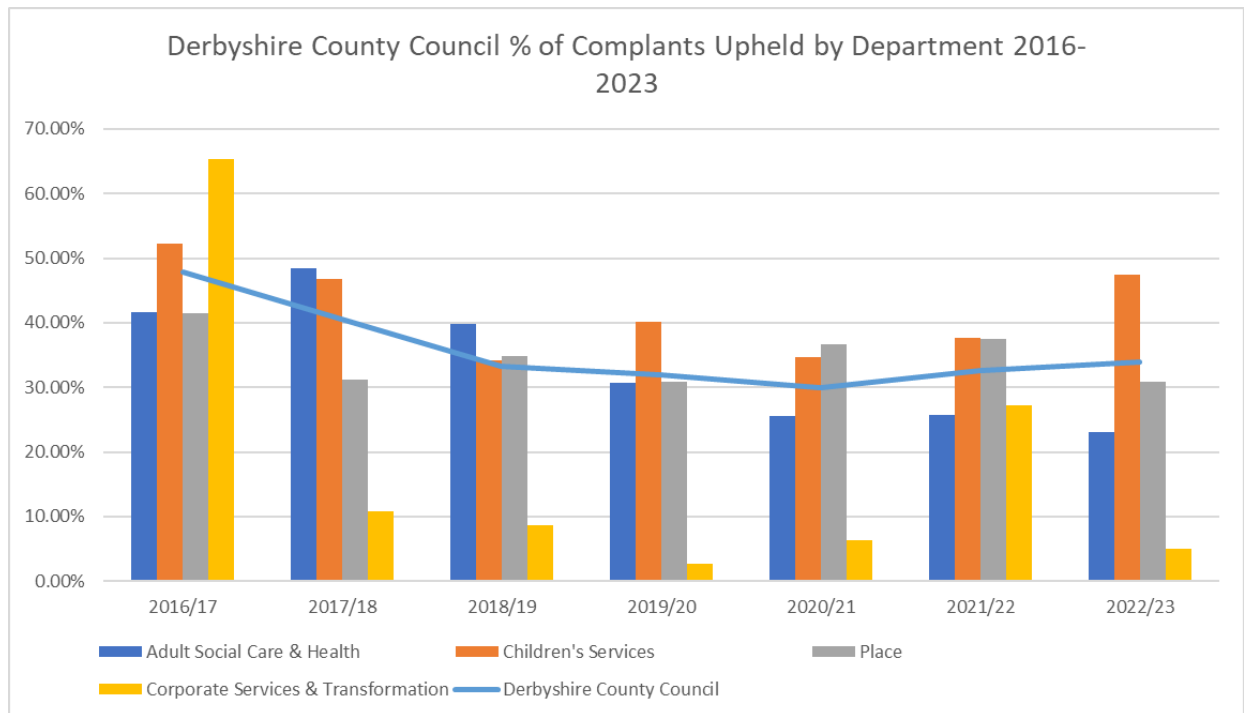


### **Complaints received and decisions upheld or partially upheld**

In 2022/23, 34% of complaints were upheld or partially upheld by the Council. This was a higher percentage of complaints upheld compared to the previous year. In 2022/2023, Children’s Services upheld the largest percentage of complaints. The percentage of upheld complaints have slightly increased in the past two years.

Department	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Adult Social Care and Health	41.60%	48.40%	39.80%	30.70%	25.60%	25.70%	23.00%
Children's Services	52.30%	46.70%	34.20%	40.20%	34.60%	37.60%	47.40%
Place	41.50%	31.20%	34.90%	30.80%	36.60%	37.50%	30.84%
Corporate Services & Transformation	65.40%	10.80%	8.60%	2.70%	6.40%	27.20%	5.00%
Derbyshire County Council	47.90%	40.50%	33.20%	32.00%	29.90%	32.60%	34.00%

*Table 3: Percentage of complaints upheld by department*



### Response times

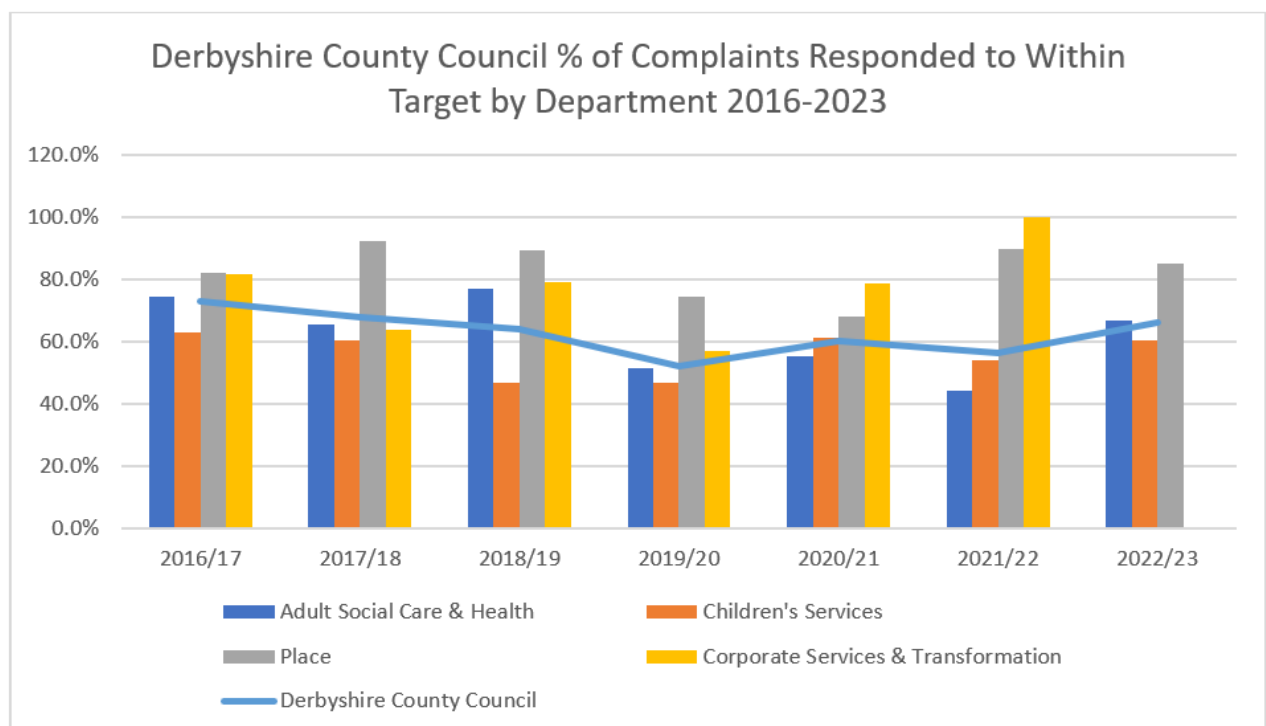
The Council's policy is to respond to complaints within 28 calendar days. This target was met for 66.2% of complaints during 2022/23 as set out below. This is an increase from the previous year when 56.3% of complaints were responded to within target, although there should be some caution as Corporate Services & Transformation 100% result reflects a total of 20 complaints, which has an impact on the overall percentage.

Complaints received by Corporate Services & Transformation in 2022/23 had the highest percentage of complaints responded to within the Council's target (although numbers of complaints are very low as stated above), with Children's Services having the lowest percentage of complaints responded to within target.

It should be noted that the table below includes statutory complaints within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, which have different response time targets. If these statutory complaints were removed from the figures the response rate within 28 days would be significantly higher.

Department	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Adult Social Care and Health	74.50%	65.60%	77.20%	51.60%	55.10%	44.10%	67.00%
Children's Services	63.20%	60.30%	46.70%	46.80%	61.20%	54.10%	60.50%
Place	82.30%	92.40%	89.40%	74.40%	68.30%	89.70%	85.05%
Corporate Services & Transformation	81.90%	63.80%	79.20%	57.10%	78.80%	100.00 %	100.00 %
Derbyshire County Council	73.20%	67.70%	64.10%	51.90%	60.40%	56.30%	66.20%

*Table 4: Percentage of complaints responded to within 28 day target by department \* includes statutory complaints which have different target response times*



## Complaints by type

To assist with understanding the reasons why complaints are made, each complaint should be 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 A.

There is some discrepancy between the overall number of complaints and the total number of complaints that have been categorised. In some cases, this is because complaint categories are reported, if and when the complaint enters the statutory process, which not all do (Children's Services) and because some do not fit into the main categories reported here. However, there is sufficient categorisation information for us to be confident in the areas of higher concern, and departments have more in-depth data to analyse and support their service improvement activity.

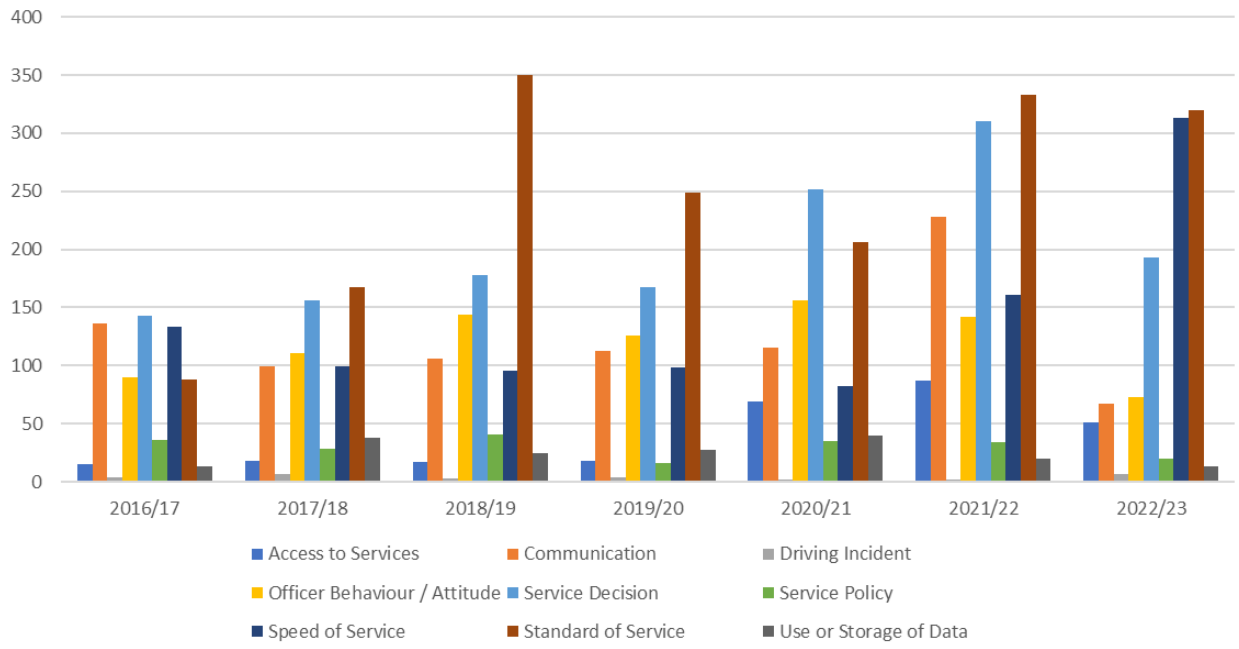
Speed of service has seen a significant jump in the last year, largely made up of Adult's and Children's services, with Service decision decreasing significantly.

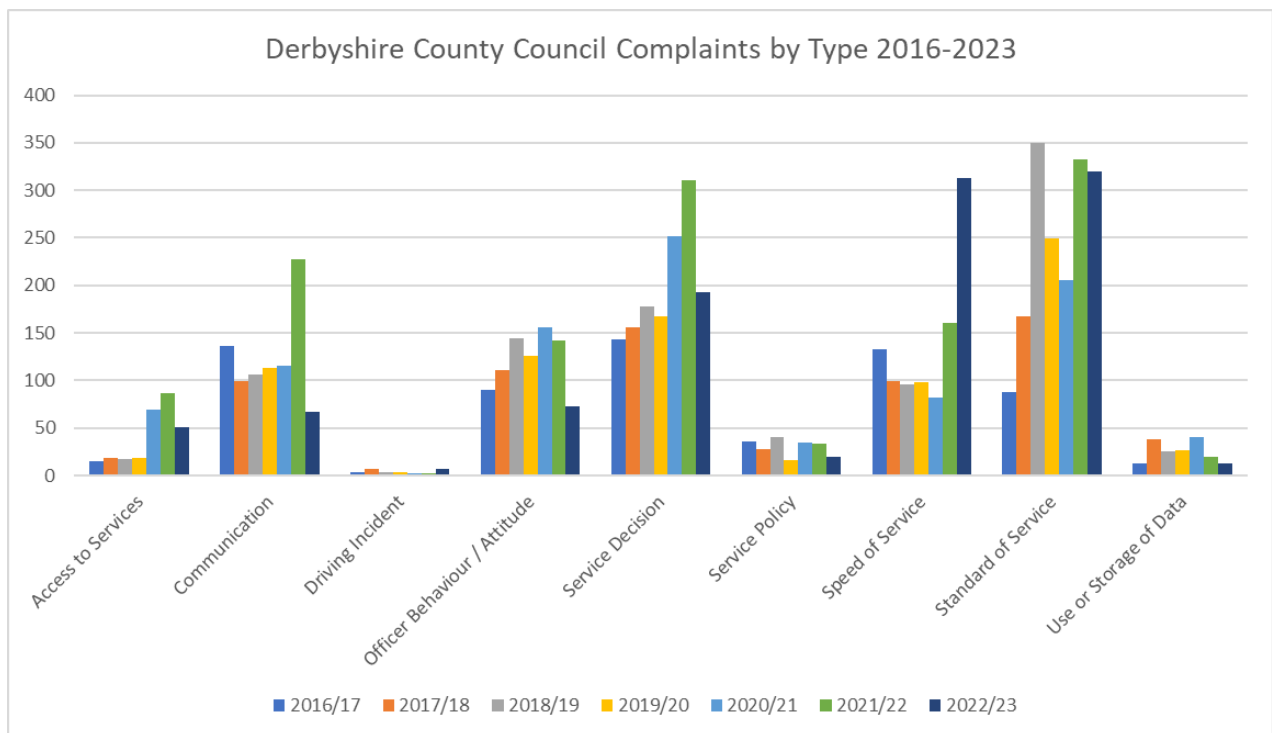
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Access to Services	15	18	17	18	69	87	51
Communication	136	99	106	113	115	228	67
Driving Incident	4	7	3	4	2	2	7
Officer Behaviour / Attitude	90	111	144	126	156	142	73
Service Decision	143	156	178	167	252	310	193
Service Policy	36	28	41	16	35	34	20
Speed of Service	133	99	96	98	82	161	313
Standard of Service	88	167	350	249	206	333	320
Use or Storage of Data	13	38	25	27	40	20	13

Table 5 – Breakdown of complaints received by type



### Derbyshire County Council Complaints by Type 2016-2023





## Demographics

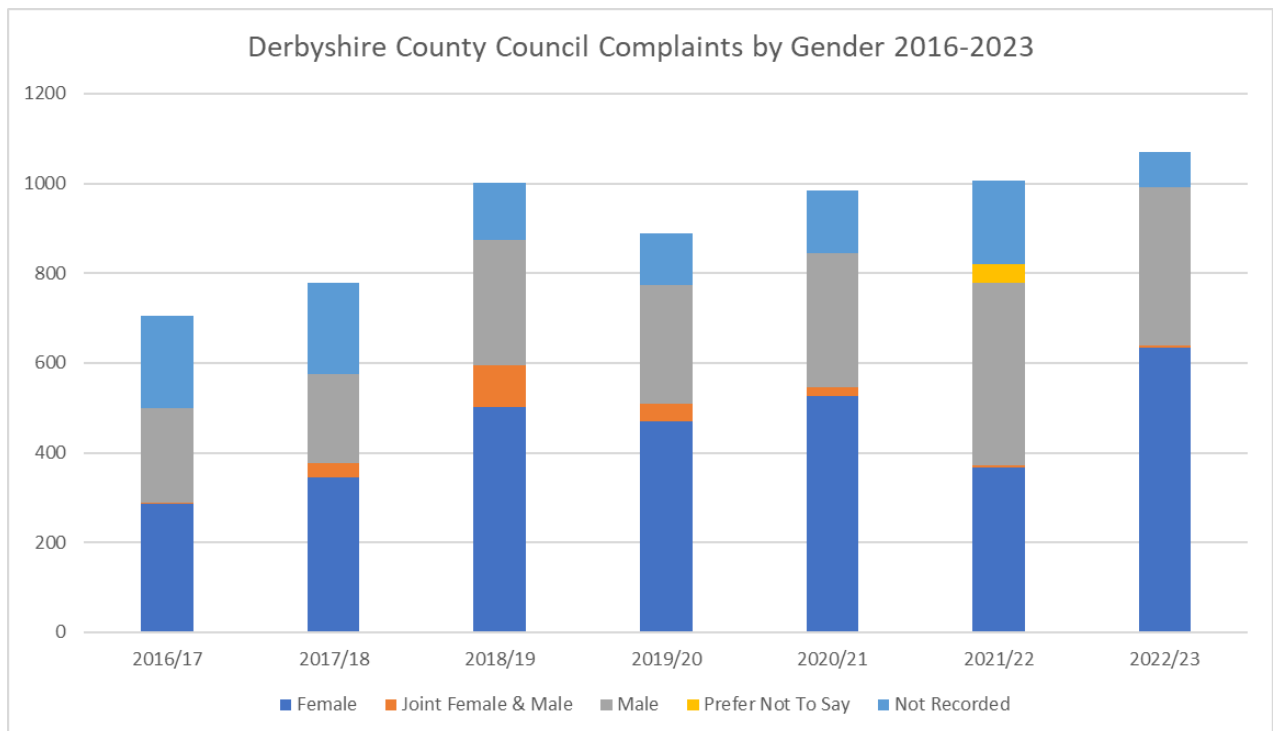
The Council also collects data on the gender of complainants and this information is set out in Table 6 for information. As can be seen in the table and graph in 2022/23, the highest percentage of complaints were female.

Again, this category has not been recorded for every case and this is an optional question in some reporting areas.

It is suggested that the Council considers and clarifies why it collects this data and what it is used for. Work is underway between Communications & Customers and HR to define a new list of identification categories based on best practice.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Female	287	344	501	469	525	366	635
Joint Female & Male	1	32	94	39	20	7	5
Male	211	200	278	266	300	406	352
Prefer Not To Say	0	0	0	0	0	42	0
Not Recorded	206	202	129	115	139	184	79

Table 6 – Gender of complainants



### 2.3 Learning from Complaints to Improve Resident Satisfaction

Learning about the root causes of complaints is vital for the continuous improvement of Council services and improvement of the customer experience. As part of the future Customer Experience Strategy, a refreshed Customer Charter will set out the Council's experiential 'promise' to residents and establish a series of mechanisms by which to measure the effectiveness of this. Enabling an ongoing cycle of learning and improvement, including through the centralisation of complaints gathering.

Currently, 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:

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

The following section gives a more detailed breakdown taken from the annual complaints report for Childrens, Adults and Place. For CST, there is currently no data recorded other than that from Call Derbyshire which forms part of the detail in the below reports.

The Council's aim, with the continued implementation of the CRM across the wider Council, would be to standardise, where feasible, how complaints and compliments are recorded and reported. This would apply to all areas where a resident has submitted feedback as part of the aforementioned Customer Experience Strategy development and Customer Charter refresh.

## **2.4 Children's Services**

The below document is a link to the Children's annual complaints report for 22/23



QA\_Children's  
Services Annual Com

## **2.5 Adult Social Care & Health**

The Adult Social Care and Health department (ASCH) has seen a further 4% increase in complaints from 2022/2023. This is a change from the previous two years (2020/2021 and 2021/2022), where there was 17% and 14% increase of ASCH complaints received. The maintained level of complaints received reflects the national ongoing pressure and demand in adult social care, and challenges associated with this as a department.

In 2022/2023 two consultations were completed, where the closure of seven Derbyshire County Council Residential homes and eight Day Care Services were closed, which is reflected in the increased feedback received, with 30% of complaints being around the theme 'service decision'.

There has been a 21.9% improvement responding within agreed timescales; however, ASCH department are looking to improve the compliance in 2023/2024. Additionally, they will be looking to embed learning and develop their current systems within the Quality Team, which oversees complaints, compliments and enquiries and develop a feedback policy which demonstrates the departments intentions to improve systems.

Examples of lessons learnt:

Standard of service: The person found it difficult to raise concerns with Derbyshire County Council following an assessment and did not agree with all the content within the assessment. The ASCH department sourced additional training around good written skills, which is mandatory for all operational practitioners.

Speed of service – A relative raised a concern around their relatives delay in receiving an Adult Care Assessment. It was recognised there was a need to improve education around this and there were specific sessions around this subject for operational practitioners and communication was shared to all ASCH colleagues using the internal Practice Bulletin.

Communication – It was highlighted all communication/documents were not always shared with the LPOA or POA. There have been practitioner sessions to improve practice in this area and improve communication.

Please note all graphs include Public Health data within Adult Social Care.

## **2.6 Place**

There has been a reduction in the number of Place complaints compared with the previous year. This can be partly attributed to the department embedding a more focused, holistic, and empathetic approach to dealing with complaints and ensuring the difference between service enquiries and complaints is recognised. By doing this, issues are being resolved or rectified, before having to be escalated to a formal complaint. Out of the 15 complaints referred to the LGSO during the period, 4 were upheld, 7 closed after the LGO initial enquiry and 4 returned to the complainant, in order to seek local resolution.

The area most impacted with complaints was Highways, due to issues relating to external and sometimes unforeseen factors such as weather, the condition of roads and road works, often created by external agencies and/or services. These are being closely monitored, in order to identify any service improvements required which will be incorporated as part of the Derbyshire Highways Programme.

## **3. Consultation**

3.1 Executive Directors, through CMT, and departments, through the DCC Governance Group, have been engaged in the production of this report.

## **4. Alternative Options Considered**

4.1 N/a.

## **5. Implications**

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

## **6. Background Papers**

6.1 Not applicable.

## **7. Appendices**

7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

7.2 Appendix 2 – Type of complaint descriptors

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

That Committee:

Notes the content of the report and the latest data.

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

9.1 To keep the committee informed of information relating to Complaints and Compliments in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

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### **Contact details:**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Implications**

#### **Financial**

1.1 No financial implications.

#### **Legal**

2.1 In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Governance, Ethics and Standards Committee is required to receive regular reports on the performance of the Corporate Complaints process.

#### **Human Resources**

3.1 None identified.

#### **Information Technology**

4.1 The ongoing development of the Granicus system will have a positive impact on the processes in this report.

#### **Equalities Impact**

5.1 Not applicable.

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

6.1 This report links to the Council priority of High Performing, Value for Money and Resident Focused Services.

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

7.1 None.

## **Appendix 2**

### **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