

ANNUAL COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

Committee name	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ian Anderson - Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries
Papers with report	Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H
Ward	All

HEADLINES

To provide information to the Committee on key complaints and related service monitoring data.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee note the contents of the report and provide any comments to officers as appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members' Enquiries received between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 and satisfies the requirement to publish annual information. The report includes:

- Appendix A: Background to the complaints process
- Appendix B: Complaints, Compliments, and Members' Enquiries trends for 2023/24
- Appendix C: Complaint and Compliment report for Housing Services for 2023/24
- Appendix D: Complaint and Compliment report for Adult Social Care for 2023/24
- Appendix E: Complaint and Compliment report for Children and Young People Services for 2023/24
- Appendix F: Complaint and Compliment report for Education Services for 2023/24
- Appendix G: Complaint and Compliment report for Finance Directorate for 2023/24
- Appendix H: Complaint and Compliments for Place Directorate for 2023/24

Implications on related Council policies

A key role of Select Committees is to monitor the performance of Council services within their remit. Select Committees may also recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

This report seeks to provide assurance that complaints and Members' Enquiries are being processed in accordance with the Council's published policies.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

Legal Services confirm that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND TO THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is about 'putting our residents first'. Feedback in the form of complaints and compliments is seen as a very important source of information from residents about the quality of services and care provided by the Council. In cases where something has gone wrong, we are committed to putting it right and ensuring that it does not happen again.

2. What is a Complaint?

In general terms a complaint can be considered as:

"an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals"

3. What is a Service Requests?

A Service Request is defined as a request from a resident/people to the Council requiring us to take action to put something right. Whilst Service Requests are not complaints, they may contain expressions of dissatisfaction and give the Council the opportunity to deal with feedback in an informal way before a complaint is made.

4. How can people complain?

Complaints can be made quickly and easily 24 hours a day, seven days a week via our website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints or by post or telephone. If an adjustment is needed, people are asked to call the Complaint and Enquiries Team.

5. What can people complain about to the Council?

People can complain about any services that the Council provides or contracts out.

6. Remedies for redress

Where a complaint investigation finds that the Council has made mistakes, redress needs to be considered. The purpose of redress is to remedy the injustice or hardship suffered and, where possible, to return a complainant to the position they would have been before the situation went wrong. Types of redress include:

- an apology;
- providing the service that should have been received in the first place;
- taking action or making a decision that the Council should have done before;
- reconsidering an incorrect decision;
- improving procedures so that similar problems do not happen again; and
- payment in recognition of any loss or distress that has occurred as a result of maladministration, particularly where actions cannot be taken to put matters right.

7. Mediation

Sometimes, resolving a complaint through the usual process may be unsuitable or unfeasible, especially if the relationship between the service provider and user is strained or emotions are heightened. In these cases, the Business Manager of Complaints and Enquiries will evaluate if mediation could be a viable alternative. Should both parties consent, an independent mediator can facilitate a meeting where they attempt to negotiate a resolution through discussion.

8. Complaint Handling Codes

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) carried out a consultation with their users in late 2023. The outcome of their consultation was published in February 2024 in which they issued new and revised Complaint Handling Codes, requesting that all Local Authorities/social housing landlords begin to comply with the guidance issued from 1 April 2024. Cabinet approved the changes on 27 June 2024 and the effect of this is that:

- The stages in the Corporate complaints procedure have been decreased from three to two.
- “Informal Complaints” have been removed as a category and replaced with “Service Requests”.
- the timeline for acknowledging receipt of a complaint is now set at 5 working days instead of 3 working days.
- the time set for responding to Stage 2 complaints under the Corporate complaints procedure is now set at 20 working days rather than 10.
- introduction of a Member Responsible for Complaints.

APPENDIX B

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES FOR 2023/24

1. Total number of complaints/compliments recorded for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Directorate	Informal complaints	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Ombudsman Investigations	Compliments
Finance Directorate	149	97	18	0	3	1
Adult Social Care	72	31	N/A	N/A	8	21
Digital and Intelligence	16	1	0	0	0	2
Children and Young People Services	85	46	6	0	4	55
Education Services	55	5	2	0	1	8
Central Services	578	240	93	0	21	10
Place Directorate	2,774	261	61	0	28	119
Total for 2023/24	3,729	681	180	0	65	216
Total for 2022/23	5,176	816	121	0	46	245

- The Council strives to resolve complaints in a reasonable manner and to the satisfaction of the residents. The figures above indicate that this is achieved, as the number of complaints decreases at each stage of the escalation process. For example, only 18% of Service Requests (3,729) progressed to a Stage 1 complaint (681) and only 26% of Stage 1 complaints advanced to Stage 2 (180).
- The number of compliments (216) for 2023/24 and 245 for 2022/23 is similar.

2. Total number of complaints/compliments recorded for 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024

Year	Service Requests	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Ombudsman Investigations	Compliments
2019/20	2,339	861	80	0	59	301
2020/21	2,587	789	42	0	34	502
2021/22	4,473	802	102	0	75	349
2022/23	5,176	816	121	0	46	245
2023/24	3,729	681	180	0	65	216

- The number of Service Requests dropped by 1,447 from 5,176 in 2022/23 to 3,729 in 2023/24. This may be due to the new online complaint system that started on 3 July 2023, which requires residents to adapt to the new interface and process.
- The Council's Corporate complaints procedure changed in 2024 to align with the revised Complaint Handling Codes of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HoS) and the Local

Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). We anticipate more formal complaints in the future as we removed the “informal complaint” step on 1 April 2024 and replaced it with “Service Request”.

- The LGO and HoS, completed 65 investigations for 2023/24, which is 43% (19) more than 2022/23 (46). Only 10% of complaints escalated from Stage 1 (680) to an Ombudsman investigation (65).

3. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Service Ombudsman investigations completed for 2023/24

The table below provides the outcome of all investigations concluded by the Ombudsman.

Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Did not investigate	Total
Finance	2	0	0	1	3
Adult Social Care	2	1	0	5	8
Children and Young People's	3	0	0	1	4
Education	1	0	0	0	1
Housing	7	1	2	10	20
Waste	1	0	0	0	1
ASBET	3	1	0	1	5
Planning and Building Control	0	0	0	4	4
Green Spaces	0	0	0	9	9
Transport and Projects	0	0	0	0	0
Parking	0	0	1	6	7
Highways	0	0	0	3	3
Total	19	3	3	40	65

- Of the 65 investigations concluded by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24, 29% (19) were upheld but in the majority of complaints they received against the Council 62% (40), the Ombudsmen determined that based on the information presented to them, there was insufficient evidence of fault for them to open a full investigation into the complaint.

4. Members Enquiries (MEs)

Number of MEs recorded

Period	Place Directorate	Adult Services	Children Services	Finance Directorate	Central Services	Digital and Intelligence	Total
2019/20	11,047	135	62	179	-	-	11,423
2020/21	9,533	145	54	228	-	-	9,960
2021/22	9,432	112	58	167	-	-	9,769
2022/23	7,417	150	56	182	-	-	7,805
2023/24	4,467	67	85	98	1,517	2	6,236

- The handling of Members Enquiries (ME) was reviewed and a new system using the GOSS platform was introduced on 1 January 2023. A key part of that change was to re define what an ME is i.e. *'a clear question has been asked that now requires investigation by Council Officers, or the supply of information from a Council department'*. At the same time, we introduced the term *"service request"* which we have defined as *'a request for a one-off action to be taken, that requires action by an Officer and not investigative activities or supply of information'*. The effect of this is that the volume of MEs has reduced and will continue to do so over the years to come as those more straightforward enquires are treated as *"service requests"*.

Service areas that have the highest number of MEs recorded

Service Area	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Waste	5,950	4,964	3,934	2,003	749
Housing	1,288	1,269	976	1,021	1,375
Anti-Social Behaviour	1,408	1,176	1,258	761	589
Green Spaces	966	863	1,043	705	400
Planning	978	827	1,255	361	325
Highways	-	-	-	744	709

- Waste, Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour, Green Spaces, Planning and Highway Services accounted for 4,147 (67%) of all enquiries submitted by Members for 2023/24. Housing enquiries alone accounted for 22% of all enquiries submitted by Members.
- Waste Services and Green Spaces received fewer MEs than in previous years but this was to be expected as the typical type of enquiry submitted for these services falls under the definition of a *"Service Request"*. This is reflected in the figures below.

Service Requests recorded

Period	1 December to 31 March 2023	1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024
Number	1,023	5,555

- Members submitted a significant volume of *"Service Requests"* in 2023/24 and when this is combined with ME figures, it shows that a total of 11,791 enquiries/requests were submitted by Members. This combined figure is higher than in any preceding years.

Top 5 Service Requests submitted by Members for 2023/24

Service Area	2023/24	% of all SRs submitted
Street Cleansing	1,743	31%
Fly tipping	1,695	30%
Potholes	350	6%
Rubbish accumulation	251	5%
Tree maintenance	185	3%

- Street Cleansing and Fly tipping account for 61% of all Service Requests submitted by Members.

5. Complaints about a Councillor

Complaints about the conduct of a councillor have a separate complaint process that people are required to follow and these complaints are dealt with by the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Lloyd White. More information on this process can be found on the following web pages: www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaint-councillor

6. Service Improvement

Continuous improvement is seen as a cornerstone of how we operate at Hillingdon Council and learning from complaints is a central part of this. The receipt of any complaint provides Hillingdon with valuable feedback and opportunities to learn from what has happened and make adjustments to avoid future problems and improve the service we provide our residents. To this end, we have paid for a bespoke training course delivered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in May of 2024 on investigating complaints and the processes to follow, along with mechanisms they use to identify issues and make recommendations for change/service improvement. Officers found this course extremely helpful.

The Council has invested in new software for complaint handling. Since July 2023, we have been using a new complaint portal to process and manage complaints. The new portal has provided us with the opportunity to better understand feedback we are receiving from our residents through the “Report It” data we receive, complaints, compliments and Members Enquiries. This will enable improved analysis to better understand the specific issues that residents raise and identify trends. We expect that, over time, this will help us to address systemic problems at an early stage, reducing the need for escalation to the formal complaint stages or to Members. It is envisaged that this analysis could be used to identify any possible gaps in staff knowledge, skills or processes and develop training programs to meet those specific needs.

Going forward, a Customer Experience Contact report covering service request and complaint analysis will be developed, with the aim of identifying issues before they escalate into complaints and, by doing so, reduce the burden on our resources and develop a culture where service improvement is seen as the norm.

The Housing Management Service has comprehensively reviewed its approach to learning from complaints and, earlier this year, rolled out a revised approach to monitoring complaints and evidencing learning outcomes. Relevant service managers and the complaints manager have been involved in developing and implementing the approach. The stated objective of the approach is ‘to enhance the council’s approach to handling and monitoring complaints in a fair and transparent manner, ensuring continuous improvement through identified learning outcomes’.

The process covers extracting data from our new system, GOSS, organising this into a structured spreadsheet and filtering to share with relevant service managers. An online learning log form has been created for service managers to complete to capture learning outcomes identified and any changes to services, policies or procedures identified as a result.

Collectively housing managers and Landlord Board collate and review the Learning Outcome forms and identify common themes and areas for improvement. These are then prioritised and necessary changes to services, policies and procedures are implemented. The effectiveness of changes is monitored and reported on.

This structured approach ensures that complaint handling is systematic, with clear steps for extracting, filtering, and sharing data. By requiring service managers to complete the Complaints Learning Outcome form, the process ensures that each complaint is thoroughly reviewed and leads to actionable improvements. Continuous monitoring and reporting uphold transparency and demonstrate the council's commitment to service excellence.

The Repairs and Voids Team keep a learning log from complaints and quarterly meetings are held to review and track changes to processes and procedures. There is a commitment to continuous learning and several changes have been made and embedded into service provision.

Feedback we receive is used to improve our services and this includes the systems we have in place and where appropriate additional training for staff and Members on how to use the system(s), where to locate training material and information is provided.

7. Lessons Learnt

Housing

The Homeless Prevention team shared the ombudsman's 2023 report **More Home Truths** with all the housing staff working in that team by way of a reminder to ensure that we monitor and follow up reviews for reviews of bandings.

Finance

Equalities refresher training was provided to front line staff in the Benefits department to ensure that requests for reasonable adjustments are acted on in accordance with our policies and procedures. In addition, the policy on the operation of the Restricted Persons Register and on Dealing with Unreasonable and Unreasonably Persistent Complainants have been added to the Council's website to ensure that residents and staff are aware and clear on our approach.

Children and Young People Services

A review of social work practice and training was undertaken to ensure that officers follow the proper process to amend care plans of looked after children. This was to ensure that officers take into account the child's wishes and feelings and the views of others when making long term care arrangements.

All staff in the SEND area were reminded of the duties of the Council under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and the need to ensure that when a child moves into our area the Education Health and Care plan needs to be updated, education provision provided and that

parents are provided with regular updates. In addition, officers from the SEND team reviewed how they carry out due diligence for children and young people with EHC Plans who are unable to attend their named placement, with a view to preventing gaps in education.

Adult Social Care

Officers were reminded to update the Restricted Persons Register with any key changes, for example when a person has a Lasting Power of Attorney, so that an attorney can fulfil their legal duties for a person lacking capacity.

The Council sent written reminders to all relevant staff to ensure they are aware that they should provide assessments under the Care Act 2014 to customers and their relatives without unnecessary delay. This is to ensure that there are no delays in completing assessments and that the necessary support is put in place promptly.

Reminders were also issued to staff of the need to keep clear, accurate records of decisions on how long a care call should take in each individual's circumstances. Reminders were also given that there is statutory guidance about when a person's care and support plan should be reviewed and guidance on how to recognise a request for a review; and how the FREDA principles should be applied when commissioning domiciliary care.

The service also reviewed the brokerage process to ensure that the Council proactively requests quotes from more than one provider where a care package is complex or likely to be high cost, to minimise delay putting a service in place.

Anti-social behaviour

The Council provided training and guidance to complaint handlers on the handling of complaints, the need to collect accurate information and the need to ensure that the complaint response contains accurate information.

The service reviewed its process for taking action where someone does not comply with an abatement notice and particularly to remind staff of the need to take timely actions once it has agreed to take legal action.

The service also reviewed a number of other processes such as:

- Process and guidance to staff for assessing and investigating reports of fly tipping.
- Monitoring of ongoing fly-tipping cases to keep in regular contact with those affected.
- The system for reporting and monitoring fly-tipping cases to ensure it functions correctly.

In addition, the service arranged training for officers investigating possible environmental crimes and best practice in those investigations; and reminded the relevant senior officers to investigate all aspects of a complaint.

APPENDIX C

COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES FOR 2023/24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

I have set out below the data and outcomes of service requests, complaints and compliments for Housing Services in the period of 2019/20 to 2023/24. It indicates that service requests and Stage 1 complaints declined in number, while the number of Stage 2 complaints and Ombudsman investigations rose in 2023/24. It also refers to the removal of Stage 3 complaints as a step in the complaint process from 1 April 2024 and gives some examples of compliments received from residents.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Housing complaints are managed in line with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operated as follows until 31 March 2024:

- Service Requests
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service or Director.
- Stage 2 – response from a Director or Corporate Director of Place or Central Services
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman Service

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for Housing Services is set out below.

a. SERVICE REQUESTS

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 1 - Service Requests

Year	Total
2019/20	457
2020/21	568
2021/22	1,039
2022/23	1,389
2023/24	1,122

- There was a 19% reduction, equating to 267 fewer service requests, in the 2023/24 period with a total of 1,122 compared to the 1,389 recorded in 2022/23. The decrease in Service

Requests largely resulted from the transition to an online system for complaint handling over an email-based approach and was also influenced by the less severe winter conditions.

b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

A Head of Service or Director will aim to respond within 10 working days.

Table 2 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints

Period	Total
2019/20	177
2020/21	231
2021/22	227
2022/23	259
2023/24	240

- In 2023/24, there were 19 fewer Stage 1 complaints, a 7% decrease to 240 from the previous year's 259.

Table 3 - Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2019/20	18	40	113	6	177
2020/21	39	52	127	13	231
2021/22	17	40	160	10	227
2022/23	24	68	154	13	259
2023/24	20	43	169	8	240

- Out of 240 Stage 1 complaints, 8% (20) were fully upheld, 18% (43) were partially upheld, 70% (169) were not upheld, and 4% (8) were either cancelled or withdrawn.

c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Corporate Director for Place (or their delegate) will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

Table 4 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints

Period	Total
2019/20	31
2020/21	22
2021/22	42
2022/23	55
2023/24	93

- The number of Stage 2 complaints increased by 69%, from 55 in the year 2022/23 to 93 in 2023/24. A marked rise was seen in the Homeless Prevention service, with more individuals lodging complaints about issues such as their Locata banding, the time it is taking to be allocated accommodation, the application of the Social Housing Allocation Policy, etc.

Table 5 – Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld/WD	Total
2019/20	4	3	24	31
2020/21	6	4	12	22
2021/22	0	12	30	42
2022/23	2	15	38	55
2023/24	4	17	71	93

- 4% (four) of the Stage 2 complaints were fully upheld, 18% (fifteen) were partially upheld, and 78% (seventy-one) were not upheld.

d. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

At Stage 3, the Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and the aim is to respond within 15 working days. However, we will no longer be using this Stage from 1 April 2024. This is because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service introduced new/revised Complaint Handling Codes in February 2024. This has resulted in a two Stage Corporate complaint procedure and removes Stage 3 of our process. Cabinet approved the changes on 27 June 2024, and we began to apply it from 1 April 2024.

- There were no Stage 3 investigations undertaken during 2023/24.

e. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN OR HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 6 - Total number of Ombudsman investigations

Period	Total number
2019/20	15
2020/21	5
2021/22	19
2022/23	15
2023/24	20

- 33% (5) more investigations were concluded by the Ombudsman when comparing the 2022/23 figure of 15 with the 2023/24 figure of 20. A brief note of all 20 complaint

investigations completed by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24 and the outcome is set out below:

Adaptations	0677-3777-7373-6243	Mr X complained on behalf of Ms Y, that the Council closed her application for a Disabled Facilities Grant when the Council knew they were waiting to move and that the equipment provided was damaged.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council should not have closed Ms Y's adaptations case when it did.	The Council agreed to write to Mr X and Ms Y to confirm their adaptations case remains on hold while they resolve with their landlord whether they can move permanently.
Homeless Prevention	0572-4551-8239-0451	Miss X complained about the Council's assessment of her housing application. She says that her current banding of Band B is not sufficient to reflect her daughter's health needs.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault that would warrant an investigation.	
Homeless Prevention	0595-2028-9701-3561	Mr X complained about the Council's handling of his application for housing help in 2001. Mr X says this has caused serious mental health problems. He wants the Council to pay him compensation of £25 million.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman felt that it is more appropriate for the courts to investigate this matter.	
Homeless Prevention	1629-1657-3129-9139	Miss J complains about the Council failing to properly consider her request to review its decision about her housing allocation priority awarded.	Partially upheld - The Ombudsman found no fault on Miss J's complaint about the Council failing to properly consider the suitability of her accommodation. However, they did find that there was a 6-week delay in considering the medical information she	

			sent. This caused no significant injustice to her as the review confirmed she was in the correct band.	
Homeless Prevention	2550-1314-9545-7233	Ms X complained the Council was taking too long to re-house her despite providing evidence of her health conditions and the property being overcrowded.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault in the Council's actions.	
Homeless Prevention	2737-8138-6032-8769	Miss X complained about the Council's offers of accommodation and discharge of its homeless relief duty in 2023.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation	
Homeless Prevention	4321-5496-4864-9689	Miss X has three young children, one of whom has special needs. She complains. the Council placed her in unsuitable Temporary Accommodation which had damp and mould and where there was evidence of rats.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council did not write to Miss X to explain that she had the right of review and appeal to challenge the suitability of the temporary accommodation.	To recognise the three weeks Miss X spent in unsuitable accommodation, the Council agreed to pay a small sum of money to Ms X.
Homeless Prevention	5096-8412-9252-0963	Ms X complains there were failings in the way the Council dealt with her homeless application, housing allocation application and responded to her complaints about the matter.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that there was evidence of fault and service failure by the Council.	The Council apologised to Ms X and made a small payment of compensation in recognition of the uncertainty and frustration caused by its delay in considering whether it had a prevention duty towards Ms X.

Homeless Prevention	5836-3947-1546-5757	Mr X complained that the Council failed to refer his case to the Care Leavers Panel sooner so it could consider whether to award him Band B priority on the Housing Register.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council did not follow the correct procedure when it awarded Band B priority but that this fault did not cause injustice to Mr X as the time Mr X has waited for social housing is not due to any fault by the Council.	The Council agreed to complete a medical assessment for Mr X and inform him of the outcome. If this should lead to a higher priority on the Housing Register, it will backdate the award. The Council will also review its current practice of not making referrals to the Care Leavers panel if the young person has housing-related debts.
Homeless Prevention	6607-0275-5527-2698	Ms X complained that the Council had not correctly followed the allocations policy in relation to bedroom size.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it was clear from the Council's Social Housing Allocation Policy that two children under ten are allocated one bedroom, regardless of their sex.	
Homeless Prevention	9160-4615-3970-7093	Mrs X complains about her personal financial details being added to her relative's Council records. She says the relative showed her the records which caused her a lot of distress and anxiety.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman took the view that it was for the Information Commissioner Office to consider this issue.	
Homeless Prevention	9363-5167-0330-8626	Ms X is complaining that the Council misled her into thinking it had offered her a property. Ms X wants the Council to provide her with long-term accommodation as a	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was no sign of any fault by the Council regarding this matter.	

		remedy for her complaint.		
Housing Repairs & Maintenance	0384-6548-1321-5040	Ms X complained that the Council failed to fully investigate issues she raised about repairs to her balcony.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council had not fully investigated her balcony repair concerns.	The Council agreed to appoint a surveyor to inspect the balcony and provide a report on the balcony. If any works are recommended, the Council would let Ms X know and the timescale for completing the work. The Council also agreed to include within its Repairs Policy, repair responsibilities which extend to balconies.
Housing Repairs & Maintenance	3000-5223-6662-3742	The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of hot water and heating loss.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found that the Council had failed to provide temporary heating to the resident nor offered compensation to recognise the period of 5 days during which she was without heating.	The Council agreed to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review the resident's electricity bill and offer a fair and reasonable contribution towards her increased utility costs as a result of using temporary heaters in the property. 2. review its staff training in the application of its repairs policy to ensure that residents are provided with alternative heating when there is a total loss of heating in the property. 3. paid the resident a small amount in compensation for the inconvenience caused.
Housing Repairs & Maintenance	6607-2492-0185-8444	Mrs X complained that the Council was negligent in installing an access gate which came off in high winds and damaged her car. The Council has denied liability for the damage but	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it would be reasonable for Mrs X to take the matter to court.	

		Mrs X believes it should pay her compensation.		
Housing Repairs & Maintenance	8206-0328-2994-2888	Ms X complained about the Council's handling of boiler repair reports she had reported.	Not Upheld – The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaints relating to 2019/2020 as they were not raised with the Council within a reasonable time, which is normally six months. There was also no maladministration in the Council's handling of repairs to the resident's thermostat, radiators, and boiler or in the Council's handling of the complaint.	The Ombudsman did though recommend that the Council review how it records repairs. The documents could be clearer on when repairs were reported and how they were reported
Tenancy Management	1731-8557-6466-9048	Mr X complained about the Council's handling of his reports of soot-like deposits falling onto his balcony.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council did not take reasonable action to meet Mr X's request to have his concerns about the soot assessed by an environmental health officer.	The Council agreed to apologise to the resident.
Tenancy Management	3350-5892-4599-1054	Mr X complained about the Council's handling of his reports about staff conduct following his interactions with an officer via telephone	Partially upheld – The Ombudsman found that his report about staff conduct was not well handled but	The Council agreed to remind staff of the need for professionalism and respect when addressing residents.

		and email and that there was a delay in receiving a response from an officer regarding the medical evidence he was asked to submit.	did not find any maladministration in respect of the Council's handling of the medical evidence.	
Tenancy Management	3953-4948-0231-0587	Ms X complained about the way the Council has managed her housing situation after she agreed to hold a tenancy in trust.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.	
Tenancy Management	4695-4416-4691-6736	Mr X is a leaseholder of a property where the Council owns the freehold. He complains about the behaviour of two council officers when they visited his property to check if he had the necessary permissions for building works.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that as Mr X's complaint is about the management of housing let on a long lease agreement by a Council that is a registered social housing provider, and the Ombudsman will not look at the associated complaints process in isolation.	

f. COMPLIMENTS

Table 7 – number of compliments recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	92
2020/21	132
2021/22	167
2022/23	81
2023/24	93

- The number of compliments increased by 15%, from 81 in the 2022/23 period to 93 in the 2023/24 period, reflecting an additional 12 compliments received.

Here's what some people said about Housing Services:

“I wanna start by saying thank you so much for all the help you have done for me you have been amazing. You really are one of them people who really are here to help and understand so thank you so much for everything.”

“Just wanted to give xxxx a big shout out, he did an outstanding job last week. Not only did he manage to resolve the hot water issues in the shower mixer, he did so under very difficult circumstances. xxxx displayed excellent customer service skills with this resident, Mrs xxxx, who can be very difficult and gets very agitated easily. She continually follows officers around, stands over officers while working and prevents officers from leaving if she thinks they are not going to fix the problem. xxxx remained calm, professional and showed respect for Mrs xxx at all times. Mrs xxxx expressed her gratitude for xxxx perseverance in resolving the issues with her shower.”

“A professional Plumber turned up this morning at 0800, I told him what had happened, he looked at the system, ripped the lot out, placed a new unit inside and bingo it's never worked so well !!!!! What a delightful skilled person. Thanks as always for your help.”

“Please can you pass on our congratulations to the team who completed the painting last week. Miss xxxx was absolutely delighted with the team and the quality of work.”

“I hope you are keeping safe and well. I just wanted to email you to say thank you very much for getting the concrete fixed as that badly needed fixing. I would also like to say what wonderful service we received from xxx on behalf of xxxx as he really went out of his way to ensure that the work was completed in good time. His communication and care to the customer was exemplary and he went the extra mile at all times from his first visit to look at the work that needed to be done and kept in contact every step of the way throughout the works being started and completed to ensure that we were in the loop and happy with the completion. xxxx is a pleasure to deal with and his easy-going nature and friendly but professional approach really were outstanding. He is a great representative of xxxx as a company. Thank you so much for all the help.”

“I would like to say 'thanks' to the plumber who came today, he knew exactly straight away what the problem was & repaired it. It has been a problem for a while & was not repaired on other visits! He is a very happy helpful young man.”

APPENDIX D

COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE FOR 2023/24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

A comprehensive analysis is provided covering the period from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The report provides information on service requests, stage 1 complaints, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigations, and compliments with key findings or comments. The report also incorporates some feedback from people who expressed their satisfaction with Adult Social Care Services.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The procedure for dealing with Adult Social Care complaints is regulated by the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'.

This procedure is far less prescriptive and allows for early escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the Local Authority. The intention of this procedure is to achieve resolution at the first attempt, to remove bureaucracy and is designed to empower complainants in shaping the approach to resolving the complaint from the outset.

- The Informal Complaint (service request).
- Stage 1 – response from a director or Assistant Director or Head of Service of the area complained about.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed explanation of all complaints and compliments for Adult Social Care is set out below.

a. SERVICE REQUESTS

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 8 – Service Requests

Year	Total
2019/20	53
2020/21	52
2021/22	80
2022/23	72
2023/24	72

- The number of Service requests received for 2022/23 and 2023/24 are the same.

b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINT - LOCAL RESOLUTION

At Stage 1 of the complaint process a director or Assistant Director or Head of Service will carry out an investigation and aim to respond within 20 working days.

Table 9 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	45
2020/21	48
2021/22	50
2022/23	37
2023/24	31

- A reduction of 16% in Stage 1 complaints, from 37 in 2022/23 to 31 in 2023/24.

Table 10 - Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn/cancelled	Total
2019/20	10	9	25	1	45
2020/21	9	11	26	2	48
2021/22	8	9	29	4	50
2022/23	7	10	18	2	37
2023/24	2	5	22	2	31

- Out of the 31 Stage 1 complaints responded to, 2 (6%) were fully upheld, 5 (16%) were partially upheld, 22 (71%) not upheld, and 2 were either withdrawn or cancelled. These statistics are consistent with those of previous years.

c. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATIONS (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council's own investigation has not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the LGO and at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 11 - Total number of LGO investigations

Period	Total Number
2019/20	8
2020/21	4
2021/22	7
2022/23	6
2023/24	8

- The number of investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman remains broadly similar when comparing figures from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024. A brief note of all 8 complaint investigations completed by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24 and the outcome is set out below:

Service	Complaint reference	Summary of complaint	LGO decision	Agreed action
Adult Social Care (ASC)	7654-1263-0484-1459	Mr D complained that the Council delayed completing an assessment of his care needs and it delayed putting necessary support in place. He also says the Council initially refused to allow him to have an advocate and it refused to properly deal with his complaints.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council was at fault for its delay in sending Mr D a copy of his assessment. There was also some fault with how it dealt with the concerns Mr D raised about its service.	The Council agreed to apologise to Mr D, pay him a small amount in compensation and to issue written reminders to relevant staff to ensure they are aware that they should provide assessments under the Care Act 2014 to customers and their relatives without unnecessary delay.
ASC - Extra Care Services	0320-3739-7171-8910	Mr B says the residential services the Council arranged for him at a substance misuse rehabilitation centre was defective and added to his distress, anxiety and mental state while trying to overcome addiction.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman will not investigate Mr B's complaint because they could not add to the care provider's response on behalf of the Council, the remedy it has offered is suitable to the injustice Mr B claims, and CQC is better placed to consider wider performance issues.	The care provider offered to remedy any injustice to Mr B by increasing post-treatment family therapy sessions from two to four at no extra cost (to the Council); increasing one-to-one counselling sessions to twice weekly until end of Mr B's programme and providing a one-to-one session when Mr B would move on to 'phase 3' of the programme in the community.
ASC - Quality Assurance	5554-5570-4627-9509	Miss X complained on behalf of her family member, Miss Y that the Council failed to consider all the evidence available when it refused to provide post-16 travel assistance to Miss Y.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found that there was no fault in the way the Council decided not to award Miss Y travel assistance but there was fault in the Council's record keeping.	The Council agreed to apologise to Ms Y for the uncertainty it caused when it referred to Miss Y by the wrong pronoun in its decision letter, and by its incorrect recording of her personal details in its stage two bundle summary.
ASC - Safeguarding	1747-6669-0047-8669	Mr X complained the Council wrongly disclosed confidential	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman will	

Adults - MASH		personal and sensitive information that he had provided to it, to a third party. Mr X says the disclosure has torn his family apart.	not investigate this complaint as this is a matter for the Information Commissioner's Office.	
ASC	5025-0197-4013-3636	Mr X complained that the Council had refused to pay invoices for physiotherapy services provided.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it reasonable to expect Mr X to take the matter to court.	
Adults Care Home Providers	9480210	Mr C complained his care provider damaged his headphones by putting them in the washing machine. Mr C says carers have caused damage to other items in his property and has photographic evidence to support this.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it would be reasonable for Mr C to make a claim against his care provider through his own insurers or the court.	
Adults Care Complaints - North	8824111	Mr B complained about the delay by a Trust, Council and Integrated Care Board in discharging him from section 117 of the Mental Health Act aftercare. Mr B said the delay led to distress, and anxiety	Did not investigate- The Ombudsman found that although there was a delay in informing Mr B of the discharge, he has received an apology, and the Ombudsman would not add anything further by investigating the case.	
Adults Care Complaints - North	9372294	Mr Y complained about the Council's decision to restrict his contact and that it directly interfered with his legal obligations as Lasting Power of Attorney.	Partially upheld – The Ombudsman found that there was some fault in some elements of Mr Y's complaint which caused him injustice such as	The Council agreed to apologise to Mr Y for the identified faults.

			the failure to include all relevant grounds for implementing contact restrictions in its 6 April 2022 letter and wrongly recording on the RPR that Mr Y did not have consent to receive information	
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d. COMPLIMENTS

Table 12 - Number of compliments recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	65
2020/21	92
2021/22	33
2022/23	23
2023/24	21

- There was a modest reduction in the number of compliments received, with 21 recorded for the year 2023/24 compared to 23 in the previous year 2022/23.

Here’s what some people said about Adult Social Care Services

“We are delighted with the wonderful news that xxxx will receive 7hrs. 1:1 weekend support. Those extra hours will make such a difference to xxxx’s mental health and we look forward to seeing a much happier young man in the coming weeks. Our sincere thanks, xxxxx for your effort in helping to bring this to a happy conclusion.”

“I thank you for your help with what was a difficult time for the family and our Carers help was something I shall never forget. She had had 9 months off work to have her baby and it was so nice that we got back in touch at that time especially since she wasn’t sure if she would be able to work so soon with childcare considerations of her own. Thank you for all the patient support you provided during our relationship with my sons Carer, xxxx.”

“Thank you for the very friendly and professional approach. You made the review very smooth and easy. Thank you for all your help. We wish you the best for the future.”

“It appears that mother has settled in well at Clare House, so on behalf of my sisters and myself, we would like to say a thank you to you, and your whole team, at Social Services for the help and advice you gave over the past four months. A special thanks goes to you personally, for the little amount of time we knew you, and the vast amount of effort you put in, so once again thank you, even mother had confidence in you more than others that had visited her. Could you also say a big thank you to xxxx of O T again a wonderful woman who helped and guided mother more than others.”

“I just wanted to drop you a quick line to thank you for everything you did getting mum rehoused. You were absolutely amazing! Without your help she’d still be there, sitting in the corner just waiting to die but now she’s as happy as a lark with a new will to live! She’s eating properly and is just so happy.... And that wouldn’t be possible without your help.... And she tells me that you even popped round for a visit! You really are a star. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.”

APPENDIX E

COMPLAINT REPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE'S FOR 2023/24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

I have provided an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by the Children and Young People Service from 2019/20 to 2023/24. It provides information on the number and outcome of service requests, Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, and LGO investigations, as well as the number of compliments recorded. It also includes some quotes from people who praised the service. The report shows that the service has recorded fewer Stage 1 complaints and resolved more issues through informal approaches, the number of Ombudsman investigations has risen and recorded fewer compliments than the previous year.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Complaints made by children or on their behalf are governed by the Children's Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738). This sets out the statutory three-stage complaint procedure that Local Authorities are required to follow when dealing with complaints made by for example any child or young person, any local authority foster carer, a child or young person leaving care, etc. Hillingdon's procedure operates as follows:

- Service Request
- Stage 1 – Local Resolution - response from an Assistant Director or Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – Independent Investigation by two people (Investigating Officer and Independent Person).
- Stage 3 – Review Panel comprising of three independent people
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for Children and Young People Service's is set out below.

a. SERVICE REQUESTS

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 13 – Service Requests

Year	Total
2019/20	88
2020/21	86
2021/22	106
2022/23	62
2023/24	85

- In the 2023/24 period, there was an increase of 37% (23 additional) service requests, totalling 85, compared with the 62 requests recorded in the 2022/23 period.

b. STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

An Assistant Director or Head of Service will investigate and aim to respond to complaints within 10 working days.

Table 14 - Total number of complaints recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	71
2020/21	87
2021/22	69
2022/23	76
2023/24	46

- There was a 39% decrease in Stage 1 complaints, with a drop from the previous year's total of 76 to 46 in the current fiscal period. Although this reduction is balanced by an increase in Service Requests, it indicates that Officers were more successful in addressing complaints through less formal resolutions.

Table 15 - Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2019/20	9	21	37	4	71
2020/21	9	25	47	6	87
2021/22	7	15	45	2	69
2022/23	12	21	41	2	76
2023/24	2	14	29	1	46

- Out of 46 initial complaints logged, 4% (2) were upheld, 30% (14) were partially upheld, 63% (29) were not upheld, and 1 was withdrawn. The statistics align with those of previous years.

c. STAGE 2 INVESTIGATIONS

A Stage 2 investigation is conducted by an Investigating Officer (IO) and Independent Person (IP) with specialist skills and knowledge of the Children's Act. The timescale to conclude such an investigation is set by statute at 25 working days but this may be extended to a maximum of 65 working days.

Table 16 – Total number of Stage 2 complaints recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	0
2020/21	0
2021/22	0
2022/23	0
2023/24	6

- There were no Stage 2 investigations undertaken under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- The 6 Stage 2 complaints related to the SEND service and these complaints are processed in accordance with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This is because the children's statutory complaints procedure is for specific sections of the Children Act 1989 and it does not include the Council's duties with regards to Special Education Needs, which come under the Children and Families Act 2014.

d. STAGE 3 INVESTIGATIONS

At Stage 3 of the statutory complaint process, three people independent of the Council, will consider the complaint and wherever possible work towards a resolution. The timescale to conclude such an investigation is 45 working days.

- There were no Stage 3 investigations commissioned during this period.

e. INVESTIGATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 17 – Total number of LGO investigations

Period	Total number
2019/20	1
2020/21	1
2021/22	3
2022/23	2
2023/24	4

- The Ombudsman completed 4 investigations in the year 2023/24. A brief note of all 4 complaint investigations completed by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24 and the outcome is set out below:

Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) - Youth Justice and Adolescent Services	1660-0714-3590-6375	Mrs X complained that the Council refused to issue refunds for summer activities her children could no longer attend.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault that would warrant an investigation.	
SEND	3572-3790-4041-4146	Ms X complained that the Council delayed in producing her child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and that this happened ahead of a key transfer in his education and caused him to miss the opportunity to begin primary school in a specialist placement.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council delayed by 23 weeks in finalising her son's EHCP, failed to consult the specialist school Ms X requested in a timely way, and communicated poorly with Ms X during this time.	The Council agreed to apologise and pay Ms X a small sum of compensation in recognition of the distress and uncertainty caused by the delay. The Council also agreed to carry out several service improvements.
SEND	7171-1703-6097-4373	Ms B complained that the Council failed to provide education to her son; failed to keep her up to date with what was happening and respond to her queries and telephone calls.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found that the Council failed to put in place education for part of the period, did not always respond to Ms B's queries and failed to meet with her as it agreed to do.	The Council agreed to apologise to Ms B for the distress and frustration she experienced and pay her a sum of money in compensation. By way of service improvements, the Council agreed to send a reminder to officers about the Council's section 19 responsibility to ensure a child receives education and the need to consider making a referral for a tutor at an early stage if a school cannot be identified.

SEND	2332-6662-3043-6695	Mrs X complained that the Council failed to provide education and specialist provision in line with her son Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan since March 2023 when his school was unable to meet his needs.	Upheld -The Ombudsman found that the Council was at fault.	The Council agreed to apologise to Mrs X and pay her a small sum of money in compensation to recognise the distress and uncertainty caused to her by the faults. By way of service improvements, the Council agree to remind all officers in its SEND team of the duty to comply with statutory timescales following an annual review.
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f. COMPLIMENTS

Table 18 – number of compliments recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	124
2020/21	132
2021/22	77
2022/23	64
2023/24	55

- Comparisons between 2022/23 and 2023/24 data show a small decline in the number of compliments, dropping from 64 to 55.

Here's what some people said about Children Services:

"I would like to express my gratitude for the incredible work you have done as the children's social worker. Xxxx and xxx have mentioned on multiple occasions how fortunate they feel to have you as children's SW. Thank you for your dedication and invaluable work."

"Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed today and how wonderful it was to see you listen to xxx, she will now feel such a part of her own future, it was really important to her. You have some great officers at Hillingdon!"

*"I am the foster carer that has been looking after ** & ** with xxx being the children's social worker. I have been foster carer now for around 10 years (5 with the LA and 5 with my agency) and also previously I was a looked after child for many years. I would like share my thoughts with you regarding xxx. In all the years of fostering I personally have never come across a social worker that has been this outstanding, truly dedicated and clearly a strong sense of loving care and totally focussed on the right outcomes for these 2 children. Her 100% attention to detail, covering ALL aspects, one step ahead of everything, her kind and caring nature, firm but fair, totally organized and a loving caring manner. It will be no surprise to hear that the 2 children adore her and would extremely look forward to her visits when placed with myself, ST even sleeps ever night with a cuddly toy cat that she was given to her for Christmas from xxx. We all*

want the right outcomes for looked after children and I truly believe that the work and dedication that xxx showed/shows has made a huge impact on this case. She has always returned any phone calls, emails or concerns from myself in a quick and efficient manner which has been a great help and comfort along the way. During the children's time here, if there were things I didn't understand decisions etc, she would explain things clearly, respectfully and with empathy. When fostering, to have a social worker working alongside you as part of team it really does make a huge difference. If the LA does any yearly awards for Social Workers, I would like to put her name forward please! I feel the LA are lucky to have such a great social worker on their team. I wish her all the best for the future and hope I will get to work alongside her one day with other looked after children in the future.”

“I wanted to contact you on behalf of xxx and the Your Choice team to thank you for the wonderful work that you are doing in Hillingdon. In celebration of Social Work week, we were delighted to deliver a webinar alongside Hillingdon’s Adolescent Safeguarding Team to talk about the purposeful, positive and promising impact of Your Choice in Hillingdon. I have just loved spending time with the team as we prepared for the session and am in complete awe of their thoughtfulness and passion in relation to their work. xxx did such a fantastic job yesterday at showcasing the incredible work they do for Hillingdon’s children. We will be sharing a snippet at ALDCS on Monday as part of our progress update. Thank you so much for enabling the team to do such a wonderful job yesterday and every day!”

“Stronger Families has proven to be a timely intervention for us as a family and I do want to thank you and your team for your help and support on what is at times a challenging period for us as parents trying to understand our children now young people, in a world that is far more complex than it was when we were growing up (in our view!). Your visits to us have helped us understand Xxxxx more and more in an environment that felt comforting and safe for all 3 of us. Sometimes identifying what exactly is going on is difficult and you have helped us do that. The questions/issues that arose in your presence have provided us with valuable insight into how she thinks/feels and we believe she too has benefited from them. Your observations have proven crucial-sometimes when in the midst of it all it’s very hard for us to separate the woods from the trees. Xxxxx is bright and thoughtful, and we are all on a journey which will continue, but she undoubtedly through her actions over the last few weeks has shown us that she is willing to work with us which involves change from all sides. It’s a journey - ups and downs - no different from what other families go through. Thank you for helping us along the way.”

APPENDIX F

COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR EDUCATION SERVICES FOR 2023/24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

I have set out below a detailed complaint report which provides statistical data and analysis for each stage of the complaint process, from service requests to LGO investigations, as well as the number of compliments received. It covers the period from 2019/20 to 2023/24 and highlights any significant changes or trends in the data.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Complaints about education and schools are governed by the Education Act 2002. The Local Authority will only deal with complaints that are education related such as the provision of the national curriculum, school admission appeals, exclusions, special educational needs assessments, child protection issues, allegations of child abuse, etc.

Complaints about the internal management of a school must initially be made in writing to the Headteacher of the school. If this fails to resolve the issue, concerns should then be raised with the chair of governors. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they can then escalate their complaint to the Department for Education and beyond that to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman via a Member of Parliament.

For those complaints where this Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate, we will deal with these complaints under the Council's Corporate complaints procedure as follows:

- Service Requests
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from the Director for SEND and Education
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A more detailed explanation of how the complaint procedure operates the main complaint themes and statistical data for each stage of the complaint process is provided below.

a. SERVICE REQUESTS

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 19 – Service Requests

Year	Total
2019/20	8
2020/21	22
2021/22	20
2022/23	74
2023/24	55

- When looking at the 2022/23 figure of 74 compared to the 2023/24 figure of 55, there was a 25% (19) decrease in Service Requests recorded. Out of the 55 Service Requests recorded, Ofsted was responsible for 52. These were primarily enquiries from parents forwarded by Ofsted to the Council about schools, predominantly concerning complaints about how schools are run, which should be handled through the school's complaint process.

b. STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

The Head of Service will aim to respond within 10 working days.

Table 20 - Total number of complaints recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	16
2020/21	3
2021/22	6
2022/23	7
2023/24	5

- The overall volume of Stage 1 complaints has stayed relatively consistent between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 periods, with numbers at 7 and 5 respectively. However, I envisage that this figure will rise as the complaint team has agreed with colleagues in Education Services on a new process for handling complaints.

Table 21- Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2019/20	2	6	8	0	16
2020/21	1	0	2	0	3
2021/22	0	2	4	0	6
2022/23	1	0	6	0	7
2023/24	1	1	2	1	5

- The data shown is too limited to form any definitive conclusions.

c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Director for SEND and Education will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

Table 22 – Total number of Stage 2 complaints recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	1
2020/21	0
2021/22	0
2022/23	2
2023/24	2

- Two investigations were carried out in the periods of 2022/23 and 2023/24, with both complaints being partially upheld.

d. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

At Stage 3, the Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and the aim is to respond within 15 working days. However, we will no longer be using this Stage from 1 April 2024. This is because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service introduced new/revised Complaint Handling Codes in February 2024. This has resulted in a two Stage Corporate complaint procedure and removes Stage 3 of our process. Cabinet approved the changes on 27 June 2024, and we began to apply it from 1 April 2024.

e. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGO) INVESTIGATIONS

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the LGO and at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 23 - Total number of LGO investigation

Period	Total number
2019/20	0
2020/21	0
2021/22	0
2022/23	0
2023/24	1

- There was one investigation undertaken by the Ombudsman during this period. A brief note of the investigation completed by the Ombudsmen and the outcome is set out below:

Education	4241-5495-0381-3977	Mr X complained that the Council failed to provide the Occupational Therapy provision specified in his child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or reimburse the transport costs for their child attending school between September 2022 and July 2023.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found that the Council failed to ensure his child received the full OT provision set out in her EHC Plan and that there was a delay in issuing a final EHC Plan.	The Council agreed to apologise to Mr X, pay him an amount of money in compensation in recognition of the stress and uncertainty caused and a sum of money to recognise the loss of OT provision which Mr X can use for his child's benefit.
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f. COMPLIMENTS

Table 24 - Compliments recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	1
2020/21	4
2021/22	2
2022/23	2
2023/24	0

APPENDIX G

COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR FINANCE DIRECTORATE FOR 2023/24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

I have provided below statistical data on the number and outcome of complaints at each complaint stage, as well as the number of investigations by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) and the number of compliments received. The text shows that the number of complaints has decreased at most stages, except for stage 2, and that the majority of complaints were not upheld. The number of LGO investigations and compliments has also decreased over the years.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Finance Directorate complaints are managed in line with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operated as follows up to 31 March 2024:

- Service Requests
- Stage 1 – response from a senior officer from the Appeals and Complaints Team.
- Stage 2 – response from a Director or the Corporate Director for Finance.
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A more detailed explanation of how the complaint procedure operates the main complaint themes and statistical data for each stage of the complaint process is provided below.

a. SERVICE REQUEST

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 25 – Service Requests

Year	Total
2019/20	82
2020/21	121
2021/22	350
2022/23	558
2023/24	149

- When examining the data, there's a notable decrease in Service Requests, with 149 instances in 2023/24 against the previous year's 558. The surge in figures for 2022/23 was largely due to the central government's initiative, which provided up to five payments as a cost-of-living aid for some residents who received certain benefits or tax credits. Consequently, this led to an increased number of inquiries from residents checking their eligibility for these payments.

b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

An experienced officer from the Appeals and Complaints Team investigates the complaint and aims to respond within 10 working days.

Table 26 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints

Period	Total
2019/20	213
2020/21	171
2021/22	167
2022/23	191
2023/24	97

- For the 2023/24 period, there was a 49% reduction in Stage 1 complaints, dropping to 94 from the previous year's total of 191.

Table 27 - Outcome of complaints

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2019/20	38	23	151	1	213
2020/21	15	16	140	0	171
2021/22	19	27	114	7	167
2022/23	12	12	162	5	191
2023/24	8	15	74	0	97

- Of the 97 Stage 1 complaints, 8% (8) were not upheld, 15% (15) were upheld and 77% (74) were not upheld.

c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Director or Corporate Director for Finance will investigate and aim to respond within 20 working days.

Table 28 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints

Period	Total
2019/20	21
2020/21	15
2021/22	19
2022/23	25
2023/24	18

- There were fewer Stage 2 complaints when comparing 2022/23 figure of 25 with the 2023/24 figure of 18. Of these 18 Stage 2 complaints, 2 were upheld, 1 cancelled and 15 were not upheld.

d. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

At Stage 3, the Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and the aim is to respond within 15 working days. However, we no longer use this Stage from 1 April 2024. This is because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service introduced new/revised Complaint Handling Codes in February 2024. This has resulted in a two Stage Corporate Complaint procedure and removes Stage 3 of our process. Cabinet approved the changes on 27 June 2024, and we began to apply it from 1 April 2024.

e. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council’s own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the LGO and at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 29 - Total number of LGO investigations

Period	Total number
2019/20	8
2020/21	6
2021/22	10
2022/23	7
2023/24	3

The Ombudsman concluded 3 investigations during this period. A brief note of the 3 investigations completed by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24 and the outcome is set out below:

Finance – Housing Benefit	3048-1376-9330-4682	Miss X complained about the Council's decision to suspend her housing benefit. She says the Council kept asking for more and more information. She says she is now in rent arrears and her landlord is seeking possession.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault that would warrant an investigation. They also noted that it was reasonable for Miss X to use her right of appeal to Tribunal.	
Finance – Housing Benefit	7419-9713-0228-8319	Miss X complained that the Council took too long to assess her housing benefit claim following a change in her circumstances. She stated the Council did not respond to her requests for updates on her claim and that this resulted in causing her financial hardship and impacting her mental health.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council took too long to decide Miss X's claim. However, this has been remedied by the Council.	The Council informed Miss X that her chances of moving to permanent accommodation will not be jeopardised providing she makes the required rent payments for a minimum of six months
Finance - Financial Assessment team	3706-9333-4976-3133	Ms D complained that the Council replaced free NHS carers for her father (Mr X), with paid for care, without her agreement or any financial assessment. She says she cancelled the service as soon as she was able to, but the Council has continued to pursue payment for care which was not agreed to.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found the Council at fault for failing to provide enough information about the care charges before the costs were incurred.	The Council agreed to apologise to Ms D and waive the fees. By way of service improvement, we will be reviewing our process by providing costs information at the outset.

f.

COMPLIMENTS

Table 30 - Number of compliments recorded

Period	Total number
2019/20	10
2020/21	17
2021/22	6
2022/23	2
2023/24	1

- Compliments have decreased from two to one, which is disappointing.

Here's what one person said about Finance Service:

"Your investigation has really helped, and we will really benefit once the payment has been processed."

APPENDIX H – COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS FOR PLACE DIRECTORATE FOR 2023/24

(This directorate also includes Housing Services whose figures are shown in Appendix C)

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

I have provided an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by Highways, Parking, Transport and Projects, Waste, Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team, Green Spaces, and Planning and Building Control. The report provides data on the number, type, and outcome of service requests, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3 complaints, and Ombudsman investigations. It also highlights some of the compliments received from residents for the services provided.

The report shows that the number of service requests and compliments decreased, while the number of complaints and Ombudsman investigations increased, compared to the previous year. The report also explains the changes to the complaint procedure that will take effect from 1 April 2024.

THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Complaints are managed in line with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

- Service Request.
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from a Director or the Corporate Director for Place
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for this Directorate is set out below.

1. SERVICE REQUESTS

Resident feedback suggests a preference for immediate resolution of issues through direct dialogue with an officer/manager, rather than submitting formal complaints. When feasible, we aim to address concerns directly and will maintain this method moving forward.

Table 31 – Service Requests

Year	2022/23	2023/24
Highways	248	131
Parking	312	185
Transport and Projects	100	39
Waste	1,297	1,000
Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team	605	294
Green Spaces	292	123
Planning	167	113
Total	3,021	1,885

- In comparison with the statistics from 2022/23, the total service requests have decreased. It is anticipated that these numbers will increase over time as residents become more familiar with the newly implemented online complaint system that was launched on 3 July 2023.
- Waste accounts for 27% (1,000) of all service requests submitted across the Council, followed by ASBET 8% (294), Parking 5% (185), Highways 4% (131), Green Spaces 3% (123), Planning 3% (113) and Transport and Projects 1% (39).

2. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

A Head of Service aims to respond within 10 working days.

Table 32 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints

Service	2022/23	2023/24
Highways	25	19
Parking	41	97
Transport and Projects	10	3
Waste	43	43
Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team	35	34
Green Spaces	35	37
Planning and Building Control	57	28
Total	246	261

- Parking accounts for 37% (97) of formal complaints followed by Waste 16% (43), Green Spaces 14% (37), ASBET 13% (34), Planning 11% (28), Highways 7% (19) and Transport and Projects of 3.

Table 33 - Outcome of complaints

2023/24	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highways	2	1	15	1	19
Parking	4	6	85	2	97
Transport and Projects	0	0	3	0	3
Waste	19	8	15	1	43
Anti-Social Behaviour	6	13	14	1	34

and Environment Team					
Green Spaces	3	4	28	2	37
Planning and Building Control	4	5	18	1	28
Total	38	37	178	8	261

- Waste services have the highest number of upheld complaints - 44% (19).
- Parking has the highest number of complaints and the highest number that are not upheld. This is because they are mainly challenges to the issue of Penalty Charge Notice where there is a separate statutory procedure that complainants need to follow.
- Across all these services, 14% of Stage 1 complaints were either upheld or partially upheld, 68% were not upheld, and 4% were withdrawn or cancelled.

3. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

A Director or the Corporate Director for Place will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

Table 48 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints

Service	2022/23	2023/24
Highways	5	3
Parking	3	7
Transport and Projects	2	0
Waste	5	10
ASBET	9	17
Green Spaces	8	16
Planning and Building Control	7	8
Total	39	61

- In 2023/24, there was a 56% increase in Stage 2 complaints with 22 more recorded than the 39 from 2022/23.
- Of the 61 Stage 2 complaints, ASBET and Green Spaces accounted for 54% of all Stage 2 complaints.

Table 49 – Outcome of complaints

2023/24	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highways	0	1	2	0	3
Parking	0	1	6	0	7
Transport and Projects	0	0	0	0	0
Waste	4	0	5	1	10
ASBET	1	4	12	0	17
Green Spaces	2	0	14	0	16
Planning and Building Control	1	1	6	0	8
Total	8	7	45	1	61

- Of the Stage 2 complaints, 13% (8) were upheld, 11% (7) were partially upheld, and the remaining 74% (45) were not upheld.

4. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

At Stage 3, the Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and the aim is to respond within 15 working days. However, we will no longer be using this Stage from 1 April 2024. This is because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service introduced new/revised Complaint Handling Codes in February 2024. This has resulted in a two Stage Corporate complaint procedure and removes Stage 3 of our process. Cabinet approved the changes on 27 June 2024, and we began to apply it from 1 April 2024.

5. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman at any stage of the complaint process.

Table 51 - Total number of Ombudsman investigations

Service	2022/23	2023/24
Highways	1	3
Parking	3	7
Transport and Projects	0	0
Waste	0	1
ASBET	3	6
Green Spaces	4	9
Planning and Building Control	5	4
Total	16	30

- A significant rise in the number of investigations concluded by the Ombudsman when comparing the 2022/23 figure of 16 with that of 2023/24 of 31. A brief note of all the investigations completed by the Ombudsmen for 2023/24 and the outcome is set out below.

Highways

Highways	3854-4675-4003-4827	Ms X complained that the Council wrongly accused her of damaging the highway and about the way the Council dealt with her complaints.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that the complaint was submitted late and that she had not suffered significant injustice that would warrant an investigation.
Highways	4167-5849-6378-2425	Mr X says he is being asked to pay for damaged paving stones that were already damaged in 2018 and not caused by his builders who undertook work on his driveway in 2019.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman said that the courts are best placed to determine liability on this complaint.
Highways	9490090	Mr X says the Council has decided to remove the surface of the vehicle crossover (dropped kerb) outside his home and charge him for this. It will also charge him for resurfacing. He also complains the Council delayed in responding to his enquiries.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman found no fault in the process the Council has followed leading to its decision to remove the surface of the dropped kerb outside Mr X's home.

Parking

Parking Appeals	0656-3344-4725-0135	Mr X complained that the Council failed to properly consider his informal challenge to a penalty charge notice (PCN). He says the Council's response failed to take account of his disability.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it is reasonable for Mr X to appeal to London Tribunals.
Parking Appeals	2195-7367-5403-7402	Mrs X complained about the Council's decision to increase parking permit charges in permit zones such as the one she lives in. she says she is part of a military household and the Council should make an exception for such households from the increases.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.
Parking Appeals	0188-8976-4356-0106	Mr X complained that the Council issued him with a penalty charge notice (PCN) despite him displaying his blue badge.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it is reasonable to expect Mr X to appeal against the PCN to the independent tribunal.
Parking Services	5487-5673-6483-7113	Mr X complained that the Council issued him with a penalty charge notice despite him displaying his blue badge. Mr X wants the PCN to be cancelled.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that it is reasonable to expect Mr X to appeal against the PCN to the independent tribunal.
Parking Operations	3140-7166-2371-3094	Mr X complained about the Council introducing a charge of the parking permit for a first vehicle in his area. He says this has been previously free but now he has to pay £75 to park outside his home which he believes is an additional tax on motorists.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.
Parking Operations	7829-6669-6802-8358	Mr B complained the Council failed to consider his circumstances when refusing his application for a resident parking permit. Mr B says as a result he has lost what is an essential lifeline for him due to his health conditions.	Not upheld – The Ombudsman found that although a document lists Mr B as a named driver of the vehicle it does not refer to his address. The Ombudsman was satisfied with the decision of the Council and cannot criticise the Council for refusing to issue Mr B with a resident parking permit.
Parking Operations	8496-4566-8301-8409	Mr X complained that the Council sent correspondence about a penalty charge notice to the wrong address. He says he was therefore unaware of the PCN until enforcement agents (bailiffs) attended his property in 2018.	Did not investigate – The Ombudsman found that Mr X was late in submitting his complaint and that it would have been reasonable for Mr X to apply to the Court to challenge the Council's decision.

Waste

Waste Services	2878-8980-3601-1539	Mr X complained about the Council's response to his bin collection complaints and the lack of reasonable adjustments it made for him when he submitted various complaints to it in September 2023.	Upheld - The Council failed to clearly state to Mr X what reasonable adjustments it agreed to make and how it would make them.	The Council agreed to apologise to Mr X. By way of service improvements, the Council will remind all staff to that we have a duty under the Equality Act to enquire into the adjustments that are being requested and if they are reasonable, to put them place. The Complaint team will also hold a log of all adjustments requested and the outcome of each request.
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Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team

Anti-social Behaviour	1791-1548-1026-3019	Ms X complained of noise nuisance and inappropriate use of the pathway to her front door by other residents.	Partially upheld – The Ombudsman found no fault in the Council’s handling of the resident’s reports of antisocial behaviour but there was service failure by the landlord in relation to its complaint handling.	The Council agreed to apologise and pay the resident with a small sum of money in compensation.
Anti-social Behaviour	2013-8925-3281-4288	Mr X complained about the Council’s decision to remove and destroy his two cars without contacting him.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council failed to double check the condition of one of Mr X’s cars, and that its contractor destroyed both Mr X’s cars before the Council notified him of their removal.	The Council apologise to Mr X for failing to check the condition of Vehicle Two before removing it and pay him a sum of money in compensation to replace the vehicles its contractor destroyed.
Anti-social Behaviour	5250-0806-6415-9163	Mr X complained that the Council failed to take appropriate action against residents from leaving their household waste outside his business premises.	Upheld – The Ombudsman found that the Council failed to take action to prevent reoccurrence of problematic fly-tipping.	The Council agreed to apologise Mr X. By way of service improvements, the Council agreed to send letters to residents informing them where household waste should be stored and when it would be collected.
Anti-social Behaviour	7168-5908-6037-0177	Mr X complained that the Council has failed to act on his reports of noise nuisance from a commercial premises.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman informed the complainant that it did not consider that an investigation will lead to a worthwhile outcome.	
Anti-social Behaviour	7428-4301-2322-6309	Mrs X complained about the delay in the Council’s response and action following her reports of fly-tipping on a piece of land at the entrance to her street.	Upheld - The Ombudsman found that the Council was at fault for the delay in progress the investigation and the lack of updates sent to Mrs X.	The Council agreed to apologise to Mrs X and pay her a small sum of money. By way of service improvement, all officers in ASBET would be reminded of the importance of keeping complainants updated on the progress of their investigations.

Green Spaces

Green Spaces- Cemeteries	1297-1795-7833-5574	Mrs X complained that the Council treated the grass around her late husband's headstone with weedkiller, destroying the grass.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman will not investigate Mrs X's complaint because further investigation is unlikely to lead to a different outcome as the Ombudsman cannot dictate to the Council how it maintains its cemeteries.
Green Spaces & Trees	0478-6601-0270-1577	Mr X lives in a property with land containing overgrown vegetation on the other side of his boundary fence. He complains the Council has not agreed it owns the adjacent land and has not accepted liability for damage to his fence caused by the vegetation.	Did not investigate - It would be reasonable for Mr X to make a claim to the Council's insurer, then to the courts if required, to pursue the required legal liability finding of property damage and the redress he seeks.
Green Spaces & Trees	2534-7498-9696-6785	Mr X complains the Council has only offered to partially settle his claim for damages to his fence/post caused by a tree it owns. Mr X says the full costs of his claim should be reimbursed.	Not investigated- It would be reasonable for Mr X to pursue his claim to the courts to pursue the extent of the financial remedy he seeks.
Green Spaces & Trees	4843-6683-8855-1813	Mr X complained about the Council's refusal to prune a large tree in the highway outside his home. He says the tree restricts daylight when it is in leaf and creates a mess on his land from leaves and debris.	Did not investigate - There is insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.
Green Spaces & Trees	5735-2221-7606-7526	Mr X complained about how the Council dealt with his application to carry out work to protected trees. The Council approved the application subject to a condition. Mr X says the condition is not feasible and the Council should allow him to fell the trees without complying with the condition.	Did not investigate -The complainant has appealed to the Planning Inspector.
Green Spaces & Trees	6032-6634-9665-3415	Mrs X says the Council has been negligent in not cutting back and removing a tree. She says the tree is causing her a nuisance and possible damage to her property.	Did not investigate - It is reasonable to expect Mrs X to go to court to decide the Council's liability for any damage to her property.

Green Spaces Team	5263-5941-4099-1840	Mr X complains about the Council failure to cut back three neighbouring 'oversized' trees since 2016. He says his insurance company has advised him they may pose a risk. Mr X says his health has been affected adversely as, he is worried, he and family may be at risk.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman is unlikely to find the Council has acted with fault.
Green Spaces & Trees	6316-0983-5759-3457	Miss X complained that the Council refused to replace the flooring at an outdoor gym after she fell over and hurt herself.	Did not investigate - An investigation would be unlikely to find fault with the Council's actions as the evidence shows the Council has explained to Miss X why it will not change the flooring and it has confirmed the outdoor gym meets all required standards.
Green Spaces & Trees	7787-2676-2132-8864	Mrs B complains the Council has refused to prune or crown an overgrown tree outside her home. Mrs B says branches and sap fall from the tree and the tree blocks light to her home. Mrs B is also concerned that during strong winds the tree may fall onto her property.	Did not investigate - There is not enough evidence of fault to justify an investigation.

Planning and Building Control

Planning and Development	3211-9861-2864-2317	Mrs X complains about how the Council dealt with her neighbour's retrospective planning application. Mrs X says the Council failed to properly assess the application and that the development has a significant impact on the area.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman is unlikely to find fault by the Council.
Planning and Development	6642-6525-6779-5255	Mr X complains the Council failed to consider his objections or follow its own policies when it granted planning permission for a neighbour's loft extension. He says as a result his privacy will be affected, and he will be overlooked.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman is unlikely to find fault by the Council.
Planning and Development	9771-0930-0092-3446	Mr X complains about the Council's decisions not to enforce against his neighbour's decking and fencing nor require them to apply for retrospective permission, how it investigated his concerns, or how it dealt with his complaint.	Did not investigate - There is not enough evidence of fault in the Council's enforcement decision-making which would have altered the outcome, including evidence of any discrimination, to warrant an investigation.
Planning Enforcement	6073-2970-0880-9164	Mr X complains about how the Council dealt with breaches of planning control. He says there have been delays and the Council failed to properly look into his concerns.	Did not investigate - The Ombudsman is unlikely to find fault by the Council as it is not possible to determine if Mr X has suffered any significant injustice.

7. COMPLIMENTS

Number of compliments recorded

Table 52 – number of compliments recorded

Service	2022/23	2023/24
Highways	0	3
Parking	5	9
Transport and Projects	1	1
Waste	24	7
Street Scene Enforcement Team	3	1
Green Spaces	7	6
Planning and Building Control	10	4
Total	50	31

Here's what some people have said about these services:

Highways

"I hope this finds you well and enjoying the summer. I just wanted to write on behalf of my family and our friends living near the river xxx to thank you so much for sorting out the recent repairs. They have made the route safe again for us all to enjoy this summer and we are very grateful. Attached are a couple of photos of my brother, xxx on his favourite walk again, thanks to you. As I mentioned before xxx is registered blind and the failed embankment and damaged sleepers had made the path by the xxx too dangerous for him to use for a while. He has been telling everybody how happy he is that it's safe to go that way again."

Parking

"I filled in a form to request another brown badge, having lost mine somehow when I had a courtesy car. It came the very next day, with a nice plastic slip case. I am so impressed with the speed and ease, well done Hillingdon."

"This isn't about the payment of my PCN, as I am not contesting it, but it relates to the conduct of the civil enforcement officer (xxxx), when it was given. I came back to my car to find him giving a ticket and in my frustration and confusion (I was at work and had thought my permit was valid for this area), I was unnecessarily rude to him. He was completely professional in return, actually giving me helpful advice, despite my rudeness. On leaving I felt very bad for having been rude to him and I wanted to send this apology and to thank him for his professional response. I hope my apology and my thank you for his response to me can be passed onto him. Can you please speak to the CEO and ensure this apology issued by the driver is given to the CEO. I would also like to thank the CEO for their conduct and professionalism."

Transport and Projects

"I called up earlier today with a sensitive matter that related to road safety and parking. Sensitive because it has caused a dispute between myself and a neighbour which I wanted to handle as sensitively as possible. I won't go into details as its not pertinent to the compliment. xxx was firstly very patient and courteous and helped me to understand the issue,

the potential solutions and also was able to direct me to another department. I had not realised how many aspects one could see the problem from, road safety, obstruction and parking and even the trees and environment! The redirect was thinking out of the box to solve the problem from a different angle which I really liked. I did have a lot of questions and it's a very bad habit of mine to interrupt which can really annoy people (I am working on that) but xxx was patient which I appreciated. These skills of dealing with the random and sometimes unpleasant public are not easy skills to teach or learn. Having worked with the public before I found it difficult at times. So I can acknowledge when it's done well. Thank you for your assistance xxx."

Waste

"Over the last year or so, I have had the pleasure of meeting xxx as I go about my daily walks. If I find any rubbish or broken glass that has been left on the kerb, I contact xxx and he always endeavours to collect the waste that very same day. xxx is a total professional in his duties, he not only collects the rubbish that has been fly tipped, he always calls or texts me to confirm it has been collected. If I mention to xxx about some waste that has just been dumped in a road, or glass that has deliberately been broken on a pavement, I can rest assured he will endeavour, to collect it that day. If for whatever reason he is unable to collect the rubbish or broken glass on the day I speak to him, he always lets me know that if he does not collect it, he will ensure he will the following day and he always does! I cannot praise xxx high enough for his dedication and professionalism to his duties."

"I would like to nominate xxx the local road sweeper and cleaner for xxx for any kind of award - recognition from the council. He works tirelessly and we are so lucky to have him."

"Just another thanks to you and the sharps collection teams. It used to be hard to find where to discard old sharps boxes. Pharmacies stopped taking them, our 'Diabeticare' dept at Hillingdon hospital wouldn't take them, didn't know where to turn. Then you started your service, and we had boxes with 1-2 years of sharps boxes able to be left outside and collected. So, thanks for the service, you should all be proud of it."

Street Scene Enforcement Team

Thank you for your response. I understand the challenges that Hillingdon faces currently with limited resources, and I appreciate efforts made going forward. It was indeed a pleasure meeting you previously during the media-related interventions with the Residents Association. I'm also aware that a follow-up meeting involving xxx was discussed. We have not had any more updates, could you please provide any information you may know regarding the status of that meeting? Regarding the matter concerning no. xxx, both my neighbour and I want to express our gratitude for the time and effort invested by all parties involved. I understand that my neighbour has also had multiple visits from a Pest Control company. I will collect and forward both property Pest Control reports to you in due course. Once again, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the dedication shown by both our Councillors and Hillingdon Council in addressing this issue."

Green Spaces

"I can't find any contact details for the Garden Maintenance team, but they have done a fantastic job at the rear of xxxx. The two gentlemen seem to be part of the same team and visit regularly to cut the grass, but yesterday did a sterling job on cutting back overgrowth of ivy,

borders etc and it's letting so much more light in. It looks very tidy and neat for mid-Summer. Please pass on my thanks to them and the managing service. It's really appreciated. They even locked the gate after them, we get intruders etc so security is vital."

We just received a call from a Ms xxx and she wanted to pass on her thanks and compliments to xxx for his helpfulness and politeness. She doesn't use email and therefore couldn't submit an online compliments form but wanted to ensure that you were made aware of the excellent service received.

Planning

"On behalf of everyone at xxx, I want to express our sincerest gratitude for your tremendous support in securing the recommendation for approval on our recent application at xxx. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you, and we are overjoyed to report that we are now two for two in receiving your unwavering backing - what an achievement! Your dedication and passion for your work have made a real difference in ensuring the smooth progress of our projects. Your attention to detail and commitment to excellence have been impressive, and we're truly grateful for your ability to grasp the intricacies of our proposals and translate them into favorable recommendations. Working with you has been a breeze. Your approachable and friendly nature has made us feel valued and appreciated throughout the planning process. Your guidance and support have been invaluable in overcoming any obstacles that came our way, and we genuinely appreciate your expertise and assistance. Your knowledge in the field is evident, but it's your down-to-earth attitude and willingness to engage with us that have truly made this collaboration a success. Your professionalism and friendly demeanor have made our interactions pleasant and productive. We firmly believe that your efforts have not only facilitated the success of our projects but have also contributed positively to the development of the community. Your contributions are truly commendable, and we cannot thank you enough for all that you have done and continue to do for us. Thank you both for all of your advice and support with the application. It is much appreciated. Look forward to working together through to the delivery of the project."