

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Quarterly Report

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

**For the period:
October - December 2021**

Introduction

This report from the Complaints and Feedback Team covers Q3 (October - December 2021) and brings together all compliments and complaints received by the Council.

Together for Children (TfC) provide a six-monthly report on complaints regarding Children's Services, which is presented to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee for detailed analysis. To ensure the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has a complete overview of complaints made about Council services, the report from TfC will be appended to the Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report in Q2 and Q4.

As TfC reports on a six-monthly basis it is not possible to include information in the quarterly graphs. However, where complaints are made to the Local Government Ombudsman regarding TfC, they are included in the relevant Scrutiny report.

Sunderland Care and Support's report regarding complaints received about services will be appended to the Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report on a quarterly basis.

The report also contains information about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter to the Council.

Part A of the report includes statistical data, which is presented in an updated, easy to view format.

Part B of the report provides information on the different Compliments and Complaints Procedures that are used by the Council to handle customer feedback.

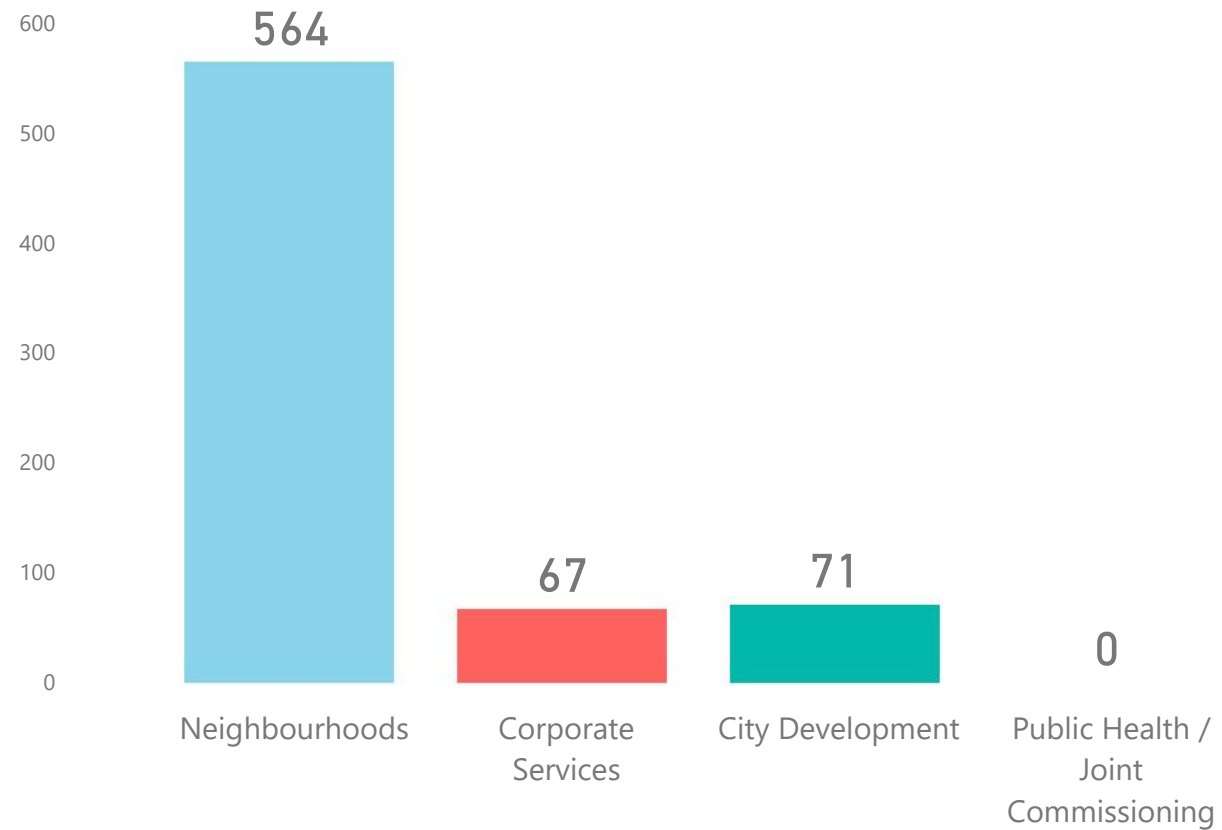
Part C of the report includes further information on each service area within separate appendices.

Complaints Overview

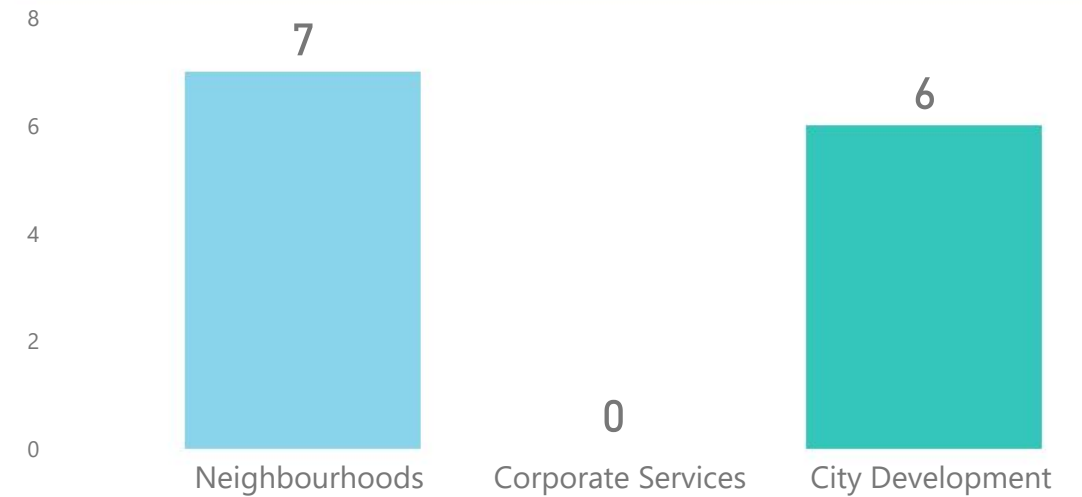
Ombudsman - 9



Corporate Stage One - 702

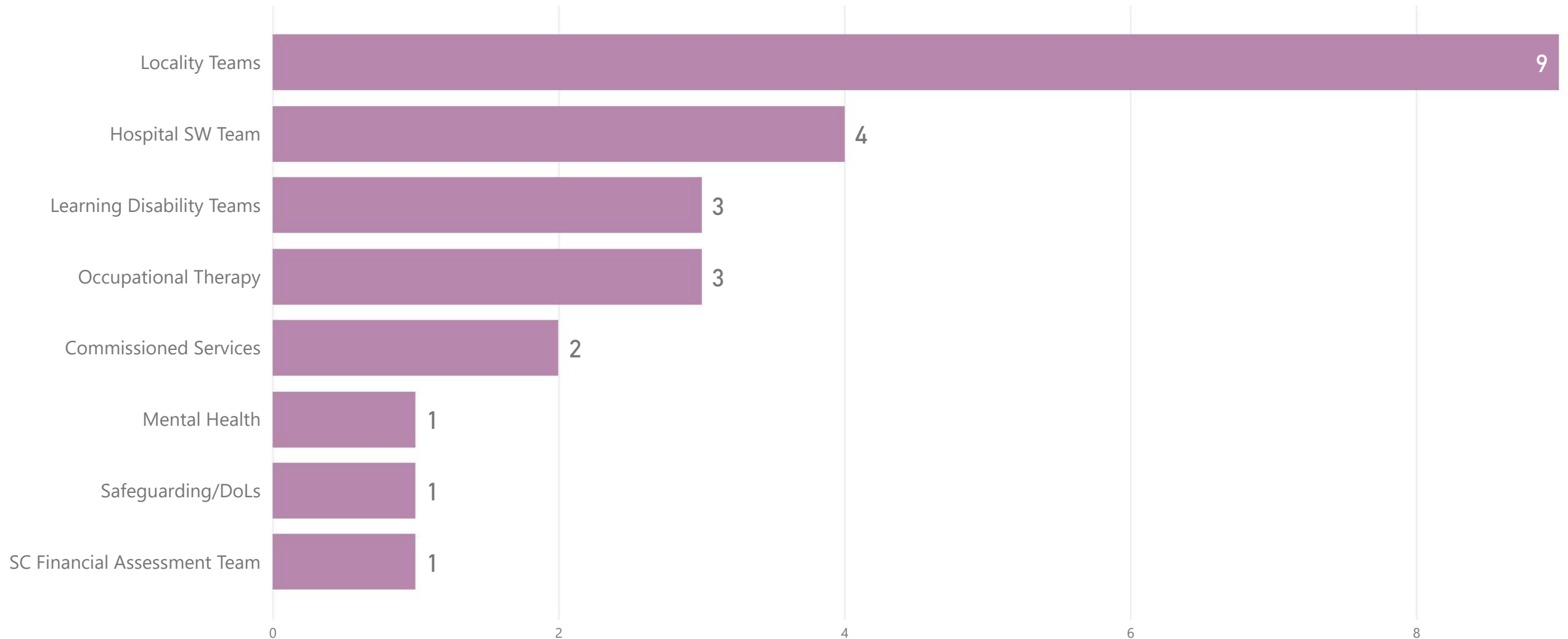


Corporate Stage Two - 13



Complaints Overview

Neighbourhoods - Adult Statutory Social Care - 24



Compliments

Compliments - 235

258

I would just like to compliment the approach and patients thank you for the (OT) who came out to see my dad today. My dad is suffering from Dementia and Alzheimer's and can very easy become agitated and scared when anyone strange come into the home. The OT was excellent with both my dad and mam and treat them with the upmost respect. The OT was able to make me feel very relaxed in using equipment which helped me build my confidence

I would just like to say thanks for all your time and effort. It is different all together now and all thanks to you. Never had we ever had such a quick response. Thanks Again

Customer would like to thank the council for putting new LED lighting in her street. It has really made a difference

I was pleased with the online service and the phone call. The young lady answered all my questions then went on to double check another question all very pleasant indeed.

Customer wants to compliment the pest operative that attended her property. He was reassuring and putting her mind at ease, it has been a traumatic time.

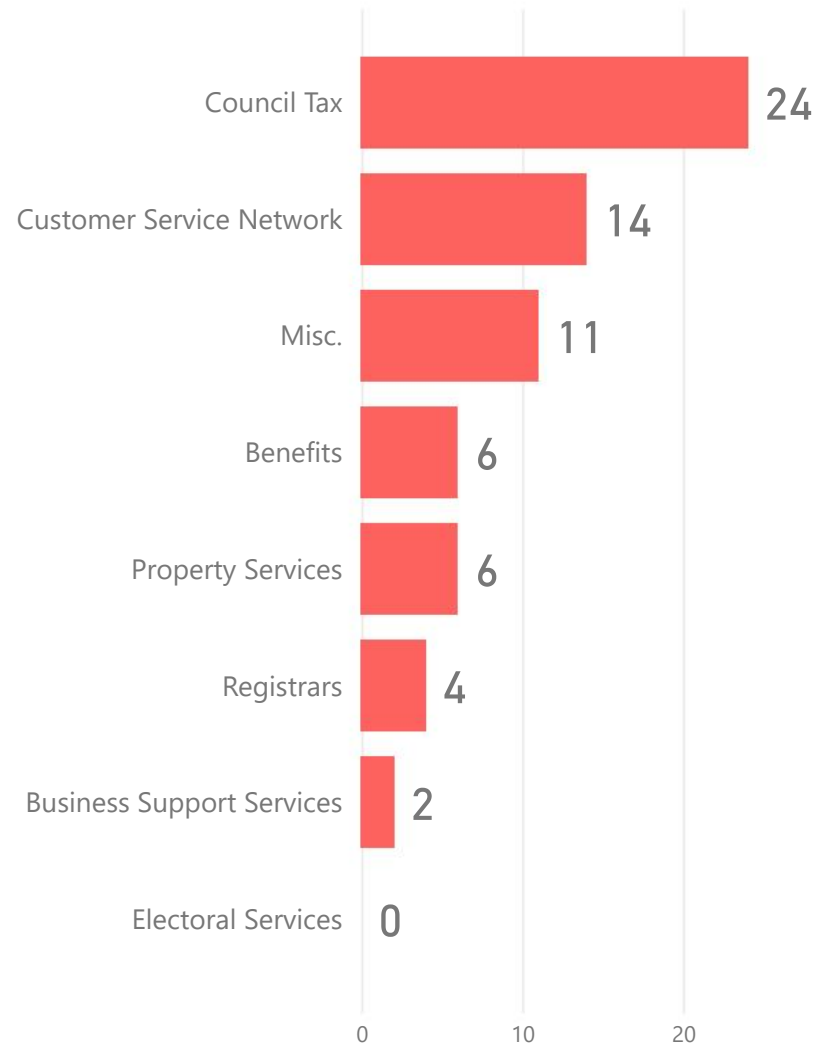
I would just like to compliment the staff at the Waste and Recycling Centre at Beach Street- we've been twice recently and the guys who work there are always so helpful and pleasant. I'd also like to say that the current process of booking a slot is great, it's so much better than just turning up and it being super busy.

Corporate Complaints Breakdown for Stage 1

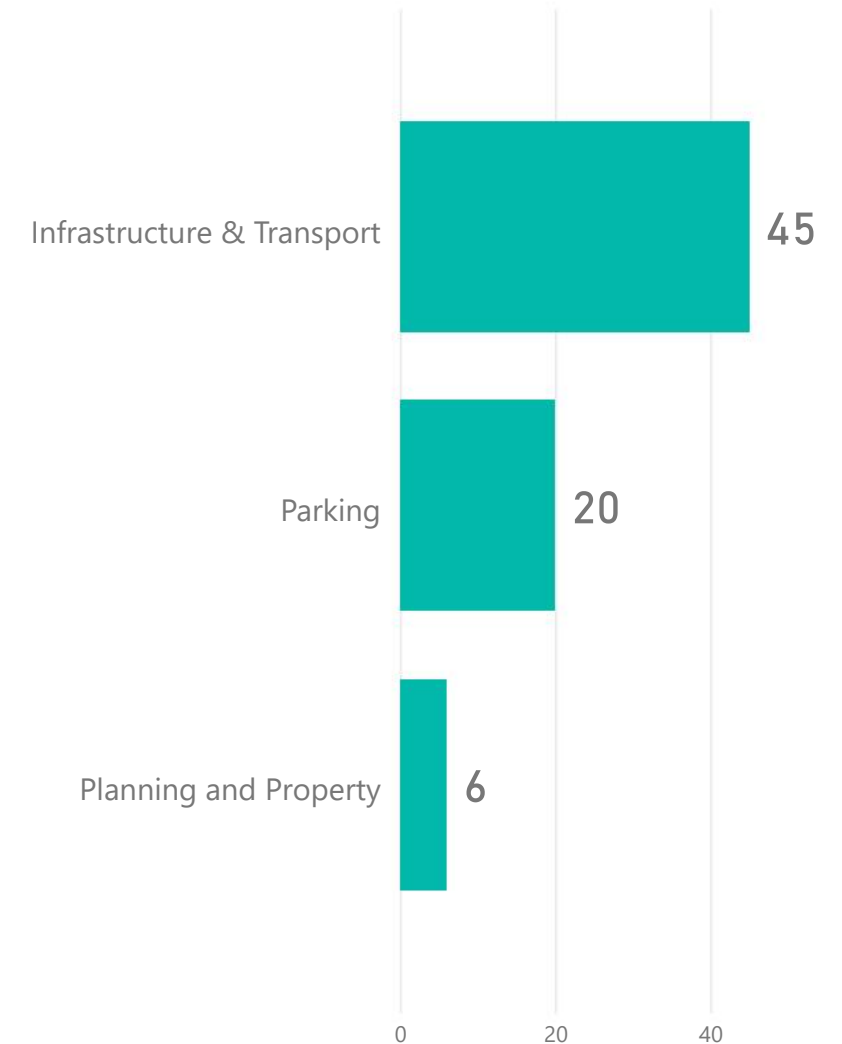
Neighbourhoods - 564



Corporate Services - 67



City Development - 71



PART B

Compliments

Compliments help to indicate what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow the Council to use this information to build those features into its services where possible and this helps it to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction. Compliments are logged centrally through the Complaints and Feedback Team.

Information on compliments is attached as **Appendix 1**

Complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local authorities. The Ombudsman will usually only consider a complaint after it has been through the Council's complaints procedure and the customer remains unhappy. Complaints from the Ombudsman are made against the Council, even if they refer to a service provided on behalf of the Council by another organisation, such as those about Children's Services.

Information about Ombudsman complaints is attached as **Appendix 2**

Corporate Complaints Procedure

How the procedure works:

There are two stages to the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure;

Stage One: These are dealt with by the relevant service area and should be completed within 25 working days. All responses advise the complainant that if they remain dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to the Complaints and Feedback Team for review.

Stage Two (Review): Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team. Complainants are advised that, should they remain dissatisfied with the response at stage two, they can ask the Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

Information about Corporate complaints is attached as **Appendix 3**.

Statutory Procedures

Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure

Legislation & Regulations

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 provide for a single complaints process for all health and local authority adult social care services in England.

How the procedure works:

There is one stage to the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure.

One Stage (Local Resolution by the Council): local resolution is about the Council trying to resolve complaints quickly and as close to the source as possible. Complaints should be acknowledged within three working days and arrangements made for an appropriate manager to consider the issues and provide a response to the complainant.

Most complaints can be dealt with and resolved satisfactorily at the local resolution stage, however, if this is not the case, any unresolved concerns can be referred to the Ombudsman.

Information about Adult Statutory complaints is attached as **Appendix 4**

Sample of complaints received

At the previous Scrutiny Overview Committee, a request was made that future reports contain examples of the types of complaints received by the Council. This would enable Members to gain a sense of the content of the complaints, similar to what is already provided regarding compliments.

A sample of complaints received is attached as **Appendix 5**

Sunderland Care and Support

Sunderland Care and Support is a Local Authority Trading Company, formed in December 2013, wholly owned by the Council. The company has a board of directors appointed by the Council (as the shareholder of the holding company).

Sunderland Care and Support offers care and support 24/7 to more than 6,000 vulnerable customers across a wide range of services including: Supported Living schemes for people with a Learning Disability, Mental Health needs; Autism or challenging behaviour; Day Services and Short Break care services; Intermediate Care and Reablement services; Sunderland Telecare; Community Equipment Service; and Home Improvement Agency.

How the procedure works:

Complaints are dealt with under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure. Some complaints may fall outside this procedure and these complaints are considered as a corporate complaint.

A report from Sunderland Care and Support regarding all complaints received and handled by the service in Q2 is attached as **Appendix 6**

Children's Services Statutory Complaints

Legislation & Regulations

In order to accompany The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, Statutory Guidance was introduced by the Department for Education in 2006 entitled '*Getting the Best from Complaints – Social Care Complaints and Representations for Children, Young People and Others*' to deal with complaints and representations made to Children's Services by children and young people.

On 1 April 2017 *Together for Children*, the company responsible for Children's Services in Sunderland, came into operation. The statutory duty to deliver services for children remains with the Council, which commissions the company to deliver services.

How the procedure works:

There are three stages to Together for Children's Complaints Procedure;

Stage One: An emphasis is placed on local problem solving. Complaints are acknowledged within three working days and responded to within 10 working days (with a possible extension to 20 working days in total).

Stage Two: If dissatisfied, a complainant can progress their complaint to stage two. An investigation is undertaken by an Investigating Officer who has not been involved with the case. An Independent Person must be appointed to oversee the investigation, and these are commissioned externally. Investigations should be completed within 25 working days, although an extension of up to 65 working days is allowed.

Stage Three: This is an Independent Review Panel, comprising of an independent chair and two independent panel members. A panel must take place within 30 working days of receiving the request from the complainant. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they can request a further investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Appendix 1: Compliments

Compliments indicate what people like best about the services they receive. The Council may also use this information to build those features into its services where possible and this helps it to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction.

	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22
Q1 - Apr-Jun	152	245	206
Q2 - Jul-Sep	176	210	235
Q3 - Oct-Dec	120	273	258
Q4 - Jan-Mar	115	181	
	563	909	699

The table below shows the service areas where compliments were received during Q3

	Q3
Adult Services	9
Anti-Social Behaviour	3
Council Tax	4
CSN	134
Environmental Health	9
Environmental Services	73
Events / Derwent Hill / Active Sunderland	6
Highways / Network Management	7
Housing Benefits	6
Misc.	2
Parking Services	1
Planning	1
Registrars & Bereavement	3
	258

A sample of compliments received in Q3

Adult Services

I would just like to compliment the approach and patience, thank you for the Occupational Therapist (OT) who came out to see my dad today. My dad is suffering from Dementia and Alzheimer's and can very easy become agitated and scared when anyone strange come into the home. The OT was excellent with both my dad and mam and treat them with the upmost respect. The OT was able to make me feel very relaxed in using equipment which helped me build my confidence

I just wanted to let you know that mum passed away peacefully this afternoon. Thank you both for all the help and support in dealing with mum's case, I am truly grateful. It certainly made it a lot easier to sort things out, living so far away and during a very difficult time

I would like to thank the social worker for the help and support he has given to the family; he has gone above and beyond and they wanted this documenting and passed over to him

Anti-Social Behaviour Team

I would just like to say thanks for all your time and effort. It is different all together now and all thanks to you. Never had we ever had such a quick response. Thanks Again

Thank you So Very Much for your work on this matter. Thank you. From the bottom of her Heart. And now is So Relieved. That it's all over and done with

City Wide Services

I would just like to compliment the staff at the Waste and Recycling Centre at Beach Street- we've been twice recently and the guys who work there are always so helpful and pleasant I really wanted to pass on my thanks for the great job they do. I'd also like to say that the current process of booking a slot is great, it's so much better than just turning up and it being super busy - some good things can come out of bad situations after all!

Council Tax

really pleased with the way the worker dealt with her query she says he dealt with every aspect in a professional way and was friendly and understanding she feels strongly he should be praised for her positive experience

thank you very much I really, really appreciate your help as I have had to ring loads of people to sort things out for mam and they have not been as helpful as you and you deserve a gold medal and tell your manager.

Customer Service Network

I was enquiring to make an appointment to collect household items. The gentleman I spoke to was very pleasant, polite and very informative. It was lovely to contact a person with an excellent telephone manner.

Couldn't ask for a better service today

I was pleased with the online service and the phone call. The young lady answered all my questions then went on to double check another question all very pleasant indeed.

Sunderland Council are very good to deal with compared with every other council I have ever been in touch with! Well done! The lady I spoke to was helpful, attentive and courteous.

I was pleasantly surprised at the speed my query was resolved. It was never like this before. Subsequently I am greatly encouraged.

Brilliant lady I spoke to. An absolute credit to the council. Thank you so much.

My request was dealt with quickly and professionally and in a very friendly manner.

Very good as I'm partially deaf the lady was very good

Service as always was excellent when I spoke to a member of your staff about a bulky waste collection

I received excellent service during my phone call and would like to thank the lady for her kind and courteous manner.

Derwent Hill

Just wanted to drop you a quick email to say a big thank you to all the staff who made the stay a great one. She's definitely made more happy memories with her new school friends and she couldn't stop talking about it when I went to pick her up.

Environmental Health

Customer wants to compliment the pest operative that attended her property. He was reassuring and putting her mind at ease, it has been a traumatic time.

Environmental Services

Thanks for quickly replacing/ fixing the chains on the swings at the play park at Hylton Castle. he is glad that it has been made after for children in the area to play

Compliment for having done an excellent job removing a dangerous tree today

Customer would like to say thank you very much to the team who cleared the leaves today she reported them yesterday and the team arrived early this morning and have done a very good job

wants to pass on his thanks to the crew that have cleared the lane of rubbish and fly tipping. They were very pleasant and they have done a great job

They came out to sweep the leaves around the area and they did a brilliant job! Would just like to say to keep up the good job as its brilliant

Environmental Services – Bereavement

I wanted to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to you and your team for the wonderful service that you provide to the bereaved families of Sunderland. This last 18 months has indeed been unprecedented and challenging for those of us involved with bereavement care. Throughout this time, you and your staff have provided a service that has been exceptional and unlike that of any other council in terms of going the extra mile, keeping us as Funeral Directors informed and making the space as safe and as inviting as possible. Every single member of the team has been exceptional throughout, going above and beyond, however I do feel that a particular mention needs to be made of the cleaner, whose warmth and compassion has been appreciated by all of us who use the crematorium. She is an asset to the team.

Environmental Services – Enforcement

Your service is more than I could ever expect from Sunderland Council and you are a credit to the community and the Council

Big 'thank you' for your out of hours support! It's really appreciated that you were able to help.'

Customer was extremely complimentary about Enforcement Officer who is a 'credit to the team' and a 'fantastic ambassador for the council'

Environmental Services – Refuse

Customer would like to say a big thank you to the bin crew as she has had a knee replacement and the bin crew came up and got the bin for her, she couldn't manage to do this herself today - she has now requested an assisted collection but would like to say thank you for what the bin crew did today she really appreciates it.

Customer would like to say thanks to the bin man that was round this morning, she was struggling to get waste in her bin and he helped her do this - customer would like to say thanks

Has lived at the property 35 years and nothing but praise for the bin crew and wished to pass this on

I would just like to say how nice and lovely our bin men are, they are always lovely and probably don't get enough credit for what they actually do, I would like to say thank you to them

Highways

I put in a notification for a street lamp in my back lane not working. I put in the request to fix early yesterday morning. I noticed this morning when I came out to go to work, it had been fixed. Fantastic quick service! Just want to say a big thank you for sorting so quickly

Customer would like to thank the council for putting new LED lighting in her street. It has really made a difference

Housing Benefits

Thanks very much for all your help and making me calmer

Thank you ever so much you have been wonderful and really put my mind at rest

Planning

Just a quick note to thank you for all your hard work on the planning application. You have made the entire process pain free, even with the various curveballs that came throughout the process! Very much appreciated!

Registrars & Bereavement Services

I really appreciate your support and kindness yesterday.

Would like to thank the Bereavement Services Team for all of their help re purchasing a plot. She said it has taken some time to sort it out because of other family issues, but she is so grateful to the team & that it has given her peace of mind. She said that all of the staff she dealt with were very helpful & pleasant

Welfare Benefits

Thanks for the fridge freezer delivered today - can't thank us enough for what she received and wanted us to know how much she appreciates it

Appendix 2: Complaints dealt with by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

There were 9 complaints concluded by the Ombudsman for Q3. The table below shows the number of complaints together with comparative data for the previous year.

	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2021-22</i>
Q1	6	4	4
Q2	11	1	6
Q3	6	7	9
Q4	15	7	
	38	19	19

The table below shows the number of complaints concluded in each quarter for each Directorate.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
City Development	2	-	-		2
Corporate Services	-	1	2		3
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	-	2	2		4
Neighbourhoods (other)	-	1	1		2
Together for Children	2	2	4		8
	4	6	9		19

The table below shows the total number of complaints received for each Directorate to date, how many of those complaints the Ombudsman chose to investigate, and from those investigations, how many were upheld.

	Total Complaints made to the Ombudsman	Number closed after initial enquiries	Number Investigated by Ombudsman	Outcome of Investigation	
				Number upheld	% upheld rate
City Development	2	2	-		88%
Corporate Services	3	3	-		
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	4	2	2	2	
Neighbourhoods (other)	2	2	-		
Together for Children	8	2	6	5	
Total	19	11	8	7	

Of the nine complaints received from the Ombudsman in Q3, four were investigated and information on these complaints are set out below. The Ombudsman's reference is included in brackets and the full report can be found on their website; www.lgo.org.uk

Detailed Investigations in Q3 (4)

Together for Children (20 011 849) - a complaint that the Council had failed to properly consider a report made about his children's welfare.

Outcome: *Not upheld - no maladministration. The Ombudsman found no fault with the council.*

Adult Services (20 012 735) - a complaint about the Council's actions in setting up a companion service to improve a relative's (who is deaf) social isolation.

Outcome: *Upheld – maladministration and injustice.* The Ombudsman agreed with the Council's own conclusions that it was at fault and agreed with the Council's proposals to put matters right.

Remedy Action: The Council agreed to pay compensation to the service user for her distress and to the complainant for her time and trouble in pursuing the complaint. The Council agreed it would provide a copy of its revised 'Accessible Information and Communication' policy and would also place the policy on its website. The Council would also consider providing frontline staff training in deaf awareness.

Together for Children (21 002 343) - a complaint that the Council had failed to follow Child Protection procedures, had wrongly shared information, and was biased toward the children's mother.

Outcome: *Upheld – maladministration and injustice.* The Council agreed it was at fault on parts of the complaint and apologised. However, the Ombudsman felt the apology was not a sufficient remedy.

Remedy Action: The Council agreed to make a payment to the complainant to acknowledge the distress its faults had caused.

Together for Children (21 008 759) - a complaint about a safeguarding investigation, court proceedings, and complaint handling.

Outcome: *Upheld – no further action.* The Ombudsman cannot investigate what happened at court which dealt with the child protection case.

Remedy Action: The Council agreed to make a payment to the complainant to acknowledge the delay in the complaint handling.

Appendix 3: Corporate Complaints

Stage One

The table below shows the number of Stage One corporate complaints together with comparative data for the previous two years.

	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2021-22</i>	<i>% change from same period last year</i>	<i>% responded to within timescale</i>
Q1	704	636	807	+27%	97%
Q2	770	804	790	-2%	94%
Q3	684	560	702	+25%	94%
Q4	502	689			
	2660	2689	2299		

The 702 complaints received this quarter are broken down into Directorates in the table below.

	City Development	Corporate Services	Neighbourhoods	Public Health/ Joint Commissioning	Total
Q1	94	67	646	0	807
Q2	89	60	641	0	790
Q3	71	67	564	0	702
Q4					
	254	194	1851	0	2299

Neighbourhoods

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Environmental Services	603	600	509		1712
Libraries	0	1	0		1
Access to Housing	9	6	4		19
Anti-social Behaviour	8	10	4		22
Welfare Rights	2	0	0		2
Public Protection	19	18	18		55
Events	1	4	23		28
Misc.	4	2	6		12
	646	641	564		1851

Environmental Services

Complaints in respect of Environmental Services make up 90% of the complaints made against the Neighbourhoods Directorate this quarter. The table below provides a breakdown of the service areas within Environmental Services.

Environmental Services	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Refuse: <i>non/late delivery of bins & caddies/missed bins</i>	477	468	428		1373
Bereavement: <i>maintenance of cemeteries/ crematorium</i>	8	10	6		24
Street Cleaning: <i>fly tipping/dog bins</i>	76	73	41		190
Trees, fixed play, trade waste: <i>grass cutting/ tree pruning</i>	17	23	20		60
Enforcement: <i>Fly tipping/littering/dog fouling</i>	14	10	8		32
Waste Management: <i>Beach Street Depot – staff attitude/permits</i>	11	16	6		33
	603	600	509		1712

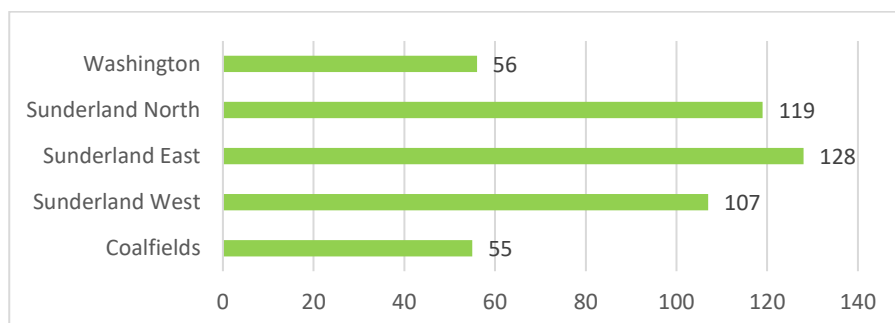
Refuse Complaints

Of the 509 complaints received for Environmental Services, 428 (84%) were about issues to do with refuse collection. This should be viewed in context. In any quarter the Council will service approximately 1.6 million containers, therefore this number of complaints represents only 0.03% of activity for this service area. The table below contains a breakdown of complaints about refuse.

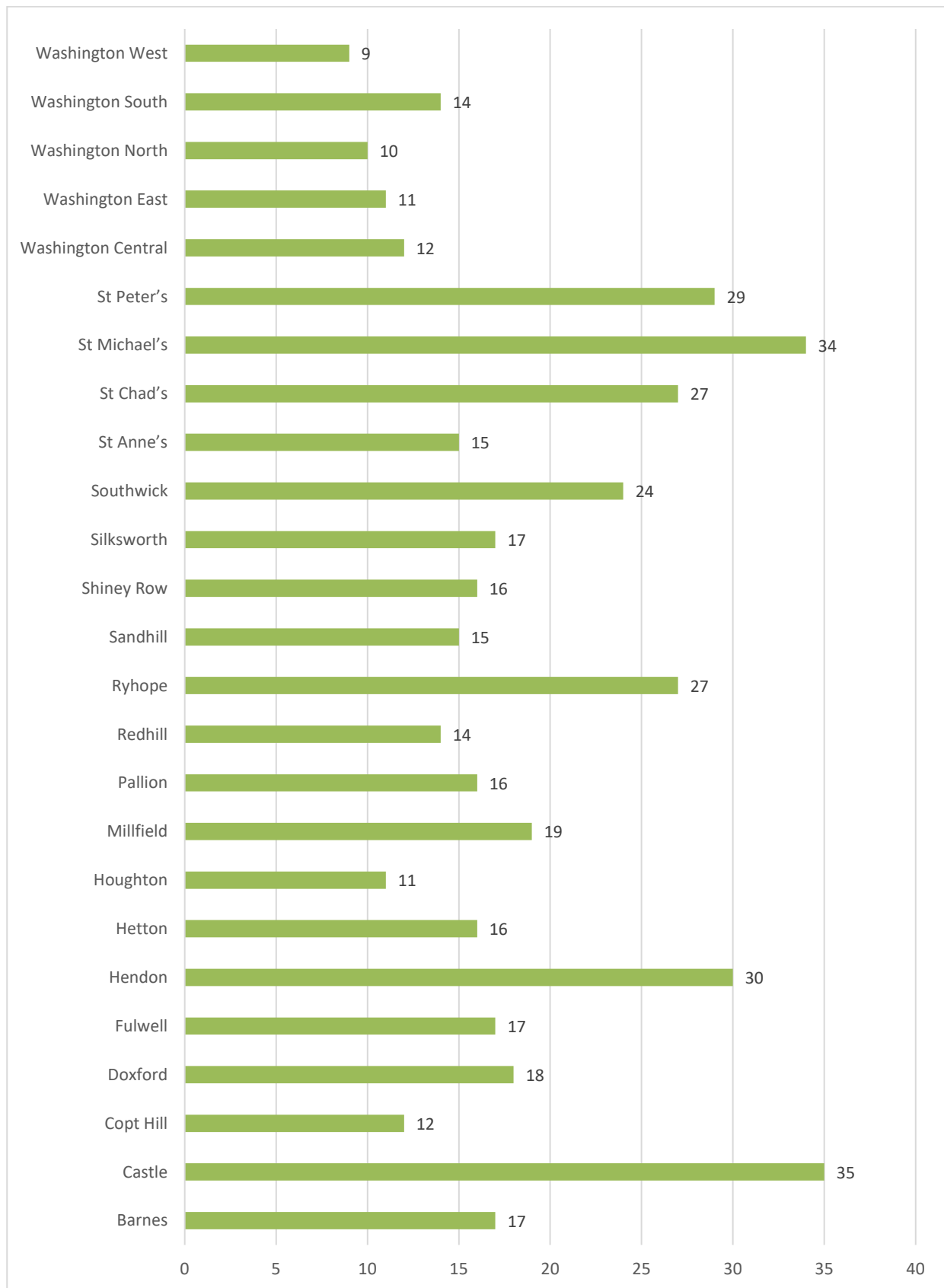
	<i>Number of Complaints for 2019/20</i>	<i>Number of Complaints for 2020/21</i>	Number of Complaints for 2021-22	% change from previous year
Q1	433	419	477	+14%
Q2	464	519	468	-10%
Q3	454	340	428	+26%
Q4	232	398		
	1583	1676	1373	

At a previous Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, a request was made by Members for information to be provided about Environmental Services complaints by Ward area and by Area Committee. Tables including this information are set out below.

Complaints about Environmental Services by Area Committee



Complaints about Environmental Services by Ward



City Development

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Planning & Property	11	9	6		26
Infrastructure & Transport	49	51	45		145
Parking	34	29	20		83
	94	89	71		254

Planning & Property

Complaints about this service area were regarding issues to do with general planning issues, failure to follow processes, enforcement action.

Infrastructure & Transport

Complaints about this service area were regarding road resurfacing, footway repairs, traffic calming/restrictions and potholes.

Parking

Complaints about this service area were regarding car parks, the actions of the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO), and lack of communication and Parking Permits.

Corporate Services

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Council Tax	9	11	24		44
Customer Service Network	25	10	14		49
Benefits	6	7	6		19
Property Services	4	3	6		13
Business Support Services	2	7	2		11
Registrars	5	7	4		16
Electoral Services	2	2	0		4
Misc.	14	13	11		38
	67	60	67		194

Council Tax

Complaints about this service area were regarding general issues about Council Tax, incorrect information, Business Rates, payment issues and wrong action taken. In this quarter, complaints regarding Council Tax make up 36% of all complaints made regarding Corporate Services and is a significant rise from previous quarters. Recovery action was ceased during the Covid emergency with the last reminders/summonses being sent out from the Council in early 2020. Recovery action recommenced in October 2021 and the spike in the number of complaints reflects the significantly increased level of activity in this area.

Customer Service Network

Complaints regarding the Customer Service Network (CSN) make up 21% of complaints made during this quarter. Again, the number of complaints should be viewed in context. The CSN handled 387,854 contacts this quarter; 14 complaints represent a dissatisfaction rate of 0.003%. Complaints about this service area were regarding staff attitude, lack of communication and general issues around contact.

Stage Two - Review

Where customers remain dissatisfied with the response to their stage one complaint, they can request a review be undertaken by the Complaints and Feedback Team. 11 Reviews have been concluded in this quarter.

The internal timescale for completing Reviews is 25 working days. More complex cases may require further time to complete with the aim of completion within 65 working days.

Stage 2 Reviews	<i>Number of Reviews 2019/20</i>	<i>Number of Reviews 2020/21</i>	Number of Reviews 2021/22	% responded to within 25-day timescale
Q1	5	3	5	60%
Q2	7	6	11	73%
Q3	8	5	13	62%
Q4	11	7		
	31	21	29	

The reviews were in respect of services within the following Directorates.

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	<i>Comparison Figures for previous full year 2020/21</i>
City Development	3	7	6		16	10
Corporate Services	0	0	0		0	7
Neighbourhoods	2	4	7		13	4
	5	11	13		29	21

Outcome of Stage 2 Reviews

Complaint Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	<i>Comparison Figures for previous full year 2020-21</i>
Upheld in full	1	-	2		3	2
Upheld in part	-	5	3		8	6
Not Upheld	2	6	8		16	13
Unsubstantiated	1	-	-		1	-
Not Eligible	1	-	-		1	-
Withdrawn	-	-	-		-	-
	5	11	13		29	21

Reviews upheld in this quarter (2)

Refuse – *a complaint about a failure to adhere to the assisted collection protocol, issues with staff attitude and a lack of communication regarding the complaint*

Outcome: The review was unable to determine the exact cause of the problem, other than a change in the staff / crews throughout the refuse service had taken place which may have impacted on the provision of the collection. Nevertheless, once an issue had been raised the matter should have been investigated thoroughly and a solution found to prevent the problem re-occurring. This did not happen, and the Council offered its sincere apologies.

Environmental Services (Trees) - *a complaint about a lack of communication regarding a service request and a lack of response to a stage 1 complaint*

Outcome: Given the circumstances of this complaint, the matter was dealt with by the Complaints & Feedback Team as a combined stage 1 (investigation) and stage 2 (review). The investigation/review determined that there had been a breakdown in communication between officers and the customer. There were some mitigating circumstances, for example resource issues within the team, officers on annual leave and some misunderstanding/confusion between officers that responses had been issued. The investigation/review concluded that the service provided had not been of an acceptable standard and the Council offered its sincere apologies. Staff have been reminded of their responsibilities in respect of acknowledging customer contact in a timely manner and responding to complaints within the Council's set timescales.

Appendix 4: Adult Social Care

The table below shows the number of complaints received in Q3 regarding adult social care services, together with comparative data for the previous two years.

	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	Number of complaints 2021-22	<i>% change from same period last year</i>	<i>% responded to within timescale</i>
Apr-Jun	24	10	18	+80%	56%
Jul-Sep	21	15	27	+80%	37%
Oct-Dec	20	32	24	-25%	50%
Jan-Mar	16	19			
Total	81	76	69		

The complaints were about the following issues.

Nature of Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	<i>Comparison Figures for previous full year 2020-21</i>
Actions of worker	1	4	4		9	17
Assessment Disagreement	2	8	2		12	4
Care Practice Issues	3	1	7		11	8
Communication	2	4	1		7	9
Delay	2	4	1		7	4
Equipment Issues	-	-			-	1
Finance	3	5	3		11	14
Lack of Choice	2	-	4		6	0
Quality Issues	3	1	2		6	8
Actions of residents	-	-			-	1
Lack of help/support	-	-			-	10
	18	27	24		69	76

The complaints were made regarding the following service areas.

Service Area Involved	Q1	Q2	Q3		Total	<i>Comparison Figures for previous full year 2020-21</i>
Mental Health Service	1	3	1		5	11
Hospital SW Team	3	4	4		11	5
Learning Disabilities Service	-	5	3		8	9
SW Locality Teams	9	9	9		27	21
Occupational Therapy Service	2	3	3		8	8
Financial Assessment Team	-	1	1		2	4
Commissioned Services	3	-	2		5	17
Financial Safeguarding Team	-	2	1		3	-
Safeguarding Adults/DoLs	-	-			-	1
	18	27	24		69	76

Outcome of complaints

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	<i>Comparison Figures for previous full year 2020-21</i>
Upheld in full	3	5	4		12	13
Upheld in part	3	10	3		16	12
Not Upheld	6	9	9		24	35
NE/WD/OTH**	5	2	4		11	14
Ongoing	1	1	4		6	2
**not eligible/withdrawn/other	18	27	24		69	76

In Q3 there were 4 complaints that were upheld in full and information about these is included below.

- A complaint regarding a delay in the provision of a wheelchair*

The investigation found that the time taken from the initial contact to the handover of the wheelchair had taken 26 weeks, some 8 weeks longer than the national standard. An explanation of why the delay had occurred was provided together with sincere apologies. A review of the arrangements regarding specialist seating provision is to be undertaken by the service area.
- The customer complained that the Council had failed to conduct a full and fair assessment of an application for a Blue Badge and a Concessionary Travel Pass*

Regarding the blue badge the investigation concluded that the initial assessment had failed to understand the complexities of the situation. Following a further detailed assessment the service was satisfied that the criteria for the award of a Blue Badge had been met. Regarding the Concessionary Travel Pass (CTP), the initial application indicated that not all of the criteria were met. The application was passed to the Occupational Therapy Service, where it was subsequently determined that the service user was eligible to receive the award and the CTP was subsequently issued.

The service area is continually working with therapists to help them understand the difficulties faced by people with hidden disabilities when travelling.
- A complaint about the actions of a worker who had not turned up for appointments and had not kept the customer informed*

The investigation found that visits had been either rearranged or not attended on more than one occasion, which understandably had led to a breakdown in trust. Apologies were offered and a new worker was allocated to the case. Measures were also taken by the manager to address the issues identified to prevent any reoccurrence.
- A complaint regarding a lack of carers to support a care package*

Apologies and an explanation were provided to the customer regarding the difficulties at the time in sourcing a care package due to ongoing impact of Covid pandemic. The service worked with commissioning colleagues and care agencies through challenging times, to help support the customer in sourcing a care package.

Appendix 5: Complaints

A sample of stage one complaints received in Q3 is included below. Outcomes for the complaints varied from not upheld, partially upheld and upheld.

City Wide Services

Customer was at Beach Street tip - didn't have the permit and stated the staff there were not patient or understanding.

There is a cockerel in one of the allotments - this is the second lot of cockerels in 11 months now and there has been a cockerel crowing at all hours of the morning.

Council Tax

The service offered for paying council tax online has not been working for a number of months. I have used your automated telephone pay service, but no receipt is given. I have requested a receipt by email but again non has been forthcoming. Why has the service been down for months and why do you not respond to emails informing you of such?

Billing section in Council Tax have not responded to telephone log that was made 3 weeks ago.

I am now being charged a premium for a property which has been unfurnished for 2 to 5 years. This seems very unfair since it is only 5 months since I purchased it and I am being penalised for someone else's neglect of the property.

Customer Service Network

My son's disability blue badge expired. I applied for a renewal and have never even had a response.

Customer had a bulky waste collection and claimed that she contacted the council to change one of the items from chest of drawers to a sofa. The items had not been changed on the list and the crew did not take the sofa.

I rang today for help with gas and electric, the operatives first question was that I should be budgeting my finances, without even taking into my account my circumstances, I suffer from mental health problems and I feel that she could have dealt with this call a little better

My ESA got stopped, as on New Year's Day I became pension age. I rang the council to get a food voucher and was not happy with the woman who spoke to me, she said I have had 7 already and made me feel I was a burden now.

Environmental Health

Customer rang to make an appointment for rats at a property and the appointment was booked for 1 October. Customer has been informed that rat appointments are free from today so would like to know why if the appointment was booked for today why they had to pay.

Customer had booked appointment, but the pest officer had not attended as there was a system error and the request had not gone through, customer unhappy as she waited in all afternoon

I requested for the services of pest control(cockroaches) and paid £123 but your official only attended once to drop traps which did nothing. The condition has grown worse since then. We had to book for another appointment tonight after running out of patience. This type of behaviour is really unacceptable, imagine what we have to endure after paying such ridiculous amounts. It is not fair.

Environmental Services – Bereavement Services

Customer has reported that when she visited Ryhope Cemetery, a gravestone was lying flat, she believes that the staff are responsible. The headstone is old but has never shown any signs that it was leaning.

Complaint about the rules at Bishopwearmouth Cemetery, when the customer first arranged a headstone approximately 15 years ago, they were only allowed to put up a headstone, above a certain height and no surrounding stones were allowed due to access for maintenance of the graveyard - since then all sorts of heights of headstones and surround have been allowed

Environmental Services – Cleansing and Ground Maintenance

The perimeter of Sunningdale School has not been maintained and left to run wild, the trees have overgrown and covered the streetlamps, people are dumping bags household rubbish into the trees

The grass cutters have cut the grass in Easington Lane Cemetery and the big machines have smashed the edging on her father's grave.

Mowbray Park was closed all day today. This is a public park, and you should not have locked all the gates and kept the public from using it. This is not the first time it has happened. The public have a right to access this park otherwise why do we pay council tax?

Appalled at the state of the road outside of Hill View Infant School - the road had not been gritted this morning - we have had snow overnight and the road is extremely icy

Environmental Services – Refuse

I am assisted collections, and my bin was nearly missed today I had to go out and speak to the bin men, I need the service and I'm not being provided with it.

I paid for bulk waste removal of cardboard boxes for today and they are still there, I have been in all day and nothing has come past window from council. They are now soaking wet and an eyesore for other residents

Blue bin not delivered has already been chased up once and escalation form sent, and a note added to say will be delivered but still no bin

Crew keep putting my caddy into the back of the wagon,

You never delivered my new green bin after a second phone call to you about it.

Due to the missed bins in the city centre she believe that that's the reason the students across the way from her are dumping waste in the bin making her get commercial waste notices - not her fault as the students are dumping the rubbish in the bin as there's are always overfull

Non taking of side bags on collection, customer is not happy that side bags aren't take as she says the normally do and have never ran into an issue before

Customers green bin was stolen - she says she cannot afford to order a new one - police advised she could ring with a crime number, however, charge still applies.

Customer has to ring in every collection as the crew are not emptying her brown bin. She thinks she might be the only one in the street to have signed up to the service.

Environmental Services – Trees / Fixed Play, Trade Waste and Commercial

The customer logged multiple jobs over the last couple of years and was informed that the work was going to happen, but nothing has happened, and the customer has chased it up a couple of times since.

Putting a Christmas tree up at 5.30am and using power tools to do it - you could have waited till at least 7am, it's not an emergency so it could have been put up later - there is no need to put a tree up at that time of the morning

Events and Active Sunderland

The booking system for Roker lights this year has been handled poorly. I don't understand the restrictions due to covid? I can go in an arena full of thousands of people but can't walk around a park outside?

Holding an extremely loud fireworks display, which was not low noise as advertised. Not being informed previously about the event. As a result my dogs were both so distressed one of them vomited. I'm sure I'm not the only resident who feels this way.

Highways

Customer paid for dropped curb and has contacted on numerous occasions to chase up and was told would be done after the summer holidays then 2 weeks behind, then six weeks behind then further delays and rang today and told would not start until October.

The paving stones around the city centre are loose and uneven making them dangerous.

Following resurfacing of the street last week, customer has noticed tarmac spotting on her front window, UPVC frames and front door. This has dried hard, and customer is unable to remove it herself.

Licensing

Herrington Country Park open air event on Saturday and Sunday night loud music up until 11.00pm. Disgrace to have loud music on a Sunday night when children have to get up for school in the morning.

Parking Services

Neighbourhood parking permit scheme, I was led to believe that it was for local residents to park their vehicles? Not for business premises or for work. On a regular basis I find myself blocked in or unable to park safely at all at my home address. Also throughout the day cars and taxis coming and going all day parking badly and sometimes dangerously. Again I thought that visitors passes were for occasional visitors and not a 7days a week parking, that lasts sometimes for weeks?

Parking on pavements and double yellow lines and not a thing is being done about it

received a parking ticket in a parking permitted area but the area did not have the information on the street to say he could not park there

Planning

I submitted this email to council officers almost 3 months ago. The email contains my request for responses to specific queries. To date I have received no response whatsoever from any officer within the council. I wish to submit a complaint about the lack of response.

You have not sent out my planning application form rang your planning department twice in the past 4 weeks

Registrars and Bereavement

paid for copy certificates was informed the certificates would be sent out on same day afternoon post first class. not very happy that the certificates are not tracked and feels the service need to look into this has when calling royal mail there are unable to do anything with item not being tracked

Appendix 6: Sunderland Care and Support Care

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT LIMITED (SCAS)

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS Q3 2021-22 (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021) UPDATE

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Sunderland City Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on recent performance activity in relation to SCAS compliments and complaints.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Council's Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are requested to note the contents of the report.

3 OUR APPROACH

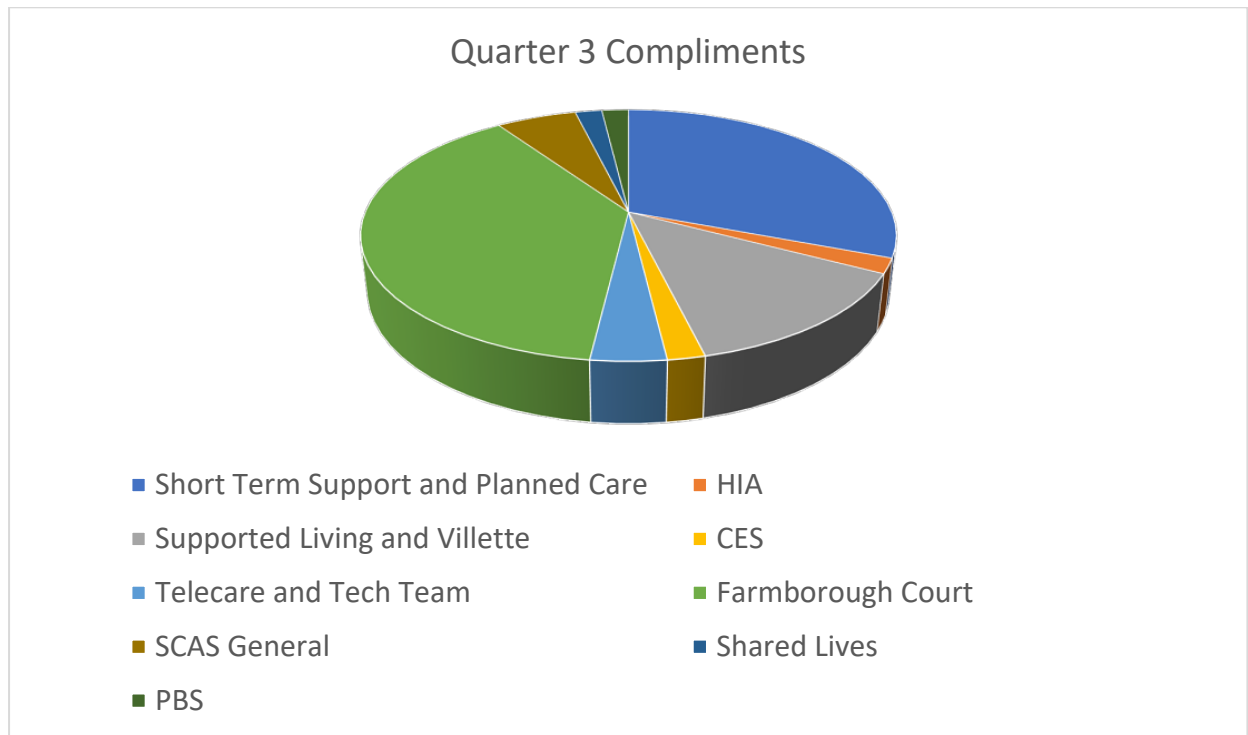
- 3.1 Sunderland Care and Support Limited takes pride in the high-quality services we provide our customers.
- 3.2 We pro-actively welcome both positive and negative feedback from all our customers and view this as our opportunity to learn and to improve; and recognise that such feedback helps us to corroborate the standard of service our customers receive.

4 COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 A total of **fifty-two compliments** were received during the period **1st October – 31st December 2021**, representing:
 - around **33%** (13) **more** than were recorded in the previous quarter (39)
 - around **27%** (19) **fewer** than were recorded over the same period, the previous year (71)
 - around **33%** (25.5) **fewer** than the median average of 77.5 per quarter noted for the year April 2020-March 2021
 - and 49% (50) **fewer** than the median average of 102 per quarter noted for the previous year, April 2019-March 2020.

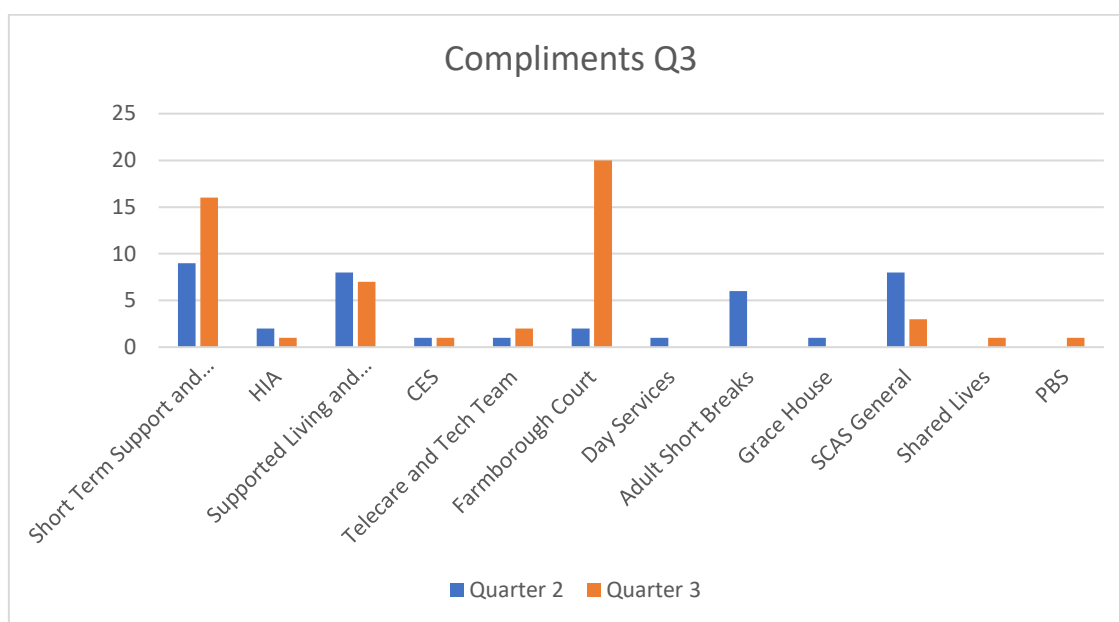
Quarter 3 Compliments Breakdown - Distribution

Compliments received during the quarter were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Short Term Support and Planned Care:** 16 (31%) – **7 more** than Quarter 2
- **Home Improvement Agency:** 1 (2%) – **1 fewer** than Q2
- **Supported Living and Registered Accommodation:** 7 (13%) – **1 fewer** than Quarter 2
- **Community Equipment Service:** 1 (2%) – **equal** to Quarter 2
- **Telecare:** 2 (4%) – **1 more** than Quarter 2
- **Farmborough Court:** 20 (38%) – **18 more** than Quarter 2
- **Day Services:** 0 – **1 fewer** than Quarter 2
- **Adult Short break Services:** 0 – **6 fewer** than Quarter 2
- **Childrens Short Break Services:** 0 – **1 fewer** than Quarter 2
- **PBS:** 1 (2%) – **1 more** than Quarter 2
- **Shared Lives:** 1 (2%) – **1 more** than Quarter 2
- **SCAS General:** 3 (6%) – **5 fewer** than Quarter 2

4.2 Quarter 2 Compliments Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



It is of note that during the quarter, 50% of Service Areas received more or the same number of compliments as received during the previous quarter, with remaining areas seeing reductions in the number of compliments received.

4.3 Quarter 2 Compliments Breakdown - Synopsis

Praise during the quarter was extensive, highlights of which included:

- **Short Term Support** – recognition for the 'wonderful and professional' work of the team and the professionalism of staff in finding the customer in need of urgent medical treatment.
- **Home Improvement Agency** - Compliment received from a customer in recognition of the Service provided and the 'very well mannered' staff installing her stair lift.
- **Supported Living** – recognition from Sunderland College of the excellent medication processes in place and the 'amazing' work of team members, and praise from NTW colleagues for the excellent support provided by the team for their customer, his family, and professionals.
- **CES** – Recognition of the 'fantastic team' at CES and acknowledgement of the quality of the equipment delivered.
- **Telecare** – Recognition of the speed and efficiency of the service and the 'super-helpful' demonstration of the technology.
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court** – Compliment received from a Farmborough Court customer in appreciation of the support provided, highlighting that 'staff went beyond their duty' and from a customer of Farmborough Court and their family, highlighting that the customer had 'loved her stay and everyone had been so kind and patient'.
- **PBS** – recognition of the 'fantastic example' of what PBS had recently achieved for a SCAS customer.

- **SCAS** – recognition from Chairs of the SCAS Board and the SCAS Supported Living Board for the ‘outstanding service’ provided and the ‘tireless work’ of staff members through uncertain times.

Customer Satisfaction Consultations

There were no responses from customers and their families via proactive customer satisfaction consultations noted during the reporting period.

Feedback received from the service-wide customer consultation shared during quarter 3 is currently being analysed and a report prepared.

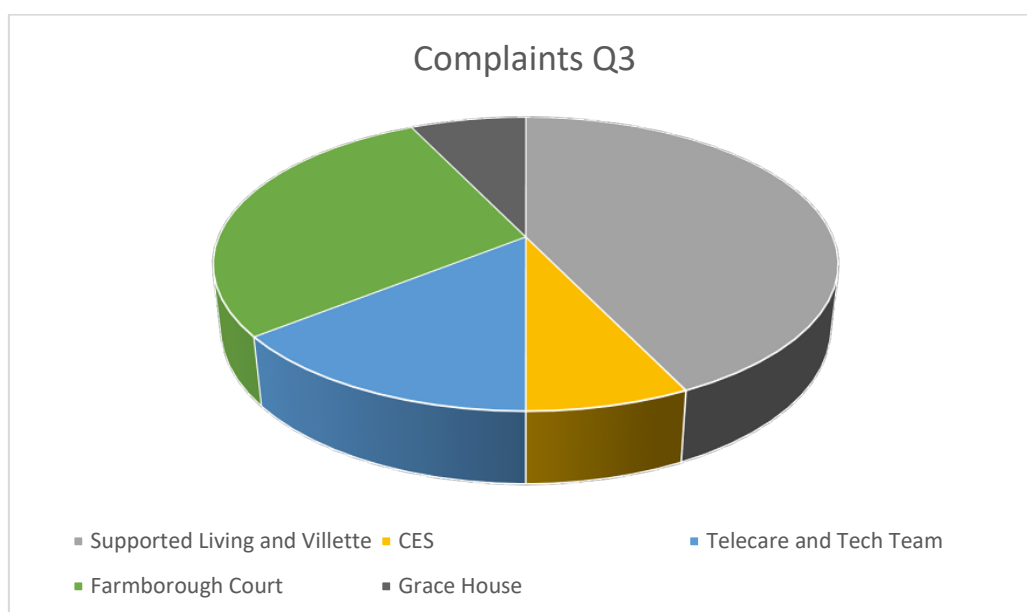
5 COMPLAINTS

5.1 A total of **fourteen complaints** were received by the Company from **1st October – 31st December 2021**, representing:

- around **39%** (9) **fewer** than were recorded in the previous quarter (23)
- **7%** (1) **fewer** than those recorded over the same period, the previous year (15)
- Almost **equal** to the median average of 14.5 per quarter noted over the year, April 20-March 21
- but around **36%** (25) **lower** than the median average of 39 per quarter noted for the previous year, April 2019-March 2020

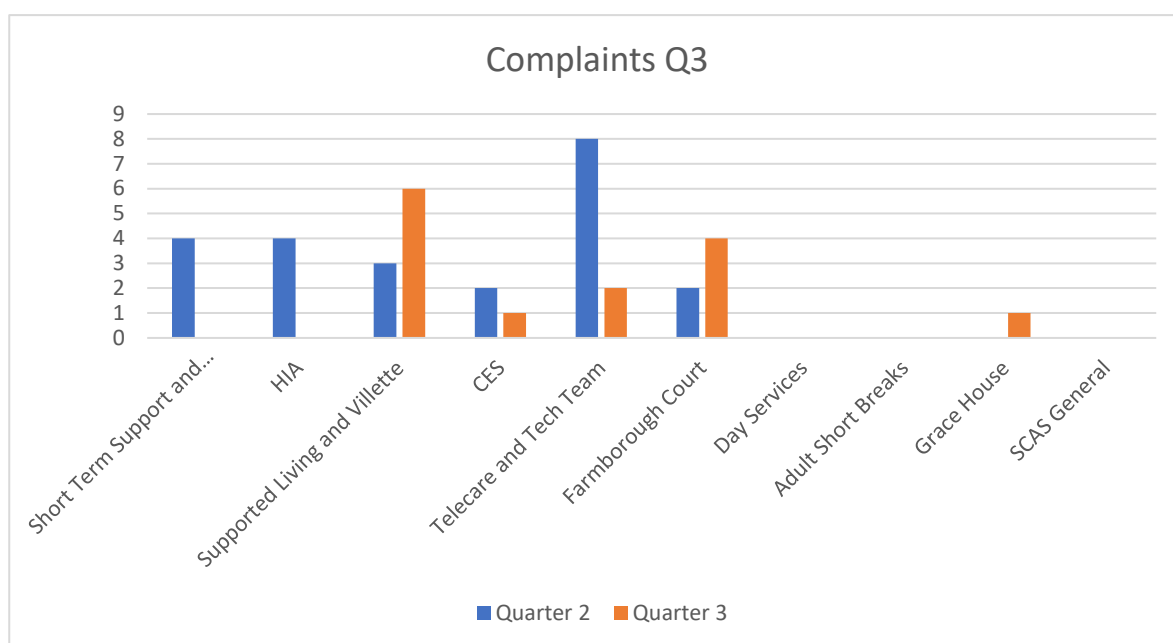
5.2 Quarter 2 Complaints Breakdown – Distribution

Complaints received during the quarter were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Reablement & Planned Care: 0 (0%) – four fewer** than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency: 0 (0%) – two fewer** than the previous quarter
- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation: 6 (43%) – 3 more** than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service: 1 (7%) – 1 fewer** than the previous quarter
- **Telecare: 2 (14%) – two fewer** than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home (Farmborough): 4 (29%) – two more** than the previous quarter
- **Day Services: Zero (0%) – no change** from the previous quarter
- **Short Break Services: Zero (0%) – no change** from the previous quarter
- **Children's: 1 (7%) – one more** than the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General: Zero (0%) - no change** from the previous quarter

5.3 Quarter 3 Complaints Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



It is of significance that **60%** of Service Areas either received **zero complaints** or **fewer complaints** than were noted over the previous quarter, as follows:

- **Supported Living, Farmborough Court, and Grace House** noted an **increase** in complaints
- **CES and Telecare** noted a **reduction** in complaints
- **Short Term Support, HIA, Day Services and Adult Short Breaks** saw **zero** complaints during the period
- and **no complaints** were noted for **SCAS** generally.

5.4 Quarter 2 Complaints Breakdown - Synopsis

Complaints for the quarter were categorised as follows:

- x4 (29%) related to Customer Service / Service Delivery Standards
- x2 (14%) related to Service Provision / Customer Expectations
- x1 (7%) related to the actions of an external contractor
- x3 (21%) related to restrictions in place due to Covid-19
- x2 (14%) related to customer behaviour and staff intervention
- x2 (14%) were miscellaneous concerns

5.5 Quarter 2 Complaints Breakdown - Resolution

In all instances where a complaint had been raised during the reporting period, the complaint was acknowledged either verbally or in writing, an appropriate colleague tasked to undertake a comprehensive fact-finding exercise and a response provided to the complainant when resolved.

And where a complaint was upheld in full or in-part, the response provided included an overview of any remedial actions to be implemented.

Of all complaints received during the period, **8 (57%)** of complaints received during the reporting period were **not upheld**, with **4 (29%)** being **partially upheld** and **2 (14%)** being **fully upheld**. All complaints were resolved during the reporting period.

There were four complaints (around 29% of all complaints) requiring (Step 2) Formal resolution, no complaints requiring (Step 3) External resolution and no non-SCAS complaints noted during the period.

5.6 Previous Quarters - Complaints Breakdown - Resolution

There were no complaints noted as remaining open to SCAS 'Tell Us What You Think' procedures from previous quarters.

6 CORPORATE ASSURANCE

- 6.1 SCAS is committed to be a learning organisation, where improvement is led through open feedback and recognising how we can do things better.
- 6.2 Despite the continuing impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic and within extremely challenging circumstances, we have continued to operate within the full scope of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy to provide assurance that this is achieved.

6.3 Utilising our monthly Complaint Forums, chaired by our Deputy Chief Operating Officer, and attended by Senior colleagues, all complaints are considered in detail, to identify any common themes and improvement opportunities, and reflect upon and share lessons learnt across the company.

6.4 Some recent examples of themes considered at Forum have included:

- Opening lines of communication to ensure contractors have systems in place to provide services in line with the expectations of both SCAS and our customers.
- Improving communication with family members and professionals to assist customers and their families to fully understand the service that is on offer.
- Listening and learning from customer feedback and reviewing policies and procedures to meet customer expectations while adhering to guidance and legislation.
- Listening and learning from external feedback to nurture and maintain positive relationships with customers local communities, while placing the customers rights and preferences at the forefront of our care provision.