

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Quarterly Report

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

**For the period:
April – June 2020**

Introduction

This report from the Complaints and Feedback Team covers Q1 (April – June 2020).

This report 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 its service will be appended to this Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report on a quarterly basis.

The report also contains information on 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.

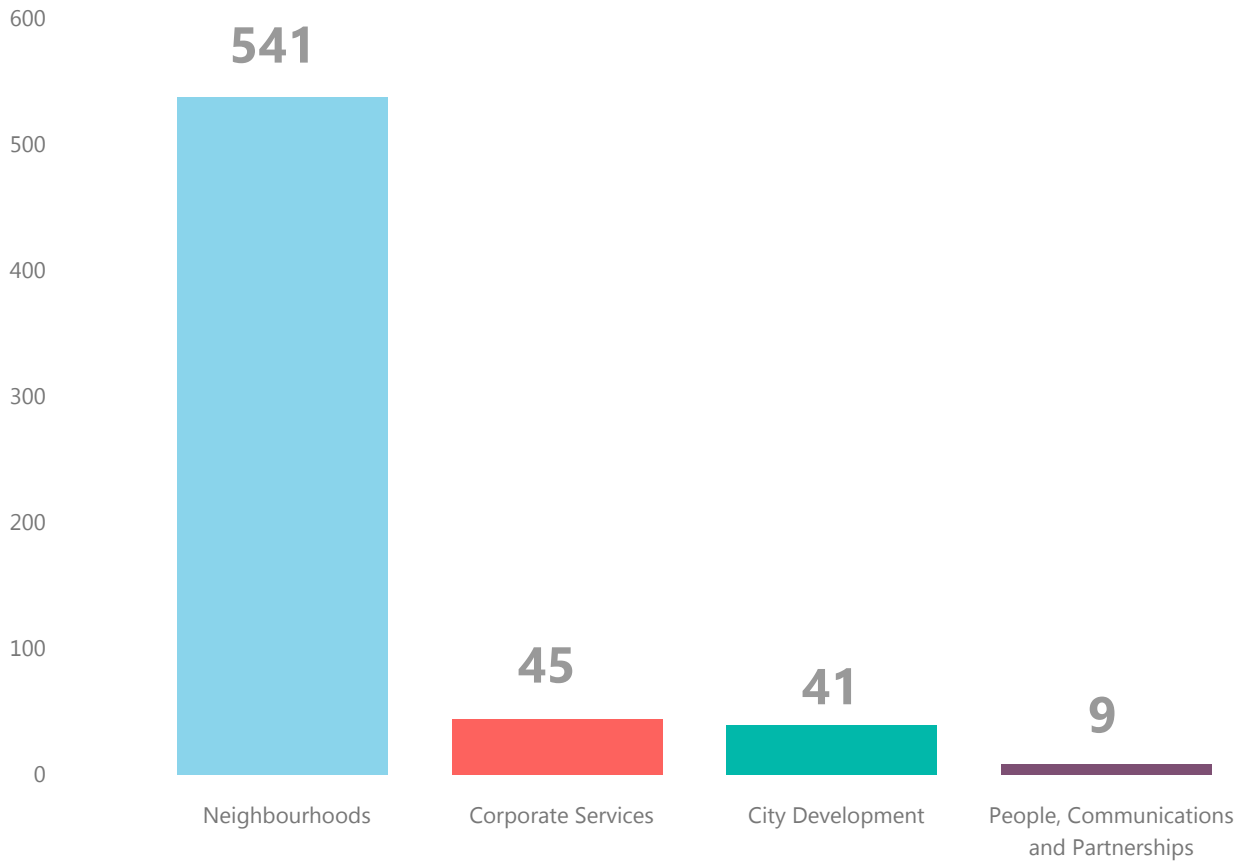
Part B of the report provides information on the different Compliments and Complaints Procedures that are used by the council to handle customer feedback.

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

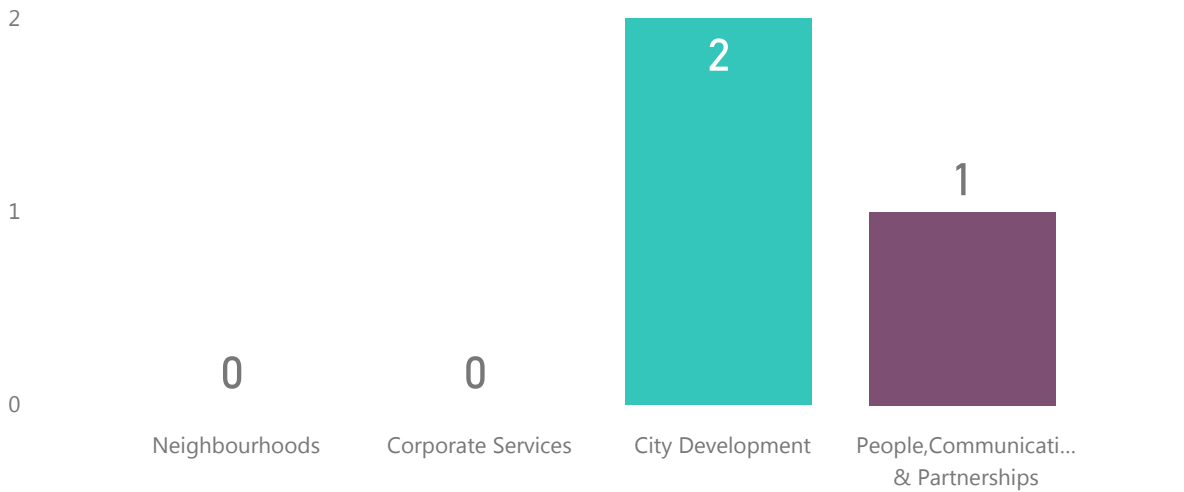
Complaints Overview



Corporate Stage One

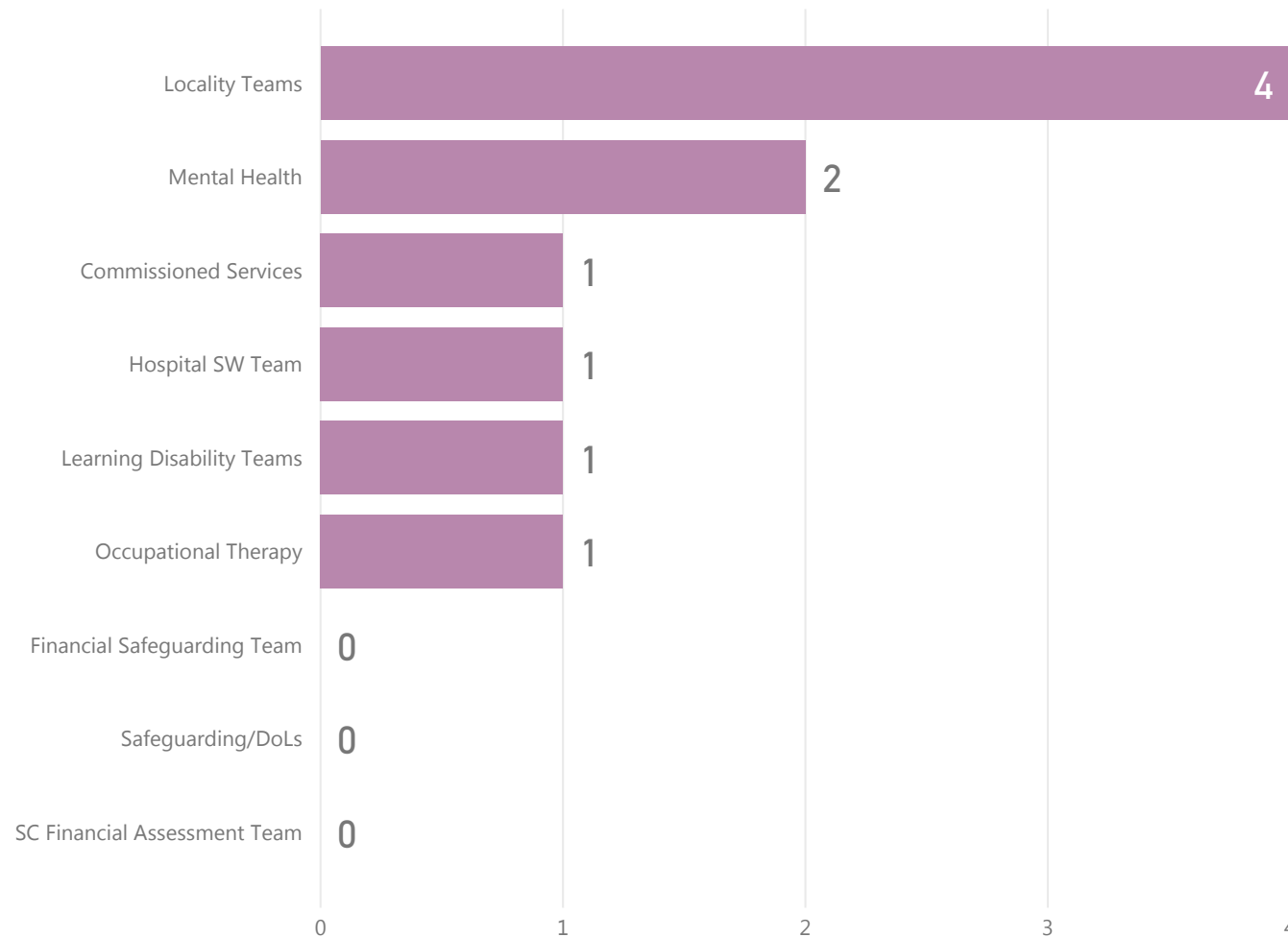


Corporate Stage Two

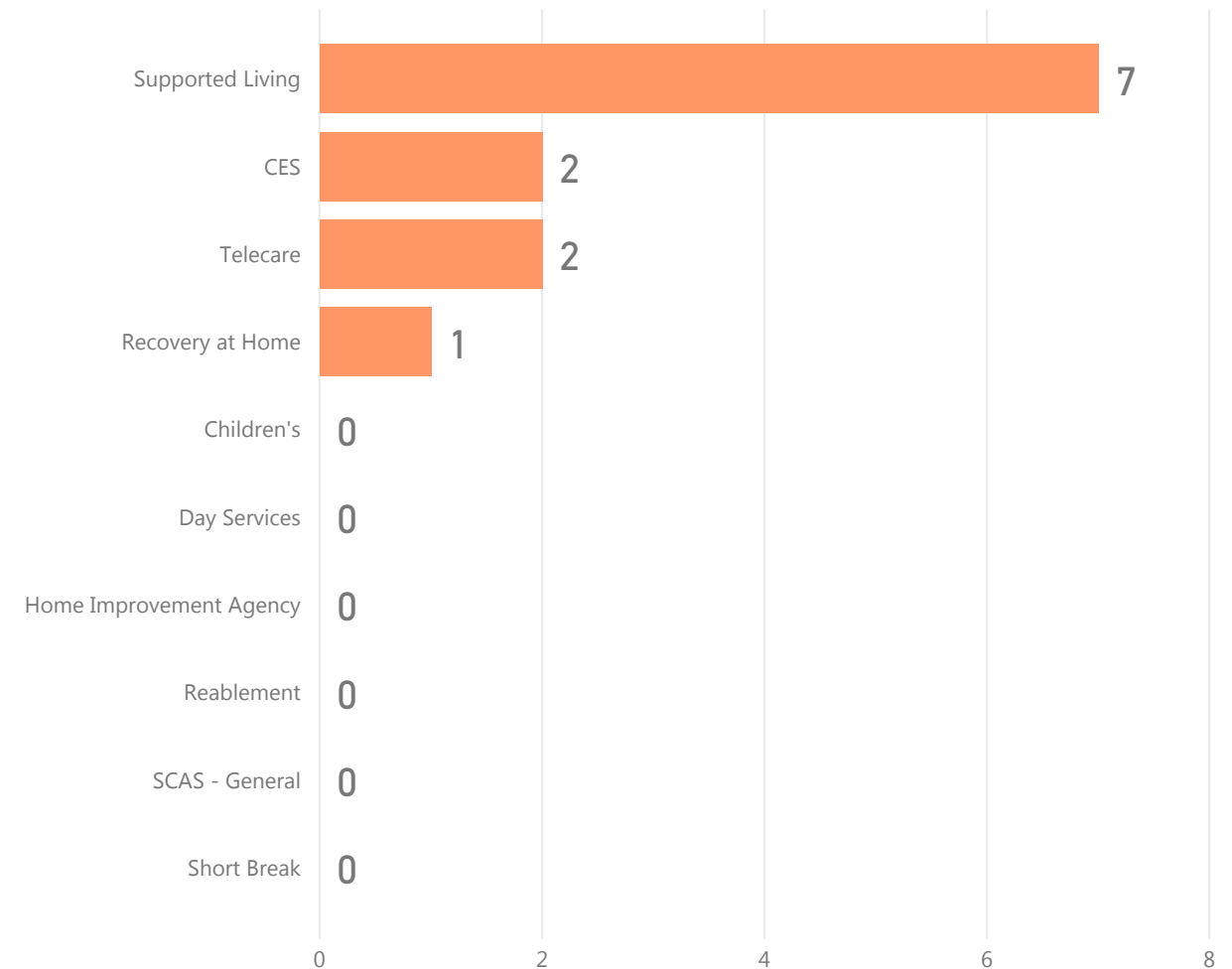


Complaints Overview

Neighbourhoods - Adult Statutory Social Care - 10

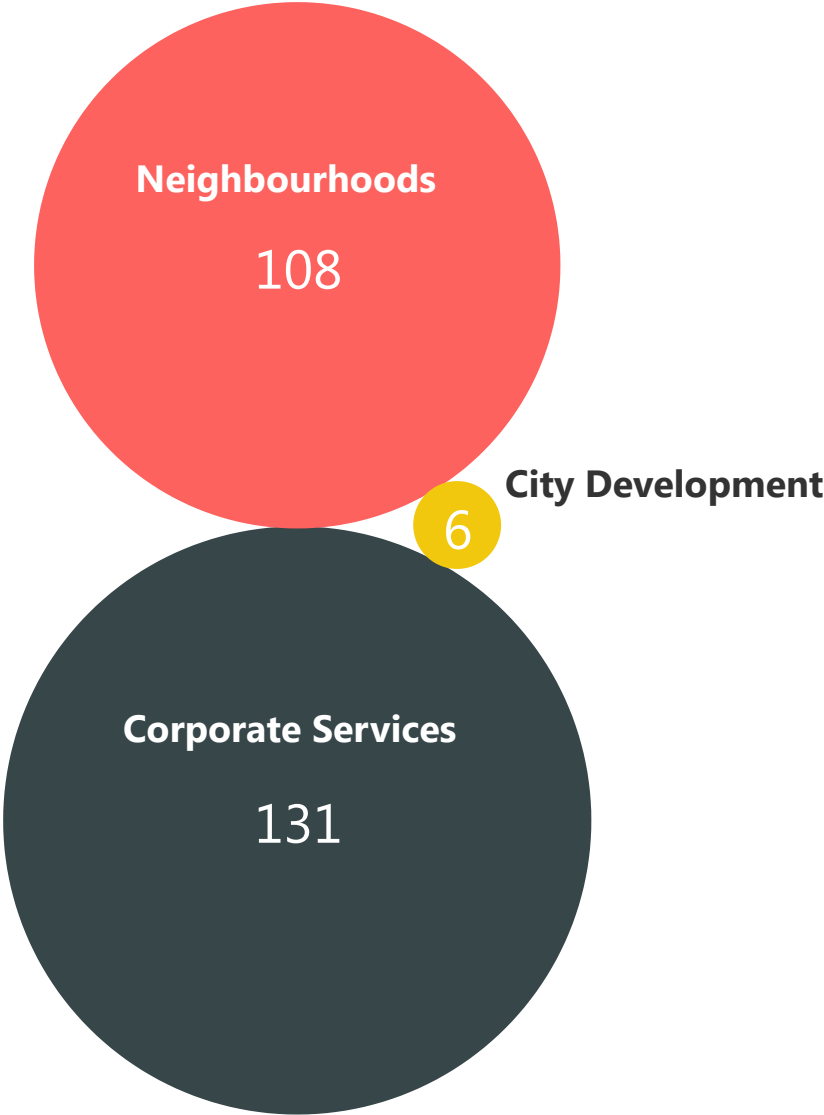


Sunderland Care and Support - 12



Compliments

Compliments



I just would like to say that the new permit system in place at the Beach Street Household recycling was a good experience. Less waiting time in queues and helpful staff. Please consider implementing this system all the time.

Customer wanted to thank the contact centre for still being here during this difficult time and keeping everything up and running.

Customer ordered replacement green bin yesterday, it was delivered today, and damaged bin taken away, thank you for the speed of service, well done refuse team

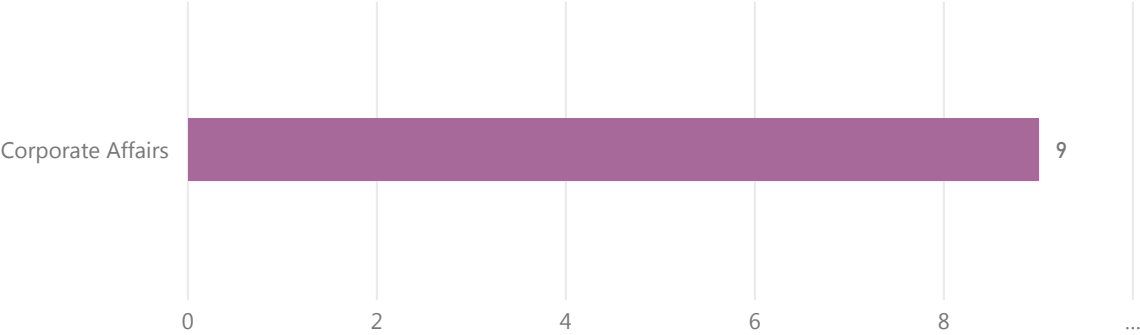
Just wanted to say the officer has been absolutely brilliant in the contact we have had and so helpful in guiding me around complex housing matters

Just to pass on many thanks for having the path resurfaced. We are delighted with the work carried out.

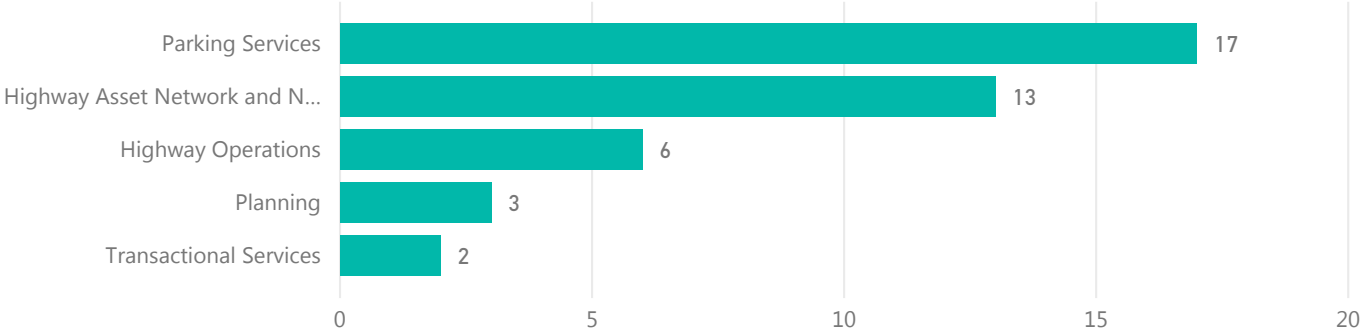
I attended a funeral at the Crematorium, the service room was carefully set out adhering to social distancing guidelines was very well planned and didn't distract from the service. Everything went really smoothly – a credit to your team.

Corporate Complaints Breakdown for Stage 1

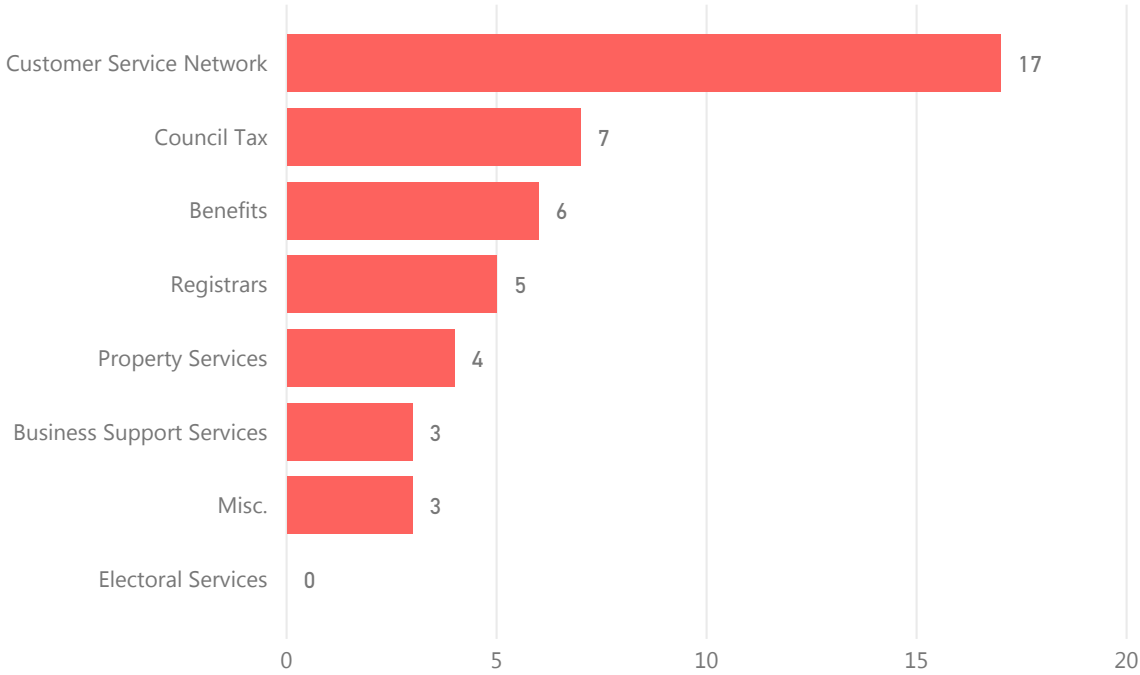
People, Communications and Partnerships - 9



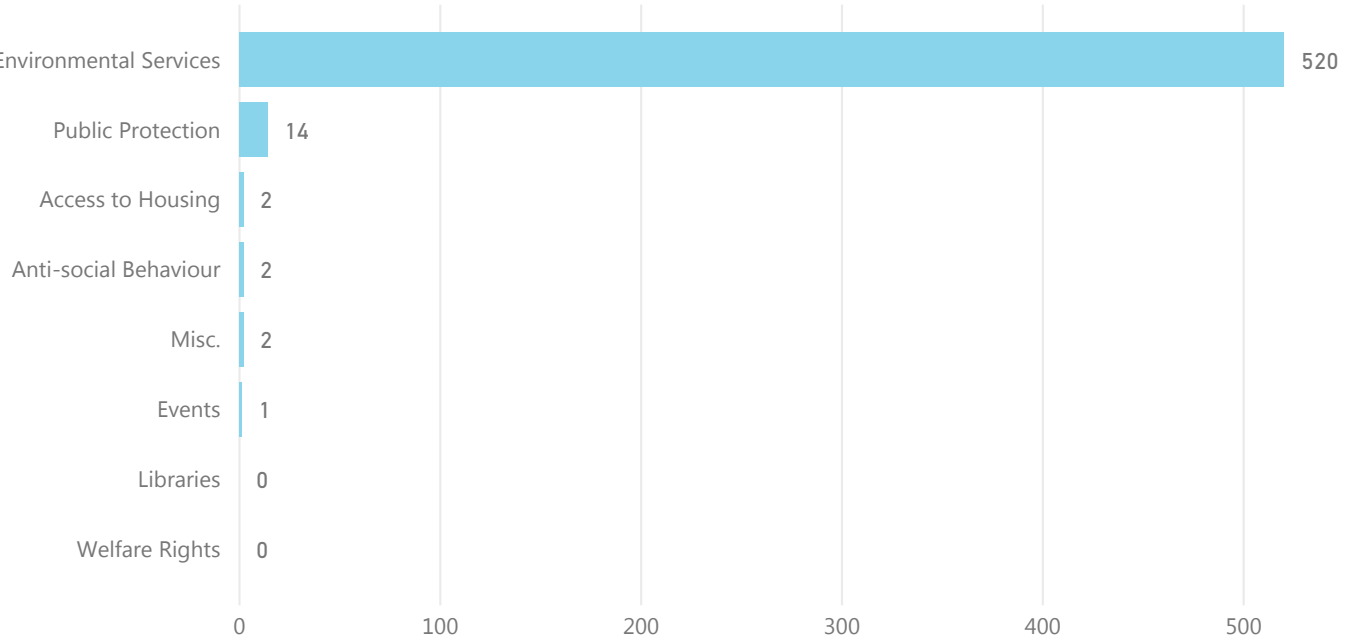
City Development - 41



Corporate Services - 45



Neighbourhoods - 541



PART B

Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us 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 councils. 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 including those about Children's Services.

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

The Ombudsman provides the council with an annual Review Letter which is a summary of statistics on the complaints made to them regarding the council for the financial year. Information includes the number of complaints and enquiries received; decisions made; and the council's compliance with any recommendations.

Information on Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter is attached as **Appendix 2a**

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 Directorate 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 on 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 provides 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. We acknowledge complaints within three working days and make arrangements 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 on Adult Statutory complaints is attached as **Appendix 4**

Sunderland Care and Support

Sunderland Care and Support is a Local Authority Trading Company, formed in December 2013, wholly owned by Sunderland City 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 eligible 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 them in Q1 is attached as **Appendix 5**

Appendix 1: Compliments

Compliments tell us what people like best about the services they receive. They also allow us to use this information to build those features into our services where possible and this helps us to continually improve levels of customer satisfaction.

	2018-19	2019-2020	2020-21
Q1 -Apr-Jun	126	152	245
Q2 - Jul-Sep	184	176	
Q3 - Oct-Dec	170	120	
Q4 - Jan-Mar	134	115	
	614	563	

The table below shows the service areas where compliments were received during Q1

	Q1
Adult Services	14
Council Tax	1
CSN	124
Environmental Health	4
Environmental Services	83
Events	0
Highways / Network Management	6
Housing Benefits	3
Housing Options	2
Libraries	0
Misc.	5
Parking Services	0
Registrars & Bereavement (Incl. Business Support)	3
	245

Some examples of compliments received in Q1

Adult Services

I must say how delighted and amazed I am at how quick you have reacted in supplying me with PPE. I was getting quite worried about this, but now feel completely reassured. Thank you again stay safe

The response and the way the entire service (social workers, OT, CES and CSN) have reacted during the Covid Crisis has been amazing. The impact that it has had on the people that need it most has been wonderful.

I just want you to know that both Dad and I are so grateful to you for everything you did to help mum in these last difficult weeks. It has been awful being unable to help her in these last weeks and

we've taken huge comfort from knowing you were there to look after her. We are truly thankful that you were there for her.

City Wide Services

I just would like to say that the new permit system in place at the Beach Street Household recycling was a good experience. Less waiting time in queues and helpful staff. Please consider implementing this system all the time.

Customer Service Network

Can I please take this opportunity to thank a member of your staff who has helped me tremendously under very difficult times for everyone, she is a credit to the Council, and it is so nice that she took care in looking after me. thank you

The member of staff who took the details from me was extremely helpful and her understanding of the communication difficulties a person living with dementia has were very appreciated.

Customer wanted to thank the contact centre for still being here during this difficult time and keeping everything up and running.

Customer has received the leaflet and whilst she did not need help, she wanted to say thanks - she thought it was lovely that we are helping people and to keep up the good work

Customer said the Community Hub is brilliant and the work the council are doing is Magic!

Emergency Food Parcel delivered and customer over the moon with the speed of service as well as the items in the food box

Environmental Services – Bereavement

I thought I would drop you a line to let you know how helpful your staff have been. They have gone above and beyond what I expected during these troubling times. I now have the information I need to make the funeral arrangements - this meant a lot to me and I am immensely grateful them. Thank you too for your fast response to my enquiry.

I attended a funeral at the Crematorium, the service room was carefully set out adhering to social distancing guidelines was very well planned and didn't distract from the service. Everything went really smoothly – a credit to your team. The crematorium gardens are really lovely, very well kept and tidy.

Environmental Services – Cleansing and Ground Maintenance

Customer reported litter tipped outside her property this morning and it has been cleared. She rang to say thank you for the speed of the service

We would like to thank all of the staff who work at Herrington Country Park; we have walked there every morning since the Lockdown was imposed. We have always loved HCP, but never imagined it would be the lifeline that it has been over the last 4 weeks. It really is looking beautiful at the moment

Customer ordered replacement green bin yesterday, it was delivered today, and damaged bin taken away, thank you for the speed of service, well done refuse team

Environmental Services – Refuse

Customer would like to say thank you - she states she is vulnerable and has to stay home and is amazed the bin crew are still working and would just like to say thanks and stay safe

Customer reported his blue bin had been damaged. A new bin was sent the next day. He wants to thank the refuse team for the speedy response and a general thanks for all that they do

Customer rang to say what a good service we are providing for the bulky waste service. She has had an email to let her know her collection has been brought forward. She said well-done everyone

Highways

Customer reported the drains in the street yesterday and they have been out today, she would like to say thank you as they have done a great job and came out really quickly

Housing Benefits

Just wanted to say the officer has been absolutely brilliant in the contact we have had and so helpful in guiding me around complex housing matters.

Registrars

Too often people are quick to criticise but not compliment, so I'd just like to Thank you and your team for the work and effort you have shown so far dealing with our queries. Take care and stay safe during these uncertain times.

Just to say many thanks indeed for calling me this morning. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak to me. You were really very helpful in explaining the current position, as well as the steps that you will try to take to ensure that we are able to give notice on time subject to the ongoing public health situation, and we are both very grateful to you.

Appendix 2

Complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman

The council received 4 complaints from the Ombudsman for Q1. The table below shows the number of complaints received together with comparative data for the previous year.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>
Q1	5	6	4
Q2	10	11	
Q3	6	6	
Q4	6	15	
	27	38	

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

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
City Development	2				
Corporate Services	-				
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	1				
Neighbourhoods (other)	1				
People, Communications & Partnerships	-				
Together for Children	-				
	4				

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

	Total Complaints made to the Ombudsman in Q1	Closed after initial enquiries	Number Investigated by Ombudsman	investigations upheld by ombudsman	% upheld rate
City Development	2	2	-	-	
Corporate Services	-	-	-	-	
Neighbourhoods (Adult Social Care)	1	1	-	-	
Neighbourhoods (other)	1	1	-	-	
People, Communications & Partnerships	-	-	-	-	
Together for Children	-	-	-	-	
	4	4	0	0	

The Ombudsman's reference is included in brackets and the full report can be found on their website; www.lgo.org.uk.

Complaints closed after initial enquiries (4)

Adult Services (Sunderland City Council – 19 003 263)

A complaint about the Council's lack of support and communication regarding the complainant's regular contact with her grandson.

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because matters were being considered by the Court of Protection.

Parking (Sunderland City Council – 19 019 958)

A complaint that the Council was taking enforcement action for an unpaid 2017 parking fine

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because the Council was entitled to pursue the debt.

Planning (Sunderland City Council – 19 015 214)

A complaint about the consultation process/decision to grant planning permission

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because they were unlikely to find evidence of fault in the way the Council made its decision.

Refuse (Sunderland City Council – 19 019 820)

A complaint about a recycling collection issue

Outcome: The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because it was unlikely they could add to the Council's investigation into the matter.

Detailed Investigations

There were no detailed investigations undertaken in Q1.

Appendix 2a – Ombudsman’s Annual Review Letter 2019-20

Introduction

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has a statutory responsibility for investigating complaints of maladministration about local Councils. The Ombudsman writes to local authorities annually to feed back on their performance in dealing with complaints that the Ombudsman has received about them. The aim of the letter is to provide the Council with information to help it improve complaint handling, and to inform the improvement of local services for the public.

Mr Michael King, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for England has issued his annual review letter to the Council. A copy is attached at the back of this appendix.

Complaints made to the Ombudsman

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the 74 complaints that were received at the Ombudsman regarding Sunderland City Council. The table also provides a comparison to figures for previous years.

Table 1	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Adult Care	13	5	13
Benefits & Council Tax	7	5	9
Corporate & Other	2	8	4
Education & Children	30	15	21
Environmental Services/Public Protection	11	4	9
Highways & Transport	4	9	9
Housing	1	2	2
Planning & Development	3	6	6
Other	0	1	1
Total	71	55	74

Table 1a: compares the numbers of complaints received by the Ombudsman for Council’s in the Northern Region for 2019-20.

Table 1a	Adult Care	Benefits & C/Tax	Corporate & other	Children’s Services	Environ. Services	Highways	Housing	Planning	Other	Total
Durham	23	14	13	41	23	15	0	14	1	144
Northumberland	15	8	3	18	7	11	5	20	1	88
Sunderland	13	9	4	21	9	9	2	6	1	74
Newcastle	11	12	1	20	7	4	6	3	1	65
Gateshead	12	2	4	11	3	8	7	2	2	51
North Tyneside	6	5	2	17	4	7	3	3	3	50
South Tyneside	7	3	4	12	7	2	5	0	0	40

Decisions made by the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman then made decisions on 76 complaints. This is a different figure to the number received at the Ombudsman (74). In this case it is likely that 2 complaints were received in the previous year with a decision been made in this reporting year. This can happen when complaints are received close to the end of one financial year.

Table 2 sets out how these 76 complaints were decided. It also provides information on the previous year's figures for comparison.

Table 2	Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	'premature' complaints	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Detailed investigations	Total
2019-20	6	2	30	27	11	76
2018-19	3	0	27	14	13	57
2017-18	4	1	31	20	11	67

Of the 76 complaints on which the Ombudsman came to a decision;

- 6 were incomplete/invalid and 2 were provided with advice, however the Council would not have been made aware of these.
- 30 were referred back to the Council for local resolution, we term these 'premature'. These complaints are dealt with through the appropriate complaint's procedure. To avoid double counting we do not include these numbers in our own Ombudsman statistics but rather count them against the complaint procedure utilised.
- **38 complaints** were forwarded from the Ombudsman to the Council. These are shown in the Ombudsman figures provided for *closed after initial enquiries* (27) and *detailed investigations* (11) as shaded in the table.

For information, *closed after initial enquiries* cases are those where the Ombudsman has made an early decision not to investigate the complaint. Sometimes the complaint will be outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction for example where issues are already been considered through a court process.

Complaints received at the Council

Mr King emphasises in his annual letter that the statistics reflect the data held by his organisation and may not necessarily align with the data held by the Council. That is the case with the figures presented in this report.

Table 3 provides a comparison regarding the numbers of complaints received at the Ombudsman compared to those forwarded to the Council.

Table 3	Adult Care	Benefits & C/Tax	Corporate & other	Children's Services	Environ. Services	Highways	Housing	Planning	Other	Total
<i>Complaints received at the Ombudsman</i>	13	9	4	21	9	9	2	6	1	74
Complaints forwarded to the Council	8	4	3	9	4	5	1	4	0	38

Information on these 38 complaints has been reported to the Committee over the course of the previous year through the Complaints & Feedback Team quarterly reports.

Table 3a: compares the number of complaints received from the Ombudsman by Council's in the Northern Region.

Table 3a	Closed after initial enquiries	Detailed Investigations	Total
Durham	64	36	100
Northumberland	35	26	61
Sunderland	27	11	38
Newcastle	17	18	35
North Tyneside	20	12	32
Gateshead	21	8	29
South Tyneside	12	11	23

Detailed Investigations

For the period 2019-20 the Ombudsman carried out 11 detailed investigations regarding Sunderland City Council. 7 of these complaints were upheld.

Table 4 shows the breakdown for the detailed investigations for service areas, together with the outcomes.

Table 4	Upheld	Not upheld	Total
Adult Care	2	3	5
Children's Services	5	1	6
Total	7	4	11

Table 4a: provides comparative data regarding the number of detailed investigations carried out by the Ombudsman for Council's in the Northern Region together with upheld rates.

Table 4a	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	<i>Uphold Rate (%)</i>	Average uphold rate (%) of similar authorities
Durham	36	15	21	58%	56%
Northumberland	26	17	9	35%	56%
Newcastle	18	6	12	67%	67%
North Tyneside	12	4	8	67%	67%
South Tyneside	11	5	6	55%	67%
Sunderland	11	4	7	64%	67%
Gateshead	8	4	4	50%	67%

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

22 July 2020

By email

Mr Melia
Chief Executive
Sunderland City Council

Dear Mr Melia

Annual Review letter 2020

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local

Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the exceptional pressures under which local authorities have been working over recent months, I thought carefully about whether it was still appropriate to send you this annual update. However, now, more than ever, I believe that it is essential that the public experience of local services is at the heart of our thinking. So, I hope that this feedback, which provides unique insight into the lived experience of your Council's services, will be useful as you continue to deal with the current situation and plan for the future.

Complaint statistics

This year, we continue to place our focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have made several changes over recent years to improve the data we capture and report. We focus our statistics on these three key areas:

Complaints upheld - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated. A focus on how often things go wrong, rather than simple volumes of complaints provides a clearer indicator of performance.

Compliance with recommendations - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault and we monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority - We want to encourage the early resolution of complaints and to credit authorities that have a positive and open approach to resolving complaints. We recognise cases where an authority has taken steps to put things right before the complaint

came to us. The authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

This data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 29 July 2020, and our Review of Local Government Complaints. For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#).

Resources to help you get it right

There are a range of resources available that can support you to place the learning from complaints, about your authority and others, at the heart of your system of corporate governance. [Your council's performance](#) launched last year and puts our data and information about councils in one place. Again, the emphasis is on learning, not numbers. You can find the decisions we have made, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the tool with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

Earlier this year, we held our link officer seminars in London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Attended by 178 delegates from 143 local authorities, we focused on maximising the impact of complaints, making sure the right person is involved with complaints at the right time, and how to overcome common challenges.

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. During the year, we delivered 118 courses, training more than 1,400 people. This is 47 more courses than we delivered last year and included more training to adult social care providers than ever before. To find out more visit www.lgo.org.uk/training.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MK' followed by a stylized flourish.

Michael King
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Q1	1,951	704	636	-9%	
Q2	1,389	770			
Q3	592	684			
Q4	499	502			
	4,431	2660			

The **636** complaints received this quarter are broken down into Directorates in the table below;

	City Development	Corporate Services	Neighbourhoods	People, Communications & Partnerships	Total
Q1	41	45	541	9	
Q2					
Q3					
Q4					
	41 (6%)	45 (7%)	541 (85%)	9 (1%)	

Neighbourhoods

Service Area	Q1
Environmental Services	520
Libraries	0
Access to Housing	2
Anti-social Behaviour	2
Welfare Rights	0
Public Protection	14
Events	1
Misc.	2
	541

Complaints in respect of Environmental Services make up 96% 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
Refuse: <i>non/late delivery of bins & caddies/missed bins</i>	419
Bereavement: <i>maintenance of cemeteries/ crematorium</i>	5
Street Cleaning: <i>fly tipping/dog bins</i>	61
Trees, fixed play, trade waste: <i>grass cutting/ tree pruning</i>	20
Enforcement: <i>Fly tipping/littering/dog fouling</i>	1
Waste Management: <i>Beach Street Depot – staff attitude/permits</i>	14
	520

Refuse Complaints

Of the 520 complaints received for Environmental Services, 419 (81%) 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 0.02% of activity for this service area.

The table below contains a breakdown of complaints about refuse.

	<i>Number of Complaints for 2018/19</i>	<i>Number of Complaints for 2019/20</i>	<i>Number of Complaints for 2020/21</i>	<i>% change from previous year</i>
Q1	1,606	433	419	-3%
Q2	1,012	464		
Q3	358	454		
Q4	253	232		
	3,229	1583	419	

City Development

Service Area	Q1
Planning & Property	3
Infrastructure & Transport	21
Parking	17
	41

Infrastructure & Transport

Complaints about this service area were regarding road resurfacing, footway repairs, traffic calming/restrictions and potholes. Complaints regarding Infrastructure and Transport continue a downward trend from 42 in Q4 (2019-2020).

Corporate Services

Service Area	Q1
Council Tax	7
Customer Service Network	17
Benefits	6
Property Services	4
Business Support Services	3
Registrars	5
Electoral Services	0
Misc.	3
	45

Complaints regarding the Customer Service Network (CSN) make up 39% of complaints made during this quarter. Again, the number of complaints should be viewed in context. The CSN handled 370,248 contacts this quarter; 17 complaints represents a dissatisfaction rate of 0.004%.

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.

3 Reviews have been concluded in this quarter.

The internal timescale for completing Reviews is 25 working days. However, there are times when more complex cases require further time to complete and the aim is to complete these within 65 working days.

Due to the impact of covid-19 emergency we did not meet the 25-day deadline for the three reviews undertaken in Q1.

Stage 2 Reviews	<i>Number of Reviews 2018/19</i>	<i>Number of Reviews 2019/20</i>	Number of Reviews 2019/20	% responded to within 25-day timescale	% responded to within 65-day timescale
Q1	4	5	3	0%	100%
Q2	8	7	-		
Q3	6	8	-		
Q4	6	11	-		
	24	31	3		

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

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2020/21	Comparison Figures for previous year 2019-20
City Development	2					12
Corporate Services	-					7
Neighbourhoods	-					12
People, Communications & Partnerships	1					0
	3					31

Outcome of Stage 2 Reviews

Complaint Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2020/21	Comparison Figures for previous year 2019-20
Upheld in full	-					3
Upheld in part	-					10
Not Upheld	3					16
Unsubstantiated	-					0
Not Eligible	-					1
Withdrawn	-					1
	3					31

Reviews not upheld (3)

The elements of complaint were;

- *Actions of the Data Protection Officer and delays in the case (not upheld)*
- *Impeding the flow of a Burn by installing of a culvert screen (not upheld)*
- *A lack of consultation in allowing a temporary closure of a back lane (not upheld)*

Reviews upheld (0)

Reviews partly upheld (0)

Appendix 4: Adult Social Care

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

10 complaints received in Q1 regarding adult social care services.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2020-21</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Apr-Jun	14	24	10	-58%	80%
Jul-Sep	38	21	-		
Oct-Dec	18	20	-		
Jan-Mar	23	16	-		
Total	93	81	10		

The complaints were about the following issues;

Nature of Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Actions of worker	3			
Assessment Disagreement	-			
Care Practice Issues	1			
Communication	2			
Delay	1			
Finance	1			
Quality Issues	2			
Lack of help/support	1			
	10			

The complaints were made regarding the following service areas;

Service Area Involved	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Mental Health Service	2			
Hospital SW Team	1			
Learning Disabilities Service	1			
SW Locality Teams	4			
Occupational Therapy Service	1			
Financial Assessment Team	-			
Commissioned Services	1			
Financial Safeguarding Team	-			
Safeguarding Adults/DoLs	-			
	10			

Outcome of complaints

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Upheld in full	2			
Upheld in part	2			
Not upheld	4			
NE/WD/OTH**	1			
Ongoing	1			
	10			

**not eligible/withdrawn/other

In Q1 there were 4 complaints (40%) that had some element upheld or partly upheld;

- *A complaint about not being kept informed when requesting details regarding the care co-ordinator (partly upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: Apologies/explanation provided. The complaint highlighted an area that required some clearer guidance re: the interface between a social care DP and a DP for health. CCG working on procedure prior to the Covid-19 pandemic which will be revisited once CCG revert to normal working.

- *A complaint that a home care service would not attend due to lack of PPE (partly upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: The provider had a duty of care to customers/carers - due to risk of cross infection care and had suspended the service until PPE could be sourced. Council confirmed customer would not have been left without support and this case the complainant had already agreed to support their relative in the meantime.

- *A complaint about a lack of communication when changing SU's social worker (upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: There had been a lack of proper explanation/handover amidst the unfolding scenario with Covid-19. Apologies and an explanation were provided, and the new worker was introduced properly. The customer was happy with reassurance offered.

- *A complaint that the AMHP did not get a form signed meaning the SU can now leave the hospital (upheld)*

Remedy/Learning Outcomes: Apologies and explanation offered. The form had not been signed and additional checking mechanisms also failed to pick up the error. These measures are now under joint review by ASC and CNTW with additional steps already implemented to strengthen the process.

Detailed Investigations

Whilst under the Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure there are no defined stages, there are still those complaints that have a high level of complexity requiring a more comprehensive consideration.

The internal target for completing detailed investigations is 90 working days, although due to the nature of the investigations this is only a guideline as it is important that the investigations are given due consideration.

1 detailed investigation was completed during Q1 and information on this complaint is included below.

Detailed Investigation 1

A complaint about the actions of workers and the level of communication and involvement following the placement of a relative in a Durham hospital following a Mental Health Assessment.

The investigation was carried out by an independent investigating officer and took 177 working days to complete. The complaint was complex in nature involving a number of Health Trusts, third-party agencies and care providers.

There were 10 elements of complaint: 3 were upheld; 6 were not upheld and 1 was unsubstantiated.

The three elements upheld were;

- *That the family's request for a bed at a Sunderland Hospital had been ignored and the family later found that this was an option that should have been available to them.*

Information provided to the investigation from the Health Trust revealed that the process regarding the option to relocate to a bed in Sunderland had not been fully explored with the family.

- *A failure to provide notice to the family of the decision to section.*

The earliest indication that an MHA Assessment may be undertaken was at 1.25pm and this would have been the first opportunity to make the complainant aware. The worker contacted the complainant at 2.55pm. In this respect there was not a failure to provide notice, but rather there was a delay in doing so.

- *A failure to include the complainant at the earliest opportunity, whilst undertaking the assessments of their relative.*

The opportunity to inform at the earlier time, was not purposely missed, but rather was due to the speed the issues unfolded on that day. Nonetheless, the delay did have an impact which meant the relative was not able to attend the first MHA Assessment at 3pm.

Actions/Learning Outcomes

Apologies were offered regarding those elements of complaint upheld, and the following actions have been taken in accordance with the investigating officer's recommendations for improving practice:

- To help ensure we can be confident in providing advice to families in what can often be difficult circumstances, Adult Social Care staff have been made aware of the bed management policy and the potential option for a transfer to a Sunderland Hospital. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for identifying a hospital bed remains with the Health Trust.
- The Council liaised with the Health Trust regarding the reimbursement of any additional travel costs to the complainant in line with the Trust's own protocol.
- Adult Social Care staff have been reminded of the importance of contacting the nearest relative at the earliest opportunity.

Appendix 5: Sunderland Care and Support

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT LIMITED (SCAS)

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS Q1 2020-21 (APRIL-JUNE 2020) 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

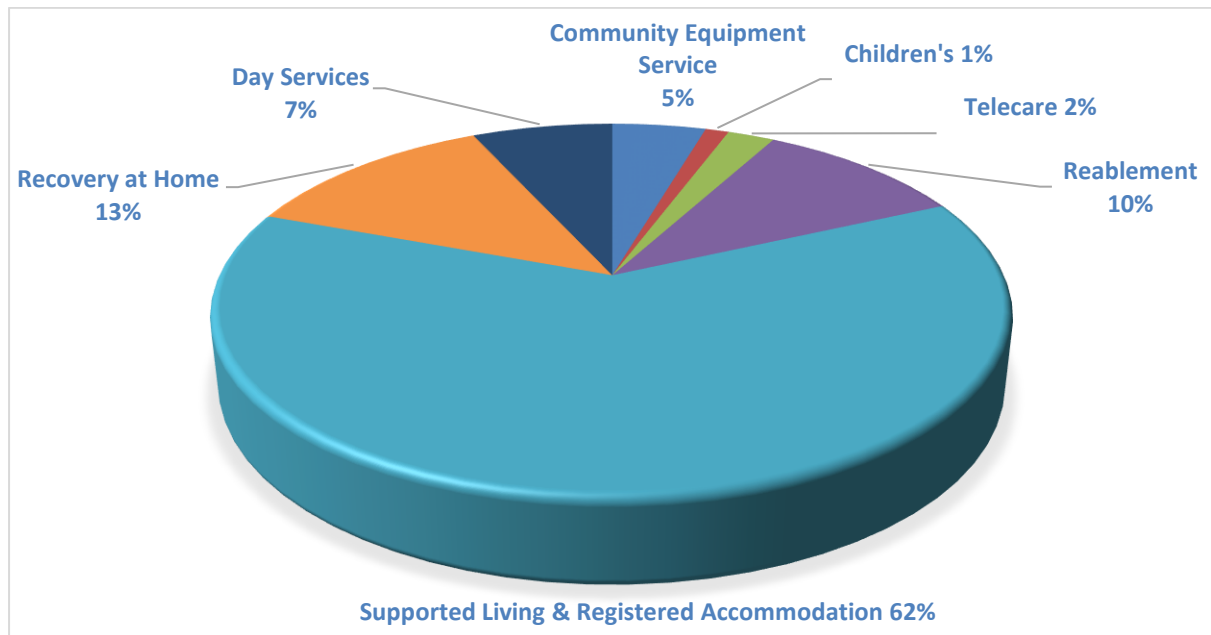
- 3.1 Sunderland Care and Support Limited takes pride in the high-quality services we provide our customers.
- 3.2 We pro-actively welcome both positive and negative feedback from all of our customers and view this as our opportunity to learn and to improve; and recognise that such feedback helps us to corroborate the standard of service our customers receive.
- 3.3 This reporting period has been quite extraordinary given that it covers the beginning and initial peak of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic. But despite this unprecedented scenario, the Company has continued to deliver within what have been extremely challenging circumstances, using creative means to ensure that we have supported our customers both in the community and in an out of hospital pathway.

4 COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning and initial peak of the Pandemic, a total of **88** compliments were received by the Company from **1st April to 30th June 2020**, 5 (3%) slightly less than had been recorded over the previous period.

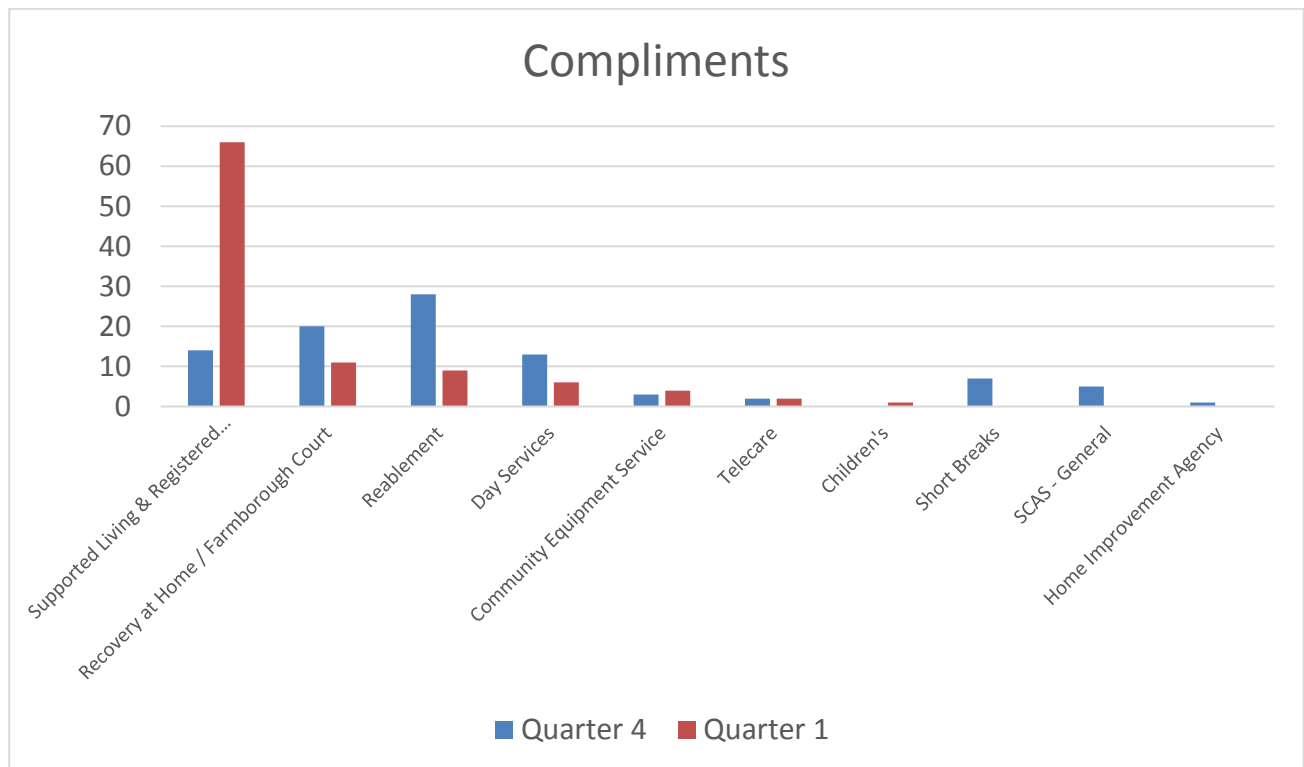
4.2 Q4 Compliments Breakdown - Distribution

Compliments received during Quarter 1 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 55 (62%) – **forty-one more** than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court:** 11 (13%) – **nine less** than the previous quarter
- **Reablement:** 9 (10%) - **nineteen less** than the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** 6 (7%) - **seven less** than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 4 (5%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 2 (2%) - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Children's:** 1 (1%) – **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Short Breaks:** zero (0%) - **seven less** than the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General:** zero (0%) – **five less** than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** zero (0%) – **one less** than the previous quarter

4.3 Q1 Compliments Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



During the quarter, the City has been experiencing the impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic, therefore we wouldn't have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer their feedback. It is therefore of significance that our **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation Services** saw a near **four-fold increase** in the number of compliments received, when compared against figures for the previous reporting period; and around a third of Service Areas services saw an increase or equivalent number of compliments received during the quarter, with the remainder seeing slight reductions.

4.4 Q1 Compliments Breakdown - Synopsis

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

- **Supported Living** – 'well done to all staff for their dedication and commitment to customers'
- **Recovery at Home / Farnborough Court** – thanks for the 'excellent care' provided by the team
- **Reablement** – 'Thank you for the fabulous service provided'
- **Community Equipment Service** – thanks for 'the amazing response' provided by team members
- **Telecare** – appreciation of the 'wonderful' service provided by staff
- **Children's** – thanks for the 'excellent work' of the team

4.5 Customer Satisfaction Consultations

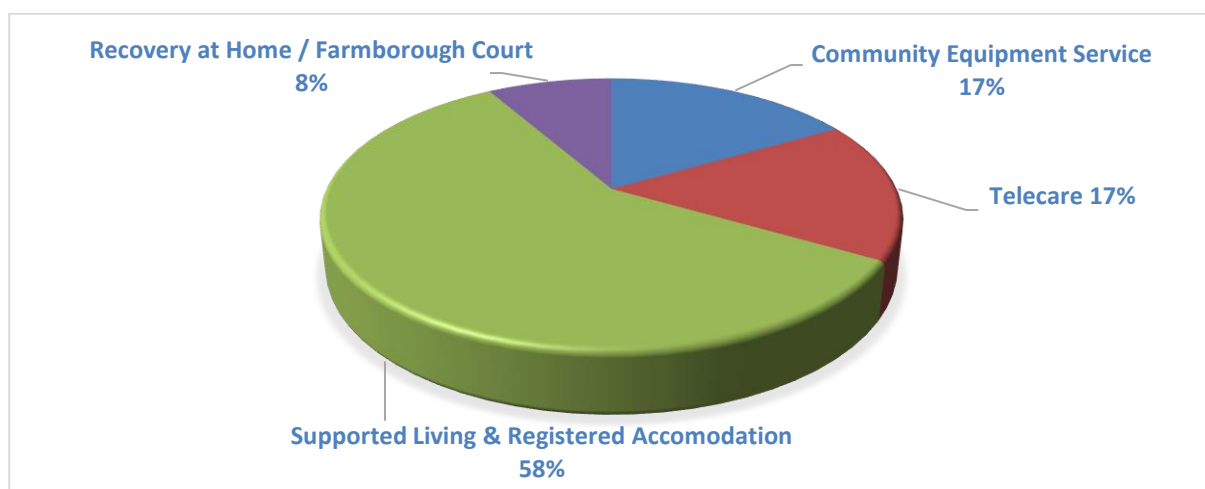
It is of note that Supported Living Services also received 11 positive responses from customers and their families via proactive customer satisfaction consultations during the reporting period.

5 COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 It is of note, that despite this report covering the beginning and initial peak of the Pandemic, only **12** complaints were received by the Company from **1st April to 30th June 2020**, representing **29% less** than had been recorded over the previous period (Quarter 4 - 2019/20) and **58% less** than vs. Quarter 3 (2019/20) figures.

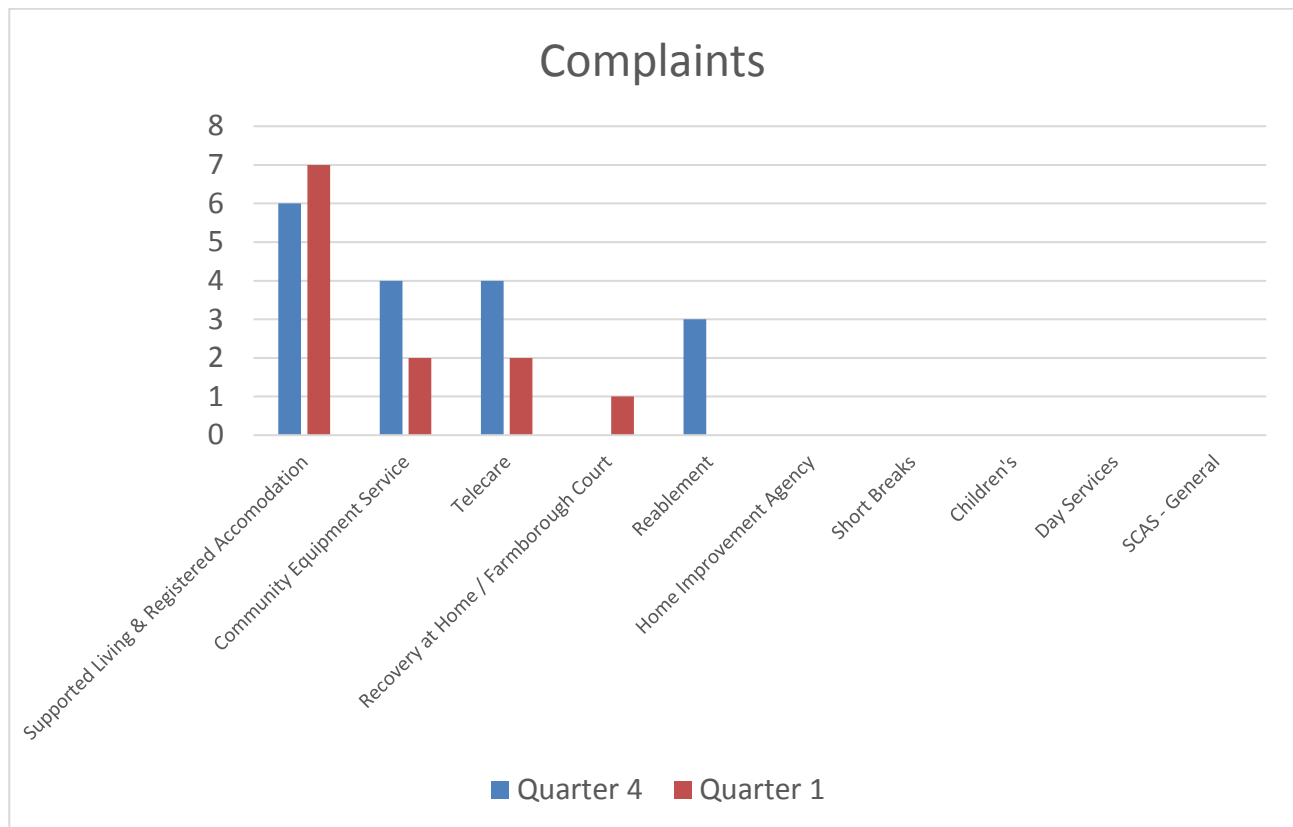
5.2 Q1 Complaints Breakdown – Distribution

Complaints received during Quarter 1 were distributed across the following service areas:



- **Supported Living & Registered Accommodation:** 7 (58%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 2 (17%) - **two less** than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 2 (17%) - **two less** than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home / Farmborough Court:** 1 (8%) - **one more** than the previous quarter
- **Reablement:** zero - **three less** than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** zero – **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Short Break:** zero – **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Children's:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter
- **SCAS - General:** zero - **no change** from the previous quarter

5.3 Q1 Complaints Breakdown - Previous Quarter Comparison



It is of note that around 80% of Service Areas either received zero complaints or significantly less complaints than seen during the previous quarter, with only two Service Areas noting a slight increase for the period.

Also of note was that our **Reablement Service saw zero complaints** during the period (down three for the previous quarter), and the number of complaints received by our **Telecare and Community Equipment Services** were both seen to have **decreased by 50%**.

And of particular significance, when compared with figures for the same quarter for the previous year, our **Community Equipment Service** was noted to have achieved a **sixteen fold decrease** in the number of complaints received.

However it is worth bearing in mind that due to the impact of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic the Company would not have expected to see as many customers taking the time to offer their feedback.

5.4 Q1 Complaints Breakdown - Resolution

Of the complaints received during the period, 8 (66%) were to be resolved locally utilising the Company's Step 1 - Local Resolution complaints procedures and 4 (33%) to be resolved formally using the Company's Step 2 - Formal Resolution complaints procedure.

6 COVID-19 REPORTING

- 6.1 Throughout the reporting period the company have continued to operate within the scope of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures, despite the temporary suspension of complaints clinics at the peak of the pandemic.
- 6.2 Complaints clinics are now being reinitiated using MS Teams in order to ensure social distancing is observed.

7 OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.1 Just prior to the pandemic the Company successfully completed a thorough review of our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedures.
- 7.2 The review of our Whistleblowing Policy, originally scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2020/2021 but delayed due to the Pandemic, is expected to be completed during the next reporting period, at which time it is planned that the company will relaunch both Policy documents across the Company and will also introduce our new Tell-Us-What-You-Think@sunderlandcareandsupport.co.uk and Speak Up Speak-Up@sunderlandcareandsupport.co.uk e-mail channels to stakeholders.
- 7.3 It is of note that during the previous reporting period Sunderland City Council's Complaints Team had supported SCAS to access Complaints Management training, led by the LGO, that would, but for the Pandemic, have been delivered during the Quarter. It is hoped that this opportunity will be made available again in the future.