

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Quarterly Report

Compliments, Complaints & Feedback

**For the period:
October - December 2019**

Introduction

This report from the Complaints and Feedback Team covers Q3 (October - December 2019).

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.

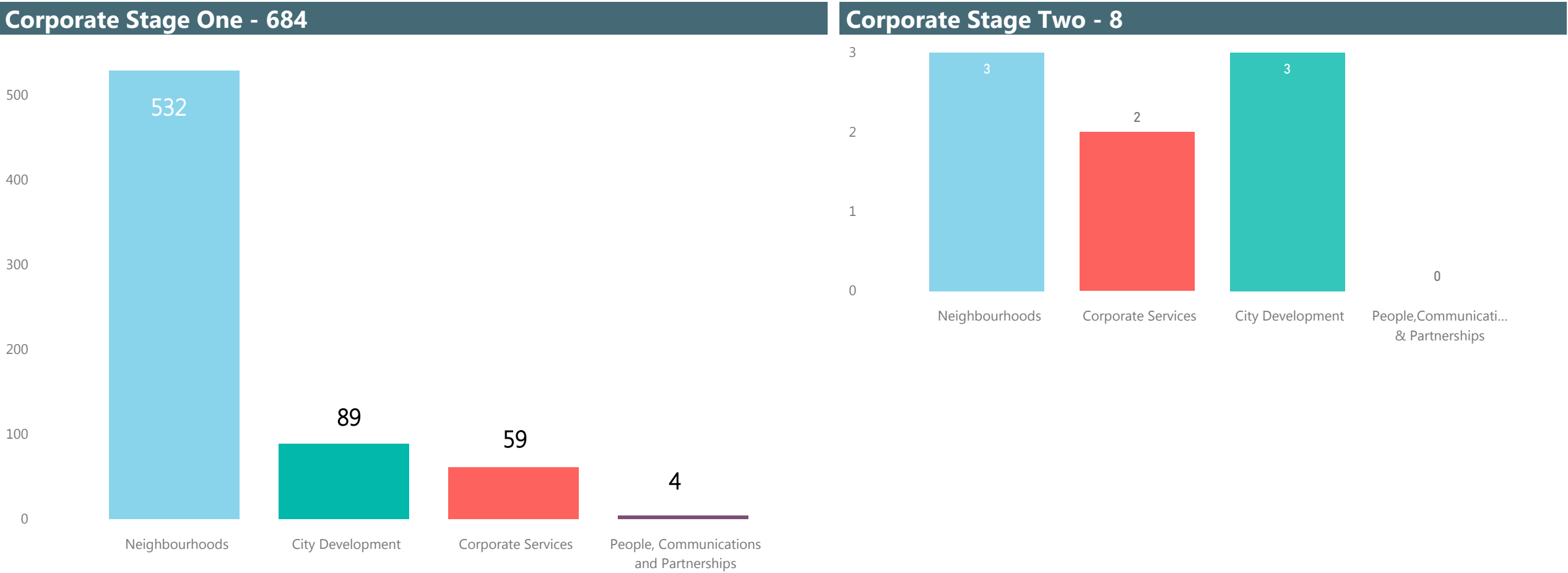
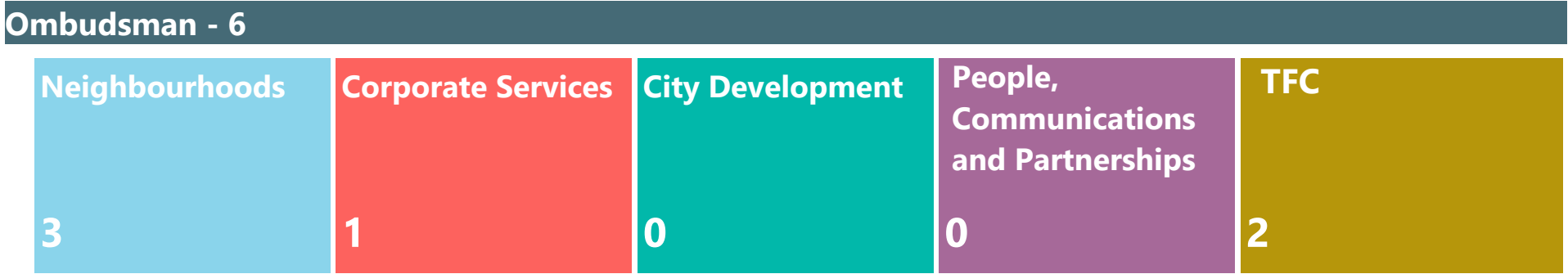
Sunderland Care and Support's report regarding complaints received about its service will be appended to Compliments, Complaints & Feedback report on a quarterly basis.

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

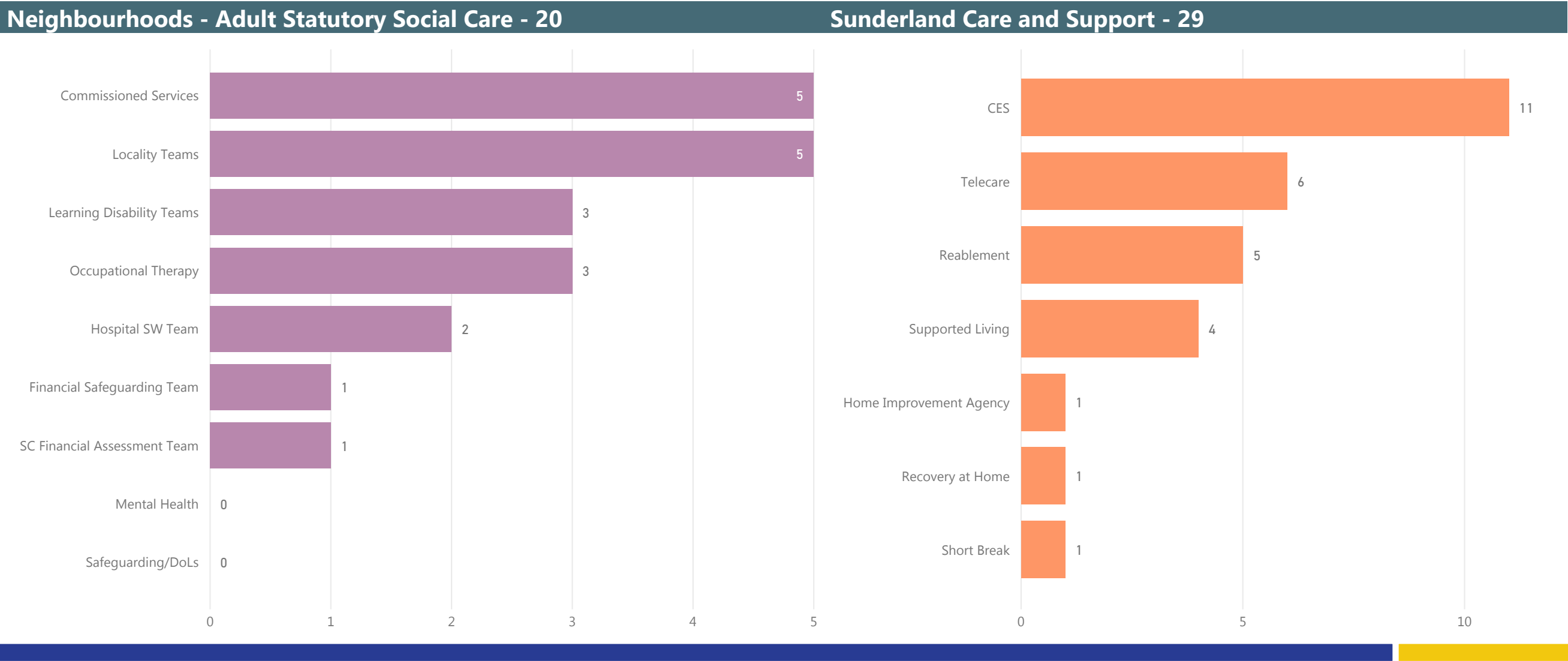
Part B of the report provides information on the different Compliments and Complaints Procedures that are used by the council to handle customer feedback.

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

Complaint Overview

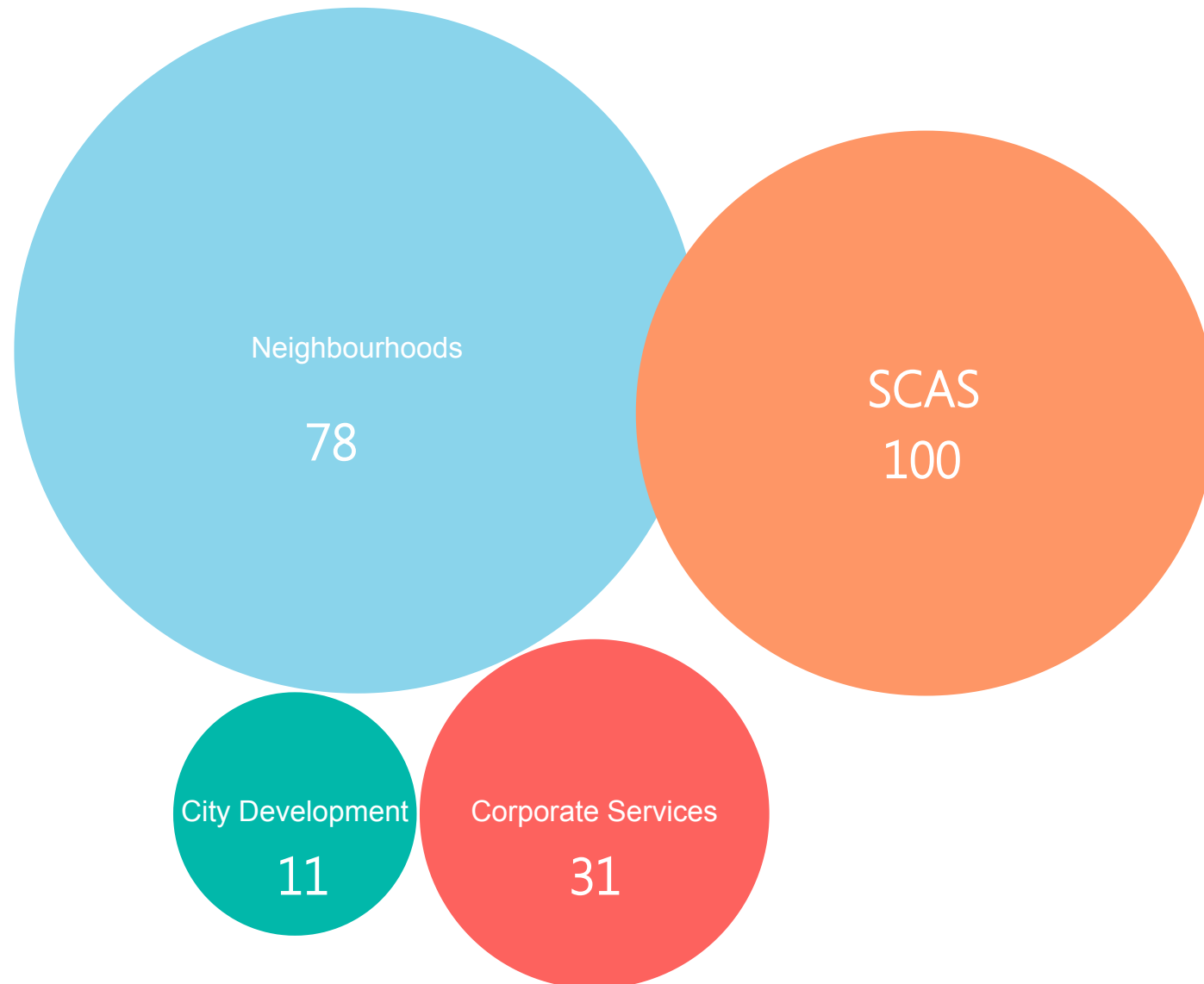


Complaint Overview



Compliments

Compliments - 220



A jobseeker attended Fawcett Street and said the workers assisted them quickly, were courteous and professional, exceeding their needs - a friendly happy team

Customer reported litter on Silksworth complex. The following day he walked by that area and every scrap was gone - amazing job

Customer rang to say that she thinks the lads who empty her bins are lovely. she said they are really good and they do a really good job and are a great help

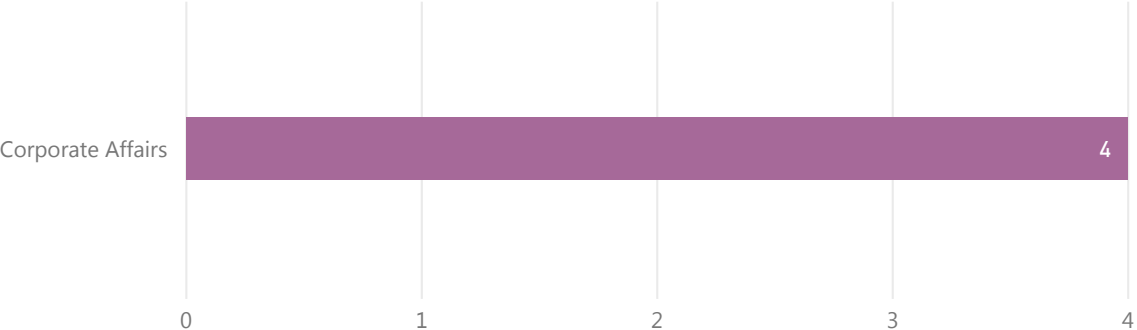
I went with my two children to the Festival of Light and just wanted to say how fantastic it was. The staff were so friendly and welcoming.

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

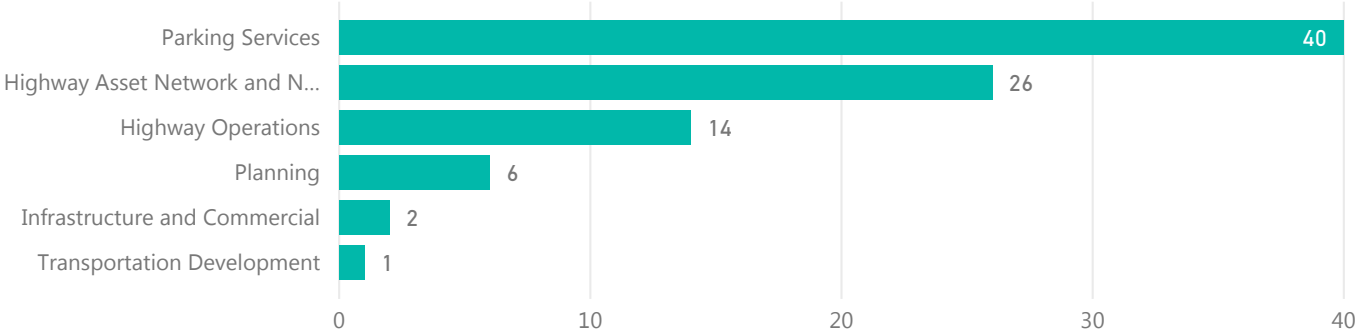
Customer would like to thank the traffic wardens as she had asked if the wardens could be in the area when the school was holding an event. Customer said the residents appreciated it.

Corporate Complaints Breakdown for Stage 1

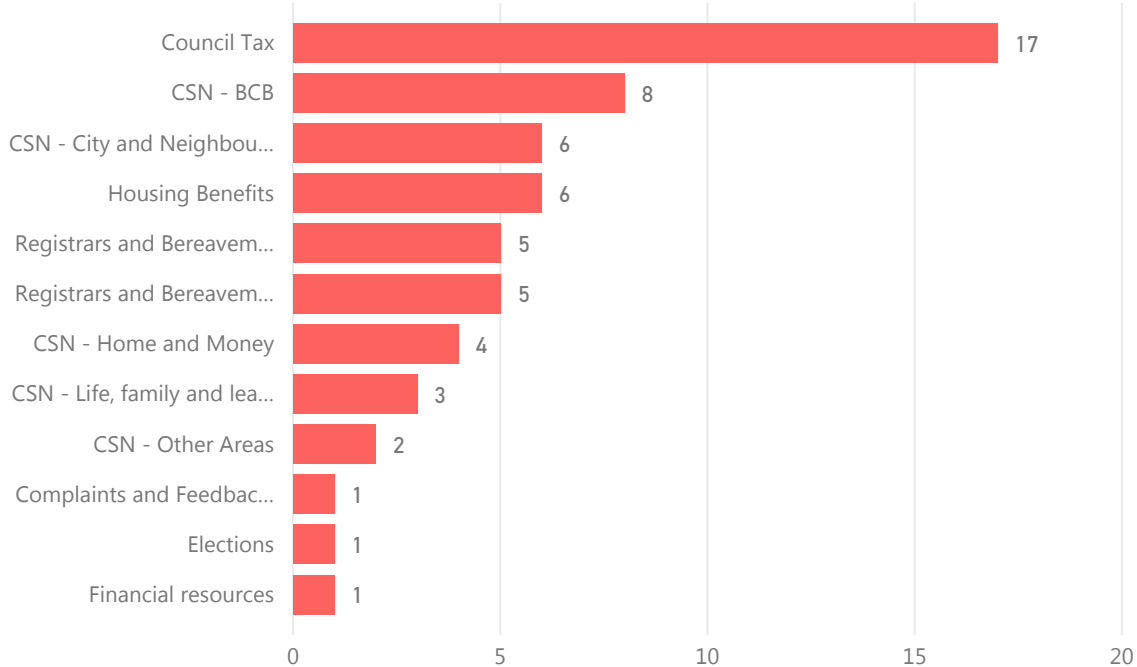
People, Communications and Partnerships - 4



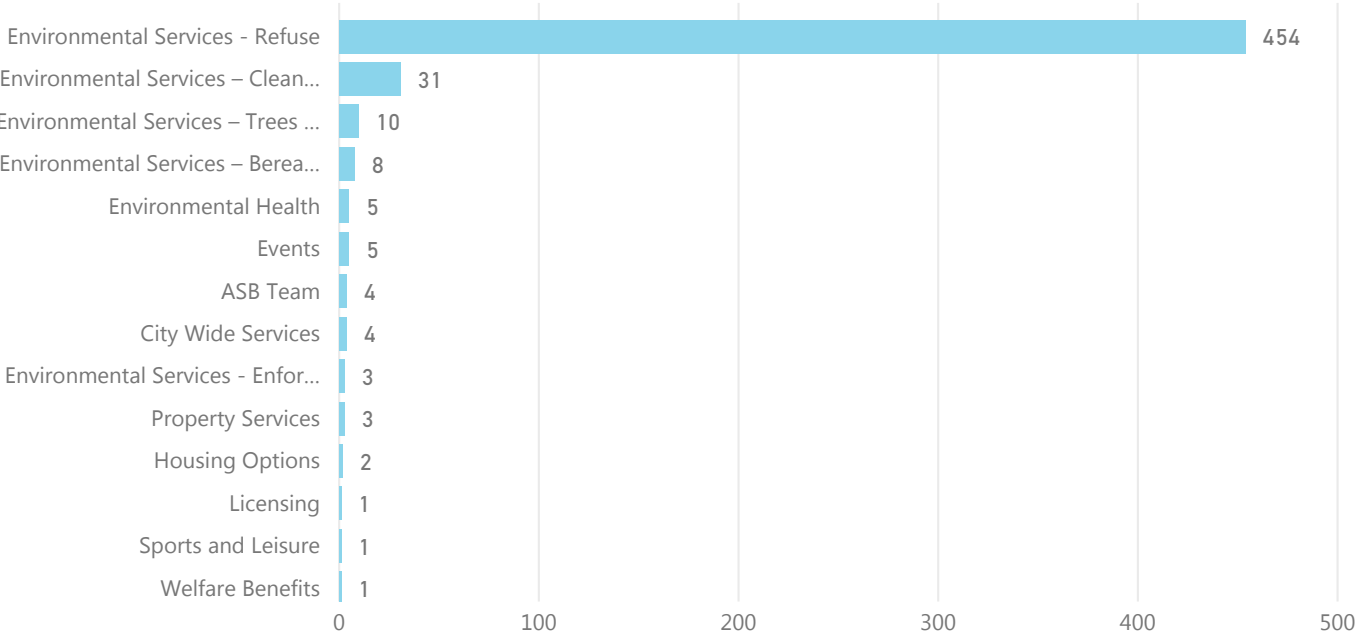
City Development - 89



Corporate Services - 59



Neighbourhoods - 532



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.

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 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 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 Q3 is attached as **Appendix 5**

Children's Services Statutory Complaints

Legislation & Regulations

Statutory regulations were introduced by the Department for Education in 2006 entitled '*Getting the Best from Complaints – Social Care Complaints and Representations Procedure for Children and Young People*' to deal with complaints and representations made to Children's Services by children and young people (the regulations and guidance cover complaints and representations made by children and young people).

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

The 6-monthly report from Together for Children will be included in the Q2 and Q4 reports to Scrutiny.

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.

	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2019-2020</i>
Q1 -Apr-Jun	<i>137</i>	<i>126</i>	152
Q2 - Jul-Sep	<i>146</i>	<i>184</i>	176
Q3 - Oct-Dec	<i>134</i>	<i>170</i>	220
Q4 - Jan-Mar	<i>140</i>	<i>134</i>	
	<i>557</i>	<i>614</i>	548

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

Adult Services	24
Council Tax	3
CSN	19
Environmental Services	47
Events	4
Highways	8
Housing Options	2
Libraries	1
Misc.	9
Parking Services	3
Sunderland Care and Support	100
	220

Some examples of compliments received in Q3

Adult Services

I wanted to let you know of the tremendous support provided by your Occupational Therapist. Nothing was too much trouble for her, and she motivated and managed her available resources magnificently with a totally can-do attitude.

Thank you so much for the meeting and your management of it today. I really appreciate your work and support. Whatever the outcome of your assessment I feel you are doing your very best for my mam and that you have helped me with this difficult time.

The customer stated she was over the moon with her grab rails fitted by the worker. She said he was an absolute joy, and nothing was too much bother for him. He even swept up after him and he cheered her up with his conversation. She said that the service was brilliant.

Council Tax

Customer has been going through a bad time lately and when she spoke to the worker, he was very polite, helpful, reassured the customer and had a very calming manner.

Customer Service Network

Could I pass on my gratitude to all the members involved in issuing my blue badge so quickly, I forgot the average time to do this and I only contacted yourselves a couple of days before it was due to expire but thanks to your efficiency I still got my badge the day after the old one expired, so

many many thanks to all concerned it really is very helpful, please let everyone know how much this meant to me thank you so much.

The customer wanted to thank the workers. Their tone of voice was very welcoming and friendly and made her feel reassured that she was going to be helped.

A jobseeker attended Fawcett street and said the workers assisted them quickly, were courteous and professional exceeding their needs - a friendly happy team

Environmental Services

Customer logged a request for leaves to be cleaned on the street yesterday. Customer is very happy and appreciates that her request was dealt with quickly.

Customer would like to thank the team for cutting the grass, advised they have done a fantastic job and she really appreciates it

Customer had reported litter on Silksworth complex. Following day he had walked past that area and every scrap was gone - amazing job.

Customer reported a pot of paint spilled on pavement outside his property. The paint has been removed and customer would like to thank the person / team who cleaned it up as they have done a great job.

Customer rang to say that she thinks the lads who empty her bins are lovely. She said they are really good and said they do a really good job and are a great help.

Customer would like to thank the refuse team for a great service provided

Customer is a widow and in ill health and would like to thank the Refuse Crews who come in to empty her bins. She really appreciates the service.

Events

I went with my 2 children to the festival of light and just wanted to say how fantastic it was. The staff were so friendly and welcoming.

We made the journey from Birmingham to see the lights with our granddaughter. What a surprise price on the gate, food prices the lights brilliant, best value by far. Thank you and your team for a great night.

Highways

Customer states he reported the footpath outside the Grangetown Community Centre for repair on Tuesday and by Thursday it was corrected. Customer impressed with this.

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

Libraries

As part of Sunderland Libraries Literature Festival, the customer took the opportunity to attend the Local Studies Library for a taster session on Find My Past. The customer said the guide was welcoming, very knowledgeable and provided clear guidance including practical tips on search strategies. She was very approachable, and nothing was too much trouble.

Parking Services

Customer would like to say a big thank you to parking enforcement team as the traffic warden was around the area to monitor traffic, customer said the residents really appreciated the traffic warden being there as she has problems with parking issues every day

Customer would like to say thank you to the traffic wardens as she had asked if the wardens would be able to be in the area when the school was holding an event. Customer said the residents appreciate it.

Misc.

The policy team has received lots of praise for the work it undertook for Sunderland Pride this year. One of the biggest successes was the 40 second film clip put on Facebook of the rainbow crossings being laid, the film clip has had 15.3k viewings.

Appendix 2

Complaints dealt with by the Ombudsman

The council received **6** complaints from the Ombudsman for Q3. The table below shows the number of complaints received together with comparative data for the previous year.

	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	Number of complaints 2019-20
Q1	5	6
Q2	10	11
Q3	6	6
Q4	6	
	27	23

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

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
City Development	2	1	0		3
Corporate Services	2	1	1		4
Neighbourhoods (including SCAS)	2	4	3		9
People, Communications & Partnerships	0	0	0		0
Together for Children	0	5	2		7
	6	11	6		23

Ombudsman Decisions

Of the 6 complaints - 2 were closed after initial enquiries and 4 were investigated.

	Total	Closed after initial enquiries	Detailed Investigations
Q1	6	5	1
Q2	11	7	4
Q3	6	2	4
Q4			
	23	14 (61%)	9 (39%)

Outcome of Detailed Investigations

	Detailed investigations	Number upheld	% upheld rate
Q1	1	1	100%
Q2	4	2	50%
Q3	4	3	75%
Q4			
	9	6	67%

Of the four detailed investigations undertaken in Q3, three were upheld, providing an upheld rate of 75%. Overall the upheld rate after three quarters is 67%

Information on the four detailed investigations undertaken in Q3 is included below. The Ombudsman's reference is included in brackets and the full report can be found on their website; www.lgo.org.uk.

Complaints Upheld (3)

Adult Services – (Sunderland City Council 18 007 253)

Complaint about the level of care a relative received at a nursing home

Outcome: upheld – maladministration with injustice.

Finding: There were failings in care including poor record keeping, a failure to follow NHS advice and a failure to address poor food and fluid intake. No written feedback was provided to the complainant on the outcome of a safeguarding enquiry and there had been a failure by the council to address the complaints.

Remedy: The Council was asked to apologise and pay £1000 to reflect avoidable distress.

Actions: A letter of apology has been sent to complainant together with the remedy payment.

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 19 004 608)

A complaint that the Council had not properly considered a claim for compensation.

Outcome: upheld – maladministration with injustice.

Finding: There was fault in the Council's handling of allegations against the complainant which then had an impact on his work and income. The Council had offered a measure of compensation, but the complainant feels it should be more. The Ombudsman is not able to assess the complainant's claim or recommend the Council pay more.

Actions: No further action required as the Ombudsman considered the injustice had already been remedied.

Together for Children – (Sunderland City Council 18 017 487)

Complaint about how the Council had handled contact issues regarding her grandchildren

Outcome: upheld – maladministration with injustice

Finding: There was no fault in the frequency/length of contact the Council arranged. However, the Council was at fault for not telling the complainant it had decided to suspend contact for three months and for failing to consider the complaint at stage two.

Remedy: The Council to apologise for its lack of communication, failure to keep the complainant informed and for not investigating the complaint at stage two. The council should also agree how it will communicate with the complainant in future.

Actions: A letter of apology has been sent to complainant covering the issues within the remedy.

Complaints Not Upheld (1)

Adult Services (Sunderland City Council 19 006 825)

A complaint about how the council had assessed care needs

Outcome: not upheld – no further action.

Finding: The Ombudsman discontinued the investigation as the complainant was now receiving support from the Council and was satisfied with that support.

Appendix 3 – Corporate Complaints

Stage One

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

	<i>Number of complaints 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Q1	3,315	1,951	704	-64%	92%
Q2	2,415	1,389	770	-44%	96%
Q3	1,496	592	684	+16%	95%
Q4	1,231	499			
	8,457	4,431	2158		

There has been a slight decrease in the numbers of complaints from 770 in Q2 to 684 in Q3. However, the numbers of complaints this year appear to be finding a level and are stabilising around the 700 mark.

The 684 complaints received this quarter are broken down into Directorates in the table below;

Table 2	City Development	Corporate Services	Neighbourhoods	People, Communications & Partnerships	Total
Q1	47	91	560	6	704
Q2	75	74	612	9	770
Q3	89	59	532	4	684
Q4					
	211 (10%)	224 (10%)	1704 (79%)	19 (1%)	2158

Neighbourhoods

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3
Environmental Services	537	574	510
Libraries	2	0	0
Access to Housing	2	3	2
Anti-social Behaviour	1	5	4
Welfare Rights	0	2	1
Public Protection	11	15	6
Events	1	11	5
Misc.	6	2	4
	560	612	532

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	Q2	Q3
Refuse: <i>non/late delivery of bins & caddies/missed bins</i>	433	464	454
Bereavement: <i>maintenance of cemeteries/ crematorium</i>	13	8	8
Street Cleaning: <i>fly tipping/dog bins</i>	63	70	31
Trees, fixed play, trade waste: <i>grass cutting/ tree pruning</i>	16	18	10
Enforcement: <i>Fly tipping/littering/dog fouling</i>	6	3	3
Waste Management: <i>Beach Street Depot – staff attitude/permits</i>	6	11	4
	537	574	510

Refuse Complaints

Of the 510 complaints received for Environmental Services, 454 (89%) 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.

	Number of Complaints for 2018/19	Number of Complaints for 2019/20	% change from previous year
Q1	1,606	433	-73%
Q2	1,012	464	-54%
Q3	358	454	+27%
Q4	253		
	3,229	1351	

Numbers remain steady, with a slight decrease (2%) from Q2. Work continues within the service area to ensure the improvements made in previous quarters continue, and any issues that may lead to an increase in complaints in any quarter are considered and addressed in a timely manner. For context, should these figures be maintained over the coming quarters it will still result in a substantial, year on year reduction, amounting to -44%.

City Development

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3
Planning & Property	4	7	6
Infrastructure & Transport	21	51	43
Parking	22	17	40
	47	75	89

Infrastructure & Transport

Complaints about this service area were regarding road resurfacing, footway repairs, traffic calming/restrictions and pot holes. Complaints regarding Infrastructure and Transport decreased from 51 in Q2 to 43 in Q3.

Parking

Complaints about this service area were regarding the attitude and actions of civil enforcement officers, parking penalties and issues to do with car parks. The increase was across several service areas, with the biggest being for regarding car parks and Civil Enforcement Officers.

Complaints have risen to 40 in Q3 from 17 in Q2. The areas of complaint where the increases have been noticed reflect issues which tend to be raised with the council as a result of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) been issued. Further enquiries revealed that issues have been incorrectly logged as complaints when they should have been logged as an appeal against a PCN.

The Parking Team and the Complaints and Feedback Team will work with colleagues in Customer Services to ensure these issues are correctly recorded in future and that incorrectly logged issues are rectified immediately so that they do not impact on complaints statistics for future reporting.

Corporate Services

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3
Council Tax	22	19	17
Customer Service Network	38	26	23
Benefits	8	7	6
Property Services	3	2	0
Business Support Services	2	7	5
Registrars	9	9	5
Electoral Services	5	2	1
Misc.	4	2	2
	91	74	59

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 327,117 contacts this quarter; 23 complaints represents a dissatisfaction rate of 0.07%. Every complaint is reviewed and any opportunity to improve is acted upon. This may include staff training or improvements to processes or systems.

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.

Eight 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. Five reviews were completed within the 25-working day timescale with three reviews taking longer; 30, 33 and 39 days respectively. The delays were due to the complexity of the reviews.

Stage 2 Reviews	<i>Number of Reviews 2018/19</i>	Number of Reviews 2019/20	% responded to within 25-day timescale
Q1	4	5	100%
Q2	8	6	83%
Q3	6	8	63%
Q4	6		
	24	19	

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

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	
City Development	2	2	3		7	37%
Corporate Services	2	0	2		4	21%
Neighbourhoods	1	4	3		8	42%
People, Communications & Partnerships	0	0	0		0	0%
	5	6	8		19	100%

Outcome of Stage 2 Reviews

Complaint Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2019/20	<i>Comparison Figures for previous year 2018-19</i>
Upheld in full	-	1	1		2	2
Upheld in part	3	2	4		9	3
Not Upheld	1	3	2		6	15
Unsubstantiated	-				-	2
Not Eligible	-		1		1	2
Withdrawn	1				1	0
	5	6	8		19	24

Of the eight reviews undertaken in Q3, five had some element of complaint upheld and information on these are included below;

Reviews upheld (1)

Bereavement Services – A family had requested that their relative be buried as close to her parents as possible, within the Catholic section of a cemetery. However, upon arriving at the cemetery for the burial, the family found that the grave had been dug in a different section.

Outcome – upheld: there had been an administration error on the part of the Council by Business Services that resulted in the family's request not been actioned appropriately. The Council responded quickly to remedy the situation and the burial went ahead two and a half hours later.

The Council acknowledged that the error had caused upset and distress to the family, albeit the length of that distress was limited, it was nonetheless significant. The Council offered sincere apologies and immediately offered to pay for the funeral invoice in full. Internal procedures have been amended to prevent similar errors occurring.

Reviews partly upheld (4)

Property Services – a complaint about issues to do with the demolition of premises opposite the complainant's home by a third-party contractor; delays in processing an FOI request and delays in considering the complaint.

Outcome: – partly upheld in respect of two elements; *delay in processing FOI request and delay in considering the complaint*. The delays were due in part to the Council awaiting a response from the third-party contractor.

Refuse – a complaint about the non-emptying of a communal recycling bin due to contamination, also the crew's failure to return the bins correctly to where presented and a delay in responding to the complaint.

Outcome – partly upheld in respect of one element; *delay in responding to complaint*. The complaint was not responded to within the corporate timescale, due to an oversight by the service.

Council Tax – a complaint about a delay in finalising a Council Tax account and the lack of acknowledgement to correspondence he sent into the Council Tax section

Outcome – partly upheld. The service was unable to offer individual acknowledgments due to the sheer volume of correspondence received by the service at the time, which also contributed to an overall delay in offering a response. The council offered its apologies and will review this complaint to see if any improvements could be made to its way of working; that could better help inform customers of any potential delay in dealing with a request made to the Council. The Review recommended that the service area look at their procedures for acknowledging correspondence and this is something that is currently being reviewed.

Bereavement Services – the complainant was dissatisfied with the maintenance/upkeep a Cemetery grounds, the actions of workers on site and concerns that correct process has not been followed.

Outcome – partly upheld in respect of one element; *correct process had not been followed*. The letter sent to the complainant setting out the reasons why future contact with the council would be managed in a specific way had not included details about how the arrangement was to be reviewed. An apology was offered for this oversight.

Appendix 4: Adult Social Care

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

	<i>Number of complaints 2017-18</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2018-19</i>	<i>Number of complaints 2019-20</i>	% change from same period last year	% responded to within timescale
Apr-Jun	30	14	24	+71%	69%
Jul-Sep	33	38	21	-45%	69%
Oct-Dec	32	18	20	+11%	66%
Jan-Mar	42	23			
total	137	93	65		

20 complaints received in Q3 of 2019-20 regarding adult social care services.

There were 1943 new contacts made to Adult Social Care during Q3; and a total of 6252 open cases to Adult Social Care at the end of this quarter. Against the open number of cases to Adult Services, 20 complaints would provide an overall dissatisfaction rate of 0.3%.

Nature of Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3
Actions of worker	6	4	7
Assessment Disagreement	4	1	1
Care Practice Issues	0	1	0
Communication	4	4	3
Delay	3	2	1
Equipment Issues	2	0	0
Finance	4	3	2
Lack of Choice	0	4	0
Quality Issues	0	1	6
Actions of residents	0	1	0
Lack of help/support	1	0	0
	24	21	20

Outcome of Complaints	Q1	Q2	Q3
Upheld in full	2	4	5
Upheld in part	9	2	2
Not upheld	11	14	9
NE/WD/OTH**	1	1	1
Ongoing	1	0	3
	24	21	20

**not eligible/withdrawn/other

In Q3 there were seven complaints (35%) which had some element upheld which compares to six complaints (29%) for Q2 and 11 complaints (46%) in Q1.

Detailed Investigations (1)

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. Detailed investigations are reported following their completion, so that the findings and learning outcomes can be provided to Scrutiny.

Adult Social Care – a complaint regarding a service user's contribution charge. The complainant felt these costs should have been covered by Continuing Health Care arrangements.

Outcome – partly upheld. There was no evidence to suggest that the correct procedure or practice had not been followed by officers; but key information had not been provided to the family in a timely and accurate manner.

Actions: The Council had already provided a written apology and had offered suitable remedy.

Appendix 5: Sunderland Care and Support

REPORT TO SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL'S CHIEF OFFICER'S GROUP AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

SUNDERLAND CARE AND SUPPORT LIMITED

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS Q3 2019-20 (OCTOBER-DECEMBER) UPDATE

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Sunderland City Council's Chief Officer Group and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are requested to note the contents of the report.

3 OUR APPROACH

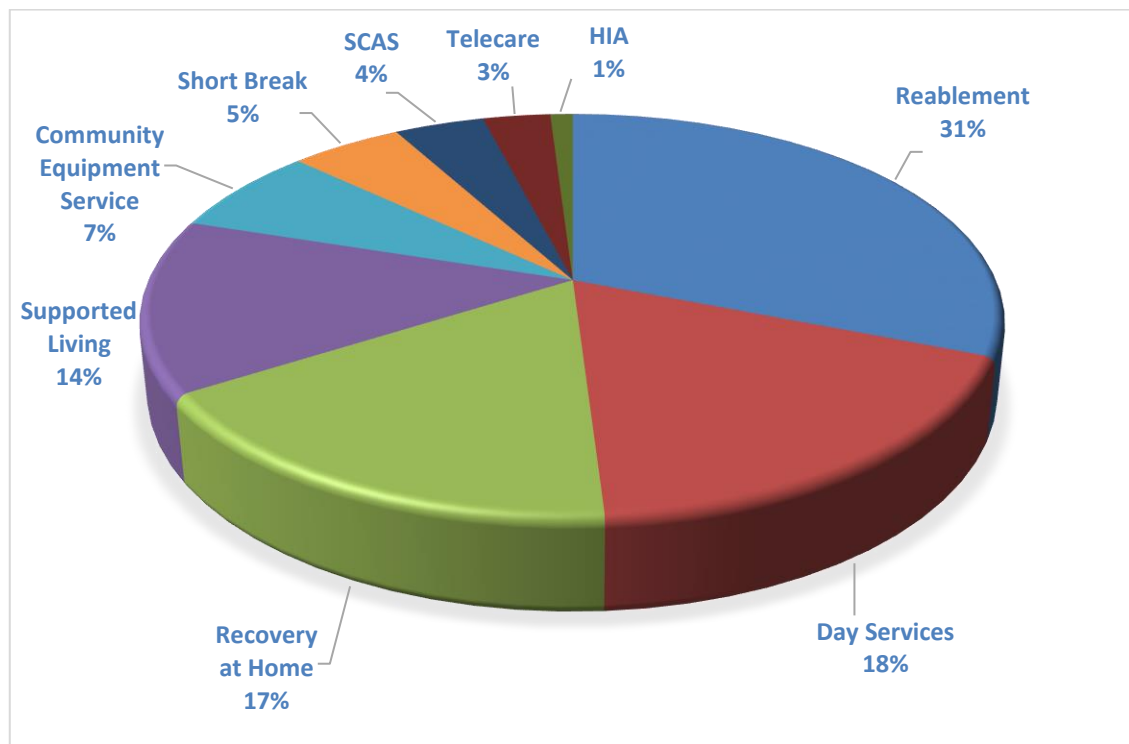
- 3.1 **Sunderland Care and Support Limited (SCAS)** takes pride in the high-quality services we provide our customers.
- 3.2 We pro-actively welcome both positive and negative feedback from all of our customers and view this as our opportunity to learn and to improve; and recognise that such feedback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

4 COMPLIMENTS

- 4.1 A total of **100** compliments were received by the Company during the third quarter of 2019/20 across the following service areas:

- **Reablement:** 31 - five more than the previous quarter
- **Day Services:** 18 - five more than the previous quarter
- **Recovery at Home:** 17 - twelve more than the previous quarter
- **Supported Living:** 14 - three less than the previous quarter
- **Community Equipment Service:** 7 - two more than the previous quarter
- **Short Break:** 5 - one less than the previous quarter
- **SCAS (HQ):** 4 - three more than the previous quarter
- **Telecare:** 3 - one more than the previous quarter
- **Home Improvement Agency:** 1 - one more than the previous quarter
- **Children's –** 0 - one less than the previous quarter

4.2 Q2 Compliments Breakdown



4.3 Figures for **Quarter 3 compliments** were noted to be nearly a **third higher** than those of the previous quarter – representing over 28% of the **355 compliments** received during the past year.

4.4 Almost a third of compliments received for the quarter were in relation to the **Reablement at Home** service and were submitted in recognition of the hard work of team members and in respect of the excellent quality of service customers had received, supporting them to live as independently as possible within their own homes, some highlights of which included:

- Praise during the quarter referenced the 'excellent' care and 'wonderful' service provided by 'proactive, positive and reliable' team members; with one Reablement at Home customer highlighting that staff were 'very kind and helpful. Nothing was a problem', and they were, 'a great team and very friendly'
- A thank you card received from the family of a Reablement customer in recognition of 'the excellent care' and 'wonderful service' provided for their mother following a fall
- A thank you card received by the 'wonderful' Reablement Team in gratitude of the 'amazing' care and support provided.

4.5 Nearly a half of compliments received for the quarter related to **Day Service**, **Recovery at Home Service** or **Supported Living Service** provision, some highlights of which included:

- A compliment from a customer of the **Washington Community Resource Centre** in recognition of the 'wonderful people who care for me'
- A compliment received by the **Recovery at Home service** in recognition of their work to find the 'best solution' for a patient's discharge from hospital and for their effective partnership working
- Praise received from the Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust in recognition of the professionalism of team members from the Claremont Terrace **Supported Living Service**, highlighting their excellent communication skills, the effectiveness of relationships built with customers & fellow professionals, their responsiveness to challenging situations and their standard of care provision

4.6 Other notable compliments received during the period included:

- Feedback from Barnes Park **Coach House Coffee Stop** customers with regard to 'Lovely friendly service' and comments such as 'staff do an amazing job', 'I believe this to be the best café in Sunderland. All the staff are happy and always smiling and so friendly' noted
- A Thank You card received from the family of a **Grindon Mews** customer in appreciation of the service provided by 'fab staff'
- A compliment from a **Farmborough Court** customer received in recognition of care and support provided by the team and for 'looking after her so well'.
- A Thank You card received from the family of a **Home Improvement Agency** customer in recognition of the support provided by the Service, highlighting that the work undertaken within his home would make a big difference to all their lives
- A compliment from a customer of the **Community Equipment Service** noted to be 'over the moon with the grab rails fitted' by the service. It was also highlighted that team members provided a 'brilliant service' and were an 'absolute joy & nothing was too much bother'.

COMPLAINTS

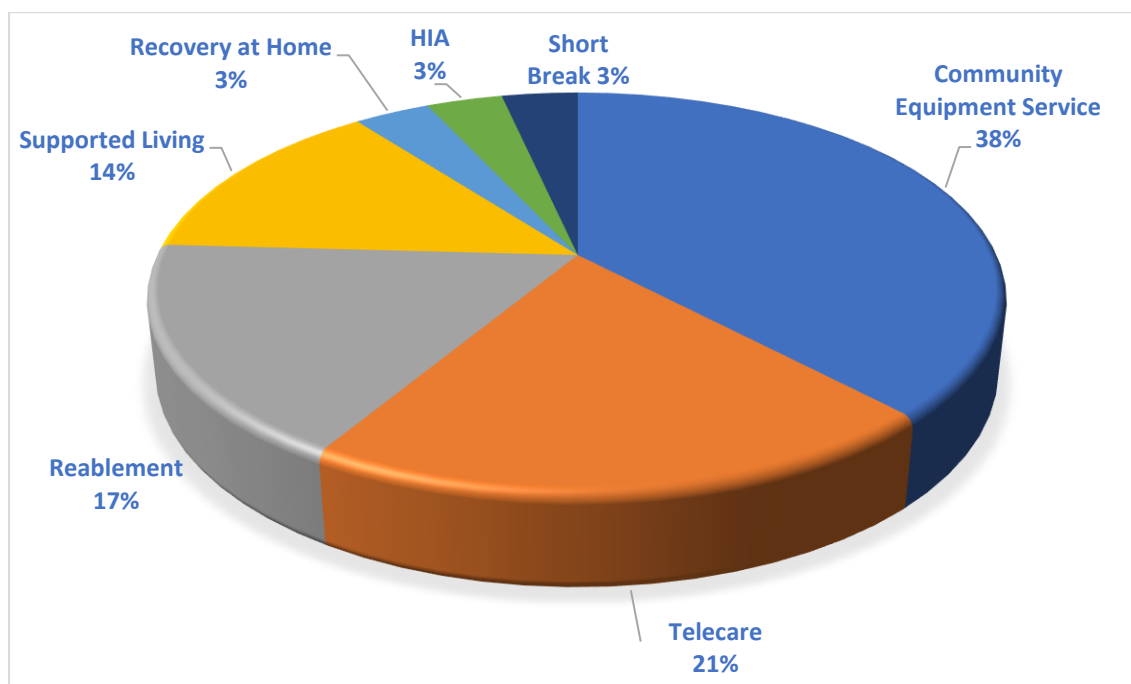
4.7 A total of **29** complaints were received by the Company during the third quarter of 2019/20, broken down as follows:

- **Community Equipment Service:** x11 - **six less than the previous quarter**
- **Telecare:** x6 - **three more than the previous quarter**
- **Reablement:** x5 - **one more than the previous quarter**
- **Supported Living:** x4 - **five less than the previous quarter**
- **Recovery at Home:** x1 - no change
- **Home Improvement Agency:** x1 - **one more than the previous quarter**
- **Short Break:** x1 - **one more than the previous quarter**
- **Children's:** zero - **five less than the previous quarter**
- **Day Services:** zero - **one less than the previous quarter**
- **SCAS (HQ):** zero – no change

4.8 Figures for **Quarter 3 Complaints** were noted to be nearly **a third less** than those received by the Company during the previous quarter

4.9 It was also noted that the Company also handled one further complaint during the period, that upon investigation was found to be the responsibility of another organisation with no fault being attributable to Sunderland Care and Support Limited.

4.10 Q2 Complaints Breakdown



- 4.11 Of the **29** complaints received during the quarter, 12 (**41%**) were **not upheld**, 12 (**41%**) were **upheld** in full, 4 (**14%**) were **partially upheld**, and one further complaint was in the process of being resolved.
- 4.12 Of the complaints received during the third quarter, 24 (**83%**) were resolved locally utilising the Company's Step 1 - Local Resolution complaints procedures and 4 (**14%**) were resolved formally using the Company's Step 2 - Formal Resolution complaints procedures.
- 4.13 Additionally, **all complaints** received by Sunderland Care and Support during the quarter **were successfully resolved within agreed timescales** with only 1 complaint requiring external resolution (via the Council's Complaints Team).
- 4.14 **Community Equipment Service**

During the quarter the majority of complaints received by the Company (a total of **11** – representing 38% of all complaints received by the Company during the quarter) were found to be in relation to the **delivery and / or collection of equipment** by the **Community Equipment Service (CES)**.

Although this figure represented the highest proportion of complaints, it should be considered within the context that the service delivers and / or collects around 13,000 individual items of equipment for customers each and every quarter.

Additionally, when this figure is compared against figures for the previous quarter, the number of complaints received by the Service has actually seen **a reduction of 35%** - and also **a 66% reduction** when the figures are compared against complaints received by the Service during the first quarter of 2019/20.

It is also of note that following receipt of the complaints by CES - 5 (**45%**) of which were **upheld in full**, 2 (**18%**) were **upheld in-part** and 4 (**36%**) were **not upheld** following investigation - the Business Manager introduced a range of remedial measures to help mitigate, where possible, the likelihood of similar issues occurring in future.

4.15 Other Service Areas

The remaining 18 complaints received by SCAS during the quarter relating to service areas other than CES (equating to 62% of all complaints received for the quarter), 8 (44%) complaints **were not upheld**, only 7 complaints (38%) were **upheld in-full**, 2 complaints (11%) were **upheld in-part** and one further complaint was in the process of being resolved.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.16 The Company has recently reviewed our compliments and complaints policy and will soon be publishing a new guidance document for customers and colleagues.
- 4.17 The Company has been keen to reflect within our new policy document, our commitment to be a learning organisation, where improvement is led through open feedback and recognising how we can do things better.
- 4.18 In conjunction with the review, the Company has recently improved its internal management & governance of complaints with the introduction of formal complaints clinics. Chaired by our Deputy Chief Operating Officer and attended by Senior colleagues these monthly clinics are utilised to identify themes, improvement opportunities and to reflect upon lessons learnt.
- 4.19 With the introduction of the clinics and the promotion of our reviewed policy we would expect to note a rise in the number of compliments and complaints we receive over the coming months.