

Moray Council

Complaints Handling Annual Report



2018/19

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1. Chief Executive's Foreword

Scotland's public sector has a duty to the people it serves, and part of that duty involves responding positively to complaints. This annual report serves three purposes: to comply with a national requirement to report against a suite of eight Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) Performance Indicators (PIs); internally to inform management to help us learn from complaints and improve services; and externally to provide information and feedback to the public who engaged with us during the complaints process.

In this report you will find details of how we have performed in dealing with complaints, the outcomes of some investigations and how we have changed our services as a result. I am pleased to see many work practices modified as a result of a complaint, which I feel shows we are listening to the public when they're not happy.

Naturally, not every complaint is upheld, but clearly, they are all addressed at either frontline stage or through a more detailed, thorough investigation within respective timescales including authorised extensions. We take our commitment to the SPSO framework seriously and I am confident that our customer care will continue to improve as a result of complaints we receive.

Roddy Burns
Chief Executive

2. Introduction

- 2.1** This Complaints Handling Annual Report summarises the council's performance in terms of handling customer complaints received between 01 April 2018 and 31 March 2019.
- 2.2** The 2018-2019 reporting period provides the sixth full year of data under the new model Complaints Handling Procedure. This annual report is presented in accordance with the National Performance Framework, which was published in August 2013. The Complaints Standard Authority developed a suite of eight Performance Indicators in association with the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network on which we are represented. These indicators are a valuable source of information about council services as this helps to identify recurring or underlying problems, derive learning from complaints and highlight potential areas for improvement.
- 2.3** The Complaints Standard Authority, in association with the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network, is working on a revision of the model Complaint Handling Procedure for introduction in April 2020. Part of their proposal is to amend the suite of Performance Indicators from 8 to 6. Performance Indicator 7 on customer satisfaction is to be removed and many councils have taken the decision not to include this indicator in their 2018/19 annual report. Poor customer service survey response rates and a lack of customer understanding in survey completion have provided limited opportunity to benchmark either locally or at a national level. We will provide a brief report on customer satisfaction within this report.
- 2.4** Performance Indicator 8 – Learning from Complaints – we now include quarterly information on the number of completed learning outcomes for each complaint that was upheld or partially upheld.
- 2.5** The council always aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to our community, but we recognise that there are times when we fail to meet the expectations of our customers. The council welcomes feedback as it provides information that helps services learn from complaints and to modify and improve the way services are delivered. Complaints are viewed as a positive communication tool and are encouraged.

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction, by one or more members of the public, about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

2.6 Our complaints procedure has two stages:

- **Stage one** – ‘frontline resolution’: we will always try to resolve complaints quickly, within five working days, and in exceptional circumstances extend for a further five days.
- **Stage two** – ‘investigation’: if customers remain dissatisfied with our stage one response, they can escalate their complaint to stage two. Complaints that are complex or need detailed investigation from the outset can be looked at immediately at stage two. These complaints will be acknowledged within three working days and a written response provided within twenty working days; this can be extended in exceptional circumstances.

2.7 Following completion of our complaints process, if a customer remains dissatisfied, they can ask the SPSO to consider their complaint further and we advise them of this entitlement.

2.8 In support of the Complaints Handling Procedure, the council has a Complaints Management System enabling us to record, track and report on complaints information across all services. Within this system, we record how we have dealt with and responded to complaints.

2.9 Monitoring complaints information, the preparation and publication of quarterly reports and this annual report helps to provide a clear basis for identifying service failures (‘learning from complaints’) and information on how effectively the council is handling complaints (‘complaints performance’).

2.10 The Performance Indicators covered in this report provide a tool that the council and the public can use to judge objectively how well complaints are being handled and how they inform service improvement activity.

2.11 The complaints performance data in this report will also inform our Annual Public Performance Report summarising our performance against the Statutory Performance Indicators.

2.12 Compliance with the Complaints Handling Procedure is monitored by Audit Scotland in conjunction with the SPSO and in line with the principles of the Best Value Shared Risk Assessment arrangements.

2.13 A new two stage statutory social work complaints process was introduced on 1 April 2017 and social work complaints administered under the new process are included in this annual report.

3 Executive Summary

3.1 This report is written against the backdrop of continued financial constraints that have required Moray Council to implement several budget savings measures that have impacted on some Service areas. Within this context it may not be surprising to note that the number of complaints received and dealt with has again shown an increase.

3.2 Improvement has been made in complaints performance in relation to stage one complaints:

- complaints received being closed off at stage one -
81% in 2018/19 versus 66% in 2017-18 giving a 15% increase in complaint handling.
- stage one complaints being upheld -
Increased to 31% in 2018/19 versus 26% in 2017-18
- stage one complaints closed off within the five working day target -
Increased to 81% versus 78% in 2017-18.

This shows a marked improvement in both dealing with and closing off complaints at the point closest to delivery. The increase in upheld complaints has afforded us opportunity to learn and improve our service provision.

- 3.3** As in 2017-18, our complaint recording has continued to rise. This year the rate has risen to 6.40 per 1,000 population versus 5.75 in 2017-18 (Note: the rate across Scotland in 2017-18 was 10.36% per 1,000 population).

We continue to provide quarterly data to the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network along with 30 other councils (one council did not submit data) for benchmarking purposes. Each council has varying methods of recording complaints preventing meaningful comparison. A sub group of the network is working with the SPSO Complaints Standards Authority to agree revised Performance Indicators for introduction in April 2020.

It is encouraging to see that in 2018-19, Education dealt with 43% of their complaints at front line versus 22% in 2017-18. Community Care also showed improvement increasing from 60% in 2017-18 to 67% in 2018-19. Integrated Children's Services continued to deal with most of their complaints at stage two, increasing from 68% in 2017-18 to 84% in 2018-19. Further guidance and training sessions will be delivered by the Complaints Officer to school and social care staff with the aim of increasing the recording of stage one complaints and having these closed off at this stage.

The Complaints Officer continues to monitor MP/MSP correspondence to ensure it is dealt with as either an enquiry or as a complaint as defined within our Complaints Policy.

- 3.4** Performance in resolving stage one complaints within the 5-working day timescale has shown improvement with scope for further improvement. One of the biggest factors in not meeting the 5-working day target is administration of complaints. The Complaints Officer will deliver training to complaint administrators and staff to improve this. This year, 77% were completed on time compared to 87% completed on time in 2017-18. Of the 111 complaints closed off beyond 5 working days, 24 (22%) had an approved extension, this was up 19% from 2017-18 however there is still room for further improvement.
- 3.5** Performance in resolving stage two complaints within the 20-working day timescale is another area for further improvement. This year, 53% were completed on time meaning that almost half of all stage two complaints were responded to out with the timescale. Of the 45 complaints closed off beyond 20 working days, only 4 (9%) had an approved extension, down 6% from 2017-18. Weekly monitoring by the Complaints Officer has made limited impact on authorised extensions for stage one and stage two complaints. Monitoring will continue along with management training to improve upon this.
- 3.6** There was a very encouraging 97% completion rate of the Learning Outcomes section within our Complaint Management System for each upheld and partially upheld complaint. Examples of where we have learned and made improvements to a policy or procedure can be found within Section 4.8 of this report.

4 Complaints Performance Indicators

The aim of the model Complaints Handling Procedure is for as many complaints as possible to be resolved at the frontline (i.e. at stage one) with as few as possible requiring progression to investigation (i.e. stage two) in order to improve both the customer's experience and the council's service provision.

The SPSO Performance Indicators provide the minimum requirement for a local authority to self-assess, report on performance and to undertake benchmarking activities. These indicators are:

- Indicator 1 – complaints received per 1,000 of population

- Indicator 2 – closed complaints
- Indicator 3 – complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld
- Indicator 4 – average times
- Indicator 5 – performance against timescales
- Indicator 6 – number of cases where an extension is authorised
- Indicator 7 – customer satisfaction
- Indicator 8 – learning from complaints

A breakdown of 2018-19 figures for relevant indicators will be explained in this section together with 2017-18 figures and some data from previous years to allow for benchmark comparisons. A breakdown of indicator figures for services is included as an appendix.

4.1 Indicator 1

This indicator records the total number of complaints received by the council. This is the sum of the number of complaints received at stage one (frontline resolution) and the number of complaints received directly at stage two (investigation). To allow for a fair comparison across all 32 councils in Scotland, the figure of complaints per 1,000 of population is used.

Table 1: Number of complaints received by Moray Council (per 1,000 population)

Complaints received by Moray Council	2017-18	2018-19
Total number of received	551	611
Population (mid-year population estimate)	95,780	95,520
Number of complaints per 1,000 population	5.75	6.40

*Some of the complaints dealt with during the period relate to complaints raised before April 2018, and some raised in March 2019 would be unresolved before the end of March 2019. So, there will not be a direct correlation between numbers received and numbers responded to.

Compared to the 2017-18 figures, there has been an increase of 10.9% in the number of complaints received and a slight drop of around 0.3% in the population size. Consequently, the number of complaints per 1,000 population has increased by 11.2% compared to 2017-18 (Table 1).¹

Many complaints continue to be received by Environmental Services (76%). Complaints to Direct Services, one of the services that has the most direct contact with Moray residents, has shown an 32% increase since 2017-18. However, the other service with direct contact with residents, Housing & Property Service has recorded a 9% reduction in complaints compared to 2017-18.

The Complaints Officer has continued to pick up under recording across a few departments. Further training has been given to try and improve on this.

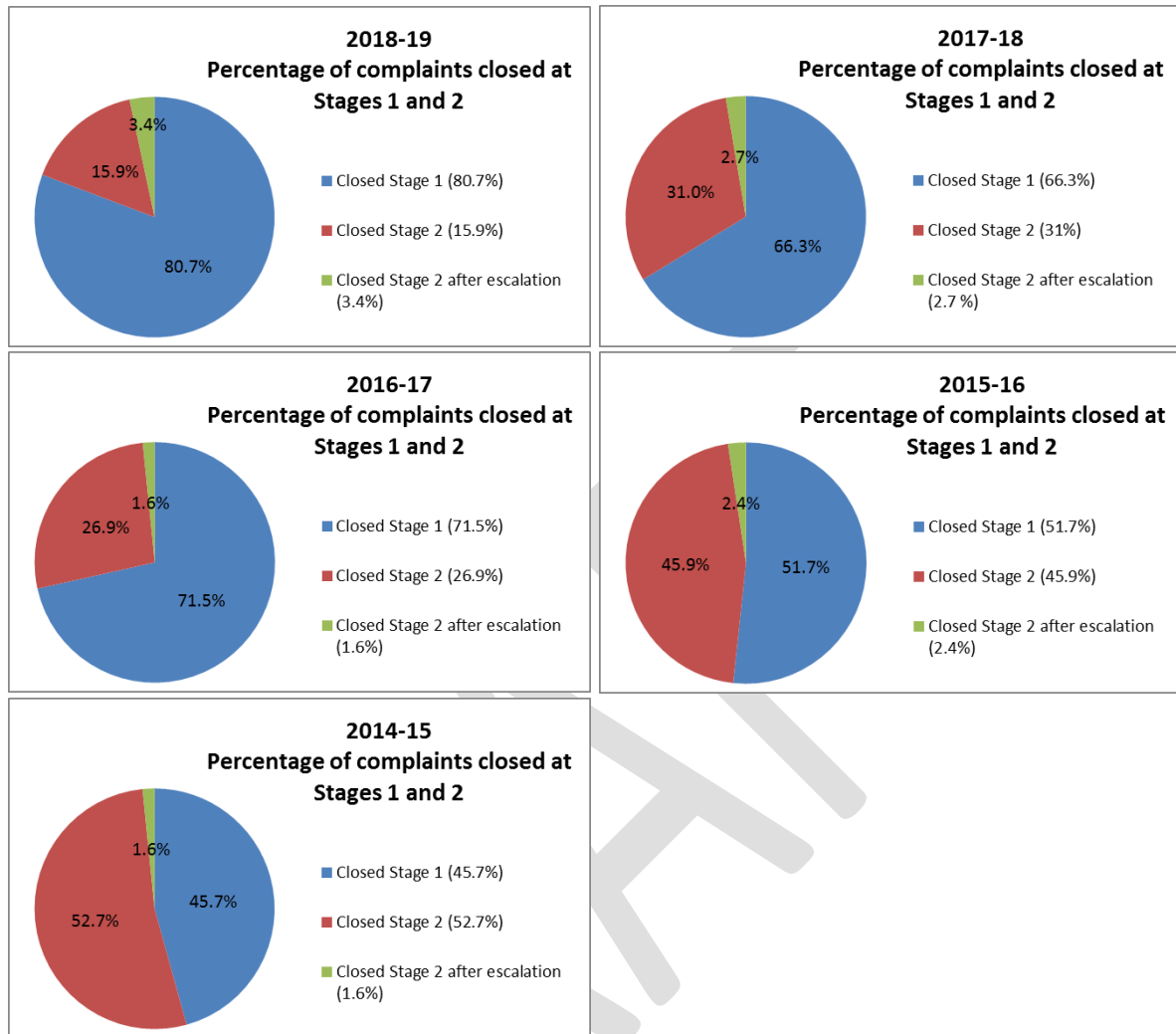
4.2 Indicator 2

This indicator provides information on the number of complaints closed at stage one and stage two as a percentage of the 597 closed complaints (note that there were 611 complaints received with 14 not closed during the reporting period). The term 'closed' refers to a complaint that has had a response sent to the customer and at the time no further action is required.

This indicator will report:

- the number of complaints closed at stage one as % of all complaints
- the number of complaints closed at stage two as % of all complaints
- the number of complaints closed at stage two after escalation as % of all complaints

Figure 1: Percentage of complaints closed at Stages One and Two (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



During 2018-19 four-fifths of complaints were dealt with at frontline resolution stage compared to one-fifth dealt with at the investigation stage. This is a considerable increase from the 66.3% dealt with at frontline in 2017-18, and 35% more than in 2014-15 when fewer than half of all complaints were resolved at this stage (45.7%).

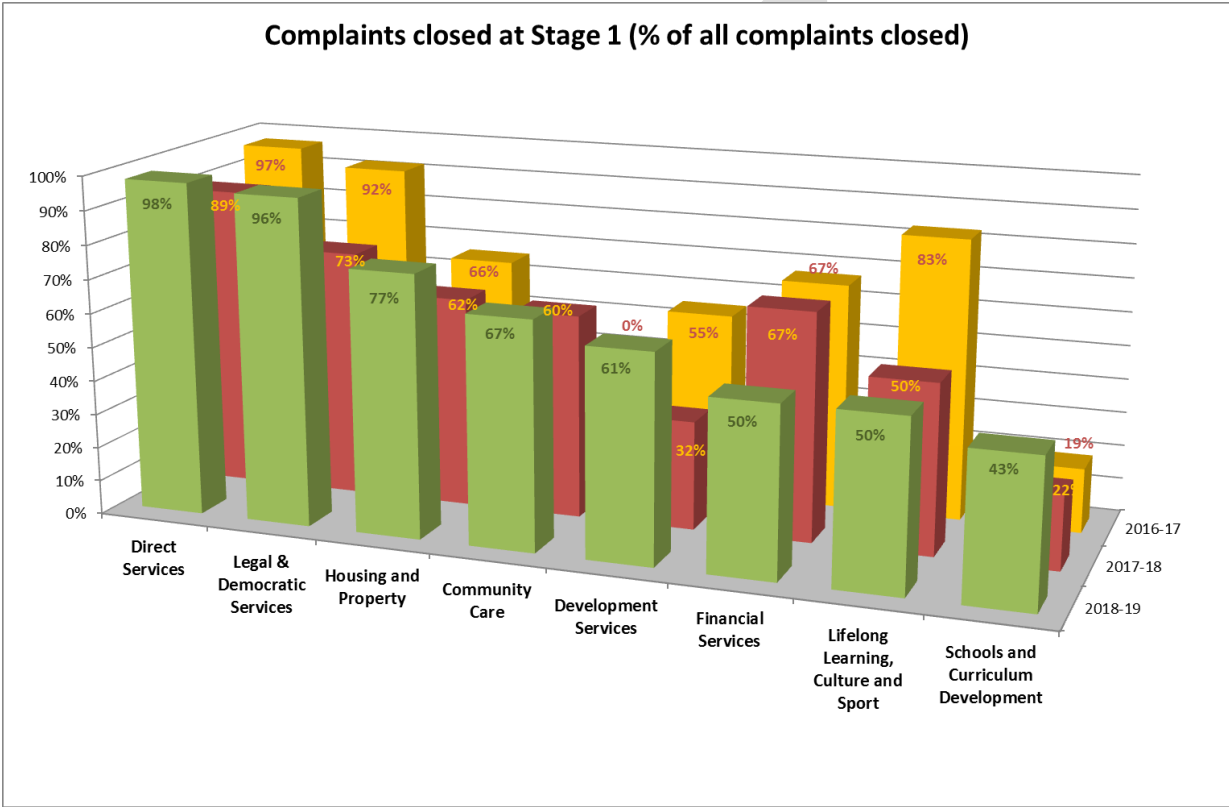
It is heartening to see that most complaints continue to be dealt with at frontline, as suggested by the SPSO’s guidance on the Complaints Handling Procedure to “take every opportunity to resolve service users’ complaints at the first point of contact if at all possible.” Continued emphasis is placed on highlighting the complaints model to individual services at the quarterly Complaints Administration Group meetings and providing complaints handling inputs to department staff, including the sharing of best practice to improve effective.

As in previous reporting periods Environmental Services received most complaints – 451 (76%). This is to be expected as they are responsible for busy service provision such as roads, waste management and planning where complaints often arise. Education and Social Care were the next highest – 94 (16%); Corporate Services – 52 (9%) received the remaining complaints. (See Figure 23 – Appendix).

Direct Services continue to lead the way in resolving complaints at frontline – 251 (98%). In 2018-19 Housing and Property continued their improvement of recent years and resolved 133 (77%) of complaints at frontline, which compares favourably to the 46% resolved at frontline in 2015-16. Community Care have built upon their performance in recent years. In 2016-17 all 10 of the complaints raised concerning Community Care were dealt with at stage two, whereas in 2018-19 the majority were dealt with at frontline (18 complaints equivalent to 67%,).

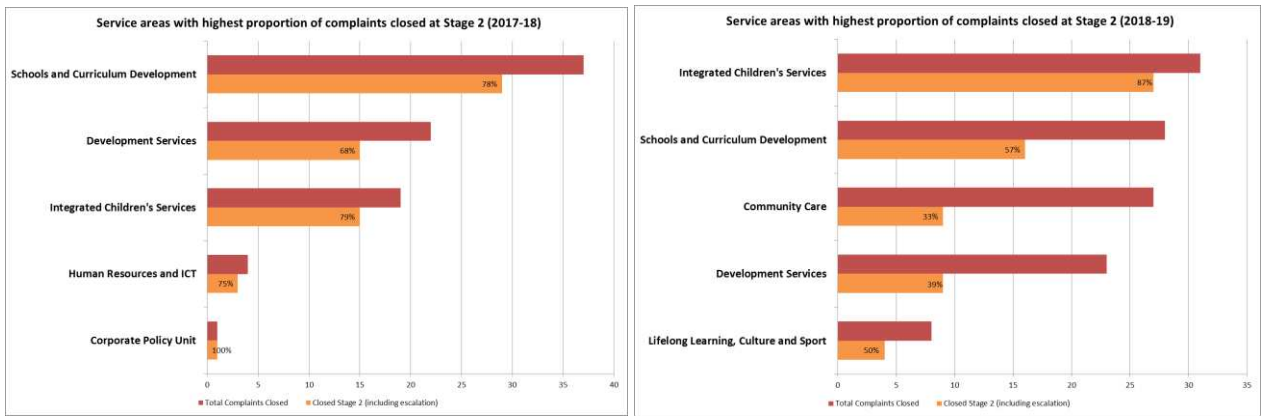
Two services resolve most complaints at the investigation stage; Integrated Children’s Services (84%) & Schools and Curriculum Development (57%), although it should be noted the relatively low number of complaints both services receive in comparison to Direct Services & Housing and Property.

Figure 2: Complaints closed at Stage One as a % of all complaints closed (2016-17 through to 2018-19)



27 out of 31 Integrated Children’s Services complaints (87%) were dealt with at stage two, while 16 out of the 28 Schools and Curriculum Development (57%) complaints were resolved at stage two (Figure 3). 2 out of 3 complaints raised against Human Resources & Information Communications Technology were closed at the investigative stage, but due to the small number this is not considered statistically significant.

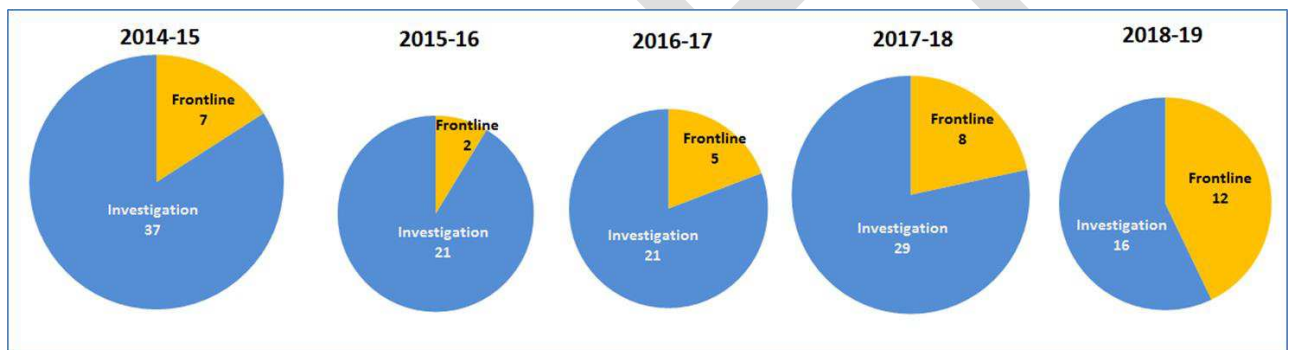
Figure 3: Complaints closed at Stage Two as a % of all complaints closed (2018-19 compared to 2017-18)



Stage two complaints often involve speaking with several witnesses, meeting with complainants and liaising with partner agencies. In such circumstances, concluding these enquiries and providing a written response to a complainant normally exceeds five working days.

There were 9 fewer complaints received by Schools and Curriculum Development than in 2017-18 (Figure 4), and of the 28 recorded 12 (43%) were resolved at frontline stage; double the 22% concluded at frontline in 2017-18 and continuing the trend of recent years.

Figure 4: Schools and Curriculum Development complaints resolved (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



4.3 Indicator 3

There is a requirement for a formal outcome (upheld, partially upheld or not upheld) to be recorded for each complaint.

This indicator will report:

- the number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one
- the number of complaints not upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one
- the number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one
- the number of complaints upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two
- the number of complaints not upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two
- the number of complaints partially upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two
- the number of escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two
- the number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two
- the number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two

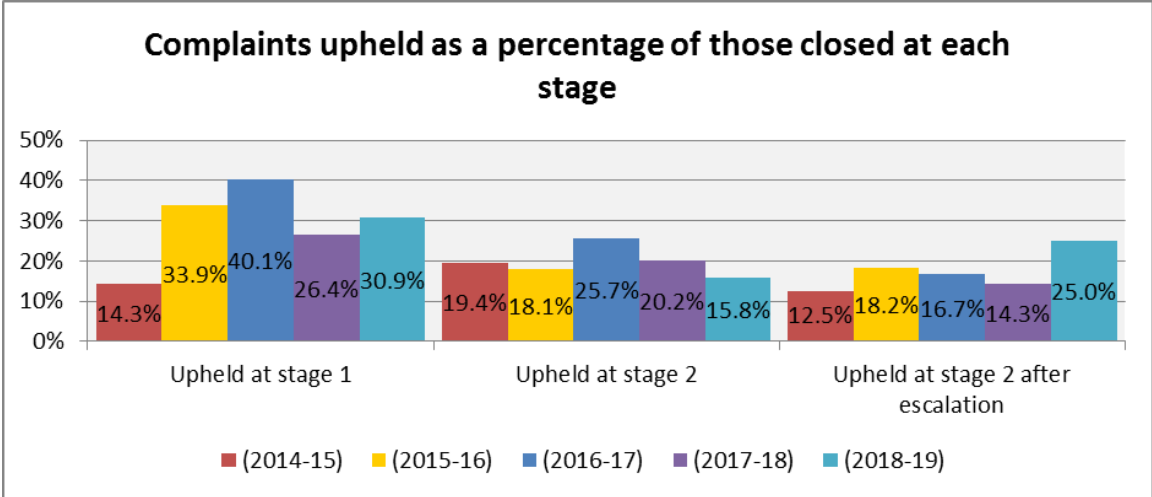
A complaint is defined as ‘upheld’ when the information in support of the complaint outweighs the service provided. A ‘partially upheld’ complaint results when there are several complaint issues raised and some, but not all, of them are upheld. Complaints are ‘not upheld’ when there is little or no information to support the complaint; that the service provided was of a reasonable standard in line with typical expectations; or if a request for services was misdirected as a complaint. The council reviews all complaints and each customer should be contacted to confirm to them whether their complaint has been ‘upheld’, ‘partially upheld’ or ‘not upheld’ together with an explanation of the findings.

Over one-third (39%) of frontline (stage one) complaints were ‘upheld’, or ‘partially upheld’ (Figures 5 & 6) in 2018-19, similar to 2017-18. In 2016-17 the proportion was 47.8%, and in 2015-16 it was 46%, compared to just one-quarter in 2014-15. This proportion demonstrates that mistakes are being acknowledged, apologies given with learning and improvement outcomes sought and implemented.

For stage two complaints ‘upheld’ or ‘partially upheld’ at the investigation stage, the proportion in 2018-19 remained unchanged at 43%, the same as in 2017-18 and 2016-17. Indeed over the past 5 years the proportion of stage two complaints (including after escalation) has been consistently around 40%.

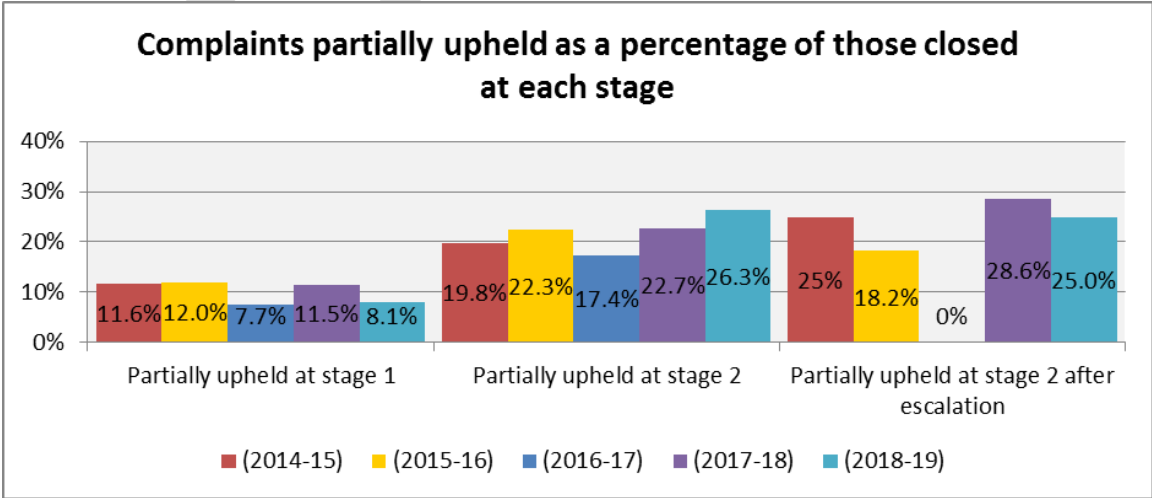
Upheld Complaints

Figure 5: Complaints upheld as a percentage of those closed at each stage (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



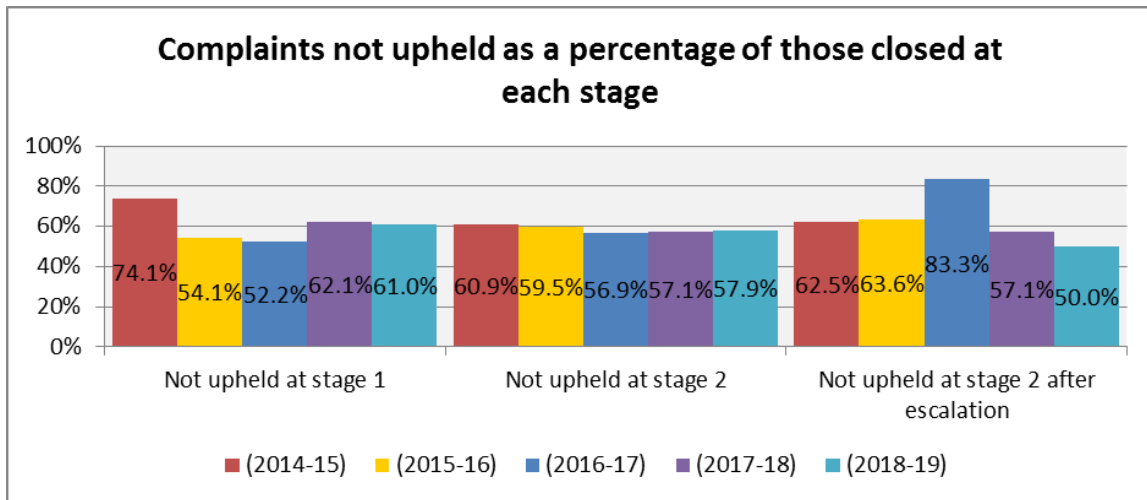
Partially Upheld Complaints

Figure 6: Complaints partially upheld as a percentage of those closed at each stage (from 2014-15 to 2018-19)



Not Upheld Complaints

Figure 7: Complaints not upheld as a percentage of those closed at each stage (from 2014-15 to 2018-19)



For all the complaints closed during 2018-19, at both stages one and two, 40% were fully 'upheld' or 'partially upheld' overall, the same as in 2017-18. This shows that many customers continue to raise concerns with service provision and, although the majority of complaints are not upheld, a significant proportion of all complaints require us to review and improve the way services are being delivered.

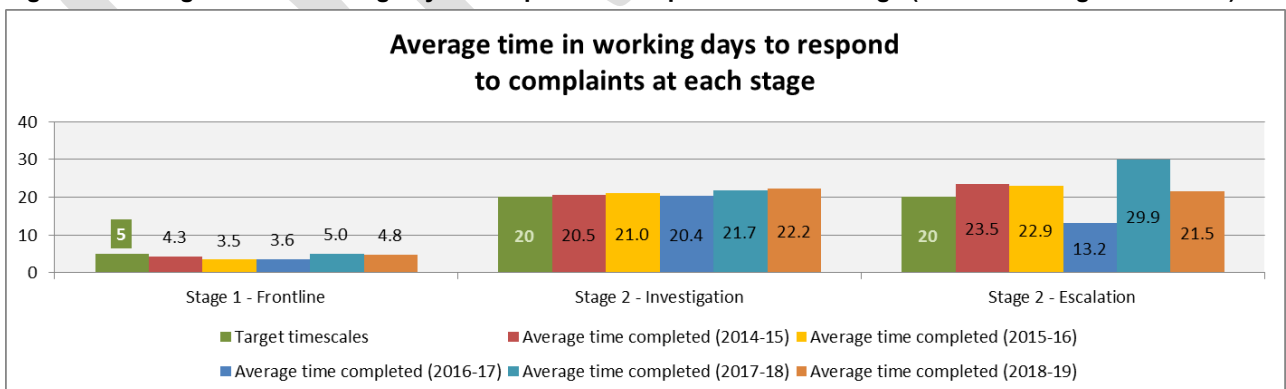
4.4 Indicator 4

This represents the average time in working days to close complaints at stages one and two of the model CHP.

This indicator will report:

- the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one
- the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two
- the average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation

Figure 8: Average time in working days to respond to complaints at each stage (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



The average time taken to respond to frontline complaints remains within the SPSO's target 5 working day timescale. The number of frontline complaints closed on time increased significantly to 372 in 2018-19 compared to 271 in 2017-18. However, the proportion that was closed within 5 days (77%) was almost unchanged from 78% in 2017-18 (Figure 9).

Frontline resolution times, at an average of 4.8 days in 2018-19, are similar to 2017-18 (5.0 days) but are higher compared to previous years: 3.6 days in 2016-17, 3.5 days in 2015-16 and 4.3 days in 2014-15.

The average time for resolving stage two investigation complaints rose again in 2018-19 to 22.2 days (compared to 21.7 days in 2017-18); outside the Complaint Handling Procedures' guidelines and higher than the 21 days recorded in 2015-16. Conversely, the time taken on average to resolve the escalated stage two investigations reduced from 29.9 days in 2017-18 to 21.5 days in 2018-19.

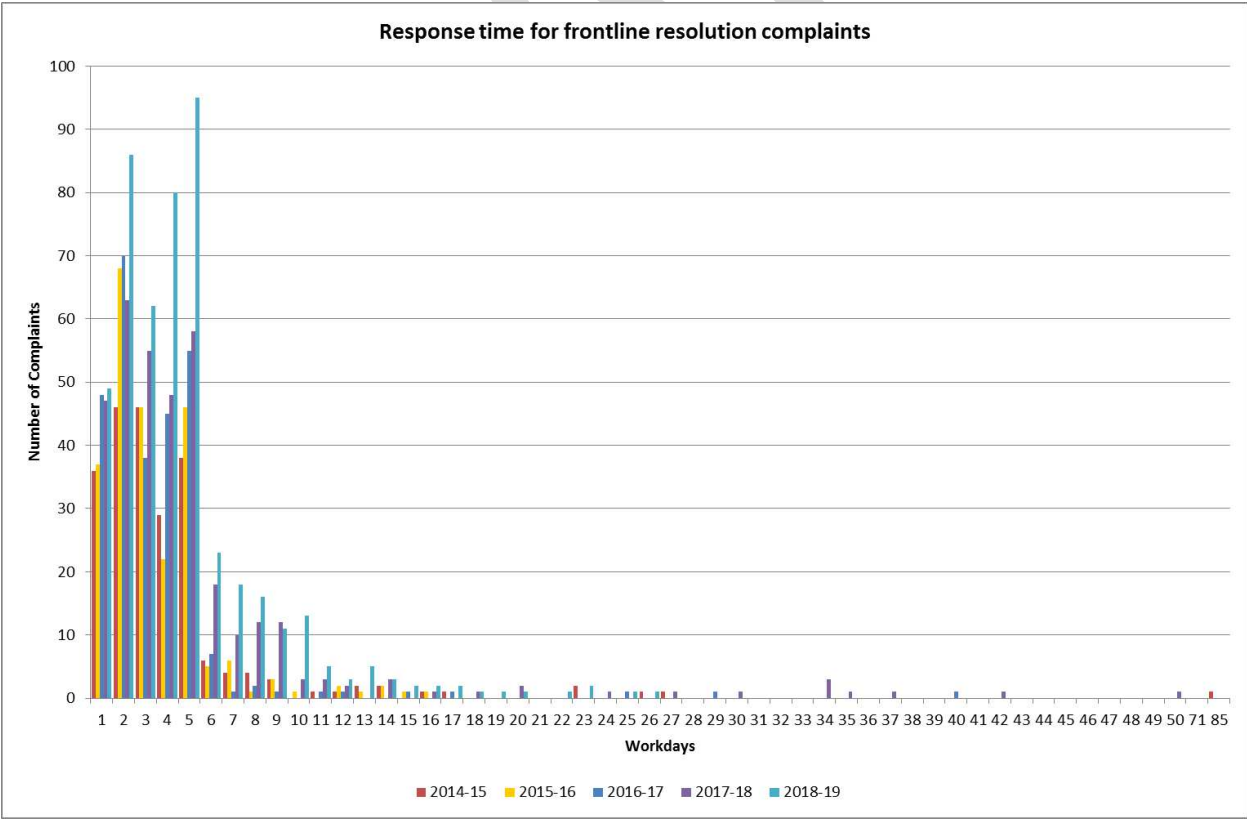
Although the majority of frontline complaints are dealt with within 5 working days, the proportion exceeding the maximum extension period of 10 working days remains at 6%, double the 3% in both 2016-17 and 2015-16. Those complaints extended should have been closed as a frontline resolution complaint (stage one) and escalated to investigation (stage two).

In 2017-18 there were 77 frontline complaints that took longer than 5 working days to close, much higher than the figures recorded in 2016-17 (18), 2015-16 (23) and 2014-15 (30). However, in 2018-19 the number rose significantly to 111, which may be indicative of the increased workload on staff. There were 12 frontline complaints taking longer than 15 days to resolve in 2018-19. There were 14 such cases in 2017-18, compared to 4 in 2016-17 and just 1 in 2015-16.

Four services account for the majority taking longer to resolve than the SPSO guidance: 50 complaints relating to Direct Services, 29 for Housing & Property Services, 14 for Community Care and 12 for Legal & Democratic Services. They ranged from 1 to 21 working days overdue. The frontline complaint that took the longest time to resolve (26 working days) was raised against Direct Services and concerned the closure of public toilets in Cullen.

Weekly monitoring continues to take place with complaint administrators for relevant departments being reminded to ensure they follow the correct database timeline process for stages.

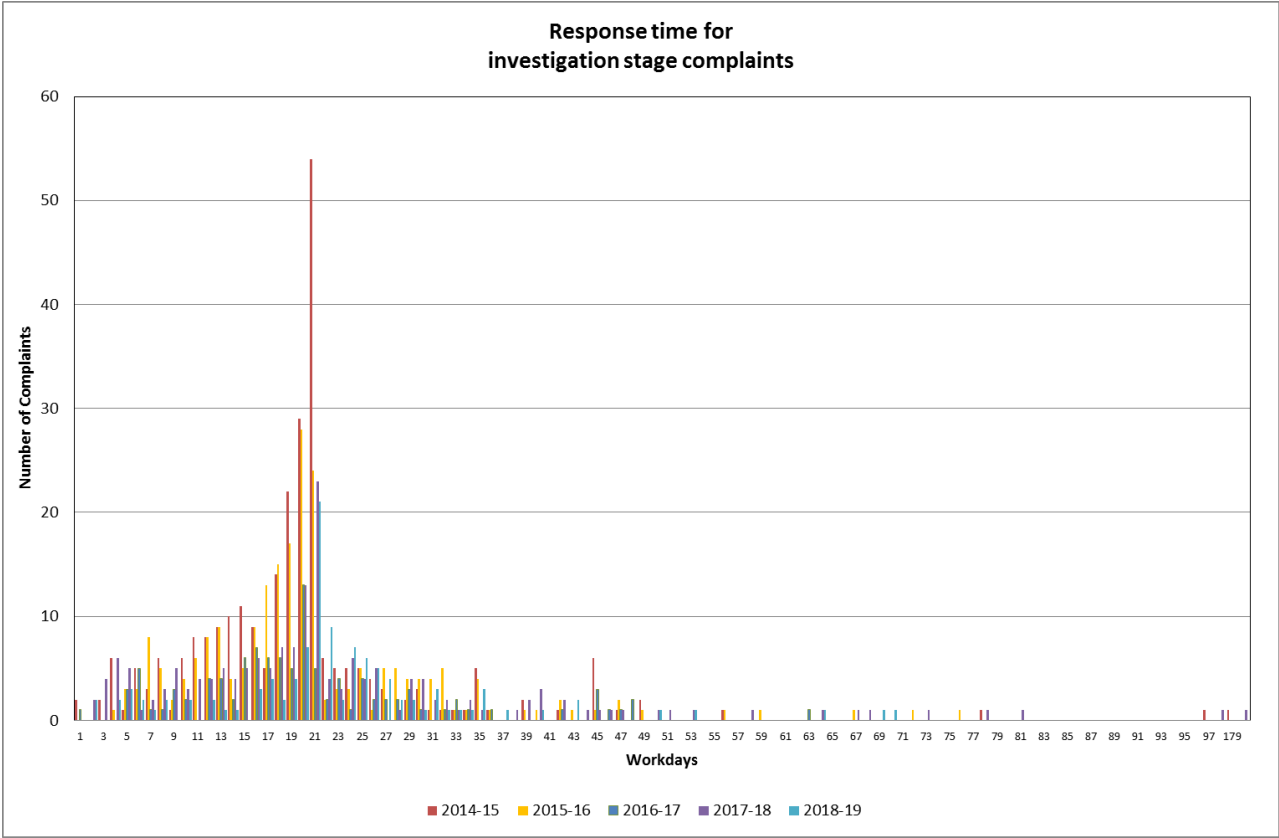
Figure 9: Response Time for frontline resolution complaints (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



The majority (59%) of the investigations were responded to within the 20 day timescale or within agreed extension periods (Figure 10). Of the 125 complaints closed at stage two (investigation and escalated), 56 (49%) took longer than the target response time. Integrated Children's Services complaints often require investigation of lengthy and complicated issues. This accounted for 17 of their 27 investigations taking more than 20 days to complete. In 2017-18 one of the Schools and

Curriculum Development investigations took 179 days to resolve; the longest of all complaints to be closed during the 5 years for which data has been collected. However, the longest resolution time in 2018-19 was much reduced at 69 days. This was an investigation into a complaint made against the Integrated Children’s Services.

Figure 10: Response time for Investigation Stage Complaints (including Escalated Investigations) (2014-15 through to 2018-19)



4.5 Indicator 5

The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days.

The model Complaints Handling Procedure requires complaints to be closed within five working days at stage one and 20 working days at stage two. This indicator will report:

- the number of complaints closed at stage one within five working days as % of total number of stage one complaints
- the number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of total number of stage two complaints
- the number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as a % of total number of escalated stage two complaints

The analysis provided for Indicator 4 is equally applicable for this indicator.

Table 2: Indicator 5 - Closure timescales (2014-15 through to 2018-19)

Performance Against Timescales		Number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as a %	Number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as a %	Number of escalated complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as a %
2018-19	Total no. of complaints	482	95	20
	No. of complaints within timescales	372	50	9
	Meeting target times	77%	53%	45%
2017-18	Total no. of complaints	348	163	14
	No. of complaints within timescales	271	109	4
	Meeting target times	78%	67%	29%
2016-17	Total no. of complaints	274	103	6
	No. of complaints within timescales	271	63	5
	Meeting target times	99%	61%	83%
2015-16	Total no. of complaints	242	215	11
	No. of complaints within timescales	219	133	7
	Meeting target times	90%	62%	64%
2014-15	Total no. of complaints	224	258	8
	No. of complaints within timescales	195	146	8
	Meeting target times	87%	57%	100%

Despite the support given to services by the Complaints Officer during 2018-19 the Council did not improve its performance for closing frontline complaints within the target times; 77% compared to 78% in 2017-18. Note, however, that in 2016-17, when 99% of frontline complaints were resolved within 5 days there were 274 complaints, which is 56% of the total for 2018/19. This additional volume may have contributed to the delay in responding. The services have also struggled to close stage two complaints within 20 working days (53% compared to 67% in 2017-18). Our performance for escalated complaints varies significantly from year to year due to small sample sizes. However, closing less than a half of such complaints on time in 2018-19 is disappointing. Performance issues continue to be discussed with complaint administrators and highlighted through quarterly management reports. Closer monitoring and reinforcement was and will continue to be done to try and improve further on this performance.

4.6 Indicator 6

The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the five or 20 working day timeline has been authorised.

The model Complaints Handling Procedure allows for an extension to the timescales to be authorised in certain circumstances. This indicator will report:

- the number of complaints closed at stage one where extension was authorised, as a % of all complaints at stage one

- number of complaints closed at stage two where extension was authorised, as a % of all complaints at stage two

This is an area where there is still room for improvement, but there has been a significant increase in the number of frontline extensions being approved (22% in 2018-19 compared to 10% or lower in previous years).

Table 3: Indicator 6 – Extensions (2014-15 through to 2018-19)

Number of cases where an extension is authorised		% of complaints at stage one where the extension was authorised	% of complaints at stage two where the extension was authorised
2018-19	Total no. of overdue complaints	111	56
	No. of complaints with authorised extensions	24	9
	Percentage with extensions	22%	16%
2017-18	Total no. of overdue complaints	77	63
	No. of complaints with authorised extensions	4	11
	Percentage with extensions	5%	17%
2016-17	Total no. of overdue complaints	42	37
	No. of complaints with authorised extensions	4	11
	Percentage with extensions	10%	30%
2015-16	Total no. of overdue complaints	23	86
	No. of complaints with authorised extensions	1	13
	Percentage with extensions	4%	15%
2014-15	Total no. of overdue complaints	18	63
	No. of complaints with authorised extensions	1	24
	Percentage with extensions	6%	38%

The council always aims to respond to complaints as quickly as possible. There are, however, times when a complaint is particularly complex, and it is identified that a thorough investigation of the issues will require time out with the prescribed timescales. In these situations, the council agrees with a complainant to extend the timescale for closing the complaint and will detail the reasons such as having to interview several potential witnesses and for a need to gather reports from a variety of sources. A senior manager must always approve such an extension before it is granted, and this is recorded with revised time limits on our complaints database.

However, as the data in Table 3 testifies, many complaints taking longer than the stipulated times still do not receive such approvals.

Figure 11 gives a breakdown by service where frontline complaints were extended without authorisation. As can be seen 24 overdue frontline complaints (22%) had authorised extensions

mainly by the Community Care team (note that there were three complaints which were extended but were then resolved in under 5 days). None of the complaints resolved in more than 5 days at frontline by Direct Services received an authorised extension. Thirty-five of these were resolved between 6 and 10 days, and should have been extended by a manager.

Housing and Property Services reduced non authorised extensions at front line by 70% down from 28 in 2017-18 to 6 in 2018-19.

Figure 12 gives a breakdown by service where complaints were extended without authorisation for investigations. Housing and Property had the highest proportion of authorised extensions for investigations that took longer than 20 working days to resolve with 5 out of 15 (33%). Integrated Children's Services had the next highest number with 3 out of 17 (17.6%).

Despite the revised complaints database, which was introduced in April 2017, the expectation that this would allow for closer monitoring to identify complaints that have extended beyond 20 days without authorisation has proved over-optimistic. Senior management are still being notified of such cases and administrators reminded weekly to update the database, but there is still scope for significant improvement.

Figure 11: Frontline complaints not responded to in stipulated timescales, without authorised extensions (2018-19)

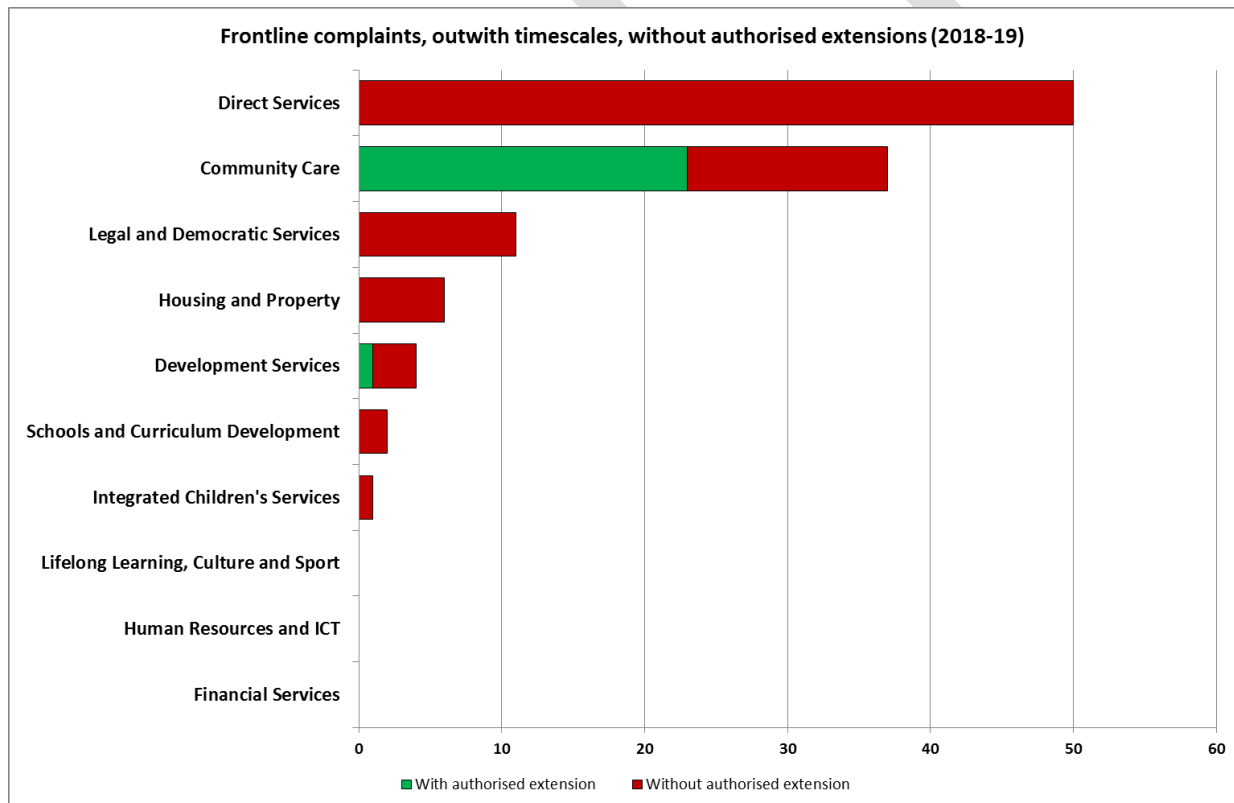
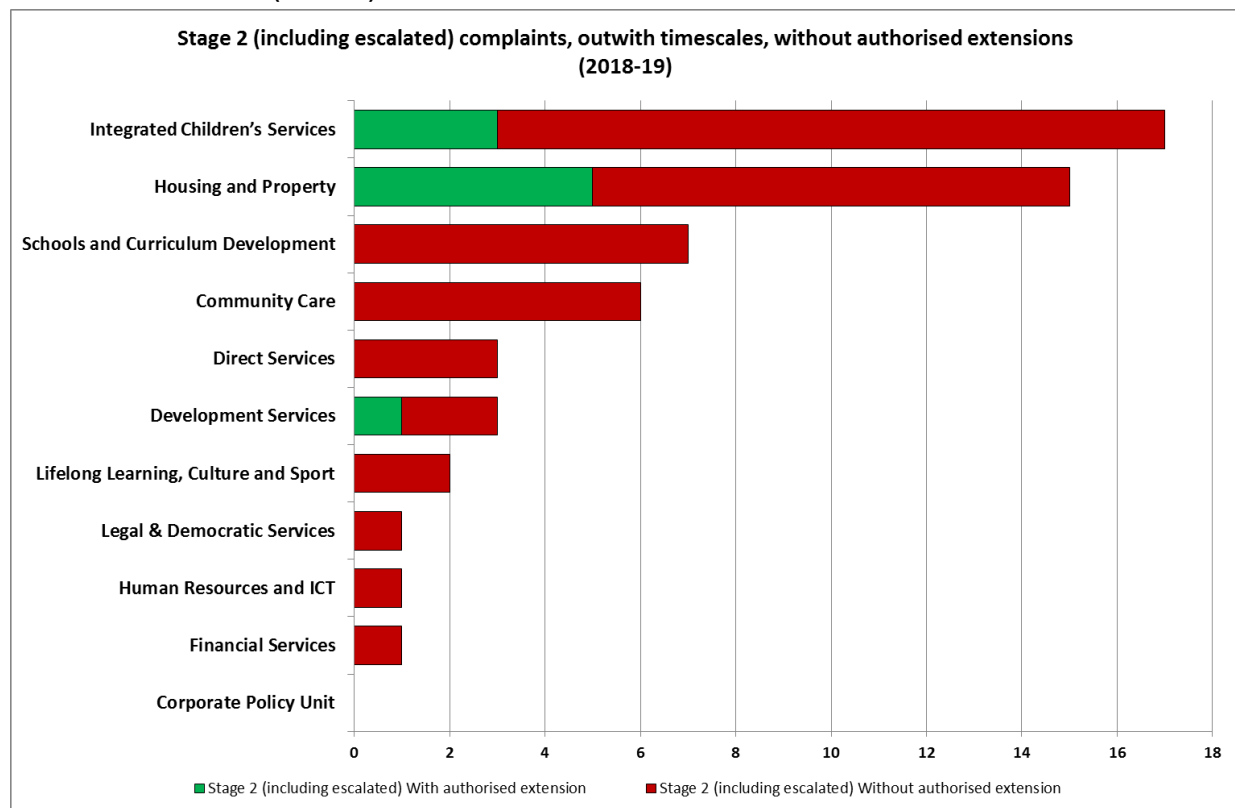


Figure 12: Stage two (including escalated) complaints not responded to in stipulated timescales, without authorised extensions (2018-19)



4.7 Indicator 7

The SPSO currently requires a statement to report on customer satisfaction with the complaints service provided although this is currently being reviewed as part of the SPSO revision of the Model Complaint Handling Procedure. A brief report is included on customer satisfaction.

A customer satisfaction survey was sent out to customers with the aim of helping the council focus on areas where improvements or change could be made to our complaints handling procedure and service provision.

In assessing customer satisfaction within the complaints service, customers were asked to consider:

- how satisfied they were with the way their complaint was handled
- how easy the complaints process was to follow
- how well we complied with the CHP
- how well we provided service delivery, timeliness and information
- how professional the attitude of staff was

Customer Satisfaction Feedback Survey

Complaints Handling Customer Feedback Surveys were sent to every complainant when they were informed of the outcome of their complaint. In 2018/19, 551 surveys were sent out, 360 by email and 191 by post. We received 24 (13%) postal responses and 119 (33%) online responses, giving an overall survey response of 143 (26%). This was an 11% increase from 2017-18.

Arising from the survey, the main dissatisfactions are:

- not contacting customers to confirm complaints and outcomes sought;
- not updating customers;
- management not taking responsibility;
- not adhering to policy timescales;

- not taking the issues seriously;
- trying to dissuade customers from making a complaint;
- not apologising for poor service provision;
- had to chase up a response;
- the response was defensive;
- only received a single sentence response;
- investigator didn't appear to have the training to do their job;
- response letter full of spelling mistakes;
- the staff member needs to attend a customer relations course, their attitude was appalling

In 2018 -19, some positive feedback comments were received. These included:

- staff did their job well in resolving the issue;
- customer complaint resolved within 24 hours;
- staff member sent me a refund and an understanding letter of apology;
- issue had been ongoing for a year so used the complaint process and staff resolved it within a week

4.8 **Indicator 8 – Lessons learned: a statement outlining changes or improvements to services or procedures as a result of the consideration of complaints.**

The council has a clear commitment to listen to our customers and act on their feedback. Learning from complaints is a continuous process that helps the council to resolve common issues and further improve the services that are provided. The council is continually working on learning from complaints and implementing changes to working practices as a direct result of investigating complaints.

4.8.1. **Learning Outcomes**

Managers review complaints that are upheld or partially upheld to determine if change or improvement would prevent re-occurrence. When a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, the remedies offered will generally fall into one or more of the following four categories:

- **Redress** – Putting things right where they have gone wrong, admitting where mistakes have been made.
- **Reimbursement** – Covering vouched actual costs incurred as a direct result of mistakes made by the council.
- **Reinforcement** – Recognising that a correct council policy/procedure has not been followed or we have fallen short of what could be expected. Training and instructing staff to prevent re-occurrence.
- **Revision** – Reviewing current practice to amend and improve working practices.

The Complaints Management System has a specific learning outcome section for managers to complete when complaints are closed. Where they have been upheld or partially upheld, any learning outcomes and service improvements are recorded.

Complaint Officer monitoring and database processing by Complaint administrators have ensured that more detailed closures are being recorded. The below information provides a quarterly breakdown of completion of the learning outcomes section in the complaints database.

Complaints Summary – Learning opportunities

Quarter 1	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
Number of Complaints Closed	49	13	81
Learning Outcomes Completed	47 (95.9%)	11 (84.6%)	Nil

Quarter 2	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
Number of Complaints Closed	38	18	92
Learning Outcomes Completed	37 (97.4%)	17 (94.4%)	Nil

Quarter 3	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
Number of Complaints Closed	38	23	102
Learning Outcomes Completed	36 (94.7%)	22 (95.7%)	Nil

Quarter 4	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
Number of Complaints Closed	46	21	103
Learning Outcomes Completed	46 (100%)	21 (100%)	Nil

Closed complaints – numbers upheld or partially upheld by type of complaint

Closed complaints by Complaint Type	Qtr 1		Qtr 2		Qtr 3		Qtr 4	
	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>
Repairs/Capital/ Planned maintenance	12	3	12	4	17	4	17	4
Household Collections	13	0	4	0	14	0	14	0
Process/Procedure	10	1	7	3	2	3	6	7
Complaint Against Staff	7	2	9	6	2	6	6	7
Allocations	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
Road Maintenance	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Housing Estate Management	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Housing Disputes	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lighting	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Support	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Bullying	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Footpaths/pavement	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Permission	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estates	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Public/School transport	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	1	3	4	1	2	5	2	2

Closed complaints – numbers upheld or partially upheld by type of complaint with learning outcomes

Closed complaints by Complaint Type with Learning Outcomes	Qtr 1		Qtr 2		Qtr 3		Qtr 4	
	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>
Repairs/Capital/ Planned maintenance	12 (100%)	3 (100%)	12 (100%)	4 (100%)	17 (100%)	4 (100%)	17 (100%)	4 (100%)
Household Collections	13 (100%)	0 (N/A)	3 (75%)	0 (N/A)	13 (93%)	0 (N/A)	14 (100%)	0 (N/A)
Process/Procedure	8 (80%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)	3 (100%)	1 (50%)	3 (100%)	6 (100%)	7 (100%)
Complaint Against Staff	7 (100%)	2 (100%)	9 (100%)	5 (83%)	2 (100%)	6 (100%)	6 (100%)	7 (100%)
Allocations	0 (N/A)	2 (100%)	0 (N/A)	2 (100%)	0 (N/A)	1 (50%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Road Maintenance	3 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Housing Estate Management	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Housing Disputes	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Lighting	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Housing Support	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Bullying	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Footpaths/pavement	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)

Council Tax	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Planning Permission	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Estates	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)
Public/School transport	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)	0 (N/A)
N/A	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	0 (N/A)	1 (100%)
Other	1 (100%)	2 (67%)	4 (100%)	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	5 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)

For the majority of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld a learning outcome was recorded on the complaints database (237 out of 246 complaints, equivalent to 96.3%). All complaints received in quarter 4 that were upheld or partially upheld had learning outcomes noted.

The following is a summary of some learning outcome actions taken to change a procedure or policy in resolving complaints that were upheld or partially upheld in 2018-19:

Table 4: Actions taken in response to complaints upheld (2018-19)

Department	You said...	We listened and took action on the following upheld complaints...
Legal and Democratic Services	Despite you adding a note to your council tax account, there was a failure in our system and we wrongly implemented recovery procedure relating to your account.	In upholding your complaint, we apologised and introduced new steps in our procedure to prevent this happening in the future.
Financial Services	Arising from a system error, we sent you an adhoc letter asking you to confirm the details of an invoice.	In upholding your complaint, we apologised and put in place a procedure where all such letters being sent out will be checked over by a manager.
Housing and Property	We delayed sending your entitled payment due to a staff absence.	In upholding your complaint, we apologised, sent payment and put in place additional cover arrangements for any staff absences.
Community Care	Basic details were missing from a document and the	In upholding your complaint, we apologised and revised our process.

Department	You said...	We listened and took action on the following upheld complaints...
	language/phrasing used in the document caused distress.	All documents in draft are now clearly marked as such. Staff have been asked to include risk conversations in the care programme approach.
Integrated Children's Services	Our facilitation and practical arrangements of a meeting was unsatisfactory.	In upholding your complaint, we apologised, and management highlighted the issues you raised to staff to address and implement changes.
Schools and Curriculum Development	We failed to deal with your child being bullied.	In upholding your complaint, we apologised and revised the school anti bullying policy.

5. Scottish Public Services Ombudsman/Benchmarking

In 2018-19, the Local Authority Complaint Handlers Network continued to benchmark across all 32 councils. 1 council didn't provide their annual data so results were drawn from the remaining 31 councils.

The below tables provide some information on how Moray Council compares with overall recorded complaint national statistics:

Complaints Received	2017-18	2018-19
Moray Council	551 (1%)	611 (1%)
Nationally	62,884	56,178

Complaints Received Per 1000 Population	2017-18	2018-19
Moray Council	5.75	6.40
Nationally	11.6	10.36

Complaints Closed	2017-18	2018-19
Moray Council	525	597
Nationally	60,952	54,782

Nationally there was an 11% reduction in the number of complaints recorded in 2018-19. In contrast, Moray Council had an 11% increase in complaint recording demonstrating continued public confidence in reporting complaints.

Average Time in Working Days – Stage one	2017-18	2018-19
Moray Council	4.97	4.8
Nationally	8.3	7.1
Average Time in Working Days – Stage two	2017-18	2018-19
Moray Council	21.7	22.2
Nationally	23.6	29.9

Nationally, many Councils do not meet their target of resolving stage one complaints within 5 working days although there has been a 16% reduction in the time taken from 2017-18. Moray Council achieved this target and reduced the average time taken to resolve frontline complaints by a further 3.4%.

Both nationally and locally the stage two complaints targets of 20 working days was not met with a 2% increase for Moray Council and a 21% increase nationally. This could be indicative of reducing staff numbers and, for Moray Council, the increase in the number of complaints dealt with.

6. Summary

The council is committed to customer service and values feedback from our service users. Customer views and experiences are important to us as they help us to understand what we do well and identify where we need to improve. We want our customers to feel that their feedback is valued, that we will listen and act on lessons learned in order to improve service provision. Use of digital technology complements written survey requests providing additional opportunity to receive public feedback.

Only by utilising the Complaint Handling Procedure and adhering to the robust performance management framework, will we learn from complaints, improve services and increase customer confidence in our service provision. We have made good use of the learning and improvement section of the Complaints Management System to demonstrate that we are learning from complaints. Increased complaint numbers reveals continued public confidence in reporting complaints.

It is importance that we aim to deal with complaints quickly, keep complainants informed and advise them what to do if they remain dissatisfied. Staff training, intranet guidance and Complaint Officer monitoring will help to achieve this aim. The complaints section in the Moray Council website provides the public with policies, reports and general information on how a complaint can be reported and dealt with.

The results of the complaints survey showed an increased return rate with some useful feedback given. It remains the case that satisfaction with the complaints handling process appears to be influenced by how satisfied the customer was with the outcome of their complaint. We used the easy-to-use online option and sent paper copies; however, this produced a low number of survey responses meaning we were restricted in assessing the effectiveness of it as a learning tool. We will continue to use both online and hard copy methods for our survey.

Welcoming, recording, managing and resolving complaints in an effective manner will increase public confidence in our application of the Complaint Handling Procedure and afford us opportunity to learn and improve our service provision.

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APPENDIX

Please note that due to rounding, some totals may add up to slightly more or less than 100%.

Table A: Indicator 2 – Complaints closed at stage one and stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed

Indicator 2 by service	2017-18				2018-19			
	Stage 1 – Front line resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation	Total	Stage 1 – Front line resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation	Total
All Council	348 66%	163 31%	14 3%	525	482 81%	95 16%	20 3%	597
Chief Executive's Office	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0
Chief Executive's Section	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	1	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0
Corporate Policy Unit	0 0%	1 100%	0 0%	1	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0
Community Planning & Development	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0
Corporate Services	24 67%	11 31%	1 3%	36	46 88%	6 12%	0 0%	52
Financial Services	4 67%	2 33%	0 0%	6	2 50%	2 50%	0 0%	4
Human Resources and ICT	1 25%	3 75%	0 0%	4	1 33%	2 67%	0 0%	3
Legal and Democratic Services	19 73%	6 23%	1 4%	26	43 96%	2 4%	0 0%	45
Environmental Services	295 73%	102 25%	7 2%	404	398 88%	35 8%	18 4%	451
Development Services	7 32%	15 68%	0 0%	22	14 61%	8 35%	1 4%	23
Direct Services	172 89%	19 10%	3 2%	194	251 98%	3 1%	2 1%	256
Housing and Property	116 62%	68 36%	4 2%	188	133 77%	24 14%	15 9%	172
Education and Social Care	28 34%	49 59%	6 7%	83	38 40%	54 57%	2 2%	94
Community Care	15 60%	6 24%	4 16%	25	18 67%	8 30%	1 4%	27
Integrated Children's Services	4 21%	13 68%	2 11%	19	4 13%	26 84%	1 3%	31
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	4 50%	4 50%	0 0%	8
Schools and Curriculum Development	8 22%	29 78%	0 0%	37	12 43%	16 57%	0 0%	28

Table B: Indicator 3 by service – The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at stage one

Indicator 3 by service – Stage 1	2017-18				2018-19			
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
All Council	92 26%	40 11%	216 62%	348	149 31%	39 8%	294 61%	482
Chief Executive's Office	0 0%	1 100%	0 0%	1	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Chief Executive's Section	0	1 1	0	1	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Corporate Policy Unit	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Community Planning & Development	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Corporate Services	11 46%	3 13%	10 42%	24	14 30%	10 22%	22 48%	46
Financial Services	3 75%	0 0%	1 25%	4	1 50%	0 0%	1 50%	2
Human Resources and ICT	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	0	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1
Legal and Democratic Services	8 42%	3 16%	8 42%	19	13 30%	10 23%	20 47%	43
Environmental Services	73 25%	31 11%	191 65%	295	123 31%	23 6%	252 63%	398
Development Services	0 0%	2 29%	5 71%	7	0 0%	5 36%	9 64%	14
Direct Services	48 28%	11 6%	113 66%	172	61 24%	4 2%	186 74%	251
Housing and Property	25 22%	18 16%	73 63%	116	62 47%	14 11%	57 43%	133
Education and Social Care	8 29%	5 18%	15 54%	28	12 32%	6 16%	20 53%	38
Community Care	4 27%	5 33%	6 40%	15	3 17%	5 28%	10 56%	18
Integrated Children's Services	0 0%	0 0%	4 100%	4	0 0%	0 0%	4 100%	4
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1	2 50%	0 0%	2 50%	4
Schools and Curriculum Development	4 50%	0 0%	4 50%	8	7 58%	1 8%	4 33%	12

Figure 20: Stage one – % of Complaints Upheld, Partially Upheld, and Not Upheld (2014-15 through to 2018-19)

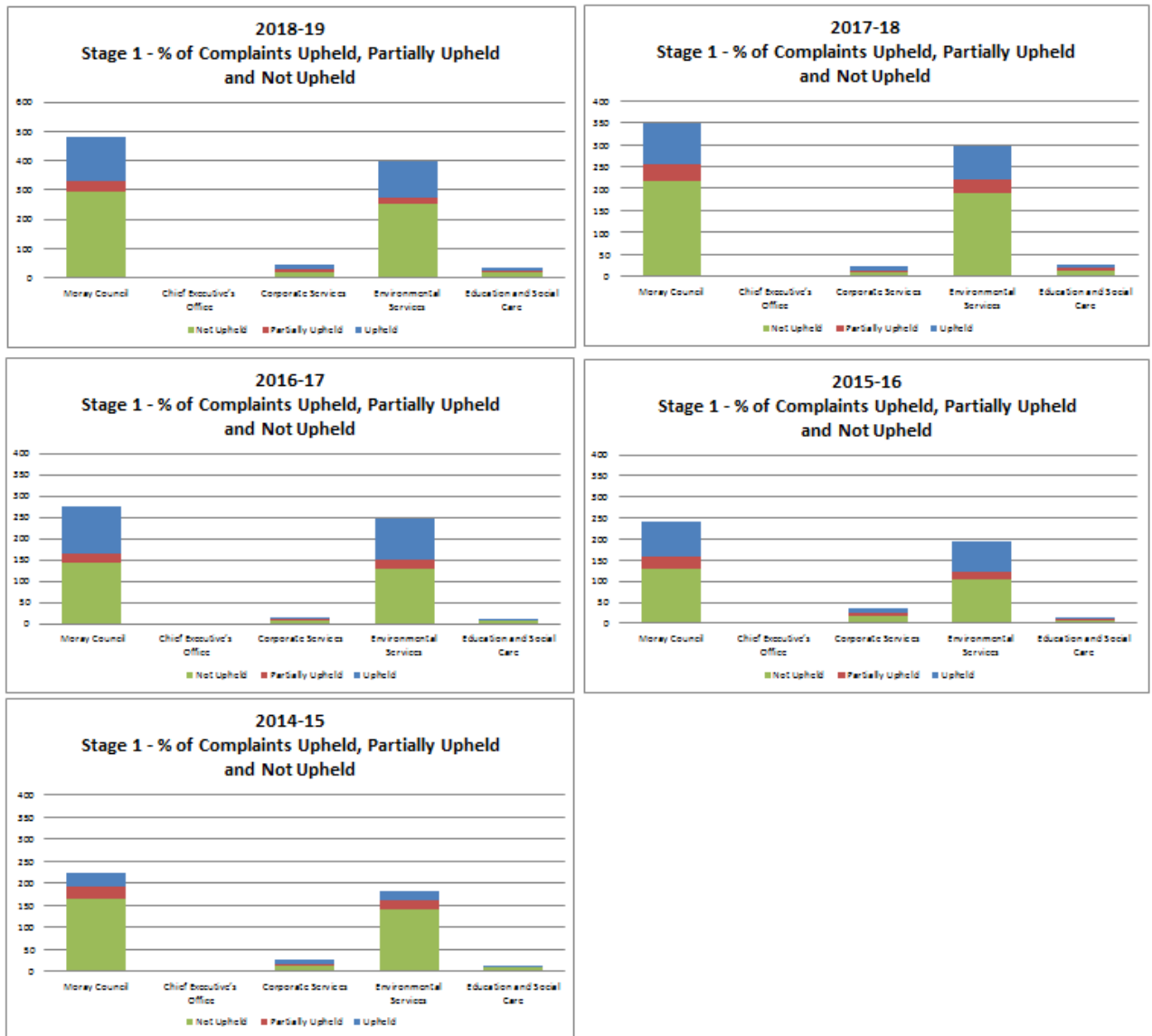


Table C: Indicator 3 by service – The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at stage two (including escalated complaints)

Indicator 3 by service – Stage 2 (including escalated)	2017-18				2018-19			
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
All Council	35 20%	41 23%	101 57%	177	20 17%	30 26%	65 57%	115
Chief Executive's Office	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Chief Executive's Section	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Corporate Policy Unit	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Community Planning & Development	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0
Corporate Services	7 58%	2 17%	3 25%	12	1 17%	0 0%	5 83%	6
Financial Services	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	2	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	2
Human Resources and ICT	2 67%	1 33%	0 0%	3	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	2
Legal and Democratic Services	3 43%	1 14%	3 43%	7	1 50%	0 0%	1 50%	2
Environmental Services	19 17%	18 17%	72 66%	109	6 11%	14 26%	33 62%	53
Development Services	0 0%	2 13%	13 87%	15	0 0%	3 33%	6 67%	9
Direct Services	4 18%	1 5%	17 77%	22	0 0%	0 0%	5 100%	5
Housing and Property	15 21%	15 21%	42 58%	72	6 15%	11 28%	22 56%	39
Education and Social Care	9 16%	21 38%	25 45%	55	13 23%	16 29%	27 48%	56
Community Care	2 20%	4 40%	4 40%	10	0 0%	6 67%	3 33%	9
Integrated Children's Services	2 13%	8 53%	5 33%	15	10 37%	7 26%	10 37%	27
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1	2 50%	0 0%	2 50%	4
Schools and Curriculum Development	5 17%	9 31%	15 52%	29	1 6%	3 19%	12 75%	16

Figure 21: Stage two – % of Complaints Upheld, Partially Upheld, and Not Upheld (2014-15 through to 2018-19)

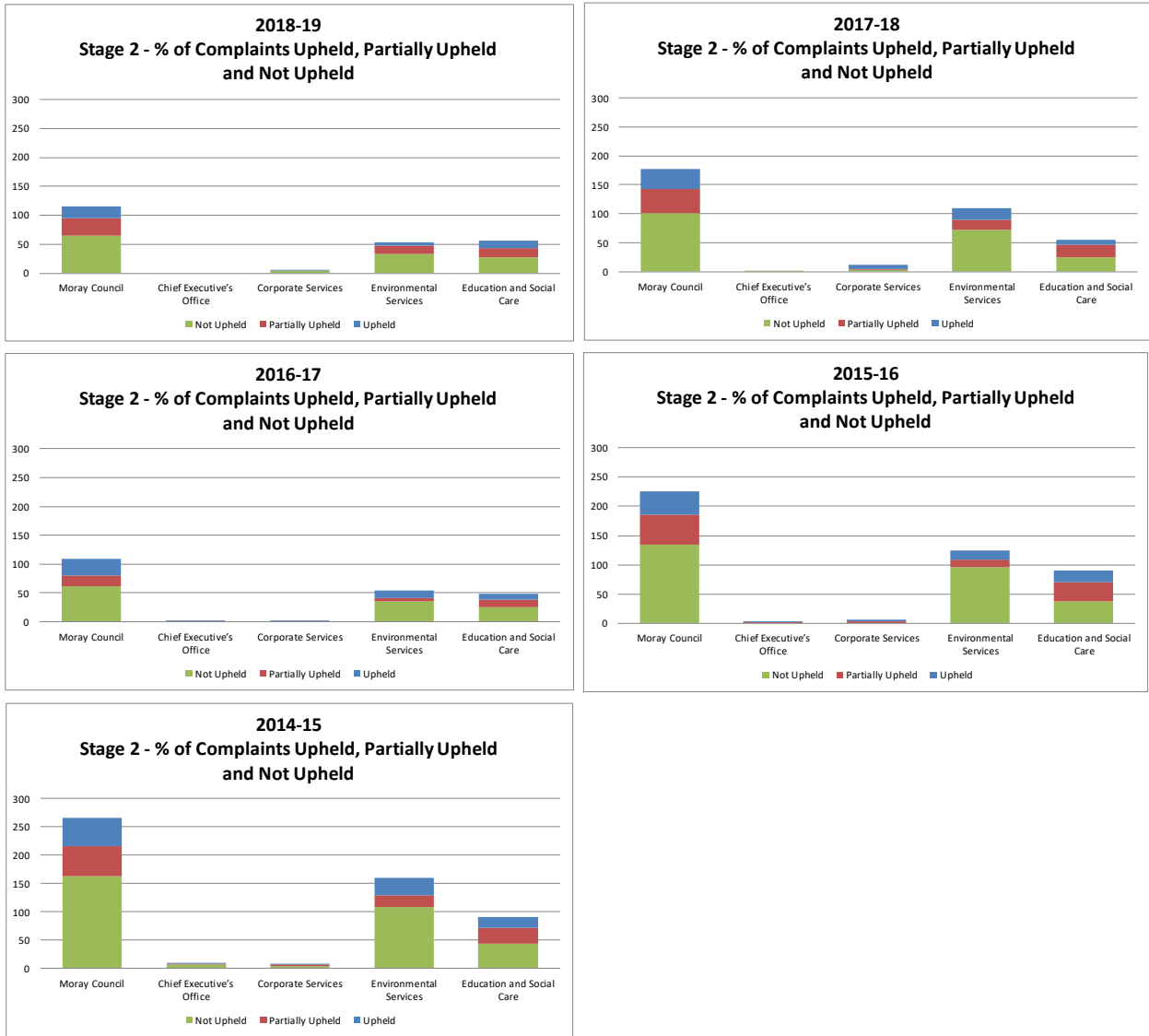


Table D: Indicator 4 by service – The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

Indicator 4 by service	2017-18			2018-19		
	Stage 1 – Front line Resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation	Stage 1 – Front line Resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation
Target timescales (number of working days)	5	20	20	5	20	20
All Council	5.0	21.7	29.9	4.8	22.2	21.5
Chief Executive's Office	1	3.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chief Executive's Section	1.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Corporate Policy Unit	n/a	3.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Planning & Development	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Corporate Services	7.7	11.2	38.0	4.5	18.2	n/a
Financial Services	3.8	15.5	n/a	1.5	20.0	n/a
Human Resources and ICT	50.0	7.0	n/a	1.0	13.5	n/a
Legal and Democratic Services	6.3	11.8	38.0	4.7	21.0	n/a
Environmental Services	4.5	19.5	28.4	4.6	19.0	19.1
Development Services	5.3	22.3	n/a	5.9	22.8	20.0
Direct Services	3.7	19.6	41.0	4.5	14.3	22.0
Housing and Property	5.5	18.8	19.0	4.7	18.3	18.6
Education and Social Care	8.2	29.1	30.3	6.7	24.7	43.0
Community Care	9.7	23.3	32.0	9.8	26.0	34.0
Integrated Children's Services	9.3	29.2	27.0	4.8	26.6	52.0
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	8.0	11.0	n/a	3.3	20.8	n/a
Schools and Curriculum Development	5.0	30.9	n/a	3.9	22.0	n/a

Figure 22: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage (2014-15 through to 2018-19)

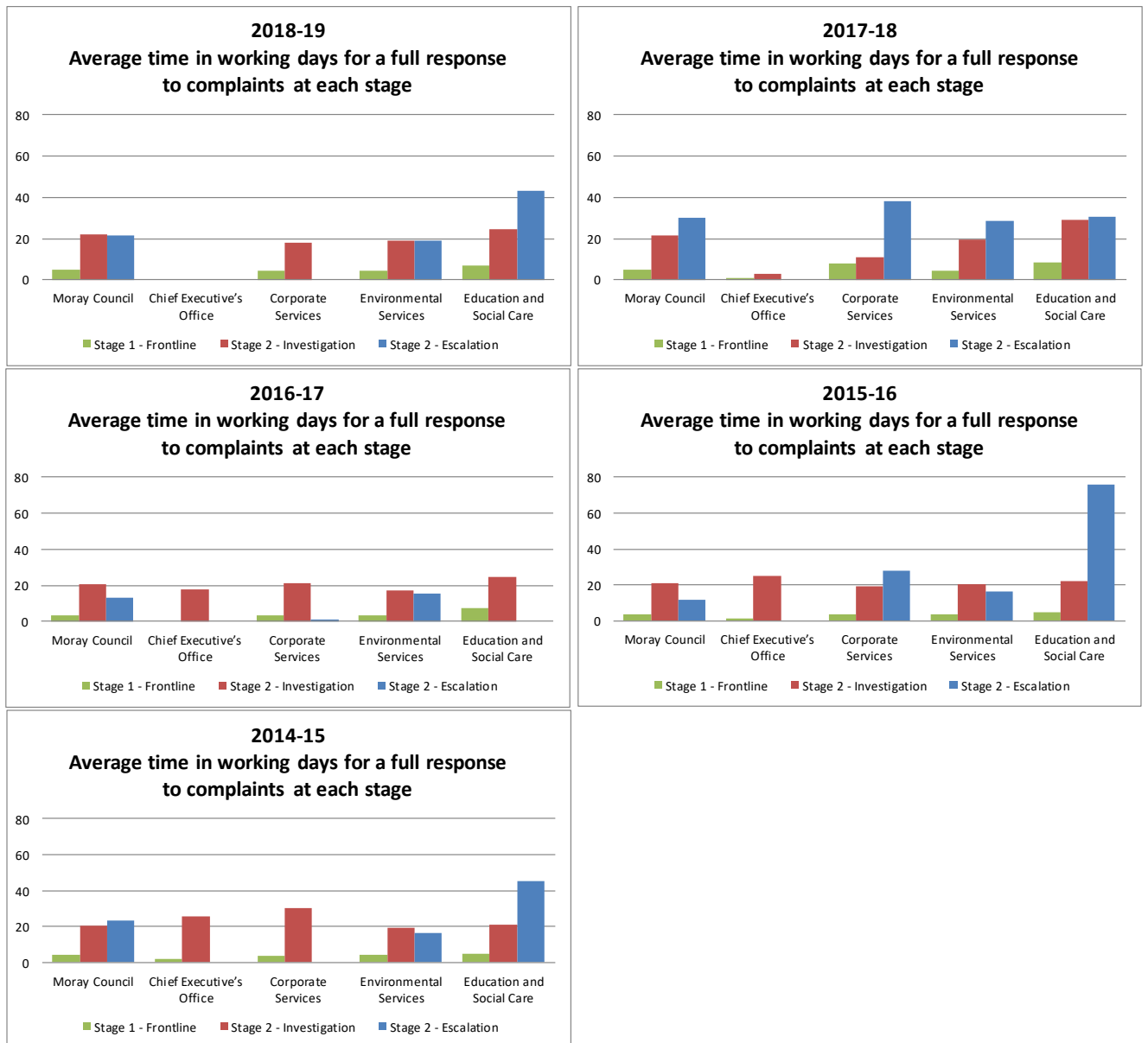


Table E: Average Time in working days to respond to complaints at each stage

Average Time in working days to respond to complaints at each stage	2017-18			2018-19		
	No. of complaints	Total time (workdays)	Average time (workdays)	No. of complaints	Total time (workdays)	Average time (workdays)
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one	348	1731	5.0	482	2293	4.8
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two	163	3539	21.7	95	2108	22.2
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation	14	419	29.9	20	429	21.5

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Table F: Indicator 5 by service – The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days

Indicator 5 by service (Refer to Table A for Totals)	2017-18			2018-19		
	Stage 1 – Front line Resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation	Stage 1 – Front line Resolution	Stage 2 – Investigation	Stage 2 – Escalated Investigation
Target timescales (number of working days)	5	20	20	5	20	20
All Council	271 78%	109 67%	4 29%	372 77%	50 53%	9 45%
Chief Executive’s Office	1 100%	0 0%	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a
Chief Executive’s Section	1 100%	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a
Corporate Policy Unit	0 n/a	0 0%	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a
Community Planning & Development	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a	0 n/a
Corporate Services	17 71%	9 82%	0 0%	34 74%	3 50%	0 n/a
Financial Services	4 100%	2 100%	0 n/a	2 100%	1 50%	0 n/a
Human Resources and ICT	0 0%	3 100%	0 n/a	1 100%	1 50%	0 n/a
Legal and Democratic Services	13 68%	4 67%	0 0%	31 72%	1 50%	0 n/a
Environmental Services	240 81%	74 73%	4 57%	317 80%	23 66%	9 50%
Development Services	6 86%	10 67%	0 n/a	11 79%	5 63%	1 100%
Direct Services	144 84%	13 68%	1 33%	202 80%	2 67%	0 0%
Housing and Property	90 78%	51 75%	3 75%	104 78%	16 67%	8 53%
Education and Social Care	13 46%	26 53%	0 0%	21 55%	24 44%	0 0%
Community Care	4 27%	4 67%	0 0%	4 22%	3 38%	0 0%
Integrated Children’s Services	3 75%	6 46%	0 0%	3 75%	10 38%	0 0%
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	0 0%	1 100%	0 n/a	4 100%	2 50%	0 n/a
Schools and Curriculum Development	6 75%	15 52%	0 n/a	10 83%	9 56%	0 n/a

Table G: Overdue complaints with formal extensions or holding letters issued

Overdue complaints that have holding letters issued, or been granted a formal extension – by service (Refer to Table A for totals)	2017-18			2018-19		
	Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution	Stage 2 - Investigation	Stage 2 - Escalated Investigation	Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution	Stage 2 - Investigation	Stage 2 - Escalated Investigation
Total number of complaints investigated	348	163	14	482	95	20
Total number of late responses	43	36	2	111	45	11
All Council	2 3%	8 15%	2 20%	24 22%	4 9%	5 45%
Chief Executive’s Office	0 0%	0 0%	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a
Chief Executive’s Section	0 0	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a
Corporate Policy Unit	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a
Community, Planning & Development	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a
Corporate Services	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a
Financial Services	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a
Human Resources and ICT	0% 0%	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a
Legal and Democratic Services	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a
Environmental Services	1 6%	4 14.3%	0 0%	1 2%	2 17%	4 44%
Development Services	0 0%	1 20%	- n/a	1 25%	1 33%	- n/a
Direct Services	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Housing and Property	0 0%	3 17.6%	0 0%	0 0%	1 13%	4 57%
Education and Social Care	1 3%	4 17%	2 33%	23 58%	2 7%	1 50%
Community Care	0 n/a	0 0%	0 0%	23 62%	0 0%	0 0%
Integrated Children’s Services	1 1	2 29%	2 100%	0 0%	2 13%	1 100%
Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport	0 0%	- n/a	- n/a	- n/a	0 0%	- n/a
Schools and Curriculum Development	0 0%	2 14%	- n/a	0 0%	0 0%	- n/a

Note: N/A indicates that a service had no overdue complaints at that particular stage

Table I: Percentage of complaints by department (2014-15 to 2018-19)

Given the types of service provided by each department, it is not surprising that the proportion of complaints dealt with by each department in 2018-19 is broadly like previous years and is very close to the 2017-18 and 2016-17 proportions. Environmental Services has the most direct contact with users of council services and receives the lion's share of complaints.

Figure 23: Percentage of complaints by department (2014-15 to 2018-19)

