

Annual Customer Feedback Report

2022 – 2023



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

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Executive Summary

Listening to the experiences and feedback of those who live, work and visit the city helps us to ensure we can learn and improve to continue to provide high quality services. To further improve processes, outcomes and learning from complaints, a review of the complaints process commenced in 2021 which is progressing well and we are seeing improvements for both customers and staff.

2022-23 saw a decrease compared to 2021-22 across most directorates in stage 1 corporate complaints.

The number of stage 2 corporate complaints recorded has increased this year. This year, 95 stage 2 corporate complaints were considered which equates to 8% of all corporate complaints received escalating to this stage, which is a 3% increase compared to 2021-22.

Children's and Family Services (CAFS) complaints fall under both corporate and statutory complaints processes. In 2022/3 there has been an increase in statutory children's complaints and reduction in corporate children's complaints, this will be due to the type of complaints received and the process they are required to follow. During the on-going review of the complaints process both the statutory and corporate procedures will be reviewed to ensure the feedback is allocated to the appropriate procedure. Overall, the City Council has continued to improve the time it took to respond to Children's Social Care complaints. This could in part be attributed to closer working with the Customer Feedback Team to improve follow-up of due dates and also the work that was done at the first point of contact supported by the restorative practice model.

As with CAFS, Adult Social Care complaints can fall under both statutory and corporate complaints processes. This year has seen a significant increase in the number of complaints in that fall under the statutory process which are mainly due to delays in waiting for assessments.

This report fulfils the statutory responsibility of the local authority to publish an annual report for complaints about children's and adults' social care.

In 2022-23 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman received 72 enquiries about city council services, which was a decrease of 4 enquiries compared to 2021-22, Out of the 72 enquiries, 22 were taken forward for detailed investigation, and of these 22, 12 were upheld. The Housing Ombudsman Service upheld 2 of the complaints it investigated about city council housing services in 2022-23.

The number of MP Enquiries received in 2022-23 increased significantly from the previous year.

Our Process

The Corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure is set out to handle feedback in relation to all services, apart from services which fall under statutory regulations, for which there are separate complaints processes that exists for social care services for children and for adults.

Corporate Complaints

The Corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure has two stages.

Having a two-stage procedure ensures that our customers get a speedier response to their concerns.

The customer feedback team has robust measures in place to encourage responses to complaints in a timely way, including sending officers reminders of forthcoming response dates, notifying officers when complaints have gone overdue and escalating matters to senior officers where required.

A weekly summary of all open complaints is also shared with senior management and cascaded to staff in the weekly directorate meetings.

Stage	Investigation Process
Stage One	Stage 1 complaint investigations are usually carried out by the lead for the service the complaint is concerning. The investigating officer is encouraged to complete a thorough investigation and provide the complainant with a detailed response of their findings. Most complaints should be resolved at stage 1 with any resolution actions and identified learning being implemented by the investigating officer. The timescale to respond to stage 1 complaints is 10 working days, however, this can be extended if required for more complex investigations.
Stage Two	In cases where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response they have received at stage 1 of the corporate complaints procedure they can request that a stage 2 investigation is carried out. Stage 2 investigations are carried out by a customer feedback officer from the Customer Feedback Team. This officer is independent of the service being complained about. A written response is provided to the complainant which is also signed off by the Assistant Director of the service being complained about. The Assistant Director is also responsible for ensuring that any recommendations and learning is implemented and fed back into the service. Stage 2 investigations should be completed within 20 working days but can be extended if required.

Statutory Complaints Process

Children's Social Care

The Children's Social Care Complaints procedure is fully compliant with The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and the accompanying guidance 'Getting the Best from Complaints'.

In line with our restorative practice model staff are actively encouraged to resolve concerns at the first point of contact as quickly and clearly as possible. Where a concern cannot be addressed at an informal level, it can be escalated to the complaints process which has three stages.

Stage	Investigation Process
Stage 1 Local Resolution	Stage 1 complaint investigations are usually undertaken by a Principal Manager. It is expected that most complaints should be resolved at this stage. The Customer Feedback Team encourage Principal Managers to complete a thorough investigation into the concerns raised within the complaint and ensure that a detailed and robust response is provided. The timescale allowed to respond to a stage 1 complaint is 10 working days. This timescale can be extended up to 20 working days for more complex investigations with the agreement of the complainant.
Stage 2 Independent Investigation	If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure or has not received a response within the prescribed stage 1 timescale, they may request that their complaint is escalated to stage 2. Stage 2 investigations are carried out by an Investigating Officer who is independent of the Local Authority. An Independent Person is appointed to oversee the complaint investigation and ensure that the investigation is open, transparent and fair. The Independent Investigating Officer and Independent Person each produce a report of their findings and any recommendations for the Local Authority. The Assistant Director of Children's Services acts as the Adjudicating Officer on behalf of the Local Authority and provides a formal response to the complainant. The Adjudicating Officer should also ensure that any recommendations and learning is implemented. Stage 2 Investigations should be completed with 25 working days and can be extended up to 65 working days if required with the agreement of the complainant.
Stage 3 Review Panel	Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following receipt of the outcome of their stage 2 complaint, they may request that an independent review panel is held to review the handling of their complaint. The panel is made up of a chairperson and two panel members, all of whom, are independent of the local authority. The panel is attended by the Independent Investigating Officer, Independent Person and the Adjudicating Officer at stage 2 and is clerked by a member of staff from the Customer Feedback Team. The Customer Feedback Team Manager attends as advisor to the panel. The panel chairperson must provide a report to the Local Authority within 5 working days of the panel hearing. The Director of Children's Services then considers the panel's findings and produces the Local Authority's response to the complaint within 15 working days.

Adult Social Care and Providers

The Adult Social Care Complaints and Representations Procedure is designed to comply with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Adult Social Care staff are encouraged to pursue first-point resolution in relation to the concerns of service users. Where problems cannot be resolved this way or a more detailed investigation is required, the service user can make a formal

complaint. This is referred to as Local Resolution and is usually undertaken by a Team Manager.

As the commissioner of services, the Local Authority also has a responsibility to investigate complaints about provider services where the service user does not wish for the provider to undertake a complaints investigation themselves.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service

Once a complainant has exhausted the local procedures, they have the opportunity to approach the relevant Ombudsman service to request that their complaint is investigated.

Complainants can approach the Ombudsman directly to make their complaint at any stage, though they will usually be expected to have exhausted all stages of the city council's own complaints procedure before the Ombudsman will carry out an investigation.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman looks at individual complaints about councils and provides an impartial service. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman considers complaints about all council services except for some housing complaints.

The Housing Ombudsman Service looks at complaints about housing where there is a landlord-tenant relationship between the council and the complainant. There are several routes for a complainant to approach the Housing Ombudsman Service following receipt of their response from the city council. They can ask their MP, Councillor or the Tenants Panel for assistance with resolving the issue and if they are unable to do so they can refer this to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Alternatively, the complainant can wait eight weeks from the date of their final response from the city council and approach the Housing Ombudsman Service directly.

Both Ombudsman Services aim to respond to most complaints they receive within 12 months.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issues an annual letter which details the complaints they have received about each Local Authority's services and the outcome of their investigations; this is included in Appendix A of this Report.

Corporate Complaints

Corporate Complaints - Stage One

This year saw a decrease of 124 corporate complaints recorded in 2022-23 compared to the previous year, as in the table below. This is the lowest number of corporate complaints received over the last three years.

Year	Number of Corporate Stage One Complaints Received
2020-21	1,264
2021-22	1,323
2022-23	1,199

The chart below shows the number of corporate complaints received by each of the

city council's directorates in 2022-23.

The chart below shows the volume of complaints received by Directorate, the highest volume of complaints received at stage one, were in the Housing, Development and Growth directorate, due to the volume of services provided in this directorate this is expected.



What kind of complaints were we getting

Each complaint was allocated an 'issue nature' which aimed to summarise the nature of the concerns that the customer felt their complaint is about, these were grouped under the following headings:

- Communication and Information
- Conduct of an Officer
- Discrimination
- Policy
- Service Delay
- Service Failure

Each complaint could be allocated multiple issue natures, and the issue the customer felt the complaint was about doesn't always reflect the complaint once investigated.

The majority of corporate complaints received by the city council during 2022-23 related to Service Failure.

The following table shows the stage 1 complaints by issue nature and by directorate for 2022-23.

	Comms and Info	Officer Conduct	Discrimination	Policy	Service Failure	Service Delay
Adult Social Care, Health Integration and Wellbeing	21	15	0	0	20	26
Children and Family Services	18	16	0	0	29	35
Strategy and Resources	144	21	2	1	71	71
City Director	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing, Development and Growth	105	104	1	4	739	145
Total	288	156	3	5	859	277

How many complaints were upheld?

Of the 1,199 corporate complaints that we received across the local authority:

54% were Not Upheld. This means on the basis of the evidence available the complaint could not be supported.

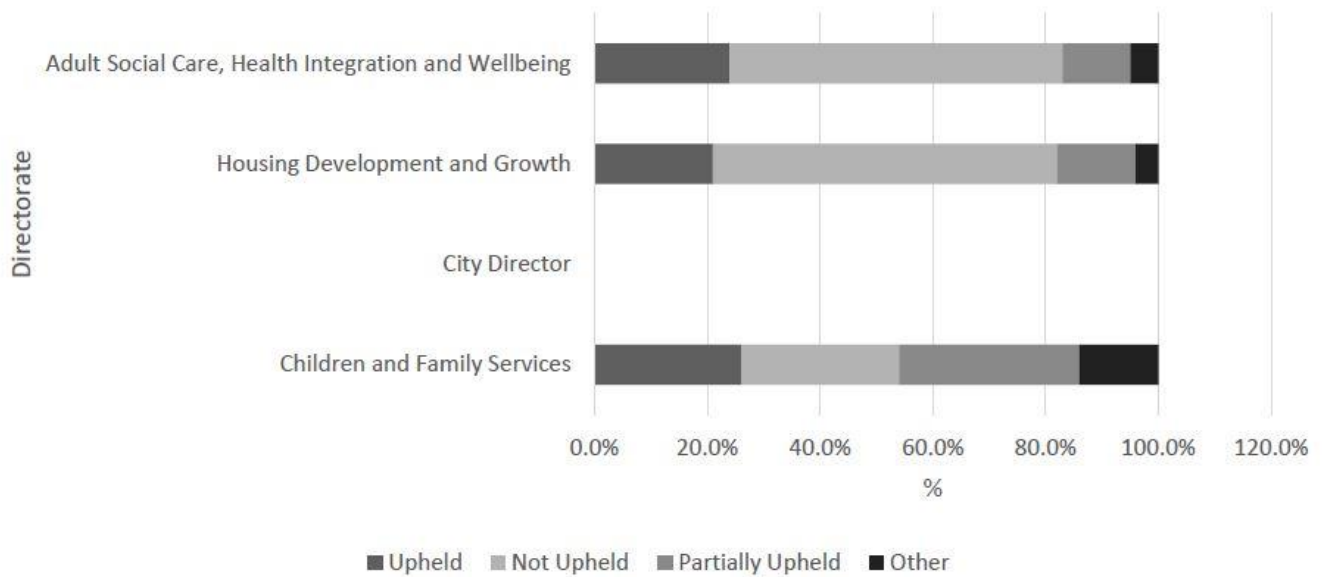
22% were Upheld. This means it was confirmed that a service had not been delivered in accordance with policy, standards or good practice.

16% were Partially Upheld. This is where the findings and conclusions of the investigation only partly upheld the complaint. Some complaints had more than one issue to be considered and a mix of outcomes for each issue would result in a 'partially upheld' complaint.

8% had another recorded outcome, for example the complaint was withdrawn, or escalated to another stage of the complaint's procedure without a Stage 1 outcome being set.

For 2022-23 these outcomes were largely consistent with the previous year. The graph below shows the percentage of stage 1 complaint outcomes broken down by Directorate for 2022-23.

Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints by Outcome by Directorate 2022-23

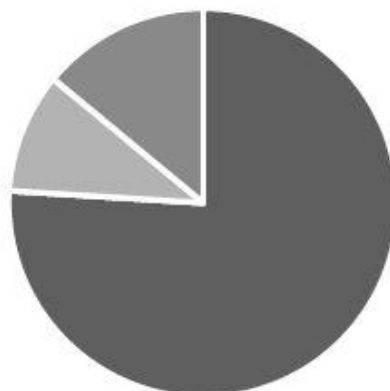


How fast were we responding?

The Corporate Complaints Procedure allows 10 working days for stage one complaints to be resolved. In some cases where it is not possible to meet this timescale this timescale can be extended; however, performance is still measured against the original 10 working day timescale.

During 2022-23, 76% of all Corporate Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescale which is slightly lower than 2021-22, of which 84% of all complaints were responded to within 10 working days. Due to the volume and complexity of complaints in 2022-23 some needed to be extended to complete an investigation.

Stage 1 Complaints % timescales

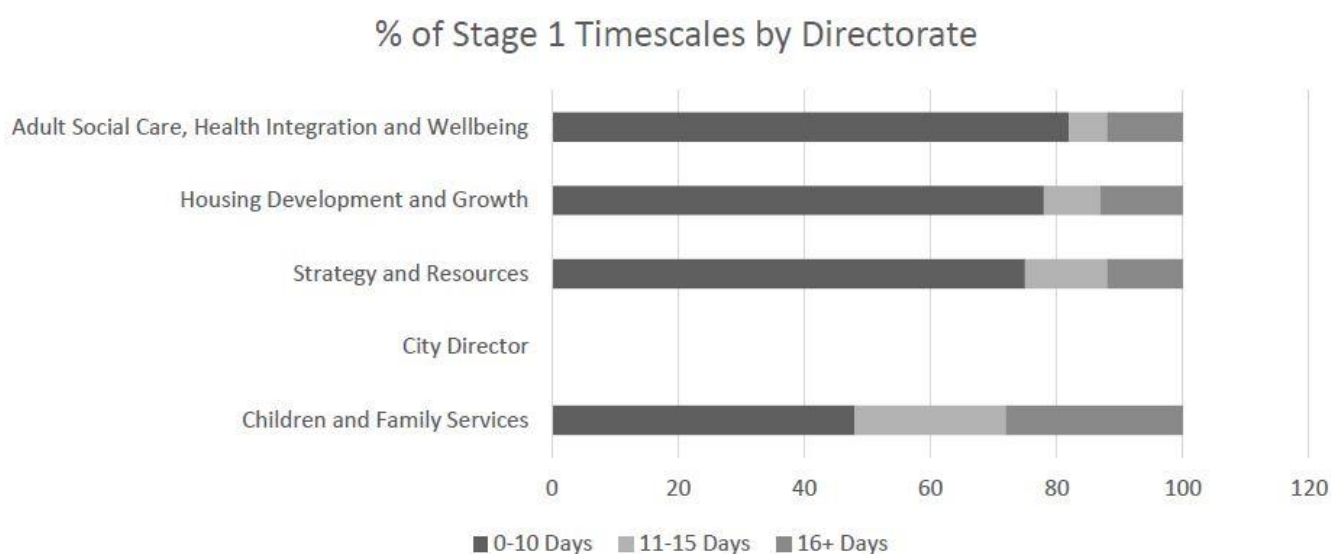


- Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints by Timescale (%) 0-10 days
- Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints by Timescale (%) 11-15 days
- Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints by Timescale (%) 16+ days

The customer feedback team carries out a robust follow up process for overdue complaints, escalating them for the attention of senior management and reporting regularly on performance timescales.

Where complaints will take longer than 10 working days to investigate the service investigating and the customer feedback team keep the customer informed of any delay.

The graph below shows per Directorate the response timescales for corporate stage 1 complaints.



Corporate Complaints – Stage Two

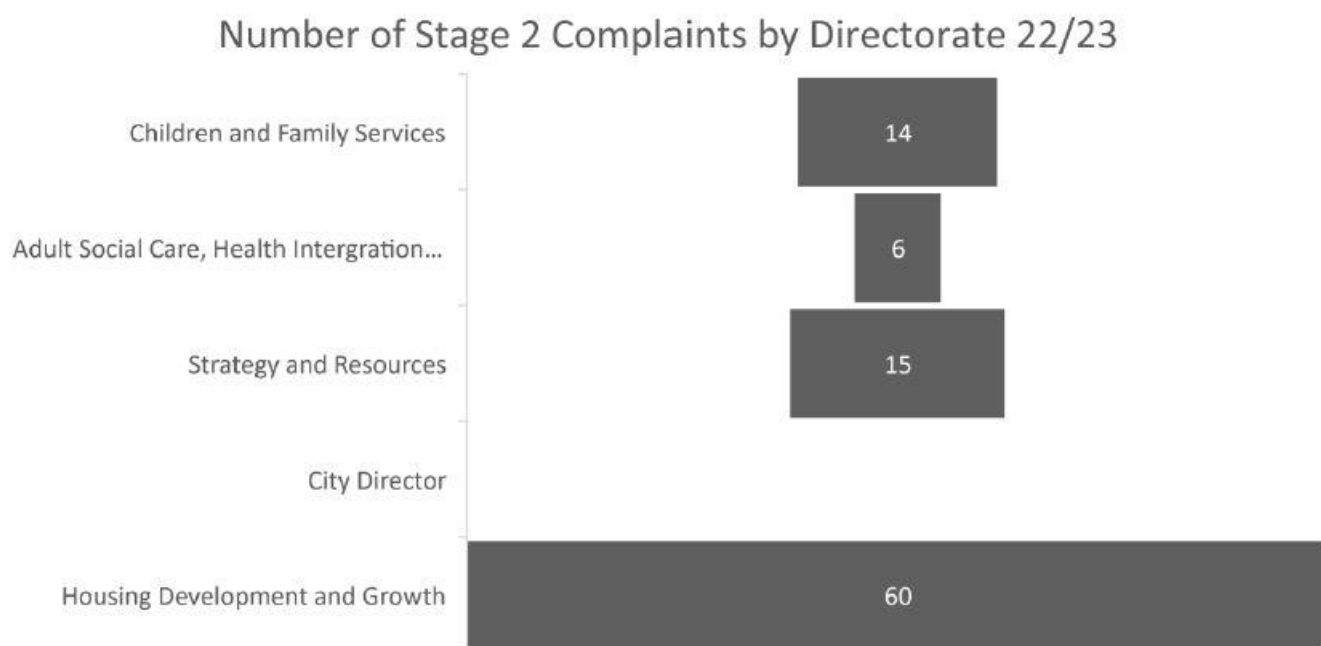
This year there was an increase in the number of corporate complaints escalated to stage 2 in 2022-23:

Year	Number of Corporate Stage Two Complaints Received
2020-21	96
2021-22	69
2022-23	95

As with corporate stage 1 complaints, corporate stage 2 complaint outcomes are categorised as not upheld, partially upheld or upheld.

Also, some requests for a Stage 2 investigation can be refused by the customer feedback team or withdrawn by the customer.

The next chart shows the breakdown of stage 2 complaints received by directorate.



58% of complaints were not upheld at Stage 2 which highlights that we are following our policies and procedures correctly, the 42% that were partially upheld or upheld were mainly in relation to communication and waiting time for services. The Corporate Complaints procedure allows 20 working days to respond to stage 2 complaints.

It is important as with stage 1 complaints that a thorough investigation is undertaken and, in some cases, stage 2 investigations are an opportunity for the complainant to request an investigation independent to the service area, this is conducted by the Customer Feedback Team.

Children's Social Care Complaints

This section of the annual report provides information relating to complaints received by the city council about Children's Social Care.

The number of statutory complaints received about Children's Social Care should be balanced against the number of families receiving support and services in the city.

Figures for 2022-23 show:

- Approximately 58,486 children and young people under the age of 18 years lived in Stoke-on-Trent. This was taken from the latest Mid-year population estimates from the ONS for 2020 – Census data released in June 2022; this does not yet give us a breakdown for under 18

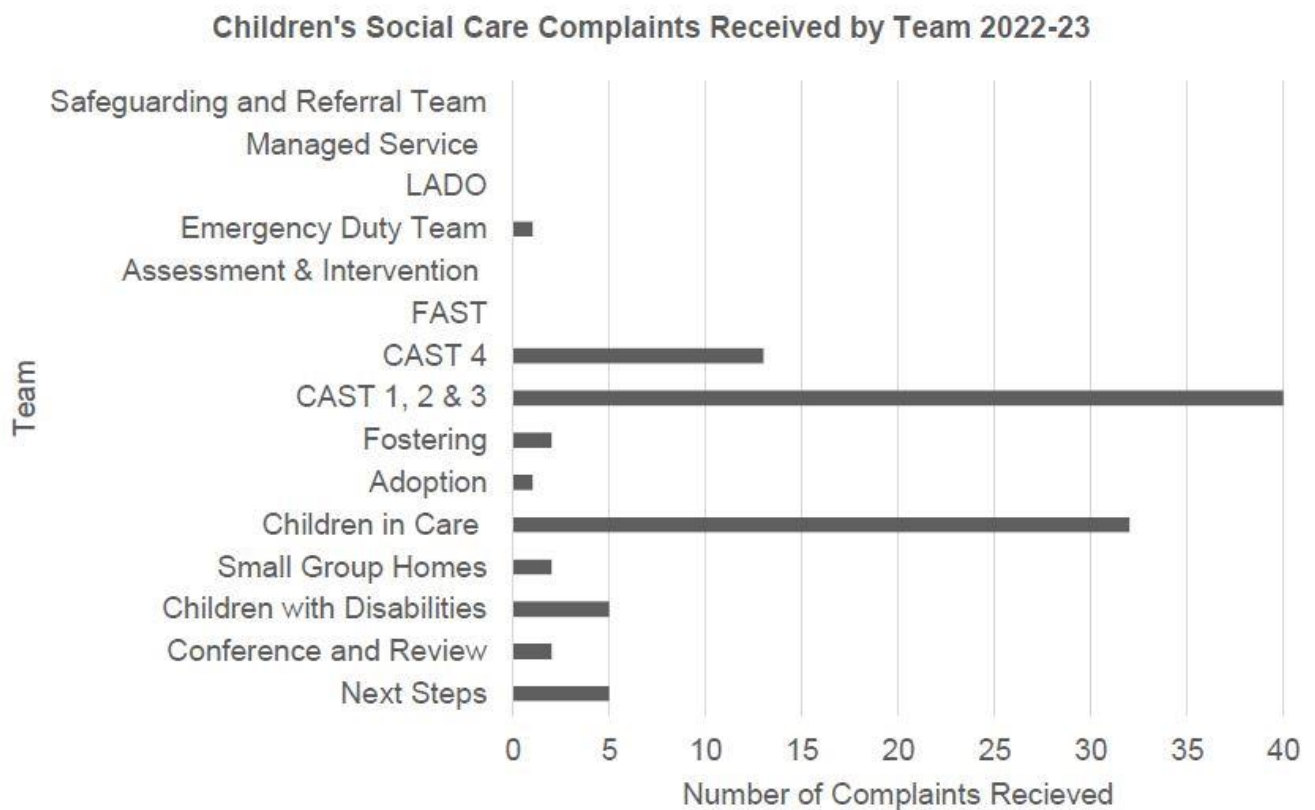
- At 31 March 2023, there were 3,890 cases open to Children's Services.
- At 31 March 2023, 1,107 children and young people were being looked after by the local authority.

In 2022-23 there was an increase in statutory complaints received, from 103 in 2021-22 to 140 in 2022-23.

Year	Number of Statutory Stage One Complaints
2021-22	103
2022-23	140

The chart below shows statutory complaints across teams.

There were slight increases across the board in the number of complaints received compared to 2021/22.



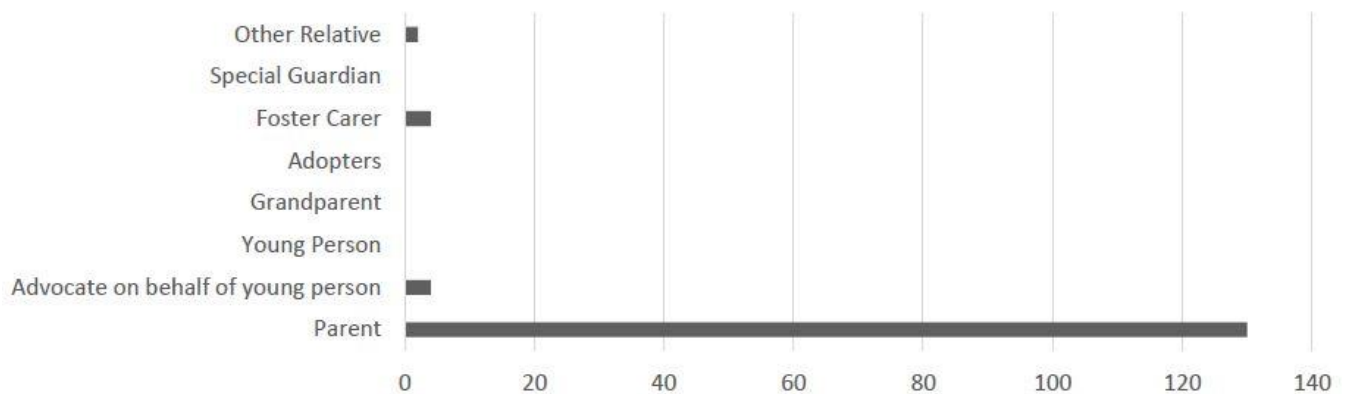
What kind of complaints were we getting?

The most frequent statutory complaints about Children's social care in 2022-23 continued to remain consistent with previous years and related to communication issues, the outcomes of decisions and assessments alongside and a perceived lack of support offered to children and young people and their families.

The following table shows the most common stage 1 complaint issues by nature for 2022-23 and 2021-22 for comparison. As with corporate complaints it is possible for more than one issue nature to be assigned to each complaint.

Issue Nature	Number of Complaints 2022-23	Number of Complaints 2021-22
Confidentiality	1	0
Placement Change	0	4

Who complained ?



Lack of Consistency	0	0
Financial	0	0
Change in Worker	10	5
Outcome of Decision/Assessment	17	21
Poor Communication	49	27
Attitude/Conduct of Staff	18	10
Lack of Support	10	23
Contact Issues	9	9

Who complained?

Delay/Failure to keep informed	0	13
Other	26	0
Total	140	112

Most complaints received in 2022-23 were made by parents with 93% of all complaints being made by this group. This remains consistent with previous years. Work is to be carried out alongside CAFS to update the website and avenues to submit feedback to ensure they are easily accessible for the young people of the city.

How many complaints were upheld?

Of the 140 Children’s Stage 1 complaints that we received:

35% were Not Upheld. This means on the basis of the evidence available the complaint could not be supported.

23% were Upheld. This means it was confirmed that a service had not been delivered in accordance with policy, standards or good practice.

28% were Partially Upheld. This is where the findings and conclusions of the investigation only partly upheld the complaint. Some complaints have more than one issue to be considered and a mix of outcomes for each issue resulted in a ‘partially upheld’ complaint.

3% had another recorded outcome, for example the complaint was withdrawn.

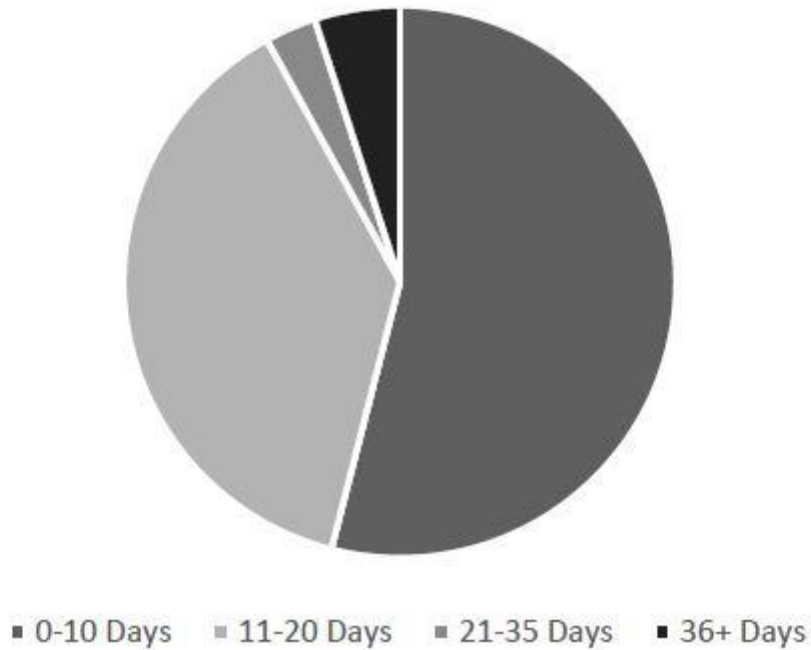
11% were out of jurisdiction for investigation.

In 2022-23 there was a 2% increase in the volume of complaints upheld in full, and the numbers of complaints that were out of jurisdiction for investigation decreased by 7% on the previous year.

How fast were we responding?

The next chart shows the percentage of time taken to respond to children’s stage 1 complaints, of which 54% were responded to within 10 days, which continues the improving trajectory since 2020-21.

How quickly are we responding?



How many complaints were escalated?

During 2022-23 2 complaints escalated to Stage 2 of the statutory complaint's procedure. This is due to the restorative work being carried out by children's services where additional contact is made with the complaint from when the complaint is received to a response being provided. One complaint was upheld and the other partially upheld.

Year	Number of Children's Social Care Complaints Stage 2
2021/22	7
2022/23	2

In 2022-23 1 complaint was escalated to stage 3 of the Children's Social Care Complaints process, however this was refused as the panel would not overturn the decision made by the court.

Corporate Complaints relating to Children's Social Care

Corporate Complaints – Stage One

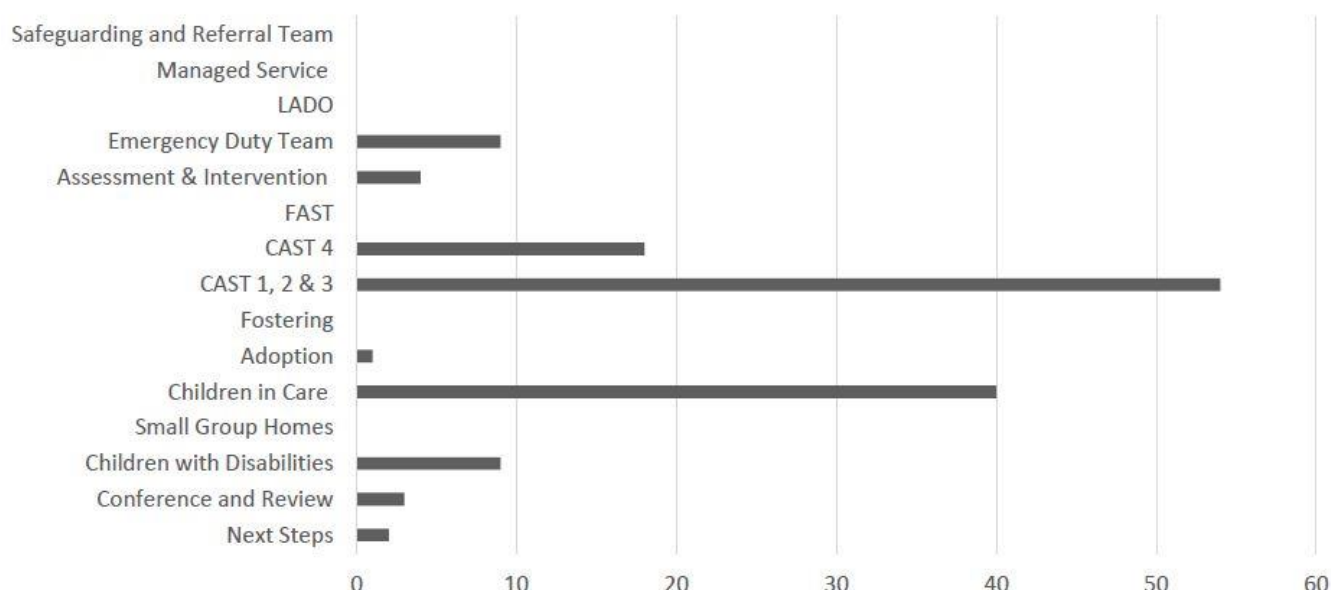
Complaints that do not meet the criteria to be considered under the Statutory complaints process may be considered under the council's corporate complaints process. For example, a complaint made by an adult about how they have been treated by Children's Services.

The table below shows the number of complaints about Children's Social Care that were considered at stage one of the corporate complaint's procedure in the last 2 years.

Year	Number of Children's Social Care Complaints Corporate Stage 1 Process
2021/22	126
2022/23	37

The following chart shows a breakdown of the corporate complaints received by each team in 2022-23.

Number of complaints received by Team 2022-23



What kind of complaints were we getting?

Each complaint can be allocated multiple issue natures. Complaints in 2022-23 saw a decrease across all issue natures, we now only allocate one issue nature to highlight the root cause of the complaint.

Issue Nature	Number of Complaints	Number of Complaints
	2022-23	2021-22
Communication and Information	18	55
Conduct of an Officer	16	46
Discrimination	0	8
Policy	0	0
Service Delay	3	16
Service Failure	4	99
Total	41	224

How many complaints were upheld?

Of the 37 corporate complaints that we received about Children’s Social Care:

31% were Not Upheld. This means on the basis of the evidence available the complaint could not be supported.

16% were Upheld. This means it was confirmed that a service had not been delivered in accordance with policy, standards or good practice.

31% were Partially Upheld. This is where the findings and conclusions of the investigation only partly upheld the complaint. Some complaints had more than one issue to be considered and a mix of outcomes for each issue resulted in a ‘partially upheld’ complaint.

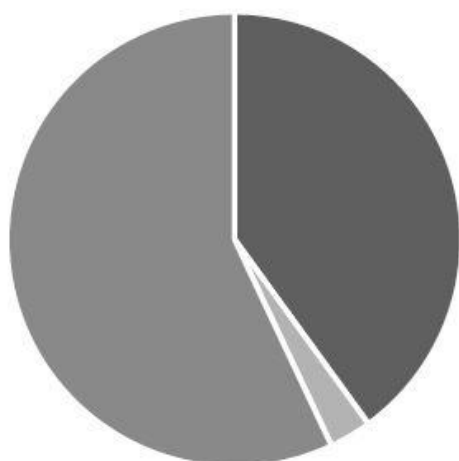
22% were withdrawn at the request of the complainant.

How fast were we responding?

The Corporate Complaints Procedure allows 10 working days for complaints to be resolved.

During 2022-23, 39% of all Corporate Stage 1 complaints relating to Children’s Social Care were responded to within timescale, which continues to be an increase year on year.

How fast are we responding ?



■ 0-10 days ■ 11-15 days ■ 16+ days

Corporate Complaints relating to Children’s Social Care – Stage Two

In 2022-23 0 corporate complaints about Children’s Social Care escalated to stage 2 of the complaint’s procedure.

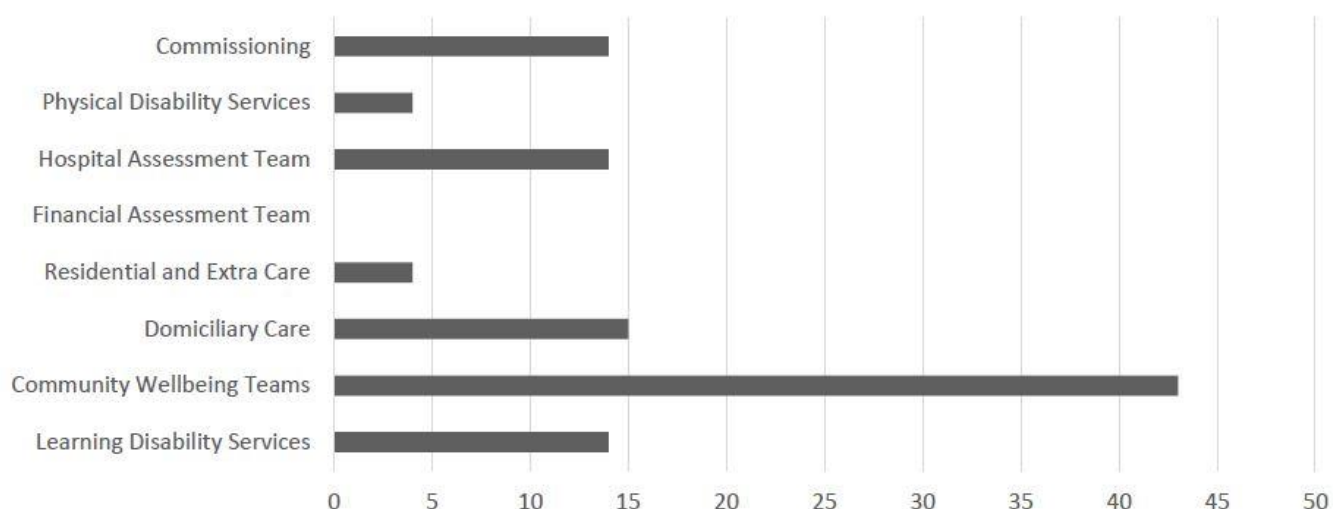
Adult Social Care Complaints

2022-23 saw a significant increase in the number of complaints received.

Year	Number of Complaints with regards to Adult Social Care
2021/22	62
2022/23	108

The following graph shows the number of complaints received by service area for 2022-23.

Adult Social Care Complaints Received, by Service Area 22-23



What kind of complaints were we getting?

The primary issue raised by complainants in 2022-23 was outcome of decision/assessment accounted for 29% of all complaints received, followed by outcome of quality of service provided for 25% of complaints, and communication accounting for 21% of complaints.

There was significant increase in the number of complaints for outcome of decision/assessment these are largely related to eligibility for services or delays in the service provision / assessment.

The following table shows the number of stage 1 complaints by nature for 2022-23 and 2021-22 for comparison.

Issue Nature	Number of Complaints 2021-22	Number of Complaints 2022-23
Conduct/Behaviour of Staff	18	21
Communication	11	23
Delay/Failure to keep informed	10	3
Financial	4	0
Non-adherence to procedure	2	2
Outcome of decision/assessment	5	31
Quality of service provided	13	27
Total	62	108

How many complaints were upheld?

Of the 108

complaints in relation to Adult Social Care that we received:

15% were Upheld. This means it was confirmed that a service had not been delivered in accordance with policy, standards or good practice.

33% were Partially Upheld. This is where the findings and conclusions of the investigation only partly upheld the complaint. Some complaints have more than one issue to be considered and a mix of outcomes for each issue resulted in a 'partially upheld' complaint.

31% were Not Upheld. This means on the basis of the evidence available the complaint could not be supported.

21% had another recorded outcome, for example the complaint was withdrawn.

How fast were we responding?

While the regulations governing complaints about Adult Social Care allow for up to 6 months to complete an investigation, there is an expectation under the local procedure that complaints are resolved in 15 working days unless otherwise agreed with the complainant. 76% of complaints were responded to within this deadline in 2022-23, which is a further increase on the performance of 2021-22.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Service

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) issues an annual letter detailing complaints received from within the local authority area. This is attached to this report at Appendix A. This letter outlines the topic of each complaint or enquiry received by the LGO and provides a summary of the outcomes reached.

In 2022-23 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman received a total of 72 complaints about Stoke-on-Trent City Council and carried out detailed investigations into 22 of these complaints. 12 of those complaints were upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Where the Ombudsman found fault with the actions of the council, it can direct us to undertake some remedial action.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman made 12 recommendations for remedial action in 2022-23 and the city council successfully implemented 100% of these recommendations.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's summary of each upheld decision are presented below, further details of these complaints can be found on the decisions page of the LGO website: www.lgo.org.uk/decisions.

Complaint	Service	Findings
1	Education & Childrens Services	Summary: Ms C said the Council was at fault for numerous failures in caring for her son, X, and in providing him with an Education, Health and Care Plan. The matter was investigated under the statutory complaints procedure which found the Council at fault for failures both in caring for X and in the Education, Health and Care Plan process. We endorsed the findings of that process. The Council has agreed to our remedy in recognition of the injustice caused by the fault found.
2	Adult Care Services	Summary: Mr X complains the Council failed to tell him his father had left a will, preventing him from complying with his father's wishes when he arranged his funeral. The Council accepts it failed to deal with this properly and has apologised. It also needs to make a symbolic payment to Mr X for the distress caused.
3	Highways & Transport	Summary: Mr X complains about how the Council handled his Penalty Charge Notice. The Ombudsman did not find fault in the way the Council followed the procedure set out in the Notice. However, we did find the Council at fault for having a separate policy which it does not consistently apply. The Council agreed to reopen Mr X's case and provide him with information about its policy to enable him to make an informed decision.
4	Adult Care Services	Summary: Mr X complains on behalf of his brother (Mr Y) that the Council failed to complete Mr Y's social care assessment and respond to his complaint. We find the Council completed the assessment in line with Care and Support Statutory Guidance, but it did not deal with Mr X's complaint according to its policy. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mr X and pay him £150 for his time and trouble.
5	Education & Childrens Services	Summary: The Council was at fault for delaying Mrs X's daughter's (Y's) Education Health Care Plan annual review and transfer review. The Council was also at fault for failing to meet the provision set out in Y's Plan and failing to properly consider the offer of alternative provision when Y was out of school. This fault had a significant impact of Y's education and wellbeing. The Council agreed to apologise and pay a financial sum to remedy the injustice caused to Mrs X and Y.

Complaint	Service	Findings
6	Education & Childrens Services	<p>Summary: Mrs D complains on behalf of her son (Young Person A) who has special educational needs. The Council maintain an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) for Young Person A which includes the provision he is legally entitled to receive so to support his education. Mrs D says the Council has failed to provide Young Person A's EHCP provision. Further, she says the Council has failed to provide her son with a suitable full-time education when he was no longer permitted to attend two different schools. We found the Council failed to provide Young Person A with his needed EHCP provision. This fundamentally undermined Young Person A's educational development. There was no fault however by the Council in respect of its duty to provide Young Person A with alternative education provision when he was out of school. The failings identified have caused an injustice and the Council has agreed to our recommendations to remedy this.</p>
7	Education & Childrens Services	<p>Summary: Mrs D complains on behalf of her son (Child A) who has special educational needs. She says the Council has failed to provide Child A with his needed occupational therapy in accordance with his Education and Health Care Plan. The Council has fully accepted fault in this respect, as well for failings made during its complaint handling process. We consider Child A and Mrs D have suffered an injustice as a result of the failings identified. The Council has agreed to our recommendations to remedy this.</p>
8	Education & Childrens Services	<p>Summary: Mrs X complained the Council failed to meet statutory deadlines to finalise her daughter's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and communicated poorly. Mrs X said this caused considerable distress and uncertainty. We find fault and recommend the Council apologise, make a payment to Mrs X, and act to prevent recurrence.</p>
9	Corporate & Other Services	<p>Summary: Miss X complained about the Council's application of its allotments policy and response to her concerns of anti-social behaviour (ASB). The Council was at fault when it failed to keep Miss X updated of the action it had taken and failed to signpost her to the Community Trigger. The Council agreed to apologise to Miss X and pay her £150 for the uncertainty it caused her and carry out service improvements.</p>

Complaint	Service	Findings
10	Education & Childrens Services	Summary: Mrs X complained about the Council's application of its home to school transport policy. There was fault in the way the Council conducted its stage 2 appeal which caused Mrs X uncertainty. There was also delay holding the panel. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mrs X, reconvene a stage 2 panel and update its policy to reflect statutory guidance.
11	Education & Children's Services	Summary: Mrs X complained about the Council's failure to provide her son with suitable education since September 2021 and delay in finalising his Education, Health and Care Plan. We have found the Council to be at fault. There was significant delay, poor communication and the Council did not provide home tuition soon enough or at an appropriate level. To remedy the injustice caused by these faults, the Council has agreed to apologise and make a payment to Mrs X to acknowledge her son's missed education and distress caused to her. It should also refund costs incurred by Mrs X. The Council has already acted to improve its service.
12	Benefits & Tax	Summary: Mr X complained the Council failed to investigate his complaints under the children's statutory complaints procedure. The Council was at fault in not having started stage 2 of the procedures for six months. It has agreed to apologise, compensate Mr X and move without further delay to stage 2 of the procedures. It has also agreed to develop an action plan to help prevent a reoccurrence in future.

[Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) investigate complaints about Stoke-on-Trent City Council where the issues raised are in connection with its function as a landlord.

In 2022-23 the Housing Ombudsman Service upheld two of the complaints it investigated about city council housing services in 2022-23, in both cases they found service failure, specifically:

In the first complaint they found in accordance with paragraph 54 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was maladministration in respect of the landlord's handling of the tenant's report of water ingress.

In the second complaint they also found in accordance with paragraph 54 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was maladministration by the landlord in respect of handling of repairs to the tenant's roof and complaint handling and record keeping.

Learning from Complaints

The city council encourages feedback from our residents about the services we deliver. Residents' feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and where we need to make improvements.

The Customer Feedback Team encourage services to learn from the feedback they receive and to implement changes and improvements to ensure that the services we deliver are the best that they can be.

The following table provides an example from each Directorate of the learning that was identified from complaints in 2022-23.

Directorate	Feedback	Learning
Adult Social Care, Health Integration and Wellbeing	Complaint from family handling of feedback to the city council	Investment made into staff training and ensuring feedback is recorded at first point of contact to ensure the customer's journey is meaningful.
Housing, Development and Growth	Customer complaining about time it has taken for the service to contact them	Reminders to all staff to ensure customers have alternative avenues to raise concerns when staff not in the office.
Strategy and Resources	Customers having issues reporting request for service.	Improvements have been made to the contact us area of the website ensuring it is easier to report concerns.
Children and Family Services	Complaint from family in regards to child's education plan and information not being provided	Communication pledge designed and implemented to improve customer experience

Comments

Comments are defined as those contacts made to the city council which are not expressing dissatisfaction, but may, for example, be a suggestion as to how services could be improved. They may also be a general statement about policies or practices.

Each comment received is passed to the appropriate service for response within 10 working days.

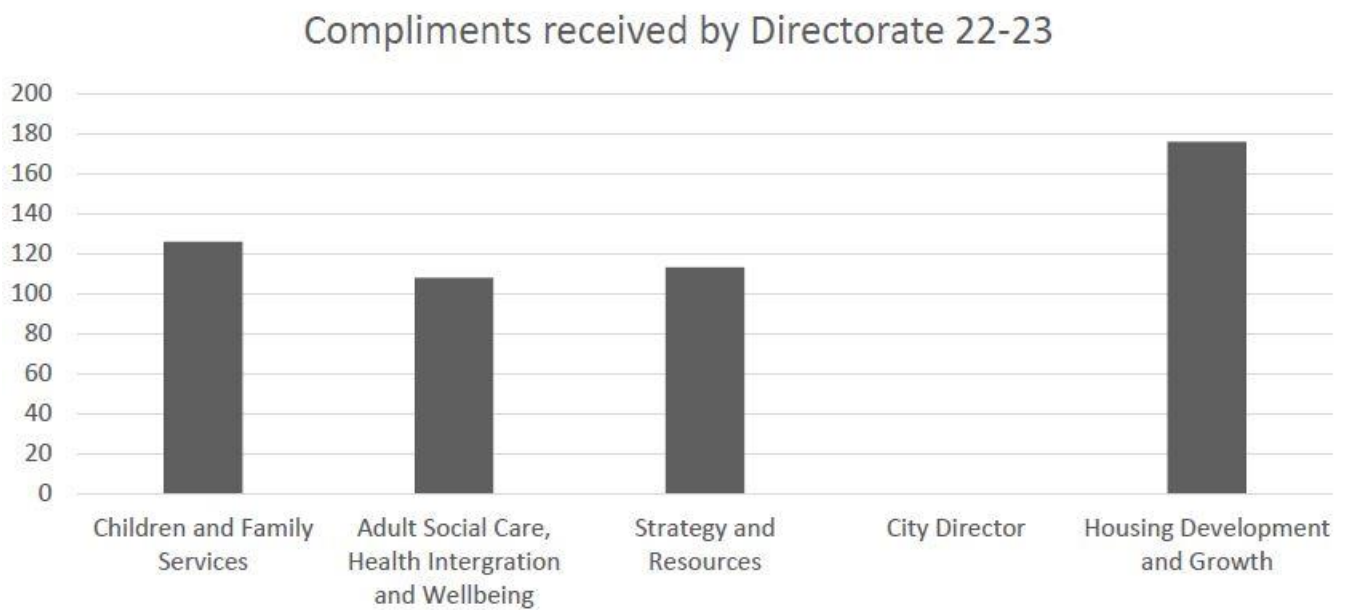
The total number of comments received in 2022-23 was 507, which was an increase of 44 comments received from the previous year, of which 463 were received in 2021-22.

Compliments

The total number of corporate compliments recorded in 2022-23 was 523.

Year	Number of Compliments Received
2021-22	616
2022-23	523

The next graph shows by directorate the number of compliments recorded in 2022-23.



What our Residents and Customers said

Examples of the corporate compliments that were received in 2022-23.

I want to compliment my social worker. He's a friendly, straight forward with what he says and I understand what he says and if I don't understand he explains it simply and simplify things He's a really good listener I think we instantly clicked I never wanted to talk to my social worker but I felt like I could sit and talk to him for hours! I think we had a good understanding of each other He is funny and made me feel confident and gave me similar scenarios to what was going on with me and what he would do which would help me clear away through my mind and actually concentrate and wonder if it's actually important if it's going to affect me or what not Last but not least he was good at getting back to me through phone contact email face to face and he never made excuses as to why he couldn't he helped me through a black hole Believe it or not I am a different person because of him.

This morning I witnessed a council road sweeper help an elderly lady, she had a Zimmer frame and was out sweeping the pavement. This gentleman stopped, helped me and swept up everything she had gathered. A true gentleman and a credit to your workforce. It was so lovely to see. We need more good people like him in the world :)

I work in a local school and I had thrown something away by mistake. As I arrived at the bins to look, the bin truck was also arriving. They asked me if I was ok and I explained the situation. They both helped me to try and find the item. Although I didn't find it, I am eternally grateful for their help. They went above and beyond their duty and were quite possibly the nicest two men I have ever come across in my life. Please reward your colleagues for being so amazing!

A big thankyou to the whole of Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Everybody that works for the council and for all that the council do across the city. The city would not run without the staff doing what they do.

I witnessed care and compassion from your staff member at Bentilee Library he helped a family today who could not speak English he made such a difference to the family and reassured them that the library is a friendly place and they will always be welcome. He is a fantastic member of staff. He's caring and compassionate, always cheerful. Nothing is too much trouble. What a difference he has made today.

I would like to say what a wonderful place Marrow House is and every member of staff have always gone above and beyond to make my father at ease in his assessment and the best care anyone could wish for. You are the best people and most caring profession I have ever come across and as a family we are sad that he has to leave as if I could I would take everyone of you with him.

MP Enquiries

The Customer Feedback Team also handles correspondence sent by Members of Parliament on behalf of their constituents.

The number of enquiries and service requests received has increased year on year for the past five years.

In 2022-23 the city council received 1,871 MP Enquiries which was an increase compared to the 1,527 received in 2021-22.

The table below indicates the numbers of enquiries received from each constituency in the city. A small number were received from MPs outside of the city.

Constituency Area	Number of Enquiries Received
Stoke-on-Trent South	832
Stoke-on-Trent Central	313
Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove	721
Out of Area MPs	5

The city council aims to respond to MP Enquiries within 10 working days and achieved 74% compliance with this timescale in 2022-23.

The Customer Feedback Team has maintained a good working relationship with constituency casework officers to ensure enquiries are responded to in a timely and comprehensive way.

As seen in previous years and due to the nature of the work undertaken in the Directorate Housing, Development and Growth, it continued to receive the majority of MP Enquiries in 2022-23, receiving 74% of all enquiries.

Percentage of MP Enquiries Received by Directorate

