

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SESSION

UPDATE REPORT: COMPLAINTS – ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

DATE: 20 September 2018

REPORT SUBMITTED BY: Caron Davies, Complaints and FOI Manager

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide Members and Chief Officers with an overview of the complaints performance for the financial year 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018.

2. Key messages

- 2.1 During the 2017/18 financial year, the authority received a total of **69 complaints: 50 stage one; 4 stage two; and 15 via the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.**
- 2.2 This represents a **43.90% decrease** on the previous financial year when there was a total of 123 complaints. Corporate Complaints have been quite steady over the year, Social Care complaints were busier at the beginning of the year and have steadily decreased.
- 2.3 There were 3 late complaints during the financial year, resulting in an overall compliance rate of **95.65% which is above the target of 95%**. There was 1 late stage one response for Social Care and 2 late corporate stage one responses.
- 2.4 Whilst the number of complaints has reduced, the complexity of the issues handled by the team has increased dramatically, with more detailed investigations being undertaken to ensure responses meet the satisfaction of the complainants.
- 2.5 The performance of the central complaints team, created as part of the ABS review, has had a positive impact on complaint handling across the Council during the past year. The team often deals with concerns at the point of contact, with their focus being on liaising with service areas to resolve issues quickly, preventing complaint escalation, and identifying opportunities to learn from customer contact.
- 2.6 Whilst the volume of recorded complaints has decreased considerably over the past year, an increasing number of calls received by the team now fall outside the definition of a complaint or service issue. Dealing with these calls is complex and can be resource intensive as they are often from people in the community who need assistance. This additional role has become integral to the work of the team, reducing pressure on front line staff, benefiting residents and protecting the reputation of the Council.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Members and Chief Officers are invited to note and comment on the information presented in this report.

4. Background & summary of overall performance

4.1 Complaints received by the authority are dealt with via one of two complaints processes:

- Social Care complaints follow a statutory procedure Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- All other complaints relating to the central council service areas are dealt with via the Corporate Complaints Procedure. This is not a statutory procedure, but follows the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy issued by the Welsh Government.

4.2 Since August 2016, a central Complaints and FOI Team has been responsible for coordinating responses to all complaints and FOI requests received by the Council. All complaints, outcomes and lessons learned (apart from those relating to schools; received from the Welsh Language Commissioner; and internal HR issues) are now managed centrally.

4.3 This is providing a more consistent and efficient approach to managing the Council's complaints processes, with the team continuing to meet with service areas to analyse complaints, review lessons learned, develop relationships and provide support.

4.4 Despite improvements in the number of complaints received, it must be highlighted that the Council still receives a large number of enquiries which divert resources away from front line service delivery. This reduces overall customer satisfaction when people are using or receiving Council services. During 2017/18, the Complaints team was involved in **162 calls outside of the complaints process** not including basic service issues.

4.5 The total number of complaints received by the Council has decreased considerably over the past three years. The trend seems to be levelling off so far in the current financial year. Overall, in 2017/18:

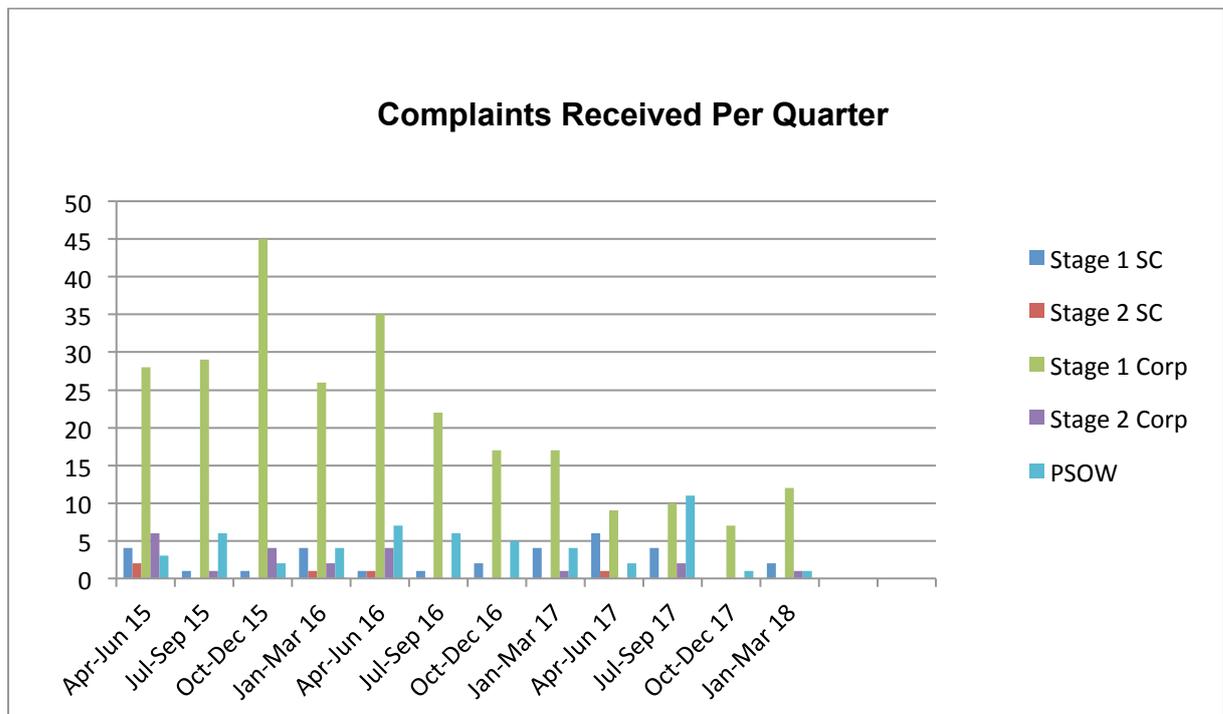
Both stage one and stage two complaints decreased significantly;

There was a drop in stage one complaints from 95 during 2016/17, to 50; and Stage 2 decreased from 6 in 2016/17 to 4.

4.6 There was a decrease in complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman of Wales (PSOW) from 22 during the period 2016/17 to 15 during 2017/18. There were no investigations by the Ombudsman during 2017/18, but there was one "quick fix" which was resolved by the authority providing an apology. The number of complaints upheld in the financial year 2017/18 was;

	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Quick Fix
Social Care Stage 1	1	6	5	N/A
Social Care Stage 2	0	1	0	N/A
Corporate Stage 1	13	5	20	N/A
Corporate Stage 2	0	0	3	N/A
PSOW	0	0	14	1

4.7 The number of complaints per quarter is as per the graph below;



- 4.8 Lessons learned from the handling of these complaints included;
- The creation of a new form to submit to benefits when social services are attempting to locate an individual.
 - Staff reminded about expected standards and behaviours to avoid complaints.
 - Being aware of the importance of prompt communication.
 - All staff and contractors being mindful of the importance of customer service.
 - Policy reviews and ensuring officers are aware of council policies.
 - Staff training.
 - Addressing poor performing crews and disciplinary action taken.
 - Training loaders to become drivers to provide more adequate cover.
 - Responsibility with waste charge hands to follow up with residents regarding issues raised. More ownership has led to very positive feedback from residents including formal compliments (see below).
 - Use of visual aids in Planning Committee, improved communication and consideration of customer service
 - Officers to be considerate of keeping numbers to a minimum during visits to avoid intimidation.
 - Working within the parameters of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act.
 - A 'softer' approach when dealing with families of deceased residents.
 - User-friendly forms being introduced including wording to better explain how benefit adjustments may be off-set.
 - Systems looked at regarding timing of Council Tax bills and benefit adjustments.
 - Improving communication to manage service users and their families' expectations, especially around the "What matters to the service user" conversation and to clarify responsibilities of health and social care.
 - Ensuring that all contact information is kept up to date, particularly relating to telephone numbers linked for Lifeline users.
 - Raising awareness that telephones cannot make overseas calls, but the system only gives an engaged tone so that officers are not made aware of this when trying to call. Request must be submitted to the SRS.

During the year there were also a number of **compliments** received thanking the council for support and services provided. These are listed in detail in the service area summary in Appendix 1.

5. Comparison of performance with other authorities

5.1 It is currently not possible to quantify the level of complaints received by the Council compared to other local authorities and public bodies as no nationally defined measures are collected to benchmark performance. Other local authorities record service issues, enquires, comments and complaints in different ways which makes comparisons difficult to make. The PSOW have advised they are considering collating information from local authorities for benchmarking in the future.

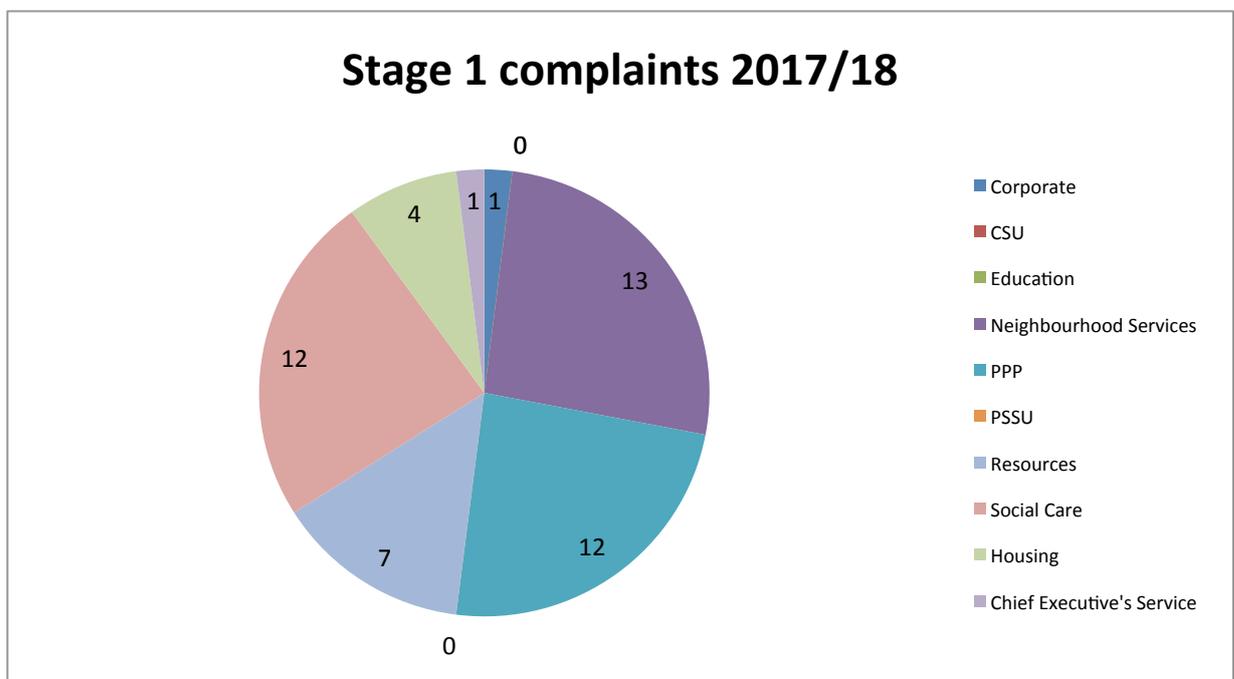
5.2 However, the PSOW does provide some comparison figures in an annual report. Torfaen had a lower than average number of complaints when the figures were adjusted for population. The number of complaints decreased from 23 in 2016/17 to 15 in 2017/18. The number of complaints adjusted for population distribution was 23, this is the fifth lowest figure, joint with Monmouthshire.

6. Performance summary by service area

6.1 A full break down of the complaints received by each service area during the 2017/18 financial year is outlined in appendix one to this report.

6.2 Stage One Complaints

The number of stage one complaints received by each service area during 2017/18 is shown in the chart below.



There were reductions in stage one complaints in most areas, the largest being;

Customer Services reduced from 4 in 2016/17 to 1 in 2017/18.

Education reduced from 3 in 2016/17 to 0 in 2017/18.

Neighbourhood Services reduced from 52 in 2016/17 to 13 in 2017/18.

This may be attributed to the proactive work being undertaken by Waste teams in particular, as well as the Complaints/FOI Team separating complaints from service issues.

There were increases in the following service areas;

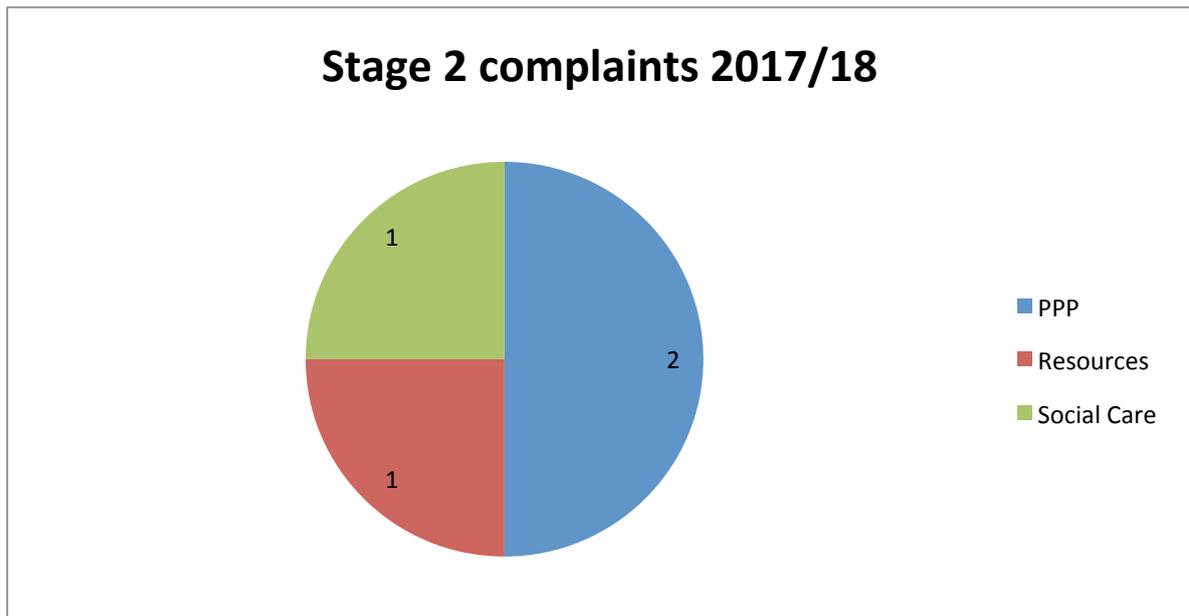
Planning & Public Protection (PPP) increased from 11 in 2016/17 to 12 in 2017/18, there were no real themes.

Social Care complaints increased from 4 to 6 in Adults Services and increased from 2 to 6 in Children's services.

The main theme within Children and Family Services was communication failure which resulted in expectations not being managed. In Adult Services a few complaints have related to CHC funding which is approved by the Local Health Board, also families of elderly residents have complained about decisions which have been made based on the wishes of the service user that they disagree with. Communication issues have played a large part in these complaints.

6.3 Stage Two Complaints

The number of stage 2 complaints received by service area in 2017/18 is shown in the chart below.



The stage two corporate complaints **decreased** from 5 in 2016/17 to 3 in 2017/18. There were no recurring themes and none were upheld.

Social Care stage 2 complaints remained the same at 1 during both years, this was for Adult Services and was part upheld.

6.4 Overall response rates

The agreed target for the Council to respond to complaints is that 95% of complaints received will be responded to on time.

During 2017/18 there was an increase in the compliance with response time at stage one from 88.42% to 94%. There were 2 late responses from PPP, and 1 from Social Care. There were no late Stage 2 responses. Overall with a total of 69 complaints, the compliance was **95.65%**.

Complaints received and responded to								
Financial Year	Stage 1	Late response	% on time	Stage 2	Late response	% on time	Omb	Inv
2015/16	138	4	97.10%	17	4	76%	15	1
2016/17	95	11	88.42%	6	1	83%	22	1
2017/18	50	3	94%	4	0	100%	15	0

7. Complaint prevention

7.1 Whilst Members and Chief Officers can be assured that the complaints process is robust and the Council is responding appropriately to complaints received, there is still an opportunity to improve service delivery by:

- Considering and acting upon the intelligence afforded through repeated enquiries and complaints;
- Ensuring there are sufficient cover arrangements in place in service areas when officers are absent from work; and
- Ensuring service areas provide requested information in a timely manner to ensure the Council's target of 95% is met.

7.2 During the past year, service areas have continued to work proactively with the Complaints Team focusing on complaints prevention. The following are good examples of work undertaken:

- Regular meetings held by the Complaints / FOI Manager and key officers in service areas to discuss matters arising and lessons that can be learned.
- Improved relationships and communication. When service issues are addressed promptly and the Complaints Team are informed of any potential issues the number of complaints is reduced.
- Monthly meetings taking place with the Heads of Adult Services and Children & Family Services to ensure effective communication on both sides. This also assists with the Complaints Team's understanding of the processes involved within the Social Care arena.
- Departments have previously taken advice with regards to gaps that were present on the website and have worked to rectify these issues. These have been identified following previous complaints however the team continue to ask service

areas to review information and look to see if it can be more customer friendly. This will not only ensure that customers are properly informed in advance of any changes but provide confidence that information is up to date which can reduce customer contact.

- Providing service users and staff with key information, this ensures that people are aware of what is or is not available from the onset which is crucial in managing expectations.
- Reviewing the Public Services Ombudsman quarterly case book of complaints they have investigated and circulating to relevant service areas to learn from complaints made against other authorities and to share recommendations.
- The Complaints Team meeting with various teams in Adult Services to discuss the complaints process, to provide advice on what to do if a complaint is received and how we can try to avoid service issues becoming complaints.

7.3 All of these actions demonstrate the benefits of effective shared learning and collaborative working however communication continues to be a primary cause for complaints.

8. Conclusions and further action

8.1 The authority is provided with a wealth of information via complaints and customer comments; it is a missed opportunity if service areas do not act on the intelligence received to improve their services. When feedback is ignored it risks changing from being an asset to a cost.

8.2 A critical part of dealing with and resolving complaints are the lessons learned and the actions that have been agreed and implemented as a part of the resolution. There is a risk to the council's reputation if residents and the Public Services Ombudsman's Office perceive that complaints are not taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

8.3 Whereas the reactive nature of complaints previously caused difficulties for the service areas allocating time to investigate, the Complaints team undertakes these tasks and works with service areas to gather the necessary information to provide a timely response. The team also uses this opportunity to discuss intelligence and challenge their enquiries, complaints and responses, in an attempt to further reduce the overall number of complaints and enquires received

8.4 The Team has worked closely with many of the service areas to raise awareness of the complaints processes, support officers and develop relationships, and is keen to continue this throughout the Council. They would like to expand on the above and believe that if the authority was consistent in the way it communicated with residents it could further reduce complaints and improve customer service. This could be achieved with the introduction of Service Standards, something which the team is keen to support service areas to progress.

8.5 Leadership Team at the meeting on 25th July 2018 agreed to continue to support the central Complaints and FOI Team in their work; and for them to work proactively with service areas to focus on learning and service improvement to further reduce the number of complaints received by the authority.

BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA

Community Services Unit

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	3	0	100%	0	1
2016/17	1	0	100%	1	1
2017/18	0	0	N/A	0	0

2017/18 Annual Update;

There were no complaints for the Community Services Unit at stage 1, 2 or to the Ombudsman's office.

Corporate

A new category was created during 2016/17 to record complaints that fall outside of a specific service area or cross between departments. The number of complaints received for the last two financial years appear below:

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2016/17	2	0	100%	1	1
2017/18	1	0	100%	0	1

2017/18 Annual Update

There was one Stage 1 complaint in respect of an administration error (mistaken identity) which was upheld.

Lessons learned from this matter included:

- The creation of a new form to submit to benefits when social services are attempting to locate an individual.
- Staff reminded about expected standards and behaviours to avoid complaints being made.

No Stage 2 Complaints.

A complaint from the previous year was escalated to the Ombudsman. This complaint encompassed both social care and finance, the Ombudsman made the decision not to investigate further.

Chief Executive's Service

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	2	0	100%	0	0
2016/17	4	0	100%	0	0
2017/18	0	0	N/A	0	0

2017/18 Annual Update

There were no complaints received for stage 1, 2 or the Ombudsman

Customer Services

The number of complaints received by this area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	9	0	100%	0	0
2016/17	4	0	100%	0	0
2017/18	1	0	100%	0	0

2017/18 Annual Update

There was one complaint made in 2017/18 which was not upheld. Unfortunately, the complainant was not prepared to listen to the advice offered and felt belittled. Customer was provided with external organisations that may be able to assist with his enquiries.

There were no stage two complaints or complaints to the Ombudsman's office.

Education

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	5	0	100%	2	2
2016/17	3	0	100%	0	4
2017/18	0	0	N/A	0	0

There were no complaints received for stage 1, 2 or the Ombudsman

Neighbourhood Services

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2014/15	89	6	93.26	7	9
2015/16	70	1	98.57	6	3
2016/17	52	5	90.39	1+1*	5
2017/18	13	0	100%	0	2

2017/18 Annual Update

Of the 13 stage one complaints received in 2017/18, 9 complaints were upheld, 2 were not upheld and 2 were part upheld.

The number of stage one complaints received during 2017/18 decreased significantly on the previous year with a reduction of 39 complaints from 52 to 13, all complaints were responded to on time. The formation of the Complaints/FOI team in September 2016 has had a positive impact and contributed to service issues being identified and processed via the correct channels, rather than recording all as complaints.

The complaints were relating to the following services;

- The number of complaints relating to all aspects of the waste service has decreased from 33 in 2016/17 to 6 in 2017/18. One complaint was regarding the customer service provided by the recycling centre (HWRC) which is privately run on behalf of the Council, the majority of complaints related to on-going missed collections and lack of 'assisted lift' collections. Monitoring exercises have continued which involved supervisors visiting areas before crews attended, watching them work, and then looking at an area after they left.
- There were 5 complaints in relation to Street-Scene, three were in relation to tree works and two regarding ground maintenance. Four of the complaints were due to lack of response/poor communication. One was relating to staff attitude but was not proven.
- The remaining 2 complaints were regarding school transport: the issue of school transport passes and the lateness of a taxi firm used to provide transport of pupils to and from school.

Action taken and lessons learned included;

- Being aware of the importance of prompt communication
- All staff and contractors being mindful of the importance of customer service
- Policy reviews and ensuring officers are aware of council policies
- Staff training
- Poor performing crews have been addressed and disciplinary action taken.
- Training loaders to become drivers to provide more adequate cover.
- Mystery shopping is ongoing, also targeting areas that historically have had issues. Charge hands have responsibility for that and for follow up spot checks.
- Responsibility with charge hands to follow up with residents regarding issues raised. More ownership has led to very positive feedback from residents including formal compliments (see below).
- Directing all queries through the waste mailbox has led to better management of correspondence.
- The waste team have continued to have regular meetings with Corporate Complaints enabling more proactive communication.
- Onus is on responsible officer to contact resident, not to assume communication will be followed up by Customer Service operators
- Better record keeping

There were no Stage 2 complaints.

The 2 complaints to the Ombudsman were in respect of school transport and the criteria for a bus pass, the Ombudsman declined to investigate as the authority was following its policy.

The Complaints Team have been made aware of eight compliments received during the period

- There were three for the gritting team including for clearing a road in order for a resident to undergo dialysis treatment.
- A resident who had been having on-going issues with missed recycling. As per the departments new processes, the chargehand went to the property and spoke to the complainant, the crew arranged the collection & this was monitored going forward. The resident thought that the whole process was very efficient.
- Four others were notes of thanks for recycling and refuse crew work and good communication.

Planning and Public Protection

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	16	0	100%	3	0
2016/17	11	2	81.82%	1	4
2017/18	12	2	83.3%	2	3

2017/18 Annual Update

Of the stage one complaints received during 2017/18, 1 was upheld, 10 not upheld and 1 was part upheld.

Many of these could be based on the customer expectation versus Council's limitations. In some cases the Council are governed by legislation or rely on professional bodies to enable them to carry out actions, such as food, health and safety guidelines or planning laws.

There were 12 Stage 1 complaints. The largest number of complaints (7) was received in relation to the Development Control (Planning) area, followed by 4 complaints for Public Health and 1 for Licensing.

Six of the complaints to Planning were not upheld, one was partially upheld. These complaints were regarding processes and legislation of planning laws, one included alleged fraud by a neighbour which would need to be investigated by the Police rather than the Council. The partially upheld complaint offered an opportunity for lessons learned allowing visual aids to be present at Planning Committee meetings, improving communication and consideration of customer service.

Public Health complaints were regarding intimidation (upheld), harassment, dog micro-chipping and an E-coli health scare (all not upheld), the latter was referred to Public Health Wales, who are the organisation that carries out the testing of samples. The Licensing complaint was regarding victimisation by officers and was unfounded (not upheld).

From a lessons learned perspective, Public Health officers were advised to be mindful of how people perceive their visits, to keep officer attendance to a minimum and work within the parameters of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act. A student attended a call in addition to two officers from separate areas of the council that both had a part to play in the investigation, however this was a bit intimidating to two elderly residents.

There were two late responses to the stage one complaints, one administration error by the complaints team and one late response from the service area.

There were two stage 2 complaints both were for the planning service, neither were upheld and both complainants advised they would take this to the Ombudsman.

Of the 3 cases that were presented to the Ombudsman, 2 had not previously complained to the authority. One was anonymous and we were unable to match that to any previous complaint, we were asked to deal with another case at stage one. The third was a Planning complaint which had been dealt with at Stage 1 and Stage 2 but was not investigated by the Ombudsman's office as they stated there was no case of maladministration to answer.

Public Services Support Unit

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	0	0	N/A	0	0
2016/17	0	0	N/A	0	0
2017/18	0	0	N/A	0	0

There were no complaints for PSSU.

Resources

The number of complaints received by the service area over the past three years is;

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	16	0	100%	2	0
2016/17	9	1	89%	2*	1
2017/18	7	0	100%	1	1

2017/18 Annual Update

There were 7 Resources complaints during 2017/18, these were all in relation to Revenues and Benefits.

One complaint regarding a Council Tax discount application was partially upheld, this was due to some confusion regarding an explanation. Unfortunately the discount expected was offset by another benefit the resident was already in receipt of.

Two complaints were upheld; one relating to the tone and expectation of payment from the family of a deceased resident and one regarding a summons being issued for an incorrect amount.

Four complaints were not upheld relating to a lack of response, the time taken to respond and incorrect information provided.

Lessons learned included:

- A 'softer' approach when dealing with families of deceased residents.
- Direct debit process to be adhered to.
- User-friendly forms including wording to better explain how benefit adjustments may be off-set.
- Systems looked at regarding timing of Council Tax bills and benefit adjustments.

There was one complaint escalated to Stage 2 which was in relation to Council Tax discount, which was not upheld.

There was one complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman that related to both Social Care and Benefits, the complainant wanted a calculation system reviewed to not include Disability Living Allowance (DLA) as income. This complaint was not investigated.

Social Care and Housing

Social Care

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	10	3	70%	4	7
2016/17	6	2	66%	1	5
2017/18	12	1	91.7%	1	8

2017/18 Annual Update Social Care

During 2017/18 the number of Stage 1 complaints received has increased from 6 to 12. There has been one Stage 2 investigation.

It is worth noting that a further 68 queries for Children and Family Services and 32 for Adult Services were received. These were either referred elsewhere e.g. POVA referral or not accepted as a complaint, but still required a significant amount of officer time. There was one late stage 1 response for Adult Services.

The main theme within Children and Family Services was communication failure which resulted in expectations not being managed. In Adult Services a few complaints have related to CHC funding which is approved by the Local Health Board, also families of elderly residents have complained about decisions which have been made based on the wishes of the service user that they disagree with. Communication issues have played a large part in these complaints.

There was one Stage 2 complaint for Adult Services which was partly upheld in that the Authority did not adequately consult with a family prior to care changes being implemented. The fact that the changes were made was not upheld as the Authority has a duty of care to both the staff and the service user.

We have taken learning from the customer contacts such as reviewing and amending processes and procedures, reviewing literature that will inform service users of what they might expect from the start of the process and continuing to highlight to teams the importance of effective communication.

Under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 if a complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the person who made the complaint by the end of the next working day that is excluded from consideration as a complaint. This investment in prompt resolution is crucial to competent complaint management and supports the creation of the team to effectively handle such contacts. It increases customer satisfaction as sufficient resourcing enables an early response to complaints.

The total number of calls (queries and complaints) dealt with in 2017/18 was 113 which is a slight decrease on the 123 received in 2016/17.

A total of 12 Stage 1 complaints were received:

6 (50%) for Adult Services (1 upheld, 3 part upheld, 2 not upheld); and
6 (50%) for Children and Family Services (3 part upheld, 3 not upheld).

1 complaint for Adult Services went straight to formal investigation (Stage 2) and was partly upheld.

No complaints for Children & Family Services went to formal investigation at stage 2.

8 complaints went to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, none of which the Ombudsman intends to investigate:

- PSOW unable to investigate 2 cases due to court action being in place.
- PSOW not investigating due to external organisation being responsible for the delays.
- No investigations as contact with Council under complaints process has not been made.
- Two complaints concluded there was sufficient action taken by Council.
- PSOW asked that we investigate concerns regarding a care home.
- No investigation as the Council made a decision it was entitled to make.

Lessons learned included;

- Reminder for teams to communicate outcomes with families, good practice to re-visit for this purpose.
- Communication could be improved to manage service users and their families expectations, especially around the “What matters to the service user” conversation and to clarify responsibilities of health and social care
- Raise awareness that the telephones cannot make overseas calls, but the system only gives an engaged tone so that officers are not made aware of this when trying to call. Request must be submitted to SRS.
- Ensure that all contact information is kept up to date, particularly relating to telephone numbers linked for Lifeline users.
- Following feedback regarding the current Social Services Complaints policy, a report has been submitted to agree amendments that will make the policy more user-friendly. The intention is to fully explain what is/is not a complaint and make it clearer when it is not possible to investigate via this process.

There were a lot of compliments for Social Care, where service users and their families thanked officers for their empathy, compassion, professionalism, care, advice, help and support. Also thanks when the implementation of services has led to service users and their families having more confidence and mobility.

Other comments were;

- “she conducts herself in reassuringly professional yet friendly manner and her communications are both timely and informative”
- “I cannot speak highly enough of the service we received and we feel lucky to have had such kind people on our case. Thanks again.”
- “I am writing to thank you for the exceptional support and assistance you have provided my parents over the last year, particularly in relation to the provision of care to Dad over recent months.”
- “Your prompt action in arranging an alternative Care Provider has made a significant impact on the quality of life for Dad and also importantly, my mum and for that I am most grateful.”
- “Could I send sincere thanks to your team for the care given to our father. From care given at home rapid response to emergency care. The ladies were the best we could we could have expected. That care allowed dad to stay at home with palliative care. Care & equipment was put in place quickly and efficiently. The care also included me as the main carer which I am very grateful making my job much easier.”
- “I noticed a lady passing my house, who suffers from Alzheimer’s. She was walking in the road and traffic was trying to avoid her, I went down the road after her. When I

reached her she was holding the hand of a young lady who was obviously concerned not knowing who she was or where she came from, my neighbour sadly has lost all communication with people. I said I would take her home, the young lady could see that I would have difficulty with her on my own and she came with me. The reason I am telling you this is because she was an employee of the council on the home care team and I saw at first hand a young lady who went out of her way to help, she was in between her other clients but her immediate action was to offer support, she was so kind she took off her coat and made sure my neighbour was warm and stayed with us until we eventually reached her home which I might add was a very long way. I asked her how long she had worked for the council, she said she had been with you for 3 years and that she loved her job. This young woman showed such caring professionalism”.

- “In short, I guess I am trying to say that the team involved in my Gran’s case was a credit to you and the Department. It could be said that it was the perfect example the Social Care and Wellbeing Wales Act envisioned when it determined that needs should be met in a holistic manner.”
- “Thank you as always for all your support and hard work. Please pass this on to your line manager. You are a credit to an excellent service.”
- Mr P’s daughter advised she has had an exceptionally positive first encounter with Social Services and wanted me to pass this on. She said that everyone she has spoken to in the team have been ‘very kind, helpful’ and ‘excellent’ and had particular praise for Natalie

Housing

	Stage 1	Late	Compliance	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2015/16	7	0	100%	1	0
2016/17	3	0	100%	0	0
2017/18	4	0	100%	0	0

2017/18 Annual Update

Housing follows the Corporate Complaints procedure. During 2017/18 a total of 4 Stage 1 complaints were received, none of these complaints went to an investigation at Stage 2. No complaints went to the Public Services Ombudsman for investigation.

One complaint related to Financial Inclusion. The complainant stated that she was given incorrect benefit forecasts. Evidence available did not support these allegations and this was not upheld.

The second complaint related to delays in repair work being completed for faulty rendering, also lack of communication. Agreed that communication had been poor, resident consented to works commencing end of April 2018. Part upheld.

An individual alleged that they were called a liar and made to bid on a property. Procedure meant that the priority status required bids on all available properties, individual failed to do this and an auto-bid was submitted. Not upheld.

A family member raised concerns about his mother’s neighbours and issues relating to a report of noise nuisance. Referred to Public Health, also highlighted DPA issues to be investigated by Housing directly. Not upheld.

There were no discernible trends, the importance of adhering to the Data Protection Act has been highlighted along with the need to maintain effective communication.

There were **6 compliments** received, these related to Housing Access/Financial Inclusion as follows;

- Conveying thanks for assistance in providing advice to his daughter regarding bidding for housing and commending the officer on his quick response and fast action
- Email to Financial Inclusion: "Thank you for all your assistance, you have quite literally saved my life from imploding around me and I really appreciate it."
- Keep up the good work that you are doing. It makes a great help to me and to others
- Found the information very easy and useful to understand. You were very easy to talk to and there whenever I needed help.
- I have been working with the financial inclusion support officer. She has been very professional and has worked with me above and beyond her role. She is empathetic and extremely caring. I would never have been able to move on with my life in apposite way if it weren't for her.
- Give the officer a rise, she is awesome.