

# CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SESSION

## UPDATE REPORT: COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

DATE: 01 October 2019

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 2018 to 31st March 2019.

### 2. Key messages

2.1 During the 2018/19 financial year, the authority received a total of **67 complaints: 51 stage one; 3 stage two; and 13 via the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.**

2.2 This represents a **2.9% decrease** on the previous financial year when there were a total of 69 complaints. There was an increase in Corporate Complaints and a substantial decrease in Social Care complaints.

2.3 There were 2 late responses to complaints during the financial year, resulting in an overall compliance rate of **97% which is above the target of 95%**. There was 1 late stage one response for Neighbourhood Services and 1 late independent stage 2 response for Social Services.

2.4 The performance of the central complaints team continues to have a positive impact on complaint handling across the Council. The team often deals with concerns at the point of contact, with the focus being on liaising with service areas to resolve issues quickly, preventing complaint escalation and identifying opportunities to learn from customer contact.

2.5 The complaints team dealt with 392 calls in addition to the formal complaints recorded which is up by 49.6% on the 262 calls taken during 2017/18.

2.6 Whilst the volume of recorded complaints is of a similar level to last 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 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 managed centrally.

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

4.4 Despite improvements in the number of complaints received, the Council 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 2018/19, the Complaints team was involved in **392 calls outside of the complaints process**.

4.5 The total number of complaints received by the Council decreased considerably during 2017/18 however the trend in 2018/19 has levelled off.

4.6 There was a decrease in complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman of Wales (PSOW) from 15 during the period 2017/18 to 13 during 2018/19. There was one investigation.

4.7 The number of complaints upheld in the financial year 2018/19 was;

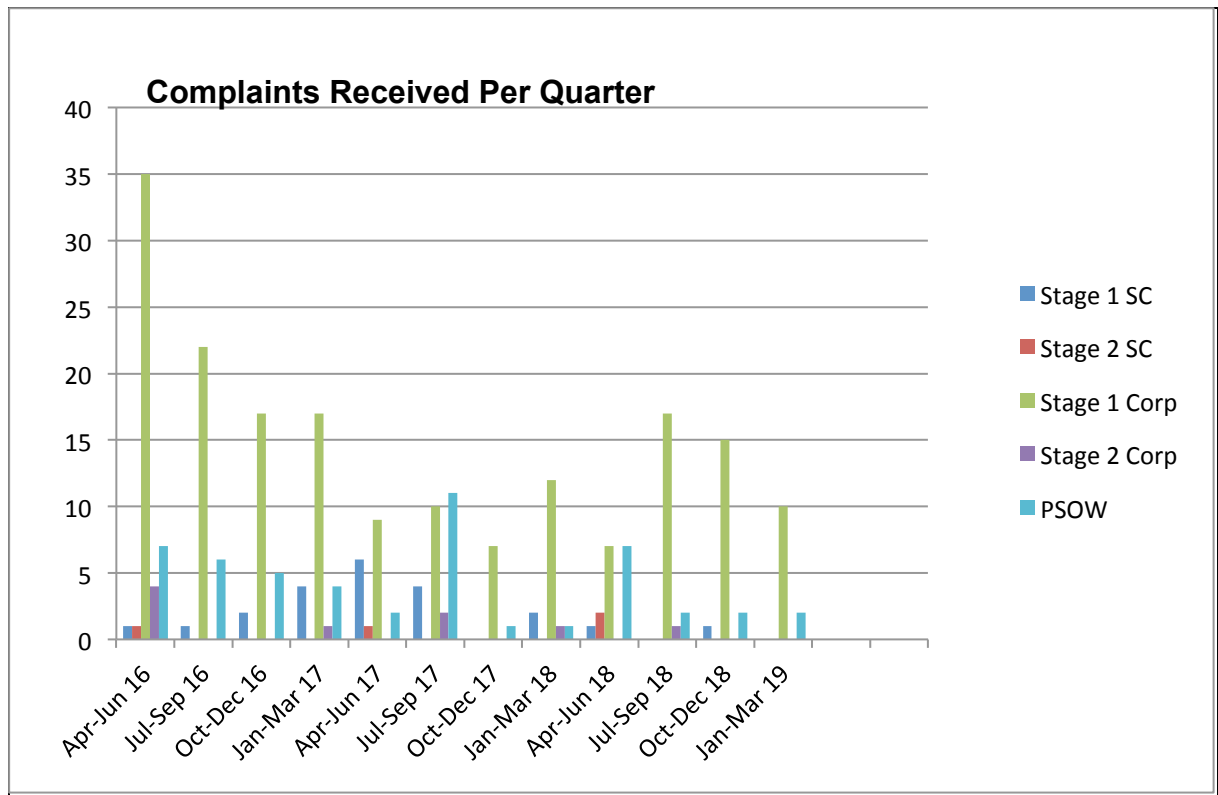
|                     | Upheld    | Part Upheld | Not Upheld | Quick Fix  |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Social Care Stage 1 | 0         | 1           | 1          | N/A        |
| Social Care Stage 2 | 0         | 1           | 1          | N/A        |
| Corporate Stage 1   | 18        | 4           | 27         | N/A        |
| Corporate Stage 2   | 0         | 1           | 0          | N/A        |
| PSOW                | 0         | 1           | 12         | N/A        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>18</b> | <b>8</b>    | <b>41</b>  | <b>N/A</b> |

This compares with the number of complaints upheld in the financial year 2017/18;

|                     | 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        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>14</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>1</b> |

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



4.9 Lessons learned from the handling of these complaints included;

- Review of case recording policy to ensure effective storage of electronic communication
- Importance of verifying information prior to recording on the system
- Improving both internal and external communication
- Staff reminded about expected standards and behaviours
- All staff and contractors being mindful of the importance of customer service
- Policy reviews and ensuring officers are aware of council policies
- Staff training
- Supervisors undertaking spot checks in relation to performance
- Using standardised comments to avoid misunderstanding
- Third party organisations being aware of expectations relating to employee conduct
- Addressing poor performance with staff
- Taking on more HGV drivers
- Working within the parameters of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act
- Ensuring information on the Council website is clear and up to date
- Reviews and changes to business processes

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. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is going to start collating information from 2019/20 with the introduction of the PSOW Act 2019 which gives the Ombudsman new powers **including to launch a Complaints Standards Authority for Wales**. The Act will also extend to accepting complaints other than in writing, own initiative investigations and the opportunity to cover some aspects of private health care.

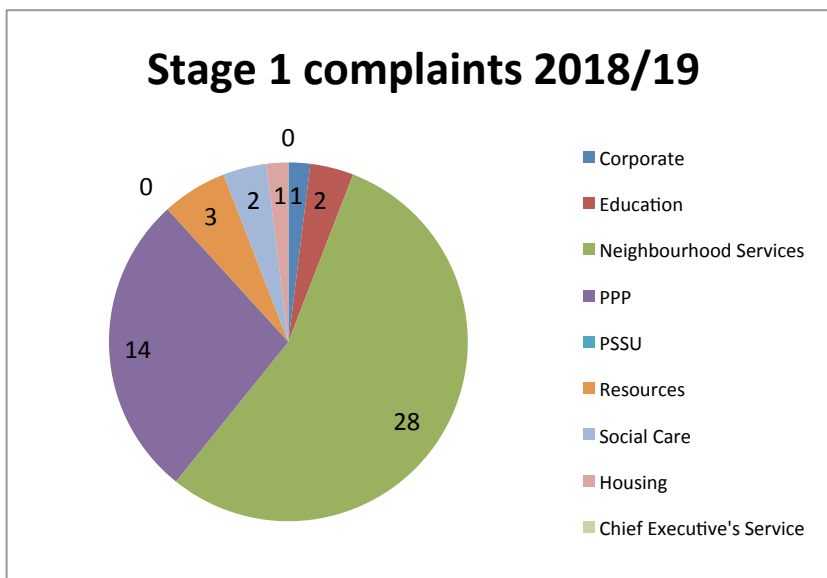
5.2 The PSOW currently provide some comparison figures in an annual report in relation to the numbers of complaints they receive by Local Authority. Torfaen had a lower than average number of complaints when the figures were adjusted for population. The number of complaints decreased from 15 in 2017/18 to 12 in 2018/19 (PSOW figures are reported as one lower as a complaint was not sent to the authority until April 2018 but reported by the PSOW in 17/18). The number of complaints adjusted for population distribution was 26, this is the fifth lowest figure out of all the Welsh Local Authorities.

## 6. Performance summary by service area

6.1 A full break down of the complaints received by each service area during the 2018/19 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 2018/19 is shown in the chart below.



There were increases in stage one complaints in the following areas;

The main increase was in **Neighbourhood Services** from 13 in 2017/18 to 28 in 2018/19. Waste complaints increased from 6 to 18, the majority of complaints related to non-delivery of containers and missed collections including assisted collections. More staff have been recruited to provide consistency and to alleviate pressure.

**Planning and Public Protection** increased from 12 in 2017/18 to 14 in 2018/19. The only theme was 6 complaints in relation to dog control. Three of these were upheld and resulted in improved signage and training.

**Education** increased from 0 in 2017/18 to 2 in 2018/19. There was one complaint relating to arrangements for a child to attend a school named in their statement and one in relation to school admissions. The complaints were not upheld.

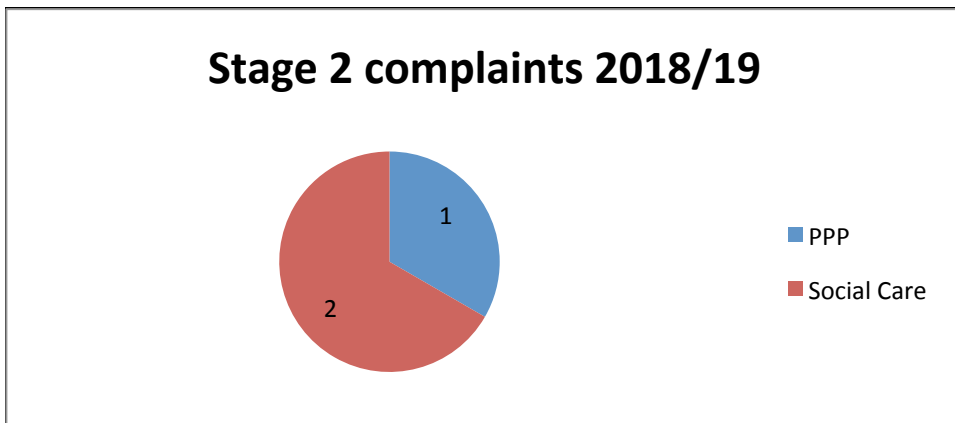
There were decreases in the following service areas;

**Resources** decreased from 7 in 2017/18 to 3 in 2018/19. All complaints were in relation to Customer Services who transferred into Resources during the year. Two complaints were in relation to staff attitude which highlighted a need for further training.

**Social Care** complaints decreased from 6 to 1 in Adults Services and 6 to 1 in Children's services. The Adults Services complaint was in relation to record keeping, this was upheld and highlighted a need for training. The Children's Services complaint was in relation to a misunderstanding regarding an expectation of confidentiality which was not upheld.

### 6.3 Stage Two Complaints

The number of stage 2 complaints received by service area in 2018/19 is shown in the chart below.



The stage two corporate complaints **decreased** from 3 in 2017/18 to 1 in 2018/19. The complaint was in relation to dog control was part upheld and highlighted poor practice.

Social Care stage 2 complaints **increased** from 1 to 2 both of which were for Children's services. One was in relation to communication which was part upheld, the other complaint was regarding an expectation of confidentiality which was not upheld but highlighted an opportunity to improve communication to ensure better management of residents expectations .

### 6.4 Public Services Ombudsman

There were 13 complaints made to the Ombudsman, one complaint in relation to Adult Services was investigated. The complaint was that the council had not acted in the

best interests of a resident. A draft report has been received advising that the complaint was partly upheld regarding communication, cross border safeguarding processes and the use of the unacceptable actions policy.

## 6.5 Overall response rates

The agreed target for the Council to respond to complaints is that 95% of complaints received will be responded to in line with the timeframe stated in the procedures.

During 2018/19 there was an increase in the compliance with response time at stage one from 94% to 98%. There was 1 late response from Neighbourhood Services. There was one late Stage 2 response which resulted in a decrease in compliance from 100% last year to 66%. Overall with a total of 67 complaints, the compliance rate increased from **95.65%** last year to **97%**.

| 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   |
| 2018/19                              | 51      | 1             | 98%       | 3       | 1             | 66%       | 13  | 1   |

## 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 staff are sufficiently trained and aware of procedures; 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 on complaint prevention. The following are examples of the 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 enabling the Complaints Team to address service issues promptly preventing escalation to a formal complaint.
- 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.
- Improving both internal and external communication to ensure both the public and colleagues are aware of what is, or is not available to manage expectations.
- Sharing and discussing information published by the Public Services Ombudsman Complaints quarterly case book regarding their investigations, outcomes and recommendations.
- The Complaints Team have continued to meet teams 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 are not dealt with appropriately.
- 8.3 The reactive nature of dealing with complaints is an added pressure for the service area, the Complaints team manages 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, develop relationships and is keen to continue this throughout the Council to reduce complaints and improve customer service.
- 8.5 Leadership Team at the meeting on 07<sup>th</sup> August 2019 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**

### **Corporate**

Corporate complaints fall outside of a specific service area or cross between departments.

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 2       | 0    | 100%       | 1       | 1         |
| 2017/18 | 1       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 2         |
| 2018/19 | 1       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 3         |

### **2018/19 Annual Update**

There was one Stage 1 complaint in relation to Elections. A recently bereaved resident had been sent a form addressed to their deceased family member. The process had been amended but unfortunately the letter was sent prior to the change.

There were no Stage 2 Complaints.

There were three complaints to the PSOW;

- one request for a policy, no further action.
- complaint was outside of the Corporate Complaints process
- Request relating to Data Protection, outside of remit and passed onto Information Commissioners Office, no further contact

### **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 |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 4       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |
| 2017/18 | 0       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |
| 2018/19 | 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 two years is;

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 4       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |
| 2017/18 | 1       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |

Please note the 2018/19 figures are included in the Resources figures due to the relocation of Customer Services.



## **Education**

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

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 3       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 4         |
| 2017/18 | 0       | 0    | N/A        | 0       | 0         |
| 2018/19 | 2       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |

There were two complaints at stage 1. The first was relating to a parent stating that the authority was not making arrangements for a child to attend a school named in their statement. The school named was parental choice.

The second complaint was that council had not followed its process in relation to school admissions. The information provided at the time was dealt with appropriately.

There were no complaints received at stage 2 or via the Ombudsman.

## **Neighbourhood Services**

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 52      | 5    | 90.39      | 1+1*    | 5         |
| 2017/18 | 13      | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 2         |
| 2018/19 | 28      | 1    | 97.4%      | 0       | 1         |

### **2018/19 Annual Update**

Of the 28 stage one complaints received in 2018/19, 14 complaints were upheld, 12 were not upheld and 2 were part upheld.

The number of stage one complaints received during 2018/19 increased on the previous year with an increase of 15 complaints from 13 to 28, one complaint was not responded to on time due to the person being on leave. The Complaints and FOI team also recorded a further 174 calls which were resolved as service issues.

The complaints were relating to the following services;

- The number of complaints relating to all aspects of the waste service increased from 6 in 2017/18 to 18 in 2018/19. The majority of complaints related to non-delivery of containers and missed collections including assisted collections. This is primarily due to inexperienced staff being put onto certain rounds/activities, or where there have been staff shortages such as during bank holidays when rounds have not been covered at all.

To alleviate this pressure new staff have been employed to provide more consistency. In addition to this crews have been reminded of their responsibilities and monitoring exercises have continued by supervisors. A new business process was implemented in relation to non-delivery of commercial waste bags.

- There were 3 complaints relating to school transport. Outcomes included apologies for late transport and an operator and escort were reminded of their responsibilities and advised that they should report every incident on school transport.
- There were 2 complaints relating to grounds maintenance regarding grass cutting.
- The remaining 5 complaints were regarding Street lighting, Libraries, Transport, Cemeteries and Economy, Environment and Culture. The outcome of the latter was an apology for an oversight, footpath cleared and signs reinstated.

There were no Stage 2 complaints.

There was one complaint to the Ombudsman regarding grass cutting issues, which was subsequently addressed through the complaints process at stage 1.

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

- There were five for the waste crews, for their efficiency, customer service and their assistance to residents involved in accidents.
- One for Property Management for professional attitude, invaluable advice and assistance
- One for Blaenavon library, friendly attitude of staff and excellent service. Online catalogue easy to use and daughter loves the children's events and activities.

## **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 |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 11      | 2    | 81.82%     | 1       | 4         |
| 2017/18 | 12      | 2    | 83.3%      | 2       | 3         |
| 2018/19 | 14      | 0    | 100%       | 1       | 3         |

### **2018/19 Annual Update**

Of the stage one complaints received during 2018/19, 2 were upheld, 11 not upheld and 1 was part upheld. The Complaints and FOI team took a further 24 calls which were dealt with as service issues.

There were 14 Stage 1 complaints. There were 4 complaints in relation to Planning and 10 complaints in relation to Public Protection.

Of the four complaints to Planning, none were upheld. The complaints were regarding processes and legislation of planning laws where residents were unhappy with neighbour's actions.

Public Protection complaints were in relation to the following service areas;

- There were two complaints relating to Licencing that were unfounded.
- Two complaints for Environmental Health were also unfounded as the Council was following policy on the information provided.

- Six complaints were received in relation to enforcement of dog control, 3 were not upheld, 1 part upheld and 2 upheld. The outcomes from these complaints resulted in improved signage and disciplinary action and training for an employee of a third party providing a council service.

There was one Stage 2 complaint for Public Protection in relation to dog control. This was partly upheld due to the employee not having sufficient evidence.

Of the 3 cases that were presented to the Ombudsman all three were relating to Planning concerns as follows;

- A resident had not complained to the authority however the Council had already previously responded to the resident's concerns in relation to the planning process so there was no further action required.
- Issues in relation to an access road were not something either the Ombudsman or the Council could address as it was significantly out of time.
- Premature as the resident complained straight to the Ombudsman, the Council went onto deal with the concerns at stage one of the complaints process.

### **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 |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 0       | 0    | N/A        | 0       | 0         |
| 2017/18 | 0       | 0    | N/A        | 0       | 0         |
| 2018/19 | 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 |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 9       | 1    | 89%        | 2*      | 1         |
| 2017/18 | 7       | 0    | 100%       | 1       | 1         |
| 2018/19 | 3       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 1         |

### **2018/19 Annual Update**

There were 3 Resources complaints during 2018/19, these were all in relation to Customer Services;

- Conduct of an officer was not upheld.
- A staff member being rude and transferring a call was upheld, the officer was reminded of correct process.
- Officer was not listening, had no compassion and provided incorrect information. This was upheld and highlighted a need for further training.

There were no Stage 2 complaints.

There was one complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman where a resident alleged that the Council had ignored the needs of a disabled person – advised to go back through the complaints process, this had already been addressed at stage one and not upheld and there was no further contact.

## **Social Care and Housing**

### **Social Care**

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 6       | 2    | 66%        | 1       | 5         |
| 2017/18 | 12      | 1    | 91.7%      | 1       | 8         |
| 2018/19 | 2       | 0    | 100%       | 2       | 5         |

### **2018/19 Annual Update Social Care**

During 2018/19 the number of Stage 1 complaints received has decreased from 12 to 2. There have been 2 Stage 2 investigations.

It is worth noting that a further 94 queries for Children and Family Services and 34 for Adult Services were received. In circumstances where a manager has contacted the service user and resolved the concern by close of play the following day, contacts are not recorded as a complaint. Others will not have been accepted as a complaint as they did not meet the criteria or concurrent action has prevented a complaint being progressed. The support of managers has helped to ensure that contacts are handled quickly and effectively, a large contributory factor to the drop in the number of complaints being recorded.

In Children and Family Services, the Stage 1 complaint was relating to a perceived breach of confidence. In Adult Services, the Stage 1 complaint focussed on third hand information being recorded without it first being verified. Communication issues have been central to both complaints.

Both Stage 2 complaints were for Children and Family Services. The first was an escalation of the above Stage 1 complaint regarding confidentiality, the individual was not happy that the matter had been independently reviewed. The complaint was not upheld. The second was an escalation of a Stage 1 complaint from 2017/18, the complainant remained dissatisfied with our actions relating to her previous complaint about a social worker's lack of input and assistance with a fostering application. The investigator partly upheld an issue with communication, acknowledging that a more pro-active approach could have been adopted. This had already been addressed in the Stage 1 and subsequent case review completed by the Group Manager. No other parts of the complaint were upheld.

We have taken learning from the customer contacts such as ensuring that a confidentiality statement is used across relevant divisions. The importance of verifying information prior to recording has also been shared.

As previously mentioned, 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 on-going co-ordination work of the team to promote effective resolution. It increases customer satisfaction as sufficient resourcing enables an early response to complaints.

The total number of calls (queries and complaints) dealt with in 2018/19 was 132, an increase on the 113 received in 2017/18.

A total of 2 Stage 1 complaints were received:

- 1 for Adult Services (part upheld)
- 1 for Children & Family Services (not upheld)

No complaints for Adult Services went to Stage 2.

**5** complaints went to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, one of which the Ombudsman decided to investigate

- The investigation was relating to a complaint that the council had not acted in the best interests of a resident. This was partly upheld regarding communication, cross border safeguarding processes and the use of the unacceptable actions policy.
- Two complaints were not investigated as satisfied with the actions taken.
- A complaint that related mainly to Data Protection/GDPR advised the complainant to contact the ICO.
- A complaint originally made directly to the PSOW had been resolved prior to any formal action being required.

Lessons learned included;

- Review case recording policy to ensure effective storage of communication i.e. text messaging.
- Confidentiality statement to be utilised across the relevant divisions.
- Check consistency across teams about information being given to service users.
- One area will write if unable to make contact by telephone to ensure that attempts to contact are noted.
- Individuals to be aware of the amount of notice given for reviews/meetings.
- Team reminded of the importance of verifying the accuracy of information before it is recorded onto the system.
- To contact the Adult Safeguarding board to ask them to consider guidance on cross border complaints

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;

- “he has helped me achieve a lot in a short space of time. He listens intensely and always gives a valid opinion. I have a long way to go, of this I am aware, but I feel I have achieved a lot in this time”
- “You have been my life line during all this turmoil...I hope your department heads know how efficient and kind you are. I couldn't have managed without you”

- “I would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of support that has been offered to my son”
- "Thank you to you and your amazing team, you are all so dedicated and work so hard to give each child the best. Always so pleasant and available to help"
- “our practitioner...has been brilliant and does an absolute service to the unit. My family would not be a whole one today if it was not for meeting him!”
- “Feels he gets exceptional service from the central team, and very positive about his social worker... The support is great.”
- “She felt she was ‘brilliant and amazing’ and they still have a good relationship with her.”
- “I wanted to say a BIG Thank you for purchasing my Son’s uniform for his First Year At Secondary School...Without your help I would of have to of missed paying some bills which would have left me in more debt...Thank you so much for all your help and taking some of the stress and worry away in more ways than one.”
- “My reason for writing is that I feel it is vital that your staff realise just how much they are appreciated. They not only care with immeasurable kindness and good nature, they also bring a ray of sunshine into our home.”
- “As an agency we work in several boroughs across South Wales and I have personally found Torfaen to be the best area to work with...Many social workers and other professionals I work with appear to have genuine interest and concern in their allocated service users and in my opinion go above and beyond to ensure they are doing everything they can to meet service user needs, improve well-being and support them with remaining in their own home. I also find that the commissioning team are very supportive and open to suggestions and shared working.”
- “Families First has 100% Helped me and my Family...I feel as if I’ve got my Son back. At the beginning when I was offered families first, I was reluctant to engage, but I’m so glad I did!”

## Housing

|         | Stage 1 | Late | Compliance | Stage 2 | Ombudsman |
|---------|---------|------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 2016/17 | 3       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |
| 2017/18 | 4       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |
| 2018/19 | 1       | 0    | 100%       | 0       | 0         |

### 2018/19 Annual Update

All Housing complaints are handled under the Corporate Complaints procedure. During 2018/19 one Stage 1 complaint was received, no complaints were investigated at Stage 2. There were 11 other contacts relating to Housing Services that were not recorded as complaints.

No complaints went to the Public Services Ombudsman for investigation.

Only one Stage 1 complaint was received, this was in relation to Bron Afon’s Torfaen 50+ support service that is commissioned by Supporting People. Although the service is not one delivered by the Authority, as it is funded by us then a complaint was considered through the Corporate Complaint process. Investigation undertaken by the Supporting People

Manager did identify shortfalls in the service, a new management structure and improved processes were implemented as a result.

There were 8 compliments received across the teams. The comments included;

- “Thank you for getting back so quickly and also the whole process has been great and the response from the team has been swift and informative, if you do ever require a feedback survey in the future please keep me in mind as I would definitely have a positive response”
- “I just want to thank everyone who has supported us and have helped us to change our banding in the last few days. Me and my partner are extremely grateful for how fast you have changed our banding to help us get out of the situation we have been put in. Again, I would just like to say a huge thank you to all within the homeseeker team and the homeless team”
- “You yourself are a rare and precious resource”
- “I would just like to compliment the team at Torfaen housing as I have had so much worry and stress the past year and Torfaen offer a much more friendly and understanding approach than others. I really do appreciate the level of support and help with getting my claim up and running. Always a quick response too. Thanks makes me feel like I’m understood and makes me feel that there is a light at the end of the tunnel”
- “We have received the best possible help and advice possible, without your help my brother would now be homeless! We are so grateful for all that has been”