

APPENDIX 3

ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES AND ADULTS' SERVICES FOR 1 APRIL 2013 TO 31 MARCH 2014

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Using feedback from residents to improve services is a key element of putting our residents first in Hillingdon. This includes feedback in the form of complaints.

This Council aims to make it as easy as possible for people to provide feedback and aim to resolve all complaints at the earliest opportunity. Our complaint procedure is designed to ensure that complaints are dealt with openly, flexibly and in a timely way. Learning from complaints is used to drive up customer satisfaction and make service improvements.

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members Enquiries received between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014 for Housing and Adults' Services and satisfies the requirements to publish annual information about complaints.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. Discuss and comment on the annual report and use the report to inform their overview activities
2. Note the contents of the annual report
3. Highlight any concerns with the relevant Cabinet Member

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

a. Housing Services (See annex 1 – pages 6 to 19)

- The number of Stage 1 complaints for 2013/14 of 175 represents a 42% increase when compared with 2011/12 of 123. This % increase is

PART I – Members, Public and Press
Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee
10 September 2014

APPENDIX 3

also reflected at Stages 2 and 3, where the numbers of complaints registered has increased by 179% and 475%, respectively.

- The average time taken to conclude complaints at Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the complaint process is within the time target set.
- One complainant asked the Council's 'Designated Person' to intervene, which the Designated Person did. The decision of the Council was upheld.
- Four people escalated their complaint to the Ombudsman. None of these complaints were upheld or partially upheld.

b. Adults' Services (See annex 2 – pages 20 to 25)

- The number of Stage 1 complaints for 2013/14 of 42 represents a 39% decrease when compared with 2011/12 of 69.
- The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint has been reduced from 27.8 working days in 2011/12 to 11.97 working days for 2013/14. This is a significant improvement when compared against the two previous years and against the 20 working day target.
- The number of referrals dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) for 2013/14 was 3, which represents a 73% decrease when compared against 2011/12 of 11.
- The number of compliments recorded for 2013/14 of 31 represents a 417% increase when compared with 2011/12 of 6.

c. Members Enquiries (ME's) (See Annex 3 – page 26)

- Housing Services received 1,134 enquiries from Elected Members for 2013/14 which represents a 40% increase when compared with 2011/12 of 822.
- Adults' Services received 143 enquiries from Elected Members for 2013/14 which is broadly similar with previous years of 141 for 2011/12 and 147 for 2012/13.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PART I – Members, Public and Press
Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee
10 September 2014

APPENDIX 3

1. The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is about 'putting our residents first'. We do this by working closely with customers/residents and listening to their views including through complaints, resolving these as soon as possible and using their feedback to prevent similar complaints for the future.

2. What is a Complaint?

In general terms a complaint can be considered as:

"an expression of dissatisfaction by telephone, personal visit or in writing, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff affecting an individual or group of customers."

3. How Can People Complain?

Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by fax, via our website or email, either directly to the service area, Contact Centre or to the Complaints and Service Improvement Team.

4. The Complaints Procedure

Housing complaints are managed in line with the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Adults' services complaints are managed in line with the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'

5. The Informal Complaint

The process of complaints resolution involves talking to the customer/resident and talking through the issues they have raised, clarifying any points and understanding what outcome they are seeking to achieve. As a result, in addition to the formal complaints procedure, the Complaints and Service Improvement Team take customer enquiries or 'concerns' and deal with them promptly and informally. This is because feedback we have received from residents indicates that most want action to resolve the issue quickly and are happy that this is undertaken informally.

6. Compensation Payments

APPENDIX 3

If after an investigation by council staff or the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), it is concluded that as a result of maladministration by council staff it has resulted in a complainant suffering a financial loss, compensation may be offered to the complainant.

7. What Has the Council Done to Improve Complaint Handling?

The Council sees every complaint as an opportunity to learn from customers about what works and what does not. As a result of complaints received during 2013/14 the Council has and continues to take the following action:

- workshops for managers and relevant staff are run in investigating and responding to complaints.
- focussed on ensuring we take action on conclusion of a complaint to reduce the likelihood of the same complaint recurring.
- ensured that monthly and quarterly reports are provided for managers regarding their team/service areas complaint handling performance.

8. What is the Council Going to do to Improve Complaint Handling?

The Council will continue to seek feedback from those residents who have had cause to complain. During 2014/15 we are using feedback to improve our complaint handling processes and make service improvements by focusing on:

- the Complaint and Service Improvement Team send prompts, on day 7, reminding staff when the deadline for response is due. This should help to ensure that complaints continue to be responded within target.
- running monthly workshops for managers and relevant staff (via the Learning and Development portal) as part of the suite of customer service courses we offer.
- introduce a web page that pulls together all complaint information in one easy place for staff to view. This will include advice and guidance on handling customer dissatisfaction, complaint procedures, published complaint reports, etc.

APPENDIX 3

- publish regular articles in “AllStaffEmail” on current performance, trends, learning identified, etc.

9. Mediation

For some complaints it will not be appropriate, or possible, to resolve them through the complaint process - particularly where there has been a breakdown in the relationship between the service provider and the service user or where emotions are running high. In such situations the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will consider whether mediation is an option that should be considered.

The Complaints and Service Improvement Manager will contact both parties to see if they will agree to mediation. (Mediation is not possible without the agreement of those concerned). If both parties are agreeable, mediation by an independent mediator will allow both sides to:

- express their own views;
- think about how to put things right; and
- come together to reach a solution.

Background Documents

APPENDIX 3

Annex 1 – Complaints about Housing Services

Housing complaints are managed in line with the Corporate Complaints Procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

The Corporate Complaints Procedure

This procedure operates as follows:

- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Housing or Deputy Director Residents Services
- Stage 2 – response from the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council
- Stage 4 - Designated Person for the Council (for tenants of housing association, local authorities and ALMOS when local complaint procedures have been exhausted. Effective from 1 April 2013.)
- Local Government Ombudsman

A more detailed explanation of how the complaint procedure operates, the main complaint themes and statistical data for each stage of the process is provided below.

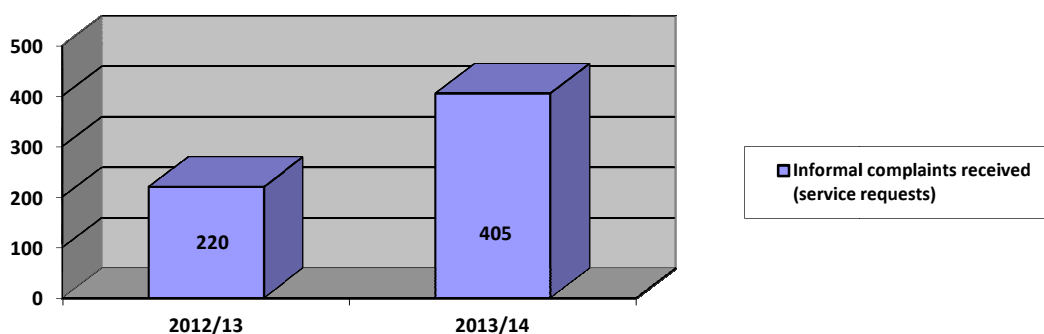
a. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Housing staff focus on resolving complaints informally. This emphasis to resolve issues and concerns quickly and avert the need to escalate these to a

APPENDIX 3

formal complaint means that a significant number of concerns are dealt with by way of service requests. The table below shows the number of informal complaints that were dealt with by way of service requests. The increase in service requests during 2013/14 indicates that more customers are prepared to work with the Council at an early stage to resolve issues.

Informal complaints received (service requests)



When comparing the number of service requests recorded in 2012/13 of 220 with 405 in 2013/14, this represents an 84% (185) increase. The increase in volume of service requests were as a result of:

Repairs accounted for 45% of all service requests, with residents complaining about delays in carrying out mainly smaller repairs.

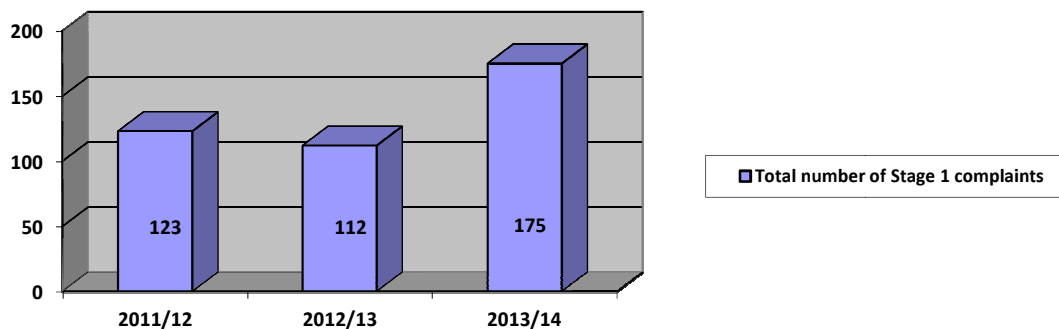
Housing Need accounted for 32% of all service requests. A number of these service requests were seeking further information about the changes to the revised Social Housing Allocations policy introduced in July 2013.

b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

Housing complaints are managed in line with the Corporate Complaints Procedure, with the Head of Housing or Deputy Director Residents Services aiming to respond within 10 working days.

Total Number of Stage 1 complaints

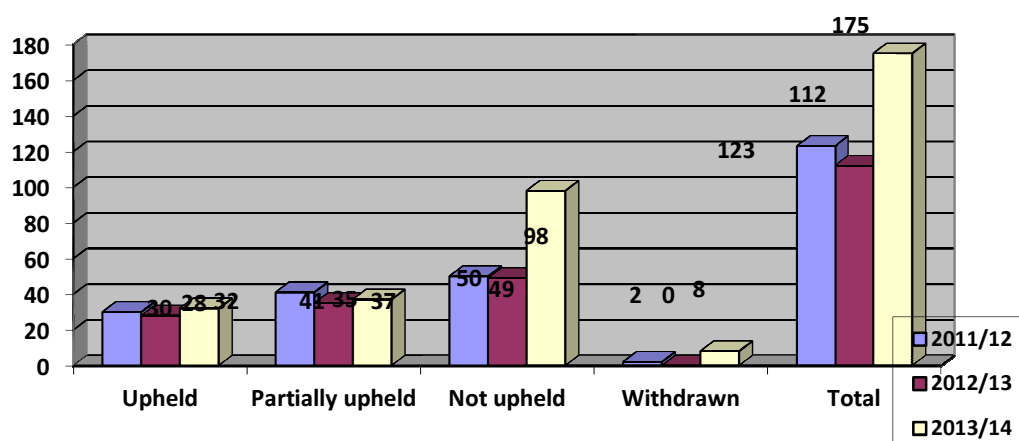
APPENDIX 3



When comparing the total number of complaints recorded for 2011/12 of 123, with the same period in 2013/14 of 175, this represents a 42% (52) increase.

Overall, 175 Stage 1 complaints is still small when taking into consideration the number of residents who use this service (housing services provide service to approximately 13,000 residents and 3,700 people on the housing register).

Outcome of complaints



Of the 175 Stage 1 complaints, 39% were either upheld or partially upheld. For 2011/12 and 2012/13, 57% and 56%, respectively were either upheld or partially upheld. Of the additional complaints received about housing services in 2013/14 most were not upheld.

Time taken to conclude a complaint at Stage 1 (working days)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	8.8	9.6	8.7
Target	10	10	10
Variance	- 1.2	- 0.4	- 1.3

APPENDIX 3

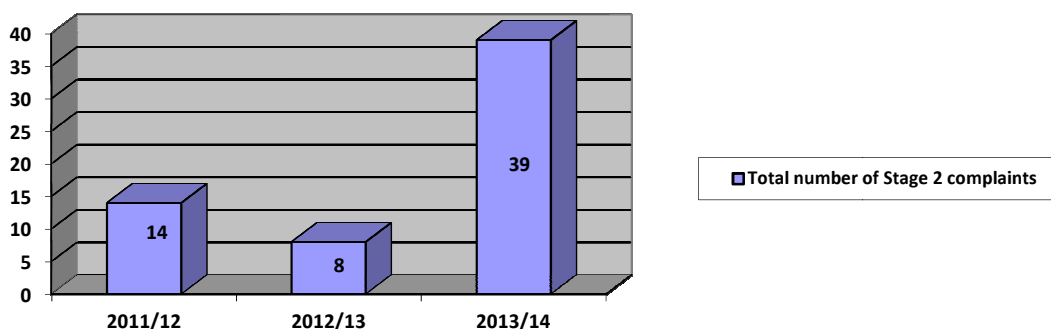
The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint is 8.7 working days which is under the 10 working day target. This is commendable given the increase in complaints.

However, 47 of the 175 Stage 1 complaints were concluded outside the 10 working day target. This is a concern as 1 in 4 complaints are not being responded to within target. The Complaints and Service Improvement Team are sending reminders at an early stage to ensure responses are prioritised.

c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Residents Services aims to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

Total number of Stage 2 complaints

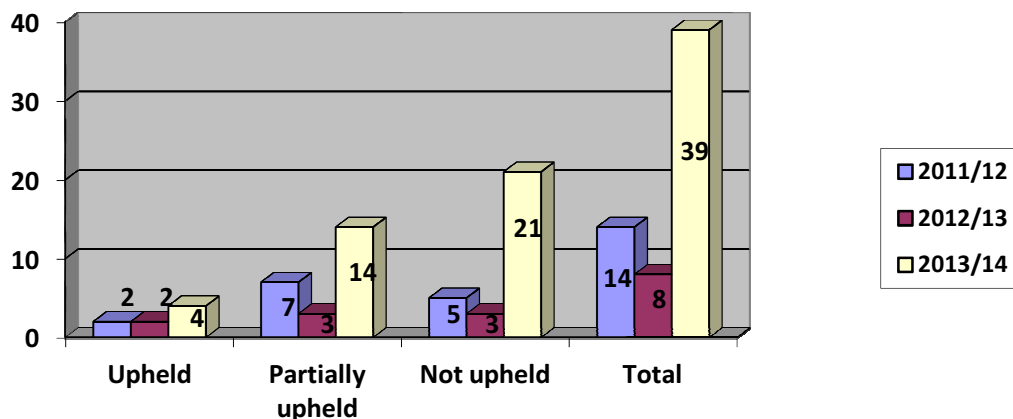


When comparing the total number of complaints recorded at Stage 2 for 2011/12 of 14 with 2013/14 of 39, this represents a 179% (25) increase.

Proportionately, more complaints have escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in 2013/14 (22%) than in 2011/12 of 11% and 2012/13 of 7%. This increase is connected with changes to the Social Housing Allocations policy and housing repairs service.

Outcome of complaints

APPENDIX 3



Proportionately, the number of upheld and partially upheld complaints has gone down when comparing 2013/14 (46%) against 2011/12 (64%) and 2012/13 (63%). Most of the additional complaints received about housing services in 2013/14 were not upheld or partially upheld.

Outcome of complaints progressing to Stage 2

Complaint details	Decision
<p>3172189 Mrs X complained that the Housing Officer had ignored her issues – access to her property being blocked by her neighbour’s car, lighting to be replaced and locks to be changed.</p>	<p>Upheld Apologised for delay in processing outstanding work. We offered her compensation for inconvenience.</p>
<p>3372206 Mr X complained on behalf of his mother regarding the heating and ventilation system at her sheltered accommodation, cooking smells circulating around the home, about the door locking mechanism and the lack of communications</p>	<p>Upheld We explained that the home has a modern and complex integrated heating and ventilation system. Working with M&E consultant, we have identified works which need to be undertaken and once this work is completed it will address the issues complained of. An</p>

APPENDIX 3

regarding the planned works.	automated door system was fitted in his mother's flat.
<p>3343383</p> <p>Mr X complained that his roof had been looked at 5/6 times since he moved in and was told repeatedly that it was due to the gutter being blocked or pointing in the direction of the window. He did not feel that this was the case as rain comes in through the roof and the seal of the window.</p>	<p>Upheld</p> <p>We explained that previous inspections had not identified any problems with the roof but would be erecting scaffolding to inspect and complete the repair. We agreed to leave the scaffolding up for a further six weeks in order to ensure that we could be satisfied that the problem has been resolved and if it had not, it could be quickly re-addressed.</p>
<p>3165230</p> <p>Ms X complained on behalf of her sister – she felt that her sister's homeless application had not been properly considered.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld</p> <p>Ms X was informed that her sister's application was dealt with in accordance with guidelines. She needed to await the outcome of the review. However, we apologised for the delay in processing the housing application.</p>
<p>3343106</p> <p>Mr X complained that a T Brown engineer had incorrectly installed his radiator system and this resulted in one of the radiators being on permanently. Mr X wanted to be compensated for the extra use of gas.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld</p> <p>We informed Mr X that when his central heating system was installed and it could not be turned off he should have been told to turn off the power to the boiler until he required the heating. We apologised for this and offered Mr X £45.36 for expenses incurred. We did not uphold Mr X's complaint that the engineer from T Brown failed to attend appointments.</p>
<p>3235256</p> <p>Mrs X is unhappy that the Council refused to pay her 1 month's rent in advance.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld</p> <p>We advised Mrs X that whilst the decision was right to refer her to her current Local Authority to claim one month's rent in advance. As a gesture of goodwill we agreed to pay her one month's rent in advance.</p>
<p>3296619</p> <p>Ms X complained that operatives</p>	<p>Partially Upheld</p> <p>Ms X was advised that the operative</p>

APPENDIX 3

<p>did not call her before appointments, the Council did not follow up after an inspection of her ceiling and that the work to her ceiling was delayed because only 1 workman was sent to do the job when 2 was needed.</p>	<p>said that they had called her prior to the appointment. We could not form a view with two conflicting version of events. We explained that work had to be re prioritised because at that time the focus was on repairing Void properties with smaller work being re scheduled. We apologised that only 1 workman was sent.</p>
<p>3003617 Ms X was unhappy that the Council was refusing to repair work to her property.</p>	<p>Not upheld Ms X was informed that the Council had not given consent for the removal of a wall between her flat and garden store. It was her responsibility to pay for work to stop the leaks which had occurred as a result of the works the tenant had undertaken.</p>
<p>3306913 Mr X complained that a telephone operative was impolite, asked to know whether the GP report had been taken into consideration in his application for sheltered accommodation and is unhappy that he was refused sheltered accommodation.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that the telephone operative denied being rude to him and without any independent corroborating evidence either way it was difficult to form a view. Mr X was advised that the report from his GP was considered but as he is a homeowner he is not entitled to be put on the waiting list for sheltered accommodation.</p>
<p>3261242 Mrs X complained that the report her solicitors received contained typographical and factual errors. He also felt that the inspection that was carried out was superficial and that the report could “create a lot of financial, psychological and personal damage”.</p>	<p>Not Upheld We acknowledged and apologised that a space was incorrectly inserted in the first line of her address but otherwise the report was accurate. In relation to the inspection, Mrs X was informed that unless the officer is able to identify any serious category 1 or 2 hazards then there is no formal legal action we can take within the confines of the law.</p>
<p>3223295 Mrs X complained that when her central heating boiler was replaced it was not properly done and resulted in a water leak which caused damage to her laminate</p>	<p>Not Upheld We explained that an excess fee is not usually requested up front but that any excess that has been paid or needs to be levied, is recovered on settlement of the claim which is usually handled by</p>

APPENDIX 3

<p>flooring. Whilst her flooring is covered by household contents insurance, she wanted the Council or T Brown to pay her excess.</p>	<p>the two insurance companies. Our understanding is that the insurers have exchanged details and the matter is being dealt with between them.</p>
<p>3267186 Mr X complained that he was not offered self contained temporary accommodation but instead temporary accommodation with shared facilities.</p>	<p>Not upheld Mr X was advised that it is not always possible to meet the preferences expressed by residents either for the location or type of accommodation they would like. At the time residents require assistance with accommodation, we will do all that we can to support them but it is not always possible to offer self contained accommodation as we have a limited stock of suitable accommodation.</p>
<p>3599100 Mr X was unhappy with the decision not to offer him social housing.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that the outcome of his homeless application was that he had made himself intentionally homeless by not paying his rent. If he was dissatisfied with this decision, his recourse was to appeal rather than pursuing it through the complaint process.</p>
<p>3538051 Mr X advised that when his garage door became jammed, as it was late in the day, he got a local mechanic to repair it. Mr X requested that the Council reimburse him the costs he incurred.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that the Council is not obliged to reimburse him, as we were not given the opportunity to fix the door first. As a gesture of goodwill we agreed to pay his costs.</p>
<p>3430334 Mr X complained that he believed that the delays in carrying out repairs to his property were deliberate acts by Council officers, allegedly as a result of his past relationship with the Council.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that we could not see any evidence to support his stance. We would look at this issue again on receipt of hard evidence from him.</p>
<p>3553431 Mr X complained about the actions of a Senior Housing Surveyor in carrying out an inspection.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised of the powers of an officer when investigating a property which was allegedly being used as a</p>

APPENDIX 3

	house in multiple occupation. We were satisfied that the officer had carried out his duties in accordance with our policies and procedures.
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Nb – Please see pages 13 to 17 for the remaining Stage 2 complaints that progressed to Stage 3.

Time taken to conclude a complaint at Stage 2 (working days)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	12.1	9.85	8.5
Target	10	10	10
Variance	+ 2.1	- 0.15	- 1.5

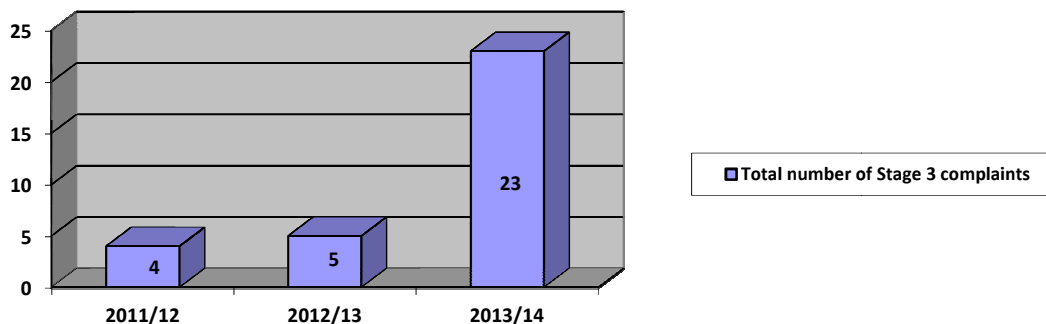
The average time taken to conclude a Stage 2 complaint has reduced from 12.1 working days in 2011/12 to 8.5 working days in 2013/14.

d. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

The Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services. The Chief Executive aims to respond within 15 working days.

Total number of Stage 3 complaints

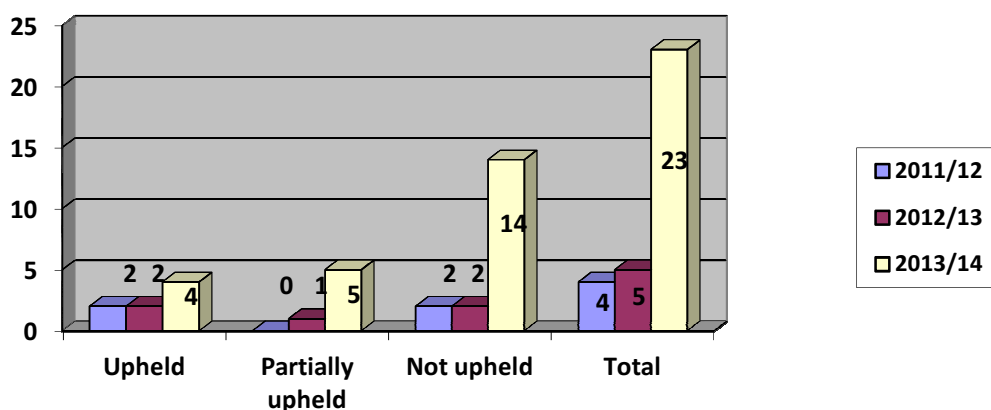
APPENDIX 3



When comparing the total number of complaints recorded at Stage 3 for 2011/12 of 4 with 2013/14 of 23, this represents an almost five fold (19) increase.

Proportionately, more complaints have escalated from Stage 2 to Stage 3 in 2013/14 (59%), than in 2011/12 (29%).

Table 10 – Outcome of Stage 3 complaints



Proportionately, the number of upheld and partially upheld complaints has gone down when comparing 2013/14 of 39% with 2011/12 of 50% and 2012/13 of 60%. Most complaints at Stage 3 were not upheld.

APPENDIX 3

Outcome of complaints progressing to Stage 3

Complaint details	Decision
<p>3209128 Mr X felt that the Council had to take responsibility for being offered inappropriate temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Upheld An apology was given for the error the Council made with his situation. Alternative accommodation has been offered to the tenant.</p>
<p>3348522 Ms X complained that errors by the Council resulted in her accruing service charge arrears.</p>	<p>Upheld The Council admitted and apologised for the service errors identified in this case and offered Ms X compensation.</p>
<p>3109112 Mrs X complained about the service provided for her sister whilst living in sheltered accommodation.</p>	<p>Upheld The Council admitted that it failed to provide the high level of service that it strives to deliver to its vulnerable residents and has taken appropriate action. An apology was offered to Mrs X and her sister.</p>
<p>3300278 Mr X complained that no viewings were offered to his daughter despite bidding every week.</p>	<p>Upheld The Council apologised and made a direct offer of the next available, suitable property by way of redress for the error.</p>
<p>3011739 Mr X complained that as his son had additional needs and a follow up letter should have been sent.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld The Chief Executive concluded that as we were aware of Mr X's son's circumstances, this should have been taken into account when corresponding with him. We apologised to the complainant and his son.</p>
<p>3288200 Mr X was unhappy with the Stage 2 response and given the evidence of disproportionate delay in repairing the gas fire and that it was requested that the original complaint be reviewed.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld Mr X was advised that we would seek to find a replacement part and apologised that some aspects of the complaint handling was not in accordance with procedure. However, this was not deliberate or that it had any material impact on the outcome of the complaint.</p>
<p>3311404 Ms X disputed that she had been provided with an appropriate and suitable remedy in being offered a direct allocation.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld The complainant received an apology for the failure in service which led to her not securing the property of her first preference but that a direct allocation of</p>

APPENDIX 3

	a similar property was reasonable and proportionate redress.
<p>3266088 Mr X complained that it was the inadequacy of the work completed by the Repairs Team in securing his front door that he was unable to remain in the property.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld We apologised to Mr X for the length of time it took to replace the door.</p>
<p>3293402 Mr X complained that the Council had been advised that water was dripping onto the electrics and that this was recorded in data entries back to May 2012.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld Mr X was advised that owing to client confidentiality, the Repairs Team, would not have been aware of information given to another service area about Mr X's personal circumstances. We apologised for the delay in resolving the leak to the roof and offered Mr X compensation.</p>
<p>3081513 Mr X complained that he had to perch on a desk during the visit on 28 May because there had been no suitable seating available.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that it is impossible to know exactly what transpired at the visit but it seems unlikely that, with the variety of seating options available, officers would not have attempted to accommodate Mr X's needs.</p>
<p>3006330 Mrs X complained that she had made three telephone calls to the Environmental Health Team and sent a letter but no action was taken to address the draught in her bedroom.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Chief Executive informed Mrs X that there is no record of any of the three telephone calls having been received nor is there a copy of the letter she says was sent on our files.</p>
<p>2994736 Mrs X complained that it was problems with her heating system that had resulted in a much higher electricity bill. She sought compensation from the Council.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Chief Executive informed Mrs X there was no evidence to support Mrs X's claim for compensation in that a faulty boiler led to an excessively high fuel bill.</p>
<p>3082914 Ms X complained that two Council inspectors told her that she maintained her kitchen to too high a standard and there was no reason for her kitchen to be re</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ms X was informed that repairs in the kitchen would be undertaken but we would not be renewing the kitchen - officers have taken a reasonable approach of the works required to bring</p>

APPENDIX 3

fitted.	the kitchen to an acceptable standard.
<p>3411636 Ms X stated her housing need and her entitlement to a restoration package following her dismissal as a Hillingdon Council employee.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Ms X was advised that the Council had offered information, advice and guidance in a timely and appropriate manner and had no duty to provide her with housing. Her suggestion of a restoration package was refused, she was advised to seek legal advice.</p>
<p>3423841 Mr X complained about mistakes made by a contractor during the construction of his extension and for the amount of time he had wasted to enable the contractors to access his property.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that the Chief Executive did not concur that the actions of the Council resulted in an injustice to Mr X or that any loss was incurred by him that would justify a payment of compensation in this case.</p>
<p>3470335 Ms X complained that it was not acceptable for the Council to provide her with a property that only had a disabled shower and no bath when it was known that she had a two-year-old child.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Chief Executive was satisfied that Ms X had been provided with clear reasons why the Council will not install a bath at her property. If Ms X provides evidence of a medical need why a bath is required, the issue will be revisited.</p>
<p>3340298 Mr X stated that the revised Housing Allocations Policy had been incorrectly applied as he had only been awarded a temporary place on the Register. The policy should have been applied after his banding had been confirmed.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the Chief Executive could find no evidence of maladministration and consider officers to have provided the correct information and also applied the policy correctly.</p>
<p>3415358 Mr X complained of the problems he had encountered with his current accommodation in the private sector. He had asked the Council for assistance but was unhappy that social housing was not provided by the Council for him.</p>	<p>Not Upheld No evidence could be found to support his contention that there had been any maladministration or that his housing allocation had been jeopardised by the actions of the Council.</p>

APPENDIX 3

<p>3134810 Mr X was unhappy that the Council would not provide him with secure social housing as he was homeless.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that as he had not lived in the Borough for 10 years he was not eligible for social housing.</p>
<p>3462034 Mr X complained that under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 the Council was required to either adapt his current home or to provide him with social housing.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that as he held a share in the property in which he lived, the Council are only able to offer advice on the complainant's options for seeking a property in the private sector.</p>
<p>3466638 Ms X complained that the Council had a duty to provide her with social housing as her nephew had taken possession of the property she used to live at.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Ms X was informed that the Housing Allocations policy had been explained to her and that any homeless application she makes would be unsuccessful – she was not considered to be in priority need.</p>
<p>3477569 Ms X said that she met the 10 year residency criteria and that the Council's scheme for private renting was not working as she had been trying for a year to find private accommodation.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Ms X was advised that she was not eligible for social housing as she had lived in another Borough for 1 year – we had checked the electoral register of another Borough and Experian to verify this. We offered her advice and support to find a property in the private sector.</p>
<p>3407902 Miss X complained that she had been awarded Band C in May 2012 and not at the time she was made homeless. The Council had penalised her by changing her priority date to March 2013.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Miss X was informed that no evidence could be found of maladministration concerning the explanation given to her concerning the introduction of the revised Housing Allocation Policy.</p>

e. INVESTIGATION BY THE COUNCIL'S DESIGNATED PERSON

From 1 April 2013, if a complaint is about a tenancy, leasehold, or other housing management issue, a complainant will first need to refer their complaint to a 'Designated Person'. This can be a Councillor, MP or a Tenant Panel recognised by the Council who will decide whether to consider the complaint and help resolve it. If the 'Designated Person' cannot resolve a complaint or if 8 weeks have elapsed since the Stage 3 response, a complainant can then complain to the Housing Ombudsman.

APPENDIX 3

During 2013/14 one complainant asked the Designated Person for the Council (Cllr Corthorne) to see if he could help to resolve the complaint. Table 12 below provides details of the complaint and the outcome of the review.

Outcome of the investigation by the Designated Person

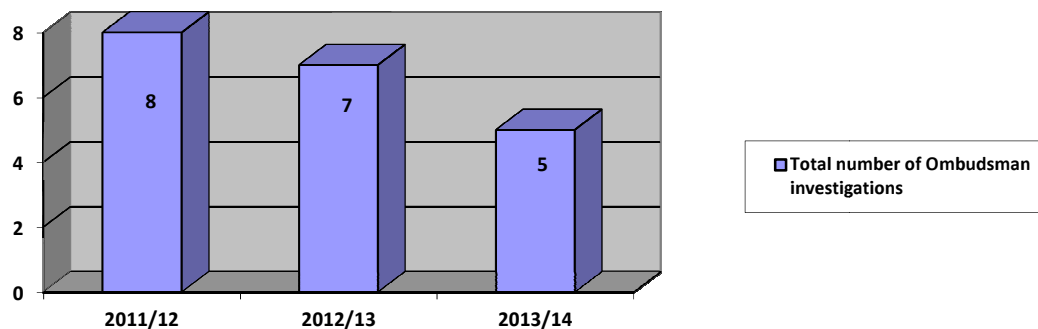
The Complaint	Council's position	Decision of the Designated Person
3462034 Mr X believed that that the Council is required to provide him with accommodation on the basis that he met the five tests under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.	The Council's position is that as Mr X owned a share in a property, there was no legal duty to provide him with social housing. The Council referred Mr X to section 2.2.2 of the Social Housing Allocations Policy which states that 'any household who owns or has an interest in a property' will not qualify to join the housing register.	Not Upheld Cllr Corthorne sought legal advice on this issue. The legal advice he received was that as Mr X owned a share in the property, as an owner of the property he is not eligible for inclusion on the Council's Housing Register". Cllr Corthorne upheld the decision of the Council not to include Mr X's name on the Housing Register.

f. INVESTIGATION BY THE OMBUDSMAN

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the Ombudsman and at any stage of the complaint process. However, the Ombudsman normally refers the complaint back to the Council if it has not been considered fully using local procedures first.

Total number of Ombudsman investigations

APPENDIX 3



The number of complainants escalating their complaint to the Ombudsman has reduced from 8 in 2011/12 to 5 in 2013/14.

Outcome of investigations by the Housing Ombudsman

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision	Recommendations
<p>3265938 Mr X complained to the HO that the Council did not provide sufficient information about planned major works to the property he purchased in 2006. He also said that the Council had not responded to his Freedom of Information Act request.</p>	<p>Outside of their Jurisdiction The HO informed Mr X they could not consider his complaint. This was because the substantive matter of the complaint (that the landlord did not provide him with sufficient information about the major works to the roof) had already been considered and a finding made by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2008. They could not consider it again. In terms of the FOI request, Mr X was advised to raise this with the Information Commissioner's Office.</p>	<p>None</p>

APPENDIX 3

<p>2994736 Mrs X Complained that a defect in the heating and hot water system caused her utility bills to increase and that the Council should compensate her for the increased costs.</p>	<p>Not upheld The Ombudsman decision was that the Council were not responsible for Mrs X's electricity bill. The reason her bills were so high was because Mrs X had been paying estimated bills.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>3348522 Miss X complained to the Ombudsman regarding the outcome of the Council's investigation regarding service charges she was invoiced for disputed works in 2011.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman advised Miss X that she was "satisfied that the landlord has acted fairly in attempting to resolve this dispute. This includes appropriately acknowledging what went wrong and redressing this by way of an offer of proportionate compensation." It was on this basis that the complaint was closed.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Miss X contacted the Council and accepted the offer of compensation.</p>
<p>3466638 Ms X complained about the Council's decision that she was not eligible to join the social housing register.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman decision was that there was no evidence of fault in the Council's not to include Ms X's name on the Housing register. This is because the decision was made in accordance with the Council's housing allocations policy.</p>	<p>None</p>

APPENDIX 3

Mr X complained direct to the Ombudsman that the Council had unreasonably decided it had no duty to house his family because he had made himself intentionally homeless.	The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint because Mr X can use his statutory review and appeal rights to challenge the Council's decision in a County Court.	None
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Annex 2 – Complaints about Adults’ Services

The procedure for dealing with Adults’ Services complaints is regulated by the ‘The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009’. This sets out the two stage complaint procedure that Local Authorities are required to follow and it applies to older people,

APPENDIX 3

people with a physical disability, people with a learning disability and other vulnerable people.

The Complaint Procedure

This procedure is far less prescriptive and allows for early escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the Local Authority. The intention of this procedure is to achieve complete resolution at the first attempt, to remove bureaucracy and has been designed to empower complainants in shaping from the outset the approach to resolving the complaint.

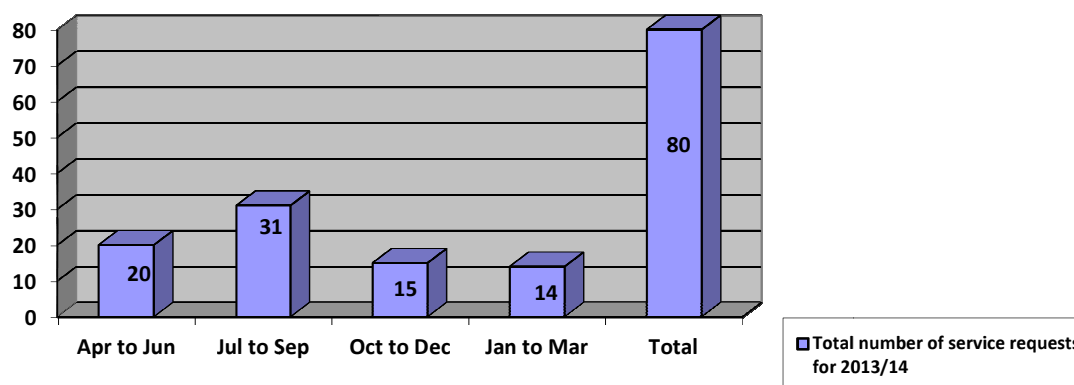
The complaint procedure is as follows:

- Stage 1 – Local Resolution.
- Local Government Ombudsman.

a. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Our focus remains on resolving complaints informally. This emphasis to resolve issues and concerns quickly and avert the need to escalate these to a formal complaint has helped to reduce the number of formal complaints. Please see below.

Informal complaints received (service requests)



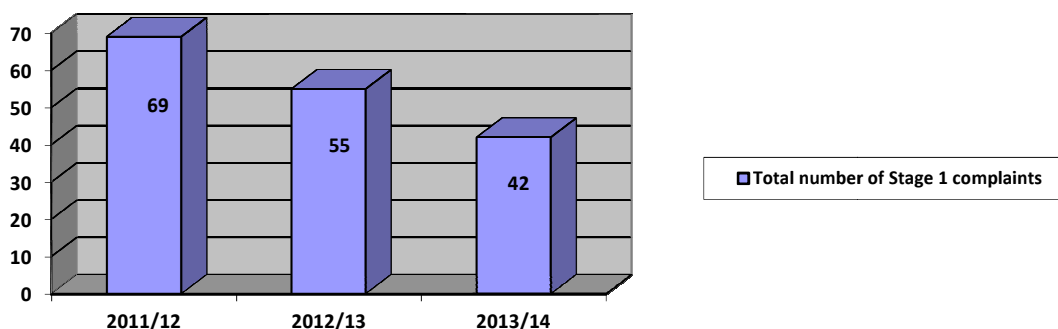
Figures are not available for previous years. For 2013/14 it shows that for every one Stage 1 complaint received, two are dealt with informally.

b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

APPENDIX 3

At Stage 1 of the complaint process a manager will carry out an investigation and aim to respond within 10 working days.

Total number of Stage 1 complaints

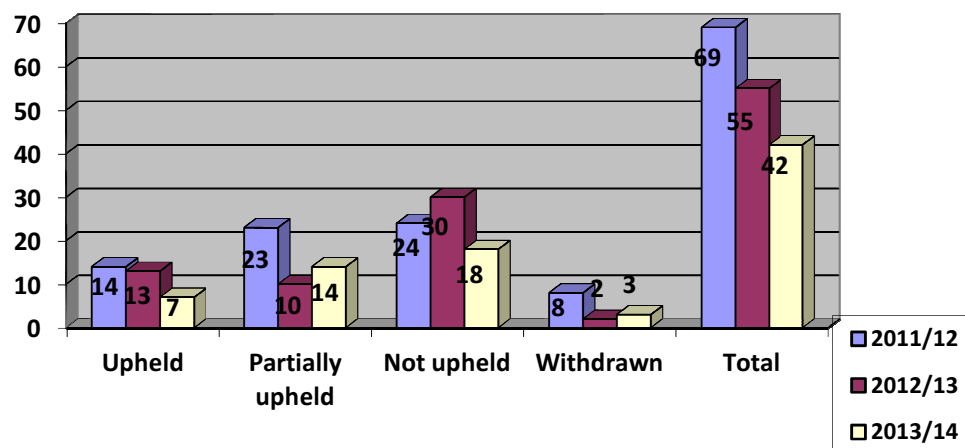


When comparing Stage 1 complaints for 2011/12 of 69 with the same period in 2013/14 of 42, this represents a 39% (27) decrease.

Analysis of the complaints received shows, 12 (29%) of the 42 complaints relate to hospital discharge issues, in particular, the medical fitness of the patient at the time of discharge i.e. that they should not have been discharged at all. Of the 12 complaints, 8 related to Hillingdon Hospital and 4 related to Northwick Park Hospitals. A case summary is now prepared of the complaints. To manage such cross cutting complaints a meeting has taken place between social care, hospital and community health service staff to ensure effective management of these complaints.

Outcome of Stage 1 complaints

APPENDIX 3



Proportionately, the number of upheld and partially upheld complaints remains broadly similar for the past three years - 2011/12 (53%), 2012/13 (42%) and 2013/14 (50%).

Time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint (working days)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	27.8	21.6	11.97
Target	20	20	20
Variance	+ 7.8	+ 1.6	- 8.03

The average time taken to conclude a complaint has been reduced from 27.8 working days in 2011/12 to 11.97 working days for 2013/14. This is a significant improvement when compared against previous years and against the 20 working day target.

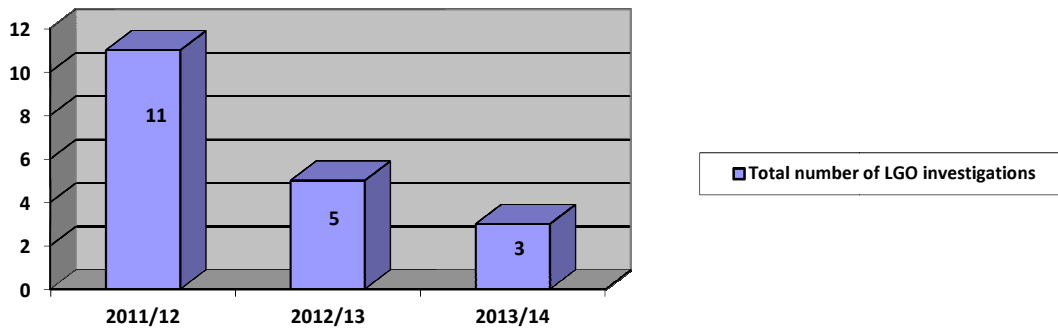
The figures show that 91% (38) of all Stage 1 complaints were concluded within 20 working days or less and that 53% (22), were concluded within 10 days or less.

c. INVESTIGATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the LGO and at any stage of the Adult Social Services complaint process concluded in 2013/14.

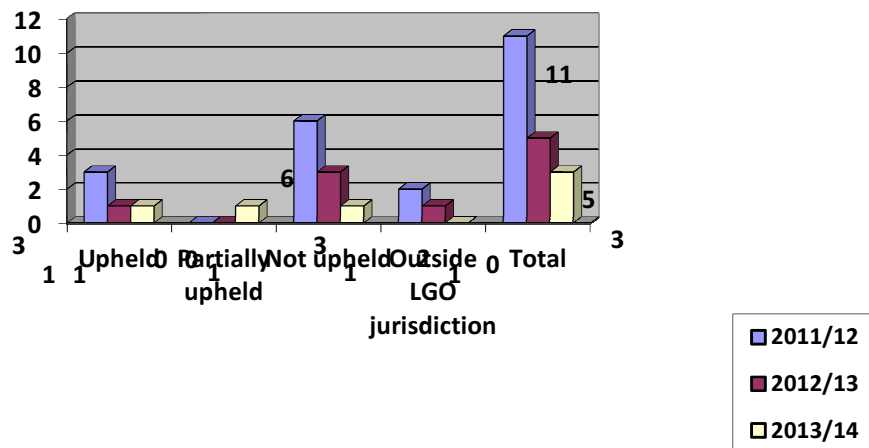
APPENDIX 3

Total number of LGO investigations



The number of investigations dealt with by the LGO has reduced by 73% when comparing the 2011/12 figure of 11 with the 2013/14 figure of 3. However, it should be noted that there are 3 complaints which the LGO began to investigate in 2013/14 but have not yet been concluded.

Outcome of known LGO investigation



See below for details of the complaint and the findings of the LGO.

APPENDIX 3

Outcome of investigations by the LGO

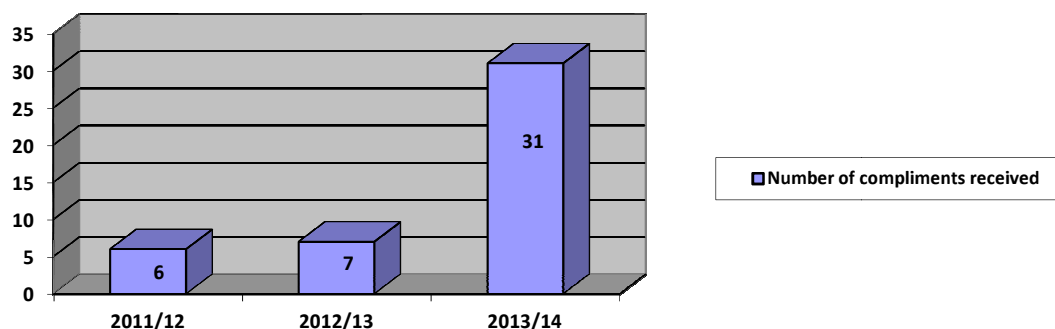
Complaint details	LGO decision	Recommendations
<p>2988343</p> <p>Mr X complained that the Council failed to properly assess Ms Y's needs in March 2011 and that the resolution offered was inadequate. Mr X believed therefore that Ms Y was entitled to a higher personal budget.</p>	<p>Upheld</p> <p>The LGO found evidence of fault in the way the Council had assessed her needs and applied a deduction to Ms Y's personal budget. However, as the Council had taken steps to remedy any injustice Ms Y had suffered. The LGO decided to discontinue their investigation on the basis of the action taken by the Council to address the injustice to Ms Y.</p>	<p>The Council agreed to re assess Ms Y's personal budget and paid her compensation.</p>
<p>3051639</p> <p>Mrs X complained that the Council is at fault for suspending her direct payments because of anomalies in her accounts. She also said the Council did not carry out annual reviews of her direct payments and that any discrepancies would have been identified sooner, had it done so.</p>	<p>Not upheld</p> <p>The LGO decision was that although they found some evidence of fault by the Council, they did not consider that this caused Mrs X significant injustice. Nor did they think that the identified fault altered its decision on this matter.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>3141640</p> <p>Mr X complained that when acting as Appointee for his late mother after she was placed in residential care, the Council delayed in applying for a higher rate of attendance allowance and that following his mother's death the Council failed to</p>	<p>Partially Upheld</p> <p>The LGO determined that the Council failed promptly to apply for a higher rate of attendance allowance when it became Appointee and that this caused financial loss to her estate. However, the</p>	<p>The Council apologised to the complainant, agreed to pay the difference between the lower and higher attendance allowance rate and paid him</p>

APPENDIX 3

supply financial information in a standard format.	Council was not at fault when it later supplied Mrs X's son with financial information required for the administration of her estate.	compensation.
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d. COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED

Table 22 – number of compliments received



The number of compliments recorded for 2013/14 of 31 represents a four-fold increase when compared with 2011/12 of 6. This is encouraging and efforts will continue to be made to remind staff to make their manager aware when a compliment is received.

Here's what five people have said about the service provided by Adults' Service staff and the difference it has made to their lives.

"A massive thank you to X for working so hard on Y's behalf and securing the extra hours. This is fantastic and we are really pleased. Words can't express how happy we are with X and thank you for making it possible. It's given Y a new lease of life and she is amazing all of us".

"I cannot thank X enough for all the help, support and professionalism that she has shown me and my family through this very difficult time. I had never had to deal with Social Services before regarding care in the community. I was so lucky to have had X as my mother's Community Care Worker. It was a very steep learning curve but X was so approachable, understanding and kind. I was so grateful when I spoke with her and she helped and guided me through what I needed to do regarding the care of my mother".

APPENDIX 3

"I am writing on behalf of my mother who has had re-ablement carer's since coming out of hospital. Your service is excellent, the carer's are kind and very helpful, especially X who goes out of her way to help you".

"I am writing on behalf of my mother to convey her heartfelt thanks and appreciation. As you are aware my father passed away after a short illness. During the re-ablement period X and Y undertook the majority of care. Both X and Y were very professional, provided exceptional care and attention. So much so that my father, would look forward to their visit, and on occasions say, when asked if he was feeling better, that 'if the carers were feeling better so was he'. My mother feels that the last few weeks of my father's life were truly touched by 'angels' in the care and attention X and Y provided".

"Thank all your staff for the wonderful care they have shown me. They are always willing to listen to me and help me in things I can't do. They always make sure I am alright before leaving. I look forward to them coming in it makes my day".

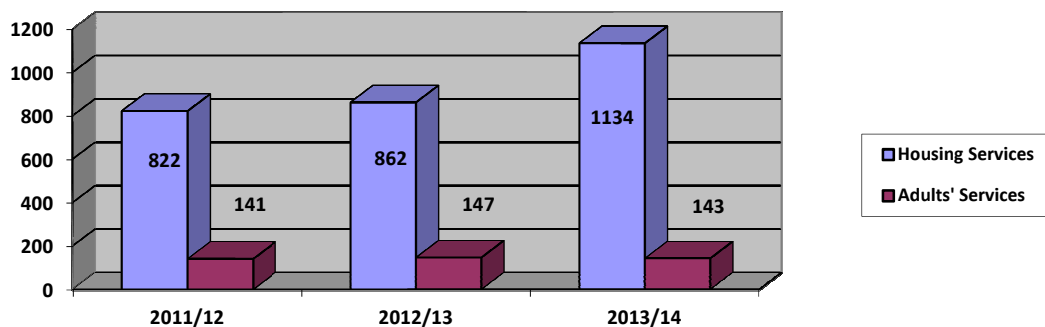
"I feel I must write to thank you and your team of carers and support staff for the very real care, I have received over the past 6 weeks. My main carer couldn't have been kinder, caring and concerned for my wellbeing. She made me feel I was her only client. Almost immediately, instead of feeling sorry for myself, with nothing to get up for X helped me with her encouraging way so I wanted to show her I could manage and appreciate all she was doing for me".

2. Members Enquiries

Enquiries can be submitted to officers on behalf of residents to Elected Members for further information. This can include questions about an assessment, decisions or quality of service experienced by our resident.

Total number of Members Enquiries

APPENDIX 3



- Housing Services received 822 enquiries from elected members on behalf of our residents in 2011/12. For the same period in 2013/14 the figure was 1,134, which represents a 40% (312) increase.
- Adults' Service received 143 enquiries from elected members for 2013/14 which is broadly similar to previous years of 141 for 2011/12 and 147 for 2012/13.
- Housing and Adults Services both receive far more enquiries from elected members than complaints.
- Housing Service Members Enquiries tend to be about the allocation of housing, repairs and community housing services.
- Adults Services Members Enquiries tend to be about Disability Services, delay or failure to carry out assessments, payment of or calculation of direct payments and the provision of older people's services.